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Academic year 2022/23

16-18 destination measures

This is the latest data

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Releases in this series

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The latest data in this release covers

students who left 16 to 18 study by the end of the 2021/22 academic year and follows their destinations in the 2022/23 academic year.

Methodologies

[16-18 destination measures](#)

Destination measures provide information on the success of schools and colleges in helping young people continue in education, apprenticeships or employment.

These official statistics show students continuing to education, apprenticeship or employment destinations in the year after completing 16 to 18 study in schools and colleges in England.

The release also provides information on destination outcomes for students based on a range of individual characteristics, and geographical location and type of education provider.

The release focuses on outcomes for state-funded mainstream schools and colleges.

This data has been revised since the original publication in October 2024 to include the latest available education data.

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Changes to the data in 2021/22

The latest data in this release covers students who left 16 to 18 study in 2021/22 and follows their destinations in 2022/23. The following should be considered when using this data:

- **The way we decide when a student is at the end of 16 to 18 study changed last year and impacts the students included in this years cohort. As such comparisons to previous cohorts should be treated with caution**

Students are included in this statistical release when they reach the end of 16 to 18 study. The 'trigger' rules for deciding when this happens changed in 2020/21.

Further details can be in the accompanying methodology document. Students are

no longer automatically triggered after spending two years in the same school or college. The two remaining criteria for assessing a student to be at the end of 16 to 18 study are by entering two A levels or other equally substantial level 3 qualification(s), or by turning 18 in that academic year.

This two-year rule has been removed from 2020/21 to reduce the number of students being triggered too early. The impact of the trigger rule change is to reduce the number of students reported in accountability measures in 2020/21, the numbers return to a similar level to before 2020/21 but the make up of the cohort this year is different to previous years and shows different results. Therefore any comparisons across years should be treated with caution.

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What are destination measures?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disruption

Destination outcomes in 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years were affected by the disruption to the economy and educational settings caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. 2020, 2021 and 2022 leavers (with destination outcomes 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) were also impacted by changes to grading approaches during these years as well as the ongoing uneven impacts of the pandemic on different schools, colleges and pupils,

Destination measures provide information on the success of schools and colleges in helping young people continue in education, apprenticeships or employment

Destination measures show the percentage of students going to or remaining in an education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the academic year after completing 16 to 18 studies (finishing year 13, usually aged 18).

The most recent data reports on students who completed this stage in the 2021/22 academic year and identifies their main activity in the following academic year (2022/23).

What is a 'sustained' destination?

To be counted in a destination, young people have to be recorded as having sustained participation for a 6 month period in the destination year. This means

attending for all of the first two terms of the academic year (October 2022 to March 2023) at one or more education providers; spending 5 of the 6 months in employment or a combination of the two.

A sustained apprenticeship is recorded when 6 months continuous participation is recorded at any point in the destination year (between August 2022 and July 2023).

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Student characteristics

Disadvantage status

Disadvantage students were less likely to have a sustained destination than non disadvantage students

Students who were eligible for pupil premium in year 11 (around a quarter of the cohort in all state funded schools and colleges) were 14.3 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination when leaving 16 to 18 study compared to all other students . This gap in the previous year was 12.8 percentage points. The change made last year in how we decide who is at the end of 16 to 18 study had a greater impact on disadvantage students (who are more likely to study Level 2 or below qualifications) so this will account for some of the difference between years.

Disadvantaged students were more likely to stay in further education and less likely to progress to higher education

While 41.2% of non-disadvantaged students leaving 16 to 18 education progressed directly to higher education, the rate for the disadvantaged group was 28.4%. On the other hand, 7.8% of disadvantaged students continued in further education, compared to 5.4% of all other students.

Sex

Female students were more likely to have an overall sustained destination than male students

Overall, 82.5% of female students had a sustained destination compared to 76.6% of male students. This is a difference of 5.9 percentage points.

Female students were more likely to continue in education than males (49.7% compared to 40.2%) and were less likely to take up apprenticeships (5.1% compared to 8.3%) after 16 to 18 study than male students.

The gender gap is most pronounced in progression to higher education. While 43.2% of female students went to higher education, the corresponding figure for male students was 33.2%. This is a difference of 10 percentage points.

A higher proportion of male students did not sustained the destination in the year following the end of 16 to 18 study when compared to female students (16.8% compared to 13.4%, respectively). This means they had some activity but didn't sustain for the required 6 months.

Destinations varied by sex and disadvantage status

Disadvantaged female students were 8.5 percentage points more likely to have a sustained education destination than disadvantaged male students (41.1% compared to 32.6%, respectively).

There were similar proportions of disadvantaged female students and non-disadvantaged male students who sustained an education destination (41.1% and 42.5%, respectively). Disadvantaged male students (32.6%) were 9.9 percentage points less likely have a sustained education destination than non-disadvantaged male students (42.5%).

Non-disadvantaged male students were more likely to have a sustained apprenticeship destination (9.2%) than non-disadvantaged female (5.3%), disadvantaged male (5.3%) and disadvantaged female students (4.4%). They were also more likely to sustain an employment destination (28.5%) than the other groups

Ethnicity

Destination outcomes varied by ethnicity, particularly at the level of minor ethnic group

Overall sustained destinations showed relatively little variation between the major ethnic groups. However, 39.6% of students within the white major ethnic group sustained an education destination, between 9.7 and 24.1 percentage points below the rest of the major ethnic groups. Regional effects may interlink with major ethnic groups and education destinations, as London (the region with highest sustained education destinations), is the only region where less than half of students within this year's cohort are within the white major ethnic group.

In contrast, overall sustained destinations varied significantly when looking at more detailed minor ethnic groupings. Students of Chinese and Indian ethnicity were most likely to have a sustained destination (89.9% and 86.8%, respectively), while

students who identified as White and Black Caribbean were third least likely to have a sustained destination (73.0%).

Below this are students who identified as Traveller of Irish Heritage or Gypsy Roma (57.9% and 44.5% respectively). However, these groups are relatively small and their outcomes are volatile between years.

Special educational needs - 16-18 status

Students with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools were less likely to have a sustained destination overall

Students with recorded special educational needs (SEN) were 5.6 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students without SEN (81.9% compared to 87.5%, respectively).

In fact, students with SEN were less likely to sustain a destination for each of the main destinations (education, apprenticeship or employment) individually. The largest gap between the two groups is for education destinations.

Learning difficulties or disabilities

The learning difficulties or disability indicator is only recorded for college students, the changes in the cohort inclusion rules which we have discussed in the release disproportionately affect college students compared to school students, as such the results across years for this indicator should be viewed with caution.

College students with identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) were less likely to have an overall sustained destination compared to students with no identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD)

Students with identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) were 8.7 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students with no identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) (67.3% compared to 76.0%, respectively).

In fact, students with LLDD were less likely to have a sustained outcome in each of the main destinations (education, apprenticeship or employment) individually.

Special educational needs - at key stage 4 status

For the first time last year we included a breakdown by the students special education needs (SEN) status as at key stage 4 (KS4), rather than during 16-18 study. As schools and colleges record SEN differently, including KS4 SEN status allows a better view across the whole cohort. We will only have this SEN status for students who completed key stage 4 in England.

The cohort covered by this breakdown is quite different to the 16-18 SEN breakdown which only covers schools and has a different qualification level breakdown. Comparisons across the two breakdowns should therefore be avoided.

As the make up of the 16-18 cohort changed last year, comparisons of the results across years for SEN students should be viewed with caution.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) at key stage 4 were less likely to have a sustained destination overall than students with no identified special educational needs

Students who had education, health and care plans were less likely to have a sustained outcome in any of the main destinations (education, apprenticeship or employment) than students with no identified special educational needs or SEN support students. They were however more likely to have a sustained education destination (46.4%) than those with SEN support (31.8%).

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Geographical location

There was little variation between regions in sustained activity overall

North East England had the lowest rate of overall sustained destinations (76.0%), while East Midlands had the highest overall rate of 81.4%, a gap of 5.4 percentage points.

At the same time, North East had the highest rate of students progressing to apprenticeships (9.5%).

There are higher rates of higher education destinations in London

More than half of all students (50.1%) leaving schools and colleges in London progressed to sustained higher education within a year. There was more than a 10 percentage point gap between London and East Midlands, the region with the second highest higher education rate, and over 20 percentage points apart from South West England, the region with the lowest higher education rate.

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Qualification level studied and prior attainment

What are qualification levels?

Most qualifications have a difficulty level. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is. The changes to the cohort last year had a much bigger effect on students studying lower levels so any comparisons across years should be avoided.

Just under 75% of young people who reached the end of 16 to 18 study at state-funded mainstream schools and colleges in England took qualifications at level 3 . A levels, applied general qualifications and tech levels are all level 3 qualifications.

Just over 13% of students who reached the end of 16 to 18 study had taken predominantly level 2 qualifications . These include GCSEs at grades above 3 as well as other, vocational level 2 qualifications.

The rest of the 16 to 18 leavers fall into the 'all other' category (around 12%). These are students who took qualifications at level 1 or entry level, or qualifications that had no assigned level. These include lower level vocational qualifications and essential and functional skills qualifications.

Qualification levels

Students who took lower level qualifications were less likely to have a sustained activity

Overall, 86.6% of all students who studied mainly at level 3 had a sustained destination, compared to 64.1% of students who studied at level 2 and 53.0% of students who studied below level 2.

Level 3 students mostly continued in education, while students studying at lower levels tended to go into employment and apprenticeships

55.3% of level 3 students sustained an education destination after 16 to 18 study. Of those who mainly took level 2 courses, 14.5% sustained an education destination, 11.4% sustained an apprenticeship and 38.2% sustained employment.

Over a quarter (27.5%) of students who took courses below level 2 sustained an employment destination, 14.8% sustained an education destination and 10.7% sustained an apprenticeship. Over a third (35.4%) of all students who took courses below level 2 did not sustain their activity for 6 months.

Prior attainment

Attainment for this cohort of students is available for two sets of assessments - the end of key stage 2 (KS2), when children take national tests in English reading, maths, and grammar, punctuation and spelling (age 11); and at the end of key stage 4 (KS4), when most pupils take GCSEs or other equivalent qualifications (age 16).

The measures indicating whether students have met key thresholds are published by the Department for Education as outcomes from, and accountability measures for, these key stages. Although some students make faster or slower progress during secondary school, attainment at the two key stages is closely correlated.

Pupils are allocated into three prior attainment groups based on their key stage 2 results - for low, middle, and high prior attainers. This cohort of leavers reflects the policies in place at the time that the cohort completed key stage 2, and are not affected by the 2016 changes to KS2 national curriculum tests. We continue to refer to national curriculum levels in the table.

Key stage 4 attainment shows whether pupils achieved a grade of either 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs.

Prior attainment at key stage 2 (age 11)

Students in the high prior attainment band at key stage 2 were more likely have a sustained destination

Overall, 86.8% of high prior attainers sustained an education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year after 16 to 18 study. In comparison, 78.3% of middle prior attainers and 64.6% of low prior attainers sustained an education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year after 16 to 18 study.

Prior attainment at key stage 4 (age 16)

Students who achieved grades 4 or above in English and maths at key stage 4 were more likely to have a sustained destination after post-16 study

Students who achieved grades 4 or above in English and maths at key stage 4 were more likely to have a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination (87.3%) than students who did not (66.1%). This was driven by the fact that students who achieved grades 4 or above in English and maths were more likely to have a sustained education destination (55.3%) than those who did not (24.9%).

Students who did not achieve grades 4 or above in English and maths were more likely to have a sustained apprenticeship or employment destination

Students who did not achieve grades 4 or above in English and maths were more likely to have a sustained apprenticeship or an employment destination (7.4% and 33.9%, respectively) in comparison to students who did achieve these grades (6.6% and 25.4%, respectively).

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Change across the years

Making comparisons over time

As discussed earlier in this release, due to the change to the 16-18 cohort last year, comparisons between years should be treated with caution. The cohort we focus on this year (activity in the 2022/23 academic year) is not directly comparable with any previous years due to the changes in the rules governing a student's inclusion in the cohort.

Further to this, when viewing any changes over time, users should also account for the fact that certain cohorts of students will have been impacted by measures taken to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and associated disruption to education settings and the wider economy.

The overall sustained destination rate for this cohort of 16-18 leavers was 79.6%,

this is lower than the previous year but 0.2 percentage points higher than two years ago which is a more comparable cohort. But, as the make up of the cohort has changed this year, there are differences when looking at individual destinations, so comparisons for these should be treated with caution.

We observe a 6.9 percentage point drop in education destinations compared to two years ago, this is driven by a drop in further education destinations. But conversely we see a 6.8 percentage point increase in employment destinations over the same period. This change is driven by the different nature and make up of the cohort, this is discussed in more detail in the accompanying methodology.

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Institution type

Comparing school and college destination outcomes

When comparing destination outcomes between schools and colleges, it is important to take account of the differences in their student populations. Compared to schools, a higher proportion of students leave colleges having taken mainly qualifications at level 2 and below. These students tend to have lower prior attainment which is related to their likelihood of sustaining an education destination.

This higher proportion of level 2 and below students also means that colleges were affected by the changes to the trigger rule last year to a greater extent than schools. As such any compared to last year should be avoided or treated with caution.

Destinations of students from different provider types are likely to reflect differences in the kinds of courses studied, differences in prior attainment, as well as student preferences.

Destination for college and school students

Level 3 college leavers were more likely to go to apprenticeships and employment

College students completing level 3 study were less likely to have a sustained education destination than students in schools, but more likely to have sustained

apprenticeship or employment destinations after completing 16-18 study.

Students who mainly took level 2 qualifications at colleges were more likely to have a sustained destination overall compared to schools

College students who completed level 2 study this year were more likely to have a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment outcomes than the equivalent students in schools. The largest gap between the two was for employment.

Local authority maintained schools and converter academies had similar destinations outcomes

Overall, 86.6% of all students leaving local authority (LA) maintained schools sustained a destination compared to 87.8% of students leaving converter academies. Their outcomes were also similar in terms of the proportion of students sustaining an education, apprenticeship or employment destination.

University Technical Colleges had the highest proportion of students going to apprenticeships

16.6% of students leaving University Technical Colleges (UTCs) went on to a sustained apprenticeship destination. This is more than twice the national average for students sustaining an apprenticeship destination (6.7%). 7.2% of students leaving UTCs sustained an apprenticeship destination at level 4 or above (level 4 apprenticeship is equivalent to a foundation degree). This is compared to the national average of 1.2% of school and college leavers sustaining an apprenticeship destination at level 4 or above.

Just over half of all students that reached the end of 16 to 18 study in special schools continued in education in the following year

Of these 17.7% remained in specialist provision whilst 30.7% of special school students went into further education at FE colleges

Special school leavers were less likely to enter apprenticeships or employment than students leaving state-funded mainstream providers.

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Methodology

Find out how and why we collect, process and publish these statistics.

[16-18 destination measures](#)

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 these statistics are:

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

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You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

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