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Academic year 2023/24

16-18 destination measures

This is the latest release

Published 16 October 2025

Next update February 2026

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The latest data in this release covers students who left 16 to 18 study by the end of the

Releases in this series

2022/23 academic year and follows their destinations in the 2023/24 academic year.

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.

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Methodologies

[16-18 destination measures](#)

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Headline facts and figures - 2023/24

Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment

78.7%

1.1 percentage point decrease since previous year

► Which students are included?

Sustained education destination

43.0%

2.1 percentage point decrease since previous year

► What is an education destination?

Sustained apprenticeships

7.4%

0.7 percentage point increase since last year

► What is an apprenticeship destination?

Sustained employment destination

28.3%

0.4 percentage point increase since last year

► What is an employment destination?

The way we have derived sustained destinations this year has been updated, so figures for previous years have been revised. See the 'Changes to the data' section for more detail.

This publication is about the destinations for pupils from state funded mainstream schools and colleges who left key stage 4 in 2022/23 and follows their destinations in 2023/24.

The headline destination rate was 78.7% for students that were deemed to have reached the end of 16 to 18 study in 2023, this is 1.1 percentage point lower when compared to the previous academic year.

- 43% of pupils were in sustained education, this shows a 2.1 percentage point decrease since last year.
- 7.4% of pupils were in sustained apprenticeship, this shows a 0.7 percentage point increase since last year.
- 28.3% of pupils were in sustained employment, a 0.4 percentage point increase since last year.

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Changes to the data

 [Hide](#)

The rules that determine if a student is at the end of 16-18 study changed for the 2021 and 2022 cohort of leavers compared to earlier years. In previous releases this caused a discontinuity in the time series. For this statistical release we have recalculated the data from 2016/17 cohort onwards on a consistent basis so all students are deemed to be at the end of 16-18 study using the new rules. This ensures a consistent timeseries in the statistical release. Full details of the

change are covered in the methodology document.

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What are destination measures?

 Hide

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 2022/23 academic year and identifies their main activity in the following academic year (2023/24).

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 2023 to March 2024) 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 2023 and July 2024).

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,

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Student characteristics

	2022/23	
	Disadvantage Status	
	Disadvantaged	Not disadvantaged
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	125,300	416,141
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	67.4	82.2
Sustained education destination	35.0	45.4
UK higher education institution	27.3	39.6
Further education	6.8	5.0
Other education destinations	0.8	0.9
Sustained apprenticeships	5.7	8.0
Sustained employment destination	26.7	28.8
Not recorded as a sustained destination	26.1	12.4
Activity not captured	6.5	5.4

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. State-funded mainstream colleges includes sixth-form colleges and other further education colleges.
2. State-funded mainstream schools also includes city technology colleges (CTCs). Figures for this institution type are not shown separately in the table. Excludes pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP), hospital schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

[Show 7 more footnotes](#)

Source: NPD

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Sex

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

Overall, 81.7% of female students had a sustained destination compared to 75.8% of male students. This is a difference of 5.9 percentage points, slightly widening from 5.7 percentage points in the previous academic year cohort.

Female students were more likely to continue in education than males (47.7% compared to 38.4%) and were less likely to take up apprenticeships (5.6% compared to 9.2%) after 16 to 18 study than male students.

The gap between male and female students is most pronounced in progression to higher education. While 41.8% of female students went to higher education, the corresponding figure for male students was 31.7%. This is a difference of 10.1 percentage points. The same difference was observed in the previous academic year's cohort.

A higher proportion of male students did not sustain a destination in the year following the end of 16 to 18 study when compared to female students (17.1% compared to 14.1%, respectively). This means they had some activity but didn't sustain for the required 6 months.

Chart

Table

► Export options

Female pupils were more likely to have a sustained destination than male students in 2022/23

	2022/23	
	Sex	
	Female	Male
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	268,888	272,525
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	81.7	75.8
Sustained education destination	47.7	38.4
UK higher education institution	41.8	31.7
Further education	4.9	5.9
Other education destinations	0.9	0.8
Sustained apprenticeships	5.6	9.2
Sustained employment destination	28.4	28.2
Not recorded as a sustained destination	14.1	17.1
Activity not captured	4.3	7.1

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

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Source: NPD

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Ethnicity

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

Overall sustained destinations showed relatively little variation between the identified major ethnic groups (around 4.8 percentage points).

However, 37.3% of students within the white major ethnic group sustained an education destination, between 9.5 and 24.8 percentage points below the identified 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.

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 (88.6% and 85.1%, respectively).

Students who identified as White and Black Caribbean were third least likely (out of all students with an identified ethnicity) to have a sustained destination (71.5%). Below this are students who identified as Traveller of Irish Heritage or Gypsy Roma (48.0% and 47.1% respectively). However, these groups are relatively small and their outcomes are volatile between years.

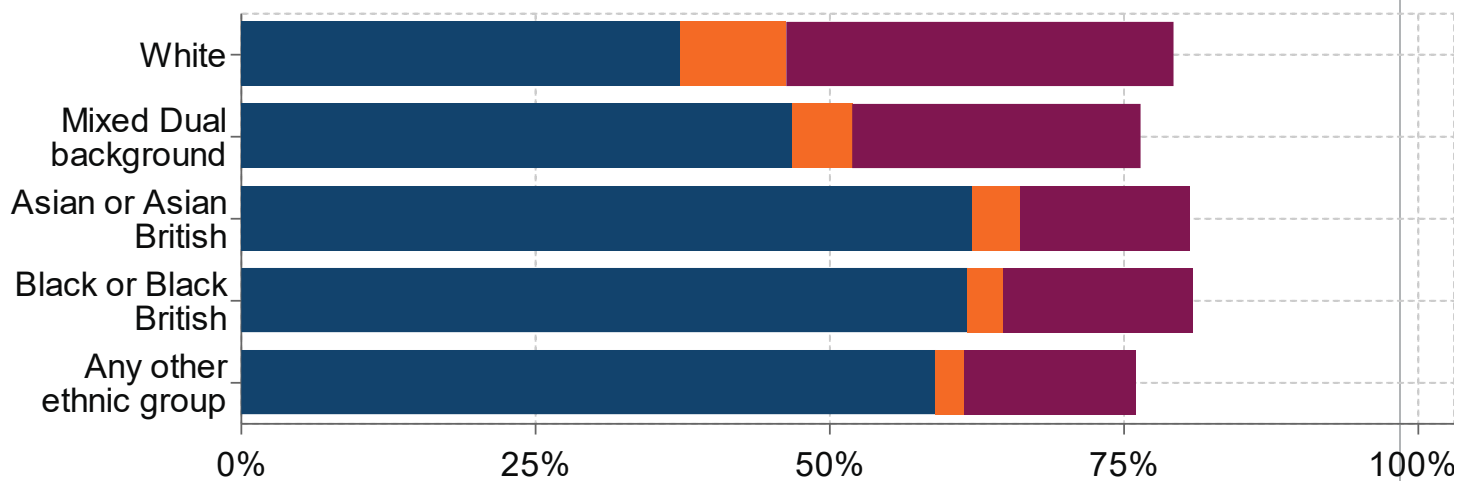
Chart

Table

► Export options

Destinations vary by ethnicity group with Asian and Asian British group most likely to have a sustained destination

Destinations of 2023 study leavers from state-funded mainstream schools and colleges in England, broken down by ethnicity



- Sustained education destination
- Sustained apprenticeships
- Sustained employment destination

Footnotes

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2. State-funded mainstream schools also includes city technology colleges (CTCs). Figures for this institution type are not shown separately in the table. Excludes pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP), hospital schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

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Source: NPD

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Special educational needs (key stage 4 status)

This sections covers 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 and this section relates to all state-funded mainstream schools and colleges. SEN status is identified only for students who completed key stage 4 in England.

Data for 16-18 study leavers with identified special educational needs (SEN) at 16-18, specifically from state-funded mainstream schools, are available in the underlying data.

The cohort covered by the key stage 4 breakdown below differs from 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.

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 (SEN with EHC plan or statement) were more likely to have a sustained education destination (45.4% of study leavers) than students with no identified special educational needs (44.5%). SEN with EHC plan or statement were most likely to sustain a further education destination in the 2023/24 academic year, accounting for 30.5% of all destinations for this cohort.

Students leaving 16-18 study in 2022/23 who had SEN support at key stage 4 were more likely to sustain an employment destination than any other cohort, with 29.8% of all students finding employment in the academic year following study (2023/24).

Chart

Table

► Export options

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

	2022/23		
	SEN Provision at KS4		
	No identified SEN	SEN support	SEN with EHC plan or statement
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	473,141	54,316	13,984
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	80.6	66.5	62.8
Sustained education destination	44.5	29.8	45.4
UK higher education institution	39.3	21.2	11.9
Further education	4.4	7.9	30.5
Other education destinations	0.8	0.7	2.9
Sustained apprenticeships	7.6	6.9	3.1
Sustained employment destination	28.5	29.8	14.3
Not recorded as a sustained destination	14.0	25.9	28.1
Activity not captured	5.3	7.6	9.1

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. State-funded mainstream colleges includes sixth-form colleges and other further education colleges.
2. State-funded mainstream schools also includes city technology colleges (CTCs). Figures for this institution type are not shown separately in the table. Excludes pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP), hospital schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

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Source: NPD

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Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD)

The learning difficulties or disability indicator is only recorded for college students so data in this section is specifically for 16-18 study leavers from state-funded mainstream colleges. College students identified as learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) were less likely to have an overall sustained destination compared to students with no identified learning difficulties or disabilities.

Students identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities were 9.0 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students with no identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) (66.3% compared to 75.3% respectively).

College students with identified learning difficulties or disabilities were also less likely to sustain a destination for each of the headline destinations (education, apprenticeship or employment) individually compared to those without any identified learning difficulties or disabilities. Though those that did sustain an education destination were more likely to sustain a further education destination than a higher education destination.

Chart Table

► Export options

College students with learning difficulties or disabilities were less likely to have a sustained destination

	LLDD Provision	
	Identified LLDD	No identified LLDD
	2022/23	2022/23
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	87,395	209,850
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	66.3	75.3
Activity not captured	6.7	6.6
Not recorded as a sustained destination	27.0	18.1
Sustained apprenticeships	7.6	9.2
Sustained education destination	29.7	31.3
Sustained employment destination	29.0	34.8
UK higher education institution	16.4	24.5
Further education	12.5	6.4
Other education destinations	0.7	0.4

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. State-funded mainstream colleges includes sixth-form colleges and other further education colleges.
2. 'Not recorded as a sustained destination' includes pupils who were captured in the source data and had some participation in the academic year but did not complete the required six months sustained participation.

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Source: NPD

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Geographical location

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Sustained activity varies by region

North East England had the lowest rate of overall sustained destinations (75.8%), while East Midlands had the highest overall rate of 81.1%, a gap of 5.3 percentage points which is consistent with the gap seen in previous cohorts.

At the same time, North East had the highest rate of students progressing to apprenticeships (10.6%).

There are higher rates of higher education destinations in London

Just under half of all students (49.3%) leaving schools and colleges in London progressed to sustained higher education within a year. There was more than a 11.2 percentage point gap between London and East Midlands, the region with the second highest higher education rate, and over 21.7 percentage points apart from South West England, the region with the lowest higher education rate.

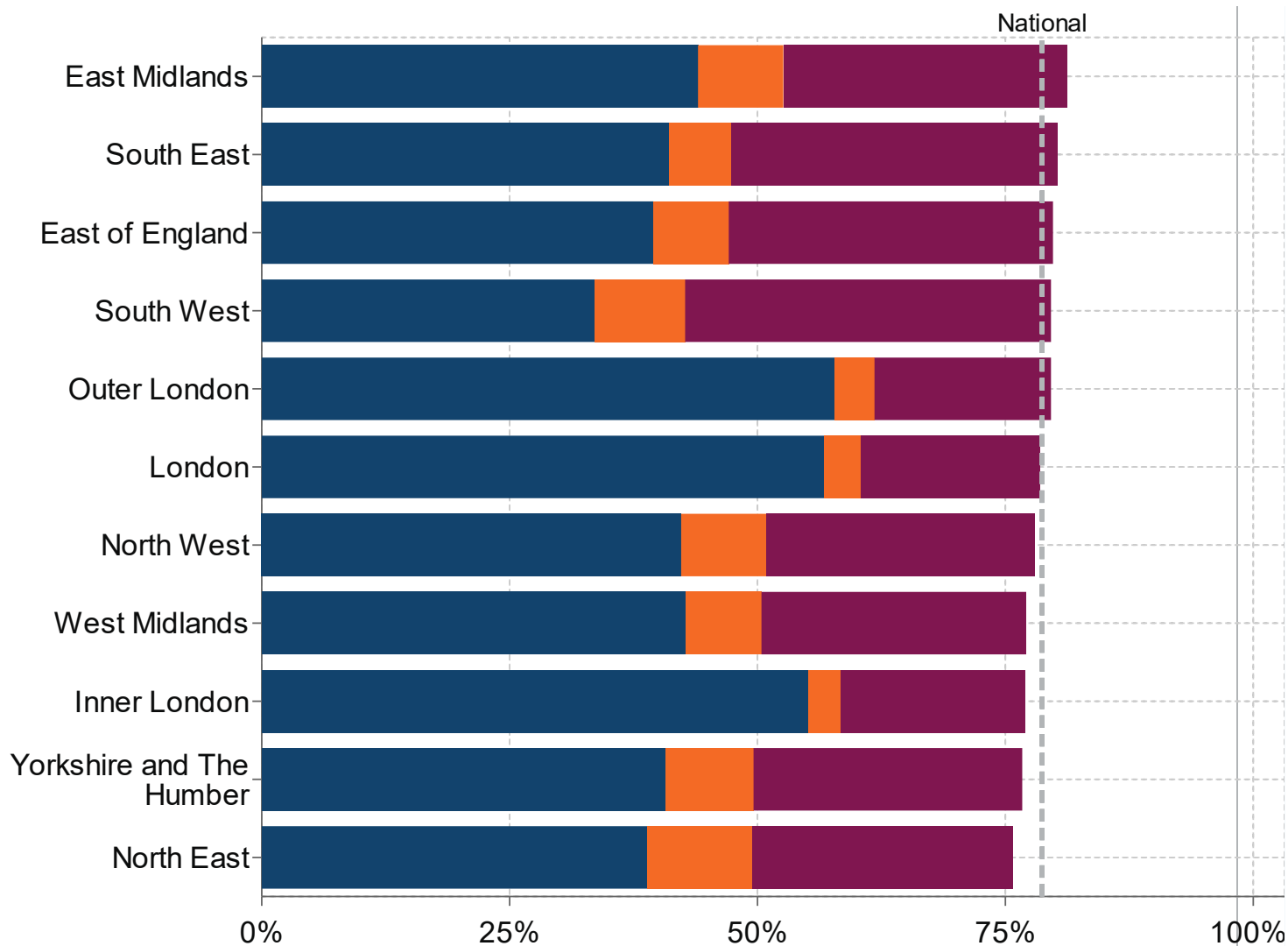
Chart

Table

► Export options

There was large variation in the type of destination between regions, but the overall destination rate varied little

Destinations of 2023 study leavers from state-funded mainstream schools and colleges in England



- Sustained education destination
- Sustained apprenticeships (Percentage, State-funded mainstream schools & colleges, 2022/23)
- Sustained employment destination (Percentage, State-funded mainstream schools & colleges, 2022/23)

Footnotes

1. State-funded mainstream colleges includes sixth-form colleges and other further education colleges.
2. State-funded mainstream schools also includes city technology colleges (CTCs). Figures for this institution type are not shown separately in the table. Excludes pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP), hospital schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

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Change across the years

 Hide

Making comparisons over time

When viewing 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 78.7%, this is lower than the previous year but 0.3 percentage points higher than three years ago.

There has been a 4.6 percentage point drop in education destinations compared to the recent peak two years ago, driven by a drop in further education destinations. We see a 1.7 percentage point increase in employment destinations over the same period.

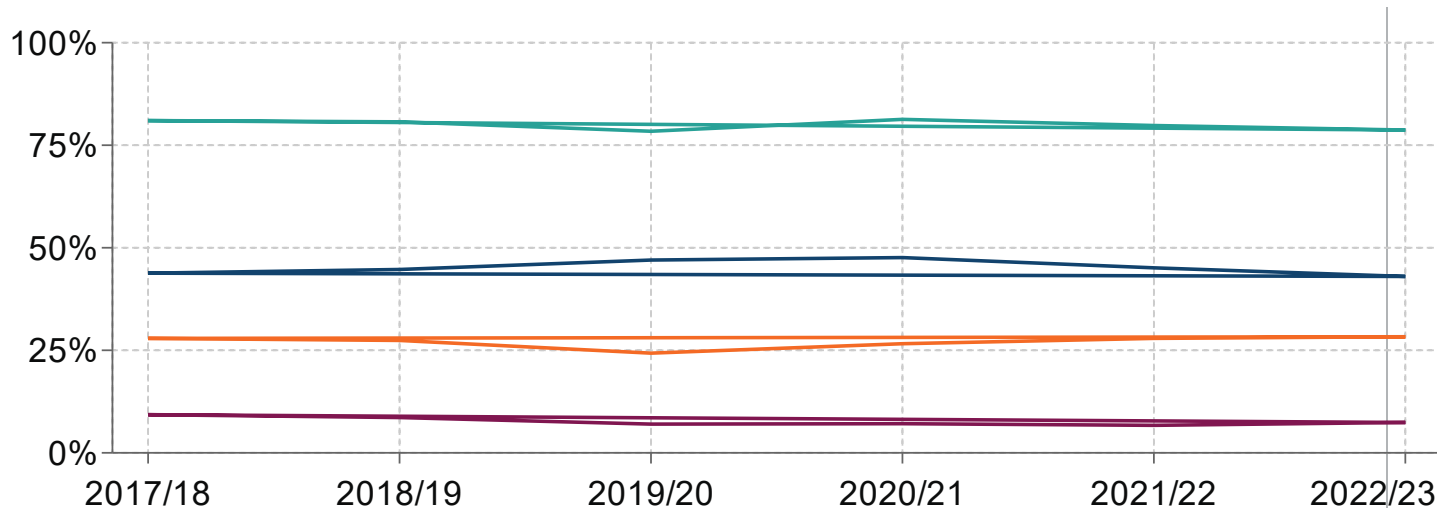
Chart

Table

► Export options

Destinations of 16 to 18 study leavers in England between 2017/18 and 2022/23 cohort years (state-funded mainstream schools and colleges)

Destinations of 16-18 state-funded mainstream school and college leavers, England,2017-2023



- Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment (Percentage, Total, England)
- Sustained education destination (Percentage, Total, England)
- Sustained apprenticeships (Percentage, Total, England)
- Sustained employment destination (Percentage, Total, England)

Footnotes

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Qualification level studied and prior attainment

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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, 85.4% of all students who studied mainly at level 3 had a sustained destination, compared to 62.2% of students who studied at level 2 and 56.1% of students who studied any other qualification.

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

53.4% of level 3 students sustained an education destination after 16 to 18 study. Of those who mainly took level 2 courses, 13.4% sustained an education destination, 12.3% sustained an apprenticeship and 36.6% sustained employment.

Over a quarter (29.6%) of students who predominately took qualifications other than level 2 or 3 (including those below level 2) sustained an employment destination, 13.0% sustained an

education destination and 13.4% sustained an apprenticeship. Almost a third (32.4%) of all students who took courses that were not Level 2 or 3 did not sustain any activity for 6 months in the academic year following study.

► Export options

Students who studied qualifications at level 3 are much more likely to have a sustained education destination than level 2 or other qualification students

	2022/23		
	Level 3	Level 2	All other qualifications
	Total	Total	Total
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	401,601	79,581	60,259
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	85.4	62.2	56.1
Sustained education destination	53.4	13.4	13.0
Sustained apprenticeships	5.6	12.3	13.4
Sustained employment destination	26.4	36.6	29.6
Not recorded as a sustained destination	10.3	29.4	32.4
Activity not captured	4.3	8.3	11.5

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

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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, 83.5% of high prior attainers sustained an education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year after 16 to 18 study. In comparison, 80.2% of middle prior attainers and 73.2% of low prior attainers sustained an education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year after 16 to 18 study.

► Export options

High KS2 prior attainers were more likely to have a sustained education destination and had a higher overall sustained destination rate

	2022/23		
	Prior Attainment at KS2		
	High prior	Mid prior	Low prior
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	112,341	280,437	89,898
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	83.5	80.2	73.2
Sustained education destination	48.9	41.0	38.5
Sustained apprenticeships	9.1	8.4	5.5
Sustained employment destination	25.5	30.8	29.2
Not recorded as a sustained destination	12.0	15.1	20.5
Activity not captured	4.5	4.7	6.3

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

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Explore data

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 (85.2%) than students who did not (62.9%). The difference largely due to students who achieved grades 4 or above in English and maths were more likely to have a sustained education destination (50.3%) than those who did not (22.7%).

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

Students who did not achieve grades 4 or above in English and maths were more likely to have a sustained employment destination (33.1%) in comparison to students who did achieve these grades (27.1%).

Chart

Table

► Export options

Students who achieved grade 4 or above in English and maths at key stage 4 were more likely to have a sustained destination than students who did not

	2022/23	
	Prior Attainment at KS4 9-4	
	KS4 E&M 9-4 achieved	KS4 E&M 9-4 not achieved
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	385,984	139,267
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	85.2	62.9
Sustained education destination	50.3	22.7
UK higher education institution	46.7	11.7
Further education	2.8	10.2
Other education destinations	0.8	0.8
Sustained apprenticeships	7.8	7.1
Sustained employment destination	27.1	33.1
Not recorded as a sustained destination	10.6	28.9
Activity not captured	4.2	8.2

[Data symbols](#) 

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Institution type

 Hide

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.

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 (43.4% compared to 60.9%), but more likely to sustain an employment destinations (32.8% compared to 21.7%) 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 (3.1 percentage points).

► Export options

Destinations vary for schools and colleges and qualification level

			2022/23	
			State-funded mainstream schools	State-funded mainstream colleges
			Total	Total
Level 3	Total	Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	229,994	171,607
		Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	87.7	82.3
		Sustained education destination	60.9	43.4
		Sustained apprenticeships	5.1	6.1
		Sustained employment destination	21.7	32.8
		Not recorded as a sustained destination	8.2	13.2
		Activity not captured	4.0	4.6
Level 2	Total	Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	5,001	74,580

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

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Source: NPD

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Explore data

Converter academies had the highest number of pupils sustaining an overall destinations

Overall, 85.4% of all students leaving local authority (LA) maintained schools sustained a destination compared to 87.5% of students leaving converter academies. Their outcomes were similar in terms of the proportion of students sustaining an education, apprenticeship or employment destination.

Other further education sector colleges had the lowest percentage of pupils sustaining a destination overall with 70.3% of students sustaining a destination, with most of those sustaining an employment destination.

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

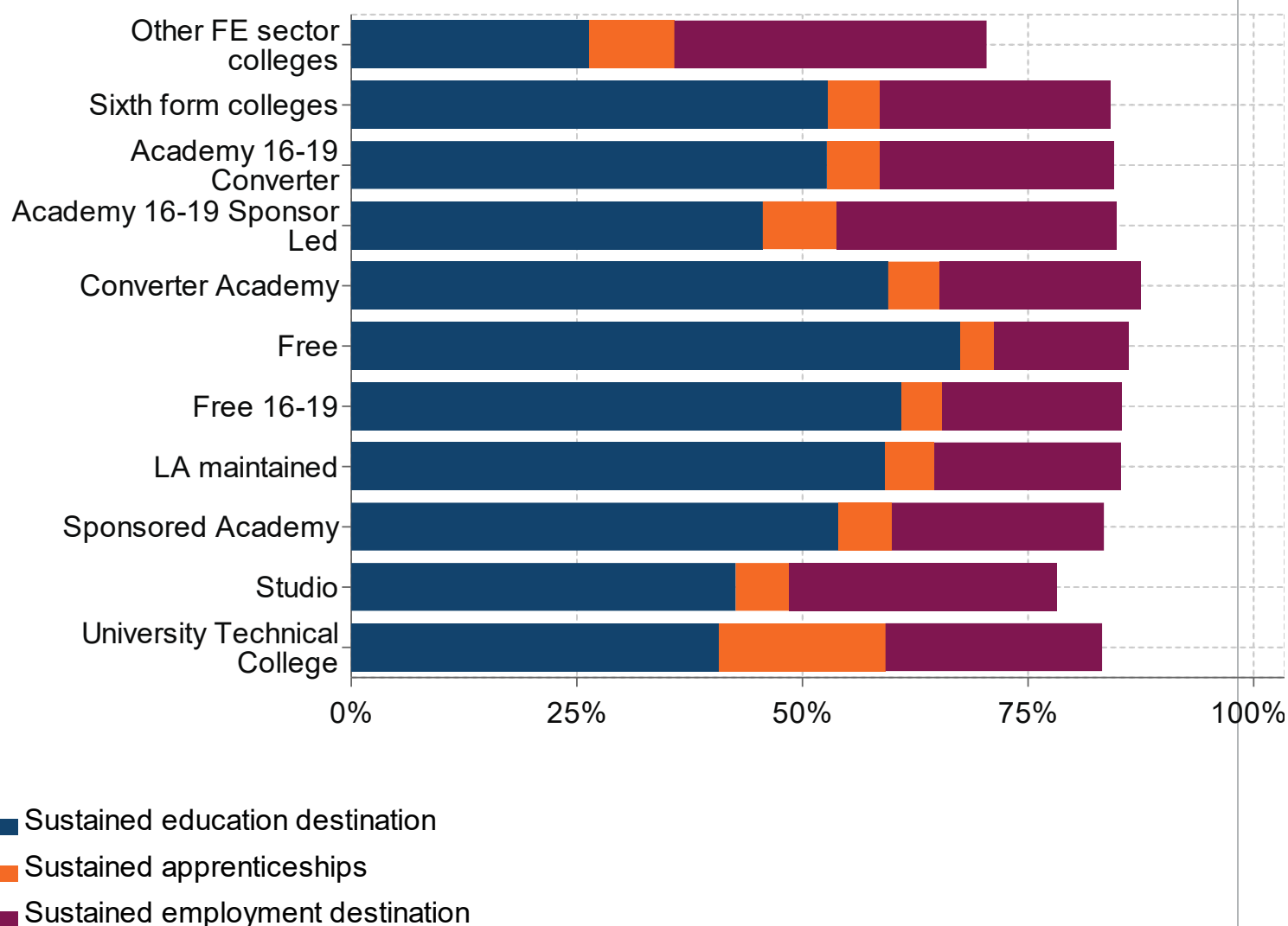
18.5% of students leaving University Technical Colleges (UTCs) went on to a sustained apprenticeship destination. This is more than twice the national average for students sustaining an apprenticeship destination (7.4%).

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 1.3% of school and college leavers sustaining an apprenticeship destination at level 4 or above.

► Export options

Overall sustained destination rate was similar for most provider types, although the specific destinations did vary depending on provider type

Destinations of 2023 study leavers from state-funded mainstream schools and colleges, England, broken down by provider type



Footnotes

1. 'Not recorded as a sustained destination' includes pupils who were captured in the source data and had some participation in the academic year but did not complete the required six months sustained participation.
2. Activity not being captured means the student was not found to have any participation in education, apprenticeship or employment nor recorded as receiving out-of-work benefits at

any point in the year. Possible reasons for this could be that the pupil was living, working or studying abroad or was attending a Scottish or Welsh college or school.

[Show 3 more footnotes](#)

Source: NPD

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Explore data

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

This is likely to be related to the higher proportion of students with EHCP in these schools and their high education destination rate. Of these 21.8% remained in specialist provision whilst 32.9% 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.

► Export options

Students reaching end of 16 to 18 study in special schools were more likely to remain in education than students in mainstream providers

	State-funded mainstream schools & colleges	Special schools
	Total	Total
Number of pupils completing 16-18 study	541,441	6,371
Sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	78.7	61.8
Sustained education destination	43.0	56.1
UK higher education institution	36.8	1.3
Further education	5.4	32.9
Other education destinations	0.8	22.0
Independent schools	0.1	0.0
School sixth form - state funded	0.4	low
Sixth form college	0.3	0.1
Specialist provision	0.1	21.8
Sustained education combination destination	low	low
Sustained apprenticeships	7.4	0.9
Sustained employment destination	28.3	4.7

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. State-funded mainstream colleges includes sixth-form colleges and other further education colleges.
2. State-funded mainstream schools also includes city technology colleges (CTCs). Figures for this institution type are not shown separately in the table. Excludes pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision (AP), hospital schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

[Show 8 more footnotes](#)

Source: NPD

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Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about 16-18 destination measures statistics and data:

Destination measures

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Public enquiries

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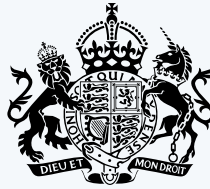
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