

Cookies on Explore Education Statistics

We use some essential cookies to make this service work.

We'd also like to use analytics cookies so we can understand how you use the service and make improvements.

[Accept analytics cookies](#)[Reject analytics cookies](#)[View cookies](#)

Explore education statistics

Shape the future of Explore education statistics

[Share your feedback to help us improve this service \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[Close](#)

New release page

You are viewing the new design of the Release page - if you would like to provide feedback, please complete [our feedback form \(opens in new window\)](#)

[Home](#) > [Find statistics and data](#) > Participation in education, training and employment age 16 to 21



Department for Education

Calendar year 2025

Participation in education, training and employment age 16 to 21

Participation in education and apprenticeships from DfE administrative data. It also includes NEET estimates from the LFS to give a full picture of activity.

Quick links

[Download all data \(ZIP\)](#)

[Create your own tables](#)

[Get email alerts](#)

Latest release

Next release **June 2027**

[All releases in this series](#)

Accredited official statistics 
[Department for Education](#)

Published
25 June 2026

Last updated
16 July 2026

[1 update](#)



On this page

Headline facts and figures

[Overview of the 16 to 21 population](#)

[Headline tables](#)

[Age 16 to 17 in education and apprenticeships](#)

[Age 18 in education and apprenticeships](#)

[Age 18 to 21 in education and apprenticeships](#)

[About this release](#)

[Other sources of participation and NEET estimates](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Back to top](#)



This release replaces the previous series [Participation in education, employment and training age 16-18](#). Estimates for the 16 to 18 age group have been revised from 2015 and this June 2026 publication should be used for the most robust estimates.

Headline facts and figures

Summary Table		
16 to 17 year olds participating end 2025 88.2% Up 0.3 percentage points compared with end 2024 What is participation? ?	18 year olds participating end 2024 58.3% Up 1.1 percentage points compared with end 2023 Latest data is for end 2024 ?	16 to 21 year olds participating end 2024 64.0% Up 0.4 percentage points compared with end 2023
16 to 17 NEET rate end 2025 (LFS) 4.0% Down 0.5 percentage points compared to 2024 What is NEET? ?	Age 18 NEET rate end 2025 (LFS) 13.0% Down 1.7 percentage points compared to 2024	Age 16 to 21 NEET rate end 2025 (LFS) 11.3% Stable compared with end 2024

[Back to top](#)

Overview of the 16 to 21 population

In this section, the England population is classified into one of the following four headline categories:

• **In education and apprenticeships:**

This includes young people in full and part-time education or those on an apprenticeship. Further detail regarding mode of study, highest qualification aims, provider types, characteristics and geography can be found in additional sections.

(Estimated from DfE administrative data).

• **In wider training**

This includes those in [Employer Funded Training \(EFT\)](#) or privately funded training outside of an apprenticeship classified as [Other Education and Training \(OET\)](#).

(Estimated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)).

- **Not in education or training (NET)**

This includes young people not in education and apprenticeships, nor in wider training.

(Estimated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)).

- **In employment**

This looks at those Not in Education or Training (NET) but in employment.

(Estimated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)).

- **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

This is all those young people not classified previously. Those NEET are either inactive in the labour market or unemployed.

(Estimated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)).

Ages 16 to 17

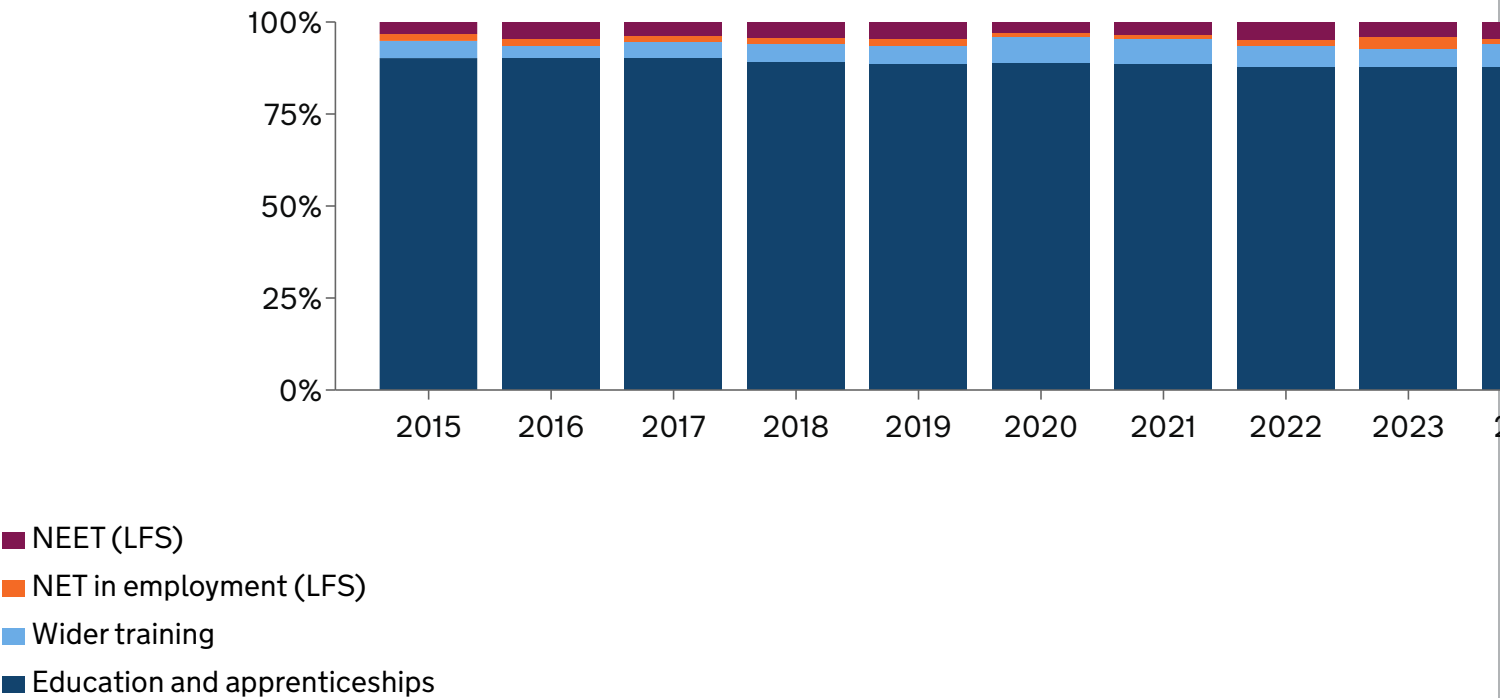
16 and 17 year olds are required to remain in education and training in England following [Raising the participation age \(RPA\)](#)  in 2013.

Chart	<u>Table</u>
-------	--------------

► [Export options](#)

At age 16 to 17, DfE administrative data shows relatively stable participation in education and apprenticeship rates in recent years.

Estimates from the LFS of the proportion in employment (not in education or training) show an increase in the latest year driving a slight decrease in NEET.



Footnotes

1. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.
2. Estimates of NEET, NET, NET in employment and wider training are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Due to low response rates in recent years, which has led to increased sampling variability, sex breakdowns for single ages are not provided.

Source: DfE administrative data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

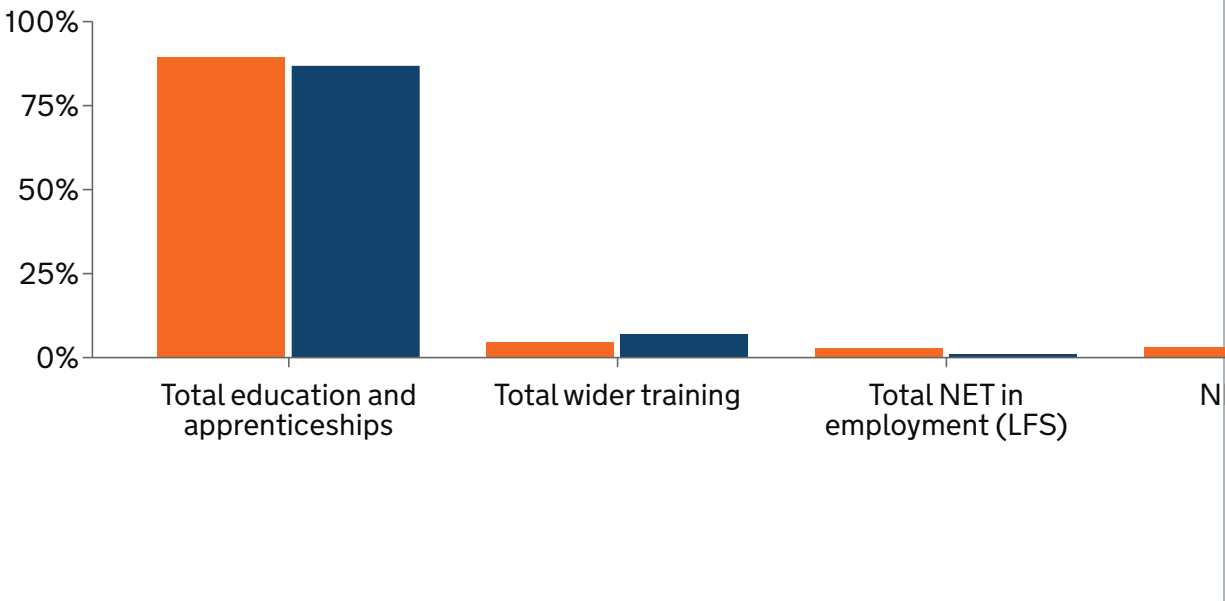
Chart

Table

► [Export options](#)

At age 16 to 17, a higher proportion of females are in education and apprenticeships than males.

A higher proportion of males were in wider training and were more likely to be NEET in 2025.



Footnotes

1. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.
2. Estimates of NEET, NET, NET in employment and wider training are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Due to low response rates in recent years, which has led to increased sampling variability, sex breakdowns for single ages are not provided.

Source: DfE administrative data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Age 18

Participation is a snapshot of activity at the end of the calendar year and includes participation from all providers including schools, further education/sixth form colleges, apprenticeships and higher education institutions.

Overall participation rates in Higher Education (HE) are published in [Participation measures in higher education](#) and should be used for official HE participation measures.

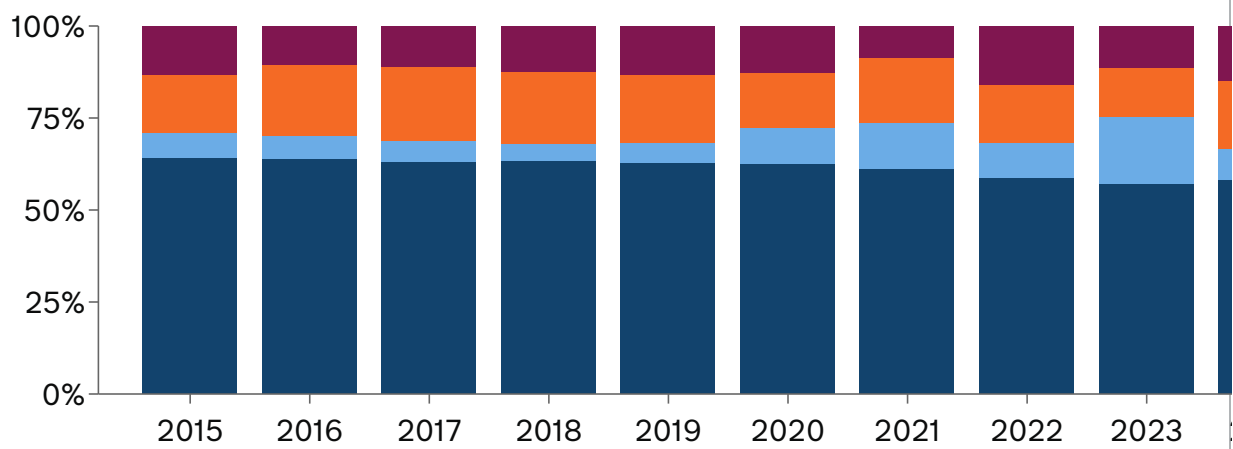
Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

At age 18, latest estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicate a decrease in the NEET rate in 2025. The employment rate of those not in education and training is estimated to have decreased in the latest year.

The proportion of 18 year olds participating in education and apprenticeships has been on a downward trend but has increased between 2023 and 2024.



- NEET (LFS)
- NET in employment (LFS)
- Wider training
- Education and apprenticeships

Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: DfE administrative data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Ages 16 to 21

Not in education or training (NET)

In 2025:

- 27.8% of the age 16 to 21 England population were not in education or training.
- 27.1% of females and 28.5% of males.

Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

[Official statistics in development ?](#) . Age 19 to 21 participation data is included for the first time in this release and may be subject to some revisions.

Participation is a snapshot of activity at the end of the calendar year and includes participation from all providers including schools, further education/sixth form colleges, apprenticeships and higher education institutions.

Overall participation rates in Higher Education (HE) by age group, including by age 25 are published in [Participation measures in higher education](#) and should be used for official HE participation measures. See the ‘About this release’ section for further details.

Trends are comparable however numbers and proportions will differ (see ‘Other sources of participation and NEET estimates’ and accompanying [methodology](#)).

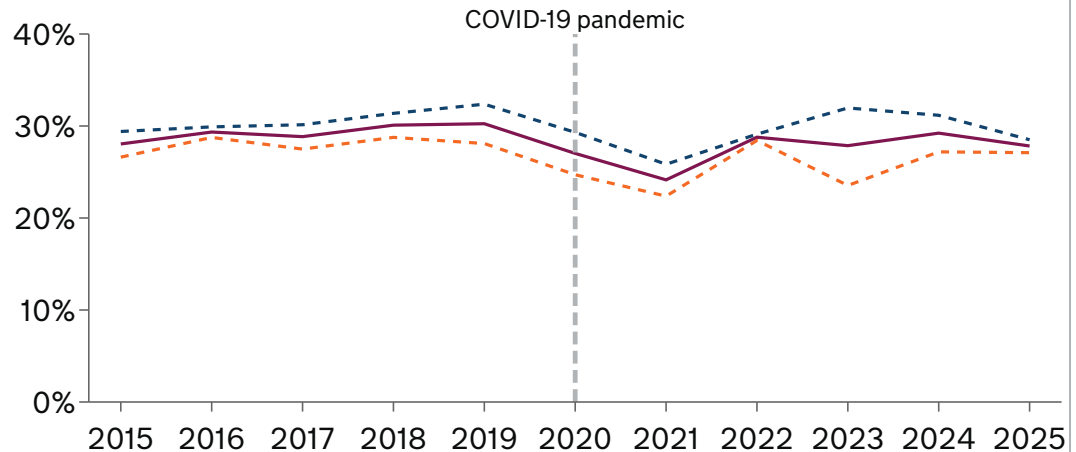
Chart

Table

► [Export options](#)

Age 16 to 21, proportions not in education or training have remained relatively stable since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were larger differences by sex in 2023 but caution below should be noted.

Note: estimates are from the LFS and low response rates in recent years (particularly 2023) have led to increased sampling variability.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Labour Force Survey

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

[Explore data](#)

Administrative data for HE participation from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) is not yet available for 2025. It will be included in the next publication of this release (expected June 2027). No overall participation estimates are shown for 2025 for grouped ages 16 to 21 as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

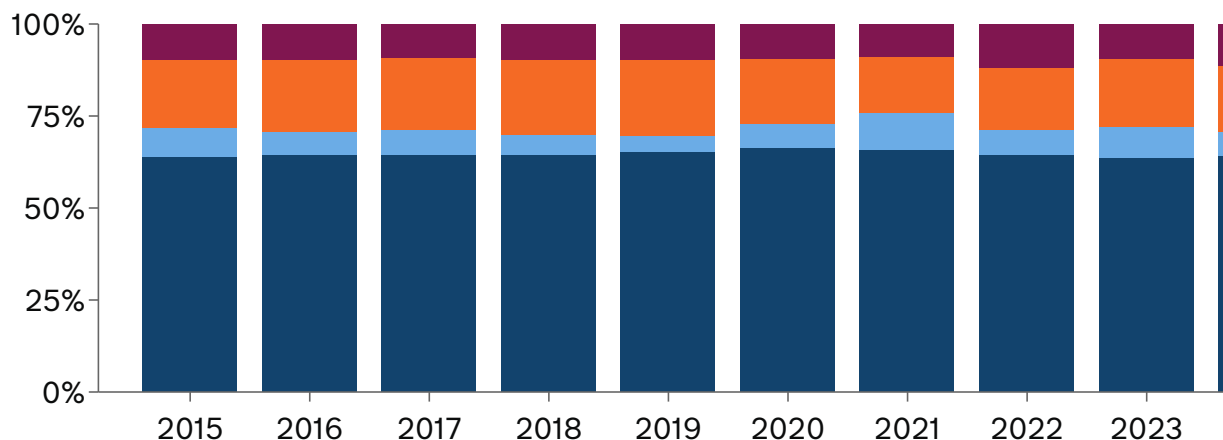
Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

In 2025, the proportion of the 16 to 21 population estimated to be NEET from the LFS has remained stable. A decrease is estimated in the proportion not in education and training but in employment.

Administrative estimates of education and apprenticeships show relatively stable rates since the COVID-19 pandemic to end 2024.



- NEET (LFS)
- NET in employment (LFS)
- Wider training
- Education and apprenticeships

Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: DfE administrative data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

[Explore data](#)

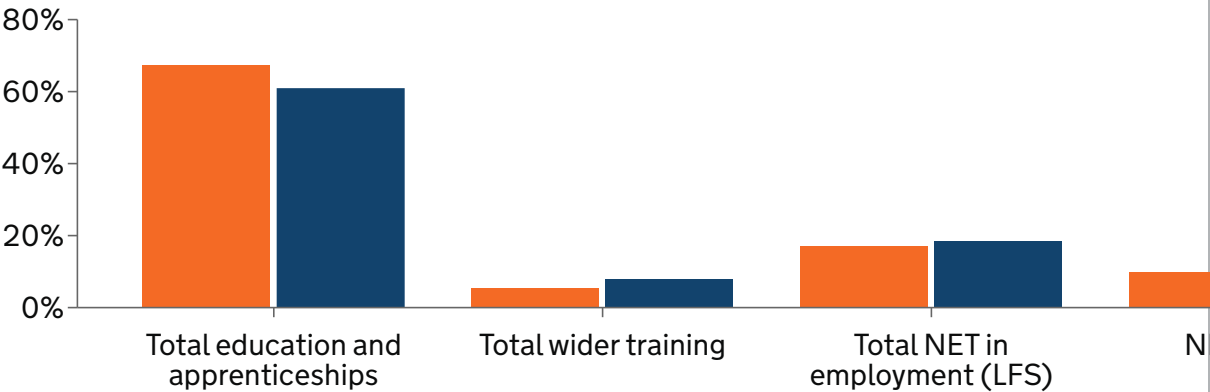
Chart

Table

► [Export options](#)

At ages 16 to 21, females have higher participation rates in education and apprenticeships than males. In 2024, males were more likely to be in wider training or employment and had higher NEET rates.

These trends broadly hold, however there are some differences across the series. (Data is shown for end 2024 to give a complete picture of activity).



Female

Male

Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. All estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) should be viewed alongside associated 95% [confidence intervals](#) as shown in the underlying data. LFS data has been reweighted from January 2019 onwards which has led to a discontinuity in the timeseries meaning comparisons prior to this point should be viewed with some caution.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: DfE administrative data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

16 to 21 NOT in education and apprenticeships by characteristics and geography

The following featured tables are available using administrative data to look at numbers and proportions of the state-funded cohort at age 15 NOT participating in education and apprenticeships at ages 16 to 21:

[Age 16 to 21 NOT in education or apprenticeships by characteristics](#)

[Age 16 to 21 NOT in education or apprenticeship rates by local authority and region, 2024](#)

Underlying data also includes individual ages.

[Back to top](#)

Headline tables

The following tables provide an overview of activities of young people aged 16 to 21 in England, categorised as: education and apprenticeships, wider training, not in education and training (NET), NET in employment, or not in education, employment or training (NEET).

[Table 1 - Age 16 to 17 by sex \(2015-2025\)](#)

[Table 2 - Age 18 \(2015-2025\)](#)

[Table 3- Age 18 to 21 by sex \(2015-2025\)](#)

[Table 4- Age 16 to 21 by sex \(2015-2025\)](#)

Source: DfE administrative data and the labour force survey (LFS)

Featured tables are available for participation in education and apprenticeship by age, sex and:

- Provider type
- Highest qualification aim
- Characteristics for the cohort educated in the state-sector at age 15
- Local authority for the cohort educated in the state-sector at age 15

Source: DfE administrative data

You can explore these featured tables and build your own tables in the [explore and download data](#) section of the release.

Age 16 to 17 in education and apprenticeships

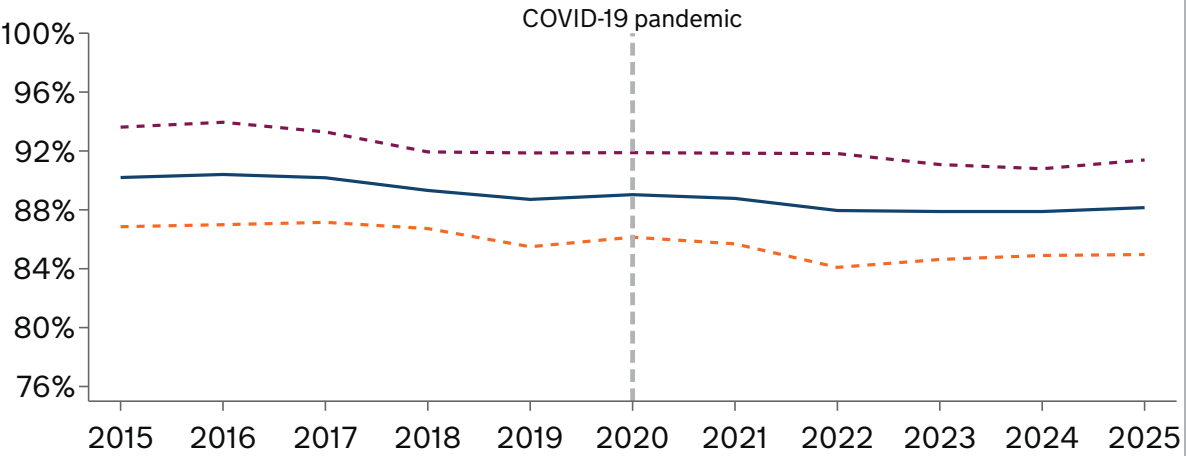
By individual age

16 to 17 year olds are required to remain in education and training in England following [Raising the participation age \(RPA\)](#)  in 2013.

Chart Table

[Export options](#)

In 2025, 88.2% of 16 to 17 year olds were participating in education and apprenticeships. Participation rates are notably higher at age 16 at 91.4% compared with 85.0% of 17 year olds.



Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

[Explore data](#)

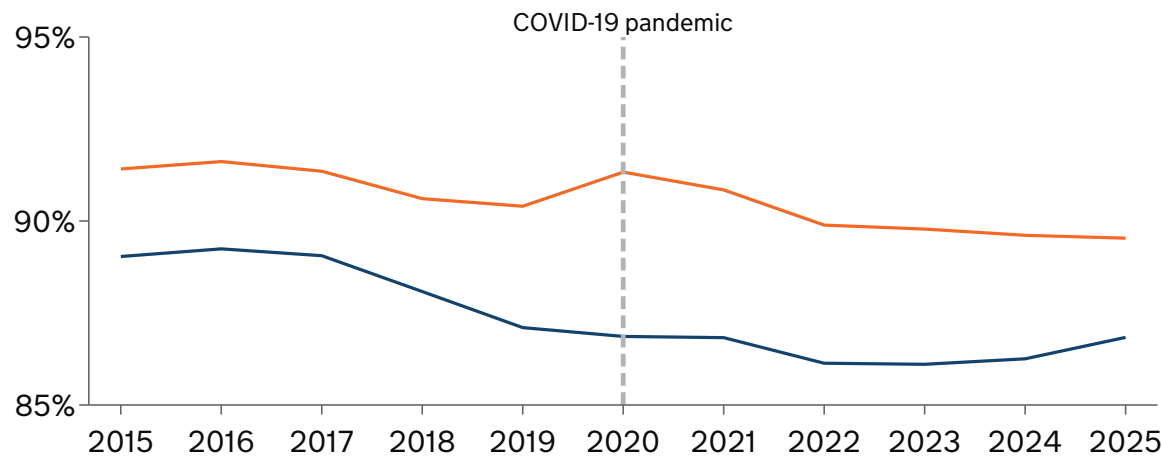
By sex

Chart Table

[Export options](#)

At age 16 to 17, female participation rates are higher than male with a gap of 2.7 percentage points in 2025.

The gap in participation by sex widened during the pandemic but looks to be narrowing in recent years.



Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By provider type of those in education

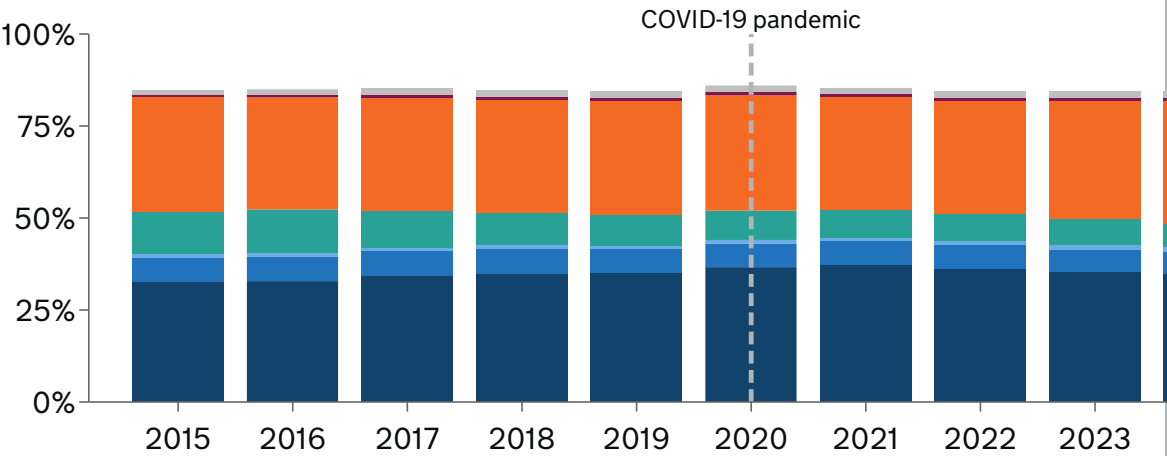
The following chart looks at the provider type of those aged 16 to 17 in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

Chart	<u>Table</u>
-------	--------------

[Export options](#)

Of those 16 to 17 year olds in education, most are in state-funded schools or general FE colleges. Since 2023 increasing proportions are in colleges. Higher proportions were in schools between 2020 and 2022.

Provider choice was likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and increases in GCSE and other level 2 attainment by age 16.



- Other provider
- Higher education institutions
- General FE tertiary and specialist colleges
- Sixth form colleges
- Special schools
- Independent schools
- All state-funded schools

Footnotes

1. Specialist colleges in this category are those specialising in fields such as agriculture, art and technology. This grouping does not mean colleges focusing on learners with special educational needs.
2. 'Other' provider types are primarily private providers, alongside a limited number of smaller organisations such as institutions funded by other government departments.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Apprenticeships

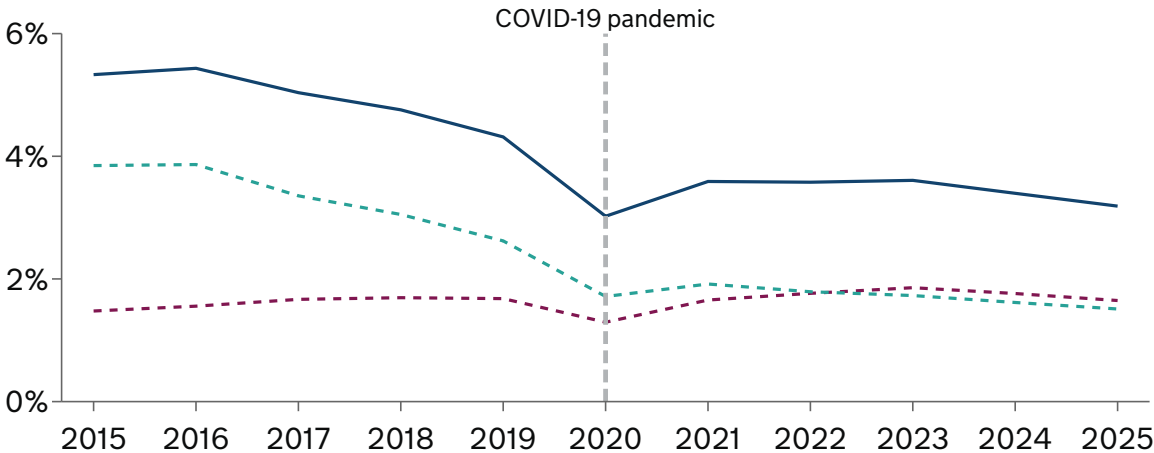
Chart

Table

Export options

At age 16 to 17 proportions in apprenticeships are relatively low. Participation fell until 2020 but has stabilised since with similar proportions doing a level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship in 2025.

Proportions doing a level 3 apprenticeship increased following the COVID-19 pandemic but have declined since 2023.



Footnotes

1. The apprenticeship framework is broken down into specific levels: Intermediate (Level 2): equivalent to: 5 GCSE passes (Grades 9–4 or A*–C), Advanced (Level 3): equivalent to: 2 A Level passes, or a Level 3 Diploma, Higher (Levels 4 and 5): equivalent to: Foundation degree, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), Degree (Levels 6 and 7): equivalent to: Bachelor’s or Master’s degree.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By highest qualification aim

The following chart looks at the highest qualification aim at ages 16 to 17 of those in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

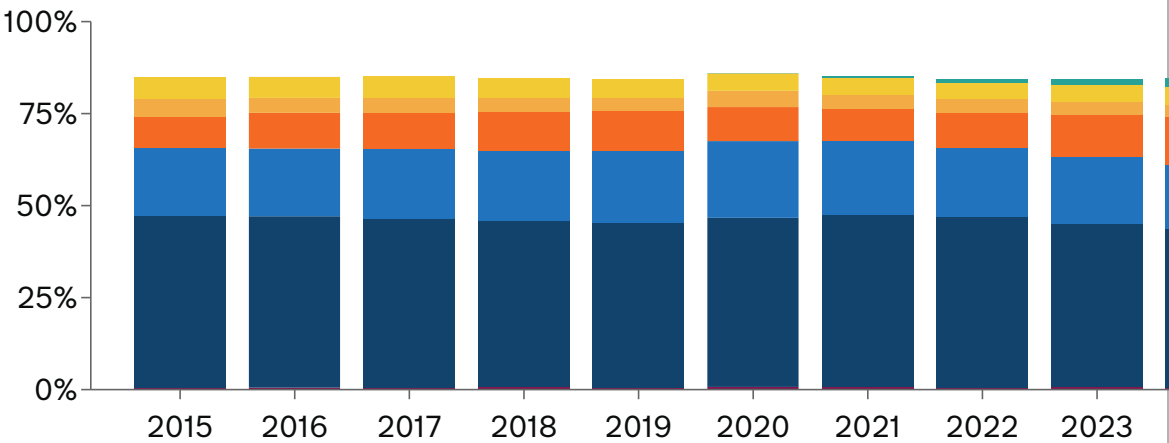
Chart

Table

Export options

Looking at the highest qualification aim of 16 to 17 year olds, most are studying for a level 3 qualification. Lower proportions studying for A levels in recent years have been offset with the introduction of T levels.

There has been a notable increase in the proportion studying GCSEs as their highest aim since the COVID-19 pandemic.



- T levels
- Level 1 and below
- Other level 2
- GCSE
- Other level 3
- A/AS levels
- HE (Level 4 or above)

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By pupil characteristics (state-sector cohort)

There have been increases in the proportion of 16 to 17 year olds participating in education and apprenticeships across all the following characteristic groups at the end of 2025 compared with end 2024.

Overall, 88.2% of 16 to 17 year olds who were educated in the mainstream state-funded sector in year 11 were participating at the end of 2025. This is compared with:

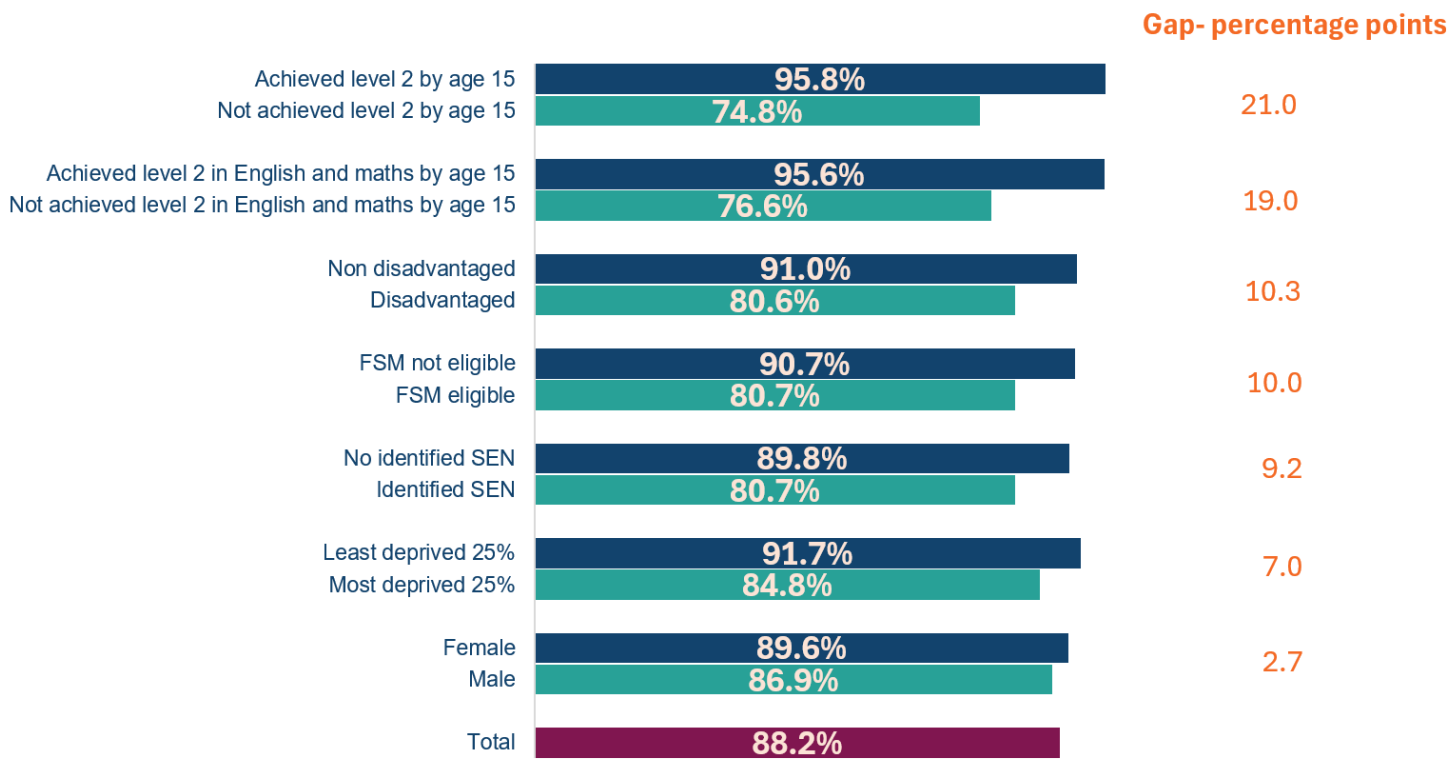
- 84.8% of the [most deprived](#) ?
- 80.7% of those with [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\)](#) ?
- 80.7% of those [eligible for Free School Meals \(FSM\)](#) ?
- 80.6% of [disadvantaged pupils](#) ?
- 74.8% who had not achieved overall level 2 by age 15
- 76.6% who had not achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15

Note- breakdowns by characteristics are for the cohort of young people educated in the state-sector at age 15 so numbers and participation rates will differ to those in the full national cohort. Trends are however comparable and the national and state-funded estimate of the proportion of 16 to 17 year olds participating at the end of 2025 are both 88.2%. (see section 'About this release' for more detail)

Chart	<u>Table</u>
-------	--------------

[Export options](#)

At age 16 to 17 participation rates in 2025 differ notably depending on pupil characteristics. The biggest difference is in prior attainment.



Footnotes

1. Participation gaps refer to the difference in between one characteristic group and another. 1) Special Educational Need (SEN) gap: between those with and without SEN, with non-SEN individuals typically having higher participation; 2) Free School Meal (FSM) gap: between those eligible and not eligible for FSM, with those not eligible for FSM typically having higher participation; 3) Disadvantage gap: between those deemed disadvantaged (see methodology) and those not disadvantaged, with those not disadvantaged typically having higher participation; 4) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) gap: between the 25% most deprived and the 25% least deprived, with the 25% least deprived typically having higher participation; 5) Gap between males and females, with females typically having higher participation; 6) Level 2 by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation; 7) Level 2 in English and maths by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Participation gaps refer to the difference in education and apprenticeship participation rates between one characteristic group and another.

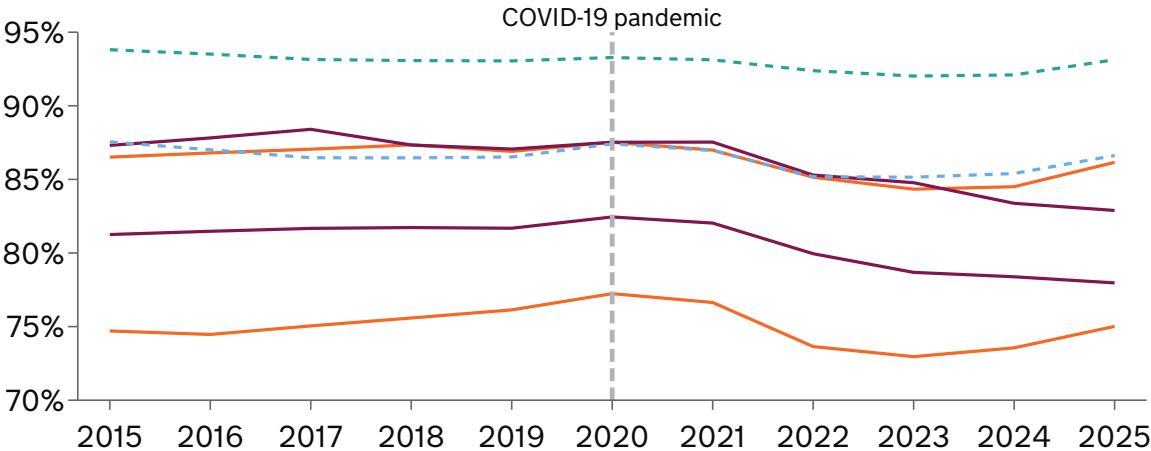
Chart

Table

Export options

Age 16 and 17 participation for those with a EHCP or SEN support are lower than for those with no identified SEN. Both decreased following the COVID-19 pandemic, SEN support rates are now increasing and EHCP decreasing.

At age 16, EHCP and SEN support rates have been comparable, however since 2024 SEN support participation is higher. At age 17 SEN support rates are lower.



Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

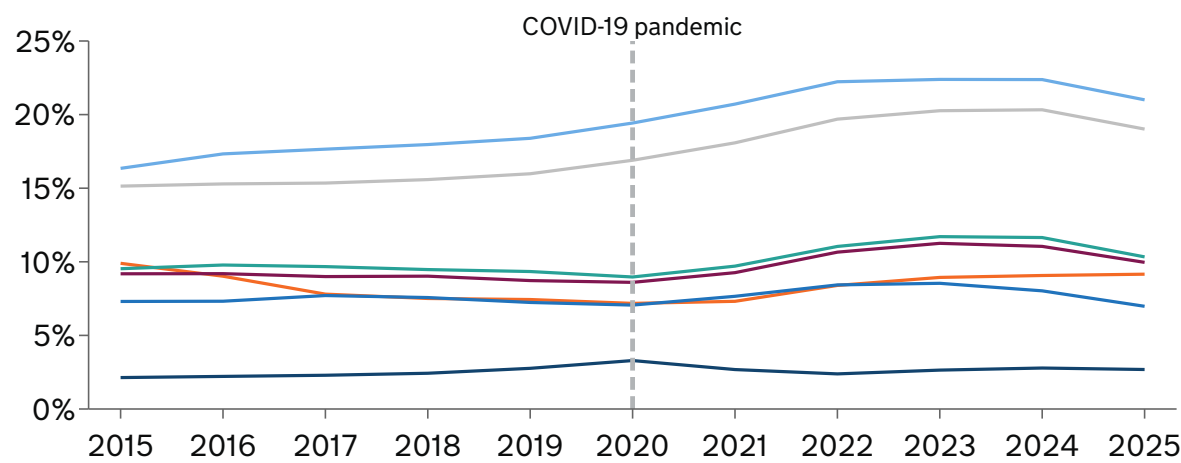
Chart

Table

Export options

The participation gap for SEND has steadily increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. FSM, disadvantage and IDACI gaps increased during the pandemic but have fallen in the latest year.

Prior attainment has the biggest participation gap but has also shown some narrowing in the latest year



Footnotes

1. Participation gaps refer to the difference in between one characteristic group and another. 1) Special Educational Need (SEN) gap: between those with and without SEN, with non-SEN individuals typically having higher participation; 2) Free School Meal (FSM) gap: between those eligible and not eligible for FSM, with those not eligible for FSM typically having higher participation; 3) Disadvantage gap: between those deemed disadvantaged (see methodology) and those not disadvantaged, with those not disadvantaged typically having higher participation; 4) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) gap: between the 25% most deprived and the 25% least deprived, with the 25% least deprived typically having higher participation; 5) Gap between males and females, with females typically having higher participation; 6) Level 2 by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation; 7) Level 2 in English and maths by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

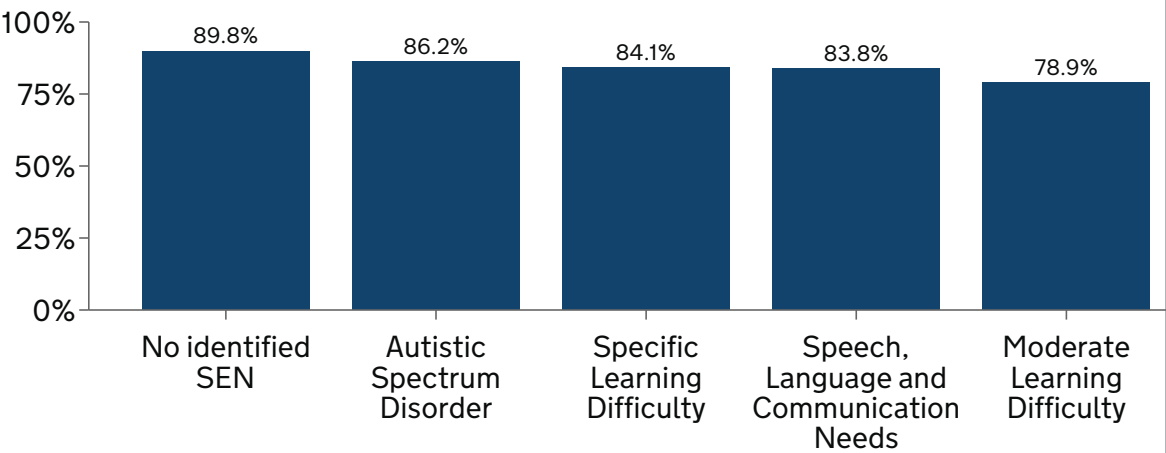
Explore data

ChartTable

[Export options](#)

In 2025, looking at primary need, just over a quarter of all those age 16 to 17 with SEND were categorised as having social, emotional and mental health and this has the lowest participation rate of all primary needs.

Only the top 5 primary needs based on proportions of those with SEND are shown, see table for all.



■ Percent of population in education or apprenticeships

Footnotes

1. Specific Learning Difficulties: Conditions that affect specific aspects of learning, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia. Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD): Broad challenges with basic literacy, numeracy, and understanding concepts. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) categorises difficulties that hinder a child's well-being, relationships, and ability to engage in learning. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): Challenges in communicating effectively with others or processing language. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Conditions that affect how a child interacts socially, communicates, and perceives the world.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

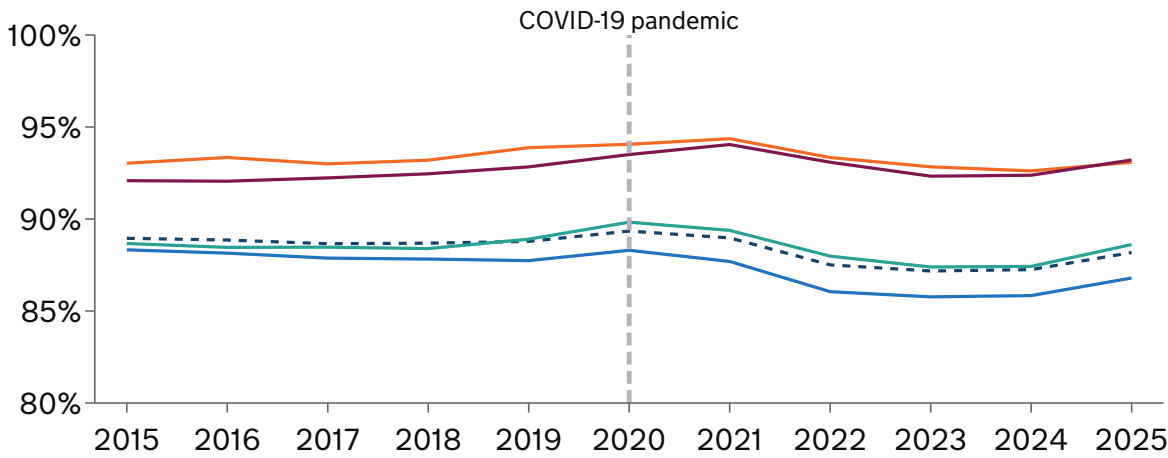
Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Export options

Looking at age 16 to 17 participation rates by ethnic group, the Asian and Black ethnic groups have consistently had the highest participation rates and those in the White ethnic group consistently the lowest.



Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

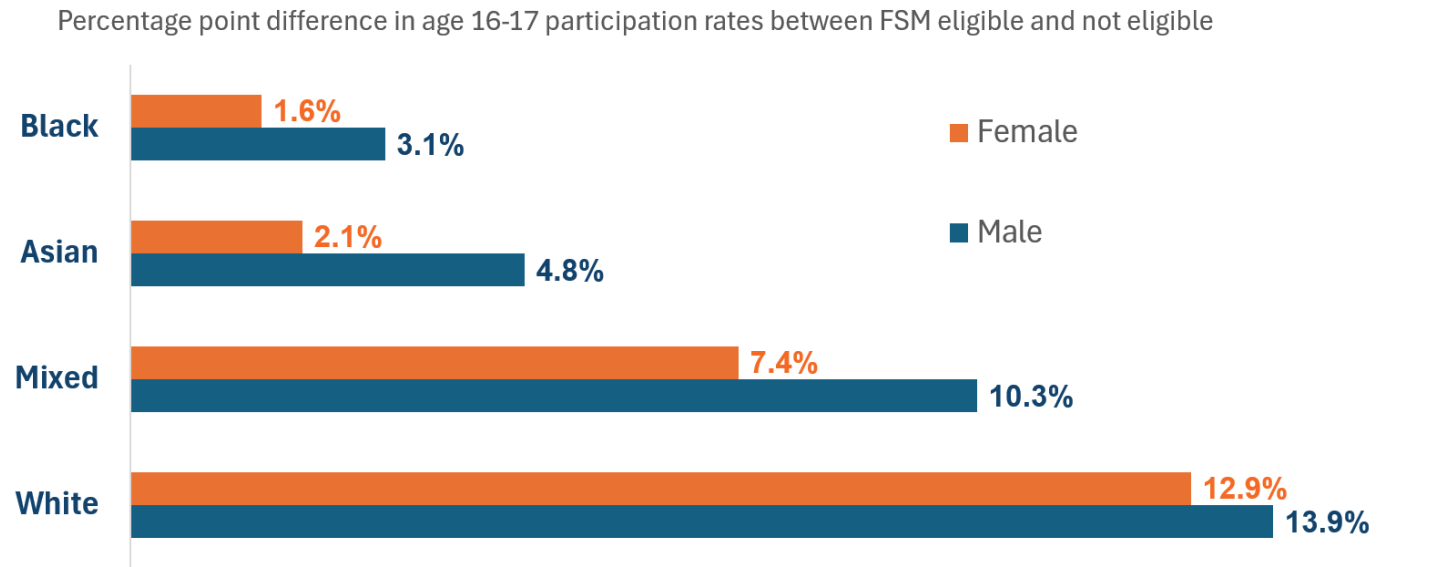
Explore data

ChartTable

[Export options](#)

In 2025, White males eligible for FSM have the lowest participation and have the widest gap of both sexes and all ethnicities.

74.9% of White males aged 16 to 17 eligible for FSM compared to 88.8% of White males not eligible for FSM were participating in 2025 (13.9 percentage point gap)



Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By geography

Breakdowns by local authority are for the cohort of young people educated in the state-sector at age 15 and the local authority is that at age 15.

Underlying data is available showing local authority participation in education and apprenticeships by provider type, highest qualification aim and by pupil characteristics. This data is available in the [explore and download](#) data section of the release.

[Back to top](#)

Age 18 in education and apprenticeships

Data from schools, further education providers, and apprenticeships is available for 2025 and given as appropriate. Data from higher education providers is not yet available for end 2025 so when the latest year is stated this refers to end 2024.

Overall participation rates are given for end 2024 in order to give a complete picture at age 18.

Participation is a snapshot of activity at the end of the calendar year and includes participation from all providers including schools, further education/sixth form colleges, apprenticeships and higher education institutions.

Overall participation rates in Higher Education (HE) by age group, including by age 25 are published in [Participation measures in higher education](#) and should be used for official HE participation measures. See the 'About this release' section for further details.

Trends are comparable however numbers and proportions will differ (see 'Other sources of participation and NEET estimates' and accompanying [methodology](#)).

By sex

In 2024, 58.3% of the age 18 population were estimated to be participating in education and apprenticeships compared with:

- 61.3 % of females
- 55.6% of males

Participation rates for both males and females increased between 2023 and 2024 at age 18.

By provider type of those in education

The following chart looks at the provider type of those aged 18 in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships

By highest qualification aim

The following chart looks at the highest qualification aim at age 18 of those in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

For those young people aiming for a higher education qualification at level 4 or above these are shown only as 'Level 4 or above' and referred to as 'higher education (HE) qualifications'.

By pupil characteristics (state-sector cohort)

The proportion of 18 year olds participating in education and apprenticeships declined for males but increased for females between 2023 and 2024. Participation for those with special educational needs (SEND) decreased, while rates for those with higher prior attainment increased.

Overall, 52.5% of 18 year olds, who were educated in the mainstream state-funded sector in year 11, were participating at the end of 2024. This is compared with:

- 50.9% of the [most deprived](#) ?
- 49.0% of those with [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\)](#) ?
- 46.1% of those eligible for [Free School Meals \(FSM\)](#) ?
- 46.3% of [disadvantaged pupils](#) ?
- 38.7% who had not achieved overall level 2 by age 15
- 40.5% who had not achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15

Note - breakdowns by characteristics are for the cohort of young people educated in the state-sector at age 15 so numbers and participation rates will differ to those in the full national cohort. Trends are however comparable and the national and state-funded estimate of the proportion of 18 year olds participating at the end of 2024 is 58.3% for the national cohort and 52.5% for the state sector (see section 'About this release' for more detail).

By geography

Age 18 local authority level participation rates are shown in the table. The chart shows regional rates.

Breakdowns by local authority are for the cohort of young people educated in the state-sector at age 15 and the local authority is that at age 15.

Underlying data is available showing local authority participation in education and apprenticeships by provider type, highest qualification aim and by pupil characteristics. This data is available in the [explore and download data](#) section of the release.

Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

At age 18, looking at regional participation rates in education and apprenticeships, in 2024 they are highest in London and lowest in the South West.

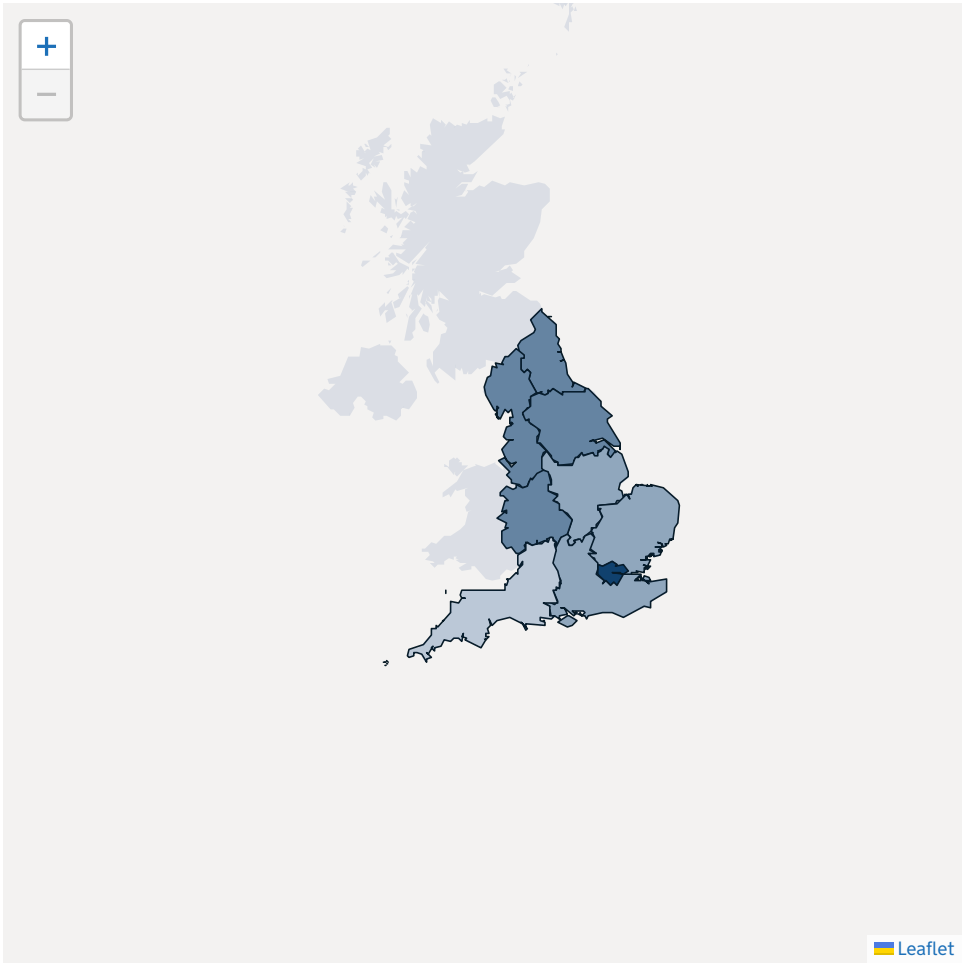
Region is based on where young people in the English state-sector were educated at age 15. Data is grouped into equal-sized ranges.

1. Select data to view

Percent of population (18, Education and Apprenticeships, 2024) ▾

2. Select a Region

None selected ▾



Key to Percent of population (18, Education and Apprenticeships, 2024)

- 42.8% to 46.9%
- 47.0% to 51.1%
- 51.2% to 55.3%
- 55.4% to 59.5%
- 59.6% to 63.6%

Footnotes

- 1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
- 2. This map uses the boundary data Regions England BUC 2022/12

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

[Back to top](#)

Age 18 to 21 in education and apprenticeships

Data from schools, further education providers, and apprenticeships is available for 2025 and given as appropriate. Data from higher education providers is not yet available for end 2025 so when the latest year is stated this refers to end 2024.

Overall participation rates for the age 18 to 21 group are given for end 2024 in order to give a complete picture.

[Official statistics in development ?](#). Age 19 to 21 participation data is included for the first time in this release and may be subject to some revisions. We welcome feedback on this new content at post16.statistics@education.gov.uk.

Participation is a snapshot of activity at the end of the calendar year and includes participation from all providers including schools, further education/sixth form colleges, apprenticeships and higher education institutions.

Overall participation rates in Higher Education (HE) by age group, including by age 25 are published in [Participation measures in higher education](#) and should be used for official HE participation measures. See the 'About this release' section for further details.

Trends are comparable however numbers and proportions will differ (see 'Other sources of participation and NEET estimates' and accompanying [methodology](#)).

By individual age

Age 18 is the first year in England where young people are not subject to legislation requiring them to participate in education or training. Participation in education and apprenticeship rates are therefore notably different for this older 18 to 21 age group.

As at end 2024:

- Age 16 to 17, 87.9%
- Age 18 to 21, 51.8%

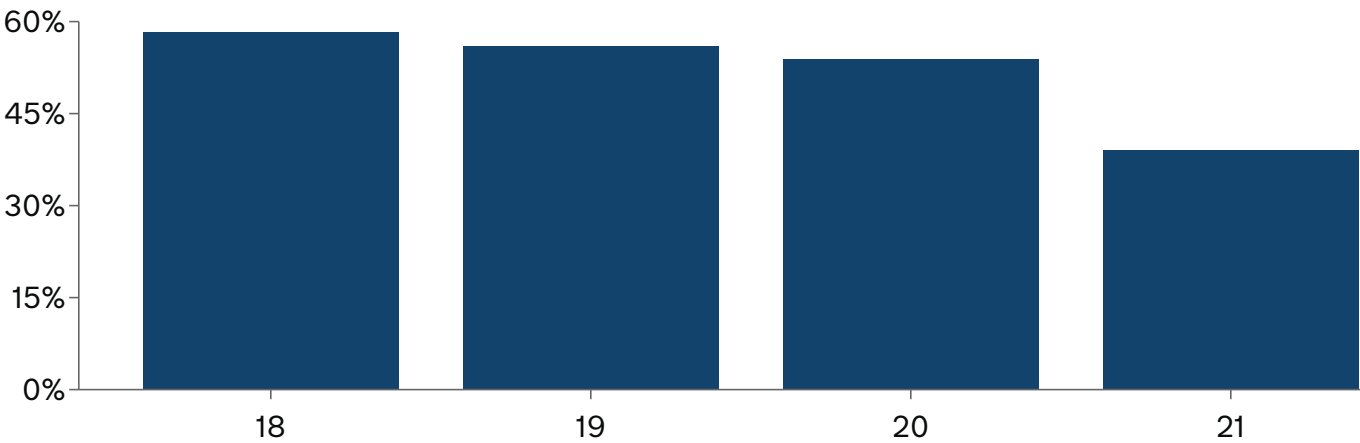
Chart

Table

► [Export options](#)

In 2024, participation in education and apprenticeships is highest at age 18 and then declines as many will have finished higher education courses at age 20.

The overall 18 to 21 participation rate was 51.8% at the end of 2024.



■ Percent of population in Education and Apprenticeships

Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

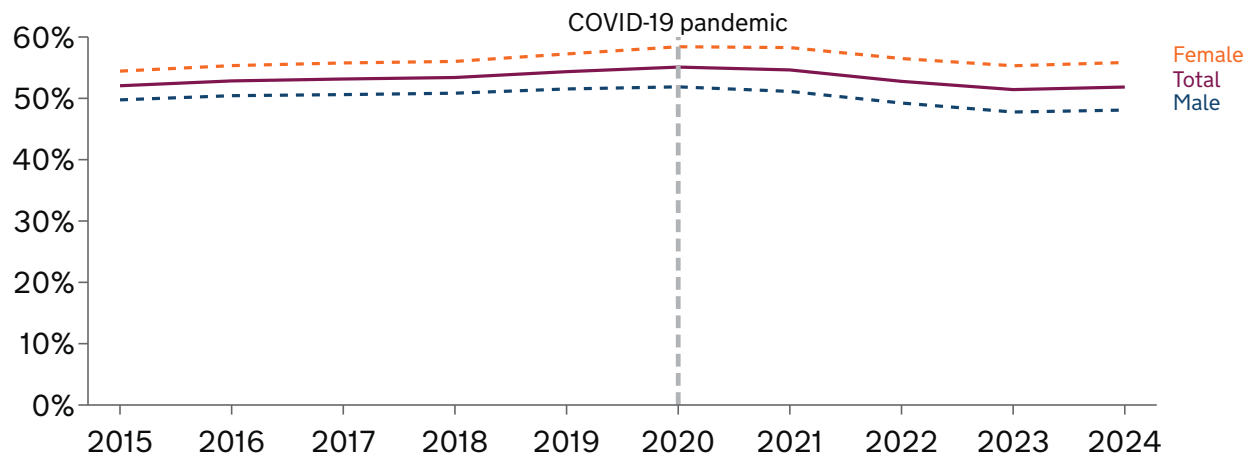
By sex

Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

Across ages 18 to 21, females have higher participation rates than males, with a gap of 7.8 percentage points at the end of 2024.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By provider type of those in education

The following chart looks at the provider type of those aged 18 to 21 in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

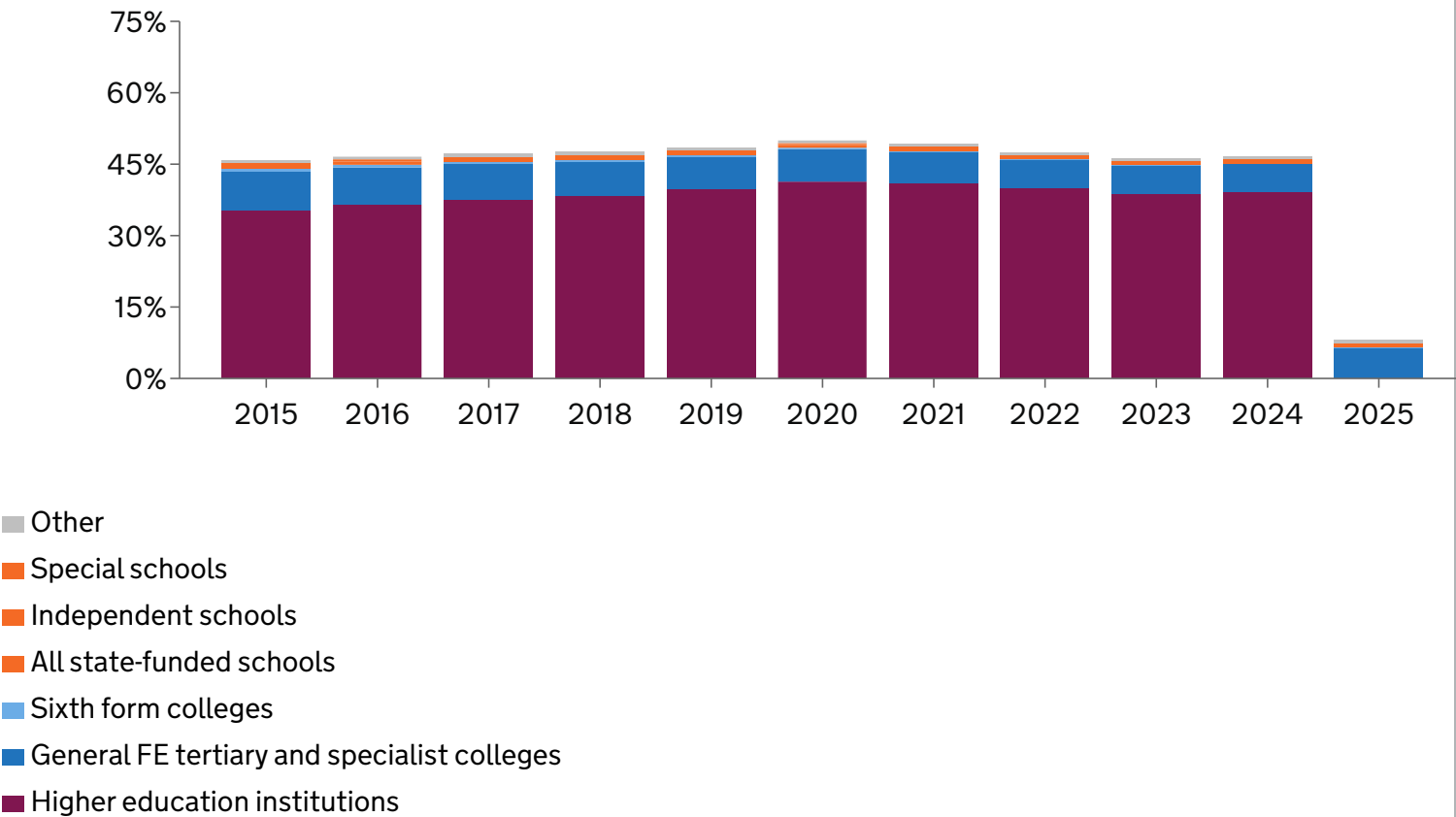
Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

At ages 18 to 21, overall participation rates declined during the COVID-19 pandemic however by 2024 they had returned to levels comparable to 2019.

46.5% of 18 to 21 year olds were in education (not including apprenticeships), with 39.1% in higher education institutions in 2024.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. Specialist colleges in this category are those specialising in fields such as agriculture, art and technology. This grouping does not mean colleges focusing on learners with special educational needs.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

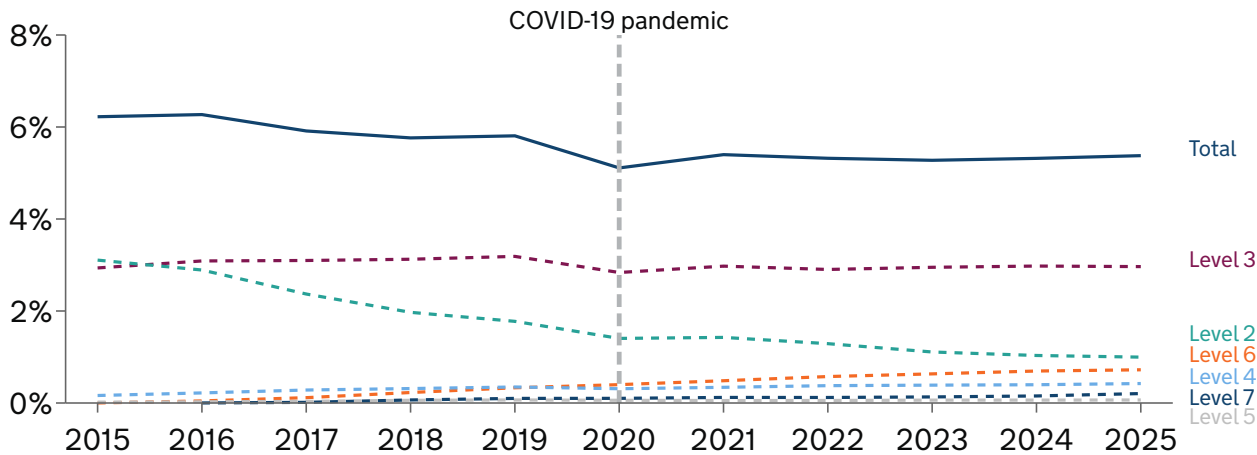
Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Export options

At ages 18 to 21, 5.4% of the population were participating in an apprenticeship at the end of 2025, with most aiming for a level 3. Level 2 apprenticeship participation has declined over the decade.

The proportion aiming for Level 4 or above is increasing but remains relatively small, at 1.4%.



Footnotes

- 1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
- 2. The apprenticeship framework is broken down into specific levels: Intermediate (Level 2): equivalent to: 5 GCSE passes (Grades 9–4 or A*–C), Advanced (Level 3): equivalent to: 2 A Level passes, or a Level 3 Diploma, Higher (Levels 4 and 5): equivalent to: Foundation degree, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), Degree (Levels 6 and 7): equivalent to: Bachelor’s or Master’s degree.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By highest qualification aim

The following chart looks at the highest qualification aim at ages 18-21 of those in full or part-time education. This does not include apprenticeships.

For those young people aiming for a higher education qualification at level 4 or above these are shown only as ‘Level 4 or above’ and referred to as ‘higher education (HE) qualifications’.

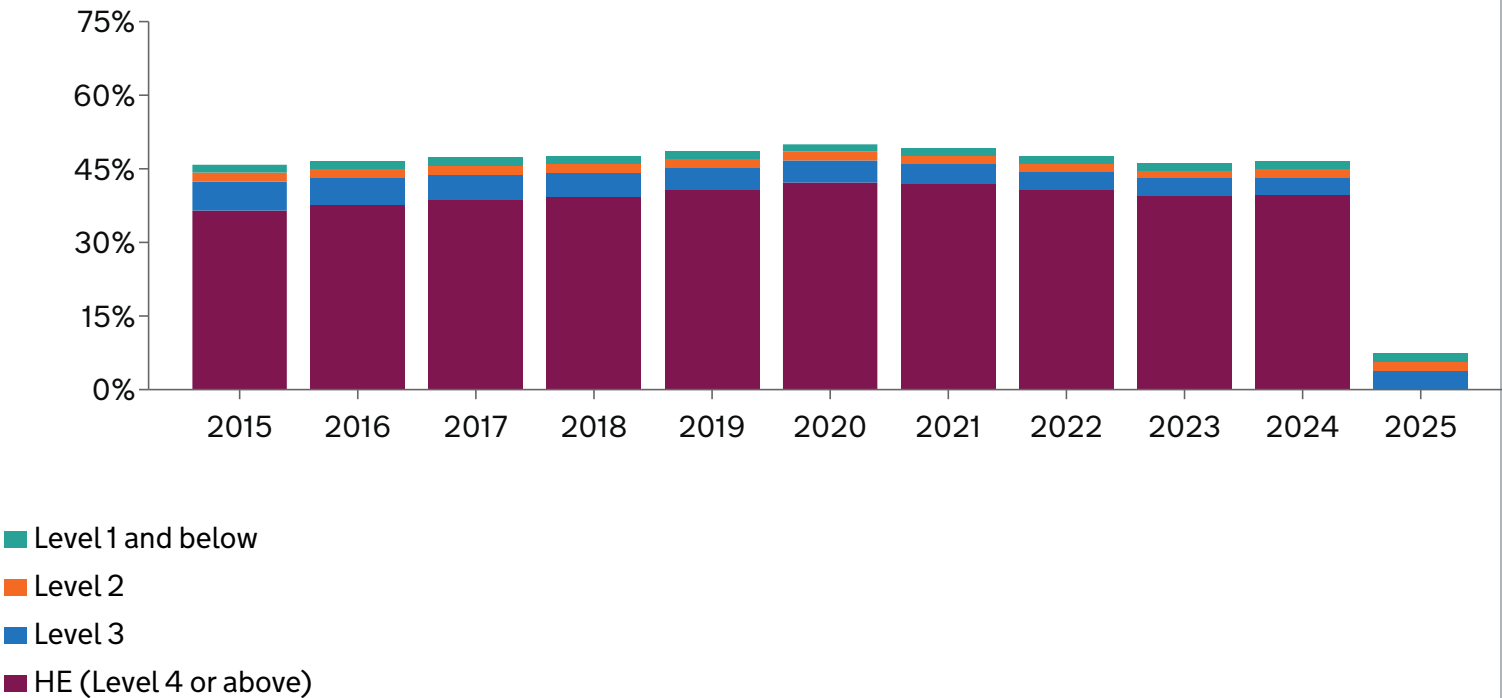
Chart

Table

Export options

In 2024, almost 40% of 18 to 21 year olds were studying for a higher education qualification.

Increases were seen during the COVID-19 pandemic in HE (level 4+) study.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD), School level annual school census (SLASC)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By pupil characteristics (state-sector only)

The proportion of 18 to 21 year olds participating in education and apprenticeships has remained fairly stable across all characteristic groups at the end of 2024 compared with end 2023. However, participation rates for those with higher prior attainment have increased.

Overall, 45.0% of 18 to 21 year olds who were educated in the mainstream state-funded sector at age 15 were participating at the end of 2024. This is compared with:

- 35.7% of those with [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\)](#) ?
- 40.7% of the [most deprived](#) ?
- 36.1% of those eligible for [Free School Meals \(FSM\)](#) ?
- 35.7% of [disadvantaged pupils](#) ?
- 25.0% who had not achieved overall level 2 by age 15
- 27.2% who had not achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15

Note - breakdowns by characteristics are for the cohort of young people educated in the state-sector at age 15 so numbers and participation rates will differ to those in the full national cohort. Trends are however comparable and the national and state-funded estimate of the proportion of 18 to 21 year olds participating at the end of 2024 is 51.8% for the national cohort and 45.0% for the state sector (see section 'About this release' for more detail).

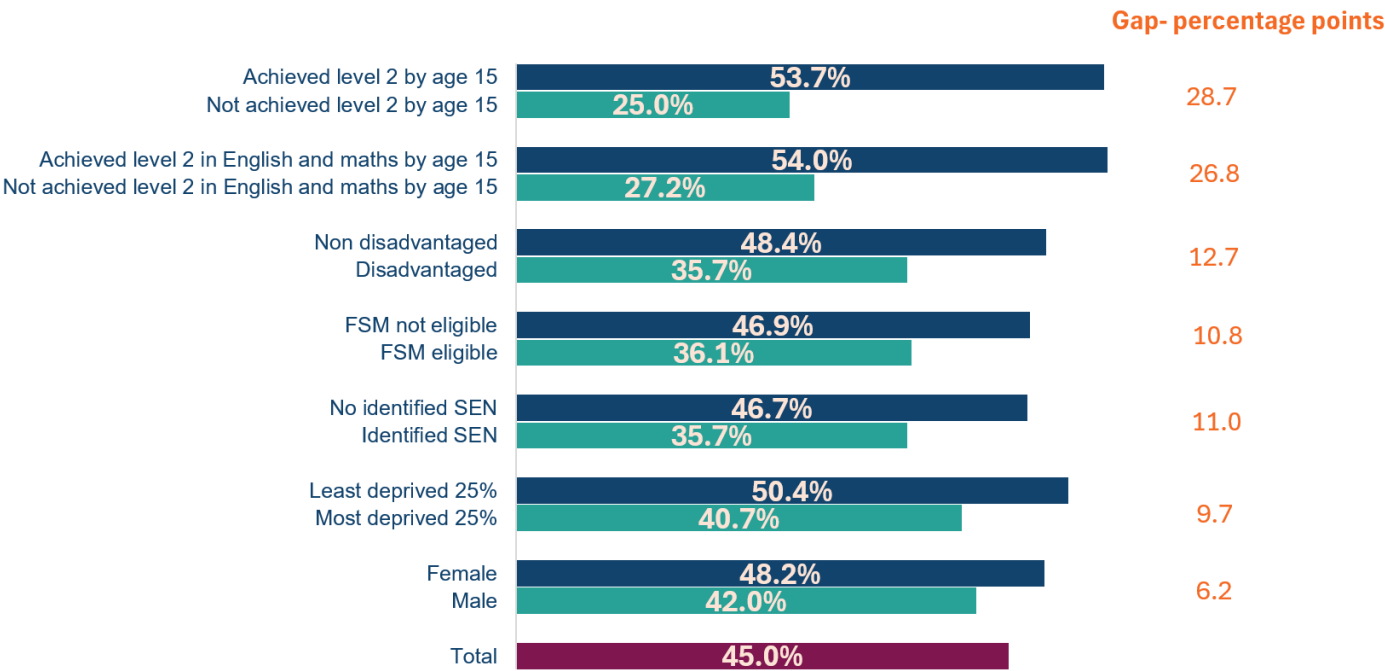
Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

For the overall age 18 to 21 group, participation gaps are widest when looking at prior attainment however there are notable differences in participation rates for all characteristics.

Participation rates are for end 2024 as no data from higher education providers is yet available for 2025.



Footnotes

- 1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
- 2. Participation gaps refer to the difference in between one characteristic group and another. 1) Special Educational Need (SEN) gap: between those with and without SEN, with non-SEN individuals typically having higher participation; 2) Free School Meal (FSM) gap: between those eligible and not eligible for FSM, with those not eligible for FSM typically having higher participation; 3) Disadvantage gap: between those deemed disadvantaged (see methodology) and those not disadvantaged, with those not disadvantaged typically having higher participation; 4) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) gap: between the 25% most deprived and the 25% least deprived, with the 25% least deprived typically having higher participation; 5) Gap between males and females, with females typically having higher participation; 6) Level 2 by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation; 7) Level 2 in English and maths by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

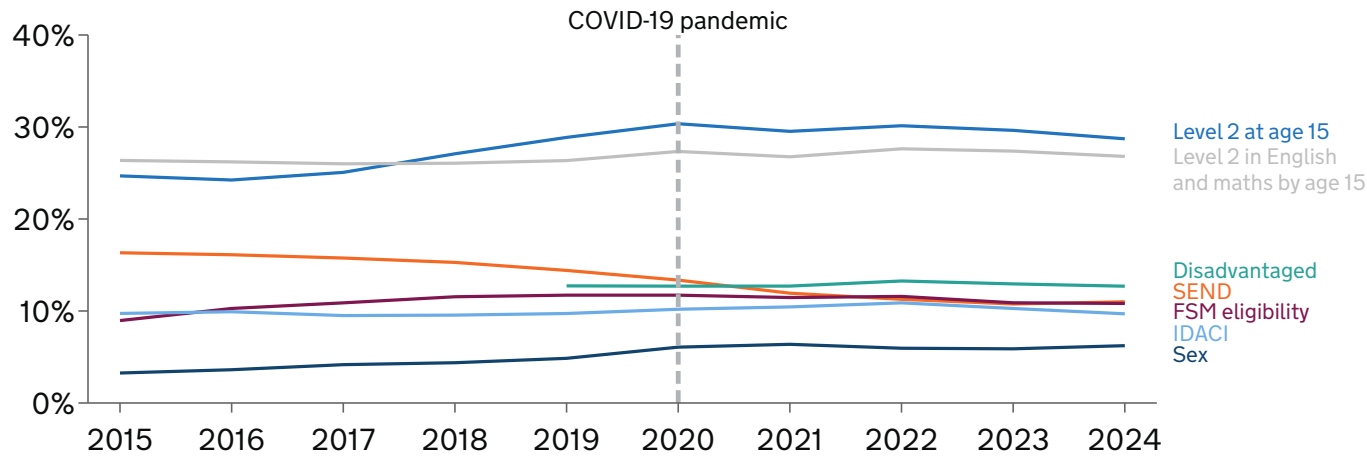
Explore data

Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

Gaps in age 18 to 21 participation are highest when looking at prior attainment, widening during the COVID-19 pandemic but seeing some narrowing in 2024. The SEND participation gap has narrowed over the last decade.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. Participation gaps refer to the difference in between one characteristic group and another. 1) Special Educational Need (SEN) gap: between those with and without SEN, with non-SEN individuals typically having higher participation; 2) Free School Meal (FSM) gap: between those eligible and not eligible for FSM, with those not eligible for FSM typically having higher participation; 3) Disadvantage gap: between those deemed disadvantaged (see methodology) and those not disadvantaged, with those not disadvantaged typically having higher participation; 4) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) gap: between the 25% most deprived and the 25% least deprived, with the 25% least deprived typically having higher participation; 5) Gap between males and females, with females typically having higher participation; 6) Level 2 by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation; 7) Level 2 in English and maths by age 15 gap: between those who achieved level 2 in English language and maths by age 15 and those who hadn't, with those achieving typically having higher participation.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

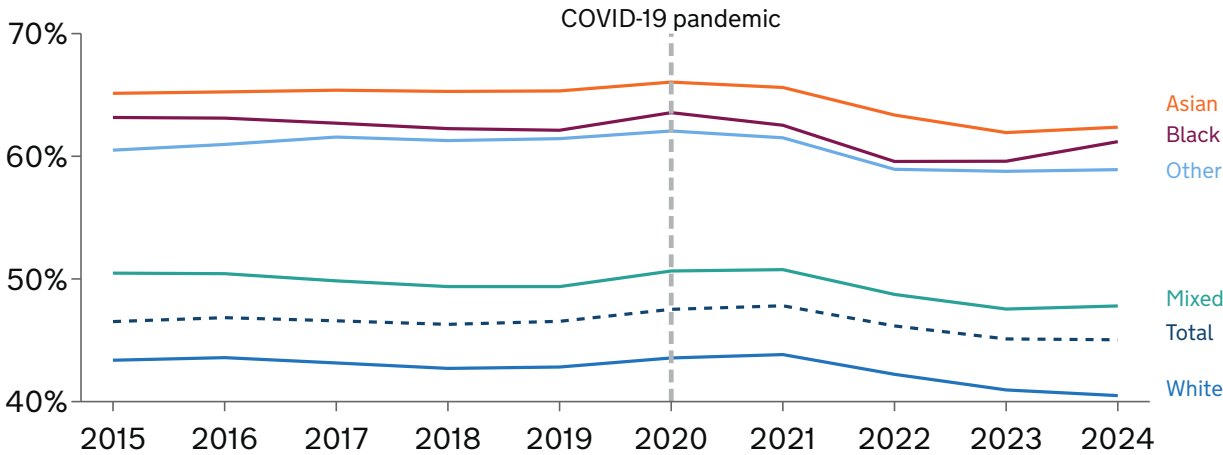
Explore data

Chart

Table

Export options

Looking at age 18 to 21 participation rates by ethnic group, Asian, Black and 'Other' ethnic groups have consistently had the highest participation rates and the White ethnic group consistently the lowest.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

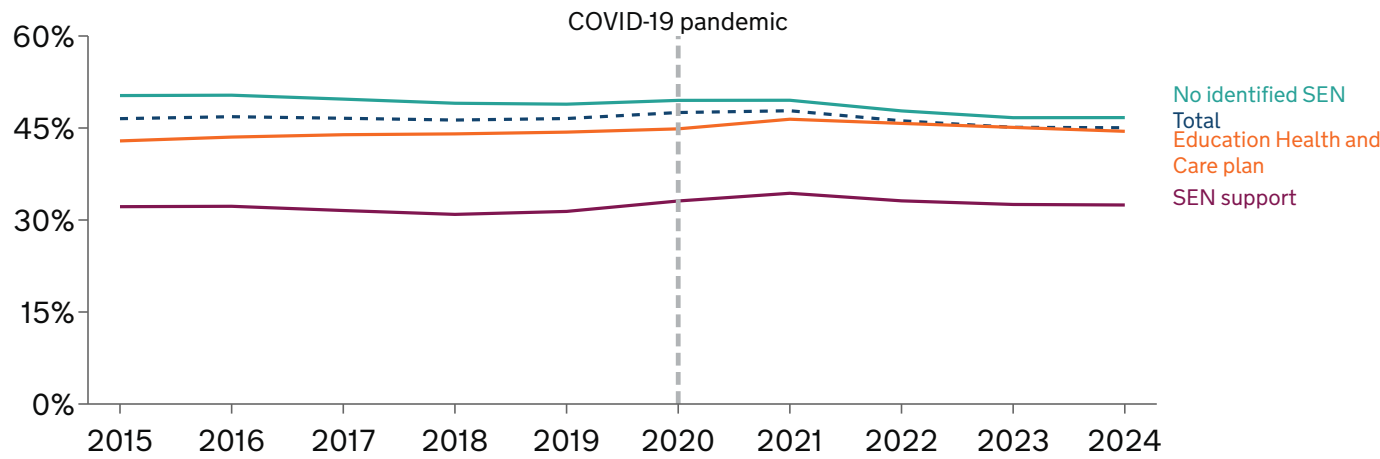
Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

At ages 18 to 21, participation is lower among those with SEN support. Participation for those with an EHCP or SEN support rose during the COVID-19 pandemic and despite decreasing since, remain slightly above 2019 levels

The 2014/15 SEND reforms created a single SEN support classification and introduced EHCPs. Previous classifications are mapped to these new categories.



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

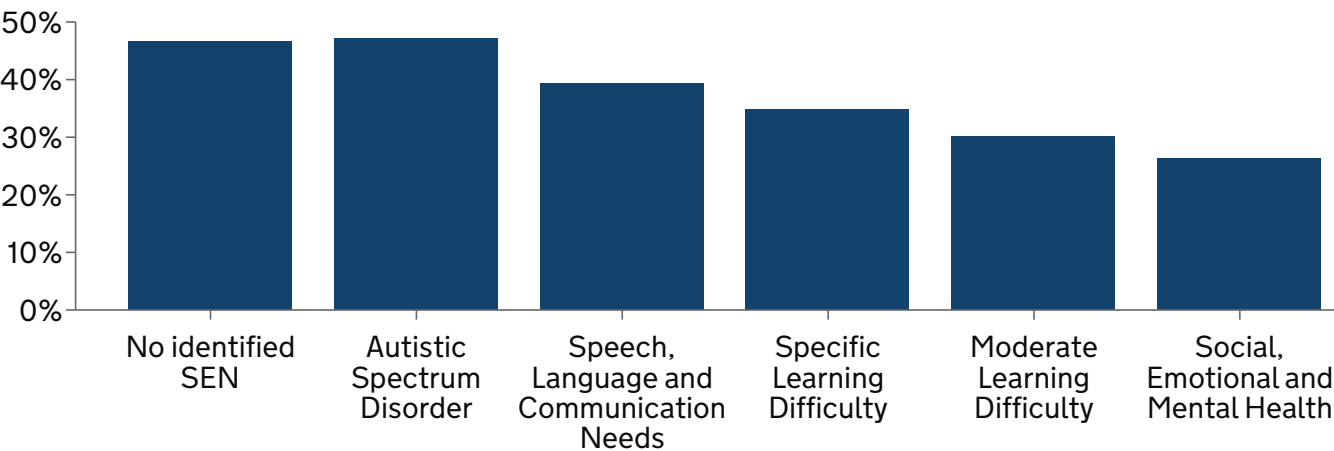
Explore data

Chart Table

[Export options](#)

In 2024, looking at primary need, over 1 in 5 of all those with SEND were categorised as having social, emotional and mental health and this has the lowest participation rate of all primary needs.

Those with autism as their primary need have higher participation rates than those with no identified SEND. (Only top 5 primary needs shown, see table for all).



Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. Specific Learning Difficulties: Conditions that affect specific aspects of learning, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia. Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD): Broad challenges with basic literacy, numeracy, and understanding concepts. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) categorises difficulties that hinder a child's well-being, relationships, and ability to engage in learning. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): Challenges in communicating effectively with others or processing language. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Conditions that affect how a child interacts socially, communicates, and perceives the world.

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

By geography

Age 18 to 21 local authority level participation rates are shown in the table. The chart shows regional rates.

Underlying data is available showing local authority participation in education and apprenticeships by provider type, highest qualification aim and by pupil characteristics. This data is available in the [explore and download data](#) section of the release.

Chart

Table

[Export options](#)

At age 18 to 21 participation rates in 2024 are highest in London and lowest in the South West.

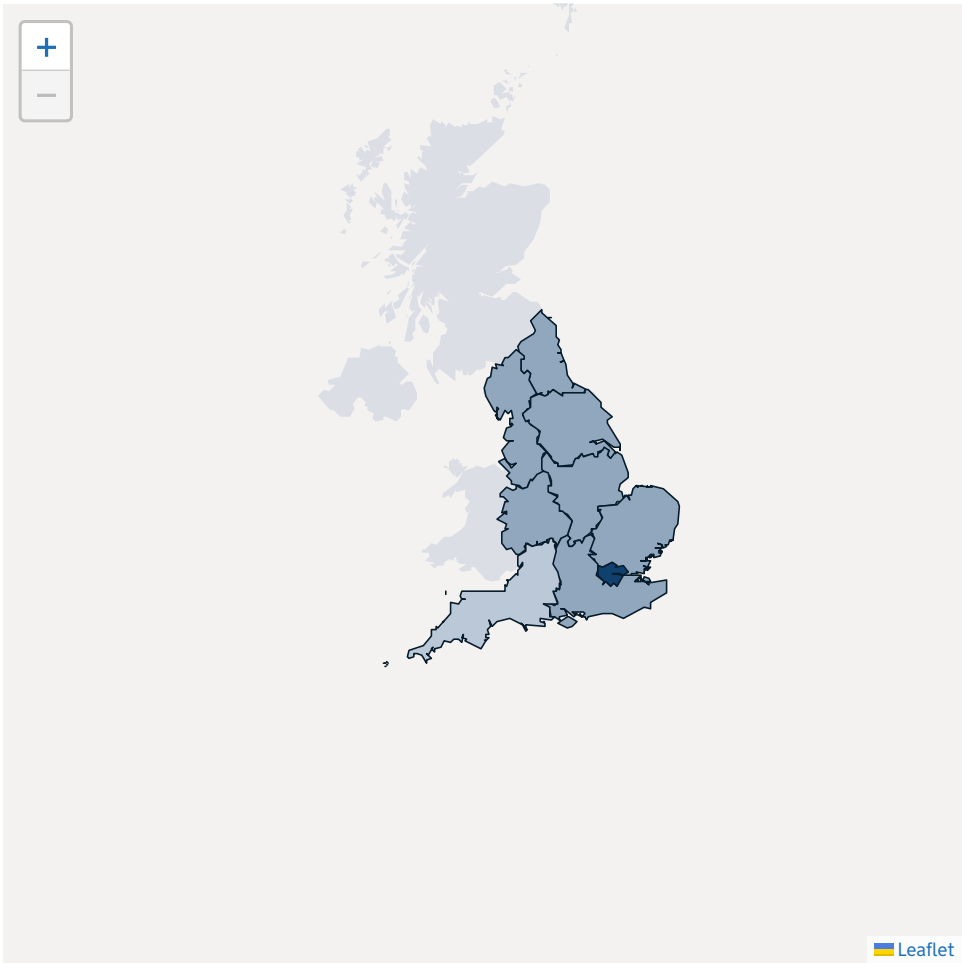
Note: The region is that where the young person was educated in the English state-sector at age 15. Data is grouped into equal-sized ranges.

1. Select data to view

Percent of population (18 to 21, Education and Apprenticeships, 2024)▼

2. Select a Region

None selected ▼



Key to Percent of population (18 to 21, Education and Apprenticeships, 2024)

- 38.3% to 41.6%
- 41.7% to 45.0%
- 45.1% to 48.4%
- 48.5% to 51.8%
- 51.9% to 55.2%

Footnotes

1. HE participation estimates from administrative data (HESA) are not yet available for 2025. No overall participation estimates are shown for the latest year for age 18+ as proportions would be misleading due to this missing HE data.
2. Some local authority data is not shown where boundaries have changed for some of the cohort. For example, in 2024 at ages 16-21, as the local authority is based on where the young person was educated at age 15, those age 21 would have their LA based on boundaries as at 2018 and 16 year olds as as at 2023.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Young Persons Matched Administrative Data (YPMAD)

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

[Back to top](#)

About this release

Data sources

These are the Department for Education's official measures for 16 to 21 year olds participating in education and apprenticeships.

Information is drawn together from various post-16 data sources to give a coherent and comprehensive picture of participation. Sources include:

Administrative data to estimate education and apprenticeship participation from:

- Schools (school census)
- Further education providers (individualised Learner Record (ILR))
- Apprenticeships (Individualised Learner Record (ILR))
- Higher education (HESA)

These administrative sources are matched together to create the Young Persons Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD).

Labour Force Survey (LFS) to estimate:

- Wider training not captured in administrative data such as some employer or self funded training
- Employment rates

ONS population estimates and projections

- As the denominator for proportions participating and those NET and NEET

Together these sources are used to give a holistic picture of the activity of the 16 to 21 population including the measures Not in education or training (NET) and Not in education, employment or training (NEET) .

- Further education providers (individualised Learner Record (ILR))
- Apprenticeships (Individualised Learner Record (ILR))
- Higher education (HESA)

These administrative sources are matched together to create the Young Persons Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD).

Labour Force Survey (LFS) to estimate:

- Wider training not captured in administrative data such as some employer or self funded training
- Employment rates

ONS population estimates and projections

- As the denominator for proportions participating and those NET and NEET

Together these sources are used to give a holistic picture of the activity of the 16 to 21 population including the measures Not in education or training (NET) and Not in education, employment or training (NEET) .

Caution when interpreting wider training, employment, NET and NEET estimates

Wider training and employment rates are estimated from the LFS. In recent years, most notably in 2022 and 2023, the ONS faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS, which has led to increased sampling variability which can impact on the accuracy of estimates. Some caution should therefore be taken when considering single age and single year estimates of proportions of young people in wider training, employment and NEET as these are estimated from the LFS.

Estimates from the LFS are [Official statistics in development](#) .

Time period

The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year, and are based on academic age, defined as 'age at the start of the academic year' i.e. age as at 31 August.

Data is presented for the period 2015-2025.

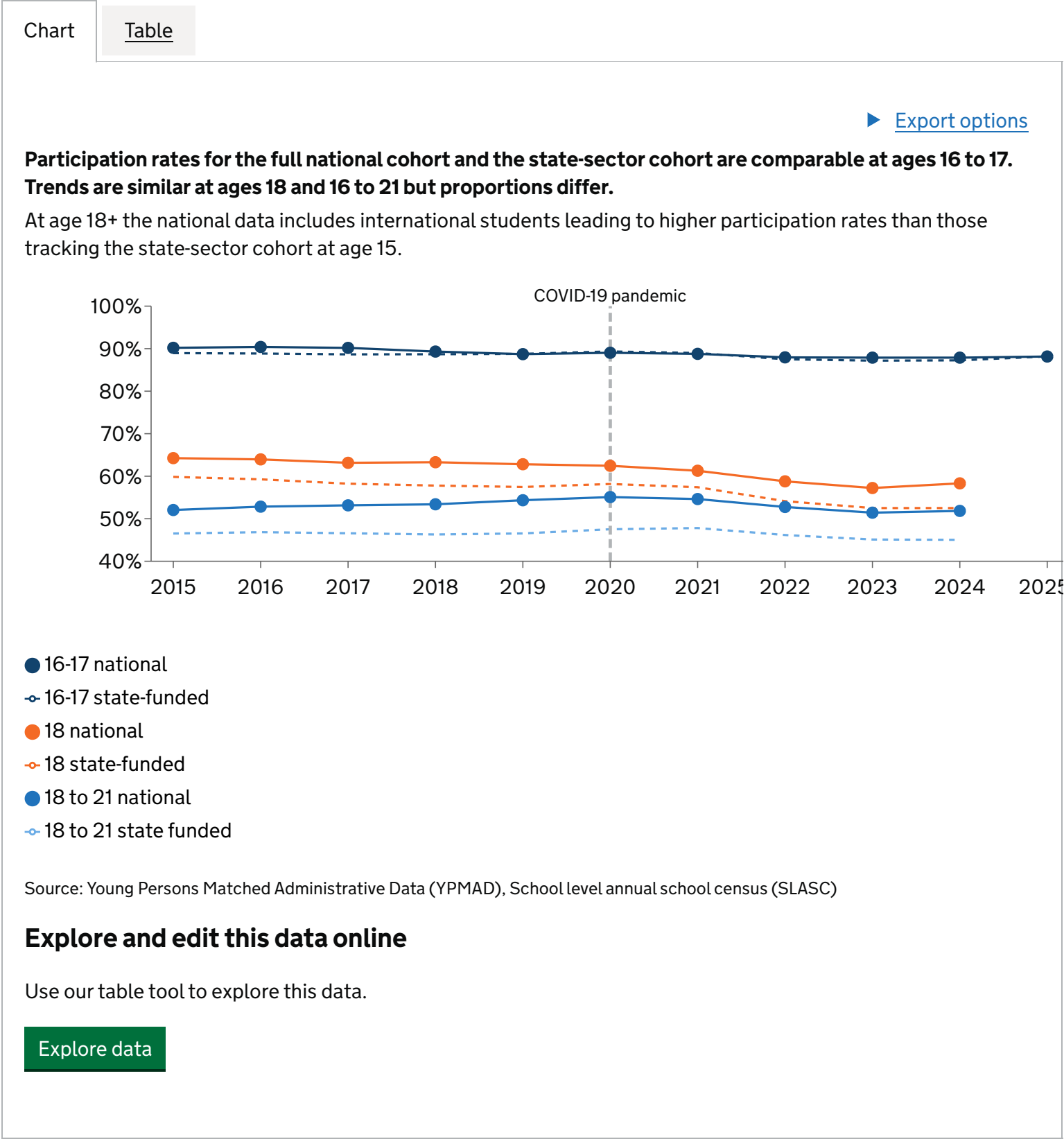
Cohorts

The statistics are based on two cohorts as follows:

- An overall **population cohort** has numerators based on all young people captured in the administrative and survey datasets (not just those in the state-funded sector in year 11), and has a denominator based on the whole England population as estimated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These estimates are published by sex, provider type and highest qualification aim and include wider training and employment estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).
- The **state-funded cohort** is based on pupils recorded as being educated in mainstream [state-funded schools](#)  at academic age 15 i.e. year 11 or the final year of secondary school. The state-funded cohort includes provider type and

highest qualification aim and breakdowns by various pupil characteristics (as recorded at academic age 15), prior attainment at level 2 and by geographies based on the school location (at academic age 15).

There are differences for the all-institution and state-funded cohorts however trends are consistent (see following chart). Attainment for all-institutions, which includes young people in independent settings in year 11, is higher than those in mainstream state-funded only.



Participation rates

Participation in this release is a snapshot of activity at the end of the calendar year and includes participation from all providers including schools, further education/sixth form colleges, apprenticeships and higher education institutions.

Overall participation rates in Higher Education (HE) by age group, including by age 25 are published in [Participation measures in higher education](#) and should be used for official HE participation measures. It provides a cohort-based measure of participation, monitoring school cohorts of 15-year-olds through time to create a percentage of those who have participated in higher education (HE). It includes statistics on the proportion of people who have participated in HE by age 25, including those who are no longer actively in HE at age 25 but had participated in HE at a younger age. It also includes participation by other ages, as well as breakdowns by sex, free school meal eligibility, and level of study (levels 4 to 8).

Breakdowns included

The release includes full population analysis by single age, sex, type of learning, provider type and highest qualification aim.

Additional breakdowns of post 16 activity by pupil characteristics and geography are available for those young people educated in the English state-sector at age 15.

The release commentary focuses on:

- ages 16-17, those required to remain in compulsory education following [RPA legislation](#) ?
- age 18, the first year post compulsory education
- ages 18-21, to give a picture of young people in post compulsory education

Estimates for ages 19-21 are included for the first time in this release and are [Official statistics in development](#) ?.

Full methodology

For further background information on these statistics, including on the data sources, qualifications and the methodology, please see the accompanying [methodology](#). Underlying data is also published alongside this release.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this publication at post16.statistics@education.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)

Other sources of participation and NEET estimates

Participation and NEET figures are also published in other statistics releases. The table below provides a summary of the related releases.

Title	This release: Participation in education, training and employment age 16-21	Participation measures in higher education	NEET age 16 to 24 in England	Young people NEET in the UK	Local authority NEET and participation: Age 16-17, England
Producer	Department for Education	Department for Education	Department for Education	Office for National Statistics	Department for Education
Status	Accredited Official Statistics	Official Statistics	Official statistics in development	Official statistics in development	Transparency data
Age range	16-21	16-25	16-24	16-24	16-17
Age type	Academic age[1]	Academic age[1]	Academic age[1]	Actual age	Academic age[1]
Country	England	UK	England	UK	England
Regional breakdowns	Yes (education and apprenticeships)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
LA breakdown	Yes (education and apprenticeships)	No	No	No	Yes
Data type	Mostly administrative	Administrative	Survey	Survey	Management information
Frequency of publication	Annually	Annually	Annually	Quarterly	Annually
Seasonally adjusted	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	No

When to use?	England participation figures, age 16-21	UK HE initial entrants and estimated percentages of participation	England/regional NEET figures, age 16-24 (includes reasons NEET)	UK NEET figures, age 16-24 (published quarterly so often most timely)	LA/regional NEET (and participation) figures, age 16-17 (includes pupil characteristics)
--------------	--	---	--	---	--

[1] Academic age is defined as ‘age at the start of the academic year’ i.e. age as at 31 August. Actual age is defined as ‘respondents age at the time surveyed’.

Sources

This participation in education, training and employment statistics series are DfE’s (Department for Education’s) definitive statistics on participation in education and apprenticeships. As these estimates are based on administrative data reported by providers, they are considered the most robust available.

DfE’s October to December NEET/NET estimates using the [Labour Force Survey](#) (usually published February/March each year) is survey data where NEET/NET status is self-reported by the young person.

Age 16-17 regional and [local authority NEET estimates \(opens in new tab\)](#) are published annually by DfE as transparency data. Figures on NEETs are provided as an average of December, January and February. This information comes from local authorities NCCIS systems (National Client Caseload Information System) . Some caution should be taken if using the NCCIS figures. This is due to the estimates being based on management information which means they are not produced to the same standards as official/National statistics. Also, the NCCIS figures include ‘not known’ activity, which results in some overestimation of NEET, as can be seen in the chart when comparing the NCCIS figures to the LFS and participation figures.

[Back to top](#)

Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about Participation in education, training and employment age 16 to 21 statistics and data:

Post-16 statistics team

Email: post16.statistics@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Sally Marshall

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

If you have a general enquiry about the Department for Education (DfE) or education:

Phone: 0370 000 2288

Opening times

Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5.30pm (closed on bank holidays)

[Back to top](#)

Is this page useful?

Yes

No

[Report a problem with this page](#)



[Cookies](#) [Privacy notice](#) [Contact us](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Glossary](#) [Help and support](#)

This service is maintained by the [Department for Education](#)

Our statistical practice is regulated by the [Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#)

OGL All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated

Build: 20260714.22



[© Crown copyright](#)