



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

# Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2021 and 2022 (provisional)

Information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24 for 2021 and 2022 (provisional).

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# Introduction

This release provides summary information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales, based on a number of different data sources. Further detail on these sources and the derivation of these statistics is provided in our [methodology note](#).

Final estimates for 2021 are provided along with provisional estimates for 2022 which use the best data currently available for each aspect of participation; this includes some final data, some provisional data and some modelling.

This release provides the definitive source for estimates of the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales. It also contains data for one of the 50 national well-being indicators.

Final estimates for 2021 cover part of the period of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Some of the changes observed may result from conditions brought about by the pandemic. For example, delayed or missed learning, changes to examinations and assessments and changing labour market conditions during the period of the pandemic.

There is additional uncertainty around these estimates, owing to issues with some of the data sources used to derive them. An explanation is provided in the section containing key quality information.

## Main points

### 16 to 18 year olds

- Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education or training decreased from 75.3% in 2021 to 71.8% in 2022.

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- The proportion in employment increased from 35.5% in 2021 to 42.3% in 2022.
- Final estimates for 2021 indicate that the proportion who were NEET increased between 2020 and 2021 to 14.2%, the highest level on record. This increase is largely driven by an increase in the economic inactivity rate (excluding students) for 16 to 18 year olds, though there was also an increase in unemployment.
- Provisional estimates suggest that this proportion decreased to 13.3% in 2022.

## 19 to 24 year olds

- The proportion of 19 to 24 year olds in education or training increased from 38.6% in 2021 to 38.9% in 2022.
- The proportion in employment also increased from 63.2% in 2021 to 63.6% in 2022.
- Final estimates for 2021 indicate that the proportion who were NEET increased from 15.6% in 2020 to 17.3% in 2021. Provisional estimates suggest that this proportion then decreased to 14.6% in 2022.

## Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education and the labour market

Figure 1 shows the trends in participation in education or training, and in employment for 16 to 18 year olds since 2003.

Prior to 2008, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in education or training remained broadly unchanged. Following the start of the recession in 2008, there was an increase in the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in education or training, to levels around 80%. Between 2014 and 2022 the proportion has seen a

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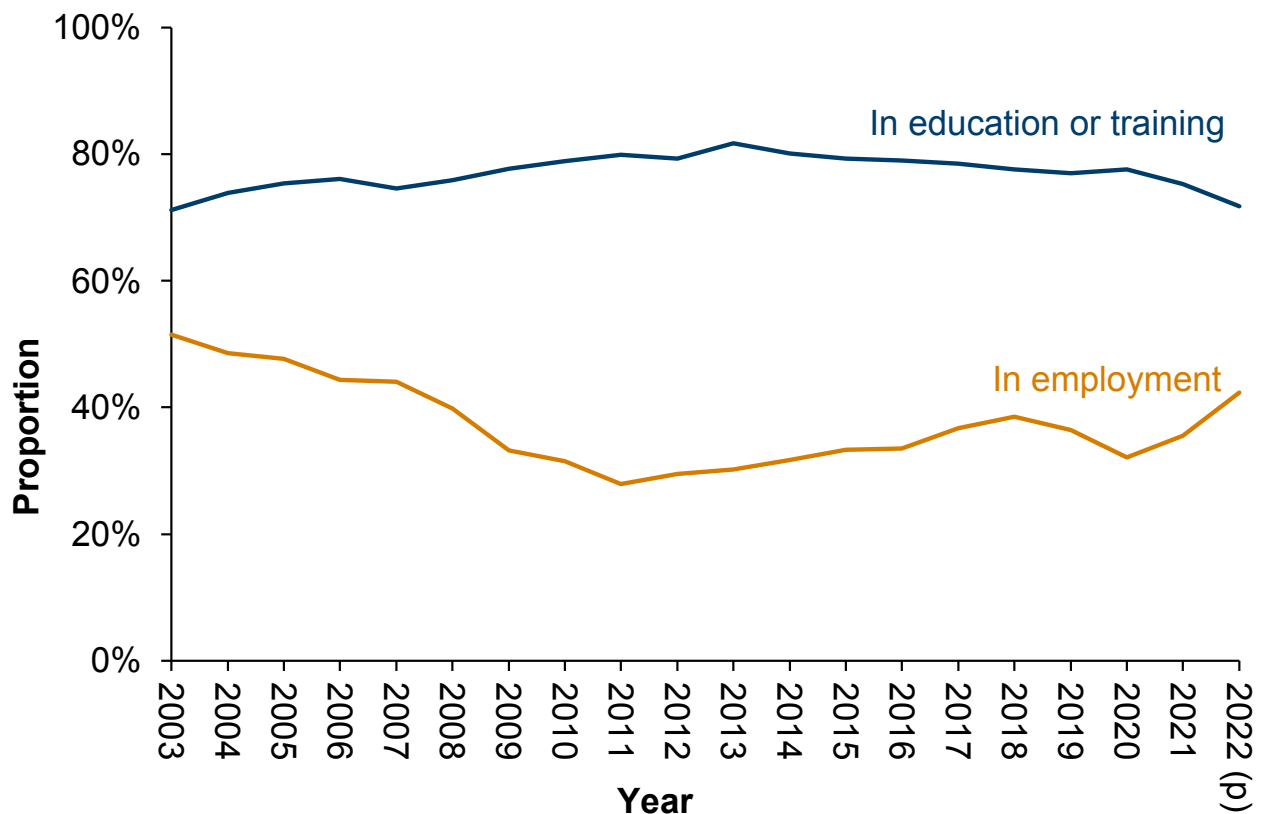
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gradual decrease to 71.8% in 2022.

In contrast, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in employment decreased overall from 2003, decreasing from 51.5% in 2003 to a series low of 27.9% in 2011. After 2011 there was a gradual increase in the proportion in employment, but this fell sharply in 2020 (the first year of the pandemic) by 6.4 percentage points to 32.1%. This was followed by a recovery in 2021 and 2022, rising to 42.3% in 2022.

**Figure 1: Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education and the labour market, 2003 to 2022**



Description of Figure 1: A line chart showing the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds

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in education or training remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2020, however the proportion has decreased since. The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in employment decreased between 2003 and 2011, however has generally increased since despite a fall in 2019 and 2020.

Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW

Note: An individual may be in both education/training and employment.

## Participation of adults and young people (StatsWales)

### Employment

- In 2022, 42.3% of 16 to 18 year olds were in full or part-time employment.
- Approximately 27.4% of 16 to 18 year olds were estimated to be engaged in some type of education or training and in employment in 2022, an increase compared to 24.9% in 2021. Most of these were students in full-time education who were also working part-time.
- In 2022, 14.9% of 16 to 18 year olds were in full or part-time employment but not in education or training, an increase from 10.6% in 2021.

### Education and training

- In total, 71.8% of 16 to 18 year olds were engaged in some kind of education or training (full or part-time) in 2022, a decrease from 75.3% in 2021.
- Participation in full-time education was 59.4%, down 3.7 percentage points compared to 63.1% in 2021.
- A higher proportion of females aged 16 to 18 were in full-time education in 2022 – 61.4% compared with 57.4% of males.
- By single year of age, 68.1% of all 16 year olds were undertaking full-time education in 2022 compared with 60.2% of 17 year olds and 49.4% of 18

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year olds.

- Participation in training was higher for males than for females. In total, 6,800 16 to 18 year olds were engaged in training (both work-based learning courses and job-related training) in 2022. This is comprised of approximately 4,400 (7.9%) males and 2,400 (4.6%) females.

## Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- An estimated 14,400 16 to 18 year olds (13.3%) were NEET in 2022, compared to 14,900 (14.2%) in 2021.
- The number of 16 to 18 year olds who were NEET in 2022 comprised of 3,500 (3.2%) unemployed young people and 10,900 (10.1%) who were economically inactive (excluding students). This compares to 4,600 (4.4%) unemployed young people and 10,300 (9.8%) who were economically inactive (excluding students) in 2021.
- In 2022, 11.2% of males aged 16 to 18 were NEET, a decrease of 4.1 percentage points compared to 2021. For females, 15.5% were NEET in 2022 compared to 12.9% in 2021.

## Participation of 19 to 24 year olds in education and the labour market

Figure 2 shows the trends in participation in education or training, and in employment for 19 to 24 year olds since 2003.

The proportion in education or training remained broadly unchanged over this period at around 37% to 39%, with the latest data estimating the value at 38.9% in 2022.

In contrast, the proportion in employment decreased after the 2008 recession

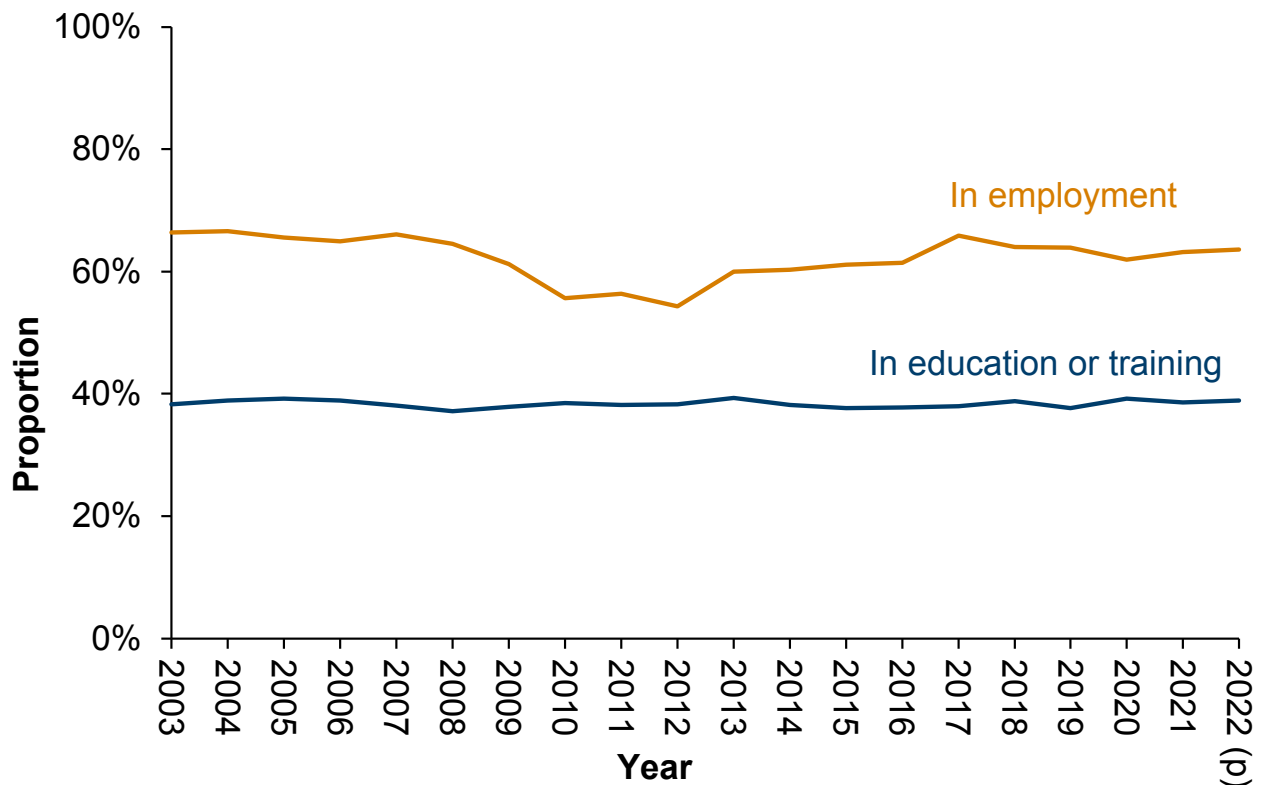
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until 2010, and then gradually increased to reach 65.9% in 2017. The proportion has fluctuated since then, falling to 61.9% in 2020, and rising to 63.6% in 2022.

**Figure 2: Participation of 19 to 24 year olds in education and the labour market, 2003 to 2022**



Description of Figure 2: A line chart showing the proportion of 19 to 24 year olds in education or training has remained relatively stable since 2003. The proportion of 19 to 24 year olds in employment decreased during the recession in 2008 before a period of growth between 2010 and 2017. Since 2017, the proportion in employment has fluctuated, with increases in the latest two years.

Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW



Note: An individual may be in both education/training and employment.

## Participation of adults and young people (StatsWales)

### Employment

- In 2022, 63.6% of 19 to 24 year olds were estimated to be in full or part-time employment.
- 46.5% of 19 to 24 year olds were in full or part-time employment but not in education or training in 2022.
- 17.1% of 19 to 24 year olds were engaged in some type of education or training and in employment in 2022. Most of these were either students in full-time education who were also working part-time or students in training who were also working full-time.

### Education and training

- In total, 38.9% of 19 to 24 year olds were engaged in some kind of education or training (full or part-time) in 2022.
- 29.5% of 19 to 24 year olds were in full-time education in 2022, up from 28.8% in 2021.
- A higher proportion of females aged 19 to 24 (32.6%) than males aged 19 to 24 (26.7%) were in full-time education in 2022.
- There were 12,400 (5.2%) 19 to 24 year olds engaged in training (both work-based learning courses and job-related training) in 2022, with participation amongst females at 4.6% and males at 5.8%.
- Participation in full-time education decreased with age. Of all 19 year olds, 52.4% were in full-time education in 2022 compared with 20.8% of 22 year olds and 10.0% of 24 year olds.

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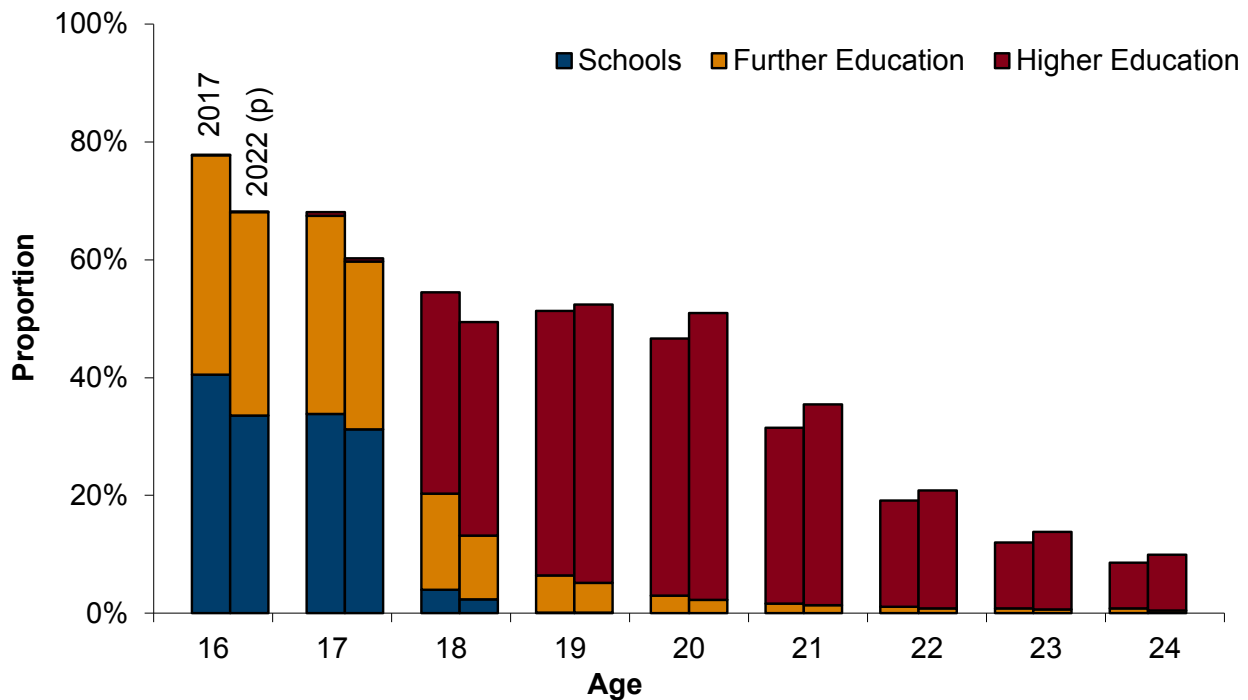
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## Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- An estimated 34,500 of 19 to 24 year olds (14.6%) were NEET in 2022, a decrease compared to 17.3% in 2021.
- In 2022, 11.2% of females aged 19 to 24 were NEET, a decrease of 5.9 percentage points compared to 2021. This is driven by an increase in the proportion of those in employment and a decrease in the proportion of those who were economically inactive.
- For males aged 19 to 24, 17.6% were NEET in 2022 compared to 17.4% in 2021.
- The 34,500 19 to 24 year olds estimated to be NEET in 2022 comprised of 9,700 (4.1%) unemployed young people and 24,800 (10.5%) who were economically inactive (excluding students). Both proportions decreased when compared to 2021 (4.8% and 12.5%, respectively).

Figure 3 compares participation in full-time education by level of study in 2022 with the position in 2017. Whilst participation in full-time education decreases with age, the participation rates of those aged 19 to 24 were higher in 2022 than 5 years earlier. For those aged 16, the proportion in full time education decreased by 9.7 percentage points between 2017 and 2022. This proportion decreased by 7.9 percentage points for those aged 17 and by 5.1 percentage points for those aged 18, over the same time period.

**Figure 3: Participation in full-time education by level of study and age, 2017 and 2022**



Description of Figure 3: A stacked bar chart showing that a higher proportion of those aged 19 to 24 were in full-time education in 2022 compared to 2017, whereas a smaller proportion of those aged 16 to 18 were in full-time education over the same periods. For those aged 16 and 17, School and Further Education are the two main types of full-time education, however for those aged 18 and above this changes to Higher Education.

Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW

### Participation of adults and young people (StatsWales)

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# National indicator and national milestone

This release contains data for one of the national wellbeing indicators (Indicator 22: percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups).

There is a national milestone associated with this indicator – ‘at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050’. Whilst this release considers data for 16 to 18 year olds and 19 to 24 year olds separately, the national milestone is based on the full 16 to 24 age range.

Provisional estimates show that 85.8% of 16 to 24 year olds were in education, employment or training in 2022, up from 83.7% in 2021.

## Policy and operational context

This release presents the annual snapshot of participation of young people in education and the labour market. The statistics are used within the Welsh Government to monitor trends in the level of participation in education and training, and the proportion of young people who are NEET.

The **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** was originally published in 2013 and was refreshed in September 2022. The Framework is a systematic mechanism to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. It focuses on young people aged 11 to 18 and is built of 6 core components:

1. Early identification
2. Brokerage
3. Monitoring progression

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4. Provision
5. Employability and employment opportunities
6. Accountability.

These statistics are of relevance to **Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills**. The technical annex for the strategy refers to the national indicator based on data from this release (see also the Well-being of Future Generations Act section below). These statistics are also part of the evidence base for the **Young Persons Guarantee**.

## Quality information

### Relevance

The statistics are used within the Welsh Government to monitor trends in the level of participation in education and training, and the proportion of young people who are NEET.

Other key users of these statistics include:

- members of the Senedd and the Research Service in the Welsh Parliament
- other government departments
- students, academics and universities

### Accuracy

### Sampling variability

The economic status proportions are estimated from the Annual Population

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Survey. Therefore, these estimates will be subject to variation due to sampling error and also non-sampling error and should be treated with caution. As a result changes in trend need to be interpreted with a degree of caution, as changes could be attributed to sampling effects as well as real effects. Currently it is not possible to distinguish between these impacts.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recalibrated the weights of Annual Population Survey datasets for periods covering the year ending 2020 quarter 1 to the year ending 2021 quarter 4. Further information on this reweighting and its impact is available in an article published by the ONS on the [Impact of reweighting the Labour Force Survey \(Office for National Statistics\)](#).

## Revisions policy

Provisional 2022 figures will be finalised in next year's publication, due for release in July 2024. The following table shows the difference between the 2021 provisional estimates published in last year's release and the final published estimate for the key series of the proportion who are NEET, and the proportion in education or training.

**Table 1a: Difference between provisional and final data for 16 to 18 year olds, 2021**

	NEET: number	NEET: per cent	In education or training: number	In education or training: per cent
<b>Provisional</b>	14,200	13.6	80,000	76.3
<b>Final</b>	14,900	14.2	79,200	75.3

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	NEET: number	NEET: per cent	In education or training: number	In education or training: per cent
<b>Difference</b>	700	0.6	-800	-1.0

**Table 1b: Difference between provisional and final data for 19 to 24 year olds, 2021**

	NEET: number	NEET: per cent	In education or training: number	In education or training: per cent
<b>Provisional</b>	37,800	16.3	97,000	41.9
<b>Final</b>	39,600	17.3	88,500	38.6
<b>Difference</b>	1,800	0.9	-8,500	-3.3

These are larger revisions than those generally seen when provisional estimates are updated with final data. This is partly due to downward revisions in the number of young people in full-time and part-time education between last year's provisional data and the final data available for this release.

Revisions for earlier years are only made in line with revisions to source data. Totals may not match due to rounding.

Further information is available in the [Participation of young people in education and the labour market methodology note](#).

## Population data

Mid-year population estimates up to and including 2021 (based on the 2021 Census for 2021 estimates, and the 2011 census for earlier years), along with 2020-based population projections, are used in deriving these participation estimates. The Office for National Statistics will be publishing rebased mid-year population estimates and updated projections in November 2023. As a result, we intend to revise previously published participation estimates in next year's release.

This issue may also affect data from the Annual Population Survey.

## Comparisons with previous years

There were changes made in the data sources and methodology used to derive the participation estimates introduced for the year end 2004 edition. Care should be taken when comparing earlier estimates with estimates from year end 2004 onwards. Please contact us for advice before using comparisons with previous years.

In particular the following changes need to be taken into account when making comparisons with previous years:

## Further education and work-based learning

The LLWR replaced the Individualised Student Record (ISR) from the start of the academic year 2004/05, therefore a discontinuity may result from the change in data collection. Prior to the academic year 2004/05 work-based learning activity was collected via the National Trainee Database (NTD). The NTD included college based WBL trainees, who were also included in the number of FE

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enrolments. This double counting has been removed with the collection of WBL activity via LLWR by the introduction of a unique identifier that is common to the learner no matter where their activity takes place.

## **Economic activity**

For 2001 to 2003 economic activity was based on the Welsh Local Labour Force Surveys (WLLFS), with a similar sample size to the APS. Prior to 2001/02, economic activity was estimated using the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

## **Timeliness and punctuality**

This Statistical Release is published annually, usually in July, and covers the preceding year end (provisional data) and the year earlier (final data). It was published later this year due to a delay in the publication of schools census data, which provides information used in producing the estimates in this report.

## **Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics and Research website of the Welsh Government. All underlying data for this release as well as other years are available on the [StatsWales website](#).

## **Comparability and coherence**

For this release, participation in education and the labour market has been estimated using population, education and work-based learning data along with the Annual Population Survey (APS) to estimate the labour market status. Further information on these sources and the derivation of the statistics

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presented in this release is available in our [methodology note](#).

In addition to this release we publish a bulletin [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#) to provide users with more timely and detailed (but less statistically robust) NEET statistics based on the APS only.

## National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2012 following [a full assessment against the Code of Practice](#).

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Included a number of visuals showing long term trends as well as commentary on these trends
- Eliminated un-necessary tables from the release as they are freely available of [StatsWales](#)

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It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016 and this release includes one of the national indicators:

- (22) Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of

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local wellbeing produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in their areas.

The Act states national milestones must be set that “...the Welsh Ministers consider would assist in measuring whether progress is being made towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals.” In doing so Welsh Ministers must specify how we know that a national milestone has been achieved and the time by which it is to be achieved.

National milestones are not performance targets for any individual organisation, but are collective measures of success for Wales.

In this release indicator 22: percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups corresponds to a national milestone:

- At least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [labourmarket.stats@gov.wales](mailto:labourmarket.stats@gov.wales).

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