



## Further Education, Work-based Learning and Adult Learning in Wales, 2021/22

28 Feb 2023  
SFR 19/2023

This release covers the academic year from August 2021 to July 2022. Education provision was disrupted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from March 2020 onwards and impacts may still be seen in the figures presented in this release. This should be kept in mind, particularly when comparing with previous years.

**149,350 unique learners** enrolled on one or more learning activity within FE institutions, adult learning or WBL providers during 2021/22. This was a rise of 5% compared with 2020/21.

There were **119,300 unique learners at Further Education (FE) institutions**, an increase of around 10% on the previous year. This increase was mostly driven by a recovery in the number of part-time learners at FEIs (up 28%), to numbers not seen since 2018/19. The number of full-time learners at FEIs decreased by 5% but learners undertaking WBL at FEIs increased by 7%.

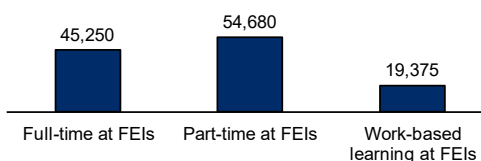
There were **43,755 unique learners in work-based Learning (WBL) provision** compared with 51,740 in 2020/21. 37% were undertaking level 3 apprenticeships and 36% were undertaking foundation apprenticeships.

There were around **3% fewer apprenticeship learning programmes started** within 2021/22 compared with the previous year.

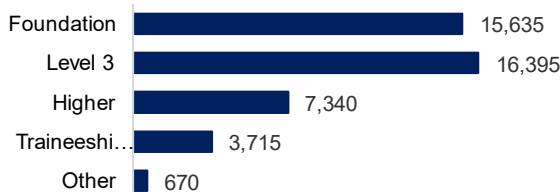
There were **10,440 unique learners in adult learning**, **88%** higher than the previous year, so it was at the highest level since 2018/19.

There are overlaps between the different areas of learning – for example, work-based learning at FEIs and adult learning at FEIs.

Unique learners at FEIs by mode of study



Unique learners in WBL provision by programme type



### About this release

This statistical first release for 2021/22 summarises information on post-16 learning collected through the Welsh Government's Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). The data coverage includes provision at Further Education (FE) institutions, Work-based Learning (WBL) providers and Adult Learning providers, but excludes enrolments at Higher Education institutions and at school sixth forms. Additional detail is available on the Welsh Government's interactive data dissemination service [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

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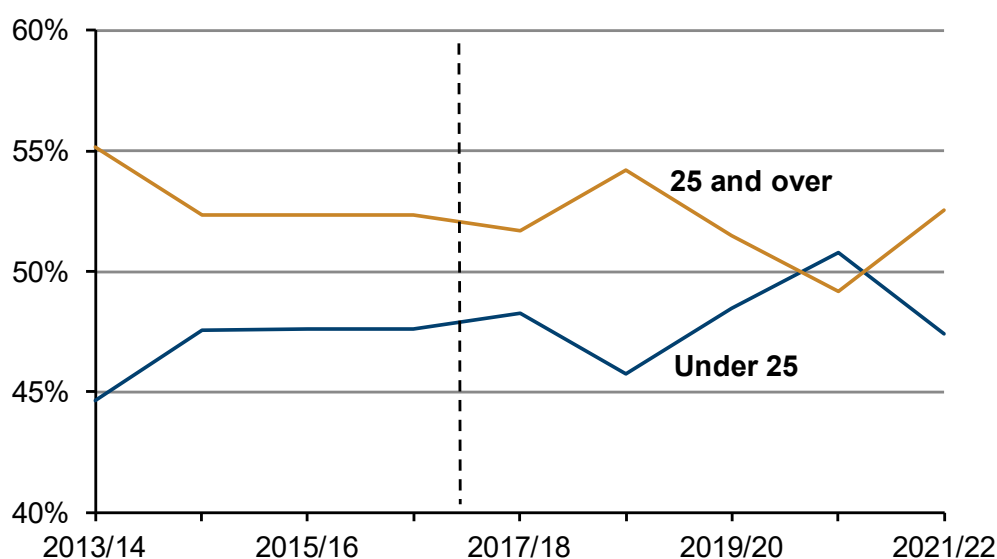
## Unique learners enrolled

A **unique learner** is defined by the learner's unique learner identifier supplied by the Welsh Government. Figures are adjusted for any multiple counting of learners within different institutions or provision types.

### Under 25s make up just under half of all learners

In 2021/22, 47% of learners were under 25. The proportion of learners aged 25 and over has varied over the years but has generally remained at more than half of learners, and this situation returned in 2021/22, having been slightly below half in the previous year.

**Chart 1a: Percentage of learners at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers by age, 2013/14 to 2021/22 [note 1] [note 2]**



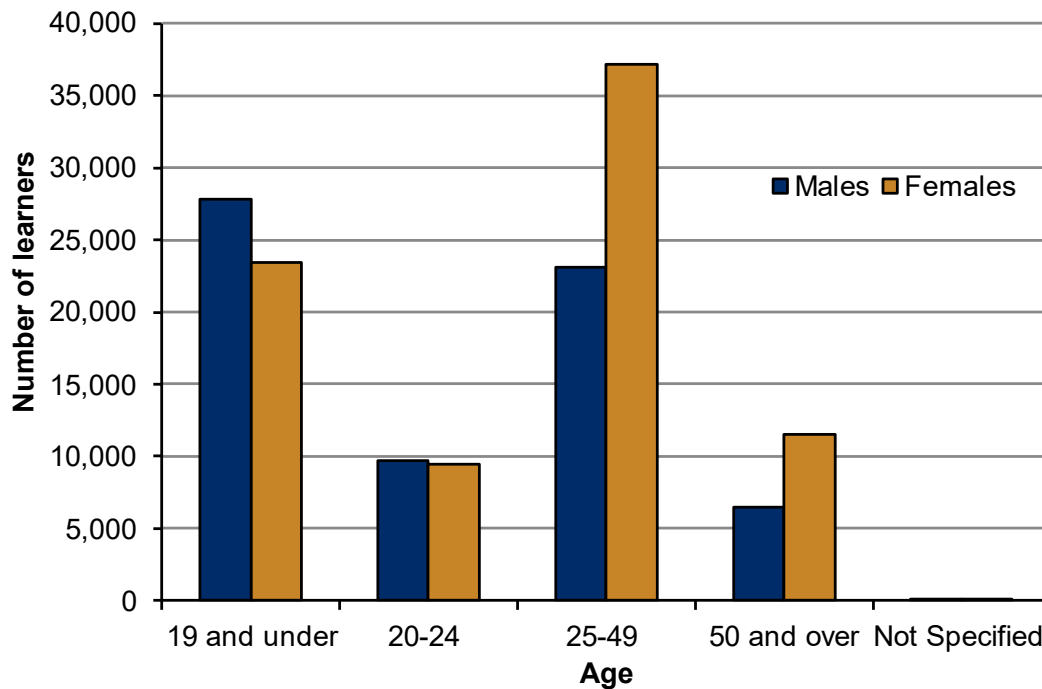
[Note 1] Age at 31 August 2021.

[Note 2] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection. See the section on [comparability and coherence](#) for more information.

### Females outnumbered males at age 25 and above

78,490 learners were aged 25 and over, of which 62% were female and 38% were male. This gender profile is mainly driven through part-time programmes, including adult learning and work-based learning (WBL) programmes [Chart 3a]. 70,835 learners were aged under 25, of which 47% were female and 53% were male.

**Chart 1b: Unique learners at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers by age and gender, 2021/22 [note 1]**

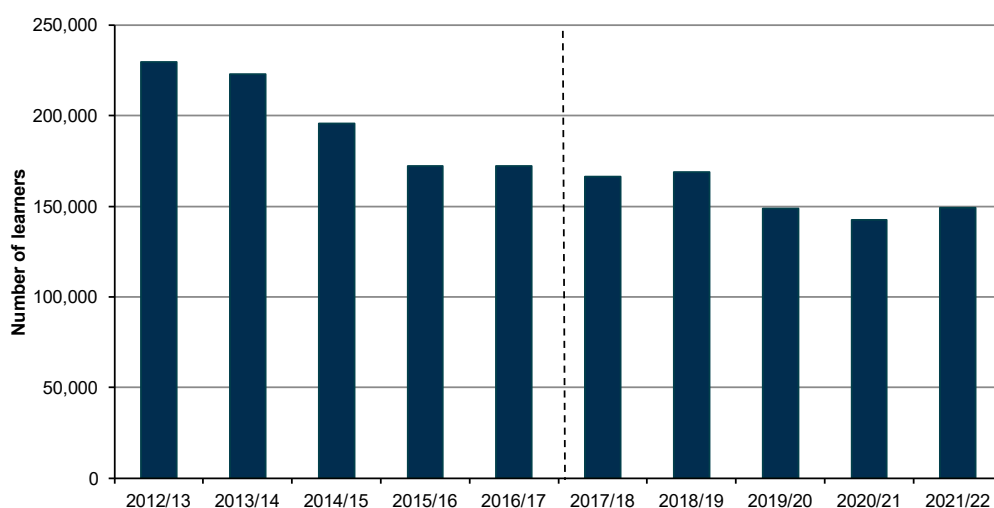


[Note 1] Age as at 31 August 2021

**Learner numbers rose in 2021/22 after falls in the previous two years.**

Chart 2a illustrates the overall trend in learner numbers within FE institutions, total WBL provision and adult learning. Further detail is given in charts 2b, 2c and 2d. Note that there are overlaps between the different areas of learning – i.e. work-based learning at FEIs and adult learning at FEIs.

**Chart 2a: Learner numbers at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]**

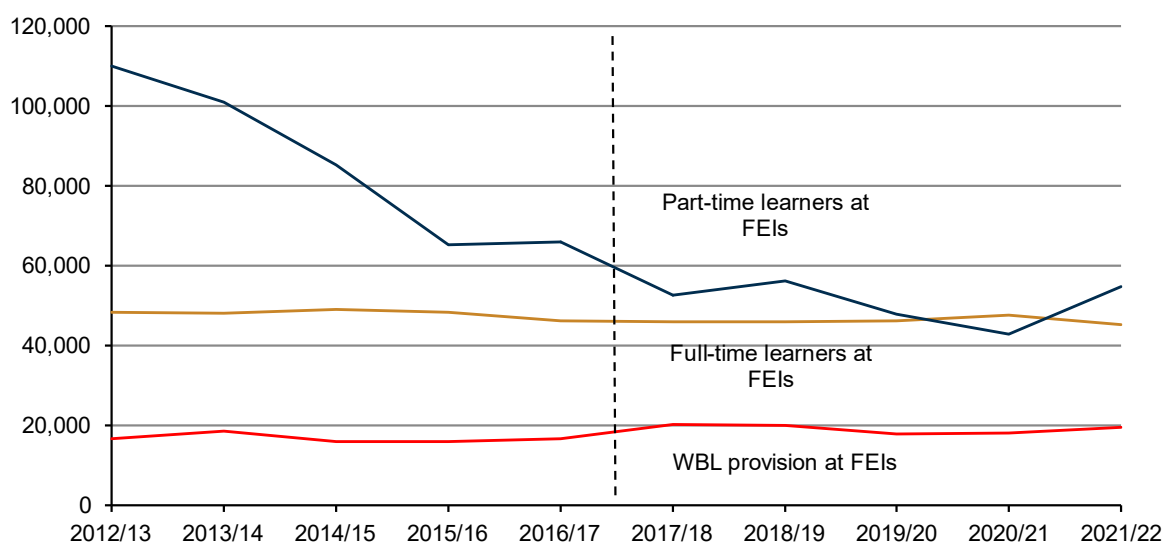


[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection

The number of part-time learners at FEIs recovered and is above the number of full-time learners again

The number of part-time learners at FEIs increased by 28% between 2020/21 and 2021/22. At the same time, the number of full-time learners at FEIs decreased by 5%, meaning that there were more part-time learners than full-time learners again in 2021/22. The number of work-based learners at FEIs increased by 7%.

**Chart 2b: Learners at further education institutions, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]**

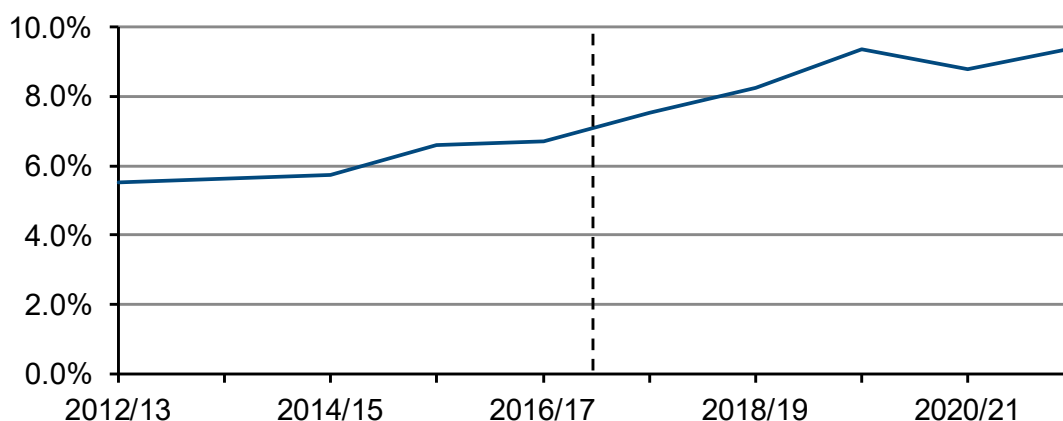


[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

The proportion of learners that have a disability and/or learning difficulty and the proportion that come from Ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities) have generally increased since 2012/13, although there have been slight falls in the disability proportion for the last three years.

## Ethnicity

**Chart 2c: Proportion of learners at further education institutions from Ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities), 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1] [note 2]**



[Note 1] Percentage is calculated with learners whose ethnicity was not known or refused removed from the total

[Note 2] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

The latest data for 2021/22 shows that there were 9.4% of learners at further education institutions from Ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities). This proportion had been steadily increasing since 2012/13, apart from a fall in 2020/21.

**Chart 2d: Home unitary authority of learners in further education, work-based learning and adult learning by ethnic background, 2021/22**

	White	Black, African, Caribbean,	Asian, Asian British	Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic groups	Information refused / not known
All	127,090	2,575	3,910	2,460	2,995	10,320
Isle of Anglesey	2,750	5	15	25	25	200
Gwynedd	4,695	15	50	40	65	380
Conwy	4,170	15	45	55	50	360
Denbighshire	3,735	20	70	55	50	320
Flintshire	6,730	15	55	50	40	910
Wrexham	6,050	70	85	60	65	895
Powys	3,630	10	65	50	40	490
Ceredigion	2,305	5	15	30	40	165
Pembrokeshire	6,125	20	65	85	40	115
Carmarthenshire	7,905	20	85	80	100	265
Swansea	11,175	375	510	195	575	525
Neath Port Talbot	7,270	25	135	95	50	470
Bridgend	6,445	45	85	90	55	265
The Vale of Glamorgan	4,795	40	125	145	70	420
Rhondda Cynon Taf	9,895	70	100	115	95	780
Merthyr Tydfil	2,905	10	40	30	25	400
Caerphilly	7,800	30	65	90	45	775
Blaenau Gwent	3,735	5	30	35	30	325
Torfaen	4,470	20	75	70	20	200
Monmouthshire	2,280	15	30	25	30	145
Newport	4,760	335	535	210	315	465
Cardiff	10,410	1,365	1,565	775	1,145	1,190
Unknown/Outside Wales	3,055	40	60	60	30	270

Learners from Ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities) are heavily concentrated in the South Wales cities: Cardiff, followed by Swansea and Newport. For example over half of learners with Black, African, Caribbean, Black British backgrounds lived in Cardiff and 4 in 5 lived in one of the three big South Wales cities.

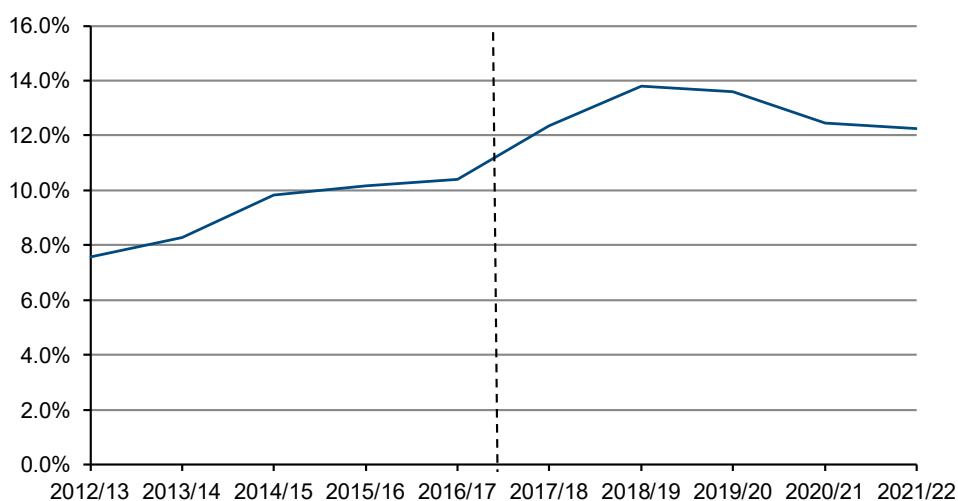
Representation varies between further education, work-based learning and adult learning. Further information is provided in [table 3](#).

## Disability

The Welsh Government accepts the Social Model of Disability, in which it is recognised that barriers in society act to disable people who have impairments or health conditions or who use British Sign Language.

The Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), which is the source of data for this release, captures data using the medical definition of disability (“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term impact on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”). In the LLWR, learners are asked if they have a “disability and/or learning difficulty” – this data is used here.

**Chart 2e: Proportion of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a disability and/or learning difficulty, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]**



[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

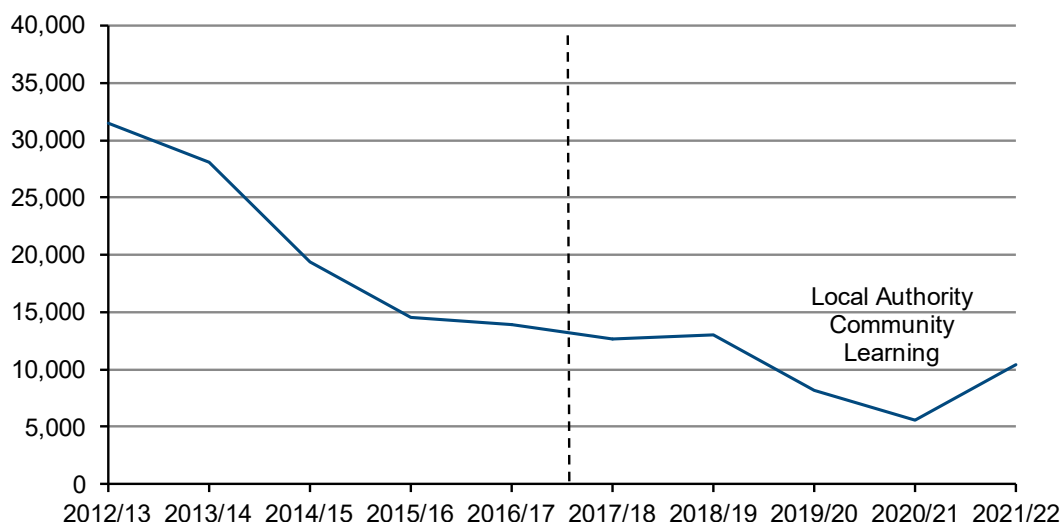
The latest data for 2021/22 shows that 12.3% of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a “disability and/or learning difficulty”. This proportion has decreased over the last three years, having previously increased steadily since 2013/14.

A wider range of data by protected characteristics can be found in our reports on [StatsWales](#).

### Unique learners in adult learning in 2021/22 rose by 88% to 10,440

The overall number of adult learning learners increased by 88% compared with the previous year [Table 2, Chart 2c]. This reversed a longer term decreasing trend in adult learning, but could have resulted from a larger than normal fall in the previous year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The longer term fall can be linked to reductions in public funding, with providers now encouraged to target their provision at developing the basic skills of adults and instead delivering leisure and recreational activity on a full cost recovery basis.

**Chart 2f: Learners in adult learning, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]**

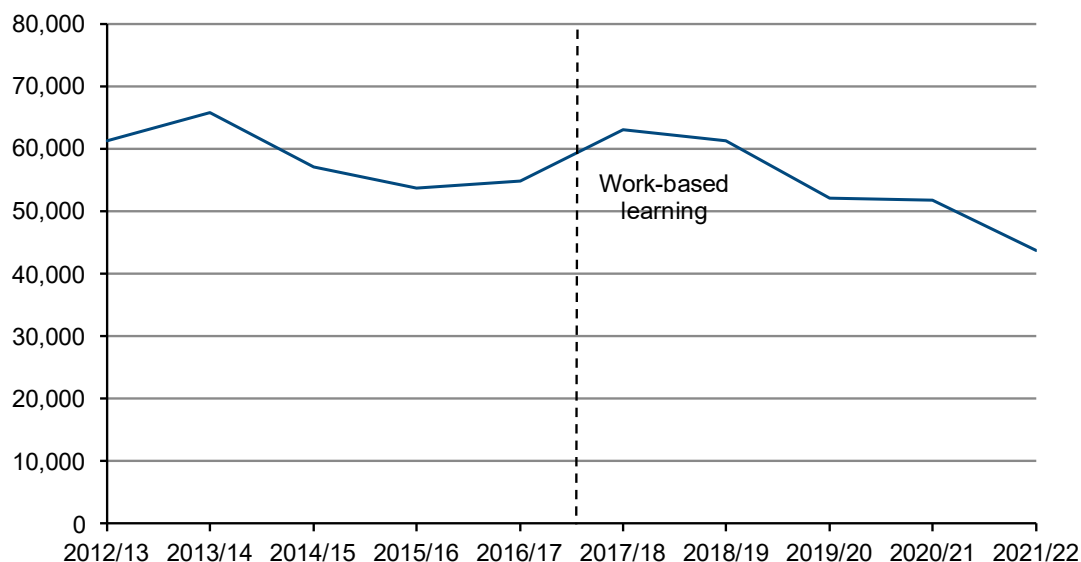


[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

**The number of learners in work-based learning has seen a further decrease.**

The overall number of apprenticeship and traineeship learners within work-based learning provision has seen a decrease of 15% compared with the previous year [Table 2, Chart 2d]. This can be partly explained by the end of traineeships in March 2022. Traineeships were replaced by the Jobs Growth Wales+ programme, statistics for which can be found in the quarterly [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) reports.

**Chart 2g: Learners within work-based learning provision, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]**



[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.



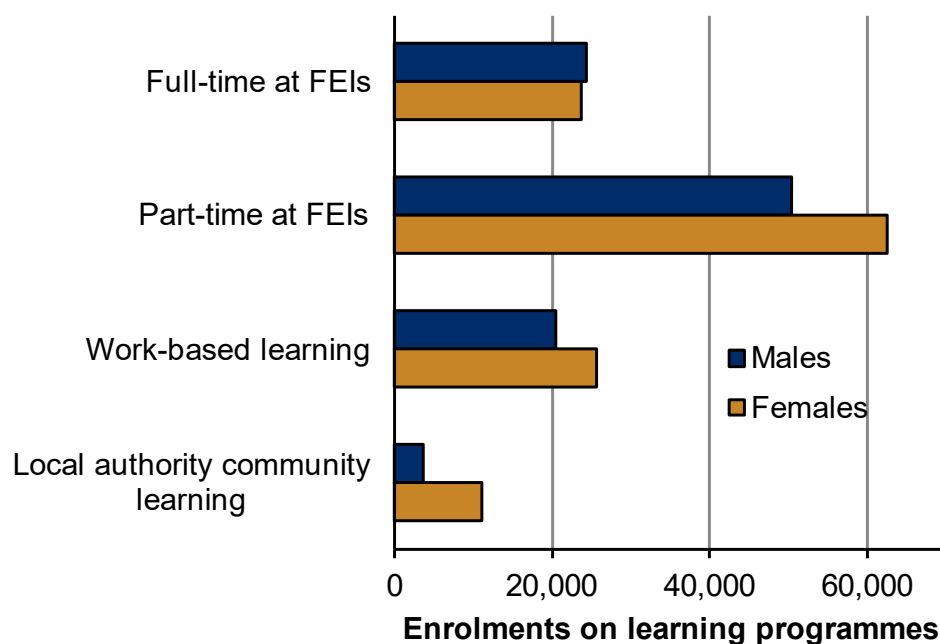
## Learning programmes

A **learning programme** is a defined period of learning undertaken by the learner. A learner can be recorded on multiple learning programmes in a single academic year and therefore learning programme counts can be larger than learner counts, which do not include this element of multiple counting. Further details can be found in the notes at the end of this release.

There were more learning programmes being undertaken by females than males

Over the academic year 2021/22 there were 222,605 active learning programmes in total. This includes new enrolments in the 2021/22 academic year and any learning programmes continuing from previous academic years. Of these, 58% were part-time, 22% were full-time and 21% were in WBL [Chart 3a, Table 4]. 55% of all learning programmes were undertaken by female learners.

**Chart 3a: Learning programmes at further education institutions, adult learning or work-based learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2021/22**



### FE Provision (excluding adult learning)

During the 2021/22 academic year, 161,610 further education learning programmes were recorded. Around 30% of these were full-time.

### Adult Learning Provision

14,795 learning programmes were recorded in 2021/22. The number of distinct learners enrolled on adult learning activities was 10,440 (see Table 2).

## Work-based Learning Programmes

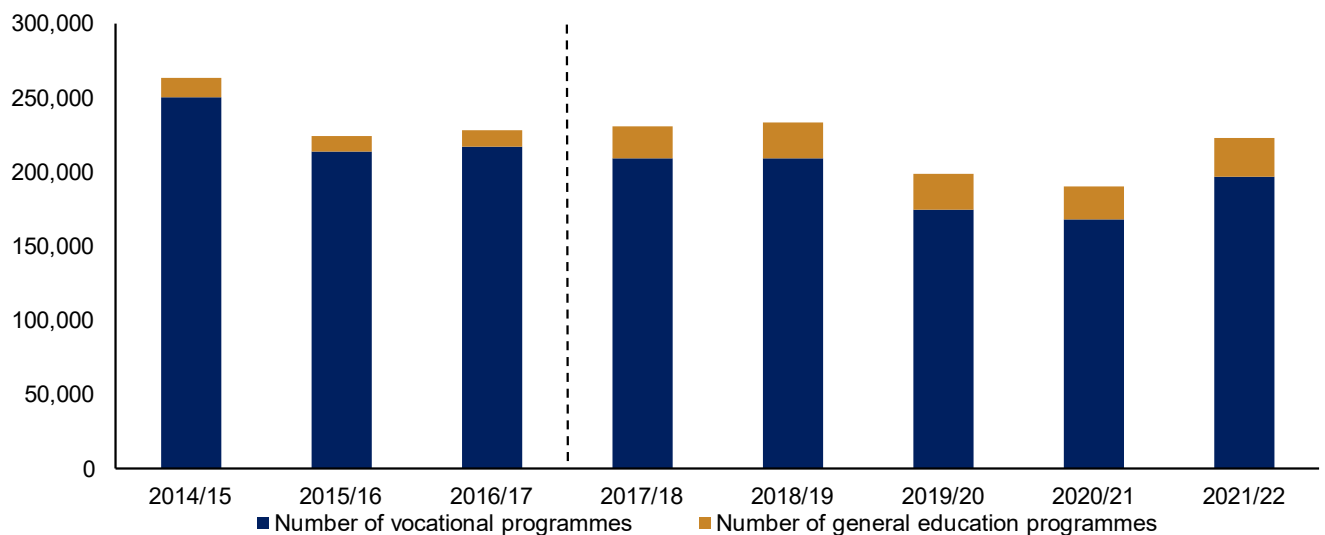
46,195 learning programmes were recorded in 2021/22 within work-based provision, of which 20,000 were provided by FE institutions (including those participating as members of consortia) and 26,195 by other training providers. Table 5 provides a breakdown by programme type.

The proportion of vocational programmes has remained constant.

For the purposes of this analysis, **vocational** learning programmes are defined as all WBL programmes and any programme in FE or adult learning not identified as a GCSE, AS level, A level or International Baccalaureate learning programme.

Over the academic year 2021/22 there were 196,475 vocational programmes - 88% of all programmes, the same proportion as the previous two years.

**Chart 3b: Vocational learning programmes at further education institutions, adult learning or work-based learning providers, 2014/15 to 2021/22 [note 1]**



[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

## The number of apprenticeship learning programmes started has decreased.



The overall number of new apprenticeship learning programmes started for all foundation, level 3 and higher apprenticeship programmes was 20,040 during 2021/22 - this is 3% lower than in 2020/21. The number of new apprenticeship programmes started peaked at 31,360 in 2017/18.

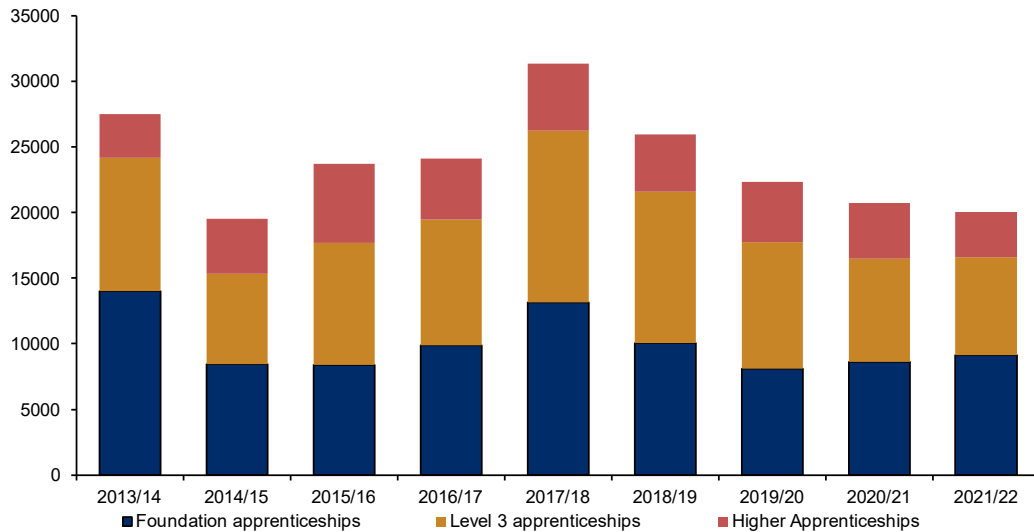
Apprenticeship programmes can start at any point during the academic year, unlike programmes undertaken in further education, which tend to start at the beginning of the academic year. Learners often continue working towards their apprenticeship into the following academic year. The effects of the Coronavirus pandemic may have affected the number of starts over the last few years. [Table 5, chart 4a].

New work-based learning contract arrangements came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. This resulted in the transfer of around 4,800 existing apprentices to new providers with new programme records created on the Lifelong Learning Wales Record. New programme records resulting from a transfer are usually included in the statistics on apprenticeship starts with the exception of the target measure. For 2021/22, however, we excluded the records as so many learners were transferred that the statistics would have presented a misleading picture of apprenticeship starts in that quarter had they been left in.

Having met the previous target, the Welsh Government set a new target to introduce 125,000 all-age apprenticeships within the 2021-2026 Senedd term. Progress towards this target is assessed using a more rigorous measure, which takes account of early dropouts (within first 8 weeks) and transfers between apprenticeships. By the end of 2021/22 there have been 22,085 of this type of apprenticeship start since the start of the target in May 2021.

Quarterly statistics on [apprenticeship learning programmes started](#) will continue to be updated to reflect progress towards the target according to the pre-announced timetable.

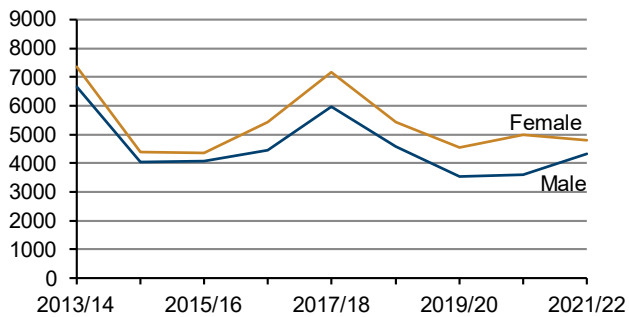
**Chart 4a: Apprenticeship learning programmes started, 2013/14 to 2021/22**



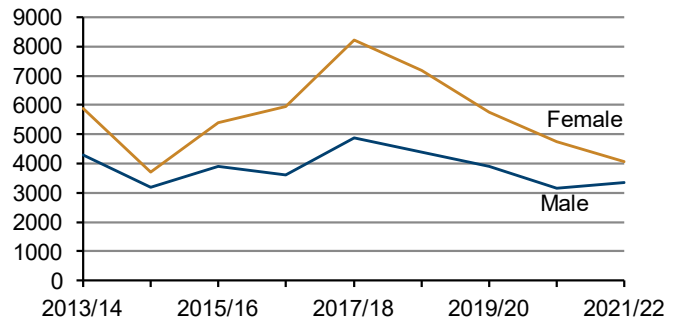
**Females continue to contribute to more apprenticeship programmes started**

**Chart 4b: Trends in apprenticeship learning programmes started by gender, 2013/14 to 2021/22**

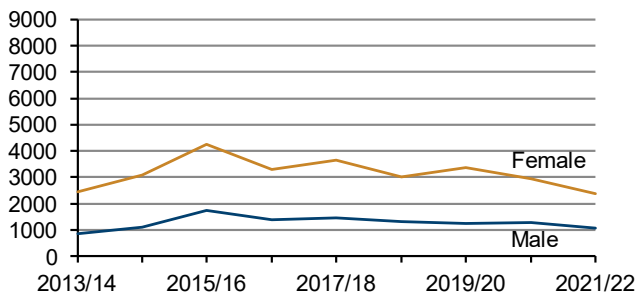
**Foundation apprenticeships:**



**Level 3 apprenticeships:**



**Higher apprenticeships:**



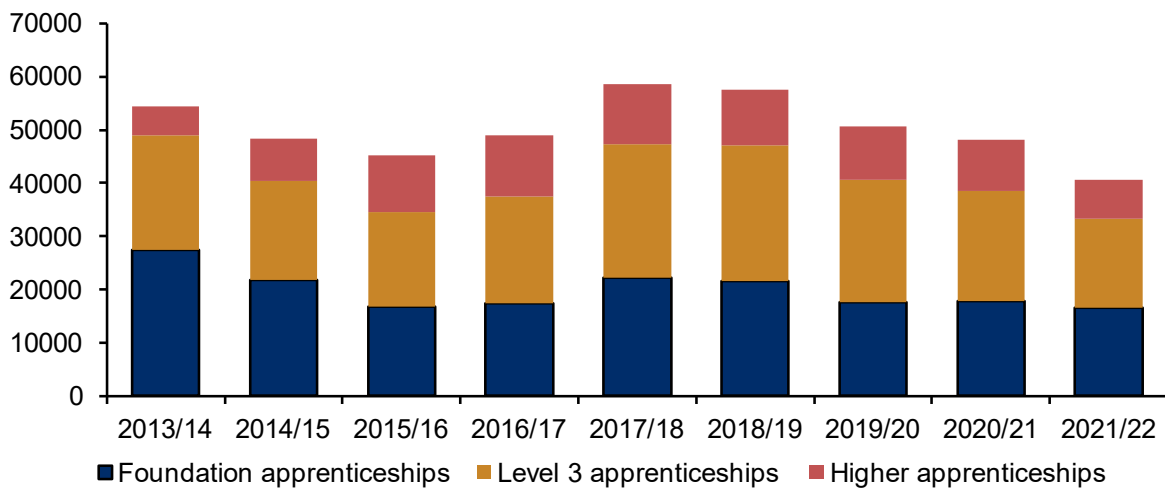
**56%** of all apprenticeship learner programmes were started by females. A slightly lower proportion than the 61% seen last year. The number of apprenticeship programmes started by females decreased by 11% on the previous year, whilst the number of programmes started by males increased by 9%.

More detailed information on apprenticeship learning programmes started, including sector breakdowns, can be found within our [interactive dashboard](#).

## Numbers of apprenticeship learning programmes in progress has decreased

The number of apprenticeship programmes in progress (This includes those programmes started in the academic year and continuing programmes from previous years) for foundation, level 3 and higher apprenticeship programmes was 40,700 during 2021/22 – this is 16% lower than in 2020/21.

**Chart 4c: Apprenticeship learning programmes in progress, 2013/14 to 2021/22**



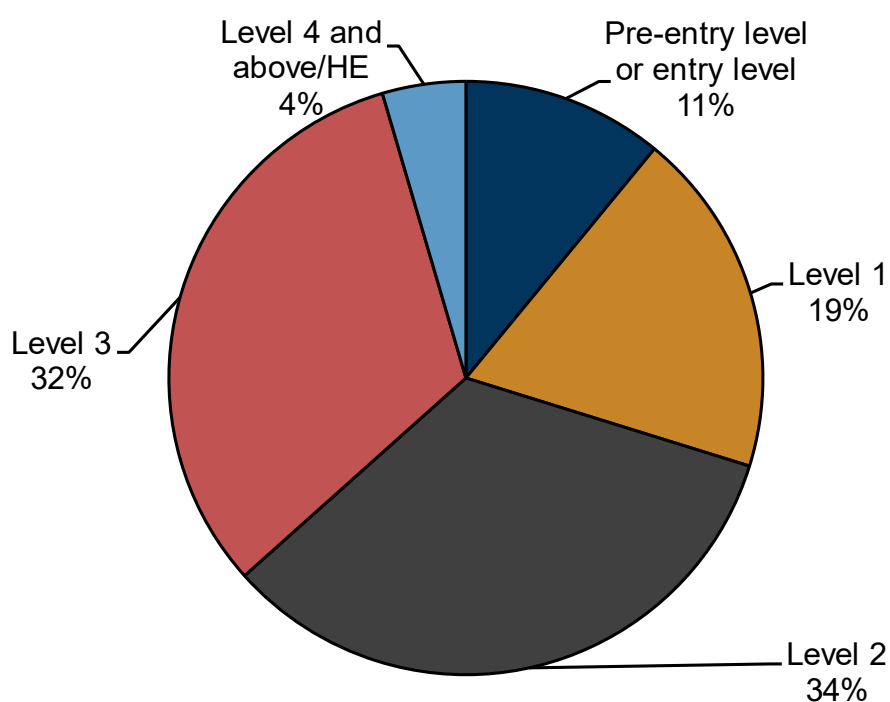
## Learning activities and qualifications

A **learning activity**, typically, is a specific qualification or course pursued by a learner. A learning programme consists of a group of related learning activities. This section includes learning activities in Further Education, Work-based learning and Adult learning.

### Level 2 qualifications accounted for the largest proportion of activities

In 2021/22, there were 429,945 active learning activities. This includes new enrolments in the 2021/22 academic year and any learning activities continuing from previous academic years. This is 2% higher than the previous year (419,555). Of the learning activities for which the [qualification level](#) was known, 19% were at level 1, 34% were at level 2 and 32% were at level 3 [Table 6, Chart 5]. <sup>(a)</sup>

**Chart 5: Learning activities by qualification level, 2021/22 [note 1]**



[Note 1] 17% of qualification levels were unknown or not applicable. For further education and work-based learning provision the figure was 16% but for adult learning provision 28% of qualification levels were unknown or undefined, as is the case for some leisure-related learning activities.

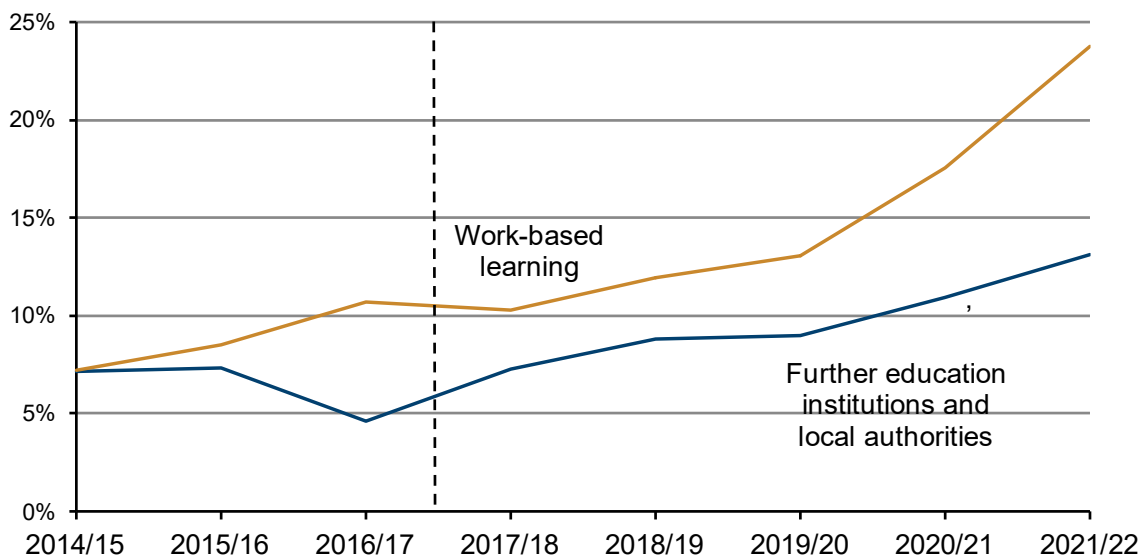
## Welsh medium learning activities

A learning activity can be delivered through the medium of Welsh, English or bilingually. The learning activity is recorded according to the medium of learning and the language of assessment of individuals.

The proportion of learning activities delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements continues to see an upward trend

There were 325,280 learning activities in further education and adult learning in 2021/22, of these 13% were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements. 104,665 learning activities were taken in work-based learning, and of these 24% were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements, the majority of which were recorded under “a small amount of Welsh-medium learning” (82% of all Welsh and bilingual learning activities).

**Chart 6: Proportion of learning activities conducted in Welsh or bilingually according to the type of provider, 2014/15 to 2021/22 [note 1] [note 2]**



[Note 1] Learning activities classified as Welsh or bilingual excludes language learning units. These are units aimed solely at teaching or improving Welsh and are not contextualised to the learner's wider studies.

[Note 2] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

Further breakdowns can be found on [StatsWales](#).

## Tables

**Table 1:** Numbers of learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by age and gender, 2021/22

**Table 2:** Trends in learner numbers at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers, 2017/18 to 2021/22

**Table 3:** Number of learners in further education, work-based learning and adult learning by type of learning in the academic year 2021/22 and ethnic background, compared to the population of Wales in calendar years 2018 to 2020

**Table 4:** Learning programmes at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2021/22

**Table 5:** Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in progress and numbers of learners starting and in progress by programme type, 2021/22

**Table 6:** Learning activities at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2021/22



**Table 1: Numbers of learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers by age and gender, 2021/22 [note 1]**

Age	Males		Females		Persons [note 3]	
	1 December [note 4]	All Year [note 5]	1 December [note 4]	All Year [note 5]	1 December [note 4]	All Year [note 5]
Under 16	95	150	40	100	135	255
16	8,875	9,940	7,860	8,845	16,885	18,965
17	7,820	8,750	6,750	7,655	14,665	16,510
18	4,430	5,375	3,285	4,225	7,755	9,655
19	2,900	3,600	1,800	2,570	4,715	6,190
20-24	6,615	9,715	5,790	9,500	12,430	19,260
25-49	12,165	23,115	21,255	37,175	33,475	60,395
50-64	2,360	5,330	4,690	9,280	7,060	14,630
65+	610	1,170	1,220	2,290	1,830	3,465
Not Specified	[c]	5	10	20	15	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,870</b>	<b>67,155</b>	<b>52,700</b>	<b>81,655</b>	<b>98,965</b>	<b>149,350</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

[Note 1] Age at 31 August 2021.

[Note 2] Numbers greater than 0 and less than 5 have been replaced by [c].

[Note 3] All persons total includes a small number of learners not recorded as male or female.

[Note 4] Snapshot of learners enrolled during the week of December 1st.

[Note 5] Count of learners throughout the academic year.

Reports on [StatsWales](#) contain the information provided in table 1 with a breakdown by ethnicity.

**Table 2: Trends in learner numbers at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers, 2017/18 to 2021/22 [note 1][note 2]**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Further Education Institutions [note 3]					
Full-time learners at FEIs	45,850	45,875	46,290	47,590	45,250
Part-time learners at FEIs	52,660	56,290	47,930	42,805	54,680
WBL provision at FEIs	20,075	19,880	17,885	18,125	19,375
Total at FEIs	118,590	122,040	112,105	108,520	119,300
Work-based learning provision [note 4]	63,120	61,290	52,190	51,740	43,755
Adult Learning [note 5]	12,680	13,050	8,200	5,555	10,440
Total learners at FE Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers [note 6]	166,640	168,810	148,860	142,735	149,350

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

- [Note 1] Counts are of unique learners, so removing, from each individual row, multiple counting of learners present at more than one learning provider and/or provision type.
- [Note 2] In calculating each in-learning count, the population is largely determined by the actual start and end dates of learning programmes and activities. However an additional constraint is applied to each year in that learning activities with an expected end date more than two years before the start of the given academic year are excluded.
- [Note 3] Learner numbers at FE institutions (FEIs) include learners pursuing work-based learning (and Pathways to Apprenticeships) programmes at FEIs and franchised Adult learners, enrolled at FEIs, whose teaching is contracted out to local authorities.
- [Note 4] Work-based learning (WBL) provision includes learners pursuing WBL programmes at FEIs and provision at other training providers.
- [Note 5] Includes both those learners enrolled at local authorities directly and learners who are enrolled at FEIs but whose teaching is contracted out to local authorities.
- [Note 6] The use of unique learner counts and definitional overlaps mean, for any given year, that the total for FE/WBL/Adult learners is lower than the sum of the figures in the preceding rows.

**Table 3: Number of learners in further education, work-based learning and adult learning by type of learning in the academic year 2021/22 and ethnic background, compared to the population of Wales in calendar years 2018 to 2020**

Ethnic group	% of people		Mainstream		Work		Adult	
	aged 16 to 64 in Wales [Note 1]		further education	(%)	based learning	(%)	learning	(%)
All	100%	98,160	100%	43,755	100%	10,440	100%	
White	95%	78,710	80%	41,775	95%	9,020	86%	
Black, African, Caribbean, Black British	1%	2,030	2%	450	1%	160	2%	
Asian, Asian British	3%	2,940	3%	675	2%	375	4%	
Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups	1%	1,920	2%	480	1%	115	1%	
Other ethnic groups	1%	2,565	3%	235	1%	260	3%	
Information refused / not known	n/a	9,985	10%	140	0%	505	5%	

[Note 1] Sourced from [StatsWales: Ethnicity by Age](#), latest available data used.

**Table 4: Enrolments on learning programmes at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2021/22 [note 1] [note 2]**

	Males		Females		Persons [note 4]	
	1 Dec [note 5]	All Year [note 6]	1 Dec [note 5]	All Year [note 6]	1 Dec [note 5]	All Year [note 6]
<b>Further Education excluding Local Authority CL at FEIs</b>						
Full-time	20,625	24,275	19,965	23,625	40,900	48,265
Part-time	26,930	50,400	31,985	62,555	59,170	113,345
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,555</b>	<b>74,675</b>	<b>51,945</b>	<b>86,175</b>	<b>100,070</b>	<b>161,610</b>
<b>Work-based Learning Provision</b>						
WBL programmes at FEIs	9,255	12,370	4,825	7,620	14,085	20,000
Programmes at other training providers	4,155	8,100	9,525	18,045	13,700	26,195
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,410</b>	<b>20,465</b>	<b>14,350</b>	<b>25,665</b>	<b>27,785</b>	<b>46,195</b>
<b>Adult Learning [note 3]</b>						
Full-time: enrolled at FEIs	0	0	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Part-time: enrolled at FEIs	455	770	1,000	1,975	1,460	2,745
Part-time: enrolled at local authorities	960	2,855	2,720	9,160	3,690	12,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>3,625</b>	<b>3,725</b>	<b>11,135</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>14,795</b>
<b>All Levels of Study</b>						
Full-time	20,625	24,275	19,965	23,625	40,900	48,265
Part-time	28,345	54,025	35,710	73,690	64,325	128,140
Work-based Learning	13,410	20,465	14,350	25,665	27,785	46,195
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,380</b>	<b>98,770</b>	<b>70,025</b>	<b>122,980</b>	<b>133,010</b>	<b>222,605</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

[Note 1] See notes for definitions of mode.

[Note 2] Numbers greater than 0 and less than 5 have been replaced by [c].

[Note 3] Excludes franchised higher education at FEIs and new HEFCW funded programmes.

[Note 4] The all persons total includes a small number of learners not recorded as male or

[Note 5] Snapshot of learners enrolled during the week of December 1st.

[Note 6] Count of learners throughout the academic year.

**Table 5: Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in learning and numbers of learners starting and in-learning by programme type, 2021/22 [note 1] [note 2]**

	Learning programmes [note 1]			Learners [note 3]			
	Starts	Leavers [note 4]	In learning	Starts target measure [note 5]	1 Dec [note 6]	31 July [note 6]	All year
<b>Work-based Learning programmes</b>							
Foundation Apprenticeship	9,160	6,670	16,490	8,140	9,915	9,745	15,635
Apprenticeship (Level 3)	7,425	6,625	16,720	6,850	10,705	10,110	16,395
Higher Apprenticeship	3,455	3,050	7,490	3,145	4,460	4,430	7,340
Traineeships	2,190	3,545	4,815		2,145	[c]	3,715
Other WBL Programme	550	310	680	[c]	265	370	670
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,780</b>	<b>20,200</b>	<b>46,195</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>27,495</b>	<b>24,655</b>	<b>43,755</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

[Note 1] Cumulative count of learning programmes enrolled at any point during the academic year.

[Note 2] Numbers greater than 0 and less than 5 have been replaced by [c].

[Note 3] Distinct learners categorised according to most recent learning programme of the year.

[Note 4] Counts of leavers exclude those who have transferred to another learning programme at the same provider. (All figures include early leavers).

[Note 5] A separate apprenticeship starts measure has been introduced in relation to the 125,000 target to take account of early drop outs (within first 8 weeks) and transfers of apprenticeships.

[Note 6] Number of learners on the reference date.

**Table 6: Enrolments on learning activities at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2021/22**

Qualification level	Further Education and Work-based Learning			Adult Learning		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Pre-Entry Level	450	775	1,225	185	125	305
Entry Level	13,970	16,900	31,000	1,830	4,740	6,600
Level 1	32,350	32,200	64,865	705	1,800	2,515
Level 2	54,605	63,035	118,010	440	1,625	2,070
Level 3	49,435	63,415	113,610	295	745	1,050
Level 4 and above / HE	5,805	10,395	16,230	0	0	0
Unknown or not required	30,810	36,545	67,670	1,020	3,770	4,795
<b>Total</b>	<b>187,420</b>	<b>223,270</b>	<b>412,610</b>	<b>4,475</b>	<b>12,805</b>	<b>17,335</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

# Notes

## 1. Context

### 1.1 General

This statistical first release summarises data on learner numbers in post-16 education and training at providers receiving funding from the Welsh Government for the academic year 2021/22. Prior to 2017/18 the figures were not restricted to fundable learners at those providers. From 1 August 2017, information relating to learning activities not funded by the Welsh Government is no longer collected. This has affected the number of part-time learners in further education in the years since.

The release contains information on the post-16 sector including Further Education (FE) institutions, Work-based Learning (WBL) providers and Adult Learning providers but excluding Higher Education (HE) institutions, the Learn Welsh sector and school sixth forms.

### 1.2 Policy context

Within the Welsh Government, this release and other outputs from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) data underlying it play a role in supporting decision making processes in relation to:

- The [Post-16 Planning and Funding Framework](#) which enables the delivery of relevant learning to support the Government priorities and aims to improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness. It focuses on the quality of the learning offer in terms of the outcome for individual learners. Programmes rather than qualifications are at the core of the framework with each programme having a defined purpose and outcome against which it will be monitored.
- The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 “aims to provide wider learner choice, reduce duplication of provision and encourage higher quality learning and teaching, but it applies to all post-16 provision. Providers are expected to establish effective collaboration to underpin 14-19 entitlement and maximise the chances of successful learner outcomes.”
- The commitment to the delivery of apprenticeships is set out in the [Programme for Government](#), which contains a commitment to create 125,000 new all-age apprenticeships over the current Senedd term.

See also section 5.1 on ‘Relevance’.

## 2. Data source

### Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

The [Lifelong Learning Wales Record](#) is the data collection system employed by the Welsh Government to enable FE, WBL and Adult Learning providers to submit on-line individualised data on learners, their learning programmes, activities and awards. Welsh Government systems load the data on to a post-16 database to facilitate analysis. Further information on LLWR including user support manuals can be found on the [Welsh Government’s website](#).

The primary purpose of the LLWR is to provide FE/WBL/Adult Learning data to facilitate the planning and funding of learning delivery. The LLWR data are also a basis for the Welsh Government's Quality and Effectiveness Framework, monitoring of performance and outcomes, informing strategy and development and the provision of statistics on FE/WBL/Adult Learning in Wales.

### **3. Definitions and methods**

#### **Learner numbers, learning programmes and learning activities**

- The Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) has datasets based on learners, their learning programmes and their constituent learning activities (as well as awards which are not included in this release). Table 1, 2 and 3 are based on counts of individual learners using a methodology which counts a learner present at more than one provider only once. Table 4 is based on counts of learning programmes, as are the first three columns of table 5, the remainder of which uses unique learners. A learner represented in tables 1, 2 or 3 will have one or more learning programmes in table 4. Table 6 is based on counts of learning activities, there being one or more of these constituents to each learning programme.

#### **Learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers (tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6)**

- Information was collected from FE institutions, local authorities and work-based learning providers via the LLWR, from which data were extracted on 22 December 2022.
- Adult Learning is a broad definition that can encompass, for instance, provision at FE institution outreach centres and Adult Basic Education. This release only identifies Adult Learning provision (see 'Provision Type' notes) and hence this is the term used throughout.
- WBL provision is included whether at an FE college, at a WBL subsidiary of an FE institution or at another training provider.
- Where a provider is part of a WBL consortium, the assignment to 'WBL at FEIs' or to 'WBL at Other training providers' has been made according to the status of the consortium member (which may differ from the status of the lead provider of the consortium).
- December 1st counts are based on a snapshot of the week of 1 December 2021. All-year counts are based on all learners enrolled during the academic year.
- Ages are at 31 August 2021.
- Includes students on courses with Adult Learning Wales.

#### **Work-based Learning (Table 5)**

This table summarises enrolments on work-based learning programmes, which consist mainly of apprenticeships and traineeships.

- Starts and leavers in the first two columns denote the cumulative number of new starts and leavers of learning programmes during the academic year.



- Counts of leavers exclude those who have transferred to another learning programme at the same provider. They are also restricted to those leavers who are identifiable from the standard database population used for this release. All figures (except the target starts measure) include early leavers.
- In progress figures are expressed as learning programme counts (in the third column), as the number of distinct learners at any time during the full year (final column) and also as learner counts on December 1st 2021 and July 31st 2022. The latter counts are for single days, in contrast to the December 1st figures in tables 1 and 4 which are based on a full week (and are therefore slightly higher).

We additionally include a measure of starts specifically related to the target to create 125,000 all-age apprenticeships over the course of the 2021-2026 Senedd term. This measure discounts starts that are recorded as early leavers (less than 8 weeks) and those that are recorded as transferred to another apprenticeship. Under this measure, 18,140 learning programmes started in 2021/22, and 22,085 since the target was introduced in quarter 4 of the 2020/21 academic year. [Table 5]

Quarterly statistics on apprenticeship learning programmes started will continue to be updated to reflect progress towards the new target according to the pre-announced timetable.

Welsh Government first funded degree apprenticeships from academic year 2018/19. These are not included in these statistics.

## Provision type

The provision type is determined at the learning programme level. This statistical release is not a funding report and definitions can differ from those used for funding purposes.

- For the purpose of this statistical release, **Further Education (FE)** provision is defined as that submitted to the LLWR by an FE provider excluding:
  - learning programmes categorised below as WBL; and
  - learning delivered by a Local Authority via a subcontracted arrangement with an FE provider.
  - junior apprenticeship programmes (with learners additionally being recorded through school enrolment figures). 170 unique learners were recorded with at least one programme for 2020/21.

Data for all higher education (HE) learners in Further Education institutions are now recorded through HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) data rather than LLWR. Historically franchised Higher Education has been collected through HESA (and therefore not part of this release) and from 2016/17 all new HEFCW funded learners are also recorded through HESA.

- **Adult Learning** provision is defined as that submitted to the LLWR:
  - by a Local Authority directly ('maintained' or 'contracted-out' provision); or
  - by an FE provider but where the learning is delivered by a Local Authority through a partnership, franchise or subcontracted arrangement ('contracted-in' provision).

The Adult Learning figures **exclude** 'assisted' provision, i.e. courses controlled and managed by another organisation but which the local authority supports either financially or by providing premises or other facilities free of charge or at subsidised rates.

- **WBL programmes** are submitted to the LLWR by contracted WBL providers (including some FE institutions) and include the following programmes:
  - Apprenticeship (Level 3);
  - Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2);
  - Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 plus);
  - Traineeships;

## Subjects

Apprenticeship subject information is based on Sector Framework information, whilst that for individual learning activities is based on the Sector Subject Area (SSA) definition, based on the 15 first-tier areas of learning.

## 4. Rounding

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and there may be apparent slight discrepancies between the sum of the constituent items and the total. A [c] represents numbers greater than 0 and less than 5.

Percentages are also calculated using the unrounded figures; therefore, it may not be possible to recreate the percentages quoted throughout this release from the information included in the tables.

## 5. Key Quality Information

### 5.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and officials in the Welsh Government;
- Members of the Senedd and researchers in the Senedd Cymru.
- other government departments;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers and local authorities;
- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research;
- inclusion in reports and briefings;
- advice to Ministers;

- informing and evaluating the education policy-making process in Wales. (See section 1.2 on 'Policy Context'.)

LLWR data are used to underpin funding and performance reports for learning providers, to calculate NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures and in student finance modelling.

## **5.2 Accuracy**

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the LLWR data management team and, where relevant, with learning providers before tables are published.

The LLWR data underlying this release are intended to be final, for non-funding purposes.

The annual timescale for the production of data balances timeliness against the need for accurate data quality. Final statistics on a given academic year are drawn from a database based on the LLWR as at December following the end of the academic year.

## **5.3 Timeliness and punctuality**

We additionally publish provisional quarterly information on apprenticeship starts to provide more timely data in this area of interest.

## **5.4 Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on StatsWales, a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

## **5.5 Comparability and coherence**

### **Apprenticeship learning programmes**

New work-based learning contract arrangements came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. This resulted in the transfer of around 4,800 existing apprentices to new providers with new programme records created on the Lifelong Learning Wales Record. New programme records resulting from a transfer are usually included in the statistics on apprenticeship starts with the exception of the target measure. For 2021/22, however, we excluded the records as so many learners were transferred that the statistics would have presented a misleading picture of apprenticeship starts in that quarter had they been left in.

### **Data for previous years**

The following changes were made to the data collection for 2017/18.

#### **Unfunded learning:**

From 1 August 2017, information relating to learning activities not funded by the Welsh Government is no longer collected through the LLWR; whilst the change is at individual activity level it will have an impact on the overall number of learners recorded. Because funding is recorded at activity rather than learner level, it is difficult to give a firm assessment of impact, as the change may also affect the way providers code their data.

## **Learn Welsh sector:**

From 1 August 2017, information relating to Learn Welsh/Welsh for Adults provision in Further Education institutions is no longer collected through the LLWR. The [National Centre for Learning Welsh](#) has been responsible for providing leadership to the Welsh for Adults programme and co-ordinating provision across Wales on behalf of Welsh Government from 2015.

These two changes mean that, particularly for part-time further education and adult learning, it is not possible to draw any conclusions around trends in the number of learners compared with the years prior to 2017/18. The decrease seen may be fully accounted for by the changes to the data collection. For completeness the following charts show the time series – but indicate the break in the series and that figures for 2017/18 are not comparable with earlier years.

## **Resit codes**

From 2017/18 there was a change to recording of GCSE resits, through separate part-time programmes alongside other programmes of learning. In 2018/19 approximately 14,600 such programmes were recorded by around 11,800 unique learners.

## **5.6 In-learning population**

In-learning counts for all years in the current release (and in the other bulletins using LLWR data listed at the end of this release) are on an adjusted population basis.

The in-learning population is adjusted by excluding unclosed activities with an expected end date more than two years earlier than the start of the given academic year. Having excluded these activities, the population is then determined from the remaining activities by means of the actual start and end dates (in conjunction with the learning programme end date, where available separately for WBL programmes).

The adjusted population was introduced in order to produce a more accurate reflection of 'live' activity after identifying an increasing number of unclosed activities since the inception of the LLWR.

## **5.7 Mode of learning**

Prior to 2014/15, Mode of learning was derived using guided contact hours sourced from the LLWR field LA19. Non-WBL learning programmes were classified for statistical purposes as full-time if they contained at least 450 guided contact hours per year and other non-WBL learning programmes were designated as part-time. Owing to a change in LLWR data collection, this is no longer possible on the same basis. Instead, from 2014/15 onwards, the mode is determined directly from a marker in the new Learning Programme Code LLWR field (LP74).

The LLWR field LA19 used in derivation of the former mode of learning was not collected after the end of 2013/14 and the new field LP74 was not collected before the start of 2014/15. This lack of a period of overlap means that a direct comparison cannot be made. However the trend from the one mode to the other appears smooth. In the context of FE and adult learning data, the new mode appears to have very similar characteristics to the old.

## 5.8 Gender

The all persons total includes a small number of learners who do not associate themselves with a binary gender identity of Male or Female.

## 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, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

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 Office for Statistics Regulation. The OSR 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.

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

- Added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy and Welsh Government targets
- Expanded the coverage of topics to include protected characteristics and Welsh medium learning.
- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables.

Most recently, the Office for Statistics Regulation published its UK-wide review, [Exploring the public value of statistics about post-16 education and skills](#), in July 2020.

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 Office for Statistics Regulation 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 well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being 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 Well-being 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.

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

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.

## Further details

This release is available at:

<https://gov.wales/further-education-work-based-learning-and-community-learning>

## StatsWales

Only summary tables have been provided in this release. Additional tables supplying greater detail, including analysis by programme and qualification type, subject, age, disability status and ethnicity, are available via the Welsh Government's online dissemination service [StatsWales](#).

## Other statistical outputs using the LLWR data underlying this release

- [‘Learner Outcome Measures for Work-based Learning and Adult Learning’](#) - Statistics on learner outcomes at WBL providers and Adult Learning providers.
- [‘Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(achievement\)’](#) – Statistics on the achievement of learners in FE institutions (derived from LLWR data) and school sixth forms (derived from school data sources)
- During 2018 we introduced [quarterly reporting of apprenticeship starts](#), and we welcome any feedback on this output.
- [‘Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic’](#) – reports on the learning outcomes for learners who were on vocational programmes, general education programmes (including A Levels), apprenticeships or adult learning courses.

## UK nations

Examples of similar outputs from other UK nations can be found at:

England - [Further education and skills: statistical first release - gov.uk](#)

Northern Ireland - [Further Education Enrolments - Department for Employment and Learning](#)

Scotland - [Scottish Lifelong learning Statistics: statistical first release](#)

However, owing to differences in methodology and data collection, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons with the figures contained in this release.

## **Next update**

February 2024

Period covered: 2022/23 (August to July)

Statistical First Release report and StatsWales cubes.

## **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [post16ed.stats@gov.wales](mailto:post16ed.stats@gov.wales)

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