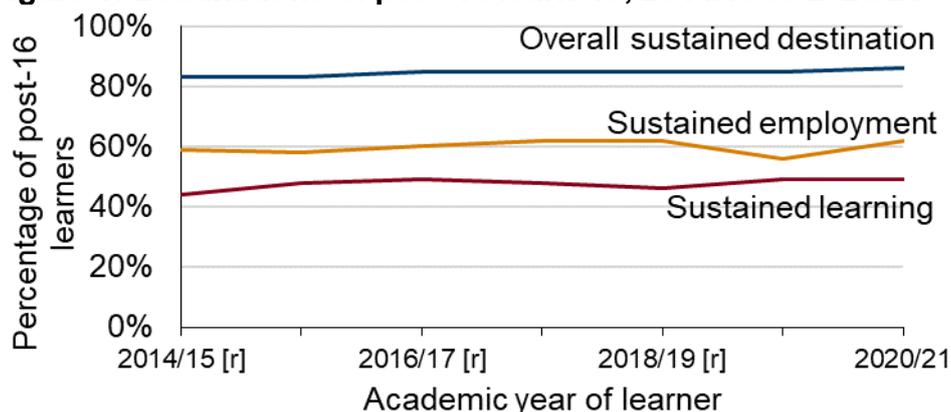


## Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: learner destinations, August 2020 to July 2021 (official statistics in development)

31 October 2023  
SFR 94/2023

This release is part of a set of three consistent performance measures for colleges and sixth forms. The measures are [Achievement](#), Value Added, and [Destinations](#). Outcomes for learners should be understood in the context of other measures. The destinations measures are official statistics in development as we continue to work through methodology and data quality issues. They were previously called 'experimental statistics'. These destination measures show learners from colleges and sixth forms, as well as work based learning, in 2020/21 and their destinations in the following year.

**Figure 1: Destinations of post-16 learners, 2014/15 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 1: This line chart shows a small increase in sustained destination since 2014/15, reaching 86% in 2020/21. More learners have a sustained employment destination than a sustained learning destination in all years. There was a dip in sustained employment and an increase in sustained learning in 2019/20. The sustained learning rate remained stable in 2020/21 (at 49%) and sustained employment returned to pre 2019/20 rates (at 62%).

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

Data can be found in Table 1a of the accompanying spreadsheet

Changes in sustained employment and sustained learning in 2019/20 could be impacted by the disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

### About this release

This release uses matched education data linked with the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) Study to show employment and learning destinations for further education, school sixth form and work-based learning learners in the year following their programme of study.

A separate release provides information on [learner achievement](#).

### In this release

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## Introduction

The consistent performance measures combine data from further education (FE) colleges and school sixth forms. In the past, there were separate measures of learner outcomes for each, even though they deliver many of the same learning programmes.

The consistent performances measures are:

- **Achievement** – the completion, retention and attainment of learners undertaking A Level, vocational and Welsh Baccalaureate programmes
- **Value added** – the progress made by learners above what would normally be expected based on their prior attainment and gender
- **Destinations** – the proportion of learners who go on to employment and/or further learning (including higher education).

The measures aim to treat colleges and schools consistently. However, small differences are unavoidable because college and school data come from separate sources.

This publication looks at the destinations of learners (i.e. what a learner moves on to do after leaving a learning programme). A separate statistical release for the achievement measures can be found at [Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(Achievement\)](#). Publication of the achievement measures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 was postponed due to changes in how grades were awarded in 2020 and 2021 and the disruption to learning caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Outcomes during the this period were analysed in statistical articles on [outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). The publication of achievement measures resumed in February 2023 with data for 2021/22.

This publication was initially pre-announced for September 2023 but this was postponed to October 2023 due to a delay in receiving the matched data.

## Measure definitions

A learner's destination relates to their activity in the following academic year. So, for the 2020/21 cohort, destinations are reported for 2021/22.

We have grouped learner destinations into the following categories for reporting purposes:

### Sustained employment

Learners must be in paid employment as recorded in Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) records for at least one day per month in five out of the six months between October and March in the following academic year, or have returned a self-assessment form stating that they have received income from self-employment during that financial year.

### Sustained learning

Learners must be learning at an equal or higher level to the programme they terminated for at least one day per month in all six months between October and March in the following academic year.

## **Sustained destination**

Learners who progress to a sustained destination in employment or learning (or both).

In recognition that the sustained learning measure above may not reflect the full value of further learning at all levels, a secondary measure is presented showing all learning:

## **Learning (non-sustained)**

Learners must be in learning at an equal or higher level to the programme they terminated for at least one day between October and March in the following academic year.

## **Learning and sustained employment destination**

Learners who progress to a sustained employment destination or learning destination (does not need to be sustained).

Data on the **Learning (non-sustained)** and **Learning and sustained employment destination** measures are included in the tables published alongside this release.

## **Impact of Covid-19**

The measures in this release include learners in post-16 education up to July 2021, and their destinations up to March 2022. This data therefore covers periods of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The first national lockdown of 2020 was announced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, during the 2019/20 academic year. Subsequent lockdowns or other restrictions remained in place over the period covered by this release. Last year, this publication gave an initial indication of the potential impact of the pandemic on these learners, this release builds on that by showing 2020/21 learners' destinations, Learners may have been impacted during their studies, their subsequent destinations, or both.

## **Changes to the analysis in this release**

A number of learning programmes have been removed from cohorts used in this release, including cohorts for previous years. See the [measures and coverage](#) section for more information.

The processing of data to create our linked education data is now undertaken by Welsh Government analysts. For more information see the [matching process information](#).

Data from the Student Alternative Record is now included in the HESA data used to calculate learning destinations. For more information see the [data sources](#) information.

## Destinations of post-16 learners

Of the 110,895 post-16 learners finishing a learning programme in 2020/21:

- 86% had a sustained destination in 2021/22, a small increase of 1 percentage point increase compared to 2019/20
- 62% were in sustained employment, a 6 percentage point increase from the dip in 2019/20, the rate of sustained employment is now the same as it was for 2018/19 learners
- 49% were in sustained learning, the same as the previous year

The sustained destination, sustained employment, and sustained learning rates for 2020/21 learners are the among the highest they have been for the 7 years in this analysis:

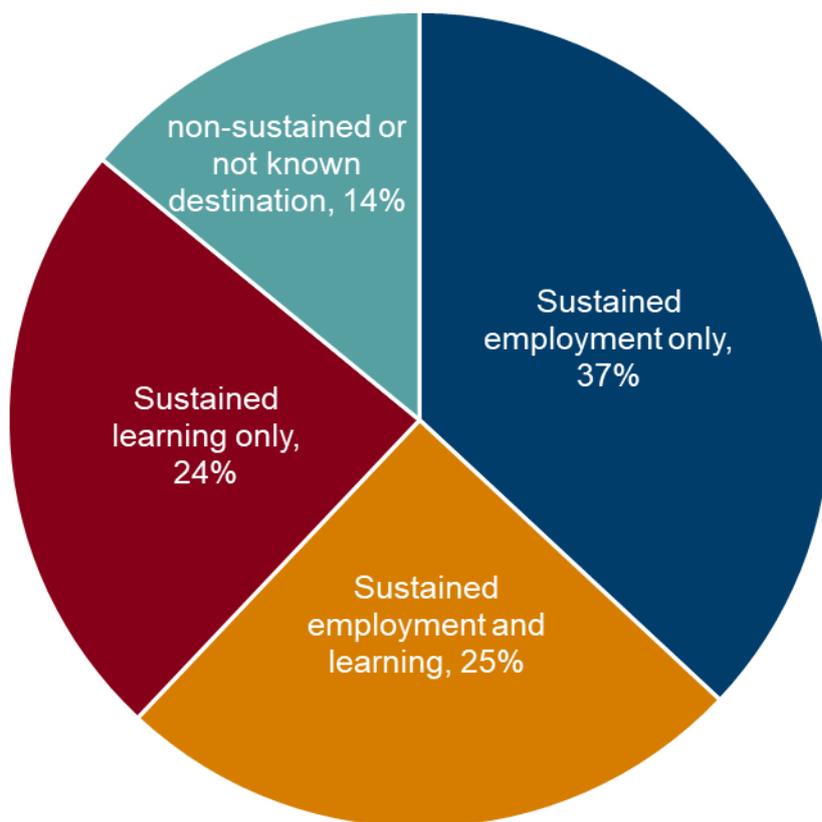
- The sustained destination rate has gradually increased from 83% in 2014/15 to 86% in 2020/21
- The rate of sustained employment destinations has ranged from 56% in 2019/20 to 62% in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2020/21
- The rate of sustained learning has ranged from 44% in 2014/15 to 49% in 2016/17, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Figure 2 shows that for 2020/21, the 86% of learners with a sustained destination was a combination of 37% with sustained employment only, 25% with a combination of sustained employment and sustained learning and 24% with sustained learning only.

Less than half a percent of learners had other sustained destinations. This category is not shown on the chart. It includes learners who were engaged in learning and/or employment in each of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022, but didn't meet the criteria of sustained employment or sustained learning.

The remaining 14% of post-16 learners in 2020/21 had a non-sustained or not known destination. This includes learners with sustained learning at a lower level, and learners with no known outcome in the destination year.

**Figure 2: Destinations of 2020/21 post-16 learners [Note 1]**



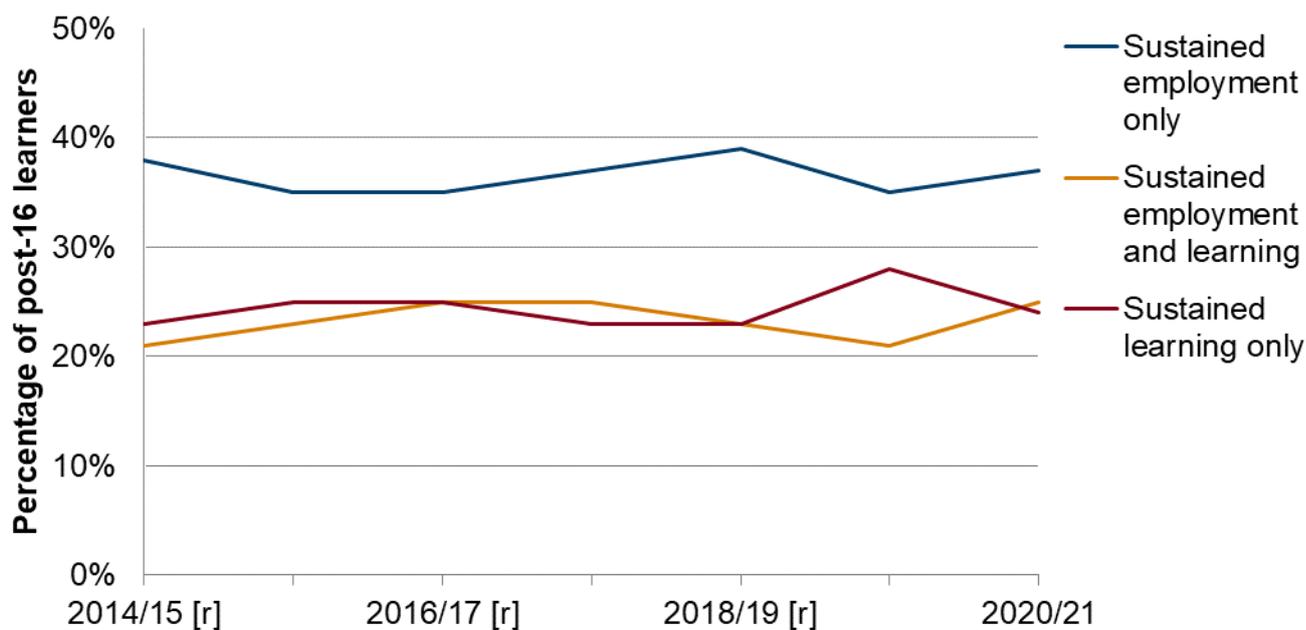
Description of Figure 2: This pie chart shows the breakdown of destinations for 2020/21 learners. The largest segment is for sustained employment only, the smallest segment includes learners with either destinations that were not sustained or those with no known destination.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[Note 1] A small proportion of learners with 'other sustained destinations (less than 0.5%) are not shown. Other sustained destinations include learners who were engaged in learning and/or employment in each of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022, but didn't meet the criteria of sustained employment or sustained learning.

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of destinations shown in Figure 2, over time.

**Figure 3: Destinations of post-16 learners, 2014/15 to 2020/21 [Note 2]**



Description of Figure 3: This line chart shows the long-term trend in types of sustained destination. The long-term trend of sustained employment rises and falls between 35 and 39%. The rates for sustained employment and learning are similar to those for sustained learning only.

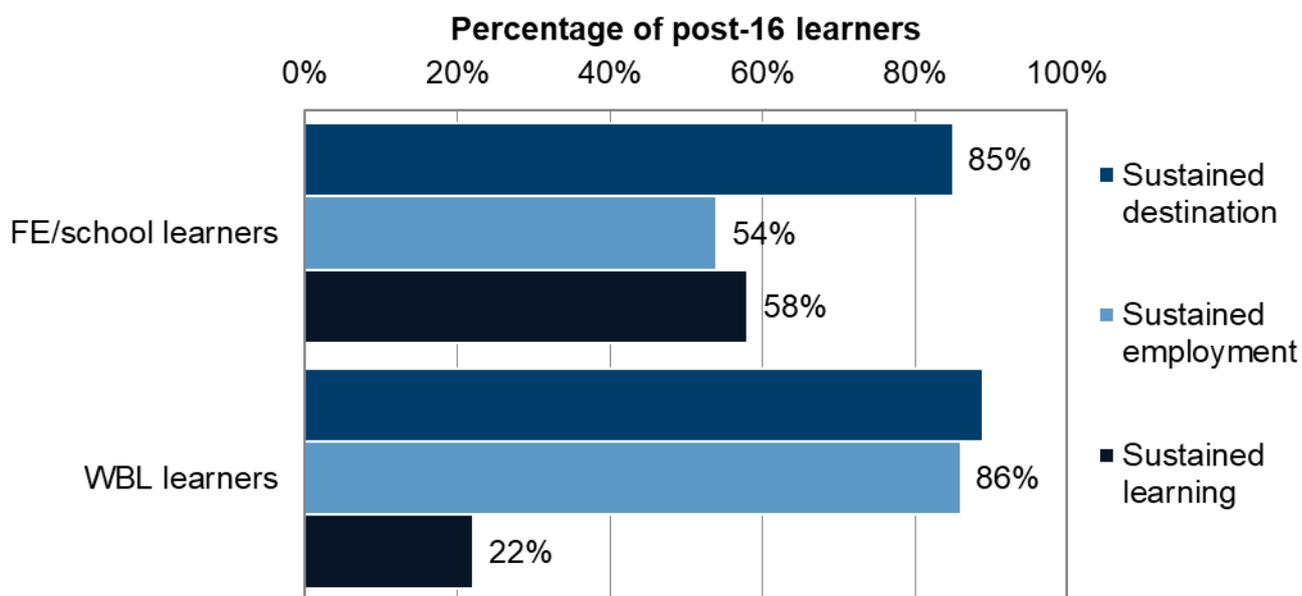
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

[Note 2] A small proportion of learners with 'other sustained destinations (less than 0.5%) are not shown on the chart. Other sustained destinations include learners who were engaged in learning and/or employment in each of the six months between October and March the following year but didn't meet the criteria of sustained employment or sustained learning. The rate for other sustained destinations is consistently below 1%.

Figure 4 shows sustained destinations broken down by sector, Further Education (FE) and sixth form learners compared to Work Based Learning (WBL) learners.

**Figure 4: Destinations of 2020/21 post-16 learners, by sector [Note 3]**



Description of Figure 4: This bar chart shows that WBL learners have a slightly higher sustained destination than FE and school learners (89% compared to 85%), driven by a much higher rate of sustained employment (86% compared to 54%). FE and school learners have higher rates of sustained learning (58% compared to 22%).

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 1b and Table 1c of the accompanying spreadsheet

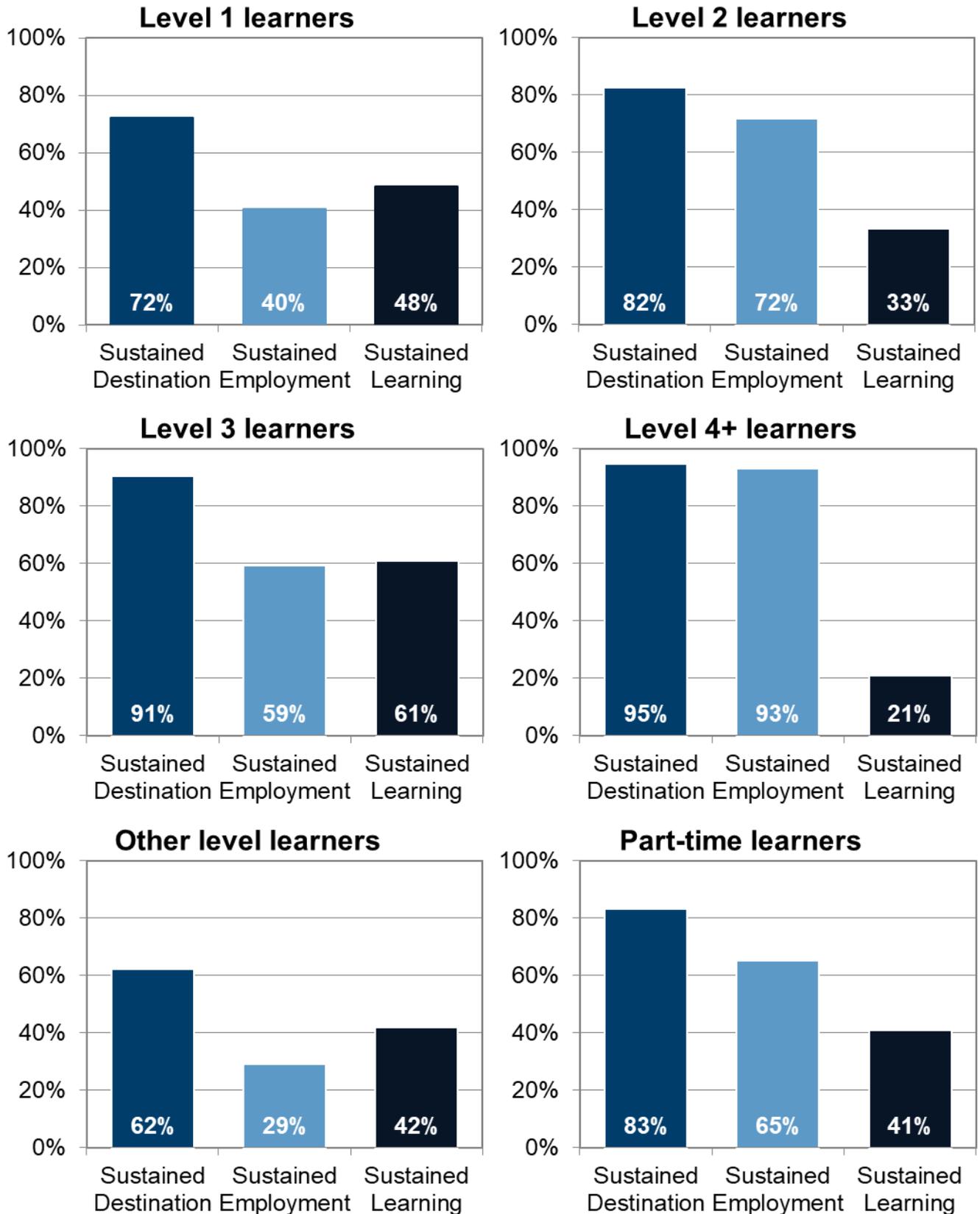
[Note 3] In this figure and throughout the release, sustained employment includes those with 'sustained employment only' and 'sustained learning and employment', and sustained learning includes those with 'sustained learning only' and 'sustained learning and employment'.

The general trend of WBL learners having a lower sustained learning rate, but a higher sustained employment rate, is consistent over time.

## Destinations of post-16 learners by level of terminated learning programme

This section shows the destination measures by the [level of study](#) the learner finished. Figure 5 shows the level of all study, figure 6 shows the levels of apprenticeships only.

**Figure 5: Destinations of post-16 learners, by level of terminated learning programme, 2020/21 [Note 4]**



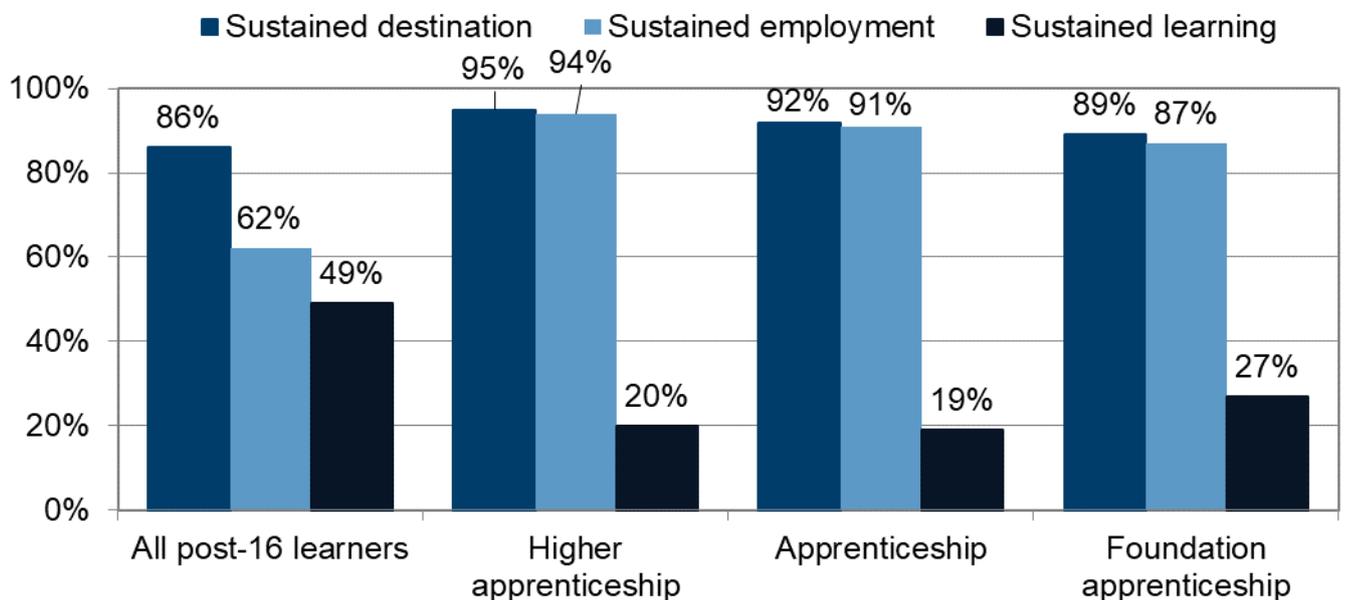
Description of Figure 5: This small multiple bar chart shows that there is a lot of variation in destination between different levels of learning programme. Learners finishing level 3 and 4 programmes have higher levels of sustained destination. Those finishing level 1 and other level programmes have the lowest sustained destination rates. Learners finishing level 4 programmes have the highest sustained employment rate and the lowest sustained learning rate. Level 3 learners have the highest sustained learning rate, other level learners (pre-entry, entry level and the traineeship 'engagement' strand) have the lowest sustained employment rate.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 5a of the accompanying spreadsheet

[Note 4] Part-time learners could be studying any level of programme.

**Figure 6: Destinations of apprenticeship learners, by level of apprenticeship, 2020/21**



Description of Figure 6: This bar chart shows that all apprenticeship learners have higher sustained destination rates than all post-16 learners, driven by higher sustained employment rates. The differences in destination rates between apprenticeship types correlate with the level of apprenticeship, higher level apprenticeships have higher rates of sustained employment and overall sustained destination.

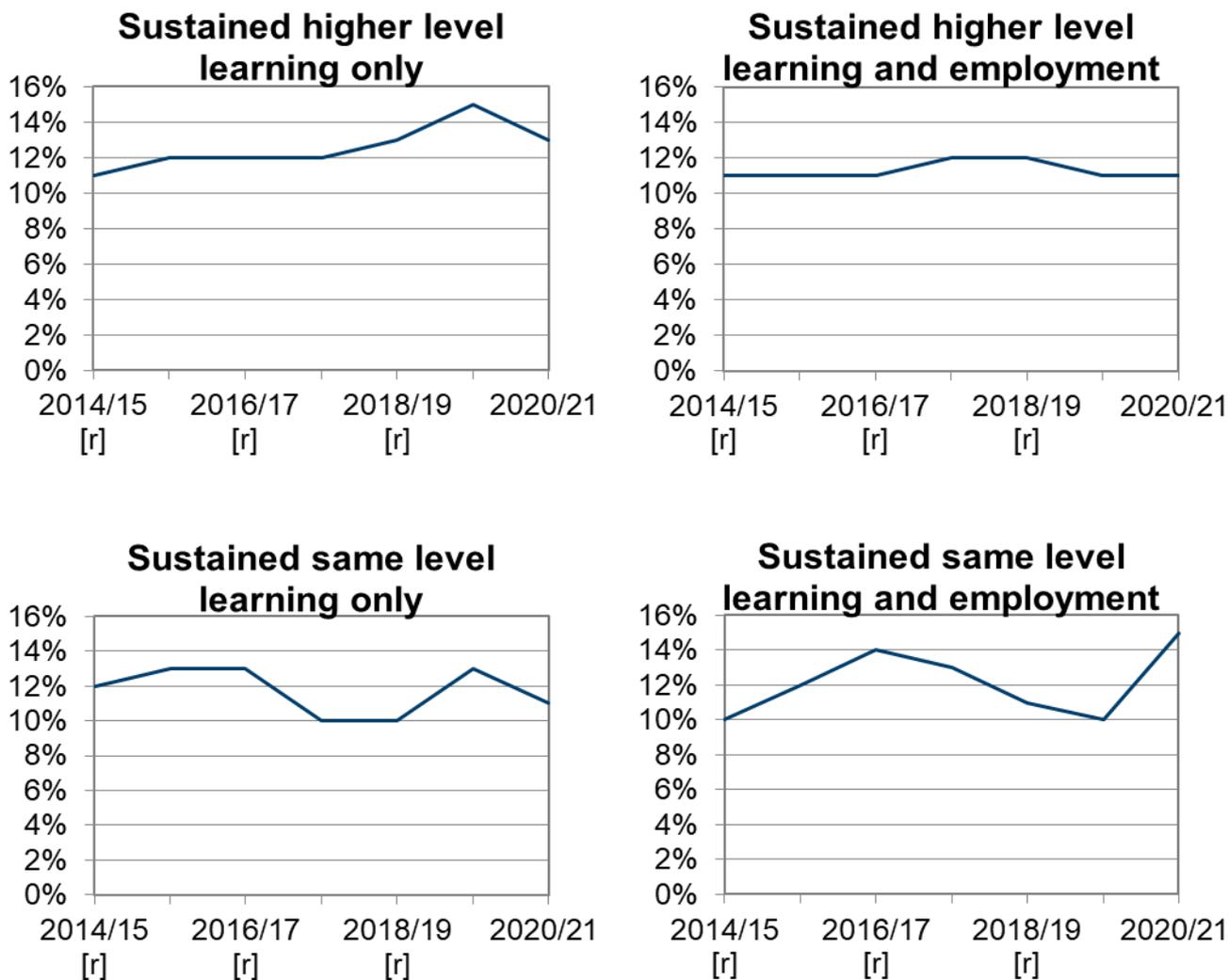
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 2a of the accompanying spreadsheet

## Sustained learning destinations of post-16 learners

This section shows the sustained learning destination measures of post-16 learners; whether learners continue their study at the same, or higher level, and whether learners go on to study at a FE, school or WBL provider, or a Higher Education Provider (HEP).

**Figure 7: Sustained learning destinations of post-16 learners, by level of learning destination, 2014/15 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 7: This small multiple line chart shows a general increase in sustained higher-level learning only over time, whereas a destination of combined sustained higher-level learning and employment increased slightly from 2014/15 to 2018/19 but has decreased a little since then to the same rate as for 2014/15 learners. Rates for sustained same level learning only and sustained same level learning and employment have fluctuated. Most show some disruption to the pattern in 2019/20 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

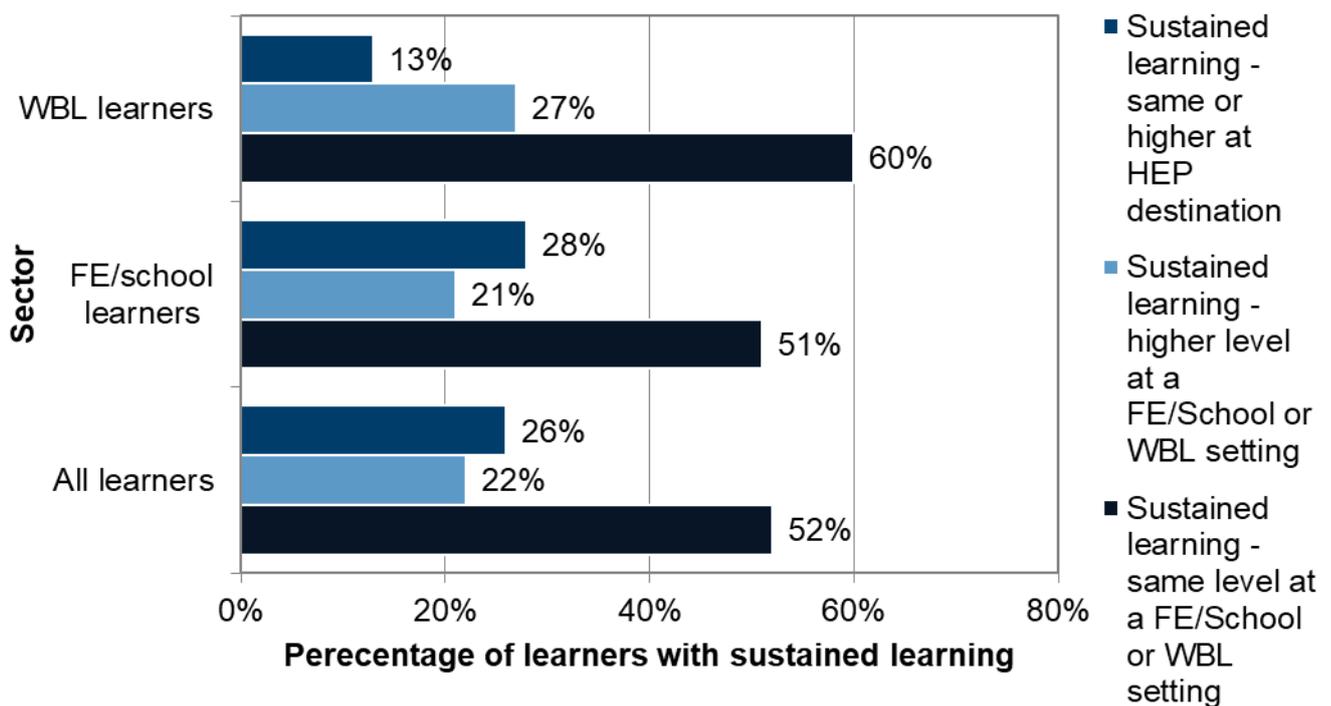
Data can be found in Table 3a of the accompanying spreadsheet

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

Over the last 7 years between 44% and 49% of learners had a sustained learning destination. For 2020/21 learners it was 49%. This was made up of 26% of learners studying at the same level and 24% of learners studying at a higher level.

Figure 8 provides a breakdown of whether sustained learning destinations were at a FE/school/WBL provider or at a higher education provider (HEP). Here, the base cohort is learners with a sustained learning destination rather than all learners.

**Figure 8: Sustained learning destinations of post-16 learners, by destination provider type, 2020/21**



Description of Figure 8: This bar chart shows that Work Based Learning learners have the highest rate of sustained learning at the same level at FE/school/WBL settings. FE/school learners have the highest rate of sustained learning (at the same or a higher level) at a Higher Education Provider.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 3b and Table 3c of the accompanying spreadsheet

In 2020/21, 58% of FE/school sixth form learners had a sustained learning destination, 72% of these learners were learning at FE/school sixth form or WBL providers and 28% were at a HEP.

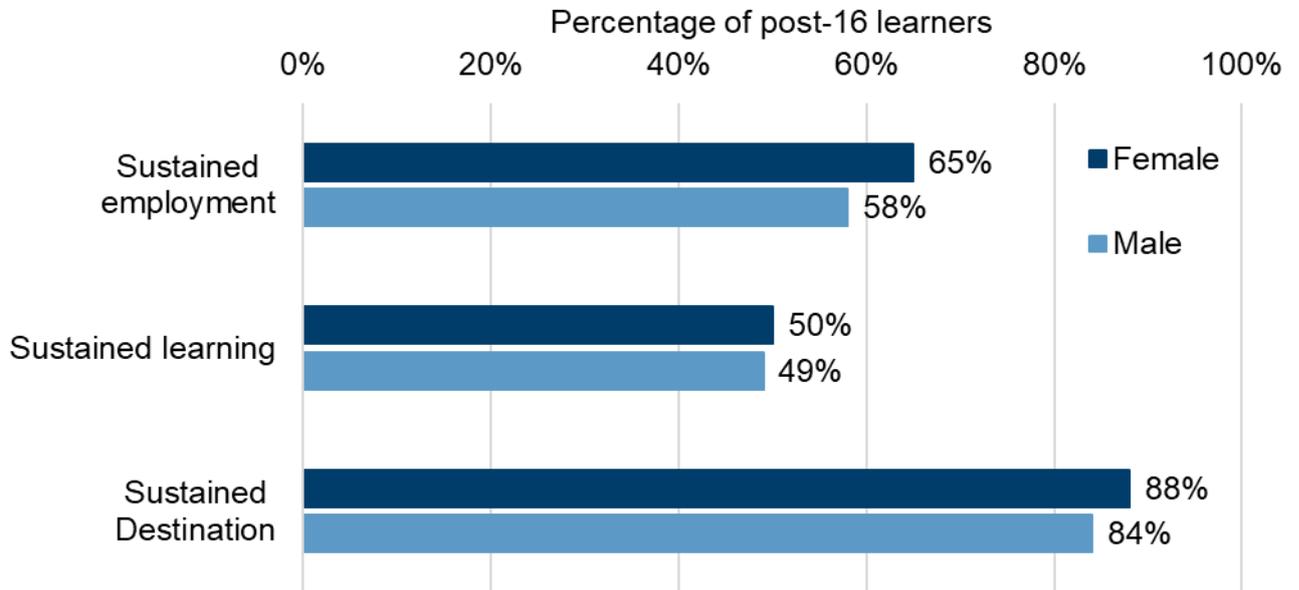
A lower proportion of WBL learners had a sustained learning destination (22%), 87% of these learners progressed to learning at FE/school sixth form or WBL providers and 13% were learning at a HEP.

## Destinations of post-16 learners by learner characteristics

This section of the release includes destinations of post-16 learners by characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, Special Educational Needs provision, free school meal eligibility and multiple deprivation decile.

### Gender

**Figure 9a: Destinations of post-16 learners, by gender, 2020/21**

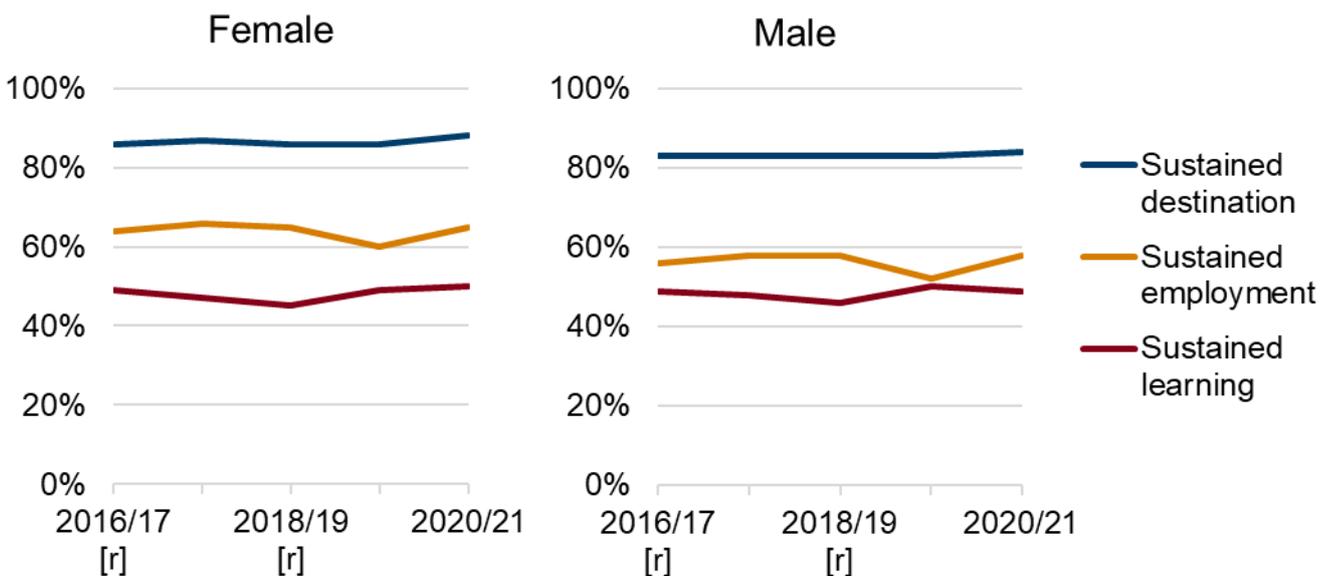


Description of Figure 9a: This bar chart shows that female learners have higher sustained employment, sustained learning, and overall sustained destination rates than male learners.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 7a of the accompanying spreadsheet

**Figure 9b: Destinations of post-16 learners, by gender, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 9b The line chart shows that female learners consistently have a higher rate of sustained destination than males and consistently higher rates of sustained employment. Sustained learning rates have been similar for males and females over the last 5 years There was a dip in sustained employment rates for both males and females in 2019/20, before bouncing back in 2020/21.

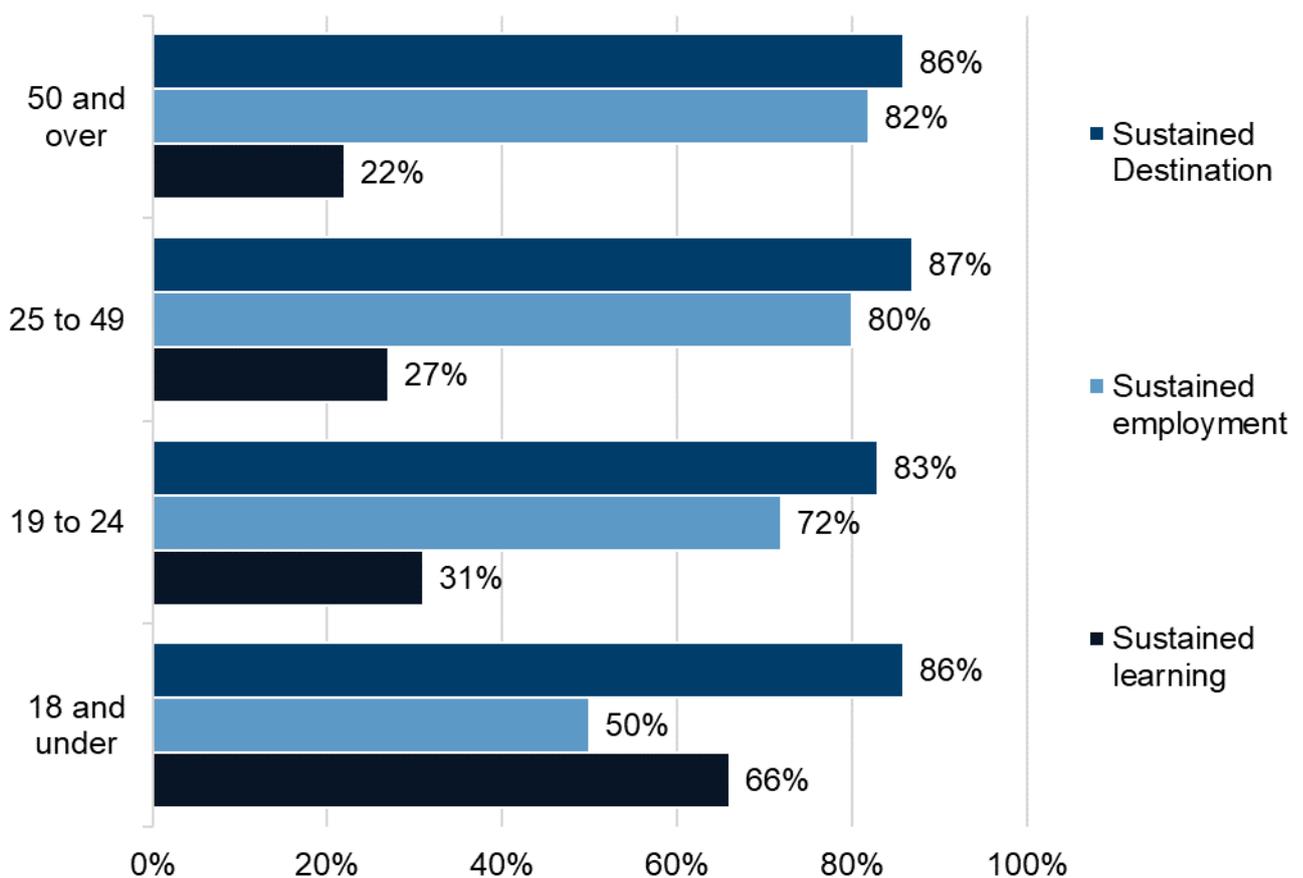
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

The gap between the sustained destination rates between male and female learners has stayed at around 3 percentage points over the last 5 years, peaking at 4 percentage points in 2017/18. The gap in sustained employment rate was 7 percentage points for those finishing courses in 2020/21 and has ranged between 7 and 8 percentage points since 2016/17. The gap in sustained learning rate is around 1 percentage point, between 2017/18 and 2019/20 male learners had higher rates than female learners. In 2020/21, female learners had a higher rate of sustained learning than males (50% compared to 49%).

## Age

**Figure 10a: Destinations of post-16 learners, by age, 2020/21**



Description of Figure 10a: The bar chart shows sustained employment rates increasing with age and sustained learning rates decreasing with age. All age groups have higher sustained employment rates than sustained learning, apart from learners aged 18 and under who have higher sustained learning rates. There isn't much difference in the sustained destination rate across the age groups, though the rate is slightly lower for 19- to 24-year-olds.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

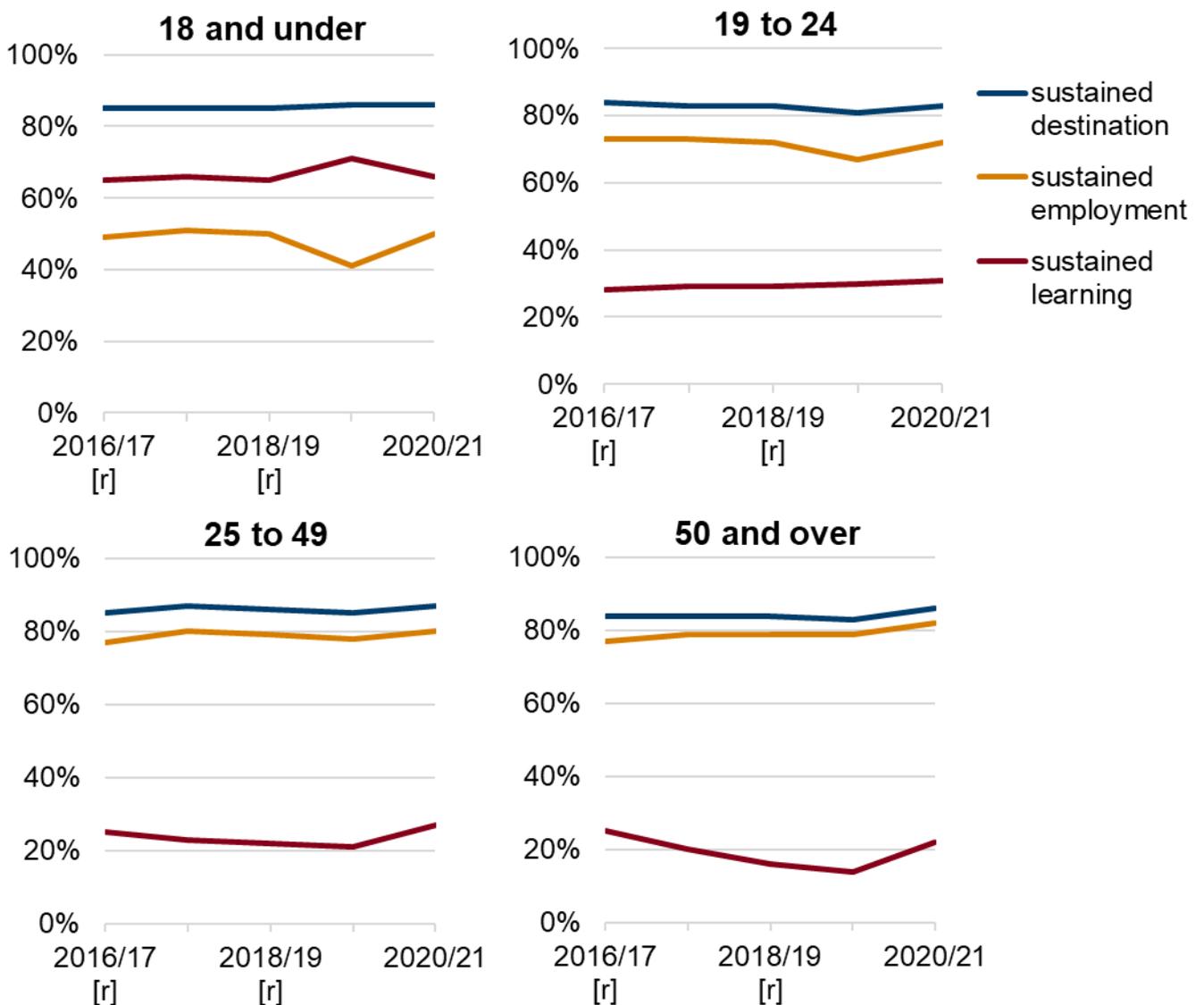
Data can be found in Table 6a of the accompanying spreadsheet

The sustained destination rate for 2020/21 learners was highest for those aged 25 to 49 (87%) and lowest for those aged 19 to 24 (83%).

The sustained employment rate was highest for the older age groups, learners aged 50 and over had a rate of 82%, compared to 50% for those aged 18 and under.

Conversely the sustained learning rate was highest for those aged 18 and under (66%) and lower for the older age groups, with 22% of learners aged 50 and over having a sustained learning destination.

**Figure 10b: Destinations of post-16 learners, by age, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 10b: The line chart shows that learners aged 18 and under have opposite destination trends compared to the other age groups, with consistently higher sustained learning rates than sustained employment rates. The dip in sustained employment in 2019/20 is more pronounced in younger learners. There is a rise in sustained learning between 2019/20 and 2020/21 for learners aged 25 to 49 and 50 and over.

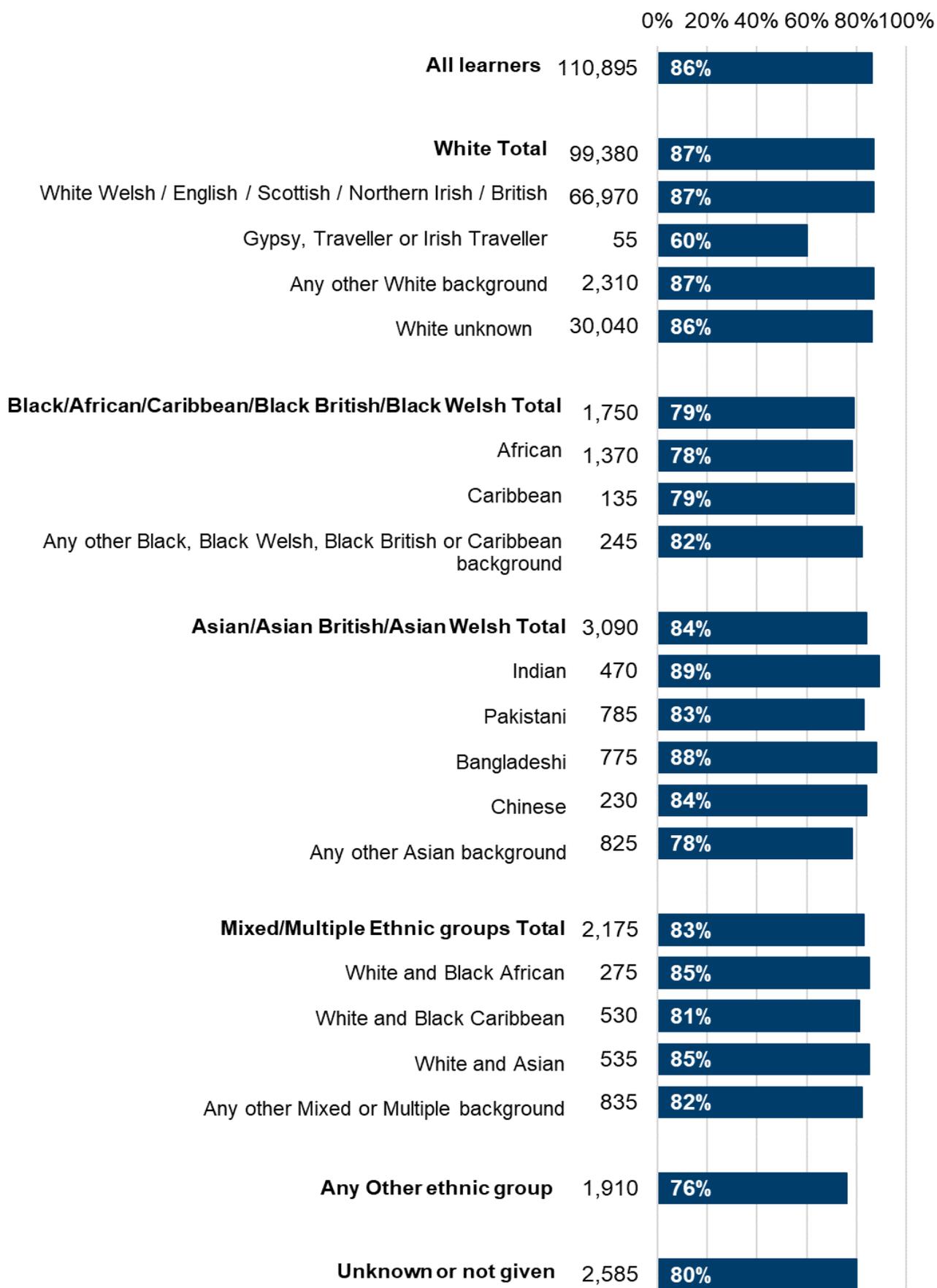
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

The rise in sustained learning in 2019/20 shown for all learners in Figure 1 is predominantly due to the large rise seen for learners aged 18 and under. In contrast to the overall trend which shows sustained learning continuing at 49% overall in 2020/21, the rate for those age 18 decreased to just above the rate in 2018/19. The rate stayed the same overall because there has been an increase in the sustained learning rate for older age groups in 2020/21, after a decrease between 2016/17 and 2019/20.

## Ethnicity

Figure 11a: Sustained destination rate of post-16 learners, by ethnicity, 2020/21  
[Note 3]



Description of Figure 11a: The bar chart shows the sustained destination rate by ethnic group for 2020/21 learners, it shows the high-level aggregate ethnic groups, alongside the more detailed groups. There is variation in sustained destination rates across ethnic groups.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 9a of the accompanying spreadsheet

[Note 3] The Roma ethnic group is not visible on the chart as numbers are small and the data may be disclosive.

The number of learners in the more detailed groups is generally much smaller so the rates are more volatile.

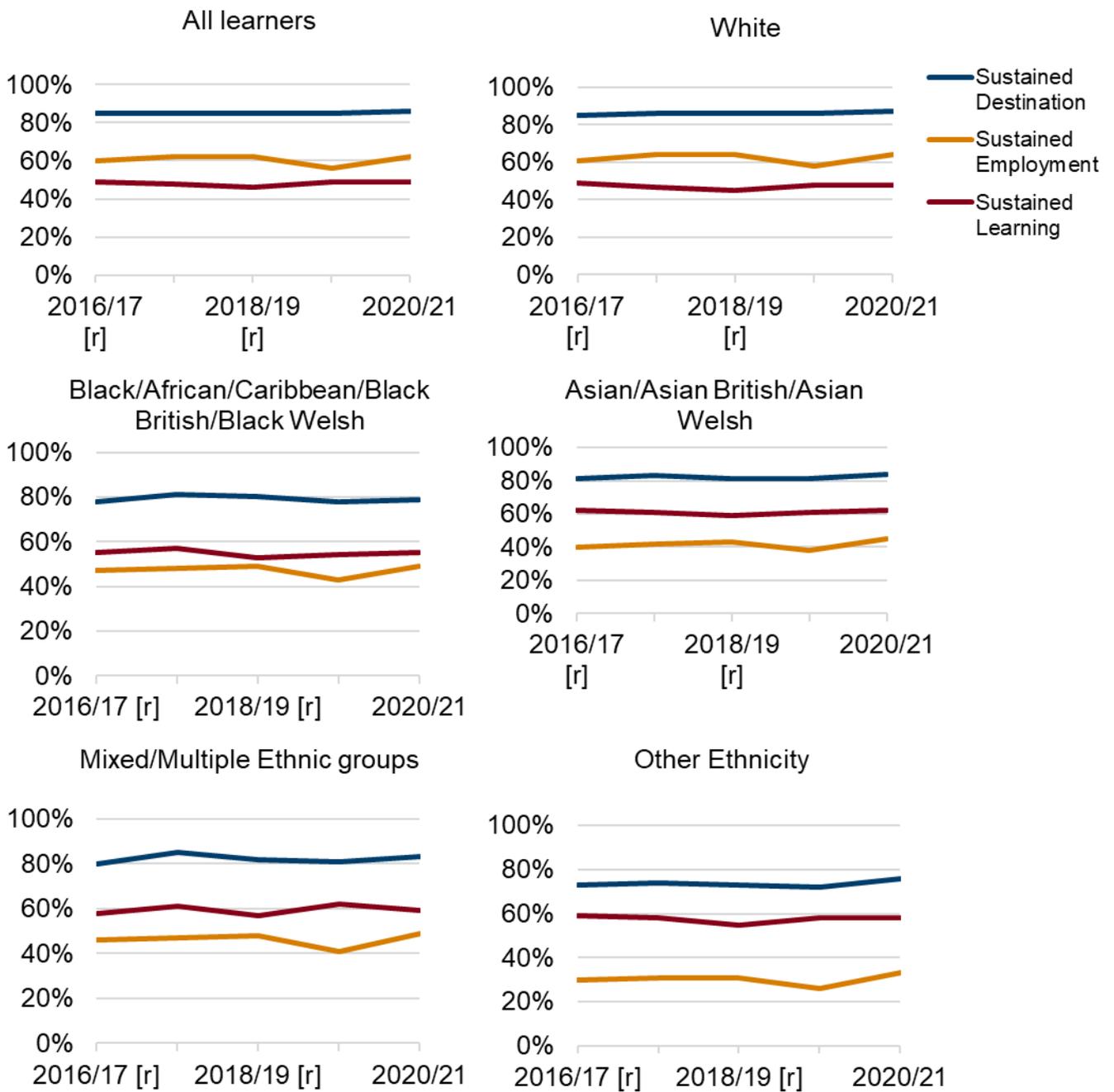
**Note:** 30% of learners in the high level "White" ethnic group were recorded at a time when there was only one category in the Lifelong Learning Record Wales data collection for White ethnic groups. These learners are shown chart 11a as "White unknown"

The sustained destination rate is generally highest for learners with a White ethnicity (87%) and lowest for learners from Other ethnic groups (76%) or learners with a Black, African, Caribbean, Black British, Black Welsh ethnicity (79%), however there is variation within the detailed groups in each category. Within the detailed groups, the Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller ethnic group has the lowest sustained destination at 60% and learners in the Indian ethnic group have the highest rate of 89%.

Learners with a White Unknown ethnicity (see note above) had the highest sustained employment rate at 73% whereas learners from Other ethnic backgrounds had the lowest rate at 33%, followed by learners with Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller ethnic backgrounds (40%) . Learners with an Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh ethnicity had a relatively low sustained employment rate compared to the other aggregated groups at 45%.

Conversely, when looking across the aggregated groups, the sustained learning rate was highest for learners within the Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh ethnic group at 62%. Looking at the more detailed groups, the Bangladeshi ethnic group had the highest sustained learning rate at 72%. The lowest rate was seen in learners with a White Unknown ethnicity (see note above), a rate of 31%.

**Chart 11b: Destinations of post-16 learners, by ethnicity, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 11b: The line chart shows learners with a White ethnicity have consistently higher rates of sustained employment than sustained learning, in contrast to learners in the other aggregated ethnic groups. There have been increases in sustained employment rates in all ethnic groups between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

## Special Educational Need (SEN) provision

To get information on SEN, we utilised our Matched Education Dataset (MED) to link students in our LEO dataset with their Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) record. For more information on this, see the [Key Quality Information](#).

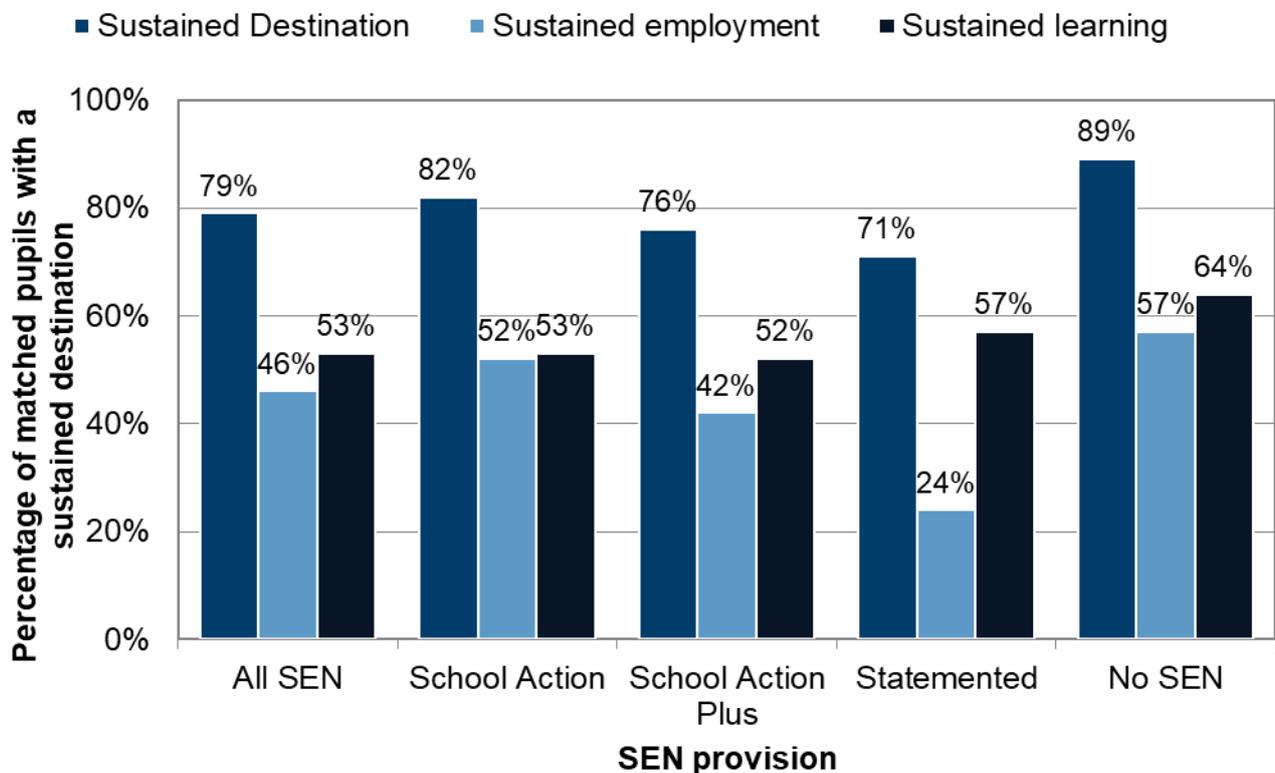
Only learners able to be matched to PLASC were linked so the number of students included in this analysis is less than the total destinations cohort. As such, the chart represents only 63% of the 2020/21 cohort and should be treated as a standalone analysis, not compared to the rest of the release.

For example, the learners included in the chart below have a younger demographic profile than the rest of this release. Figures 10a and 10b show that younger learners have a lower rate of sustained employment than the whole cohort, so the sustained employment rate of all the students in figure 12a is lower than is shown for totals in the rest of this release.

The SEN status shown for learners in this analysis is the most recent record of SEN provision they had in the PLASC record, e.g. if a learner in LLWR had one type of SEN provision in year 10, and another in year 11, this analysis uses what was recorded when they were in year 11.

Learners with SEN may have [Statements](#) issued by the LA or may have their needs identified by the school. In the latter case they come under one of two further categories: [School Action](#) or [School Action Plus](#).

**Figure 12a: Destinations of post-16 learners, by SEN provision, 2020/21**



Description of Figure 12a: The bar chart shows that learners with SEN provision have lower rates of sustained learning, sustained employment, and sustained destination than learners with no SEN.

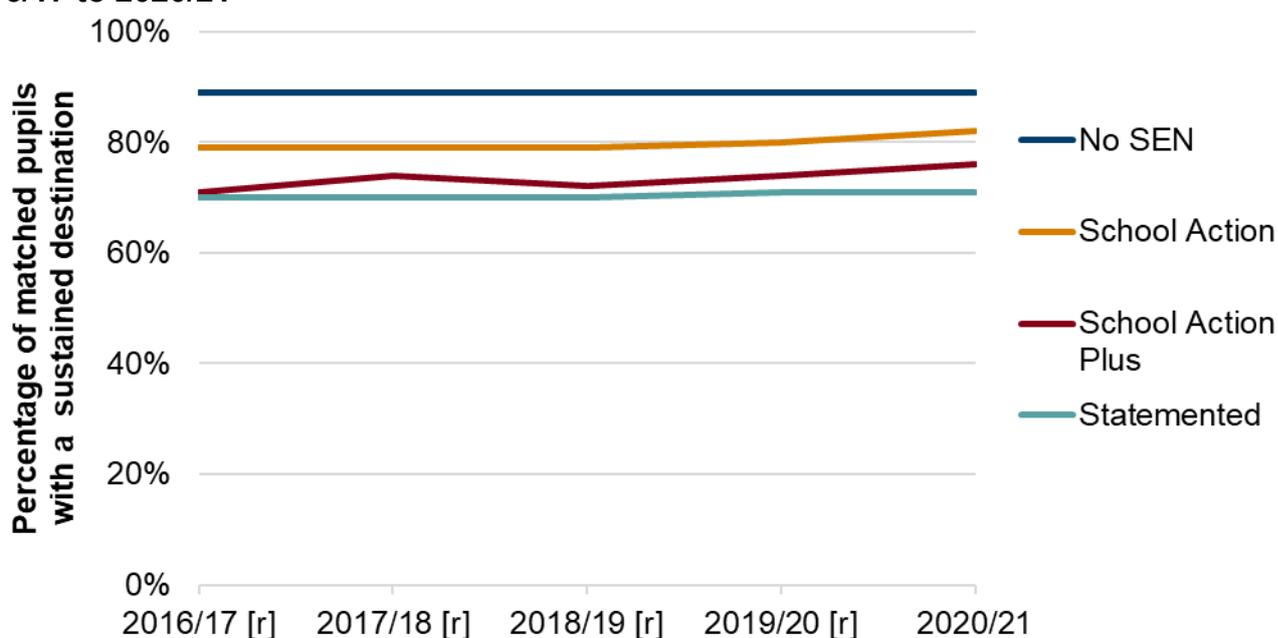
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 8a of the accompanying spreadsheet

The sustained destination rate for 2020/21 was highest for learners with no SEN provision (89%). Of the learners with SEN provision, it was highest for those with School Action (82%) and lowest for those with a statement of SEN (71%).

The same pattern was seen for the sustained employment rate, with learners with no SEN having the highest rate (57%) and those with a statement of SEN having the lowest (24%). Similarly, the sustained learning rate was also highest for students with no SEN provision (64%) but those with a statement of SEN had the highest sustained learning rate of all students with a SEN provision (57%), it was lowest for those with School Action Plus provision (52%).

**Figure 12b: Percentage of post-16 learners with a sustained destination, by SEN, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 12b: The line chart shows that the trend in sustained destination for learners with no SEN is consistent over time, with gradual small increases for learners with SEN provision.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

The sustained destination rate for learners with School Action provision has gradually increased from 79% to 82% between 2016/17 and 2020/21. Learners with School Action Plus provision have a more varied trend in sustained destination but there has been a gradual increase from 71% to

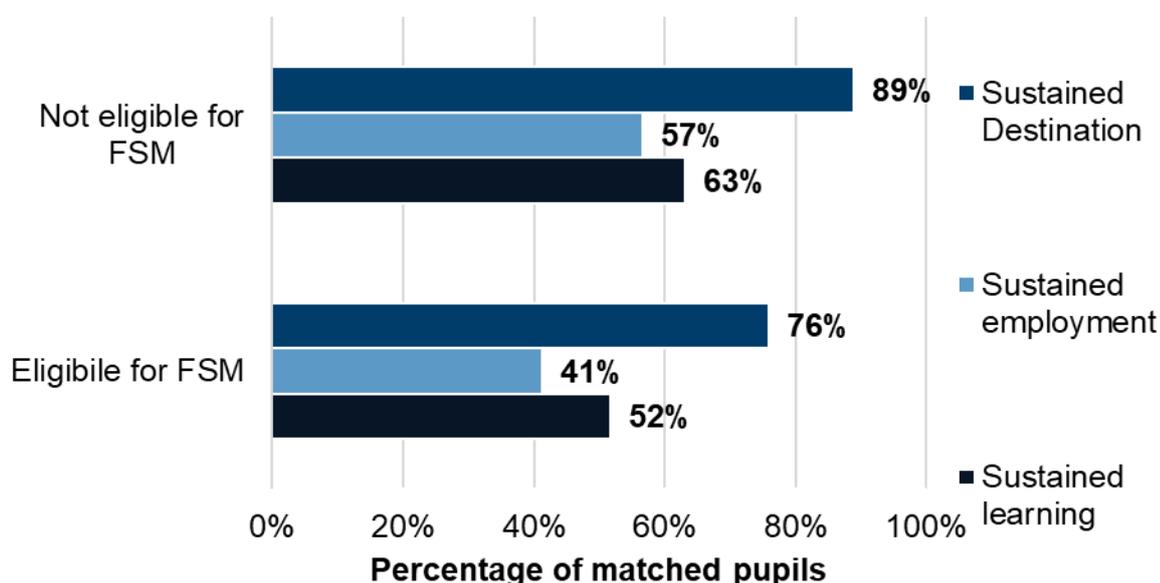
76% since 2016/17. Learners with a statement of SEN have had a smaller increase over the same period of 70% to 71%. In contrast, learners with no SEN provision have consistently had a sustained destination rate of 89% for the last 5 years.

### Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility

The analysis presented here is also derived by utilising our Matched Education Dataset (MED) to link students in our LEO dataset with their PLASC record. The match rate, and associated issues with comparing this analysis with that presented elsewhere in this release, is as described in the section on Special Educational Needs.

The FSM eligibility shown for learners in this analysis is the most recent record of FSM eligibility they had in the PLASC record, e.g. if a learner in LLWR was eligible for FSM in year 10, but then recorded as not eligible in year 11 this analysis will record them as not eligible.

**Figure 13a: Destinations of post-16 learners, by FSM eligibility, 2020/21**



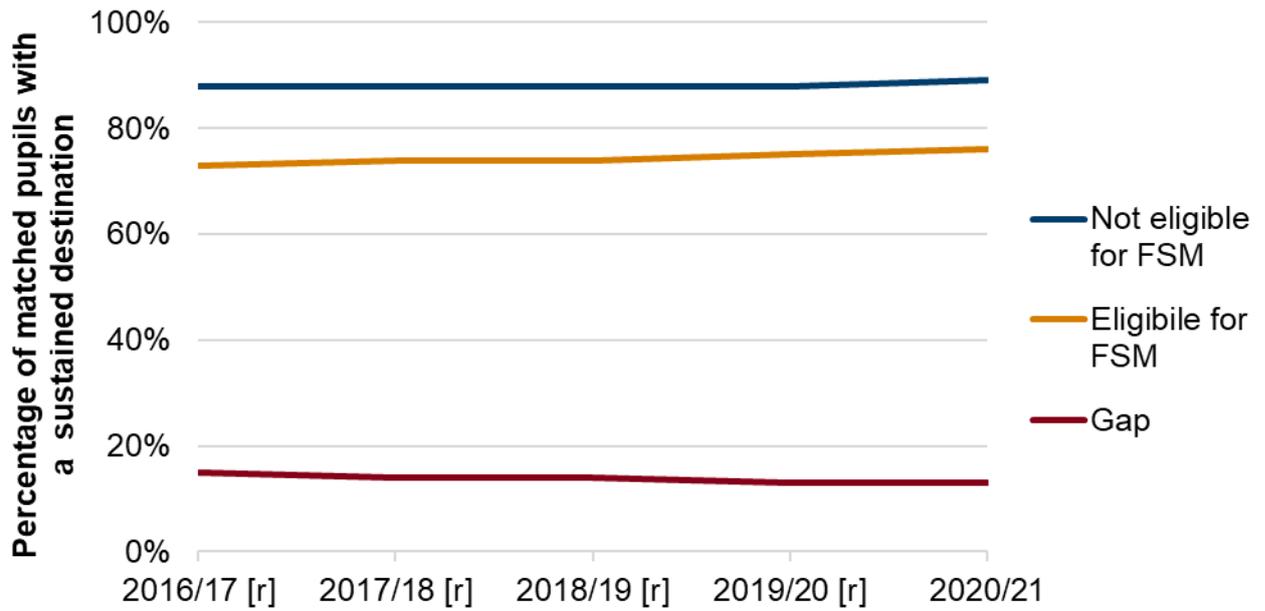
Description of Figure 13a: The bar chart shows that the rates of sustained destination, sustained employment and sustained learning are all lower for learners eligible for FSM than for other learners (76%, 41% and 52% respectively, compared with 89%, 57% and 63%).

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

Data can be found in Table 10a of the accompanying spreadsheet

The difference in rates is smallest for sustained learning with a gap of 11 percentage points, in contrast to the gap in the sustained employment rate being 15 percentage points.

**Figure 13b: Percentage of post-16 learners with a sustained destination, by FSM eligibility, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 13a: The line chart shows that the sustained destination rate for learners eligible for FSM has increased over the last 2 years. The increase has been more than that of the learners who aren't eligible for FSM, so the gap has fallen from 15 percentage points in 2016/17 to 13 percentage points in 2020/21.

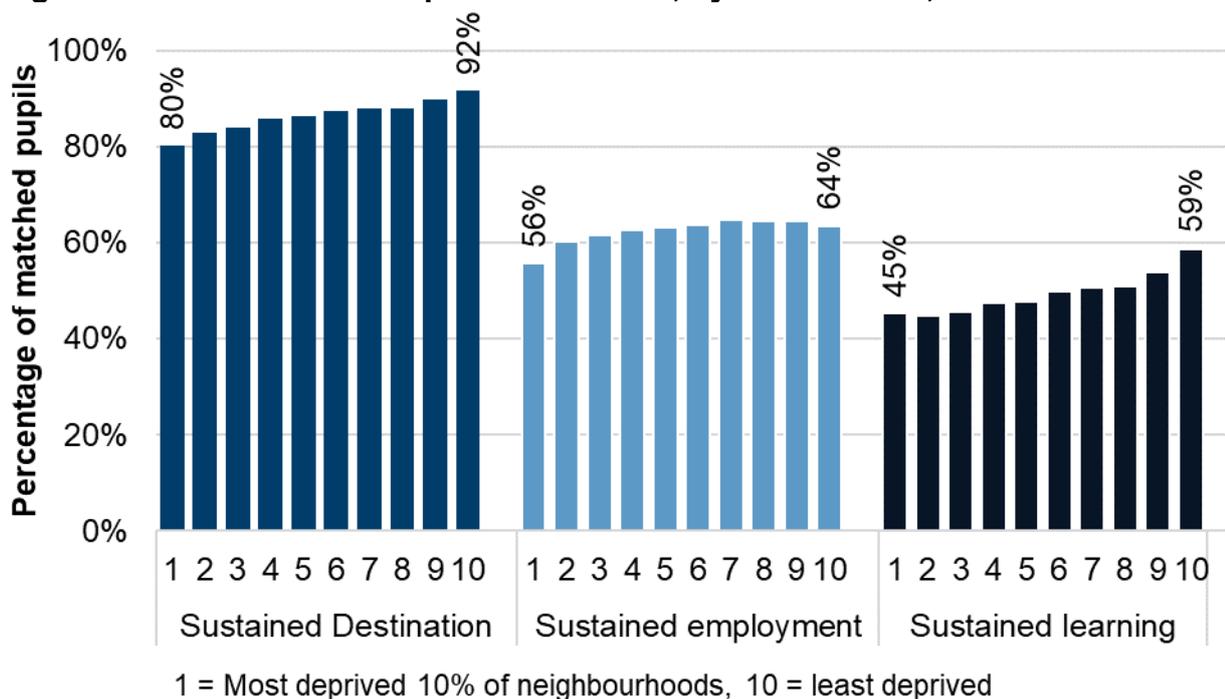
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

## Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)

[The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It is designed to identify those small areas where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. These small areas have been ranked, according to the 2019 WIMD, and grouped into deciles. The learner's postcode of residence is used to identify the deprivation decile that they reside in. This measure of deprivation is not based on the deprivation of the learner specifically. Many non-deprived learners live in deprived areas and vice versa. A small proportion of postcodes are not attributable to a WIMD decile i.e. those in England or with poor data quality.

**Figure 14a: Destinations of post-16 learners, by WIMD decile, 2020/21**



Description of Figure 14a: The bar chart shows that the rates of sustained destination, sustained employment and sustained learning are generally higher for learners from the least deprived areas.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

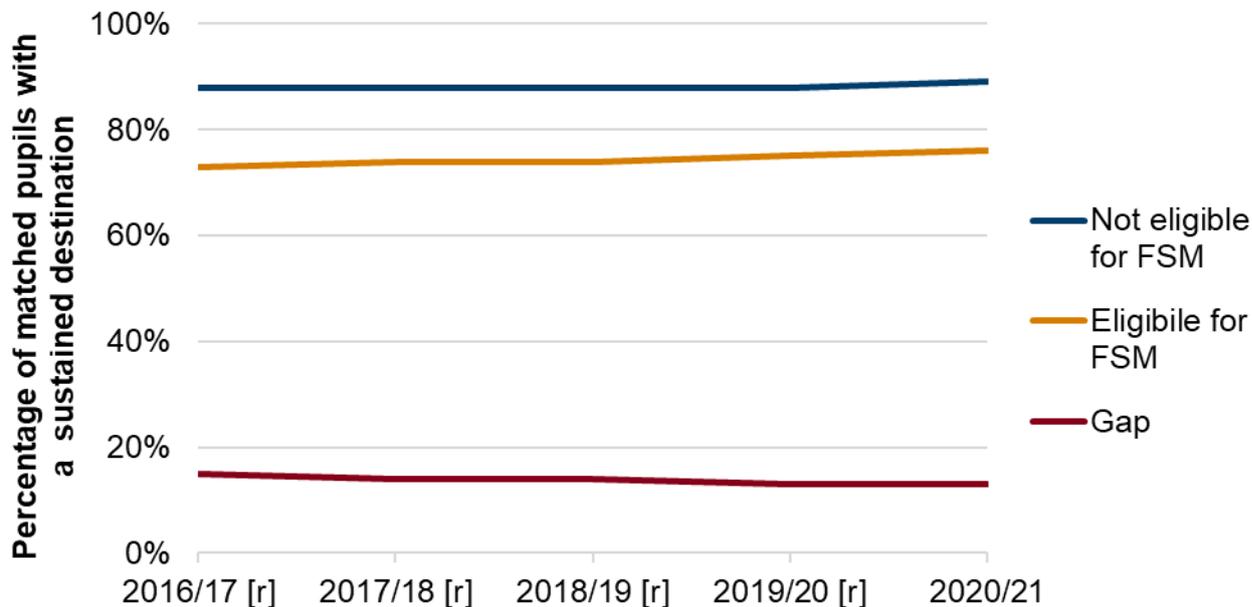
Data can be found in Table 11a of the accompanying spreadsheet

The sustained destination rate for learners from the most deprived decile (1) was 11 percentage points lower than the rate for learners from the least deprived decile (10), (80% compared with 92%).

The gap is 13 percentage points between the sustained learning rate of the most and least deprived decile (45% compared to 59%). The gap in sustained employment is smaller, there is 8 percentage points between the rate of the most and least deprived decile (56% compared to 64%), though the rate was highest in decile 7 (65%).

Figure 14b shows the sustained destination rate over time, by decile of deprivation. The deciles have been grouped into 5 groups to show them on a chart e.g. the line showing the 50% least deprived, includes learners from the 5 least deprived deciles.

**Figure 14b: Percentage of post-16 learners with a sustained destination, by WIMD deprivation group, 2016/17 to 2020/21**



Description of Figure 14b: The line chart shows that learners from the least deprived areas consistently have higher rates of sustained destination than learners from the most deprived areas. There has been a small increase for all groups over the last year.

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study

[r] Previously published figures have been revised with the latest data, see the key quality information for detail.

## Notes

### Background to this release

In December 2017 we published the statistical article [Educational Destinations of Key Stage 4 and Post-16 Learners, 2014/15](#), stating that we were working on a separate project to determine the employment destinations of learners in Wales. That project is the [Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\) Study](#), which has allowed us to link data from the [Lifelong Learning Wales Record \(LLWR\)](#) and [Post-16 Data Collection](#) with employment data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), (see Data Sources for more information).

This has allowed us to develop a more complete picture of the destinations of further education and work-based learning learners, be it continuing in education, employment, both or neither. In September 2018 we published the first publication in this series; [Consistent performance measures for post 16-learning: learner destinations, 2015/16](#).

Feedback following the first release in this series indicated that use of the word 'positive' in the measure categories could overlook outcomes that are positive for an individual, such as volunteering or parenthood, but conversely, could capture less favourable outcomes (such as employment on a zero hours contract). Therefore the word 'positive' has been removed from our terminology. However the methodology for the learning and sustained employment measure as above remains the same as for the positive destination measure presented in the [first release](#) in this series.

### Official Statistics in development

[Official statistics in development](#) may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. In previous publications, these statistics have been called 'experimental statistics'.

The Welsh Government's use of datasets used to create these measures is still evolving and further developments are planned to incorporate information on benefits and earnings. Further consultation with providers is also planned before finalising the methodology.

We welcome and value any feedback on the methodology or contents of this output. Please contact us at [post16ed.stats@gov.wales](mailto:post16ed.stats@gov.wales).

### Measures and coverage

#### Learners covered by these measures

The learner cohorts presented in this article include all post-16 learners who terminated an eligible learning programme in Wales in the academic year. Post-16 learners are those studying in further education institutions, school sixth forms and in work-based learning (apprenticeships, traineeships and other employability programmes), but excludes the Adult Learning sector. Finishing a learning

programme does not necessarily constitute 'a leaver'. For example, many learners completing programmes of AS level study will remain with their learning provider to pursue an A2 programme.

The article does not include information on the destinations of learners who undertook:

- Learning delivered in independent schools
- Higher education learning in higher education providers
- Privately-funded training at FE organisations and independent training organisations

Following a review of the methodology, a number of learning programme types have been removed from the cohorts in this release, including cohorts for previous years. This aims to improve comparability and coherence across the time series.

- Higher education (HE) programmes - from 2016/17 onwards, all HE programmes funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) moved from being reported through LLWR to being reported through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). (See below) As a result the number of HE programmes at FEIs dropped between 2015/16 and 2016/17 as the destination of HE level learners from HESA are not available to be analysed and so not included in this release. This change mainly affects the 2014/15 and 2015/16 learner cohorts.
- Junior Apprenticeships – removed as this is pre-16 provision not within the scope of these performance measures.
- Creative Solutions, Independent Living Skills, Professional Learning Accounts (PLAs) – these programmes are not currently included in the post-16 consistent measures.
- Programmes where the reason for termination was the death of the learner – removed for consistency with how such programmes are handled in the achievement measure.

This has resulted in the removal of between 2,000 and 4,000 learning programmes from cohorts published in previous editions of this release. The main impact is an increase in sustained employment rates of around one percentage point for the 2014/15 to 2018/19 cohorts, an increase of one percentage point in sustained learning for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 cohorts, and an increase in sustained destination of one percentage point for the 2014/15 to 2016/17 cohorts. Sustained employment for the 2019/20 cohort increased by two percentage points, whilst the sustained destination rate went up by one percentage points. Some of this change will also be the effect of updated employment data from LEO.

Post-16 learners in school sixth forms and further education institutions and those in work-based learning all undertake a [programme of study](#), consisting of a combination of qualifications. There are a range of programmes covering AS/A levels and the wide range of vocational qualifications offered. Eligible learning is identified using the LLWR and Post-16 Collection data, in particular the learning programme start and end dates. The measures reported here cover learners terminating a learning programme in academic year (1 September to 31 August for school sixth forms, 1 August to 31 July for other providers), whether or not the learning programme was recorded as

'completed'. Learning programme start and end dates in the Post-16 Collection have not been used due to data quality issues. Early drop outs (learners enrolled on a learning programme for fewer than 8 weeks) are excluded.

Learners age 16+ are those that are at least age 16 at the beginning of the year they terminate their learning or training, i.e. in the case of learners terminating in 2020/21 this covers learners aged 16 or older on 31 August 2020. Destinations are reported on a learner basis and learners appear once for each provider where they have terminated an eligible programme. In the case where a learner terminates multiple eligible programmes within the academic year, destinations are reported against their most recently started programme.

## **Data sources**

This publication uses data from the [Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\) Study](#), which has been brought together by different government departments and is being used to improve the information available on a range of topics across different policy areas.

The LEO study links information about individuals, including:

- Personal characteristics such as gender, ethnic group, and age
- Education, including schools, colleges and higher education institution attended, courses taken, and qualifications achieved
- Employment and income
- Benefits claimed

The privacy statement explaining how personal data in this project is shared and used is published on the [Gov.UK website: Longitudinal education outcomes study: how we use and share data](#).

Our involvement in this project has allowed us to link learning data from the [Lifelong Learning Wales Record \(LLWR\)](#) and [Post-16 Data Collection](#) with benefits, employment and earnings data from DWP and HMRC.

This publication also uses data from the [Pupil Level Annual School Census \(PLASC\)](#), utilising the Matched Education dataset to obtain additional learner characteristics such as Special Educational Need Provision in school, and Free School Meal eligibility.

The key data sources used in this article are as follows:

- [Lifelong Learning Wales Record \(LLWR\)](#): contains data on further education, work-based learning, and community learning, collected on a 'rolling' basis throughout the year with regular statistical freezes; it provides the official source of statistics on post-16 (non-higher education) learners in Wales
- [Post-16 Data Collection](#): every October, all maintained schools with sixth forms and middle schools with pupils in years 12, 13 and/or 14, are required to report all learning programmes and activities undertaken by learners in the previous academic year.

- [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#): an annual collection of a range of UK-wide data from universities, higher education colleges and other differently funded providers of higher education; this data is then provided to UK governments and higher education funding bodies to support their work in regulating and funding higher education providers. Providers submit data to HESA via either the [Student record](#) or the [Student alternative record](#). HESA recently started reporting using both these combined records to provide a more complete picture of higher education. Data from the Student alternative record is now included in our learning destination calculations.
- [P45 and P14 employment data \(held by HMRC\)](#): an administrative dataset covering those who pay tax through PAYE through employer submission of P45 and P14, or through completing a self-assessment tax form. The core purpose of this process is to collect tax from those who are eligible to pay it through this mechanism and so there is not complete coverage. Employers are not required to supply information to HMRC for individuals who earn below the tax threshold, although for large employers these individuals are thought to be included due to methods of data transfer. Further, HMRC started to implement Real Time Information (RTI) in April 2013 which includes nearly all such learners. RTI offers substantial improvements to the P45 system in terms of data coverage since employers must now provide information on all their employees if even one employee of the company is paid above the Lower Earnings Limit. The move to RTI will mean that data coverage is higher for the most recent financial years.

### **Coverage and robustness of the data**

- The measures are calculated using administrative data sources already held by the government, placing no additional burden on providers, individuals or employers to collect new information. Learner records from the LLWR and Post-16 Collection are linked to DWP and HMRC data to observe benefit and employment activity, and to other education datasets to observe post learning activity. Over 97% of learners are matched to DWP or HMRC data, so provide representative coverage of activity.
- The match rate would never be expected to reach 100% for a number of reasons including inaccurate recording of personal information in the datasets used in the matching exercise and movement of learners overseas etc.
- Calculation of rates for previous years included in this publication are recalculated using the latest matched data available at the time of publication and so may result in a higher match rate. The effect on the rates are minimal but figures may differ slightly from those presented in previously included in this series.

### **Time lags**

All data used in this process are drawn from administrative sources, which take time to process and collate. The time lags between the reference period and availability of the dataset for analysis are as follows:

- LLWR data are collated from returns by colleges with the provisional data collected to date generally published on a quarterly basis. Returns are not generally complete until up to six months after the end of the academic year, which runs from 1st August to 31st July
- Post-16 Collection data is collated from returns by maintained schools with sixth forms and middle schools with pupils in years 12, 13 and/or 14 in October, and are generally complete by December
- HESA data are collated from returns by institutions and data for the full academic year are available approximately six months after the end of the academic year
- Employment data are matched to DWP data on a regular basis. There are cleaning rules applied to the data, which identify old records when updated with new information. As new information can come through about a job after it has ended this is a source of constant change and historically the data has been considered complete after approximately six months. The most recently matched data is used in this publication so data presented for previous years may not match to those presented in previous publications in this series.

### **Matching process**

- Employment destinations have been produced using a matched dataset of person level administrative data sources from WG, DWP and HMRC. Learners from the LLWR and Post-16 Collection are matched to DWP benefit records and HMRC P45 and P14 income tax returns using a mixture of National Insurance Number and matching on other personal details. The matching algorithm relies on a number of fields being accurately populated across both datasets and additionally, not all learners will necessarily have any record of employment or benefits for legitimate reasons.

Once the match is established, the next step is to merge the different data files (employment, benefits, and learners) on the basis of the person level record linkage defined by the matching. The DWP and HMRC datasets provide a record of those receiving benefits and those paying tax through the self-assessment and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) systems. Processing rules are then applied to transform the data into useable information on employment and benefit receipt to support all analysis.

- Learning destinations have been produced using the “matched education dataset” referenced earlier. In previous releases of this analysis, the data linking exercise was undertaken by London Economics (LE) under contract by the Welsh Government. The linking process has now been developed internally and for this year’s release, the analysis uses the linked data produced by Welsh Government. The data linking exercise attaches a common anonymised identifier to records from multiple education data collections, so that the various datasets could be linked for statistical and research purposes.

For this analysis, the cohort of LLWR and Post-16 learners are matched to LLWR, Post-16 and HESA data for the next academic year to observe learning outcomes in further and higher education.

## Destination measures

A learner's destination relates to their activity the following academic year. So, for the 2020/21 cohort, destinations are reported for 2021/22.

## Sustained employment

The sustained employment measure aims to count the proportion of learners in sustained employment following termination of their course. Employment destinations are produced by matching LLWR and Post-16 Collection data to HMRC tax records (further details are provided later).

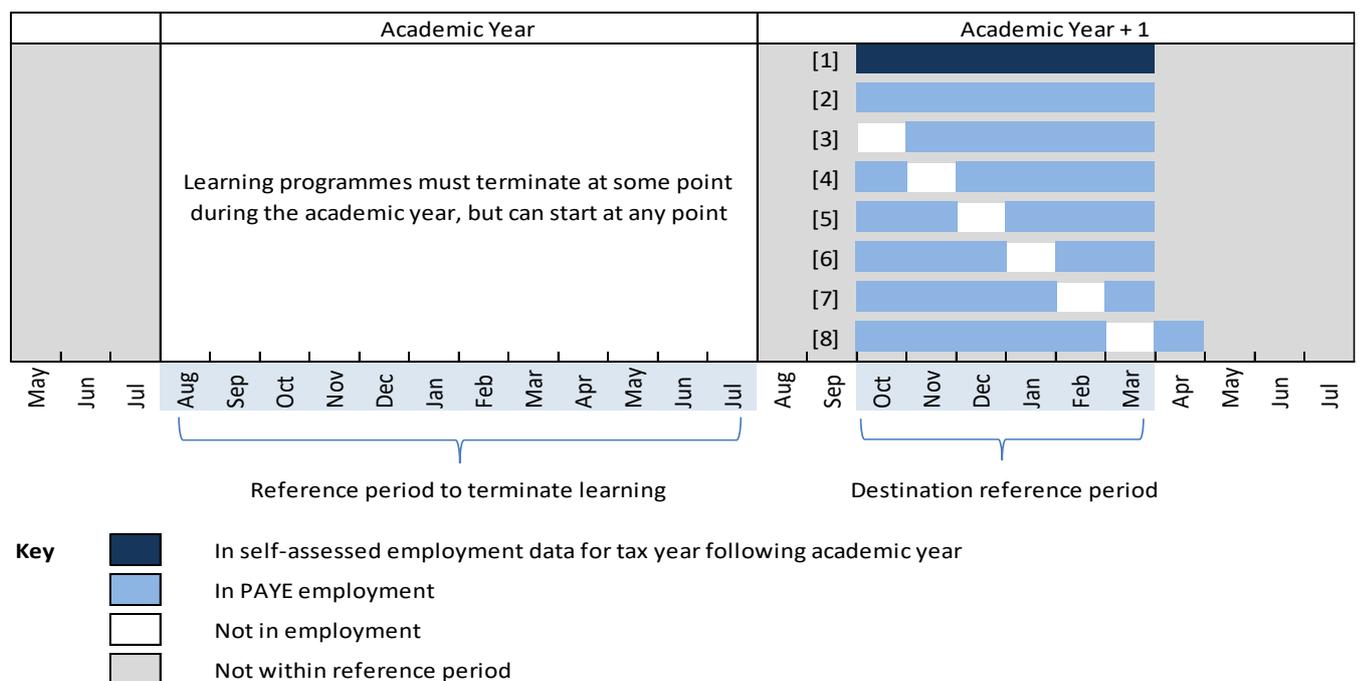
The definition of sustained employment looks at employment activity in the six month October to March period following the end of the academic year in which the learning aim took place. For 2020/21 learners to be counted as in sustained employment:

- A learner must have completed a self-assessed return for tax year 2021-22, or
- A learner must be in paid PAYE employment for at least one day in five out of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022

If a learner is employed in the five months between October 2021 and February 2022, but not in March 2022, then they must also be employed in April 2022.

The measure allows for a one month pause in PAYE employment to reflect that there may be more volatility in initial employment post learning. Where the pause is in March, activity in April is checked to see if it is a short pause or a more substantial break.

**Figure 1: The eight possible scenarios that lead to a learner being classified as in sustained employment**



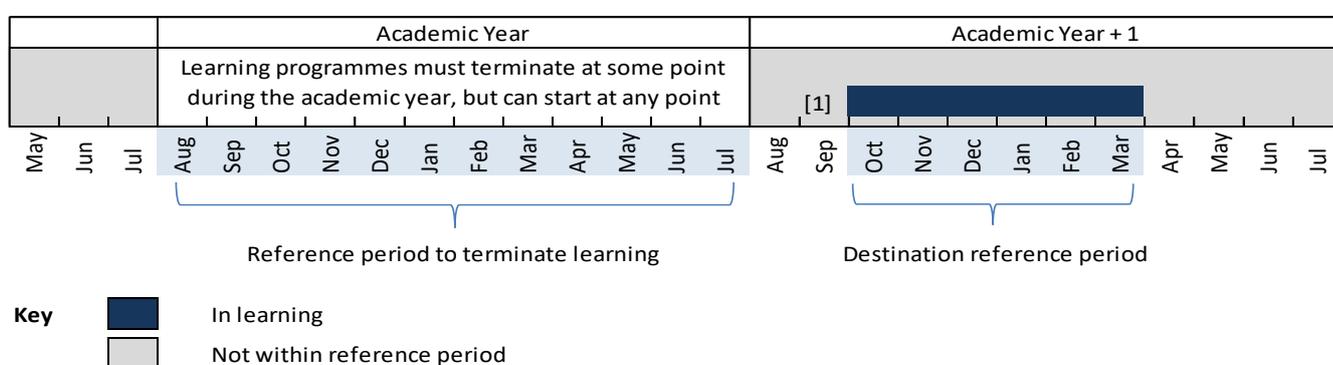
## Sustained learning

The sustained learning measure aims to count the proportion of learners in sustained learning, regardless of economic activity, following the termination of their course. The 2020/21 cohort of LLWR and Post-16 learners are matched to LLWR, Post-16 and HESA data for the next academic year to observe learning outcomes in further and higher education.

The definition of sustained learning looks at learning activity in the six month October to March period following the end of the academic year in which the learning programme took place. For 2020/21 learners to be counted as in sustained learning:

- A learner must be in learning or training for at least one day in each of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022

**Figure 2: The single scenario that leads to a learner being classified as in sustained learning**



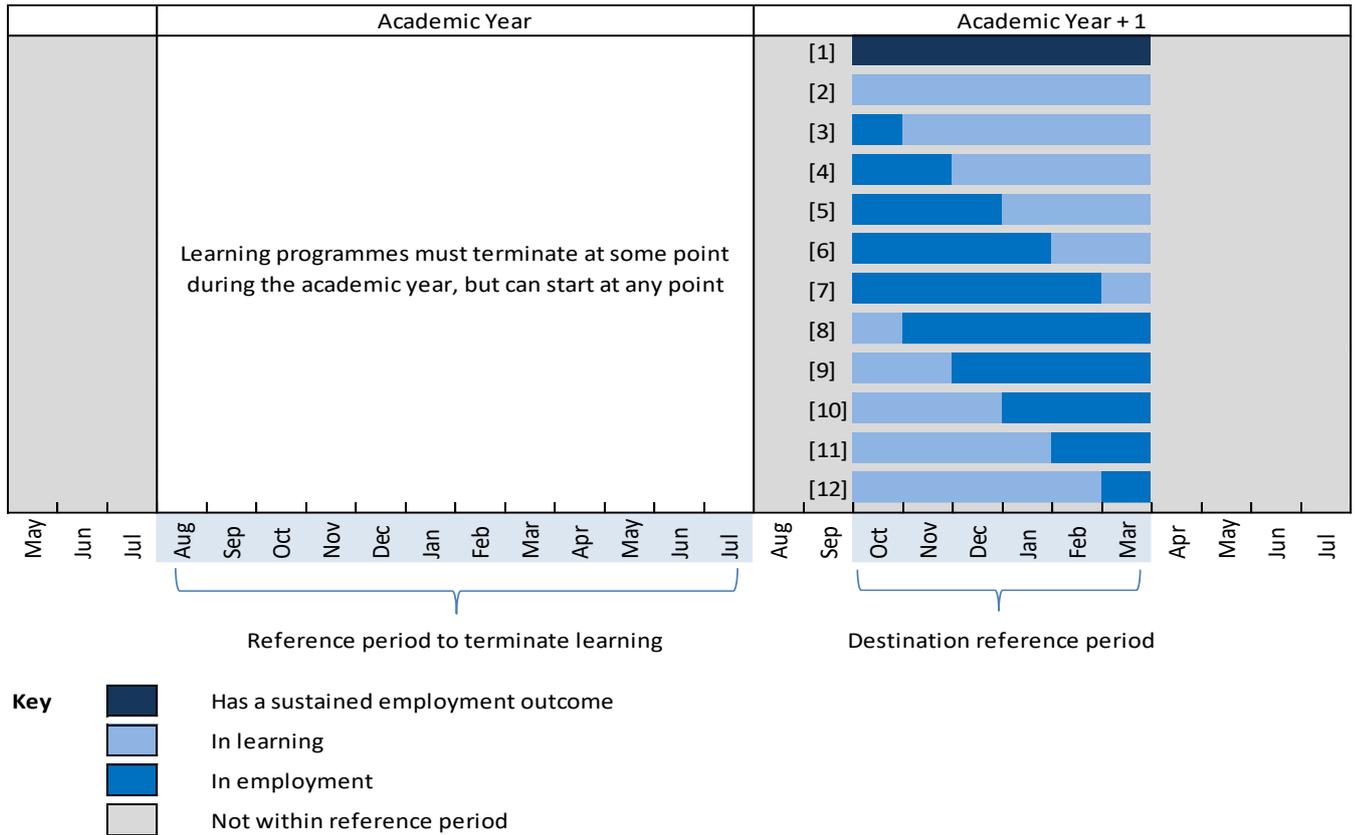
## Sustained destination

The sustained destination measure aims to count the proportion of learners with a sustained outcome, either into learning or employment (or both). For 2020/21 learners to be counted as having a sustained destination, a learner must either:

- Have a sustained employment outcome, or
- Have a sustained learning outcome, or
- Be engaged in either learning or training or paid employment in each of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022

Under the final scenario, learners may only 'switch' between learning and employment once. For example, if they are in learning for 2 months, then employment for 4 months they are counted as having a sustained destination. However if they are in learning for 2 months, then employment for 2 months, then learning 2 months, they are not counted as having a sustained destination.

**Figure 3: The twelve possible scenarios that lead to a learner being classified as having a sustained destination**

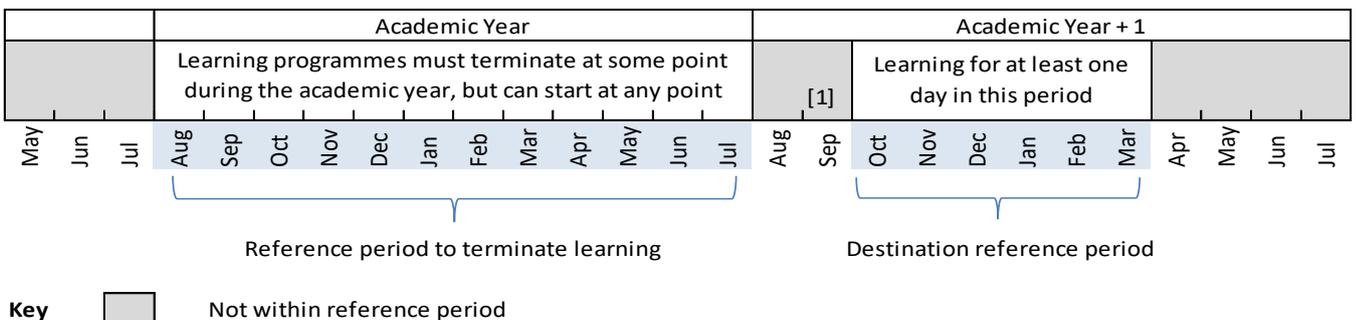


**Learning (non-sustained)**

The learning measure aims to count the proportion of learners who are in any learning, regardless of economic activity, following the termination of their course. This uses the same data sources and reference period as the sustained learning measure, but to be counted as in learning:

- A learner must be in learning or training for at least one day in any of the six months between October 2021 and March 2022

**Figure 4: The single scenario that leads to a learner being classified as in learning**



## **Learning or sustained employment destination**

The learning and sustained employment destination measure aims to count the proportion of learners with an outcome into learning or sustained employment. For 2020/21 learners to be counted as having a destination, a learner must:

- Have a sustained employment outcome, or
- Have a learning outcome (does not need to be sustained)

## **Limitations of the data**

At present, we haven't included information on employment sector and do not have any data on hours worked. Therefore, it is important to note that the sustained employment measure also captures part-time workers, such as those with a part-time job alongside their learning. It is not currently possible to use the matched data we hold to identify whether a learner has progressed into a destination that is related to their programme of study. We hope to include further information on sector of employment in the future.

## **Rounding and suppression**

All figures in this statistical release and supplementary tables are rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore there may be slight differences between the sum of the constituent rows/columns and the totals.

A '[c]' represents numbers greater than 0 but less than 5. For percentages, a '[c]' is used when the calculation is based on a denominator of 22 learners or less, or if the numerator is less than 5.

Percentages and percentage point differences are rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in differences between the sum of values being compared.

A percentage that is either zero, or rounding down to zero is shown as '[low]'.

## **Equalities data**

In April 2022 we included a section of destinations by learner characteristics for the first time. Previous analysis on age, gender and multiple deprivation was included as well as new analysis on destinations by ethnicity, Special Education Needs (SEN) and free school meal (FSM) eligibility.

There are challenges to producing these statistics due to differences in the way this information is recorded across the various data sources for different learning providers.

Ethnicity data was taken from the existing Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) and Post-16 Data Collections. Each dataset had different category breakdowns for type of ethnicity which have been aggregated up into broad ethnic groups to enable comparison.

For the SEN and FSM analysis we utilised our Matched Education Dataset (MED) which links education datasets from Key Stage 4 through to Higher Education. The MED enabled us to link students in our LEO dataset with their Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) record to add further equality characteristics analysis to this release.

Information on match rates and the impact of this approach is included in the respective sections in this release. We also hope to make information available through StatsWales in future, once our approach to developing these measures has been finalised.

PLASC is collected annually from all maintained schools in Wales. All pupils on roll on the census date must be included in the return and it includes information about pupil characteristics such as special educational need and free school meal eligibility.

Matched education data is available from 2010/11 onwards. As such, only students we were able to match to school data after that date are included in the SEN and FSM analysis. This means that the cohorts of students in those analyses are younger and may have different outcomes to the rest of the learner cohort. The breakdowns in these charts relating to SEN and FSM should therefore not be compared with the overall totals in this release.

## Special Educational Need provision definitions

### Pupils with statements

Pupils for whom the Authority maintains a statement of special educational needs under Part iv of the Education Act 1996. A statement may be issued by the LA after assessment of a child's needs.

### School Action

When a class or subject teacher identify that a pupil has special educational needs they provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum.

### School Action Plus

When the class or subject teacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator are provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different to those provided for the pupil through 'School Action' can be put in place. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator usually takes the lead although day-to-day provision continues to be the responsibility of class or subject teacher.

## Availability of data for equality dimensions:

Equality dimension	Collected	Included in release
Race/Ethnicity	Yes	Yes
Age groups	Yes	Yes
Gender	Yes	Yes
Impairments and disability	Yes	Analysis by Special Educational Needs (SEN) is included due to differences in how data on

		disability, impairments and SEN is captured across sectors – see above.
Sexual orientation	No	No
Religion or belief	No	No
Marriage and civil partnership	No	No
Pregnancy and maternity	No	No
Gender identity	In LLWR only – ‘Other’ gender category available for learners who do not identify as male or female	No

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.

## Key quality information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability and Coherence.

### Relevance

The measures set out in this release are intended to be used:

- by the Welsh Government, to monitor providers' performance and as baseline information to set targets for improvement;
- by Estyn, to inform inspection judgements on standards;
- by providers themselves, as a management tool to measure their own performance and benchmark themselves against sector averages, as part of their annual self-assessment cycles; and

The measures are also 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;
- other government departments;
- local authorities and regional education consortia;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- schools and further education institutions;
- the research community;
- individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

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

- advice to ministers;
- to inform national education policy development;
- to assist Estyn in their assessments;
- to assist in research on post-16 education;
- to inform and evaluate the education policy-making process in Wales.

### Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government undertake quality assurance processes ahead of publishing this release. The [notes](#) section provides an overview of methodological/data quality issues that relate specifically to the data in this output.

## **Timeliness and punctuality**

Data for a given academic year is derived and published subject to availability of the data-sources and completion of the external data matching process. See [‘Time lags’](#) for further information.

## **Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics and Research section of the Welsh Government website.

## **Comparability**

The Department for Education (DfE) has released analysis detailing the destinations of FE learners in England which can be found via the following link: [Further Education: Outcome based success measures, 2019 to 2020](#)

However, due to differences in methodology and data collection, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons with the figures contained within this release. In particular:

- DfE figures are based on all age apprenticeships, all age traineeships and adult (19+) FE and Skills learners, whereas WG figures also include 16-18 year old FE and WBL learners and those in school sixth forms;
- DfE figures are based on completed eligible learning aims, whereas WG figures are based on terminated learning programmes, excluding early dropouts (learners enrolled on a learning programme for fewer than 8 weeks);
- where a learner completes multiple eligible learning aims within the academic year, DfE reports outcomes against their highest level, whereas WG reports on the most recently terminated programme; and

DfE include any level of learning as a learning destination (i.e. a learner completing a level 3 programme who then went on to a level 2 programme the following academic year would be counted as in learning), whereas WG figures only count a learner as in learning if the programme they go on to in the following academic year is at an equal or higher level to the programme they terminated.

## **Coherence**

Previously published destination rates are recalculated using the latest matched data available at the time of publication as it may result in a higher match rate. The effect on the rates are minimal but figures may differ slightly from those previously presented.

In December 2017 we published the statistical article [Educational Destinations of Key Stage 4 and Post-16 Learners, 2014/15](#), which looks at the educational destinations of Key Stage 4 and 5 leavers.

More recently, the statistical article [Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic: August 2020 to July 2021](#) included a one-off analysis of the progression of Year 11 learners into post-16 education.

We hope to publish more regular information on the destinations of education leavers in the future.

Information is also published by Careers Wales, through the [Pupil Destinations Survey](#), on the destinations of Year 11, 12 and 13 school leavers.

In July 2022, the statistical article [Post-16 learning statistics by learners' ethnic group: August 2017 to July 2021](#) included destinations analysis by detailed ethnic group and committed to make the data available in regular publications in future. The ethnicity charts in this release now include more detailed breakdowns.

## **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.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing 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 wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## **Further details**

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-learner-destinations>

## **Next update**

Destinations for the 2021/22 cohort of learners will be published in September 2024.

## **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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