



Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales, 2022/23

27 Feb 2024
SFR 14/2024

Key points

163,695 unique learners enrolled on one or more learning activity within FE institutions, community learning or WBL providers during 2022/23. This was a rise of 10% compared with 2021/22.

There were 127,000 unique learners at Further Education institutions (FEIs), an increase of around 6% on the previous year. This increase was mostly driven by a recovery in the number of part-time learners at FEIs (up 11%), the highest number in the last six years. The number of full-time learners at FEIs remained approximately the same compared to the previous year and learners undertaking WBL at FEIs increased by 9%.

There were 46,610 unique learners undertaking apprenticeships in 2022/23, an 18% increase on the previous year. 43% were undertaking level 3 apprenticeships and 38% were undertaking foundation (level 2) apprenticeships.

There were 16,005 unique learners in local authority community learning, 53% higher than the previous year and the highest level since 2014/15.

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

Please note

This release covers the academic year from August 2022 to July 2023. The disruption to education provision caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will have impacted figures presented in this release, for academic years 2019/20 to 2021/22. This should be kept in mind, particularly when comparing more recent figures with previous years.

The traineeships programme, included in these statistics as part of WBL provision between 2011/12 and 2021/22, ended in March 2022. It has been replaced by the Jobs Growth Wales+ programme, statistics for which are reported separately. This should be considered when comparing figures for the WBL sector as whole and any combined figures covering all sectors (FE, community learning and WBL).

About this release

This statistical first release for 2022/23 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 Institutions (FEI), Work-based Learning (WBL) providers and Local Authority Community 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](#).

In this release

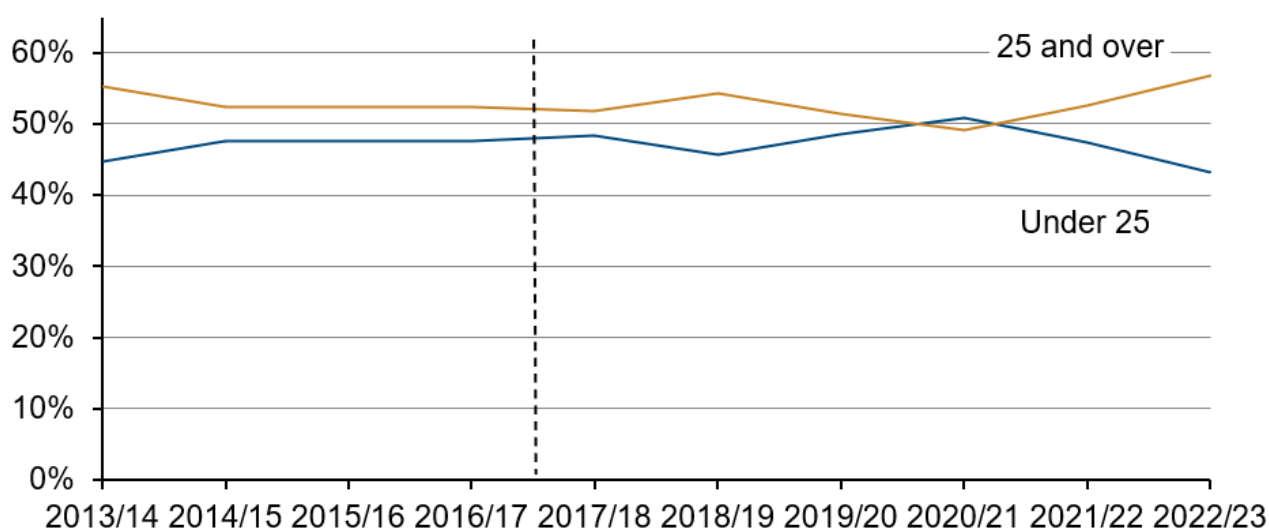
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Unique learners enrolled

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.

In 2022/23, 57% of learners were aged 25 and over. This proportion has varied over the years but has generally remained at more than half of learners, with the exception of 2021/22. This is the highest proportion of learners aged 25 and over since 2011/12.

Figure 1a: Percentage of learners at further education institutions, community learning and work-based learning providers by age, 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1] [note 2]



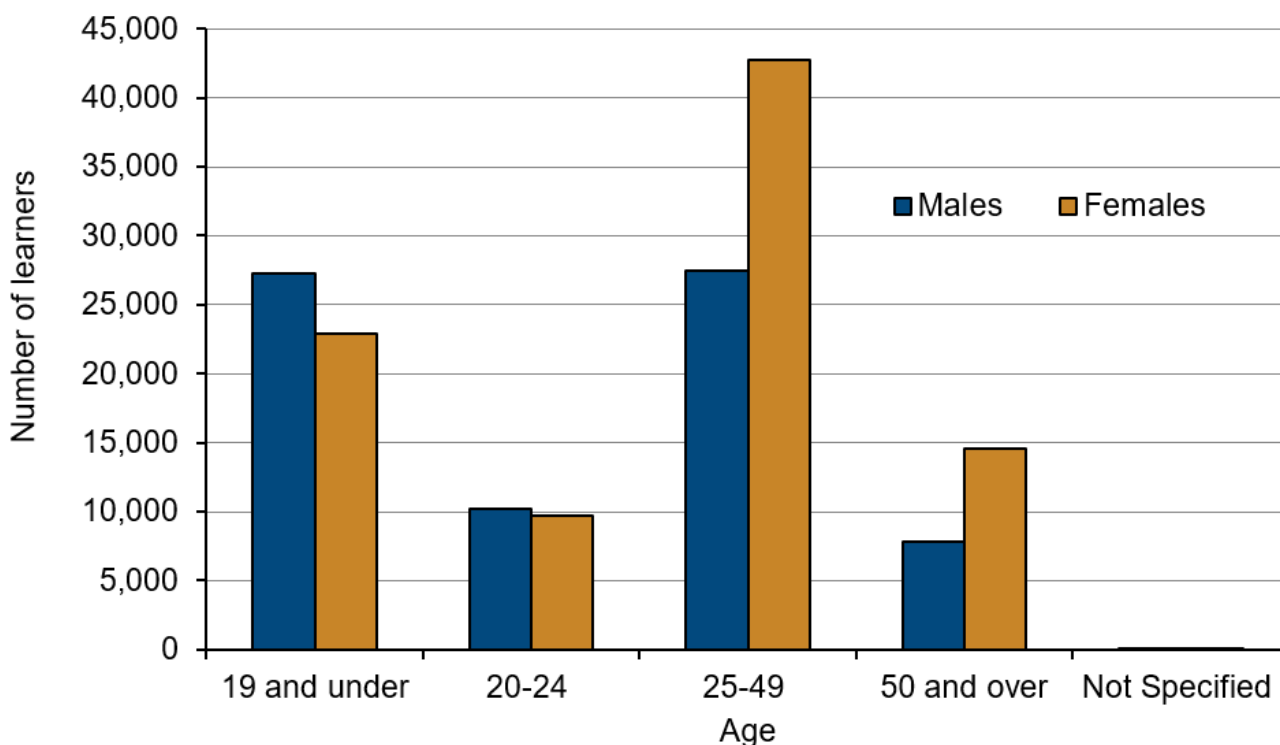
Description of Figure 1a: This line chart shows the proportion of learners by age, grouped into two groups: under 25, and 25 and over. The proportion of learners aged 25 and over has generally remained at more than half of learners, and this situation returned in 2021/22, having been slightly below half the year before. In 2022/23, 57% of learners were aged 25 and over.

[Note 1] Age at 31 August 2022.

[Note 2] The dashed line indicates where data from 2017 onwards is not directly comparable with previous years 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. 92,895 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 community learning and work-based learning (WBL) programmes [Figure 3a]. 70,790 learners were aged under 25, of which 46% were female and 53% were male. The proportion of learners who do not identify as female or male is less than 1% overall but is higher in younger age groups.

Figure 1b: Unique learners at further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers by age and gender, 2022/23 [note 1]

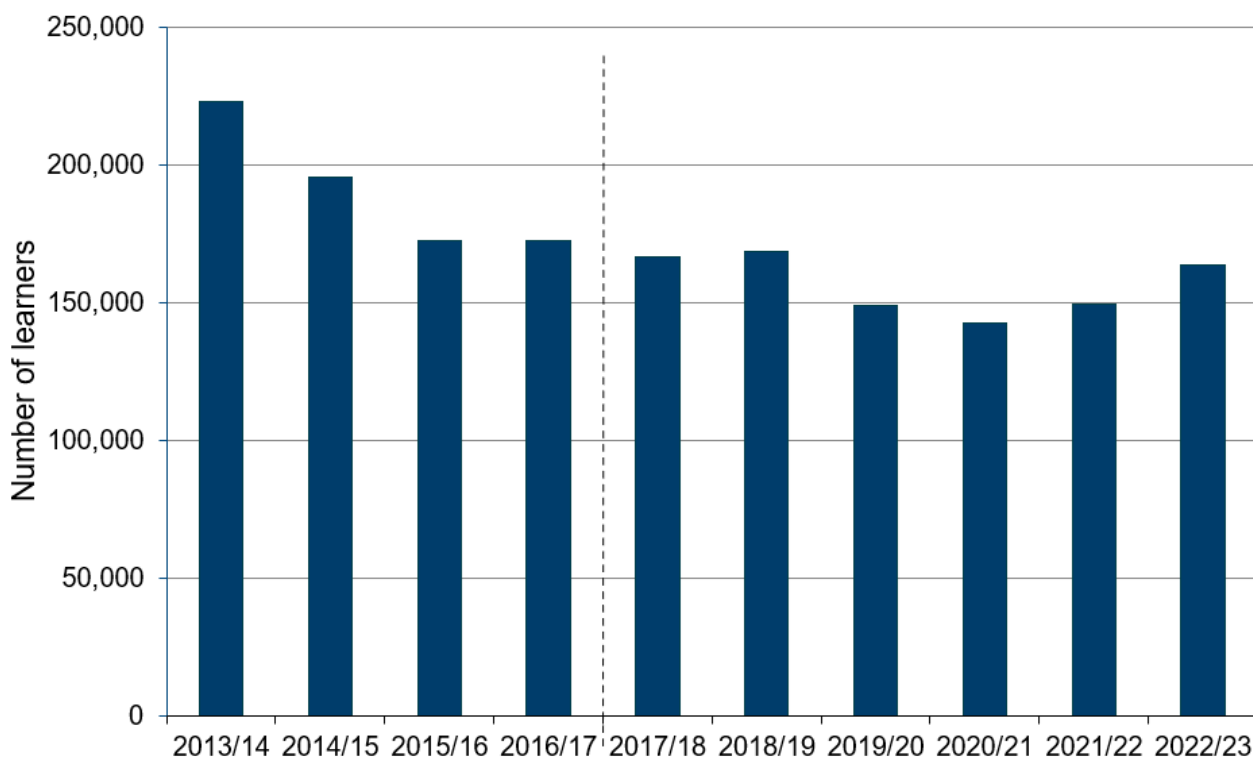


Description of Figure 1b: This bar chart shows the number of learners at FEIs, LACL, and WBL by age group and gender. The biggest difference between the number of male and female learners was in 25-49 age group with 27,495 males and 42,780 females being enrolled.

[Note 1] Age as at 31 August 2022.

Figure 2a illustrates the overall trend in learner numbers within FEIs, WBL provision and community learning. Further detail is given in figures 2b to 2g. Note that there are overlaps between the different areas of learning – i.e. work-based learning at FEIs and community learning at FEIs.

Figure 2a: Learner numbers at further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers, 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1]

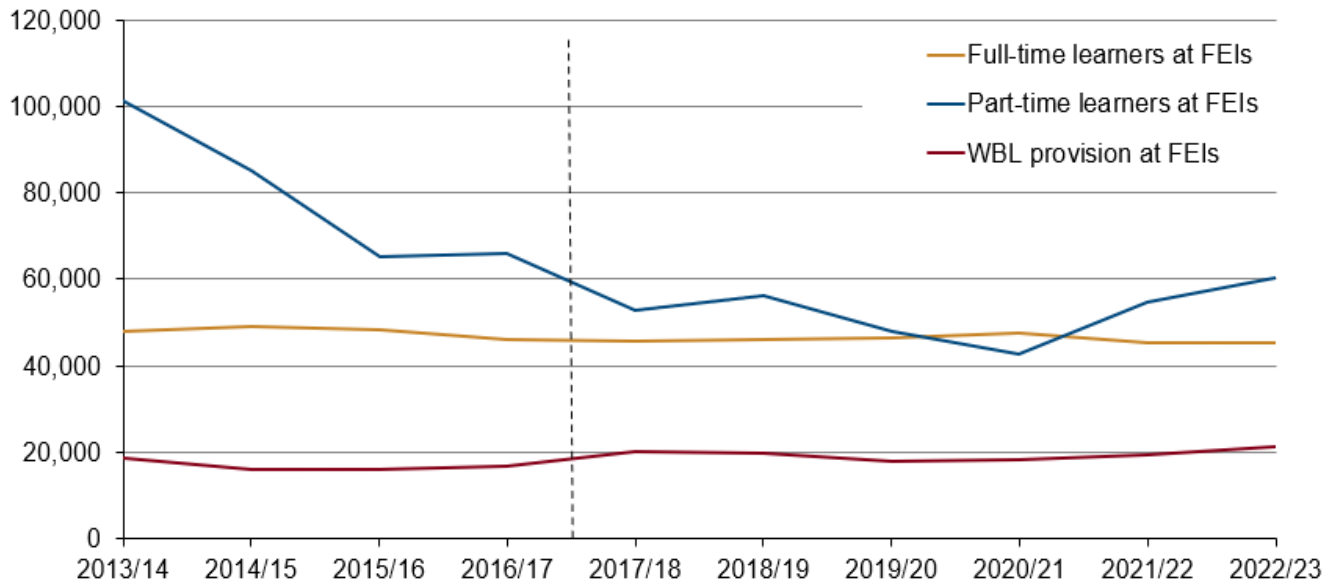


Description of Figure 2a: This bar chart shows the number of learners in FEIs, local community learning, and WBL. In 2022/23 there were 163,695 learners which is a 10% increase compared to the previous year.

[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 has increased again since its lowest point in 2020/21, up 11% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. At the same time, the number of full-time learners at FEIs stayed approximately the same, meaning that there were more part-time learners than full-time learners again in 2022/23. The number of work-based learners at FEIs increased by 9%. This is shown in Figure 2b.

Figure 2b: Breakdown of unique learners at further education institutions over the previous decade [note 1]



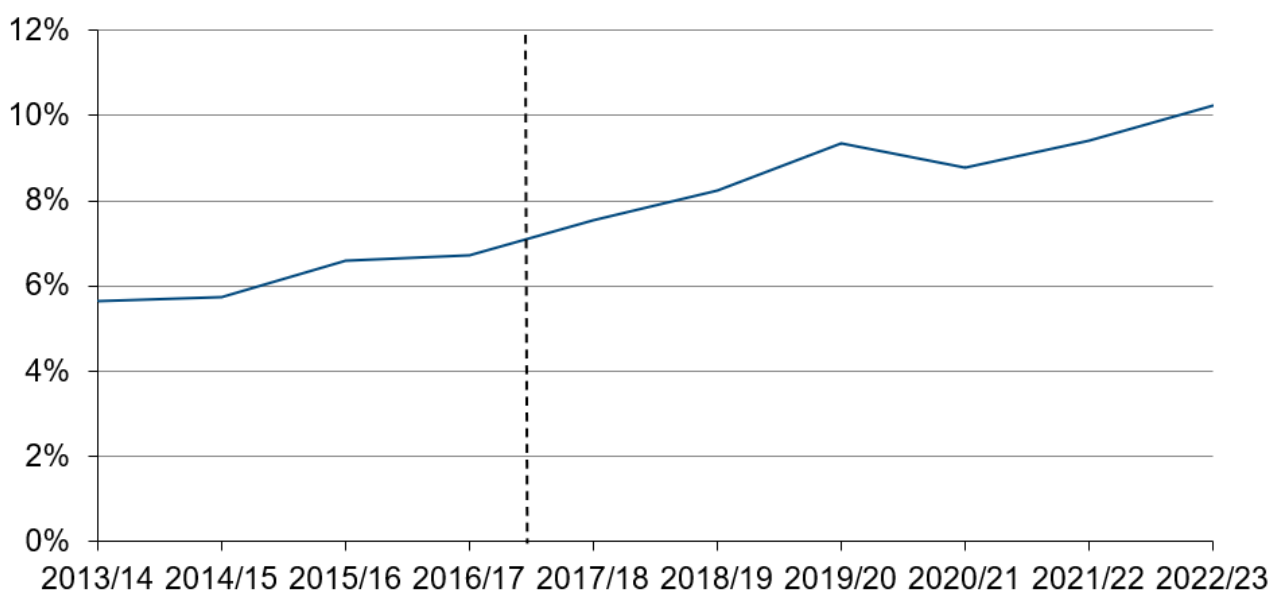
Description of Figure 2b: This line chart shows the number of learners in FEIs by the mode of study. There were 60,510 part time learners, 45,275 full time learners and 21,215 WBL learners in 2022/23.

[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.

Ethnicity

The proportion of learners that come from ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities) has been increasing over the last decade. The latest data for 2022/23 shows that 10% of learners at further education institutions are from ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities). This proportion had been steadily increasing over the last ten years, apart from a fall in 2020/21.

Figure 2c: Proportion of learners at further education institutions from ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities), 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1] [note 2]



Description of Figure 2c: This line chart shows the proportion of learners at FEIs from ethnic minority background. This excludes white minorities. 10% of learners were of ethnic minority background in 2022/23 which is an increase compared to the previous year.

[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.

Table 1: Home unitary authority of learners in further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers by ethnic background, 2022/23

	Asian, Asian British	Black, African, Caribbean, Black British	Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups	White	Other ethnic groups	Information refused / not known
All	5,115	3,845	2,825	138,370	3,490	10,050
Isle of Anglesey	15	5	20	2,765	20	190
Gwynedd	75	25	45	4,980	60	305
Conwy	60	15	60	4,520	65	360
Denbighshire	80	20	65	4,065	35	355
Flintshire	50	25	75	7,330	55	800
Wrexham	145	105	75	7,355	70	1,025
Powys	85	25	55	3,785	45	390
Ceredigion	20	20	30	2,460	35	130
Pembrokeshire	100	50	95	6,795	50	130
Carmarthenshire	120	40	90	8,405	105	275
Swansea	610	555	220	11,570	575	460
Neath Port Talbot	155	35	90	7,835	50	625
Bridgend	125	75	105	7,110	65	330
The Vale of Glamorgan	200	75	165	5,270	100	345
Rhondda Cynon Taf	140	185	150	11,175	155	675
Merthyr Tydfil	45	10	45	2,925	20	335
Caerphilly	85	45	105	8,660	60	705
Blaenau Gwent	50	15	35	4,100	30	340
Torfaen	90	30	75	5,080	15	205
Monmouthshire	65	15	35	2,720	45	140
Newport	695	465	260	5,185	330	445
Cardiff	2,010	1,965	880	11,015	1,470	1,210
Unknown/Outside Wales	95	55	65	3,260	40	265

Description of Table 1: This bar chart shows the number of learners in FEIs, WBL, and LACL by unitary authority and ethnic background in 2022/23. Learners from ethnic minority background (excluding White minorities) are concentrated in Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport similarly to the previous year.

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 around 4 in 5 lived in one of the three big South Wales cities.

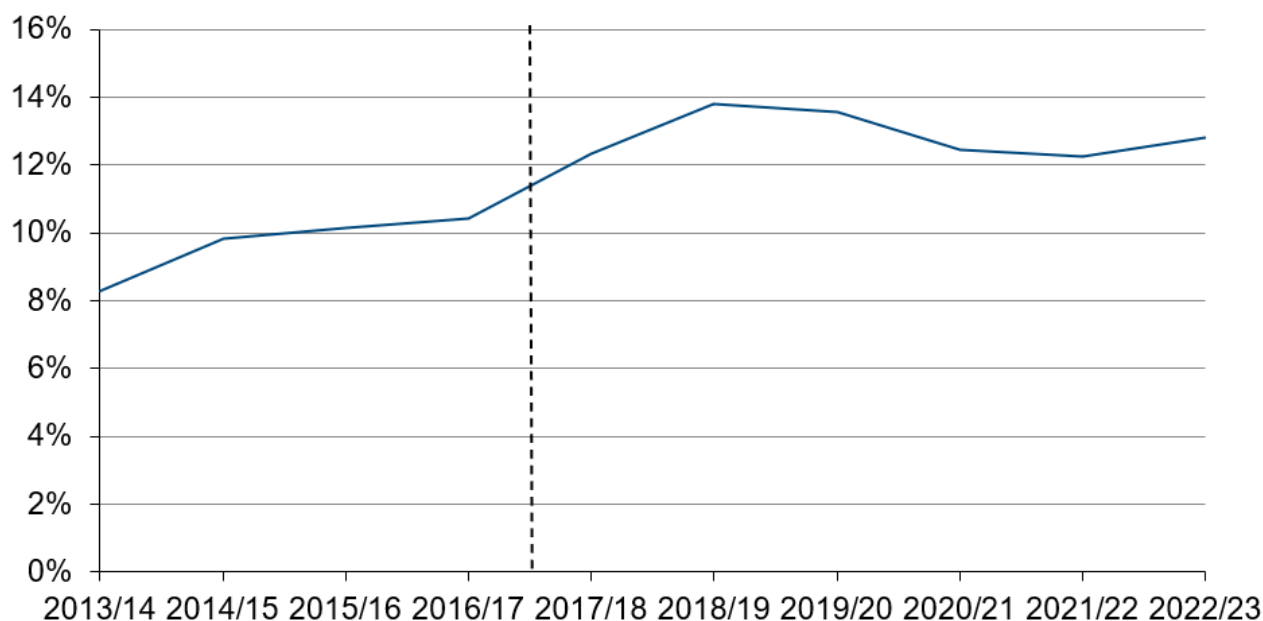
Representation varies between further education, local authority community learning and work-based learning. Further information is provided in [table 4](#).

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.

Figure 2d: Proportion of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a disability and/or learning difficulty, 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1]



Description of Figure 2d: This line chart shows learners with disability and/or learning difficulty at FEIs in percentage. This is based on learners self-identifying as having a disability and/or learning difficulty. The data shows 13% of learners had a disability and/or learning difficulty in 2022/23.

[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.

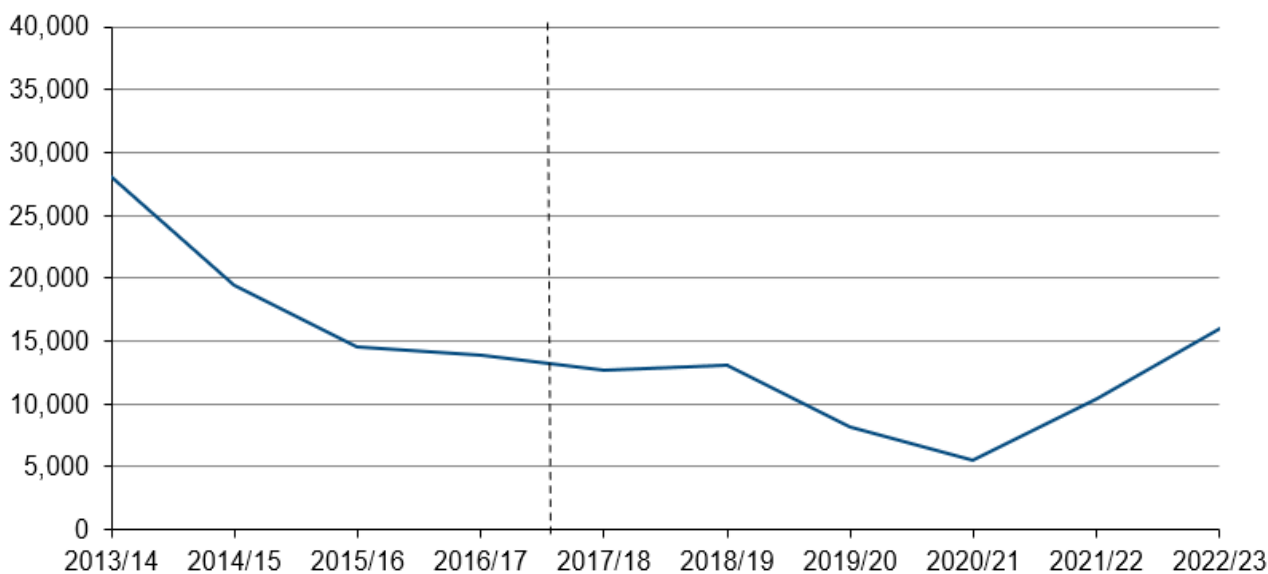
The proportion of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a “disability and/or learning difficulty” increased between 2013/14 and 2018/19. It then decreased up to 2021/22 before increasing to 13% in 2022/23.

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

Local Authority Community Learning (LACL)

The overall number of unique learners in Local Authority Community Learning (LACL) increased by 53% compared with the previous year to 16,005 [Table 3, Figure 2e]. The increases seen since the low point in 2020/21 have partially reversed a longer-term decreasing trend. Lower numbers in recent years may be 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.

Figure 2e: Learners in local authority community learning, 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1]



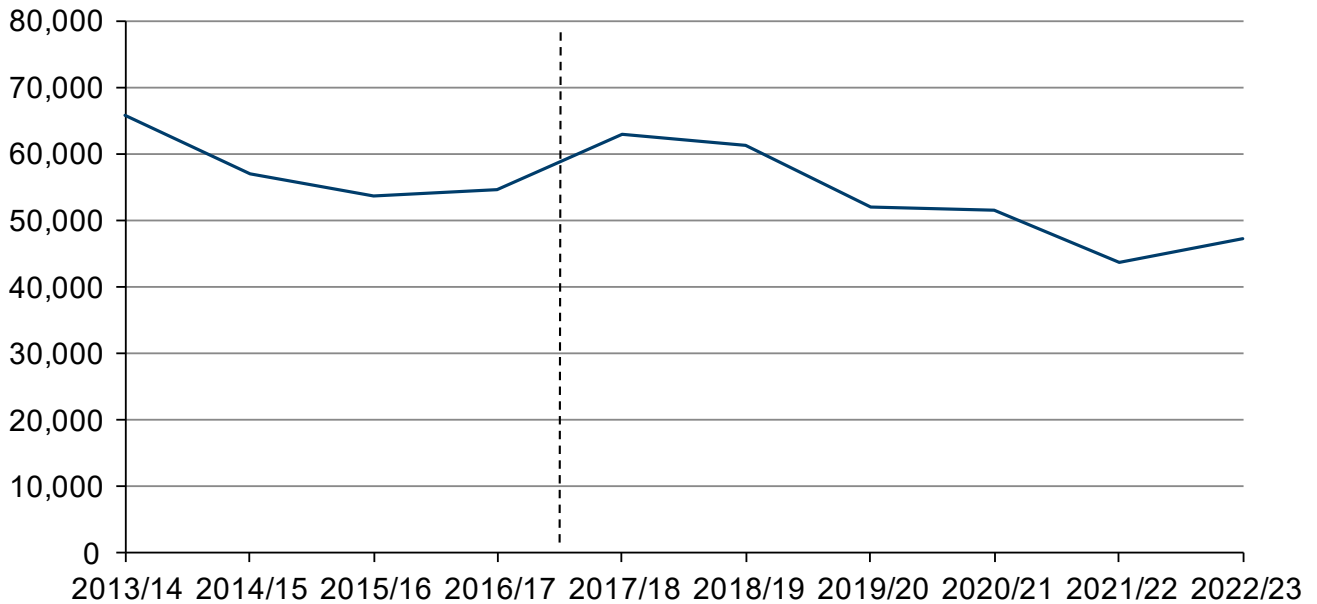
Description of Figure 2e: This line chart shows the number of learners in LACL. In 2022/23 there were 16,005 LACL learners which is an increase of 53% compared to the previous year.

[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.

Work-based Learning (WBL)

The number of learners in work-based learning (WBL) has seen an increase of 8% compared with the previous year [[Table 3](#), Figure 2f]. This is despite previous figures including traineeships which ended in March 2022. Traineeships were replaced by the Jobs Growth Wales+ programme, statistics for which are reported separately in the quarterly [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) reports.

Figure 2f: Learners within work-based learning provision, 2013/14 to 2022/23 [note 1]



Description of Figure 2f: This line chart shows the number of learners in WBL. In 2022/23 there were 47,400 learners in work-based learning which is an increase compared to the previous year.

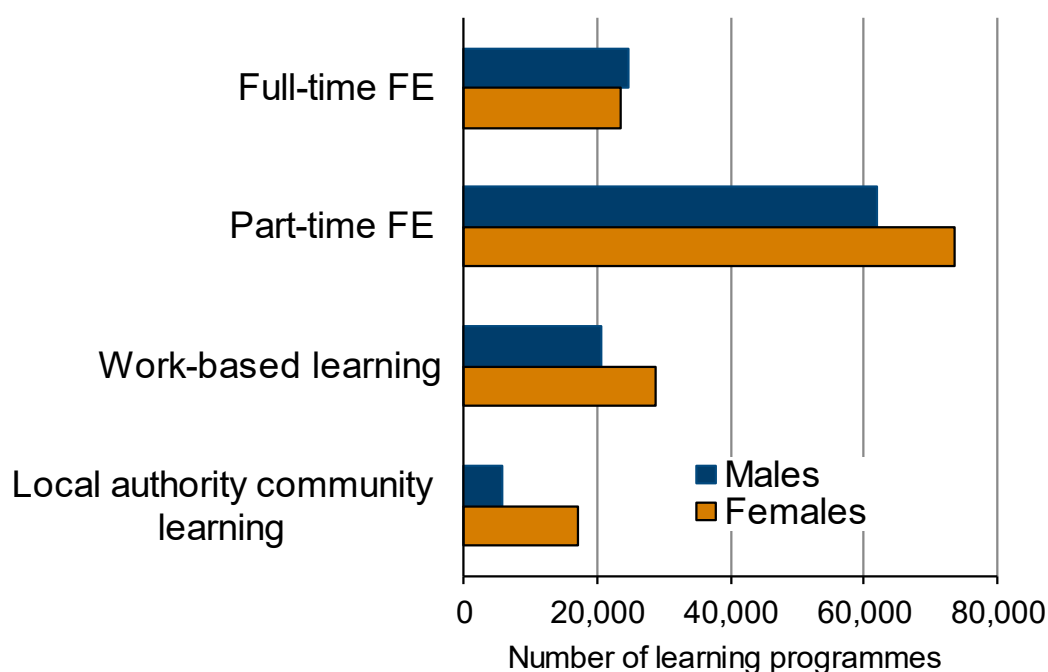
[Note 1] The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

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.

Over the academic year 2022/23 there were 257,285 active learning programmes in total compared to 222,605 in 2021/22. This includes new enrolments in the 2022/23 academic year and any learning programmes continuing from previous academic years. Of these, 62% were part-time, 19% were full-time and 19% were in WBL [Table 5, Figure 3a]. 56% of all learning programmes were undertaken by female learners.

Figure 3a: Learning programmes at further education institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2022/23



Description of Figure 3a: This bar chart shows the number of learning programmes at FEIs, LACL, or WBL by provision type, mode of study, and gender. There were 73,635 part-time programmes undertaken by female learners and 61,845 part-time programmes undertaken by male learners. This is the category with the biggest difference between males and females.

During the 2022/23 academic year, 184,945 further education learning programmes, excluding WBL and LACL, were recorded. Around 26% of these were full-time.

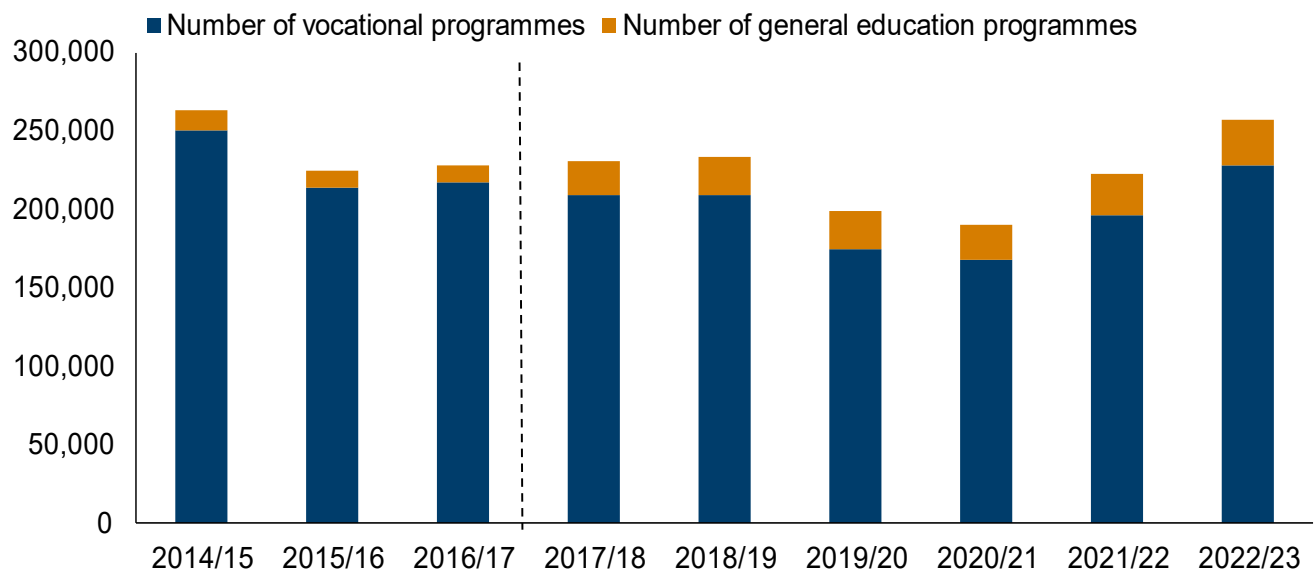
The number of distinct learners enrolled on community learning activities was 16,005 (see Table 3). In total, the number of learning programmes recorded in 2022/23 was 22,880 for community learning.

49,455 work-based learning programmes were recorded in 2022/23, of which 22,020 were provided by FE institutions (including those participating as members of consortia) and 27,430 by other training providers. Table 6 provides a breakdown by programme type.

Over the academic year 2022/23 there were 228,015 vocational programmes - 89% of all programmes, compared to 88% in the previous three years. The total number of vocational programmes increased by 16% compared with the previous academic year. The number of vocational programmes is the highest seen since 2014/15.

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

Figure 3b: Vocational learning programmes at further education institutions, community learning or work-based learning providers, 2014/15 to 2022/23 [note 1]



Description of Figure 3b: This bar chart shows the number of the vocational learning programmes at FEIs, LACL, and WBL. In 2022/23, 89% of all learning programmes fell into this category which is almost the same proportion as it was in the previous year.

[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.

Apprenticeships

The number of apprenticeship learning programmes started has increased. The overall number of new apprenticeship learning programmes started for all foundation, level 3 and higher apprenticeship programmes was 22,880 during 2022/23 - this is 14% higher than in 2021/22. The number of new apprenticeship programmes started peaked at 31,360 in 2017/18.

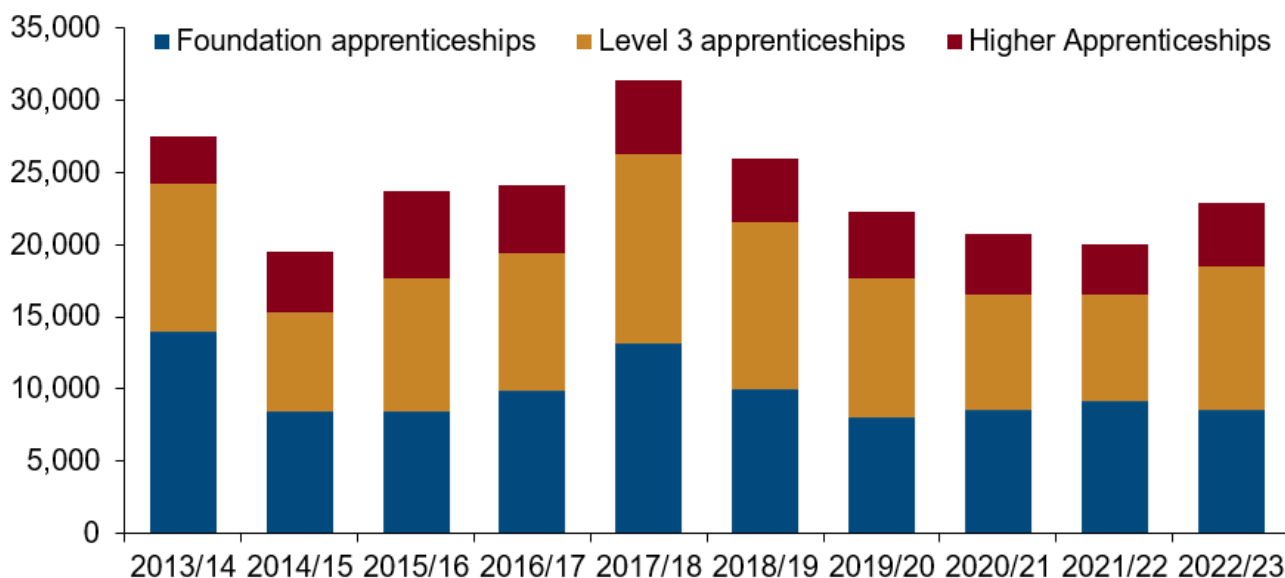


Apprenticeship programmes can start at any point during the academic year, unlike programmes undertaken in further education, which tend to start at the beginning of the academic year. Learners often continue working towards their apprenticeship into the following academic year. The Coronavirus pandemic affected the number of starts in recent few years, in particular academic years 2019/20 to 2021/22. [[Table 6](#), Figure 4a].

Having met the previous target, the Welsh Government set a new target to introduce 125,000 all-age apprenticeships. 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 2022/23 there have been 43,280 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.

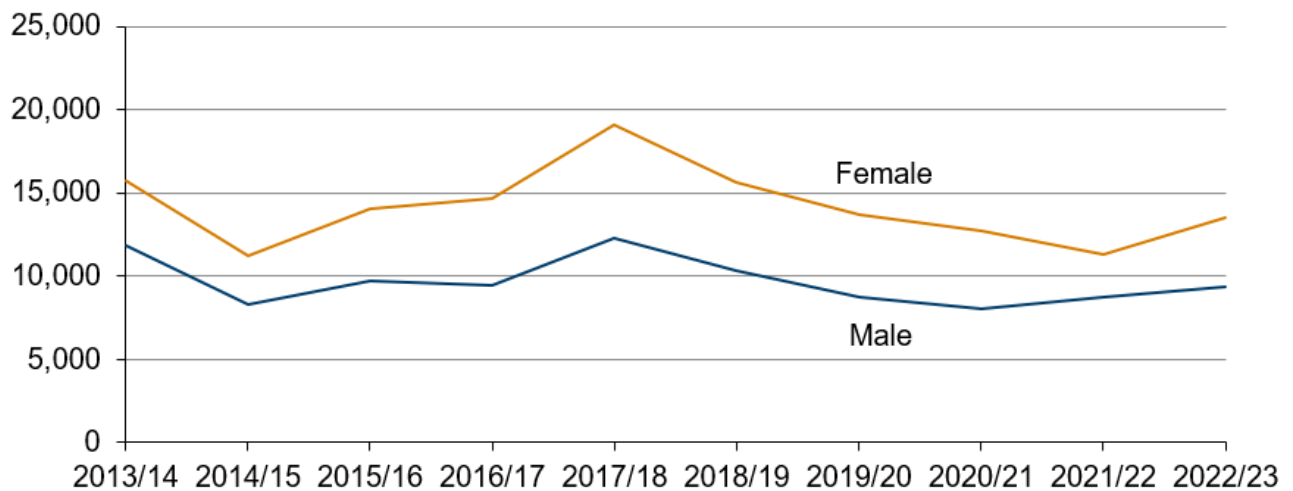
Figure 4a: Apprenticeship learning programmes started, 2013/14 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 4a: This bar chart shows the number of apprenticeships started, broken down into three levels. In 2022/23 out of 22,880 apprenticeship starts, 8,575 were Foundation (Level 2), 9,950 were Level 3, and 4,355 were Higher (Level 4) Apprenticeships.

Females continue to contribute to more apprenticeship programmes started. 59% of all apprenticeship learner programmes were started by females, a slightly higher proportion than the 56% seen last year. The number of apprenticeship programmes started by females increased by 20% on the previous year, whilst the number of programmes started by males increased by 7%.

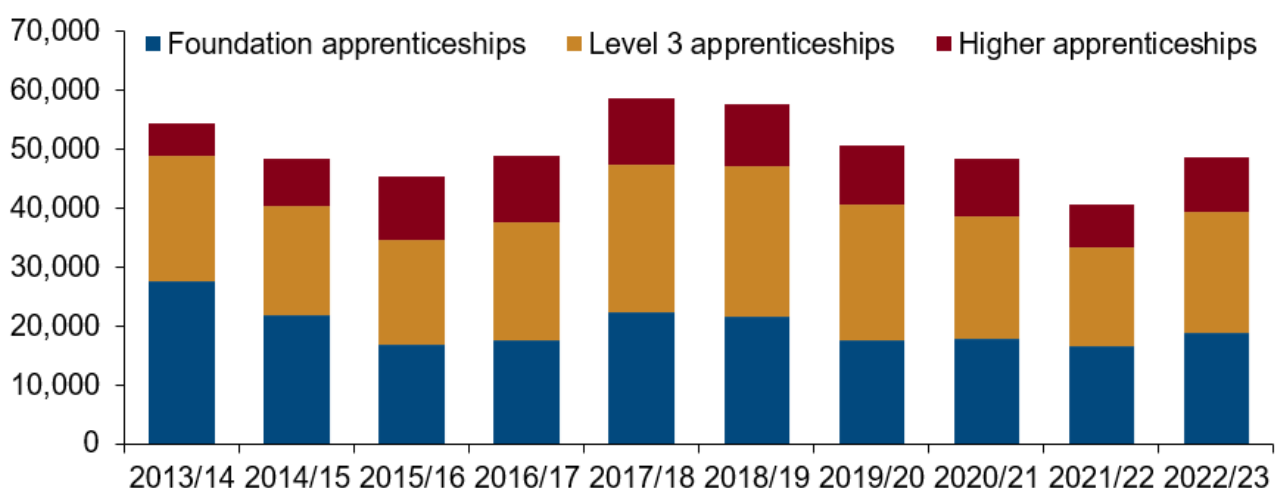
Figure 4b: Trends in apprenticeship learning programmes started by gender, 2013/14 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 4b: This line chart shows the trends in apprenticeship learning programmes started by gender. All three levels had more female learners starting than males in 2022/23 following the trend of previous years.

The number of apprenticeship learning programmes in progress has also increased. This includes those programmes started in the academic year and continuing programmes from previous years. There were 48,605 programmes in progress during 2022/23 – this is 19% higher than in 2021/22.

Figure 4c: Apprenticeship learning programmes in progress, 2013/14 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 4c: This bar chart shows apprenticeship learning programmes in progress, broken down into three levels. In 2022/23 out of 48,610 apprenticeships in progress 18,780 were Foundation level, 20,585 were Level 3, and 9,245 were Higher Apprenticeships.

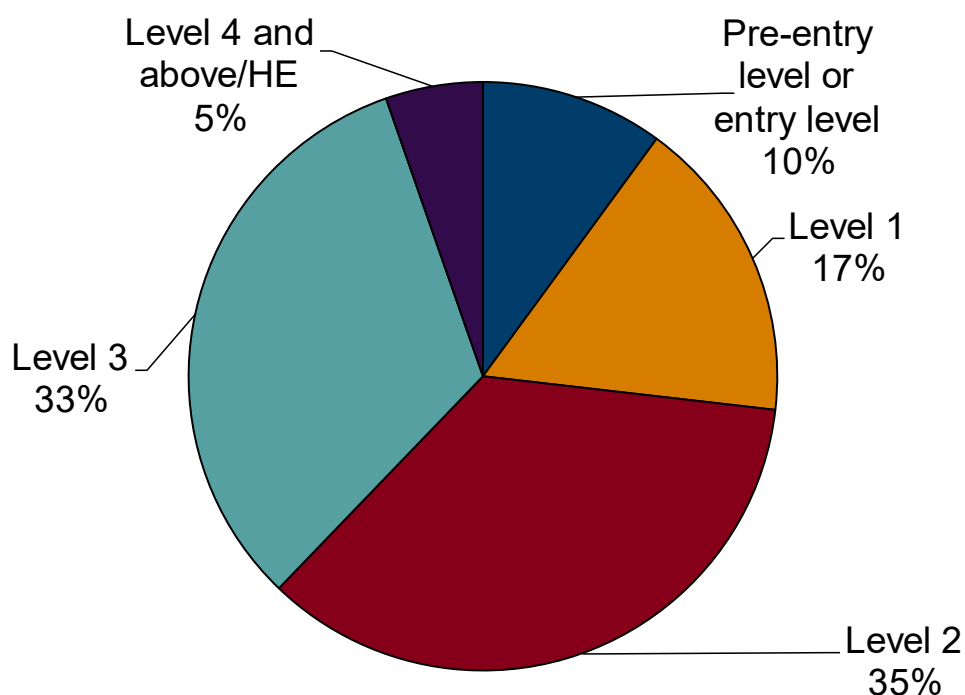
More detailed information on apprenticeship learning programmes started, including sector breakdowns, can be found within our [interactive dashboard](#).

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 institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers.

Level 2 qualifications accounted for the largest proportion of activities. In 2022/23, there were 481,520 active learning activities. This includes new enrolments in the 2022/23 academic year and any learning activities continuing from previous academic years. This is 12% higher than the previous year (429,945). Of the learning activities for which the [qualification level](#) was known, 17% were at level 1, 35% were at level 2 and 33% were at level 3 [Table 7, Figure 5].

Figure 5: Learning activities by qualification level, 2022/23 [note 1]



Description of Figure 5: This pie chart shows learning activities by qualification level. Level 2 activities had the most learners (35%), which is roughly unchanged from the previous year.

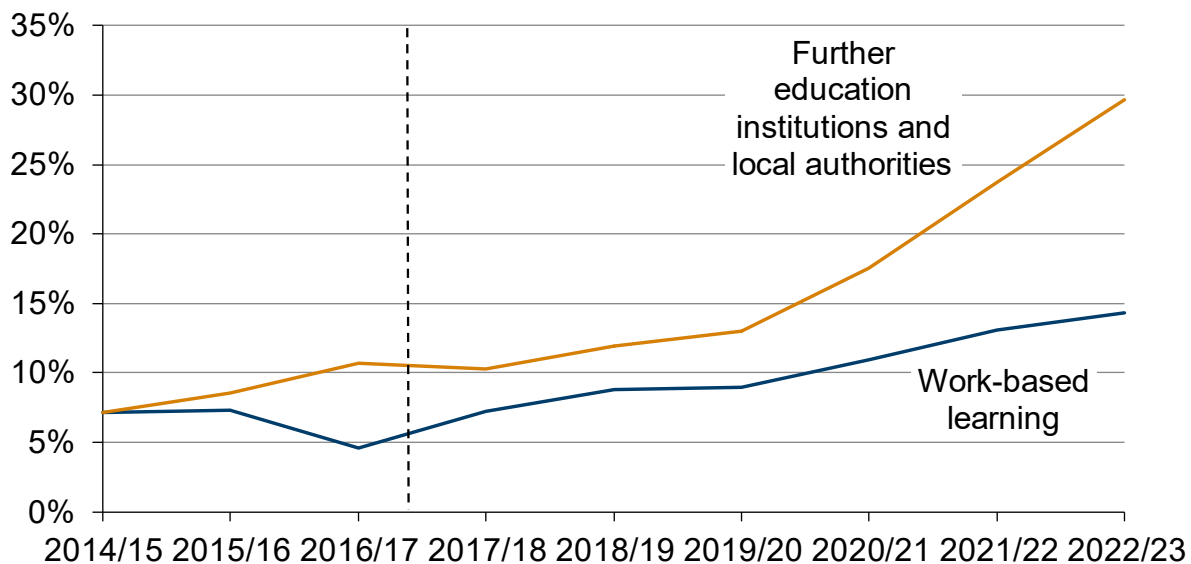
[Note 1] 23% of qualification levels were unknown or not applicable. For further education institutions and work-based learning providers the figure was 22% but for local authority community learning 43% of qualification levels were unknown or undefined, as is the case for some leisure-related learning 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 362,785 learning activities in further education institutions (excluding WBL) and local authorities in 2022/23, of these 14% were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements. 118,735 learning activities started in work-based learning. Of these, 30% were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements, the majority of which were recorded under “a significant amount of Welsh-medium learning” (86% of all Welsh and bilingual learning activities).

Figure 6: Proportion of learning activities conducted in Welsh or bilingually according to the type of provider, 2014/15 to 2022/23 [note 1] [note 2]



Description of Figure 6: This line chart shows the proportion of learning activities conducted in Welsh or bilingually. 30% of WBL and 14% of learning activities at FEIs was delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, which is an increase compared to 2021/22.

[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:** Home unitary authority of learners in further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers by ethnic background, 2022/23
- Table 2:** Numbers of learners in further education institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by age and gender, 2022/23
- Table 3:** Trends in learner numbers in further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers, 2018/19 to 2022/23
- Table 4:** Number of learners in further education institutions (excluding WBL), local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by type of learning in the academic year 2022/23 and ethnic background, compared to the population of Wales in 2021
- Table 5:** Learning programmes in further education Institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2022/23
- Table 6:** Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in progress and numbers of learners starting and in progress by programme type, 2022/23
- Table 7:** Learning activities at further education institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2022/23

Table 2: Numbers of learners at further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers by age and gender, 2022/23

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	65	130	85	145	150	280
16	9,010	10,025	7,880	8,830	17,155	19,140
17	7,700	8,525	6,805	7,635	14,670	16,335
18	4,190	5,050	2,875	3,785	7,140	8,930
19	2,795	3,525	1,830	2,545	4,655	6,110
20-24	6,790	10,200	5,810	9,725	12,635	19,995
25-49	13,945	27,495	23,000	42,780	37,025	70,435
50-64	2,640	6,360	5,275	11,160	7,930	17,570
65+	730	1,485	1,555	3,395	2,285	4,890
Not Specified	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	5	5
Total	47,865	72,795	55,115	89,995	103,650	163,695

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

[Note 1] Age at 31 August 2022.

[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 2 with a breakdown by ethnicity.

Table 3: Trends in learner numbers in further education institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers, 2018/19 to 2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Further Education Institutions [note 3]					
Full-time learners at FEIs	45,875	46,290	47,590	45,250	45,275
Part-time learners at FEIs	56,290	47,930	42,805	54,680	60,510
WBL provision at FEIs	19,880	17,885	18,125	19,375	21,215
Total at FEIs	122,040	112,105	108,520	119,300	127,000
Work-based learning provision [note 4]	61,290	52,190	51,740	43,755	47,400
Local authority community learning [note 5]	13,050	8,200	5,555	10,440	16,005
Total learners in FE Institutions, local authority community learning and work-based learning providers [note 6]	168,810	148,860	142,735	149,350	163,695

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 programmes at FEIs and franchised adult community 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/local authority community learners is lower than the sum of the figures in the preceding rows.

Table 4: Number of learners in further education, work-based learning and community learning by type of learning in the academic year 2022/23 and ethnic background, compared to the population of Wales in 2021

Ethnic group	% of people aged 16 to 64 in Wales [Note 1]	Further education institutions (excluding WBL)	(%)	Work based learning	(%)	Local authority community learning	(%)
All	100%	103,565	100%	47,400	100%	16,005	100%
Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British	3%	3,330	3%	1,345	3%	565	4%
Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African	1%	2,275	2%	1,270	3%	400	3%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1%	2,220	2%	500	1%	155	1%
White	93%	83,525	81%	43,765	92%	13,575	85%
Other ethnic groups	1%	2,905	3%	305	1%	375	2%
Information refused / not known	n/a	9,305	9%	220	0%	930	6%

[Note 1] Sourced from Census 2021, Office for National Statistics

Table 5: Enrolments on learning programmes in further education institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2022/23

	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]
Further education excluding local authority CL at FEIs						
Full-time	20,540	24,510	19,755	23,345	40,840	48,490
Part-time	31,830	61,845	35,985	73,635	68,390	136,455
Total	52,375	86,350	55,740	96,980	109,235	184,945
Work-based learning						
WBL programmes at FEIs	9,250	13,120	5,035	8,880	14,295	22,020
Programmes at other training providers	4,065	7,570	10,640	19,830	14,720	27,430
Total	13,315	20,690	15,675	28,710	29,015	49,455
Local authority community learning [note 3]						
Full-time: enrolled at FEIs	[c]	[c]	20	25	25	30
Part-time: enrolled at FEIs	580	935	1,255	2,290	1,840	3,235
Part-time: enrolled at local authorities	1,340	4,750	3,505	14,805	4,850	19,615
Total	1,925	5,690	4,780	17,120	6,715	22,880
All Levels of Study						
Full-time	20,545	24,515	19,775	23,370	40,865	48,520
Part-time	33,750	67,530	40,745	90,725	75,080	159,310
Work-based Learning	13,315	20,690	15,675	28,710	29,015	49,455
Total	67,610	112,735	76,195	142,805	144,965	257,285

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 HEFCW funded programmes.

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

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

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

Table 6: Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in learning and numbers of learners starting and in-learning by programme type, 2022/23

	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
Work-based Learning programmes							
Foundation Apprenticeship	8,575	8,410	18,780	7,730	10,505	10,420	17,480
Apprenticeship (Level 3)	9,950	7,960	20,585	9,235	12,715	12,680	20,070
Higher Apprenticeship (f)	4,355	3,420	9,245	3,940	5,325	5,860	9,060
Other WBL Programme	460	705	845	[z]	290	135	795
Total	23,340	20,495	49,455	20,905	28,835	29,095	47,400

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.

[z] The data item is not applicable.

Table 7: Enrolments on learning activities in further education institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2022/23

Qualification level	Further Education and Work-based Learning			Local authority community learning		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Pre-Entry Level	605	1,200	1,805	55	240	295
Entry Level	12,015	15,600	27,820	2,170	5,235	7,425
Level 1	28,360	30,515	59,330	860	2,160	3,030
Level 2	59,435	68,805	128,855	740	1,840	2,605
Level 3	53,530	64,205	118,975	515	1,155	1,690
Level 4 and above / HE	7,065	12,750	19,860	[c]	[c]	[c]
Unknown or not required	46,510	51,090	98,650	2,370	8,795	11,180
Total	207,515	244,165	455,295	6,710	19,430	26,225

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 2022/23. 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 local authority community learning 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.

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 local authority community 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/local authority community 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/local authority community 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 2, 3 and 4 are based on counts of individual learners using a methodology which counts a learner present at more than one provider only once. Table 5 is based on counts of learning programmes, as are the first three columns of table 6, the remainder of which uses unique learners. A learner represented in tables 2, 3 or 4 will have one or more learning programmes in table 5. Table 7 is based on counts of learning activities, there being one or more of these constituents to each learning programme.

Learners at further education Institutions, local authority community learning or work-based learning providers (tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7)

- Information was collected from FE institutions, local authorities and work-based learning providers via the LLWR, from which data were extracted on 21 December 2023.
- Community learning is a broad definition that can encompass, for instance, provision at FE institution outreach centres and Adult Basic Education. This release only identifies local authority community 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 2022. All-year counts are based on all learners enrolled during the academic year.
- Ages are as at 31 August 2022.
- Includes students on courses with Adult Learning Wales.

Work-based Learning (Table 6)

This table summarises enrolments on work-based learning programmes, which in this release now consist mainly of apprenticeships.

- 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 2022 and July 31st 2023. The latter counts are for single days, in contrast to the December 1st figures in tables 2 and 5 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. 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, 20,905 learning programmes started in 2022/23, and 43,280 since the target was introduced in quarter 4 of the 2020/21 academic year. [Table 6]

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, with the exception of the cumulative total towards the target measure. In 2021/22, there were 295 degree apprenticeship starts that contributed to the measure. Figures for 2022/23 are not yet available.

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). 205 unique learners were recorded with at least one programme for 2022/23.

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.

- **Local authority community 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 local authority community 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 mainly consist of the following programmes:
 - Apprenticeship (Level 3);
 - Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2);
 - Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 plus);
 - Traineeships (up to and including 2021/22).

The traineeships programme ended in March 2022 and was replaced by Jobs Growth Wales+, statistics for which are reported separately in the quarterly [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) reports. This affects the comparability of combined statistics for the work-based learning sector as a whole. See the section on [comparability and coherence](#) for more detail.

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

From September 2022, all construction apprenticeships start at level 3 instead of level 2. Of the programmes started in 2022/23, 93% were started by males. This has caused a large fall in the number of level 2 apprenticeship starts and an increase in level 3 apprenticeships in this sector compared with previous figures for males.

New work-based learning contract arrangements came into effect on 1st 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.

Traineeships and Jobs Growth Wales+

This release included traineeships in figures for work-based learning up to and including the 2021/22 academic year. The traineeships programme ended in March 2022 and was replaced by Jobs Growth Wales+.

Statistics for Jobs Growth Wales+ are reported separately in the quarterly [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) reports, on a financial year basis. Any 2022/23 statistics for work-based learning provision as a whole are therefore not comparable to previous years. Furthermore, there will be some impact on figures for 2021/22 as the traineeships programme ended part way through that academic year.

Almost all (98%) of in learning WBL programmes presented in this release were apprenticeships in 2022/23. Since their introduction in 2011/12, traineeships accounted for between 10% and 20% of all in learning WBL programmes.

This issue will also have a smaller impact on any statistics presented for all three sectors (further education, local authority community learning and work based learning) combined, for example overall counts of unique learners.

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 community 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 community 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 Community Learning’](#) - Statistics on learner outcomes at WBL providers and Community 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)
- [‘Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(learner destinations\)’](#) – Statistics on the destinations of post-16 learners in the year following their post-16 learning programme.
- During 2018 we introduced [quarterly reporting of apprenticeship starts](#), and have recently refreshed the look and feel of the interactive dashboard.
- [‘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 community 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 2025. The next update to this release is expected to be published by the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER). CTER will be a new arm's length body responsible for funding and overseeing post-16 education and research from August 2024.

Period covered: 2023/24 (August to July)

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

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