



27 June 2019

Experimental Statistics

About this document

This document provides a range of information on the quality of the further education for benefit claimants data, and the methodology used to produce it. It is based on the Office for National Statistics' guidelines for measuring statistical quality.

It provides an overview of the data used in the production of the statistics along with information on data issues, data definitions, the publication cycle and supplementary data produced.

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1. Introduction

This quality and methodology document provides an overview of the data used in the production of the further education for benefit claimants statistics. It provides information on the methodology used to calculate the measures, as well as information on the data sources, data issues and data definitions.

This document is based on the Office for National Statistics' [guidelines for measuring statistical quality](#).

2. Scope

This publication presents information on further education activity funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency for adult benefit claimants in England. Further education includes provision delivered in further education organisations, sixth form colleges, independent training organisations, local authorities and other providers including training undertaken as part of apprenticeship and traineeship programmes, but excludes Community Learning and learning delivered through the Employer Ownership Pilot (EOP). It contains data for the 2011/12– 2017/18 academic years, where the academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July.

The publication does not include information regarding:

- Learning delivered in school sixth forms, including state-funded and independent schools.
- Higher education learning in higher education institutions.
- Privately-funded training at FE organisations and independent training organisations.

Most tables relate to learners on benefit aged 19 to 64 during the academic year, with the exception of the apprenticeships and traineeships tables which include starts by claimants aged under 19.

The publication provides statistics on learners who were on benefits at the start of further education training, highest level of qualification studied, benefit spells with training by type of benefit, and apprenticeship starts by individuals claiming benefits before the start of training, and traineeships on benefits. The headline measures reported represent a summary of a complex set of data.

The benefits included in this publication are:

- Universal Credit (from 2015/16 onwards), in conditionality regimes:
 - i. Intensive work search
 - ii. Light touch
 - iii. Work focused interview
 - iv. Work preparation
- Jobseeker's Allowance including Training Allowance.
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Passported Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Pension Credit

Due to the limited roll out and lack of conditionality information for Universal Credit claims prior to April 2015, Universal Credit claimants are only included in this publication for the 2015/16 academic year onwards.

Since the 2015/16 academic year all Universal Credit claimants in the following conditionality regimes: “Intensive work search”, “Light touch”, “Work focused interview” and “Work preparation” are included in these statistics. The Universal Credit conditionality regime would have occurred during the duration of the training spell.

It is important to note that training by claimants who are on Universal Credit and do not have any work related requirements during the claim (those in “No work related requirements” and “Working enough” conditionality regimes) and Personal Independence Payment claimants are not included in this publication.

Conditionality regime for Universal Credit claimants can take the following values

Included	
Intensive work search	Not working, or working with very low earning. Claimant is required to take action to secure work – or more/better paid work. The work coach supports them to plan their work search and preparation activity.
Light touch	In work but could earn more, or not working but has a partner with low earnings.
Work focused interview	Expected to work in the future. Lone parent/lead carer of a child aged 1 (aged 1-2 prior to April 2017). Claimant is required to attend periodic interviews to plan their return to work.
Work preparation	Expected to start preparing for the future even with limited capability for work at the present time or a child aged 2 (aged 3-4 prior to April 2017). The claimant is expected to take reasonable steps to prepare for working including Work Focussed Interview.

Not included	
No work related requirements	Not expected to work at present. Health or caring responsibility prevents claimant from working or preparing for work.
Working enough	Individual or household earnings over the level at which conditionality applies. Required to inform DWP of changes to circumstances, particularly if at risk of decreasing earnings or losing job.

The publication only includes further education records that have been matched to the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) datasets. See Sections 5, 6 and 7 for more information.

The types of further education learning funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency included in this publication are:

- Adult (19-64) classroom based education and training.
- Adult (19-64) workplace learning (excluding the employer ownership pilot) up to 2015/16.
- All age (16-64) apprenticeship programmes.
- All age (16-24) traineeships.

Community learning and all unfunded training are not included in this report. Note that only matched data is included in this publication, i.e. where a match has been found between the ILR and DWP/HMRC administrative data in LEO. Figures will differ from the DfE [Further Education and Skills](#) statistics release as not all learners have been matched to LEO and this release excludes training under 'community learning' and the Employer Ownership Pilot.

3. Suppression

The suppression and rounding of the statistics presented within this publication has been revised to minimise the risk of disclosure while maximising the amount of data published. The Code of Practice for Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. Where appropriate we apply disclosure control to protect confidentiality. The figures presented may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are calculated using pre-rounded data.

4. Definitions

Learners	When an individual starts a programme of learning with a further education provider, they are allocated a learner record. A learner is counted as being 'on benefit at the start of learning' where they have a benefit claim which overlaps the learning start date. A learner will be counted in each year they started a learning aim.
Learning aims	An aim is the term used for a course a learner is studying and is counted in the year the learning started. Examples of aims include BTECs, NVQs and individual GCSEs and A levels. Many learners will be studying for several aims at once or in sequence, as part of a programme of study.
Benefit spell	A benefit spell is defined as a continuous period of time receiving the same benefit type. There can be multiple benefit spells per claimant, either because the claimant is receiving more than one benefit type, or because the same benefit type is received at different time periods, with distinctly different start dates, which differentiate them as different spells.
Academic year	Runs from 1 st August to 31 st July. The learning period covered in the publication runs from 1 st August 2011 to 31 st July 2018.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships are paid jobs, lasting at least 12 months, that include an off-the-job programme of learning (minimum 20%) and lead to the apprentice becoming fully competent in their chosen occupation. As an employee, apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace. For further information, please see: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/ .
Full level 2	Equivalent to a NVQ at level 2 or 5 GCSEs. The widths of all of a learner's level 2 aims are summed to establish whether a learner is taking a full level 2 programme.
Full level 3	Equivalent to a NVQ at level 3 or 2 A-levels. The widths of all of a learner's level 3 aims are summed to establish whether a learner is taking a full level 3 programme.
English and maths	Qualifications designed to give people the reading, writing, maths, and communication skills they need in everyday life, to operate effectively in work, and to help them succeed on other training courses.
Traineeship	Traineeships were introduced in the 2013/14 academic year to provide young people with essential work preparation, English, maths and work experience to secure an apprenticeship or other work. For further information, please see: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships-programme .

5. Data Sources

All data used in this process is drawn from administrative sources from across Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education which takes time to process and collate. There are therefore lags between the reference period of the published data and availability of the datasets for analysis. The data sources used in this process are detailed below.

Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) datasets

The statistics in the publication are produced using the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) datasets, replacing the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) -Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) dataset which was used to produce these statistics prior to the release covering the 2015/16 academic year.

The LEO datasets have been brought together by different government departments and are being used to improve the information available on a range of topics across different policy areas.

The LEO datasets link 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.

It is created by combining data from the following sources:

- The National Pupil Database (NPD) held by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on students at UK publicly funded higher education institutions and some Alternative Providers held by DfE.
- Individualised Learner Record Data (ILR) on students at further education institutions held by DfE.
- Employment data (P45 and P14) held by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).
- The National Benefit Database, Labour Market System and Juvos data which includes Training Allowance data held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- Universal Credit Official Statistics held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

By combining these sources together using unique identifiers, we can look at the further education undertaken by benefit claimants. These unique identifiers (explained in Sections 6 and 8) will only be available for individuals who have an educational record in one of the datasets listed above, held by DfE. Therefore the resultant LEO datasets will only contain data on those benefit claimants who have been in education.

The methodology is still under development and we will continue to review our approach, making further refinements and increasing alignment across different products over time where appropriate.

All LEO datasets used in the production of these statistics are snapshots obtained in December 2018.

Department for Work and Pensions Benefit Data

As the LEO datasets relate to specific academic year cohorts of individuals in education, it is not possible from this source alone to determine the entire benefits caseload. This information is only available from complete DWP datasets. The sources used in the process are the National Benefits Database (NBD) for benefits, the Juvos Training Allowance (JTA) dataset and the Universal Credit Official Statistics Database.

The NBD contains: Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Passported Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Pension Credit. The JTA dataset contains the Training Allowance segment of Jobseeker's Allowance. The Universal Credit Official Statistics Database is used to source caseload data for Universal Credit from 2015/16 onwards.

National Benefits Database (NBD)

This dataset can be used to look at claims to DWP benefits apart from Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment at an individual level. Data can be used to identify benefit caseloads and inflows and outflows over time, broken down by various claim and claimant characteristics. Data is a complete record of all individuals on the DWP benefit systems and is available from around August 1999.

At least 3 months is allowed for receipt of backdated claims and data is lagged by around 4 months to process and collate the National Benefits Database.

Universal Credit Official Statistics Database

The National Benefits Database (NBD) does not currently include any information relating to claims to Universal Credit. However, the Universal Credit Official Statistics dataset has been used to allow those claiming Universal Credit during 2015/16 and subsequent academic years to be included in this publication. Since April 2016, Universal Credit has been operating in every Jobcentre office in Great Britain for single jobseekers. For more information on the number of starts to Universal Credit, and the current caseload, please see the latest official statistics publication: www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics

Department for Education Learner Data

The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) collections are returned to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by further education colleges and providers. The data used in this publication are all final dataset collections and include information on provision for the full academic year.

The ESFA requirements for personal data, including National Insurance numbers, vary by the type of provision provided. Other personal details fields have high completion rates although there is some use of default values where information is not known and particular groups such as offender learners have information withheld. The dates of learning can be assumed accurate to within a week. Key data fields are tied to funding therefore there is a strong incentive for providers to ensure the information returned is accurate.

As the data sharing only covers ESFA funded learning it does not include learning done outside of England and it also excludes learning funded through the Higher Education route. Learner data is 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 four months after the end of the academic year, which runs from 1 August to 31 July.

The ESFA publish a large range of information relating to the ILR, which includes technical documents that define the ILR data that publicly funded providers must collect and return including ILR data returns calendar. This also includes information to help further education providers collect, return and check the quality of ILR and other learner data. All information and documents can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr>.

6. Matching Process

The LEO datasets include education records that have been matched to the DWP Customer Information System (CIS) using National Insurance number (NINO) and five personal details fields: Initial of Forename, Soundex of Surname, Date of birth, Postcode Sector and Gender.

There are five match processes carried out, ranging from the highest quality and most likely to be accurate (Green) to the lowest quality and most likely to be a false match (Red-Amber). The table below shows the criteria for each match type.

The matching algorithm, based on established processes, was developed through an iterative process and has been fully tested for accuracy. If a record does not have at least a Red-Amber match it is not included in the dataset.

CIS Match Type Criteria and Quality

Match Quality	NINO (National Insurance number)	Forename (initial)	Surname (soundex)	Date of birth	Gender	Postcode (sector)
1. Green	✓	4 or 5 ✓✓✓✓✓				
2. Amber	✓	3 ✓✓✓				
3. Green-amber	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Amber-red	✗	✓	✓	✓	1 ✓	
5. Red-amber	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ (Full Postcode)

Further details on data sharing as part of the LEO datasets project are published here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/529138/Longitudinal_education_outcomes_study_how_we_share_and_use_personal_data.pdf

7. Match Rates

The match rate of individuals on the ILR to the DWP CIS in the creation of the LEO datasets is over 95 per cent for each of the academic years covered in this publication. For 2017/18, 96 per cent of individuals aged 16 plus on the ILR were matched. The match rate using the LEO matching method explained in section 5 is an improvement on previous iterations of these statistics prior to the release for the 2015/16 academic year, which were based on the match between the ILR and the WPLS. The ILR-WPLS match rate was consistently around 90 per cent.

Although the match rates are very high, they will rarely reach 100% due to data quality issues and data mismatches. Not all learners who have a national insurance number or a benefit and/or employment record will be picked up by the data matching process.

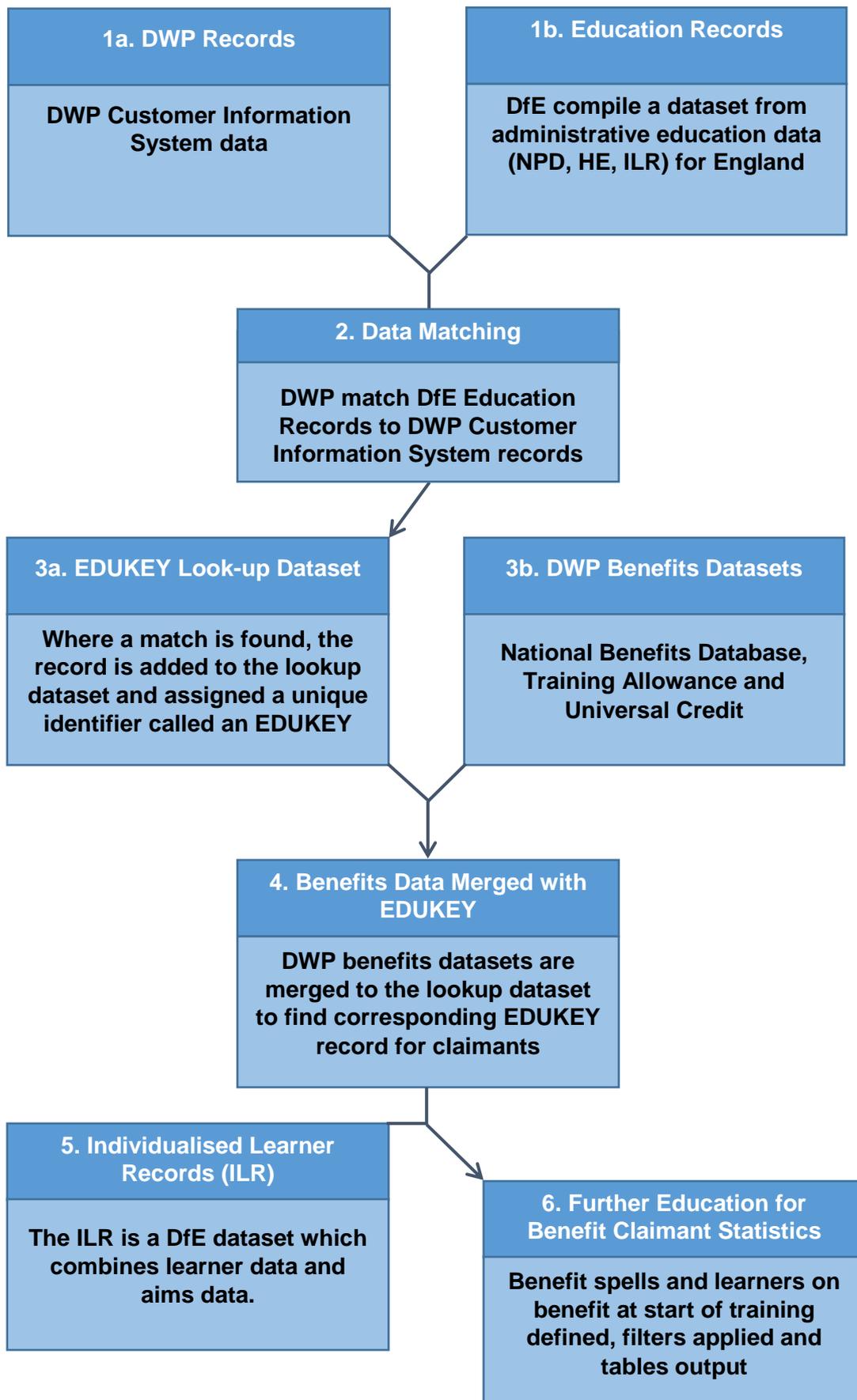
The quality of learning aim matches to the CIS has remained stable for the period covered in the publication.

Quality of CIS matches for learning aims started, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Academic year	Number of learning aims started	CIS match quality					No match
		Green	Green amber	Amber	Amber red	Red amber	
2011/12	11,030,100	48%	32%	2%	14%	2%	3%
2012/13	11,138,200	51%	31%	1%	12%	2%	3%
2013/14	9,625,500	52%	32%	1%	10%	3%	2%
2014/15	9,388,000	52%	34%	1%	9%	2%	3%
2015/16	7,910,600	50%	35%	1%	9%	2%	2%
2016/17	7,743,700	52%	34%	1%	8%	2%	3%
2017/18	7,051,200	52%	34%	1%	7%	2%	4%

8. Methodology

The flow diagram illustrates the steps taken in the matching process and the production of these statistics. The steps are explained in more detail below.



All records accessed for analysis are anonymous so that individuals cannot be identified. The personally identifying records used in the actual matching process are accessed under strict security controls.

Process in steps

1a. DWP holds Personal Identifiers and Pseudo Identifiers which are explained in Section 6. These relate to every individual that DWP issues with a National Insurance Number (NINO). DWP also hold claim information for those individuals who start a benefit claim. This is held in the Customer Information System (CIS) and is updated when DWP or HMRC are notified of a change of name, address or death.

1b. DfE combine the National Pupil Database (NPD), Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data into a table containing Personal Identifiers and Pseudo Identifiers relating to each individual within the DfE (English data), Welsh Government and Scottish Government data.

2. DWP carries out a data-matching exercise using the criteria detailed in Section 6 with the Personal Identifiers held by DWP and the Personal Identifiers held by DfE. Through this matching, it identifies individuals who are listed in both datasets (the “matched individuals”).

3a. DWP creates look-up tables aligning the Pseudo Identifiers given to a matched individual from DWP records, with the Pseudo Identifiers given to that individual from DfE records. The quality of the match is assessed from Green to Red-Amber based on the criteria explained in Section 6. A new common identifier for records on both datasets is then created called an EDUKEY. This dataset is used as a look-up to merge records from DWP and DfE.

4. Full versions of DWP datasets from Step 3b: NBD (National Benefits Database) used for all legacy benefits, TA (Training Allowance) a subset of Jobseekers allowance that earn the supplementary allowance, and UCOFF (Universal Credit Official Statistics) are combined for the academic years in scope. These are then filtered for English claimants only and selecting in-scope conditionality regimes for Universal Credit (see Section 2). The common identifier created in step 3a (EDUKEY) is then added to these datasets, to enable a merge with DfE data.

5. This step merges the Individual Learner Reference (ILR) Aims and Learners datasets for each academic year, and then adds on the common identifier created in step 3a (EDUKEY) to enable a merge with DWP data. To determine in-scope training, the funding streams for learners are also defined here for the academic year. The dataset is then merged with the DWP benefits data in Step 4 using the common EDUKEY identifier.

6. A benefit spell is defined as a continuous period of time receiving the same benefit type. There can be multiple benefit spells per claimant, either because the claimant is receiving more than one benefit type, or because the same benefit type is received at different time periods, with distinctly different start dates, which differentiate them as different spells. Learners who were on benefits at the start of training are identified as well as apprenticeship starts where the learner claimed benefit 6 months prior to starting. The merged data from Step 5 is used to derive the measures presented within the publication and the data are filtered for the academic year and the age of claimant before final tables are produced.

9. Abbreviations

DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
DfE	Department for Education
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESA (WRAG)	Employment and Support Allowance (Work-Related Activity Group)
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IB	Incapacity Benefit
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
IS	Income Support
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LEO	Longitudinal Education Outcomes Datasets
PC	Pension Credit
PIB	Passported Incapacity Benefit
SDA	Severe Disablement Allowance
TA	Training Allowance
UC	Universal Credit

10. Users of these Statistics

This publication attracts a wide variety of users who use the statistics in various ways including:

- Department for Education (DfE) who use the statistics to report on ambitions; develop and monitor policies; and answer parliamentary questions.
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who use the statistics to respond to requests for participation, and answer parliamentary questions.
- Researchers in academia.
- Government ministers in briefing.
- Media.
- General public.

In addition, a user feedback survey is currently under way to identify further groups of users and to seek feedback on the content and usefulness of the release:

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/FEBC_user_feedback_survey

11. Publication Tables

A list of tables relating to this statistical publication can be found on the GOV.UK website with the most recent publication at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-for-benefit-claimants>

12. Experimental Statistics

Experimental statistics are new official statistics that are undergoing evaluation. These statistics are being published as experimental statistics in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to further improve the use of the data in the future. We are currently reviewing the status of the release and will be considering the appropriate timeframe for putting the statistics forward for National Statistics assessment by the UK Statistics Authority.

The Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions have a set of statistical policies in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics:

DfE: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education>.

DWP: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-statistics-policies-and-procedures>

13. Related Statistical Publications

There are a number of other statistical publications and research reports available that can be used to provide contextual information to this statistical release. Some of those most relevant to this release are provided below:

- Statistics about learner participation and outcomes in further education can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>
- Statistics showing the destination outcomes of learners completing further education training using longitudinal education outcomes data can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-outcome-based-success-measures>
- The Quarterly statistical summaries which provide the breakdown on DWP benefits can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-statistical-summaries>
- The Universal Credit statistics which shows the caseload of those on Universal Credit can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>
- Employment Schemes Statistics provides information on Skills Conditionality and sector-based work academy (pre-employment training) starts can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pre-work-programme-and-get-britain-working>
- An econometric evaluation of the impact of training on the unemployed using the same matched administrative data can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-impact-of-skills-and-training-on-the-unemployed>

14. Get in touch

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