



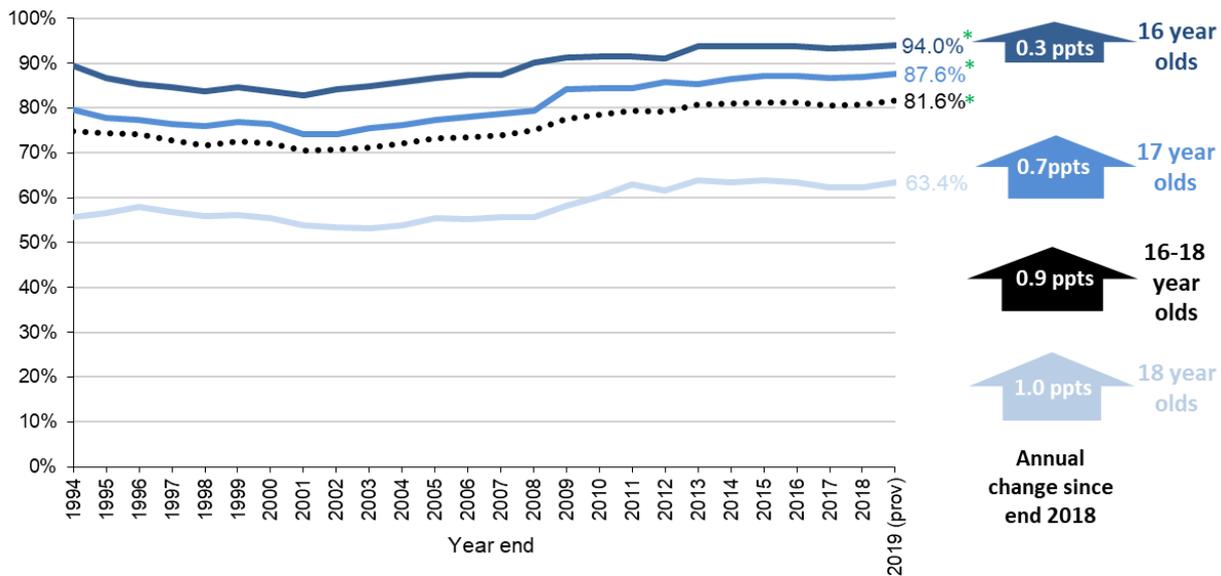
Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2019



25th June 2020

Participation rates have increased across all ages and were the highest on record for ages 16, 17 and 16-18

Participation in education and WBL/apprenticeships¹ by academic age, England

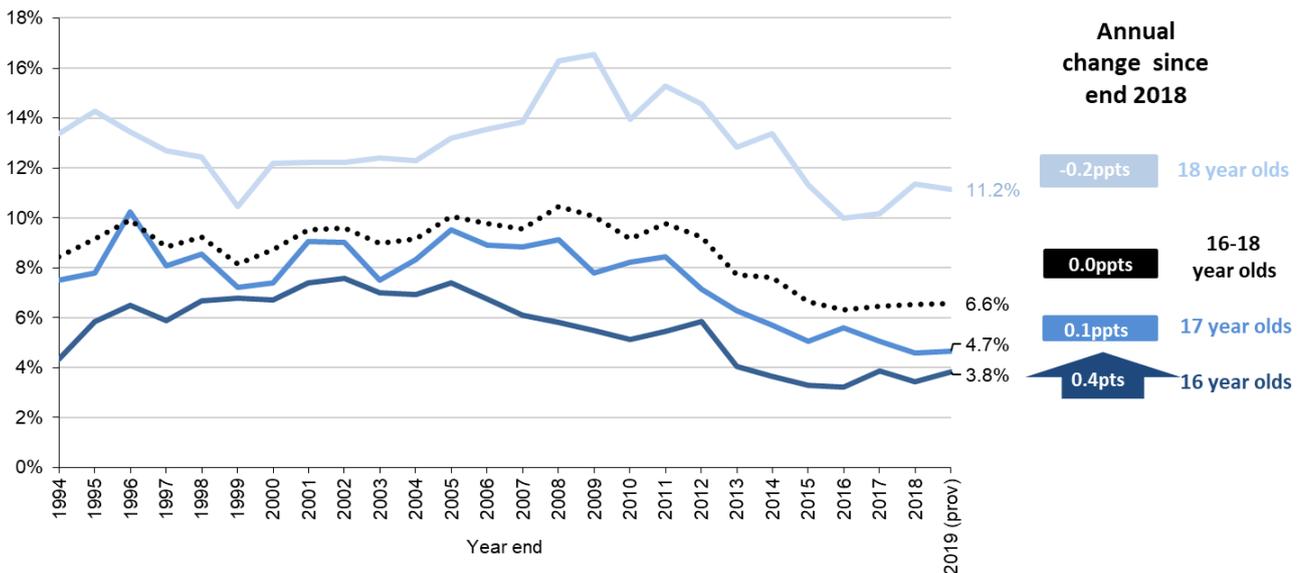


* Highest level since consistent records began in 1994.

¹ From 2013 Work Based Learning (WBL) has comprised solely of apprenticeships.

Overall NEET rate has remained fairly stable for age 16-18 but has increased at age 16

Proportion NEET by academic age, England



NEET has remained stable at age 16-18. Increases in participation in education and apprenticeships have been largely offset by falls in the proportion in wider training (such as employer/ privately funded) and falls in the NET employment rate (see section 2).

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About this release

This National Statistics publication contains provisional estimates for end 2019 for the participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education, training and employment in England. It also revises the end 2018 estimates which were published in June 2019.

The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year, and are based on academic age, defined as 'age at the start of the academic year' i.e. age as at 31 August.

Information is drawn together from various post-16 data sources including administrative data from schools, further education, apprenticeships, higher education and wider training and employment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Includes analysis by age, gender, type of learning, institution type, labour market status and highest qualification aim.

These are the Department for Education's definitive measures of participation for 16 to 18 year olds, and set recent changes in the context of historical trends.

Raising the Participation Age policy

Raising Participation Age (RPA) legislation was introduced in 2013/14, requiring 16/17 year olds in England to remain in education or training. Further detail is given in the publication's technical note.

In this publication

The following tables are included in this statistics publication:

- Main tables: 3 year timeseries rounded numbers and rates (excel .xlsx)
- Additional tables – timeseries to 1994 rounded numbers and rates (excel .xlsx)
- Underlying data – unrounded numbers and rates (open format .csv and metadata .docx)

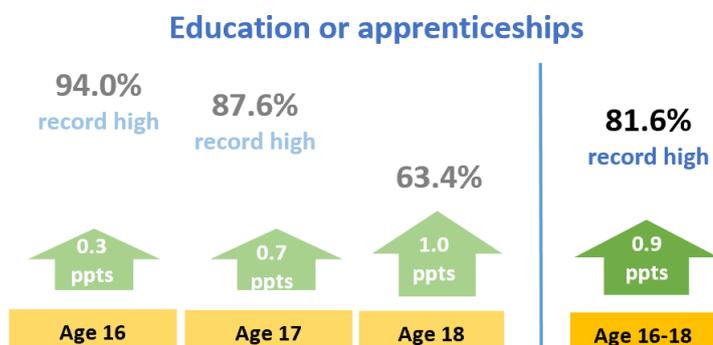
The accompanying technical document provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality, and explains the methodology used in producing the data. It also includes reference to other published data on participation and NEET rates, including estimates for the wider 16-24 age group and by local authority.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this publication at post16.statistics@education.gov.uk

1. Annual changes in participation by age (Table 1, additional tables A1-A15)

Each year we update the previous year's figures from provisional to final following the availability of revised administrative data. These revisions have resulted in the 2018 estimate of the proportion of 16-18 year olds participating in 'education and apprenticeships' being revised down from 81.3% to 80.7%. The technical document accompanying this release details the 2018 changes.



The proportion of 16-18 year olds in education or apprenticeships increased to 81.6% at end 2019, the highest participation rate since consistent records began in 1994.

Age 16 and 17:
Also record highs.

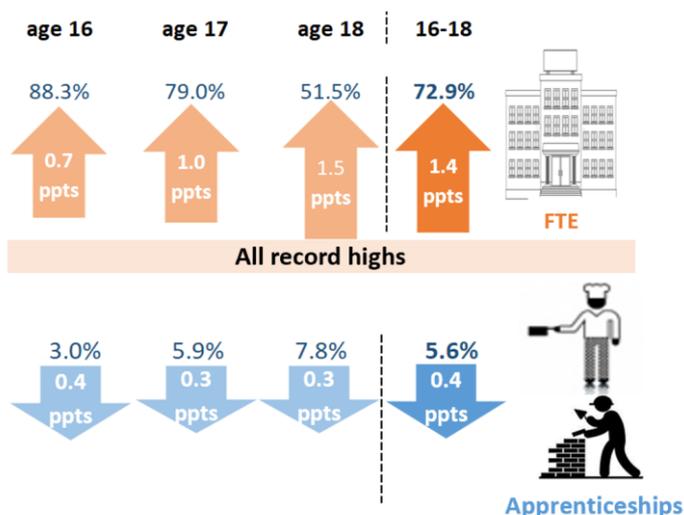
Age 18:
Highest participation rate at age 18 was 64.0% at the end of 2015 but latest estimate is still one of the highest on record.

Table A summarises the key participation statistics for end 2019 (provisional) and the changes compared with end 2018 (final) figures.

Table A: Participation statistics for 16, 17 and 18 year olds

	% of age 16		% of age 17		% of age 18		% of age 16-18		Annual change (ppts ¹)
	end 2018	end 2019 (prov)	end 2018	end 2019 (prov)	end 2018	end 2019 (prov)	end 2018	end 2019 (prov)	
Full-time education	87.6	88.3	78.0	79.0	50.0	51.5	71.5	72.9	1.4
Part-time education	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	4.6	4.3	3.4	3.3	-0.1
Apprenticeships	3.4	3.0	6.3	5.9	8.0	7.8	5.9	5.6	-0.4
Education and apprenticeships ²	93.7	94.0	86.9	87.6	62.4	63.4	80.7	81.6	0.9
Education and training ³	95.8	95.8	91.4	91.8	70.5	71.0	85.7	86.1	0.5

(1) ppts: percentage points. Changes are calculated using unrounded data, which can lead to small discrepancies if compared to those observed using rounded figures.
 (2) Education and apprenticeships includes full and part-time education and takes into account overlaps with apprenticeships.
 (3) Education and training is a wider measure which includes employer funded training and other privately funded education and training.

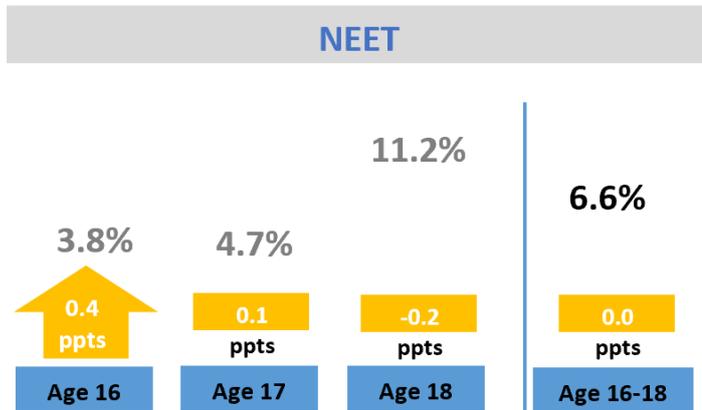


Increases in overall participation at all ages were driven by:

- increases in FTE (full-time education)
- slightly offset by falls in apprenticeships.

2. Annual changes in NEET rates by age (Tables 1 & 5, additional tables A1-A15 and D1-D15)

Each year we update the previous year's figures from provisional to final following the availability of revised administrative data. These revisions have resulted in the 2018 estimate of the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET being revised up from 6.3% to 6.5%. The technical document accompanying this release details the 2018 changes.



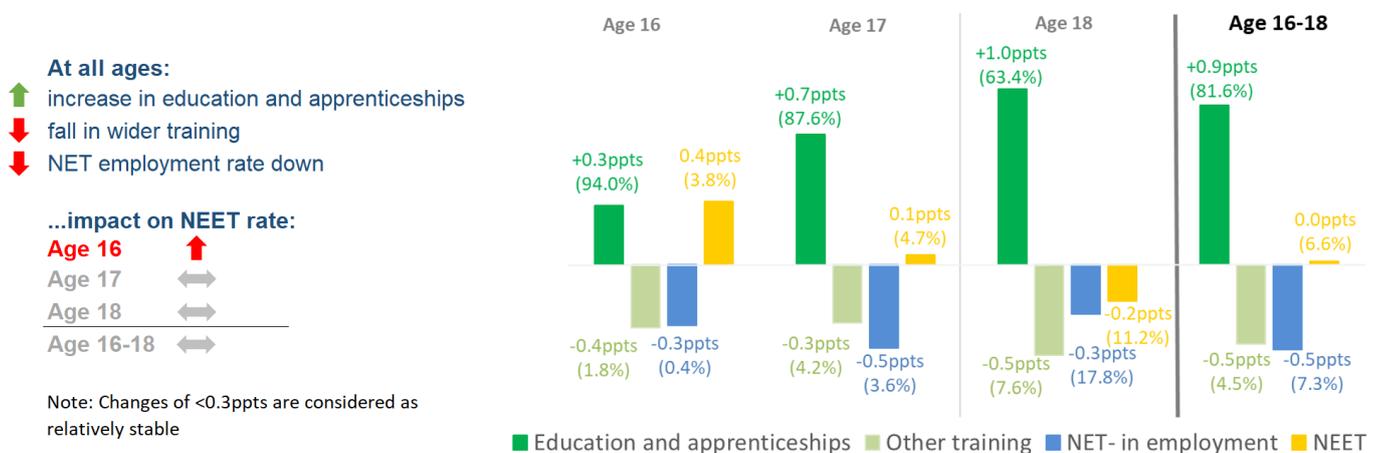
At end 2019 the provisional estimate of the 16-18 NEET (not in education, employment or training) rate remained stable and is still one of the lowest on record at 6.6% (record low was 6.3% at end 2016).

Two factors affect the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET):

- (i) the proportion not in any education and training (NET)
- (ii) the employment rate for young people who are NET, estimated from the Labour Force Survey

Figure 1 shows how the factors contributing to NEET have changed in the latest year.

Figure 1: Annual changes (+/- ppts) and end 2019 participation and NEET rates (%)



In summary, increases in participation in education and apprenticeships were largely offset by falls in wider training and falls in the employment rate for those NET.

This has resulted in the NEET rate remaining stable for the overall 16-18 age group between end 2018 and end 2019 (but the NEET rate has increased at age 16).

3. Participation by institution type

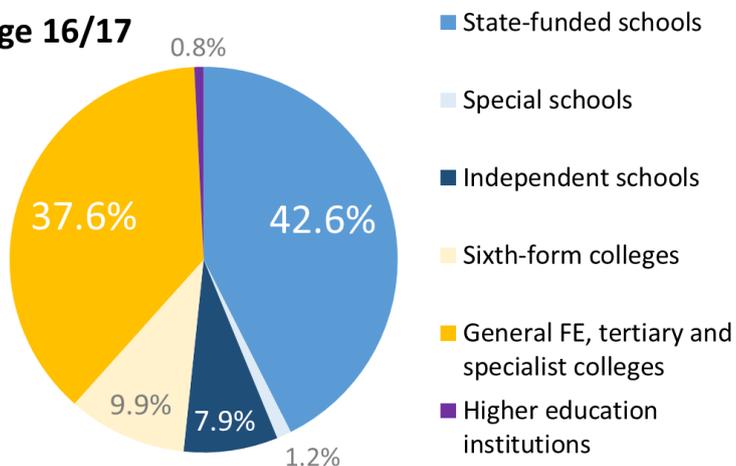
(Table 2, additional tables B1-B15)

At ages 16/17 the proportion in full-time education (FTE) increased by 1.0ppts to a record high of 83.7% in 2019.

Looking at the main institution type of those in FTE in 2019:

Figure 2a: Age 16/17 main institution type of those participating in full-time education in 2019

Age 16/17



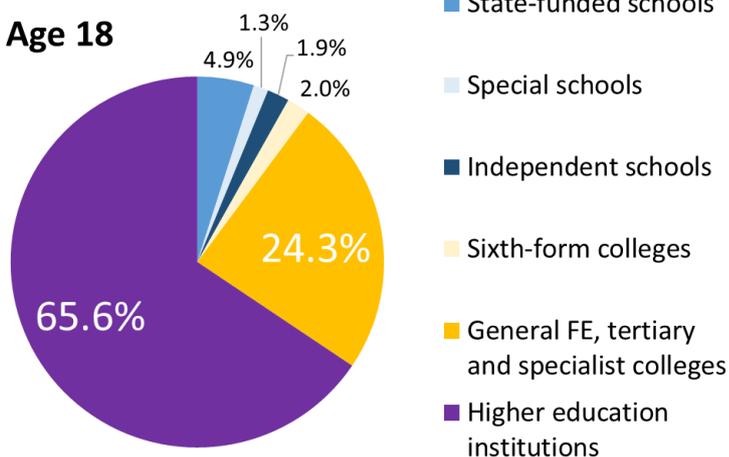
- Most 16/17 year olds in FTE study in state-funded schools or in General FE colleges.
- The proportion of those in FTE studying in General FE colleges increased by 0.9 ppts in 2019 to 37.6%.

2.8% of 16/17 year olds were in part-time education in 2019, studying mainly in General FE colleges.

At age 18, the proportion in full-time education also rose in the latest year by 1.5 ppts to 51.5%, a result of an increase in participation in Higher Education Institutions (offset however by slight falls in participation in General FE, sixth form colleges and schools).

Figure 2b: Age 18 main institution type of those participating in full-time education in 2019

Age 18



- Almost two thirds of FTE provision at age 18 occurs in higher education institutions.
- The proportion of the age 18 population in higher education institutions is at its highest level since consistent records began in 1994 (1 in 3).

4.3% of 18 year olds were in part-time education in 2019, a fall of 0.4 ppts when compared with 2018. Most part-time study takes place in General FE colleges.

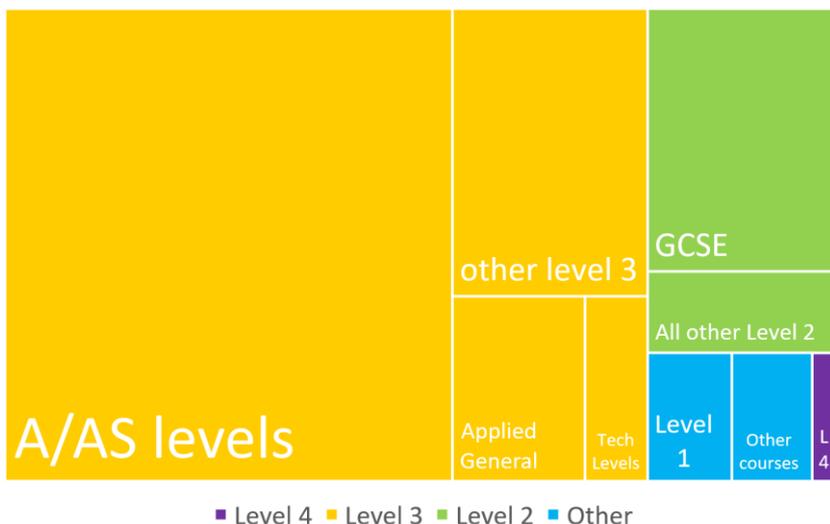
4. Participation in full-time education by qualification level

(Table 4, additional tables C1-C15 and E1-E15 for full- and part-time aims)

This section considers the highest qualification aim of those in FTE. Qualification levels are very different for those aged 16/17 and in compulsory education to those who have left compulsory education at age 18, where many are in Higher Education so are considered separately.

Age 16/17: In 2019, a record proportion was in FTE, with almost two-thirds of the 16/17 population aiming for a qualification at level 3, the highest proportion since consistent records began in 1994.

Figure 3a: Highest qualification aim of 16/17 year olds in full-time education in 2019



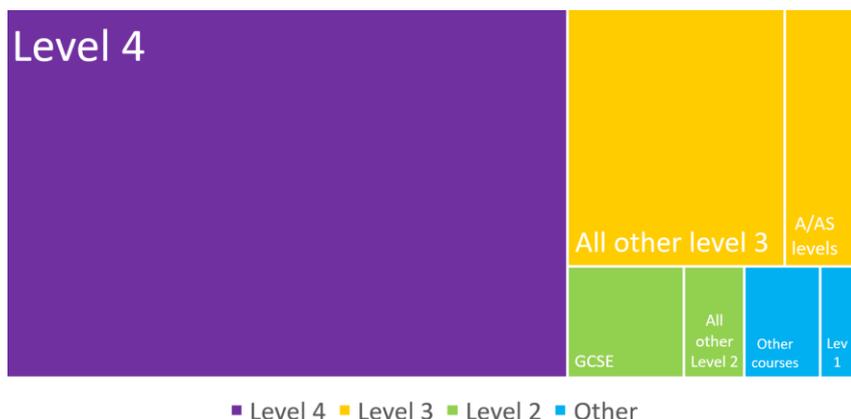
Of those 16/17 year olds in FTE:

- Just over half were studying for A/AS levels.
- Almost 1 in 4 were studying for an 'Other level 3' qualification (not A/AS levels).
- 2 in 5 of those aiming for a level 3 qualification other than A/AS levels were studying for a tech level or applied general qualification.

1 in 10 16/17 year olds were studying for GCSEs as their highest qualification aim at the end of 2019, a record high proportion. Increases in GCSE participation rates are likely to be attributable to the continued condition of funding requirements for maths and English introduced in August 2014 (see related policy section of accompanying technical document for further information). Since this change, the study of GCSEs as the highest aim at age 16/17 has increased by 7.7 ppts from 2.8% in 2013. Almost two thirds of 16/17 year olds with a GCSE as their highest qualification aim were also studying for another level 2 qualification.

Age 18: 51.5% were in FTE in 2019, the highest proportion on record.

Figure 3b: Highest qualification aim of 18 year olds in full-time education in 2019



Of those 18 year olds in FTE:

- Two thirds were aiming for a level 4 (HE) qualification, equivalent to 34.0% of the age 18 population and the highest proportion since consistent records began in 1994.

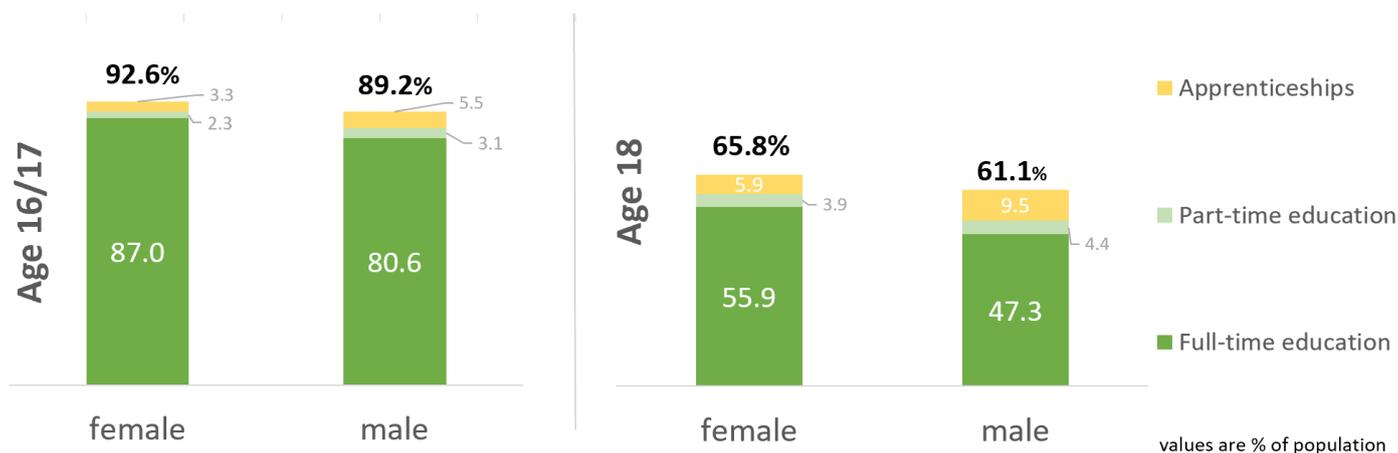
5. Differences in participation and NEET rates by gender (Tables 1 & 5, additional tables A1-A15 and D1-D15)

Females aged 16-18 have higher participation rates than males largely due to more being in full-time education. 83.5% of females were participating in education or apprenticeships at end 2019 compared with 79.8% of males.

Looking at the main study type:

- Males are more likely to be on apprenticeships or in part-time education than females, both whilst still in compulsory education (age 16/17) and when moving into post compulsory education at age 18.

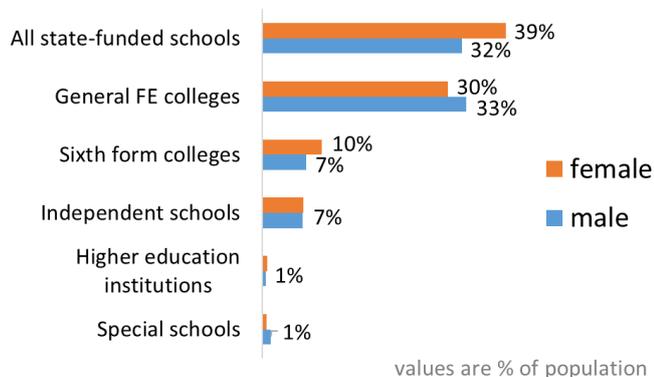
Figure 4: 16/17 year olds, and 18 year olds main study type by gender, end 2019, percentage of population



Looking specifically at those in FTE, there are differences in where young people study by gender.

Figure 5: Main institution type of 16/17 year olds and 18 year olds in FTE by gender, end 2019

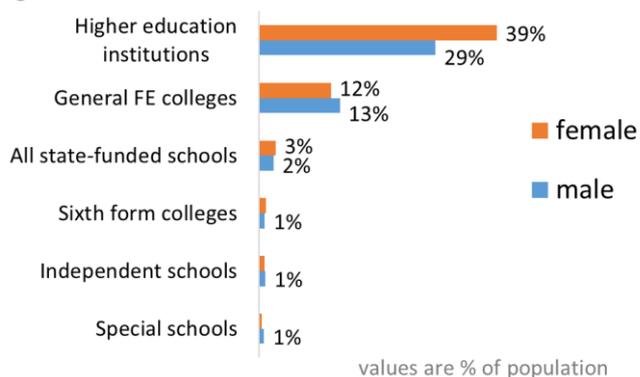
Age 16/17



At ages 16/17:

- Most young people are studying in state-funded schools or general FE colleges.
- A higher proportion of females study in schools than males, and a higher proportion of males study in general FE colleges than females.

Age 18

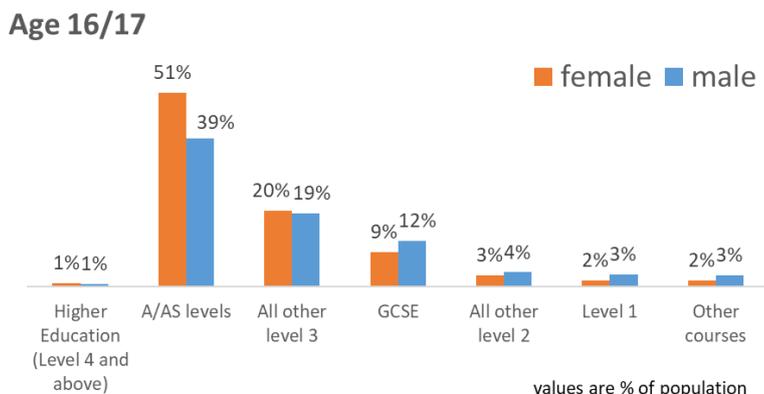


At age 18:

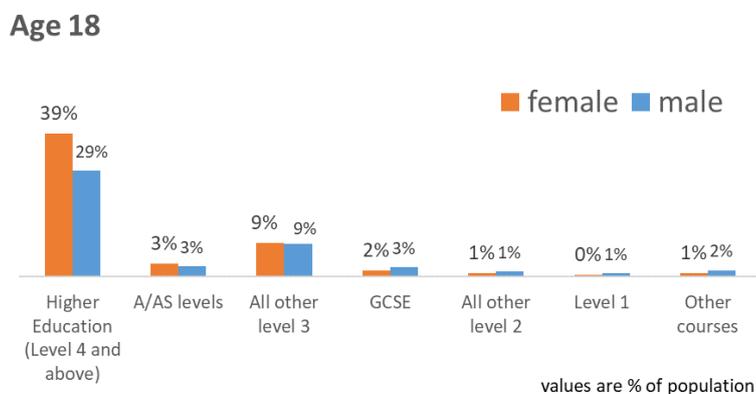
- Most study is in HE institutions and there is notable variation by gender, with more females than males in HE institutions – a difference of 10 percentage points.
- Males are slightly more likely to study in a general FE college at 18 than females.

As well as differences between where young people aged 16-18 study, there are also differences in the level of study, that is their highest qualification aim.

Figure 6: Highest qualification aim of 16/17 year olds and 18 year olds in full-time education by gender, end 2019, percentage of population



- 16/17 year old females are more likely to be studying for A/AS levels than males.
- There are more males studying for qualifications at level 2 or below including more studying for GCSEs.

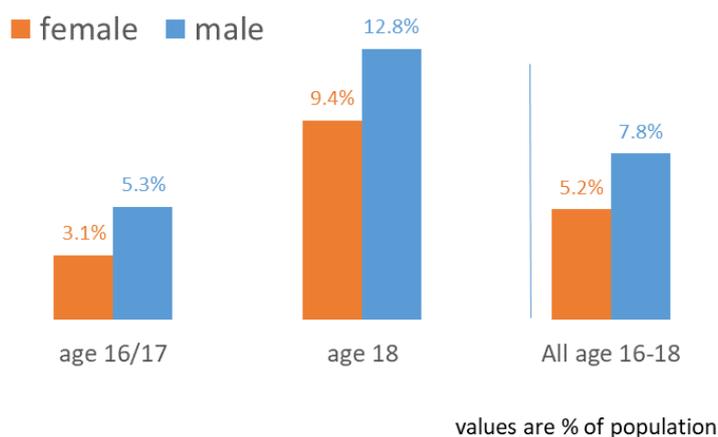


At age 18, as we might expect given more females are in HE institutions than males:

- more females are studying for a HE qualification at level 4 or above.

There are also notable differences in NEET rates by gender.

Figure 7: Not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates by gender, end 2019



At age 16/17:

- The NEET rate for males is notably higher than that for females, largely a result of lower participation rates.

At age 18, where more young people have entered the labour market:

- NEET rates are still notably higher for males resulting again from lower participation rates.

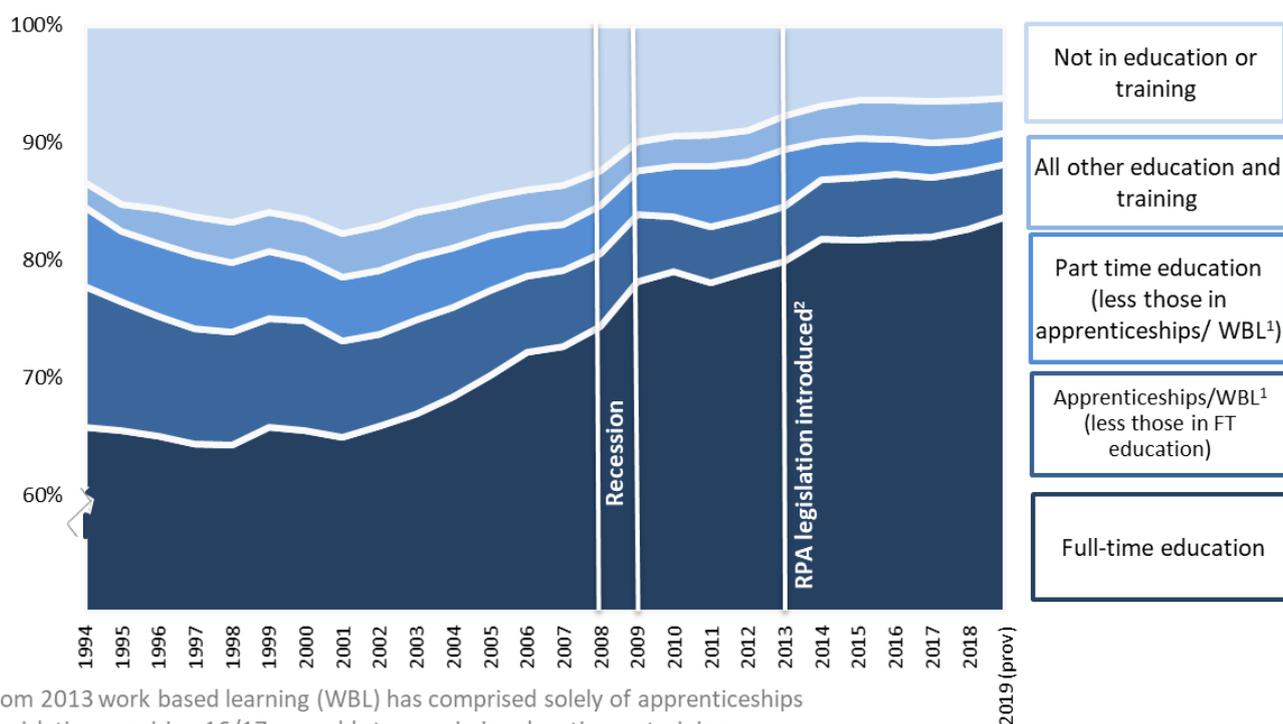
Considering the second NEET driver, employment rates of those not in education or training, at end 2019, 57.7% of females aged 16-18 not in education and training were in employment compared with 48.8% of males. Higher NEET rates for males in 2019 were therefore driven by both lower participation rates and lower NET employment rates.

6. Trends in participation since 1994 (Additional tables A1-A15)

At **ages 16/17** participation in full-time education was reasonably flat between the late 1990s to 2001, but falls in schemes such as Youth Training administered by Training and Enterprise Councils in the 1990s resulted in drops in work based learning (WBL) and caused the overall proportion in education and training to fall.

Between 2001 and 2009 participation in full-time education and overall education and training rose, with a sharper increase in 2008 during the recession period. During a recession, less economic activity takes place and so there are fewer jobs available and more redundancies, which could explain more young people remaining in full-time education.

Figure 8a: Trends in participation in education, apprenticeships/WBL and training at age 16/17
England end 1994 - end 2019 (prov)

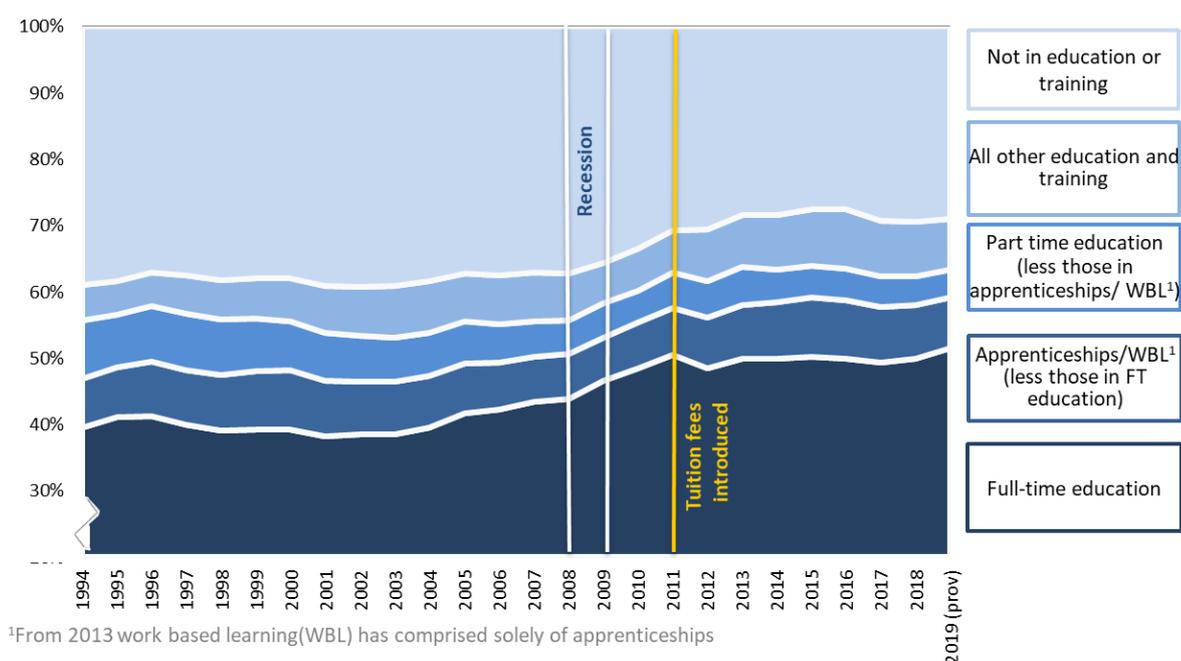


Following the introduction of Raising Participation Age (RPA) legislation in 2013/14, which required 16/17 year olds in England to remain in education or training, participation in full-time education then rose sharply in 2013, after which it remained on an upward trend, peaking in 2019 at 83.7% of 16/17 year olds. Since the introduction of RPA, these increases in full-time education have been largely offset by falls in apprenticeships and other training resulting in the stable trend of those not in education or training (NET).

At **age 18**, Overall participation in education and training was fairly flat between 1994 and 2003. Slight reductions over this period in the proportions in full- and part-time education were offset by increases in work-based learning and other employer funded training (EFT).

Full-time education then rose every year from 2003 to 2011, with a step change increase in 2008 during the recession period. During a recession, less economic activity takes place and so there are fewer jobs available and more redundancies, which could explain more young people entering full-time education.

Figure 8b: Trends in participation in education, apprenticeships/WBL and training at age 18
England end 1994-end 2019 (prov)



By 2011 participation in full-time education had increased by 12.0 pts compared with 2003 to 50.5% and although this was partly offset by falls in work-based learning and part-time education, the overall result was that the proportion of 18 year olds in education and training rose from 61.0% in 2003 to 69.4% in 2011.

In 2012 there was a fall of 2.1 pts in the proportion of 18 year olds studying full-time in higher education institutions, the result of behavioural change due to higher tuition fees (although a 2.7 ppt rise the year before was due to the anticipated arrival of higher fees which in turn drove a reduction in the number of people deferring entry). The fall in full-time education was offset by increases in other participation, so the proportion of 18 year olds in education or training was unchanged.

By 2015 participation in full-time education at 18 was almost back to its 2011 level, at 50.2%. Following slight falls in 2016 and 2017, age 18 participation in full-time education increased in 2018 and again in 2019 to 51.5%, the highest age 18 rate on record. Although between 2018 and 2019 participation in apprenticeships and part-time education fell slightly, the increase in full-time study resulted in the overall proportion of 18 year olds in education and apprenticeships being one of the highest rates on record at 63.4% (max was 64.0% at end 2015).

7. Trends in the employment rate of the NET group since 1994 (Additional tables A1-A15 & D1-D15)

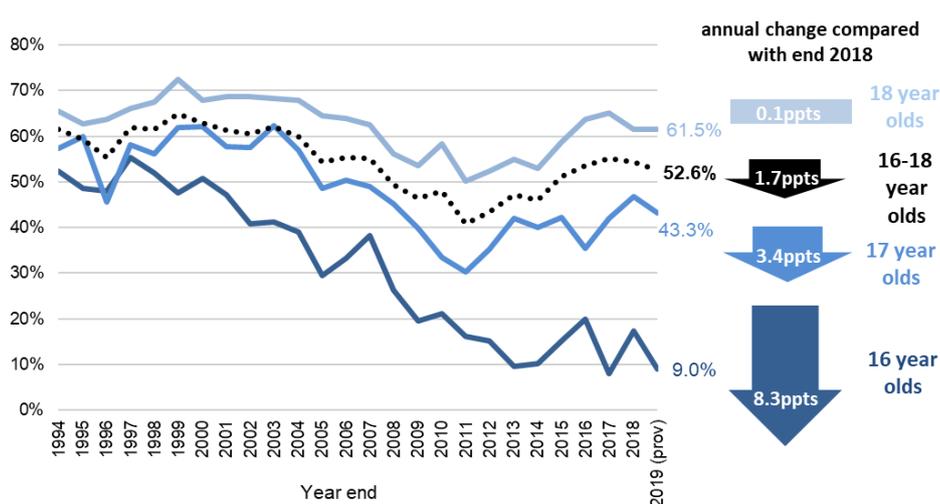
Two factors affect the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET):

- (i) the proportion not in any education and training (NET)
- (ii) the employment rate for young people who are NET, estimated from the Labour Force Survey

Considering the first factor, as we have seen the proportion of young people in education and training has been largely rising since around 2001, hence the size of the NET group has been tending to fall. The proportion of 16-18 year olds NET at the end of 2019 was 13.9%, 2.7 pts lower than in 2011 and 10.8 pts lower than in 2001.

Looking at the the second factor that influences NEET, the employment rate for the group not in education and training, figure 9 shows that between the late 1990s and 2011 the general trend was for the rate to fall meaning there was a notable decline in the proportion of 16-18 year olds in employment.

Figure 9: Employment rate of young people not in education or training (NET) by age
 England, end 1994 - end 2019 (prov)



Between 2011 and 2016 the employment rate of the overall 16-18 NET group rose, albeit with some fluctuations when looking at single ages.

It should be noted that sample sizes in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are small for individual age cohorts, particularly when looking at a sub-group such as those who are NET, so caution should be taken when interpreting changes in the employment rate over the short term.

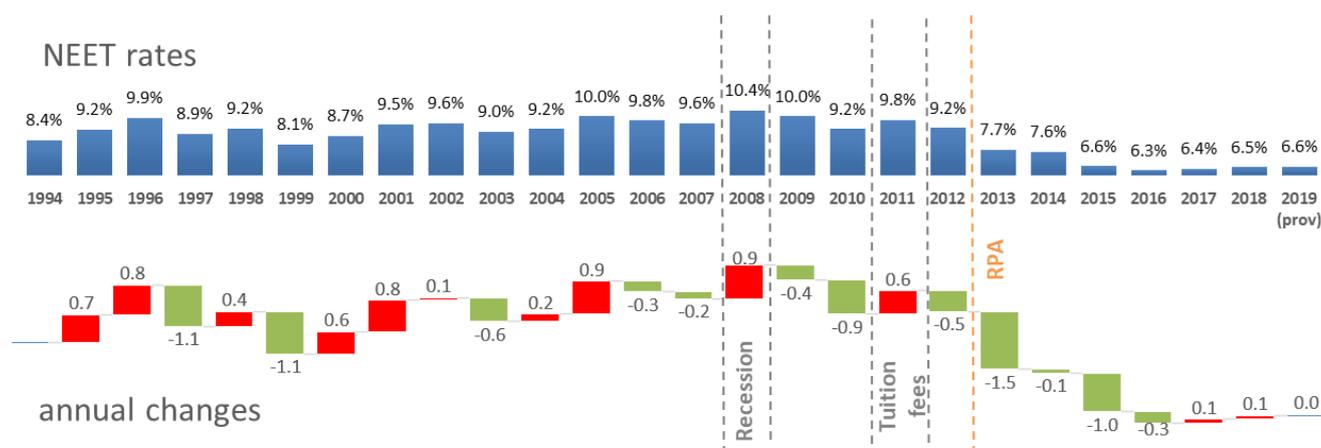
Compared with 2018, there have been decreases in the NET employment rate for ages 16 and 17, particularly notable at age 16. However, due to relatively small numbers in employment at these younger ages, they can fluctuate considerably year on year so overall trends should be considered. The age 18 NET employment rate remained stable at end 2019, at 61.5%.

8. Trends in the proportion NEET since 1994 (Additional tables A1-A15 & D1-D15)

Overall, the 16-18 NEET rate has been on a downward trend since it's series peak during the recession in 2008. There was a slight increase following the introduction of tuition fees in England in 2011 and a notable fall following the raising of the compulsory participation in education and training age to 18 from 2013.

Latest estimates show that the NEET rate has remained stable at 6.6%, and continues to be one of the lowest levels since consistent records began in 1994. The lowest rate was 6.3% at the end of 2016.

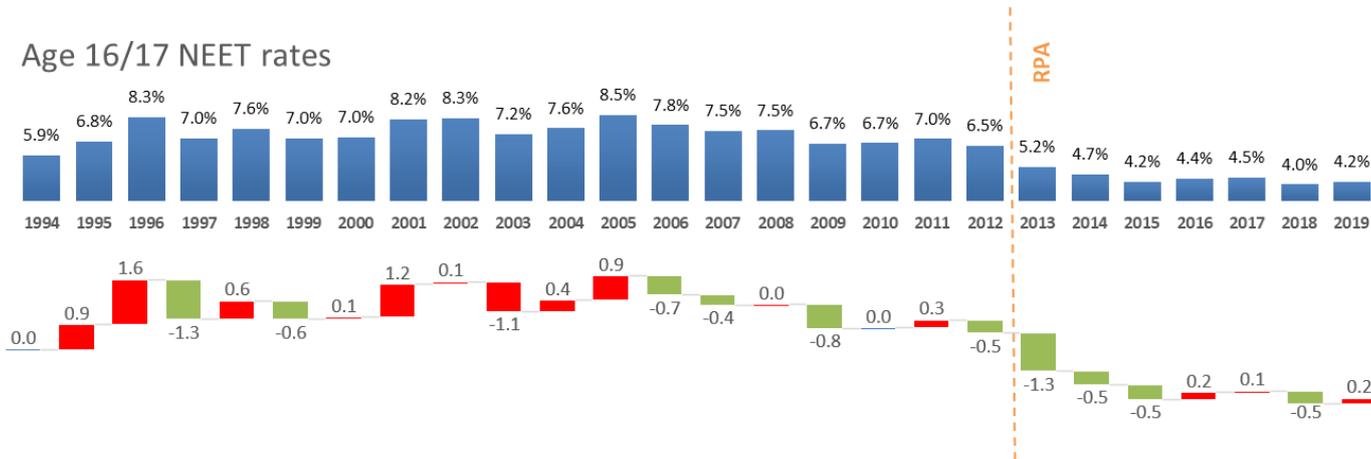
Figure 10a: Age 16-18 NEET rates and annual changes England, end 1994 - end 2019 (prov)



Looking at trends in NEET for 16/17 year olds and 18 year olds separately highlights differences in the impact of policy changes and the economical cycle:

At age 16/17, from 2005 to 2010 increases in participation in education and training, although slightly offset with falls in the NET employment rate, led to a steady decline in those NEET. A slight increase in 2011 was then followed by falls, notably from 2013 following the raising of the participation age. In 2019 the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds NEET was 4.2%, relatively stable compared with last year and one of the lowest rates on record.

Figure 10b: Age 16/17 combined NEET rates and annual changes England, end 1994 - end 2019 (prov)



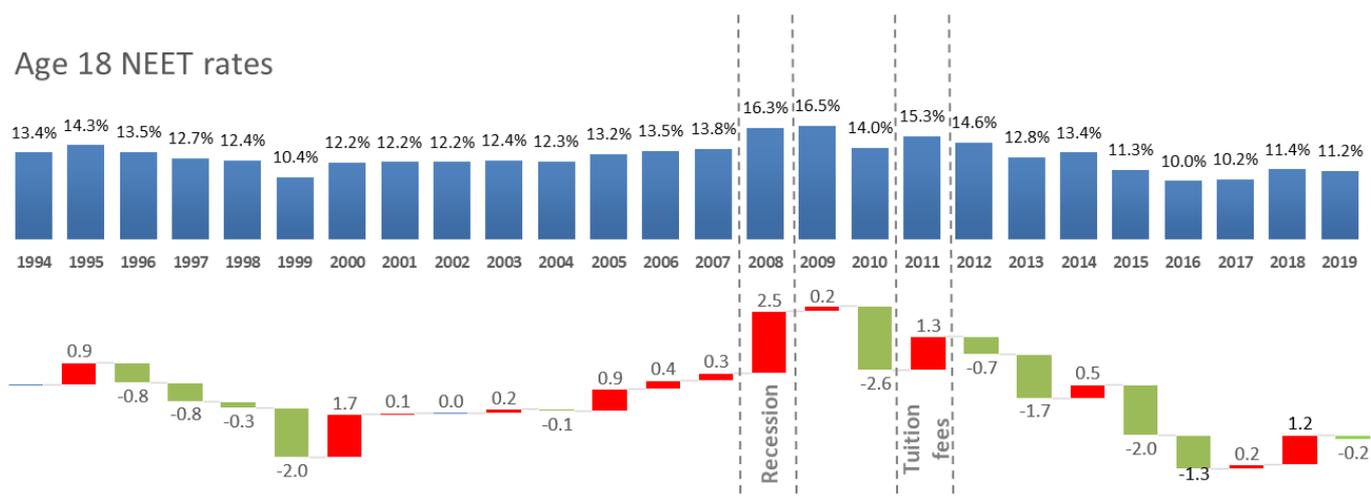
At age 18, NEET rates are more influenced by the economy than at ages 16/17 as the proportion not in education and training, and hence in the labour market is higher (29.0% in 2019).

Looking at the timeseries, a large fall in 1999 resulted in just 10.4% of 18 year olds being NEET, likely a result of government policy at the time.

Increases were then seen in the NEET rate at age 18 from 2000 to 2009 with notable series peaks during the recession period. The age 18 rate then fell notably in 2010, likely to be a behavioural change due to the anticipation of higher tuition fees being introduced in 2011.

Since 2015 the proportion of 18 year olds NEET has remained relatively low with the lowest rate being 10.0% in 2016.

Figure 10c: Age 18 NEET rates and annual changes England, end 1994 - end 2019 (prov)



9. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in [March 2012](#), in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. Information on improvements made to these statistics to continue their compliance with the Code of Practice are provided in the accompanying [technical document](#).

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.



Department
for Education



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About this publication:

enquiries Data Insight and Statistics Division (DISD), Operations Group,
Department for Education, St Paul's Place, Sheffield, S1 2FJ
Email: Post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk
download <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-neeet>

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