



08 October 2020

This release contains summary statistics on key apprenticeship learning data in England for the full provisional 2019/20 academic year. The end-of-year Further Education and Skills, and Apprenticeships and Traineeships releases, which we plan to publish in November, will include finalised data for the full 2019/20 academic year¹.

1. Apprenticeship starts

Summary headline statistics (Main table pack, Table 3)

Latest figures for the provisional, full 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to July 2020) show:

- Apprenticeship starts reported to date are 319,000
- Proportion of starts on standards was 74.7 per cent (238,400)
- Proportion of starts supported by ASA levy funds² was 68.7 per cent (219,000)
- The proportion of starts by level was:
 - Intermediate level: 31.0 per cent (98,800)
 - Advanced level: 43.6 per cent (139,000)³
 - Higher level: 25.5 per cent (81,200)
- The proportion of starts by age group was:
 - 16-18: 23.7 per cent (75,500)
 - 19-24: 29.5 per cent (94,200)
 - 25 and over: 46.8 per cent (149,300)
- The number of apprenticeship starts reported to date for July 2020 was 17,900; in July 2019, the number reported at the same point was 25,700

Note: In March 2020 we published provisional data⁴ for the first six months of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to January 2020), prior to the introduction of any restrictions due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which showed the total number of apprenticeship starts at that point had decreased to 198,600 from 214,200 in the first two quarters of 2018/19, a decrease of 7.3 per cent.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR) administrative data

The ILR is an administrative data collection system designed primarily for operational use in order to fund training providers for learners in FE and on apprenticeship programmes.

We publish a high volume of FE statistics using provisional, in year data and use latest data as soon as available despite not being 'final'. This enables us to provide the earliest picture of FE performance and allows users to assess the impact of government-funded provision and hold the 'system' to account.

¹ Previous quarterly releases can be found in the [further education and skills statistics collection](#).

² During this reporting period a small number of apprentices employed by organisations that do not pay the levy were funded using the apprenticeship service system. The service was extended to all employers that do not pay the levy to register and reserve funds on 9 January 2020.

³ The proportion of starts at intermediate or advanced level was 74.5 per cent (237,800).

⁴ [Apprenticeships and traineeships: March 2020](#)

The apprenticeship starts data in this release are based on the thirteenth ILR data return from FE and apprenticeship providers for the 2019/20 academic year, with a return date of 14 September 2020.

There are important limitations for users to be aware of and consider when producing analysis and making in year comparisons, such as:

- in year data returns being subject to later revisions.
- different proportions being observed during the year for e.g. learner characteristics such as ethnicity.
- some in year returns being more robust/reliable than others due to completeness of information at the time of the return, particularly for returns earlier in the year.
- provider reporting behaviour changing from one year to the next, e.g. in how timely they make the returns.

The fact that providers can submit data for earlier periods in later data returns can lead to 'data lag'. This highlights that the ILR does not provide 'real time' data, i.e. data returns provide information about the most recent month, but providers may not necessarily include latest information on their learners straight away, which delays finalising information until final, end of year data is returned each autumn.

The examples above can lead to differences between real world events and what can be understood from the ILR. This includes the need to make accurate data returns to support financial claims which may not provide the insight needed to fully understand what is happening on the ground such as learners being subject to short periods of suspended training and/or providers and employers continuing training programmes through the use of distance learning, as may be happening currently in some instances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, there could also be different levels of intensity of training currently, e.g. some learners might be continuing but in a reduced capacity which might not be being captured, pending a return to 'normal' circumstances.

Provider reporting during the period affected by COVID-19

The latest data in this publication covers the period affected by COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown, i.e. from March 2020 onwards (note: the UK lockdown was announced on 23 March so is likely to have impacted on, for example, apprenticeships starts from the last week of March). Therefore, extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting data presented in this release.

It is likely that the pandemic has affected provider behaviour in terms of the reporting of FE and apprenticeship learning during the affected period, and this could vary by provider. For example, some providers may have been unable to make returns due to the lockdown, or if they have made returns, these could be of variable completeness. Some providers may even return more timely and accurate returns than usual at this point in the year for funding purposes.

The furlough scheme may also have impacted on how aspects of ILR data are currently being recorded, such as how the 'learning status' of a learner has been captured, e.g. whether a learner is currently recorded as a continuing learner or whether they are being recorded as being on a break in learning while still being with an employer. Such information may not be finalised until the final end-of-year ILR data return in autumn 2020.

Impact of the apprenticeship levy

As of May 2017, reforms were made to how apprenticeship funding works, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship service. The profile of apprenticeship

starts changed significantly since the introduction of the levy which, along with the introduction of apprenticeship standards (that are replacing frameworks), has impacted on the number and nature of apprenticeship starts and participation.

2. Starts during the period affected by the COVID-19 lockdown

The data in this section are provided to give transparency on continuing activity in the apprenticeship programme during the pandemic. It includes data from 23 March when the lockdown was announced and includes starts reported to date for July based on returns from training providers returned on 14 September. Starts for the period as reported at this point in 2018/19 are also provided. The data covering this period will be provisional until final data becomes available in November.

Reporting of data by providers over the pandemic period is more provisional than normal and could lead to over and underreporting as providers and employers try and ascertain the latest position with learners and or have issues with reporting. Therefore, extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting the data presented here.

Please note also: the timing of the provision mix over the year and between years changes significantly, therefore care should be taken interpreting the change in Table 1 below from 2018/19 to 2019/20. Additionally, the 2018/19 data would also include more frameworks potentially supporting different sectors than the standards in 2019/20, so is included just for reference.

There have been 58,160 apprenticeship starts reported to date between 23 March and 31 July 2020, fewer than the 107,750 reported for this period at this point last year, a decrease of 46.0 per cent (see Table 1 below)⁵. As noted, final data will not become available until later in the year, therefore at this point it is unclear what the true number of starts in the affected period was or if the level of reporting at this point in the year has been affected by the lockdown.

To note also, as reported in the Apprenticeship and traineeships: April 2020 publication, which included data prior to the lockdown, latest reported to date starts for 2019/20 were down on the same point in the previous year, with starts in all months (except September) in 2019/20 reported to date also being lower than those reported at the same point in 2018/19.

Of the starts reported during this period in 2019/20:

- Learners aged 25 and over make up 62.2 per cent of starts; this was 54.6 per cent in the previous year.
- Intermediate apprenticeships accounted for 25.9 per cent of starts; this was 36.4 per cent in 2018/19.
- Higher apprenticeships accounted for 31.5 per cent of starts; this was 17.6 per cent in 2018/19.
- Business, Administration and Law, and Health, Public Services and Care were the dominant sector subject areas comprising 68.1 per cent of starts in 2019/20. These were also the main sector subject areas the previous year, but they represented a smaller proportion of starts (62.3 per cent).

⁵ In the Apprenticeships and traineeships: August 2020 publication, the equivalent starts between 23 March and 31 July were 53,530 in 2020 and 101,300 in 2019, a decrease of 47.2 per cent.

Table 1: Apprenticeship starts from 23 March to 31 July, reported to date
(The 2019/20 return date⁶ was 14 September 2020; the equivalent 2018/19 date was 13 September 2019)

| | 2018/19 Apprenticeship starts (at this point last year) | Proportion of 2018/19 total | 2019/20 Apprenticeship starts (reported to date) | Proportion 2019/20 of total |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Total starts | 107,750 | | 58,160 | |
| Age | | | | |
| Under 19 | 17,790 | 16.5% | 5,700 | 9.8% |
| 19-24 | 31,090 | 28.9% | 16,310 | 28.0% |
| 25+ | 58,860 | 54.6% | 36,150 | 62.2% |
| Level | | | | |
| Intermediate Apprenticeship | 39,190 | 36.4% | 15,080 | 25.9% |
| Advanced Apprenticeship | 49,640 | 46.1% | 24,780 | 42.6% |
| Higher Apprenticeship | 18,930 | 17.6% | 18,300 | 31.5% |
| Sector subject area | | | | |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 1,260 | 1.2% | 720 | 1.2% |
| Arts, Media and Publishing | 240 | * | 230 | * |
| Business, Administration and Law | 33,180 | 30.8% | 18,590 | 32.0% |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 2,210 | 2.1% | 1,230 | 2.1% |
| Education and Training | 1,580 | 1.5% | 1,410 | 2.4% |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 10,980 | 10.2% | 6,150 | 10.6% |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 33,970 | 31.5% | 21,040 | 36.2% |
| Information and Communication Technology | 5,940 | 5.5% | 3,600 | 6.2% |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 2,070 | 1.9% | 710 | 1.2% |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 16,310 | 15.1% | 4,470 | 7.7% |
| Science and Mathematics | 10 | * | 20 | * |

Note: The proportion of starts by sector subject area (and age/level) can vary by month to month. The number and proportion of starts by sector subject area in the latest full final year data is shown in Table 2 for context.

⁶ ILR reporting timescales are mainly based on returns from providers being submitted on the 4th working day of the month. Further information on return dates can be found in documents on the [ILR standard file specifications and reference data](#) page.

Table 2: Apprenticeship starts for the full 2018/19 academic year

| Sector Subject Area | Total | Proportion |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 6,650 | 1.7% |
| Arts, Media and Publishing | 1,000 | * |
| Business, Administration and Law | 118,650 | 30.2% |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 22,530 | 5.7% |
| Education and Training | 7,110 | 1.8% |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 59,970 | 15.2% |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 97,720 | 24.8% |
| Information and Communication Technology | 21,110 | 5.4% |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 7,220 | 1.8% |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 51,300 | 13.0% |
| Science and Mathematics | 130 | * |
| Total | 393,400 | |

3. Apprenticeship service data as at 21 September 2020⁷

Commitments

A commitment is where a potential apprentice, who is expected to go on to start an apprenticeship, has been recorded in the system. The apprenticeship service provides a self-managed service on which organisations and providers are able to add the details of an apprentice. Commitments may be either fully agreed or pending approval. A fully agreed commitment has agreement on the apprenticeship service from both the organisation and the training provider. A pending approval commitment means that details of an apprentice have been added but neither the provider and/or the organisation have finalised the commitment in the service. These commitments show an intent for an apprentice to start, however may not materialise into a fully agreed commitment in the future.

A commitment may be recorded on the apprenticeship service after the training start date has passed, therefore all data should be treated as provisional. Additionally, commitments pending approval do not require the recording of age or level. Data are fully captured when providers confirm details in the ILR.

Commitments include those with training start dates from March 2020 onwards, which may be affected by the impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship training activity and may not potentially translate in to an apprenticeship start in a high proportion of cases during the period affected by the pandemic.

Organisations and providers do have the opportunity to amend/delete a commitment they have entered in the apprenticeship service system, prior to the data being fully captured when providers confirm details in the ILR. However, it is not possible to quantify how timely this is happening during lockdown, so commitments for future periods may overstate the true level or timing of future starts.

The commitments data now also include those associated with the apprenticeship service accounts of non-levy-paying organisations⁸. Care should be taken when comparisons are made of these latest figures to those published previously.

As at 21 September, the number⁹ of:

- Commitments recorded for the 2020/21 academic year was 20,800 (of which 11,400 were fully agreed).
- Commitments recorded for the 2019/20 academic year so far was 193,200 (188,400 fully agreed¹⁰).
- Commitments recorded for the 2018/19 academic year was 187,200 (of which 185,100 were fully agreed).

Table 3 shows monthly commitments reported to date for training start dates in January to October 2020 on the apprenticeship service as at 21st September, along with figures for the same period at approximately the same point in 2019¹¹.

⁷ This is the latest date available at the time of producing this release.

⁸ In the April release we noted that between 09 January and 31 March, accounts associated with non-levy-paying organisations had resulted in 2,480 commitments recorded.

⁹ Commitments now include those associated with the apprenticeship service accounts of non-levy-paying organisations. Care should be taken when comparisons are made of these latest figures to those published previously.

¹⁰ At approximately this point last year (2018/19 SN13) there were 219,800 commitments (214,700 fully agreed) for training start dates in 2018/19.

¹¹ The exact date the data was taken from the apprenticeship service was the 16th September 2019.

Table 3: Latest 2020 commitments by training start date and equivalent 2019 figures¹²

| Commitment training start date | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug* | Sep* | Oct* | No date agreed | Total |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|----------------|---------|
| Commitments from Jan 2020 | 20,300 | 16,600 | 15,400 | 8,000 | 7,100 | 9,400 | 12,000 | 7,800 | 11,800 | 1,100 | 1,900 | 111,500 |
| Commitments from Jan 2019 | 19,600 | 16,500 | 17,800 | 16,000 | 15,900 | 14,600 | 16,300 | 7,900 | 4,300 | 200 | 1,300 | 130,500 |

* denotes data for the next academic year.

Impact of non-levy payers on the apprenticeship service

The comparative drop off in commitments from March 2020 through to the end of the 2019/20 academic year (July 2020) will mainly be due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown. Following this the commitments in August are similar and then much larger in September and October 2020 than those recorded at approximately the same point in 2019.

Figures from January 2020 onwards will include commitments associated with the apprenticeship service accounts of non-levy paying organisations. How commitments have increased on the apprenticeship service due to increasing engagement of non-levy payers between January 2020 and August 2020 is masked in Table 3 due to the impact of COVID-19. However, the increase becomes apparent when comparing the figures in September and October. Preliminary analysis¹³ shows 46% of commitments in September 2020 and 49% of commitments in October 2020 were from non-levy paying apprenticeship service accounts.

This means monthly commitments data from January 2020 onwards can not be compared with earlier periods due to impact of the pandemic and also the impact of non-levy payers moving on to the apprenticeship service.

In future releases, we will aim to separate commitments data in those commitments made by levy paying and non-levy paying organisations.

Please see the notes at the start of this section on recording commitments on the apprenticeship service and caveats relating to COVID-19.

4. Apprenticeship adverts and vacancies to August 2020

The apprenticeship adverts and vacancies in this section are as published on the [Find An Apprenticeship](#) (FAA) website. They represent only a subset of the total number of vacancies available across the marketplace as a whole, as many apprenticeships are not advertised through this website.

Adverts are vacancy notices and include at least one apprenticeship vacancy with an employer (one advert could potentially include a large number of individual vacancies). A vacancy is a unique opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship with an employer, and the number of vacancies provides a count of apprenticeship vacancies published on FAA in a particular period.

Monthly vacancies published on the Find An Apprenticeship website were generally lower in the 2019/20 academic year compared to 2018/19. In the months prior to the introduction of

¹² Combining the figures for January to October will not add to the total shown, as the total shows commitments from January in each year, which includes commitments beyond October and commitments where a date has not yet been agreed. Please see tables 1 and 2 in the monthly table pack released alongside this commentary document.

¹³ Based on data accessed on 05 October 2020.

coronavirus restrictions (August 2019 to February 2020), monthly vacancies, with the exception of February 2020, were between 19 and 33 per cent below the equivalent figures in 2018/19.

Vacancies in the months after coronavirus restrictions were implemented (on 23 March) saw a large fall compared to the previous year - down by over 80 per cent in April and May and by two-thirds in June. July and August 2020 vacancies were lower than those in the previous year, but more in line with differences seen prior to restrictions being implemented, i.e. 22 and 34 per cent lower than in July and August 2019, respectively.

Table 4 below shows monthly breakdowns of the number of apprenticeship vacancies published on the FAA website in August 2020, along with the corresponding figures covering the 2019/20 and 2018/19 academic years.

Table 4: Apprenticeship vacancies reported on the FAA website in August 2020 along with the corresponding 2019/20 and 2018/19 figures, by month.

| Academic year | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2020/21 | 6,920 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019/20 | 10,490 | 9,760 | 9,900 | 8,470 | 5,600 | 8,840 | 13,660 | 7,940 | 2,120 | 1,850 | 4,030 | 9,570 |
| 2018/19 | 14,060 | 12,050 | 14,260 | 12,650 | 7,110 | 12,190 | 13,030 | 13,100 | 10,900 | 13,030 | 12,100 | 12,240 |

Apprenticeship adverts in the months after coronavirus restrictions were implemented (on 23 March) showed large falls compared to the previous year - down by over 88 per cent in April and May 2020 and by nearly three quarters in June 2020. July 2020 adverts were down 52 per cent compared to July 2019, whilst adverts for August 2020 are still 36 percent below those last year. This is more in line with the year-on-year decrease seen prior to coronavirus restrictions being implemented (between August 2019 and February 2020 adverts were between 18 and 33 percent down compared to the previous year).

5. Skills Tool Kit (Experimental Statistics)

Course registrations

In the July update to this publication we stated that on 28 April 2020, [The Skills Toolkit](#) was launched to help people build their skills during the coronavirus outbreak and beyond. We provided an initial estimate of at least 136,000 registrations were recorded on the courses that featured on The Skills Toolkit in the first month of operation.

Course providers submit returns to the Department for Education regularly on those registrations through The Skills Toolkit, and an estimate is derived through aggregating those returns. There may be providers who are unable to identify if their course registrations were a result of The Skills Toolkit campaign or through other means, and so this data may be missing from the estimate. Additionally, there may be inconsistencies in how various providers submit the data, and so the department has been working with the providers to harmonise reporting. This is a provisional estimate as there may be a data lag in reporting.

It should be noted that the number of registrations was experimental in nature and relies on website analytics, it is also subject to changes in provider reporting. We are currently reviewing the original method to count registrations as some technical changes by providers means we cannot repeat the number for later periods, but we are seeking a new collection method. We are aiming to provide an update to the existing figure for assurance on the initial approach, and also provide more recent data once that work is complete.

October 2020 update

Since the July update to this release where course providers collectively reported 136,000 course registrations a month after the Toolkit was launched, some course providers have made The Skills Toolkit team aware of issues in their reporting. For example, providers have made changes to their analytics software and to the structure of their websites affecting the number of course starts they report. As a result, the number of registrations has been revised down, as of 30 September 2020 there have been 97,615 course registrations and 1,100,260 page views.

Work is on-going to continue to review the data and outcomes from the platform in partnership with the providers who host the courses that feature on the platform.

Note: this data is reported as a part of systems monitoring and some users might access the page from more than one device and if so will be counted more than once in the figures.

About this release

This statistical release presents information on all age (16+) apprenticeships in England reported to date for the provisional full 2019/20 academic year, covering August 2019 to July 2020.

This release also contains latest data on commitments from the apprenticeship service. These official statistics are produced to provide transparency with regards to the apprenticeship service, an online service implemented in May 2017 that allows organisations to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily, and its usage.

These statistics will continue to evolve over time as more data are collected and their relationships to other further education measures becomes more established. Caution should be taken interpreting what apprenticeship service data may mean for the overall apprenticeship programme given this is intended to grow over coming years. It has the potential to be affected by other factors, for example, users typically take time to adjust to recording data on a new system.

The next release

The next monthly release of apprenticeships data will be the Apprenticeships and traineeships: November 2020 statistics publication, which will contain finalised figures for the full 2019/20 academic year.

Note that the first in-year data for the 2020/21 academic year will not be published until January 2020 and will cover August to October 2020. This follows our normal practice and timing for releasing the first in-year data for the latest academic year and will be based on the fourth ILR data return for the new year. Earlier returns from providers are not sufficiently complete to allow reasonable year to date estimates of activity and comparison with previous years.

Note also that data for individual months are also less robust than quarterly data, particularly during the early part of an academic year as providers can report data for earlier periods at later points during the year. Additionally, data returns early in the academic year are typically less complete as providers tend to be busy with activities associated with the start of the academic year, and this may be more the case this year due to the return to learning following the COVID-19 lockdown and new procedures colleges and providers will be putting in place to make sure environments are 'COVID safe' for both learners and staff.

Monthly commitments on the apprenticeship service have training start dates in the 2020/21 academic year, which give an early sight of future starts.

Replacement of further in year releases during 2020

As the demand increases for statistics and data to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Education has had to change its data gathering and release practices, focussing efforts on priority analysis and statistics. Our statement of 26 March 2020 on the Statistics at the [Department for Education](#) web page explains this further, and, in line with [COVID-19 and the regulation of statistics](#) guidance from the Office for Statistics Regulation, the decision has been made to replace all in-year statistical releases relating to further education and apprenticeships for the 2019/20 academic year.

The current releases and measures we previously published may now provide very little value and/or may be misleading given how the pandemic will have impacted on both apprenticeship training and provider reporting from March. While collections remain open, we have no way to quantify how robust any reporting by providers will be during the period affected by the pandemic. Where there are updates, they may well be small corrections to pre lockdown periods. Therefore, given the expected large drop in starts from March, comparing a participation measure in say the

third quarter of 2019/20 to this point in 2018/19 would offer no meaningful insight to activity in the third quarter.

We are consulting users and seeking feedback on key data needs, which can be provided via FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk. In particular, we are seeking user feedback on key data needs in terms of the regularity of data needed and also the type of breakdowns users would find most useful, e.g. similar to those we currently publish such national apprenticeship starts by age, level and individual framework/standard etc, so we can consider going forward and in light of continued data quality assessments. We will keep users updated of further changes via the [Statistics at the Department for Education](#) website.

Future releases and the new Explore Education Statistics platform

The DfE is changing how we release our statistics to further modernise our approach to dissemination. This will be through a new DfE statistics dissemination platform known as 'Explore Education Statistics' (EES) to make our data and statistics easier to find, access, navigate and understand. Please see the [Statistics at the Department for Education](#) website for more information on the new EES platform, which we are hoping to move to in our next release in November 2020.

The EES system offers a step change for users in making data and releases easier to find and through use of a new table tool, giving more interactive access to our data. We are also adopting a more concise and user-friendly presentation of commentary and headline data. In addition, the move to EES will, over time, make production and dissemination of statistical releases more efficient and flexible.

We will also seek to improve navigation to our data by consolidating releases and providing more seamless links to all supporting tables. In EES we hope to have two releases: a Further education and skills release, and an Apprenticeships and traineeships release. The latter will bring all apprenticeship data together in one place and update relevant sections on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. For example, the next update of progress towards the public sector apprenticeships target is planned to be in November 2020.

We are looking to run webinars on the new EES release via sector bodies before launch.

There will be on-going developments to the platform over time as well as how we use it to release our statistics, therefore we would welcome feedback on what users find helpful or not.

Methodology and technical information

As with many policy areas, further education is a broad and changing topic. In order to understand the impact of policy and methodology changes on any data published in this release, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

Feedback

For any queries relating to changes we are planning to make to how we publish our data and statistics, please contact: FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk.

6. Accompanying tables

1. Total number of commitments by training start date and age as reported at 21 September 2020
2. Total number of commitments by training start date and level as reported at 21 September 2020
3. All age apprenticeship programme starts by start month, level and age (August 2019 to July 2020 – reported to date)
4. Apprenticeship vacancies and adverts published on the Find an apprenticeship website, by month, to August 2020

Underlying data CSV monthly apprenticeship starts data covering breakdowns by sector subject area, framework/standard, age group, level, degree apprenticeship flag and funding type (2014/15 to 2019/20 - reported to date) (to July 2020)

Please see the [table finder tool](#) published in the [FE data library](#) for data tools and tables with additional breakdowns for annual full year 2018/19 academic year data and previous years.

When reviewing the FE and Skills tables, please note that:

| | |
|---|---|
| We preserve confidentiality | The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. |
| We round figures | Rounding is our primary approach to preserving confidentiality in our main tables, where headline volumes are reported rounded to the nearest 100. In the supplementary tables, volumes are rounded to the nearest 10. There may be exceptions to this in instances where any figure that is an exact duplicate of a value in the headline figures (e.g. Grand Totals), which are rounded to the nearest 100 and avoid contradictory figures. Percentages reported are calculated on pre-rounded data and given to one decimal place. |
| We suppress some figures | In the main tables, headline volumes below 50 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). In reality, very few figures in our main tables are small enough to be suppressed in this way. In the supplementary tables volumes below 5 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). A percentage of less than 0.5 per cent is suppressed. |
| We adopt symbols to help identify suppression | Symbols are used in the tables as follows: ‘-’ indicates a headline volume with below 50 in the main tables and below 5 in the supplementary tables. ‘*’ indicates a percentage of less than 0.5 per cent. |
| Coverage of the data | This release includes provisional data for the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to July 2020) reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in September 2020 by further education providers. |

7. Further information is available

Additional breakdowns of further education statistics are published online in the [further education data library](#) as supplementary tables. These include breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, region, local authority, parliamentary constituency, sector subject area and funding stream.

For further information on the monthly Apprenticeship Service data, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) document that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

Statistics on further education in Wales can be found at the StatsWales [Further education and work-based learning](#) website. Statistics on further education in Northern Ireland can be found in the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy's [Further education statistics and research](#) website. Statistics on learners in further education in Scotland can be found at the Scottish Funding council's [Infact Database](#).

8. The apprenticeship funding system

Changes in the way apprenticeship funding works were introduced and implemented from May 2017. For the latest information about how apprenticeship funding works see the [how to register and use the apprenticeship service as an employer](#) guidance.

A key aspect of these changes was the introduction of the apprenticeship service, an online service to allow organisations to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily. Levy-payers are able to register on the apprenticeship service so that they can:

1. receive levy funds to spend on apprenticeships
2. manage their apprentices
3. pay their training provider

For further information, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

9. Technical information

For further information, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) document that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

10. Official Statistics

These are Official Statistics and have been produced in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This 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.

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

11. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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Department for Education

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