



**22 November 2018**

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**About this release**

This statistics publication reports on the progress being made by public bodies towards their apprenticeship target in the first year of the target, and the progress being made by the public sector overall. It is based on self-declared information on organisation headcounts and apprentice recruitment that has been submitted to the Department by each public sector body that has determined itself to be in scope. Figures in this release cover the period between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.

As the apprenticeship target is measured over a four year period, caution should be taken interpreting what the data in the first year will mean for the eventual outcome against the target both for individual public bodies and the public sector overall, especially as this is based on a new data collection that public bodies are using for the first time. For assessing the apprenticeship programme as a whole, please refer to the most recent statistics here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

**Future publications**

We will publish these statistics on an annual basis with the next release, covering apprenticeship starts in the period between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, planned for release in autumn 2019.

**In this publication**

The following tables are included in this publication, covering the reporting period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018:

Table 1: National and sub-sector table (.xls and .ods)

Table 2: Public sector body list (.xls and .ods)

**Feedback**

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at:

[FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk](mailto:FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk)

# 1. The public sector apprenticeship target

Public sector bodies in England with 250 or more staff have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. Bodies in scope must have regard to the target meaning that, in making workforce planning decisions, they should actively consider apprenticeships either for new recruits or as part of career development for existing staff.

The target is for new apprenticeship starts, which includes both existing staff that start an apprenticeship and new recruits and measures these as a percentage of the total headcount of public sector bodies at the beginning of the reporting period.

The target is an average over four years, split into individual reporting periods covering each financial year (1 April to 31 March).

The reporting periods are:

- 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018;
- 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019;
- 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020;
- 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## Important note on schools in the first year of the target

State-funded schools employing 250 or more staff are within scope for the target. Where the council/local authority is the employer for schools, and that local authority employs 250 or more staff in England, the local authority is in scope and is responsible for reporting on progress towards meeting the target. These schools are expected to be included within the local authority target. Local authorities are permitted to set out progress in their schools separately in their annual return.

Provided they meet the headcount criteria above, academy trusts and multi-academy trusts will come within scope from 31 March 2018. These academy trusts were not required to provide an annual return in the first year of the target and will need to do so for the first time from April 2019, for starts between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019.

It is not possible to report against the target for schools as a group. Instead, an estimate of the number of apprenticeship starts in schools during the reporting period has been calculated from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

There were approximately 6,300 apprenticeship starts in schools between May 2017 and March 2018<sup>1</sup>. Around half of these starts were in local authority maintained schools.

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<sup>1</sup> See technical information for further details

## 2. National summary

Self-reported figures show that **1.4 per cent** of workers in public sector bodies started an apprenticeship between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. This equates to 45,314 new apprenticeship starts in the period.

Table A below provides a summary of the aggregate information provided by public sector bodies up to and including 26 October 2018.

**Table A: National aggregate of public sector body returns**

<b>Reporting period – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018</b>	<b>England</b>
Number of public sector bodies included	676
Number of employees (headcount) at 31 March 2017	3,207,619
Number of apprentices as at 31 March 2017	45,923
Percentage of employees who were apprentices as at 31 March 2017	1.4
Number of employees whose employment began between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	440,193
Number of apprenticeship starts between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	45,314
Apprenticeship starts as a percentage of new staff between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	10.3
Number of employees (headcount) as at 31 March 2018	3,178,866
Number of apprentices as at 31 March 2018	60,665
Percentage of employees who were apprentices as at 31 March 2018	1.9
<b>New apprenticeship starts as a percentage of headcount 2017-18</b>	<b>1.4</b>

Figures submitted to the Department for the purposes of monitoring the public sector apprenticeship target, show that the number of employees in bodies that have declared themselves in scope for the public sector target<sup>2</sup> has fallen marginally over the reporting period from 3.21 to 3.18 million but the number of apprentices has risen. At the beginning of the target reporting period, approximately 46,000 (1.4 per cent) of those employed in these bodies were apprentices. This had risen to over 60,000 (1.9 per cent) by the end of the 2017-18 financial year – an increase of 0.5 percentage points. The 45,314 staff who have started an apprenticeship during the reporting period account for one in ten of all new appointments in the public sector bodies making a return.

## 3. Sub-sector breakdowns (Table 1)

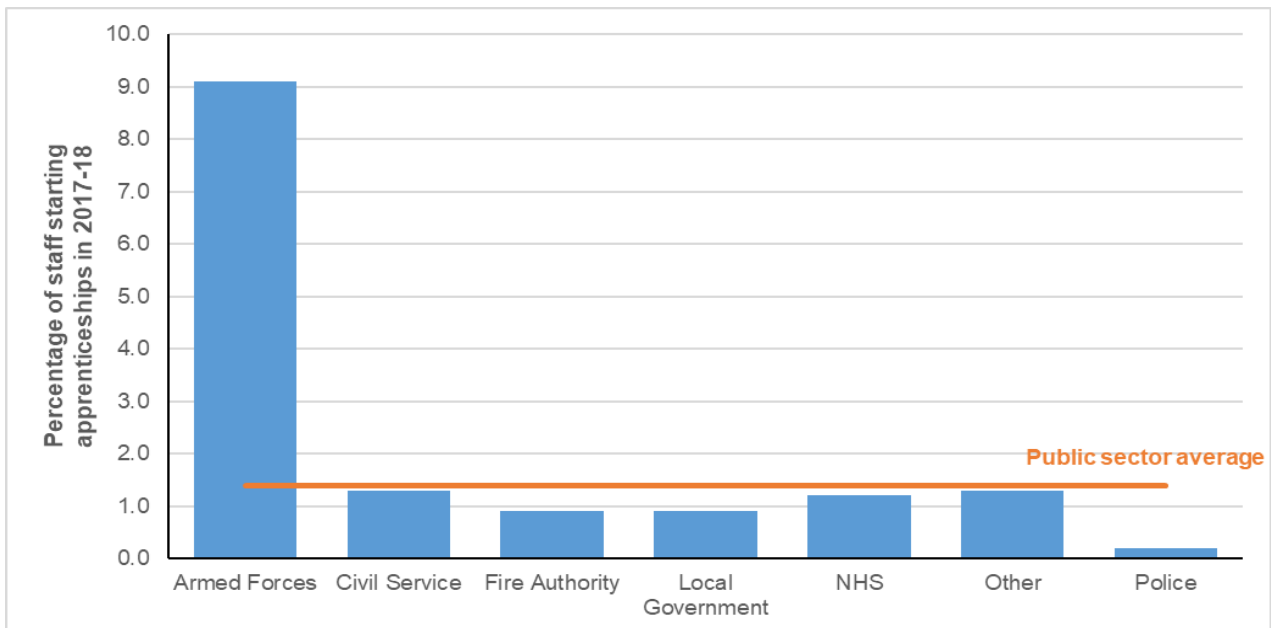
There was variation in the take-up of apprenticeships across different parts of the public sector (see figure 1). The armed forces recruited a relatively large number of apprentices over the reporting period with 9.1 per cent of employees starting an apprenticeship in 2017-18.

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<sup>2</sup> Public sector headcount figures in this release are an aggregate of those collected from bodies to form a denominator for the purposes of measuring the public sector apprenticeship target. They do not represent an official measure of public sector employment. Official public sector employment figures are published by the Office for National Statistics.

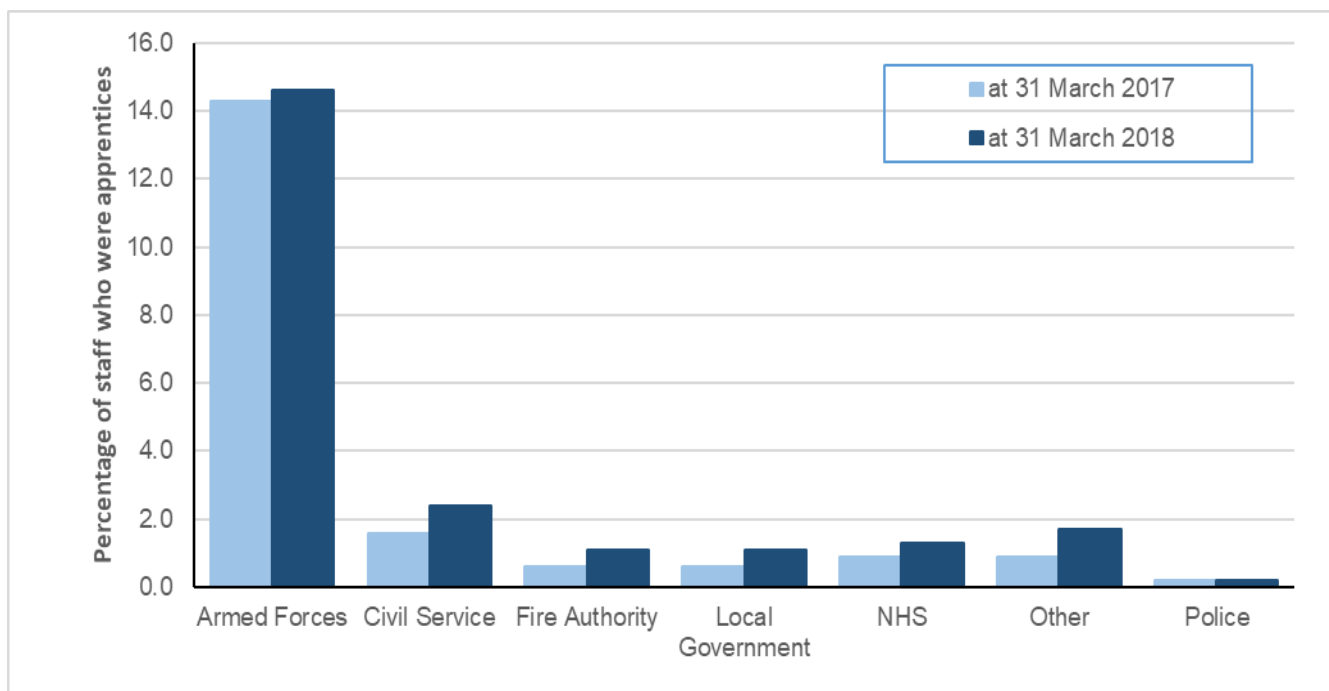
The civil service and bodies in the NHS were slightly behind the overall public sector average with 1.3 and 1.2 percent of employees beginning an apprenticeship, while the police had the lowest rate of apprenticeship recruitment in 2017-18 at 0.2 per cent.

**Figure 1: Apprenticeship starts in 2017-18 as a percentage of headcount, by sub-sector**



Comparing the start of the reporting period to the end, all sub-sectors, apart from the police, have shown an increase in the reported percentage of the workforce who were apprentices (see figure 2). At the end of March 2017, 1.6 per cent of civil servants were apprentices and this rose to 2.4 per cent by the end of March 2018. This is among the largest percentage point rises when comparing across sub-sectors.

**Figure 2 – Percentage of staff who were apprentices at the start and end of the 2017-18 reporting period, by sub-sector**



Most sub-sectors have seen a modest rise in headcount over the reporting period according to the figures submitted. However, Local Government bodies have declared a 5 per cent fall in staff numbers during the year but the reported number of apprentices employed in this sector has risen by over 70 per cent (from 7,300 at 31 March 2017 to 12,500 at 31 March 2018).

The Cabinet Office published apprenticeship data for individual Civil Service bodies on 28 September 2018. For further breakdowns of Civil Service progress, please follow:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2017-to-2018>

## 4. Indicative ILR Public sector ratios

The limitations of the quantitative data provided by public sector bodies in the official target returns means it is not possible to produce breakdowns of the target data to show typical breakdowns one might expect such as by ethnicity, apprenticeship level, sector subject area and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities etc.

We will therefore publish a small set of breakdowns based on linking returns to information held on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), to provide 'indicative' ratios to complement the official public sector release, such as<sup>3</sup>:

- a. xx% of public sector apprenticeship starts have a Learning Difficulty/Disability
- b. xx% of public sector apprenticeship starts by sector subject area
- c. xx% of public sector apprenticeship starts are 19-24
- d. xx% of public sector apprenticeship starts are female, xx% are male
- e. xx% of public sector apprenticeship starts from the BAME group

These breakdowns will be published in the 'Apprenticeships and Levy statistics: November 2018' statistics publication on 6 December 2018.

It will not be possible to reconcile these breakdowns with the public sector body target returns. In their returns, public bodies will provide information on the employment period and headcount information relating to the target; whereas the ILR will hold information on a learning period and there are inherent issues with identifying public bodies. Therefore, while estimates of volume might be significantly different, one may expect such ratios to be a reasonable indication over time.

## 5. Public sector returns (Table 2)

The full list of public sector organisations that have made an official return to the Department along with their submitted headcounts and apprentices can be found in Table 2. Returns have been included if submitted on or before the 26 October 2018.

Some organisations making a return have been excluded from the national and sub-sector statistics for one or more of the following reasons:

- The stated headcount at 31 March 2017 is fewer than 250 – only bodies with headcounts of 250 or more immediately prior to the financial year are in scope for that particular year;
- The employer is part of the Civil Service and is already included in the Cabinet Office return that covers the whole of the Civil Service – to avoid double counting;
- Mapping of organisation names to public sector bodies has failed to classify the employer as a public sector body; or
- The stated number of apprentices equals or exceeds the stated headcount at any given period.

Bodies that have been excluded from averages are identified in the final column in Table 2, which contains returns from individual public sector bodies.

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<sup>3</sup> This is not an exhaustive list.

## 6. Technical Information

### Data collection process

Public bodies who are in scope are required to submit a Data Publication and Activity Return (see below) to the Department for Education, and are also required to publish this data themselves. Collection of returns for the 2017-18 reporting period opened in April 2018 with a deadline for submission of 30 September 2018. In this first year of reporting, some leeway was given and returns up to and including the 26 October 2018 have been included in this release.

Most levy-paying public bodies have sent their return through their Apprenticeship Service Account (ASA) by completing a digital form. Non-levy paying employers in scope of the target or grouped bodies under a single ASA have completed a separate spreadsheet form via email. Cabinet Office (on behalf of the Civil Service) and the Armed Forces have also submitted spreadsheet forms.

### Data requested from public sector bodies

Public bodies in scope of the target are required to provide an annual report of two parts to the Department for Education. Bodies in scope must provide the information listed below.

1. The Data Publication Return (containing quantitative data for publication)

This includes figures to enable an assessment of the progress a body has made towards meeting the target. This information must be published by bodies and be accessible to the public.

Figure	Description
A	The number of employees whose employment in England by the body began in the reporting period in question.
B	The number of apprentices who began to work for the body in that period and whose apprenticeship agreements began in that period. This includes employees who were already working for the body before beginning their apprenticeship, as well as new apprentice hires.
C	The number of employees employed in England that the body has at the end of that period.
D	The number of apprentices who work for the body at the end of that period.
E	Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure A.
F	Figure D expressed as a percentage of figure C.
G	The number of apprentices who worked for the body immediately before that period.
H	Headcount on the day before the first day of each reporting period in the target period.
I	Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure H. <b>This figure will enable the Government to assess the progress a body has made towards meeting the target.</b>

## 2. Apprenticeship Activity Return (containing qualitative information)

The Apprenticeship Activity Return includes both information on a body's progress against the target and information to assess actions taken towards, and challenges faced in, meeting the targets. The return includes both quantitative and qualitative elements. An analysis of the responses to these returns will be published in a research report in due course.

### **Public bodies in scope**

All public bodies (except those listed below) with a headcount of 250 or more in England at the start of a reporting period are in scope of the target. Primary legislation defines a public body as a public authority; or body or other person that is not a public authority but has functions of a public nature and is funded wholly or partly from public funds.

The following organisations are excluded from the target:

- BBC
- Channel 4
- House of Commons
- House of Lords
- Post Office Ltd and subsidiaries
- Further Education colleges
- Universities
- Housing Associations
- Housing Trusts
- Independent Schools
- Financial bodies that are party state owned
- Charities

Academy trusts with 250 or more staff will officially come within scope from 31 March 2018. These bodies were not required to report on apprenticeship starts for the period between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 but those that did have been included in these statistics under the 'Other' sub-sector. They will be required to report progress for the first time from April 2019, covering apprenticeship starts between April 2018 and 31 March 2019.

Police forces are required to include police officers within their headcount when calculating their progress from 31 March 2018.

Schools that have a workforce of 250 or more in England are also in scope; the exception to this are fee-paying independent schools. Schools which are maintained by another body and where that body is the employer, such as a local authority or governing body that controls more than one school are expected to be included in the relevant bodies' target.

### **Public sector mapping methodology**

This section outlines the methodology to identify public sector bodies' Apprenticeship Service Accounts (ASAs) that has been used to assign them to sub-sector categories and to map to apprenticeship starts data.

Account names, along with information about the legal entities attached to those accounts, have been used to determine which ASAs are from the public sector. These accounts were cross-referenced with published

lists of local authorities, NHS trusts, police forces, fire services, schools, Government departments, agencies and other public bodies to further refine the classification, adding organisations missing from the original list and removing those erroneously included. Public sector accounts have also been verified and the mapping updated as bodies have made returns to report their progress against the public sector apprenticeship target through their ASAs.

A small number of target returns were submitted through ASAs that have not been identified as public sector bodies. These returns are included in Table 2 but are not included in the calculation of national and sub-sector averages.

### **ILR starts in schools**

It is not possible to report directly against the target for schools as a group. Instead, an estimate of the number of apprenticeship starts in schools during the reporting period has been calculated from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and is reported in section 1.

To calculate a schools estimate, Apprenticeship starts have been linked to Apprenticeship Service Account (ASA) names and cross-referenced with 'Get information about schools', a register of schools and colleges in England (<https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>) to produce a mapping of school and academy trust accounts. In addition, employer information has also been linked in to allow starts in local authority schools to be separated out from the linked ASA.

Data from the Apprenticeship Service was first recorded in May 2017 and so the period covered for these starts is May 2017 to March 2018 and does not span the full 2017-18 public sector reporting period.

## **7. Quality and coverage**

The statistics in this release are based on self-reported staff numbers and counts of apprentices and as such, the accuracy of these submissions cannot be completely verified in all aspects. Certain validation checks have been undertaken on the figures and some bodies removed from the calculation of aggregated numbers (see section 5 for more details).

It is difficult to give a completely accurate measure of the coverage of the submissions received. An internal mapping based on Apprenticeship Service Account (ASA) names has identified those accounts that appear to be public sector. Not all of the ASAs flagged as public sector will be in scope for the target; for example, some may have fewer than 250 staff and not meet the minimum headcount criteria.

Comparing the public sector target submissions received through the digital apprenticeship service against our mapping of ASAs, suggest that at least 80 per cent of public sector bodies have made an official return. Further to this, linking public sector ASAs to apprenticeship starts from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) suggests that around 98% of all public sector starts over the reporting period were in bodies that have made an official return against the target.



## 8. Definitions

### Apprenticeship service accounts:

In order for an apprenticeship service account to be created and registered, the user must have completed three necessary steps:

- Registration (creating a user login)
- Adding an organisation (legal entity)
- Adding a valid PAYE scheme

Completing these three steps creates a unique identifier for the registered ASA, which is our principle measure of the number of accounts. The apprenticeship service went live for registrations from 23 January 2017. All employers can use the apprenticeship service to search for apprenticeships and a training provider.

### Apprenticeship starts:

An apprenticeship is a job in a skilled occupation which requires substantial and sustained training, lasting a minimum of 12 months and involving at least 20% off-the-job training.

The target is for new apprenticeship starts. This can include both existing employees who start on an apprenticeship as well as newly employed apprentices. Apprentices are only considered 'new' and count towards the target in the year in which they begin their apprenticeship.

In order to count towards the target, the apprenticeship must be an approved English apprenticeship agreement.

### Headcount:

The headcount is calculated as at 31 March in each year they are in scope and includes:

members of staff on the body's payroll including apprentices, on whose behalf the public body makes National Insurance Contributions. This will include:

- permanent members of staff;
- members of staff who have a fixed-term contract;
- those who work full-time as well as those who work part-time;
- other members of staff who are not described above who have a fixed-term contract;
- staff who are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave;
- staff who are on sick leave or any other type of extended paid leave;
- apprentices employed by the public body through an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA); or
- employees on secondment or loan only if your organisation is paying for the majority or all of their wages.

The headcount should not include:

- those who are employed through employment agencies;
- those who are working a zero-hour contract;
- bank staff;
- employees in sub-contracted organisations who are not paid directly from the payroll; or
- those on career breaks

### Apprenticeship levy:

The UK wide apprenticeship levy came into force on 6 April 2017 requiring all UK public and private sector employers with an annual pay bill of £3 million or more to invest in apprenticeship training. Since May 2017, funding arrangements for apprenticeships changed to give employers greater control over funding for apprenticeship training.

More information on paying the apprenticeship levy can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy>

## 9. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel and OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) format here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr#2018-releases>

### 2017-18 tables

- 1 Public sector apprenticeships by sector, England, financial year 2017-18
- 2 Public sector target returns by sub-sector; financial year 2017-18

## 10. Further information is available

For the most recent apprenticeship statistics and further breakdowns, please see the Further education and skills statistics publication, the Apprenticeships and traineeships release, and the Apprenticeships FE data library:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

## 11. 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.

Once statistics have been designated as Official Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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

## 12. Get in touch

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# Department for Education

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Reference: [Public sector apprenticeships in England: 2017 to 2018]



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