



Department  
for Education

# Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England

Technical document

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## Introduction

This document provides background information on the statistical release 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England'. It explains the concepts and methods used to calculate the participation estimates and provides an overview of the data sources and other relevant information.

## Coverage

The data in this publication covers young people who reside in England, and is based on their academic age, that is their age at the start of the academic year, 31st August. The publication includes data on individual ages between 16 and 18 as well as for combined age groups, 16-17 and 16-18. The data is at national level only and cannot be disaggregated to sub-national levels, or by characteristics other than gender.

Participation estimates are broken down by (academic) age, gender, institution type, whether full-time (FT) or part-time (PT), and by highest study aim. This publication provides the official annual estimates of participation and NEET (not in education, employment or training) in England.

The publication also provides a robust estimate of the number and proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education and training (NET) and looks at the labour market status for both those young people identified as NET and those participating in education or training. Those identified as NET and not in employment are classified as NEET.

Local authority (LA) estimates of participation in education and work-based learning by 16- to 17-year-olds are no longer published as part of this statistical first release. The Department for Education publishes transparency data for local participation based on local authority management information, here: [Participation in education and training by local authority](#).

## Confidentiality

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred therefore totals in text and in tables may not always equal the sum of their component parts. Similarly, differences quoted in text may not always be the same as differences shown in tables. Where any number is shown as zero the original figure was zero. Where a number rounds to zero, the figure has been replaced by a '-'. This rounding is consistent with the [Departmental statistical policy](#).

## Overview of methodology

The estimates of participation in education, training and employment combine data from a number of sources:

- The population at each age is based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates, adjusted so that they relate to academic age and the end of the calendar year.
- Participation data from administrative sources is then subtracted from this total. Participation estimates are made by combining administrative data from schools, further education, work-based learning (apprenticeships) and higher education. Procedures are included to identify young people in more than one form of provision, to give a view of the cohort as a whole.
- The labour market status is then estimated for each of the major groups:
  - Full time education (FTE)
  - Work based learning (WBL), comprises solely of apprenticeships from 2013
  - Employer funded training (EFT)
  - Other education or training (OET)
  - Not in education or training (NET)

## Definitions

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Academic Age	Age of a learner at the beginning of the academic year, 31 August.
Employer Funded Training (EFT)	Figures for EFT cover employees who have received training in the past 4 weeks; these figures are restricted to training other than WBL and exclude those who have previously received training in their current job, though not in the last 4 weeks. They cover only young people who are in employment.
Full time education	<p>The full-time education definition varies according to institution type.</p> <p>In schools, full-time learners study 10 sessions a week (1 session is half a day).</p> <p>In further education institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) From 2013 a full-time learner is defined as someone enrolled on a programme of learning totalling 540+ planned hours per year, from either qualification guided learning hours (GLH) or employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) planned hours;</li><li>b) Prior to 2013 full-time learners are defined as those enrolled on programme of learning of 450+ qualification guided learning hours per year, or at least 150 GLH per tri-annual period, or more than 16 GLH per week for shorter courses.</li></ul> <p>In Higher Education Institutions, full-time learners study 21 hours a week for 24 weeks a year.</p>
Part time education	Where the mode of education is not classified as full-time, as in the above methodology, then it is assumed that the mode of study is part-time. In some ILR records the number of qualification guided learning hours (GLH) and employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) planned hours are recorded as NULL. These records are classified as part-time in the tables. Many of those ILR records with NULL hours are Private Ltd companies (over 85% in 2016) where study is likely to be part-time. Around 7% of part-time study in the 2016 publication was a result of the hours variables being recorded as NULL.
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	<p>The LFS covers all residential households and nursing accommodation. Householders are asked to reply on behalf of students living away in halls of residence. The LFS excludes people outside such accommodation - chiefly hospital residents, people in prison, people in army barracks and the homeless.</p> <p>The LFS is a sample survey so all estimates of labour market participation are subject to sampling error, as are the estimates for the non-HEI (higher education institutions) based components of employer funded training (EFT) and other education and training (OET).</p>
Labour market status	<p>The definitions of labour market status used in this publication are the same as those in the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and follow the conventions promoted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO):</p> <p><b>in employment:</b> an employee, self-employed, on a WBL programme or an unpaid family worker. This includes young people in full-time education who also have part-time jobs.</p> <p><b>ILO unemployed:</b> anyone (including full-time learners) who is out of work, available to start work in the next two weeks, and has either looked for work in the last four weeks or is waiting to start a job they have already obtained.</p> <p><b>economically inactive:</b> neither in employment nor ILO unemployed i.e. not</p>

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	<p>active in the labour market. This includes those not looking for work because they are students and those who are looking after dependants at home.</p>
Not in education, employment or training (NEET)	<p>Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training and who is not in employment is considered to be NEET.</p> <p>As a result, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.</p> <p>NEET is estimated in the publication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) by taking the number of young people not in education or training (NET), calculated by subtracting the number of young people known to be in education and training from the total population;</li> <li>b) estimating the proportion NEET from this NET group using the LFS.</li> </ol>
Other Education and Training (OET)	<p>Refers to young people who are studying, but are not included in other categories. The majority of these young people will be studying part-time in a further education college or sixth-form college or other institution types described under the heading 'part-time education' in the main publication table T2.</p> <p>Wholly privately funded training not picked up in the administrative data collections is also included under other education and training (OET) which is estimated using the labour force survey. The relative contribution of private training and part-time education to OET can be estimated from the more detailed data in Additional Tables A1-A15, published as 'additional information' alongside this publication.</p>
Provisional data	<p>The figures for end 2018 are provisional while the figures for end 2017 have been updated and are now final.</p>
Qualification levels	<p>If a young person is studying qualifications at different levels they are reported against their highest level of study.</p> <p>All qualifications studied are classified as one of the following seven main categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher education (Level 4 and above)</li> <li>• A/AS levels</li> <li>• Other level 3</li> <li>• GCSE</li> <li>• Other level 2</li> <li>• Level 1</li> <li>• Other courses</li> </ul> <p>Qualification levels are defined by the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). For further information and examples see <a href="#">Compare different qualifications</a>.</p> <p>Young people in full-time education studying more than one course are attributed to the course appearing first in the list. Young people in special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), for whom there is no qualification breakdown, are included under 'Other courses' in Table 4.</p> <p>The June 2017 release included for the first time further detail for those taking technical or vocational level 2/level 3 qualifications. Following the review of vocational education by Professor Alison Wolf, one outcome was to identify the best level 2 vocational qualifications as '<b>tech certs</b>' and the best level 3 vocational qualifications as either '<b>tech level</b>' or '<b>applied general</b>', and ask employers and universities to endorse them, so young people know what courses have the best job prospects. Courses were taught from September 2015 (most tech certs from</p>

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September 2016) and each year a list of qualifications approved by DfE for teaching to 16 to 19 year olds and reported in the technical and vocational categories of the 16-19 performance tables is published ([see GOV.UK for further information](#)). In order to determine whether the level 2/level 3 qualification a young person is participating in is classified as a tech cert/tech level/app gen in this publication, the 'planned' or (if populated) the 'actual' course end date is used to determine in which performance table year the outcome would be reported. The approved qualification list for that year is referenced to make the classification.

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Apprenticeships/  
Work-based learning  
(WBL)

From 2013 work based learning has been comprised solely of apprenticeships. Prior to 2013 the work based learning category included other work related provision including basic skills and individually tailored provision and learning as part of Train to Gain (NVQ only prior to 2008). Pre 2010, work based learning included the Entry to Employment learning programme.

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## Data sources

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School census

The school census is a statutory pupil level data collection for all maintained schools, including local authority maintained special and non-maintained special schools, academies including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges and city technology colleges in England.

The school census is collected on a termly basis with 3 collections per calendar year. This publication uses spring school census data collected in January and, for provisional data on post 16 learning aims, the autumn school census collected in October. The school census was first collected in 2006 for secondary schools only and then for all schools from 2007 onwards. Prior to 2007, the school census dataset was known as the pupil level annual school census (PLASC) and was collected once a year in January. Comprehensive PLASC data was first collected in 2002.

Independent schools submit school-level data via the annual school level census (SLASC).

In 2019, 384 schools did not submit or their entries were incomplete. As a result numbers have been imputed using either last year's 2018 census or using latest information from Get information about schools (GIAS). Further explanation of the 2019 data issues and imputation can be found in the release <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>. For end 2018 participation estimates in this publication, gender and qualification aims for 16-18 year olds in independent schools missing from the 2019 collection, and for which previous census data is unavailable, have been estimated based on data held for all schools in 2019.

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Schools returning the  
ILR

Sixth-form colleges in England have been able to apply to become a 16 to 19 academy since end 2015. These 16 to 19 academies established from sixth-form colleges continue to return the ILR as oppose to the school census. Therefore, from 2017 the 'converter academies' rows in the tables include both schools recorded as converter academies on the school census and sixth form colleges who were recorded as a converter academy on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

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Further Education (FE) Institutions	<p>The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Individualised Learner Record (ILR) provides data on learners in FE sector colleges. The 'FE college' sector is mainly general FE, tertiary and specialist college provision, but also includes some publicly funded provision delivered through commercial, charitable and local authority providers.</p> <p>Snapshot data as at 1 November is used. The data used for provisional estimates is the annual SN06 freeze and for final estimates the SN14 freeze. The ILR data for the latest year is provisional and is scheduled to be revised in the following year's publication (usually in June). Figures for previous years are final but can be updated following revisions to LFS or population estimates.</p>
Work Based Learning (WBL)/ Apprenticeships	<p>The ESFA ILR provides monthly data on young people on WBL programmes. Snapshot data as at 1 January has been used, for end 2001 onwards.</p>
Traineeships	<p>Due to relatively small numbers, traineeship numbers are included in the FE figures in the tables.</p>
Higher Education Institutions (HEI)	<p>Students in institutions of higher education on 1 December are included from data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).</p> <p>Some HEIs return ILR forms rather than send returns to HESA. They are permitted to do this as long as they do not do both but there are no checks to ensure duplication does not occur. In 2018 there were approximately 6,000 ILR records from HEIs, of which approximately 50% were academic age 18. Comparing the number of returns for the same institutions in the HESA data, to assess the volume of any potential overlap, we estimate very low volumes at ages 16 and 17. At age 18 it is more difficult to assess the potential overlap as both collections have substantial returns for that age group.</p>
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	<p>Figures on labour market status come from the average of Q4 (October to December) and Q1 (January to March) LFS data for each year. The LFS also supplies the non-HEI based data for Employer Funded Training (EFT) and for Other Education and Training (OET).</p> <p>The LFS is a quarterly survey of approximately 50,000 households in England. If an individual is not available for interview, another member of the household may respond on their behalf. <a href="#">ONS employment and labour market statistics</a></p>
Population estimates	<p>The population estimates for academic year ages in January of each year are derived by DfE from mid-year estimates and projections provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).</p> <p>ONS mid-year estimates are based on the 2011 Census and subsequent assumptions about migration, births and deaths, and are subject to statistical uncertainties arising from sampling error and imputation effects in the 2011 Census, as well as from estimation of the components that age the population forward from the 2011 Census date. <a href="#">ONS population estimates</a></p>

## Reference dates

The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year. The reference dates of the various post-16 sources are taken as close to the end of the calendar year as possible:

<b>Source</b>	<b>Reference date</b>
Population	January
Schools	January
Further Education Institutions (FEI)	November
Work Based Learning (WBL) / Apprenticeships	January
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	December
Labour Force Survey	October to March (average of two quarters)



# Participation methodology

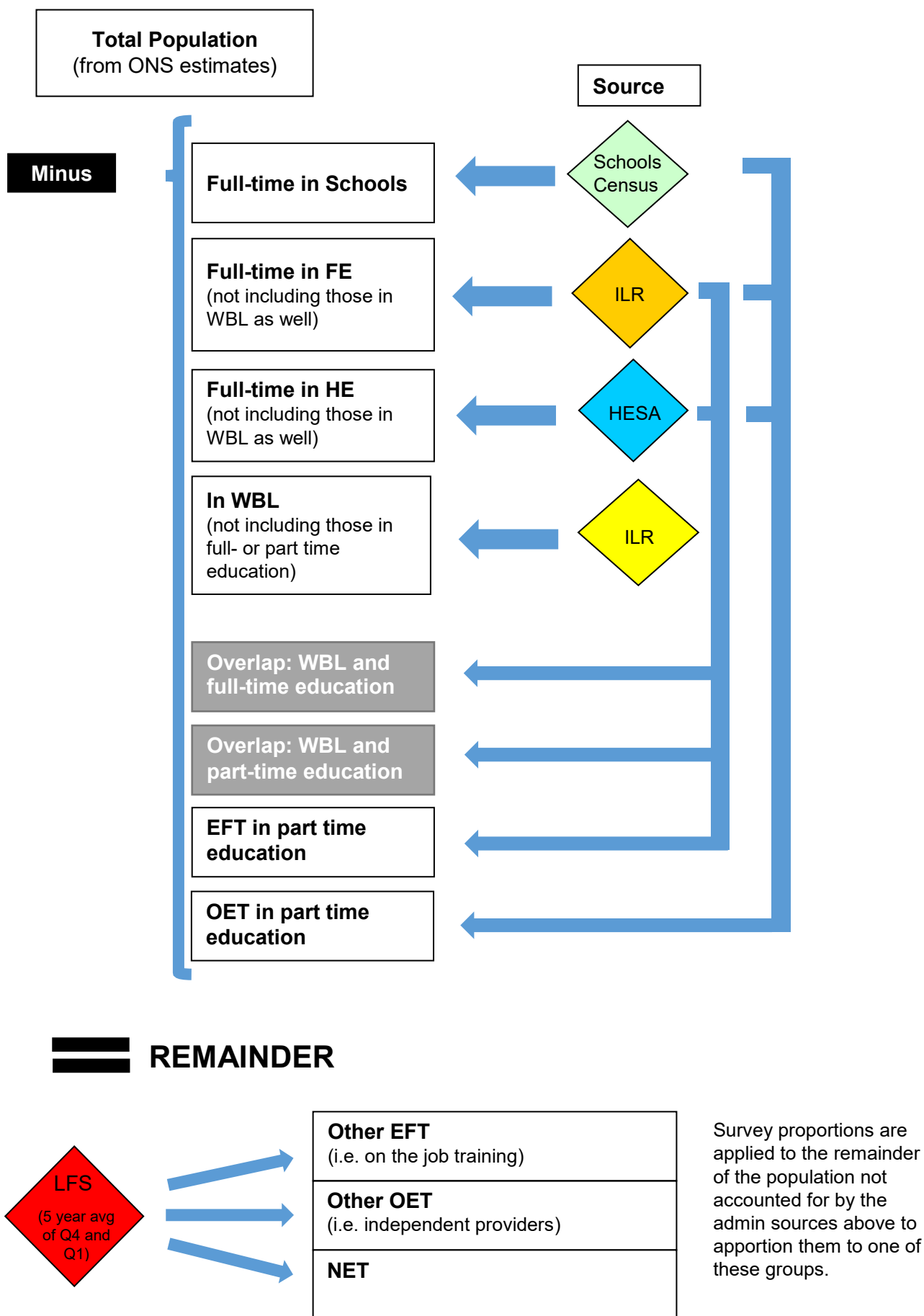
## Explanation of Figure 1.

- The total population of 16-18 year olds in England is taken from ONS estimates and projections.
- From the information provided in the administrative data sources, the total number of students in full- or part-time education and in WBL is then subtracted from the population total.
  - a) Historically there have been very small overlaps of students studying in FE/HE and WBL at the same time. Historic proportions from the ILR and HESA data are used to estimate the size of these overlaps.
  - b) Part time education is split by whether or not it is funded by an employer – this is captured on the ILR and HESA data (it is assumed that the very small number of individuals studying part time in schools are not funded by employers). If it is funded by employers it is 'Employer Funded Training (EFT)', otherwise it is 'Other Education and Training (OET)'.
- The remainder from the calculations above is apportioned between three groups for which there is no administrative data, using a 5 year weighted average of Q4 (Oct-Dec) and Q1 (Jan-Mar) of the LFS proportions.

The three groups are:

- a) non-college based EFT (and not part time education that would be captured by the admin sources) i.e. on the job training ('Other EFT' in figure 1);
  - b) non-college based OET (and not part time education that would be captured by the admin sources) i.e. independent training providers ('Other OET' in figure 1) and;
  - c) Not in Education or Training (NET)
- Overlaps are accounted for:
    - a) Learners studying an FE course as well as participating in WBL (in the same FEI) are included in the full-time figure as well as the WBL figure, but also reported in the overlap group and counted once in the totals.
    - b) Learners participating only in WBL in an FEI are reported as WBL only.
    - c) Learners in Employer Funded training (EFT) as well as publicly funded full-time education are only included in the full-time figure and not the EFT figure.

**Figure 1- Participation methodology**



## Explanation of Figure 2.

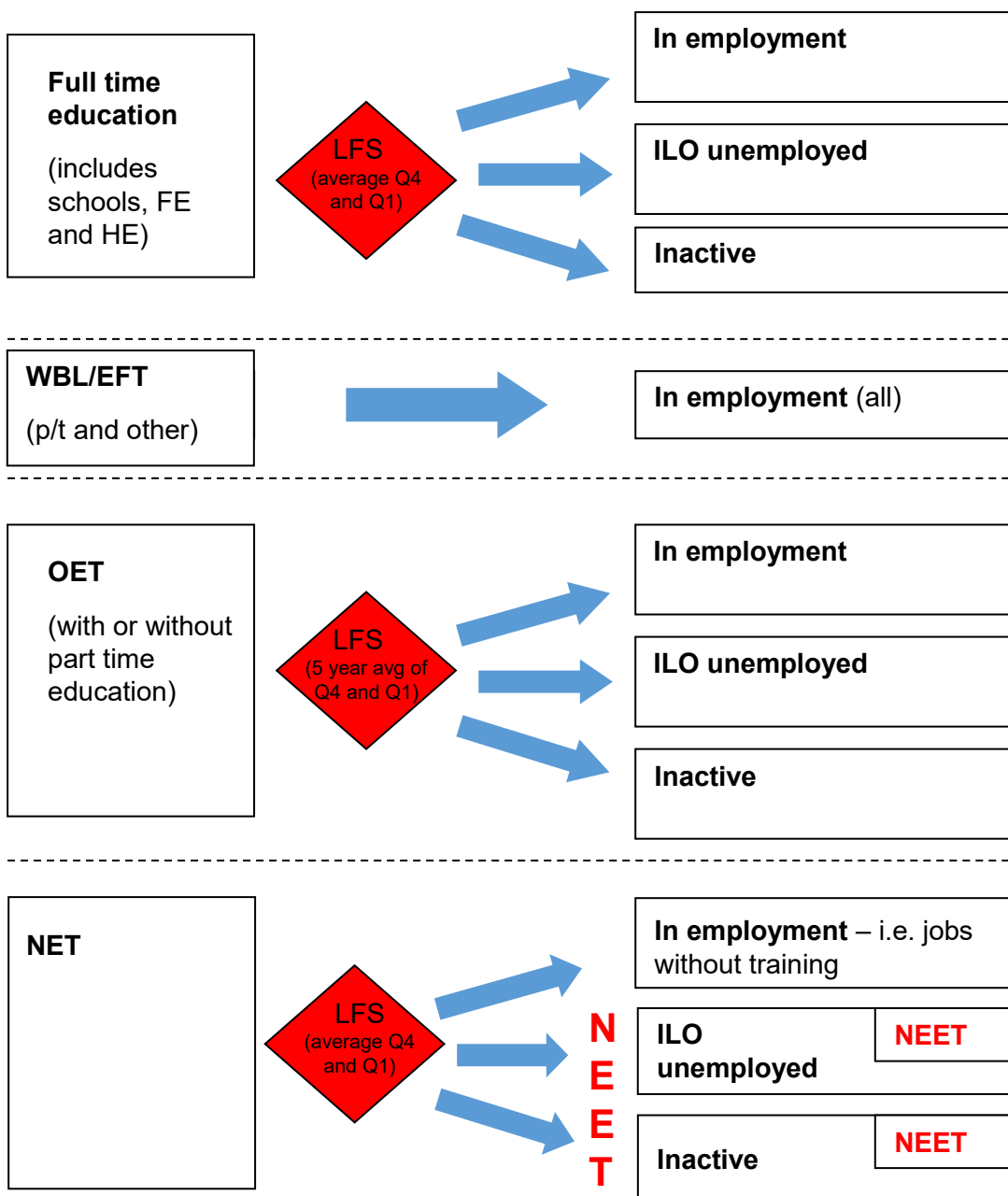
The labour market status is then estimated for each of the major groups identified above (full time education, WBL, EFT, OET, NET):

- Those in full time education are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) ILO unemployed or; (c) inactive, using an average of Q4 (Oct-Dec) and Q1 (Jan-Mar) estimates from the LFS.
- All those in WBL or EFT are assumed to be in employment.
- Those in OET are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) ILO unemployed or; (c) inactive, using a five year weighted average from the LFS, because the LFS sample size for this group is so small.
- Those who are **NET** are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) **ILO unemployed** or; (c) **inactive**, using an average of Q4 and Q1 estimates from the LFS. **Those in (b) and (c) are NEET.**

NB. A person is defined as in employment if they are an employee, self-employed, on a WBL programme or an unpaid family worker. This is the ILO (International Labour Organisation) definition and includes young people in full-time education who also have part-time jobs.

## Figure 2 – Labour market status methodology

(Proportions estimated from the LFS applied to Annex A totals)



## Overseas pupils

This publication excludes learners studying overseas. Overseas students studying in English FE and English HE are included in the national figures. Learners from Wales, Scotland and N Ireland are included in the national figures for schools (maintained & CTCs & Academies) and FE, but not included in HE national figures.

National FEI figures include all 16 to 18 year olds participating in education and training in England, whether resident in England or not.

## Time series compatibility

The data in this publication has a time series going back to 1985. However, due to changes in the source of further and higher education data the consistent time series only goes back to 1994.

## Underlying data provided alongside publications

The June 2019 publication is accompanied with the following underlying data:

File name	Content
Participation 2019_UD_Metadata.docx	Document describing the data included in the 'Participation in education, training and employment' underlying data files and how to use them.
Participation 2019_UD_Headlines_numbers.csv	Numbers participating in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds by age, gender and labour market status (all information from tables A and D in the additional tables (numbers) file).  National data covering end 1994 – prov end 2018.
Participation 2019_UD_Inst&qual_numbers.csv	Numbers participating in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds by age, gender, institution type and highest qualification aim (all information from tables B, C and E in the additional tables (numbers) file).  National data covering end 1994 – prov end 2018.
Participation 2019_UD_Headlines_proportions.csv	Proportion of population participating in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds by age, gender and labour market status (all information from tables A and D in the additional tables (rates) file).  National data covering end 1994 – prov end 2018.
Participation 2019_UD_Inst&qual_proportions.csv	Proportion of population participating in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds by age, gender, institution type and highest qualification aim (all information from tables B, C and E in the additional tables (rates) file).  National data covering end 1994 – prov end 2017.

This data is released under the terms of the [Open Government License](#) and is intended to meet at least three stars for [Open Data](#).

## Uses of data

The main use of these statistics is to provide Ministers, government departments and the wider public with a comprehensive picture of the latest trends in participation and NEET.

## Weaknesses of the data

1. The provisional annual figures are published in June, 6 months after the period to which they relate. There is therefore a lag of up to 18 months between the period to which the data relates and when it is next updated with final figures.
2. The data uses ONS population figures which are subject to error, which can increase as they move further away from the date of the census, particularly when looking at single age groups. The 2011 population estimate was revised using Census 2011 which led to the population estimate of 16 to 18 year olds increasing by 4 percentage points which in turn caused the NEET figure to increase by 1.8 percentage points.
3. Currently this publication has no measure which accurately captures the numbers of young people who comply with the requirements of raising participation age (RPA) although trends can be estimated from the in education and WBL (apprenticeship) figures.

## Scheduled revisions to previously published statistics

### Revisions to population estimates

All numbers published as a proportion of the population cohort will be revised when population estimates are revised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The ONS population statistics are re-based every two years, but revisions can extend further back. Revised estimates were released mid-2017 and were reflected in the June 2018 publication. Actual population figures up to and including end 2016 are given in this release and ONS population forecasts used for end 2017 and end 2018. These forecasts will be revised in the June 2020 publication.

### Revisions to Further Education (FE) and apprenticeships data

Data from the FE sector and data related to apprenticeships (previously WBL) is recorded on the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Individual Learner Record (ILR). For provisional data in this statistics publication we use SN06 and for final data the audited SN14 return.

Therefore, the numbers participating in further education institutions (FE colleges<sup>1</sup> and sixth-form colleges), and apprenticeships/WBL are revised as the source data are finalised. These planned revisions only occur for the latest year for which statistics are published. For example, data described in this publication “as end 2018 (provisional)” will be finalised as “end 2018” in the June 2020 update to this publication. Such changes can affect both the numbers studying and the proportion of the age cohort studying.

The following table shows how data from the ILR has changed between the SN06 and SN14 cuts of the data in 2017 for all 16-18 year olds.

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<sup>1</sup> FE sector includes a small number (approx. 5%) of young people in provision delivered by private, commercial, charitable and local authority providers

- **ILR changes provisional to final data end 2017**

<b>Provider type</b>	<b>end 17 (prov- SN06)</b>	<b>end 17 (final- SN14)</b>	<b>change</b>
WBL (apprenticeships)	119,000	116,400	-2,600
General FE (Full-time)	455,600	457,500	1,900
General FE (part-time)	68,600	63,200	-5,400
Sixth form college (full-time)	125,700	127,400	1,700
Sixth form college (part-time)	2,500	2,700	200

There has been a fall of around 2.1% in apprenticeship numbers between the provisional and final statistics publication estimates for 2017. The change was largely a result of some under-recording of drop-out in the early returns, which was then resolved in the final (audited) return.

Falls were seen in estimates of part-time participation in General FE colleges between provisional and final figures. This was a result of some revisions to guided learning hours as recorded on the ILR and revisions to course end dates.

- **The impact of revisions to numbers participating in apprenticeships**

The changes in apprenticeship numbers from provisional to final by age and in comparison to previous years are shown below.

		<b>Provisional</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>Change (final- provisional)</b>
End 2015	Age 16	24,612	24,229	-383
	Age 17	47,077	45,484	-1,593
	Age 18	61,743	59,406	-2,337
End 2016	Age 16	24,126	23,657	-469
	Age 17	47,475	45,624	-1,851
	Age 18	60,174	57,737	-2,437
End 2017	Age 16	20,894	21,144	250
	Age 17	42,478	41,312	-1,166
	Age 18	55,588	53,954	-1,634

These downward revisions in apprenticeship estimates are largely as a result of end dates being populated in later cuts of the ILR meaning learners were no longer active on the apprenticeship snapshot date (January).

The revisions to the data on further education institutions historically has had an impact on the estimates for full-time education versus part-time education, as the designation of a young person as either full or part-time in colleges could change retrospectively. The table below shows the difference between the provisional and final end 2015, 2016 and 2017 estimates for full-time and part-time education in further education institutions. The table shows a downward revision from the provisional and final estimates of the number of learners in part-time education and an upward revision of those in full-time education at the end of 2017. Downward revisions historically have largely been a result of end dates being populated in later cuts of the ILR meaning learners were no longer active at the snapshot date (November). However in 2017 there has also been a shift from part-time to full-time resulting in part from revisions to the guided learning hours recorded for these learners on the ILR.

		Provisional		Final		Change (final - provisional)	
		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
End 2015	Age 16	279,332	18,956	277,733	19,911	-1,599	955
	Age 17	254,473	23,589	252,801	23,984	-1,672	395
	Age 18	110,038	33,467	109,392	33,016	-646	-451
End 2016	Age 16	272,386	19,094	272,683	18,391	297	-703
	Age 17	248,736	21,894	248,312	21,520	-424	-374
	Age 18	102,877	30,772	102,334	31,060	-543	288
End 2017	Age 16	255,857	19,859	258,047	17,487	2,190	-2,372
	Age 17	230,618	21,716	232,421	19,213	1,803	-2,503
	Age 18	94,813	29,565	94,395	29,207	-418	-358

*Includes General FE, tertiary, specialist and sixth form colleges*

## Revisions to schools data

### Schools data updated for end 2017 following availability of PLAMS 2018

There are no changes to overall school numbers from the school census between provisional and final data. The pupil level annual school census (PLASC) from the spring term is used for overall state-funded school numbers and the school level annual school census (SLASC) for independent schools and general hospital school numbers.

From 2017, largely due to a number of sixth-form colleges converting to academies but continuing to return the ILR as oppose to the school census, schools data from PLASC and SLASC has been appended with data from the ILR. There can be some revisions to the ILR as provisional data uses SN06 and final data SN14 (see 'revisions to Further Education (FE) and apprenticeships data' section for further detail).

Although overall school census numbers remain the same between provisional and final, there are revisions to qualifications by mode of study (full/part-time) and school type as this information for provisional data is taken from the autumn census and for final data from PLAMS (post 16 learning aims data). The PLAMS data is autumn census data matched to attainment data and is therefore a more robust estimate of highest qualification aims in schools.

This PLAMS output is then re-apportioned using the school census population numbers as in provisional estimates so totals will remain unchanged.

The table below shows revisions to the 2017 age 16-18 full-time state-funded school numbers and highest qualification aim as a result of amended learning aims data in schools from the census and revisions to data from schools returning the ILR:

Highest qualification aim		end 2017 (prov)	end 2017 (final)	change
Level 4	HE	87	88	1
Level 3	A/AS levels	375,293	374,814	-478
	<i>of which also applied general</i>	54,196	55,464	1,268
	Tech level	6,261	6,535	274
	Applied general	22,606	23,026	421
Level 2	other level 3	20,832	19,098	-1,734
	GCSE	9,380	9,025	-356
	<i>of which also other Level 2</i>	7,861	7,421	-440
	Tech cert	263	267	4
	Other level 2	1,251	1,175	-76
Level 1 or below	level1/foundation	425	434	9
	other	298	304	6
<b>All</b>		436,695	434,766	-1,929

## Revisions to Higher Education Statistics Agency data

Estimates of the number of young people in higher education are provided by the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA). The HESA data gives a qualification breakdown for students in English HEIs by academic age, gender, full-time/part-time and by whether they are on any employer funded training (EFT).

The official Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) estimates of numbers in higher education institutions are published annually in January. Estimates for the 2017/18 academic year were made available in January 2019 and were used to finalise end 2017 figures in this publication. Provisional data uses the previous year's HESA data and adjusts according to latest year estimates from the Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey (HESES), an annual survey of higher education institutions about students on recognised higher education courses. As HESES data is for all students, not just 16-18, and is for under graduate new entrants, it is not definitive, but does give an indication of the trend in HE numbers.

At ages 16 and 17 there are very small numbers in Higher Education Institutions and so any revisions have very little impact. At age 18 however, where around 30% of the population are in HE institutions, any changes in estimates between provisional and final data can have a large impact on headline proportions participating.

The changes in the Higher Education institution data from provisional to final are shown below.

		Provisional	Final	Change (final - provisional)
All HE (end 2015)	Age 16	728	690	-38
	Age 17	5,754	5,709	-45
	Age 18	186,872	192,731	5,859
All HE (end 2016)	Age 16	693	600	-93
	Age 17	5,772	5,704	-68
	Age 18	195,215	195,103	-112
All HE (end 2017)	Age 16	606	796	190
	Age 17	5,767	6,124	357
	Age 18	197,362	198,490	1,128

Final HESA data for 2017/18 showed that the HESES data had made robust estimates of 2016/17 participation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and as a result there are only minimal revisions to the end 2017 estimates of numbers in HE for end 2017 at all ages.

### Methodology change:

From 2013, the higher education data (HESA) no longer included a part-time classification for FE students within higher education. Historically these FE records were split into full-time and part-time components. To account for the change, the part-time/full-time split for students in HE institutions studying for an FE qualification in the 2013 and 2014 data was apportioned using 2012 data. The impact of this change was minimal; of the 3,500 FE students in the 2014 HESA data, just over 2% of records were reapportioned to be part-time.

This methodology was reviewed in 2016 to identify whether the mode of study collection in the HESA data could be reinstated for FE learners in England or another source identified in order to provide estimates for future years. DfE define a full-time learner as someone enrolled on a programme of learning totalling 540+ planned hours per year, from either qualification guided learning hours (GLH) or employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) planned hours. It was agreed that the hours fields in the HESA collection could be used to determine mode of study (FT/PT) for those doing FE courses in HE institutions. This is consistent with the methodology used in this publication to determine mode of study in the ILR.



## Revisions to Labour Force Survey data

Labour Force Survey (LFS) datasets are routinely reweighted in line with population estimates. ONS announced in March 2017 that the reweighting of the LFS will now take place every year.

The most recent update in Feb 2019 introduced a new weighting variable, PWT18, to LFS datasets revising data from end 2012 onwards. More information as to its impact on the revision on the NEET and NET rates was published as part of <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief-2018>. Trends of the NEET and NET estimates were largely unaffected by the re-weighting hence only LFS data for end 2017 has been reweighted using PWT18 in the 2019 participation release.

Historic reweighting:

The 2017 reweighting project resulted in revisions back to 2012 due to incorporating the latest published mid-2015 population estimates (and updates to MYE's for 2012-14) and 2014 based sub-national population projections. More information about the impact of the revision on the NEET and NET rates was published as part of DfEs [SFR 21/2017 NEET Quarterly Brief – January to March 2017](#). Trends of the NEET and NET estimates are largely unaffected by the reweighting. Due to the minimal impact it was agreed by DfE analysts that the participation back series would not be reweighted prior to end 2015 using this new 2017 weighting.

Data back to 2001 was reweighted in 2014 using PWT14. More information about the impact of this revision on the NEET and NET rates was published as part of [SFR 47/2014 NEET Quarterly Brief – July to September 2014](#). Again trends of the NEET and NET estimates were largely unaffected by the reweighting.

## Related policy

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There are differences between activity that complies with the duty to participate under RPA and what is captured in this publication

Activity that satisfies the duty to participate under RPA legislation is described in detail in the [statutory guidance to Local Authorities](#). In summary, young people in full-time education or apprenticeships automatically meet the duty to participate, but in order to comply with RPA, part-time education for academic age 16 year olds:

- (i) must include planned qualification guided learning hours of a minimum 280 hrs per year;
- (ii) should usually be combined with full-time employment or voluntary work (either 20 hrs per week or 40 hrs over 2 weeks for those with less regular hours).

In this publication, participation that is not full-time is automatically counted as part-time, irrespective of planned hours or whether it is combined with employment. This will mean that RPA-compliance will be significantly lower than the proportion of 16 year olds reported as being in education and work-based learning.

However, this will be partially offset as 16 year olds engaged in LA approved re-engagement activities will satisfy the duty to participate but the activity might not be recorded in this publication.

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16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding

From August 2014 students who have not achieved a good pass in English and/or maths GCSE by age 16 must continue to work towards achieving these qualifications or an approved interim qualification as a 'stepping stone' towards GCSE as a condition of student places being funded. Full time students who started their programme on or after 1 August 2015 who have prior attainment of a grade 3 or grade D in GCSE or equivalent in maths and/or English must study a GCSE to meet the condition of funding. For further information see [16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding](#) on GOV.UK.

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Technical education reform and the post 16 skills plan

Published in July 2016, the post-16 skills plan set out the government's plan to support young people and adults to secure skilled employment and meet the needs of the economy. Based on recommendations by Lord Sainsbury's independent panel, the ambition is that every young person, after an excellent grounding in the core academic subjects and a broad and balanced curriculum to age 16, is presented with two choices:

- the academic or
- the technical option.

The academic option is already well regarded, but the technical option must also be world-class, improving both the quality of education and student choice. A framework of 15 routes across all technical education was introduced, grouping together occupations to reflect where there are shared training requirements. Rather than the previous crowded landscape of overlapping qualifications, only high-quality technical qualifications which match employer-set standards are approved.

From September 2015, each occupation cluster had approved:

- **tech level** qualifications - rigorous advanced (level 3) technical qualification on a par with A levels and recognised by employers.
- **applied general** qualifications - advanced (Level 3) qualifications

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for students that want to continue their education through learning applied to a job area e.g. Agriculture.

- **technical certificates** - rigorous intermediate (Level 2) technical qualifications for students wishing to enter a trade or occupation such as plumbing, hairdressing or care where employers recognise entry at Level 2 or where a Level 2 qualification is required before students can progress to a tech level. They can also enable entry to an apprenticeship or employment.

[Further information can be found on GOV.UK](#)

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## Publication timetable

Published annually in June each year. The next publication will be June 2020.

## Feedback and user engagement

Feedback on methodology and presentation is welcomed and encouraged. If you have any comments on the information collected, the timing or format of our outputs or whether these statistics are meeting your requirements, please email: [post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk](mailto:post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk)



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email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries FE Data and Statistics Unit,  
Data Insight and Statistics Division (DISD), Data Group  
Department for Education, 2 St Paul's Place, Sheffield S1 2FJ  
Tel: 0870 000 2288 Email: [Post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk](mailto:Post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk)

download <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-neet>

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



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