



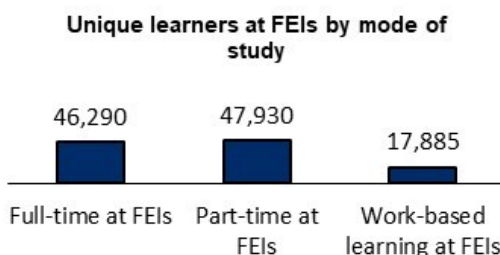
Further Education, Work-based Learning and Adult Learning in Wales, 2019/20

25 Feb 2021
SFR 52/2021

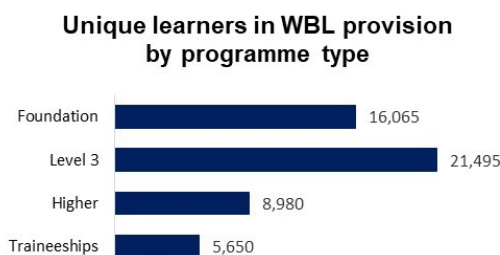
This release covers the academic year from August 2019 to July 2020. From March 2020 onwards, [education provision was significantly disrupted by the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). The figures presented in this release are likely to have been impacted. This should be kept in mind, particularly when comparing with previous years. Provision where learning programme starts are typically more spread throughout the academic year, such as Work-based Learning (WBL) and Adult Learning, are likely to be particularly affected.

148,860 unique learners enrolled on one or more learning activity within FE institutions, adult learning or WBL providers during 2019/20. Over recent years, the number of learners appears to have been fairly stable, however there was a fall of 12 per cent in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19. [Changes in data coverage in 2017/18](#) make comparisons with data prior to this point difficult.

There were 112,105 unique learners at Further Education (FE) institutions, a decrease of around 8 per cent on the previous year. This decrease was largely driven by part-time learners at FEIs and, to a lesser extent, learners undertaking WBL at FEIs. The number of full-time learners at FEIs increased by 1 per cent on 2018/19.



There were 52,190 unique learners in work-based Learning (WBL) provision compared with 61,290 in 2018/19. 41 per cent were undertaking level 3 apprenticeships and 31 per cent were undertaking foundation apprenticeships.



There were around 14 per cent fewer apprenticeship learning programmes started within 2019/20 compared with the previous year.

There were 8,200 unique learners in adult learning.

There are overlaps between the different areas of learning – for example, work-based learning at FEIs and adult learning at FEIs.

About this release

This statistical first release for 2019/20 summarises information on post-16 learning collected through the Welsh Government's Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). The data coverage includes provision at Further Education (FE) institutions, Work-based Learning (WBL) providers and Adult Learning providers, but excludes enrolments at Higher Education institutions and at school sixth forms. Additional detail is available on the Welsh Government's interactive data dissemination service [StatsWales](#).

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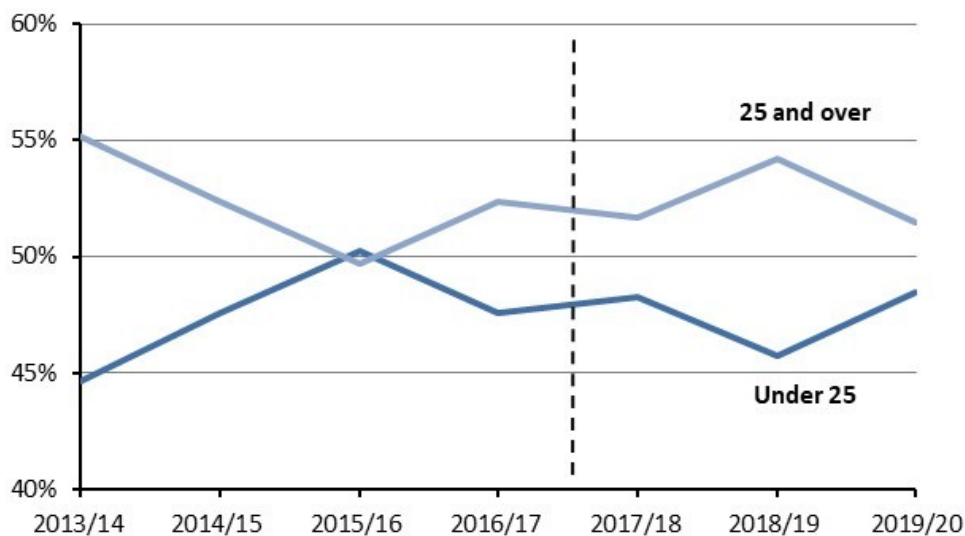
Unique learners enrolled

A unique learner is defined by the learner's unique learner identifier supplied by the Welsh Government. Figures are adjusted for any multiple counting of learners within different institutions or provision types.

Under 25s make up fewer than half of all learners

In 2019/20, 48 per cent of learners were under 25. The proportion of learners aged 25 and over has varied over the years but has generally remained at more than half of learners.

Chart 1a: Percentage of learners at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers by age, 2013/14 to 2019/20 (a) (b)



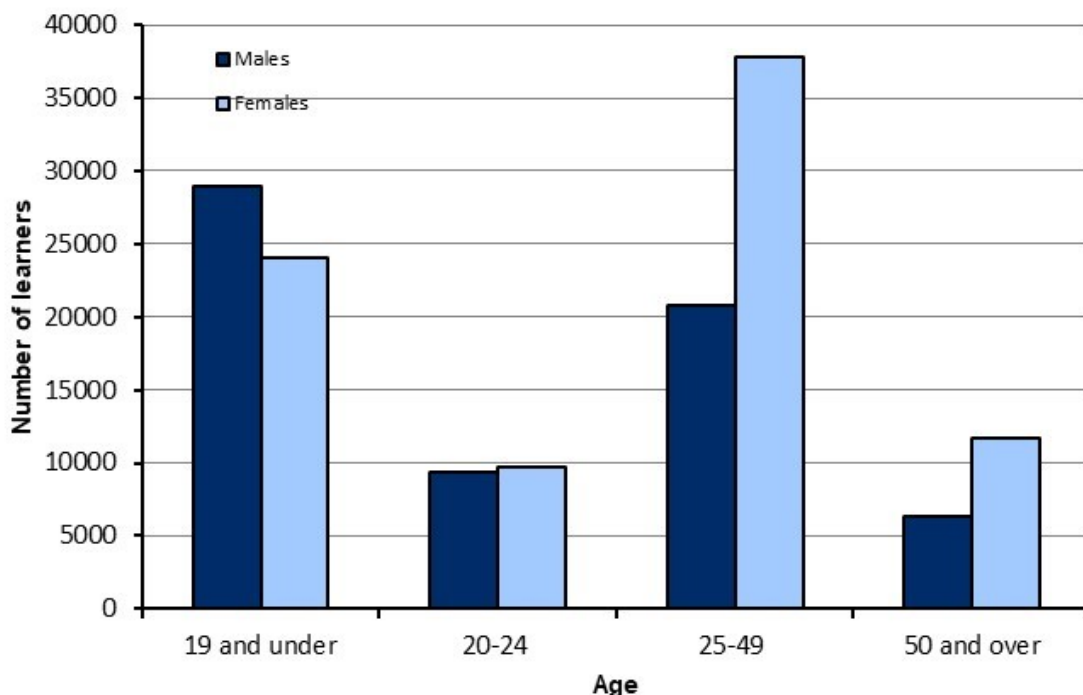
(a) Age as at 31 August 2019.

(b) The dashed line indicates where data for 2017/18 onwards is not directly comparable with the previous year due to changes in the underlying data collection.

Females outnumbered males aged 25 and above

76,645 learners were aged 25 and over, of which 65 per cent were female and 35 per cent were male. This gender profile is mainly driven through part-time programmes, including adult learning and work-based learning (WBL) programmes [[Chart 3a](#)]. 72,175 learners were aged less than 25, of which 47 per cent were female and 53 per cent were male.

Chart 1b: Unique learners at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers by age and gender, 2019/20 (a)

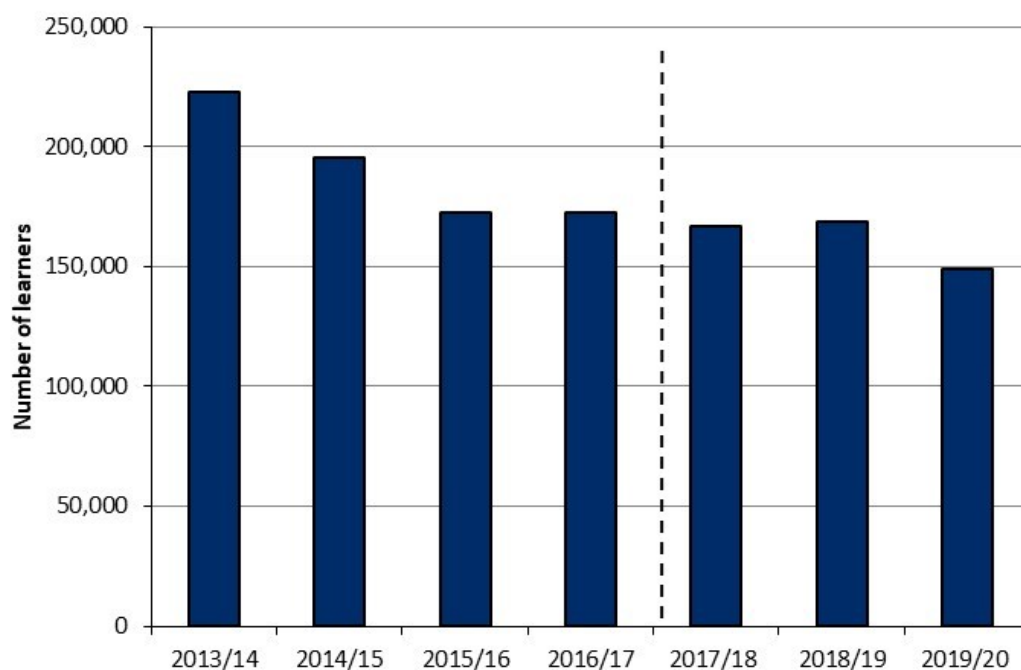


(a) Age as at 31 August 2019

Learner numbers fell in 2019/20 after being stable for the previous four years.

Chart 2a illustrates the overall trend in learner numbers within FE institutions, total WBL provision and adult learning. Further detail is given in [Chart 2b](#), [Chart 2c](#) and [Chart 2d](#). Note that there are overlaps between the different areas of learning – i.e. work-based learning at FEIs and adult learning at FEIs.

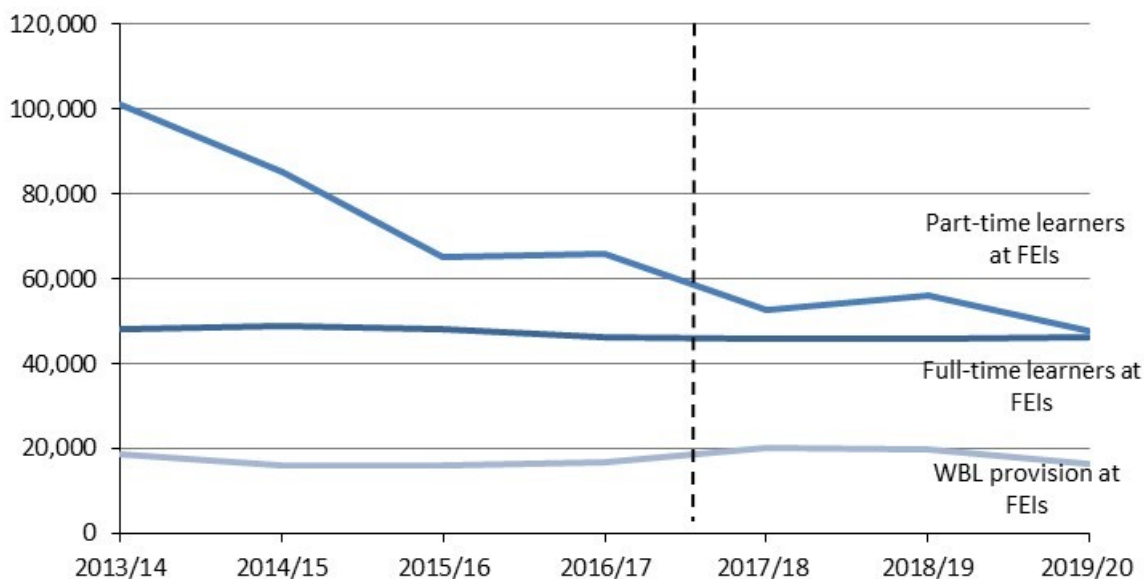
Chart 2a: Learner numbers at further education institutions, adult learning and work-based learning providers, 2013/14 to 2019/20



The number of part-time learners at FEIs has been falling and is now only slightly higher than full-time learners

The number of part-time learners at FEIs fell by 15 per cent between 2018/19 and 2019/20, whilst the number of work-based learners at FEIs fell by 10 per cent. The number of full-time learners at FEIs remained stable, increasing by 1 per cent.

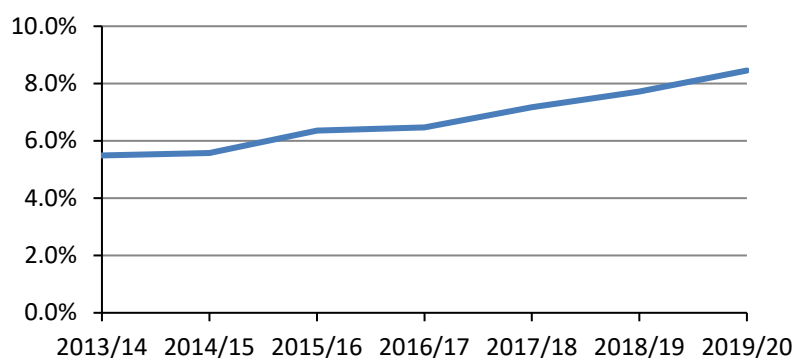
Chart 2b: Learners at further education institutions, 2013/14 to 2019/20



There were increases in the proportion of learners that have a disability and/or learning difficulty and the proportion that come from ethnic minority communities since 2013/14, although there was a slight decrease for those with a disability and/or learning difficulty in 2019/20.

Ethnicity

Chart 2c: Proportion of learners at further education institutions self-identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, 2013/14 to 2019/20



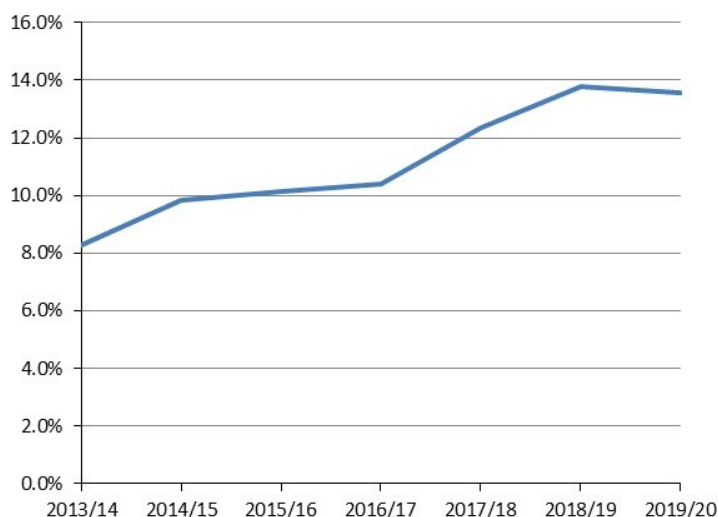
The latest data for 2019/20 shows that 8.5 per cent of learners at further education institutions self-identified as being from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. This proportion has been steadily increasing since 2013/14.

Disability

The Welsh Government accepts the social definition of disability, in which it is recognised that barriers in society act to disable people who have impairments or health conditions or who use British Sign Language.

The Lifelong Learning Wales Record, which is the source of data for this release, captures data using the medical definition of disability (“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term impact on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”). In the LLWR, learners are asked if they have a “disability and/or learning difficulty” – this data is used here.

Chart 2d: Proportion of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a disability and/or learning difficulty, 2013/14 to 2019/20



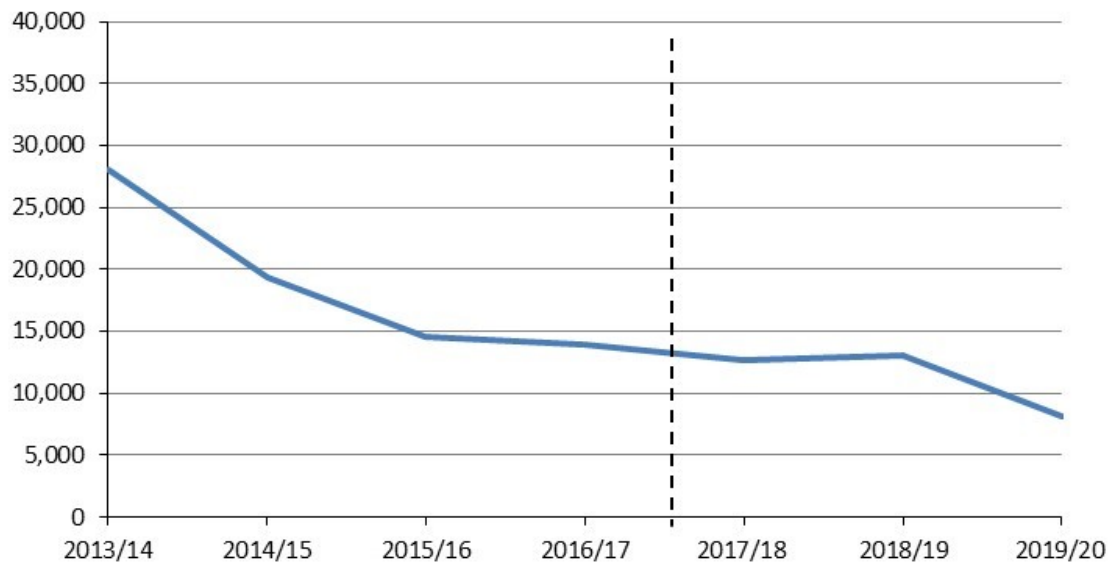
The latest data for 2019/20 shows that 13.6 per cent of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having a “disability and/or learning difficulty”. This is a slight decrease on 2018/19. This proportion increased steadily between 2013/14 and 2018/19.

A wider range of data by protected characteristics can be found in our reports on StatsWales.

Unique learners in adult learning in 2019/20 fell by 37 per cent to 8,200

The overall number of adult learning learners decreased by 37 per cent compared with the previous year [[Table 2](#), [Chart 2c](#)]. The large fall in 2019/20 is likely to be at least partly due to the disruption to education caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The longer term decreasing trend in previous years in adult learning was likely to be due to a number of different issues. These include reductions in public funding, with providers now encouraged to target their provision at developing the basic skills of adults and instead deliver leisure and recreational activity on a full cost recovery basis.

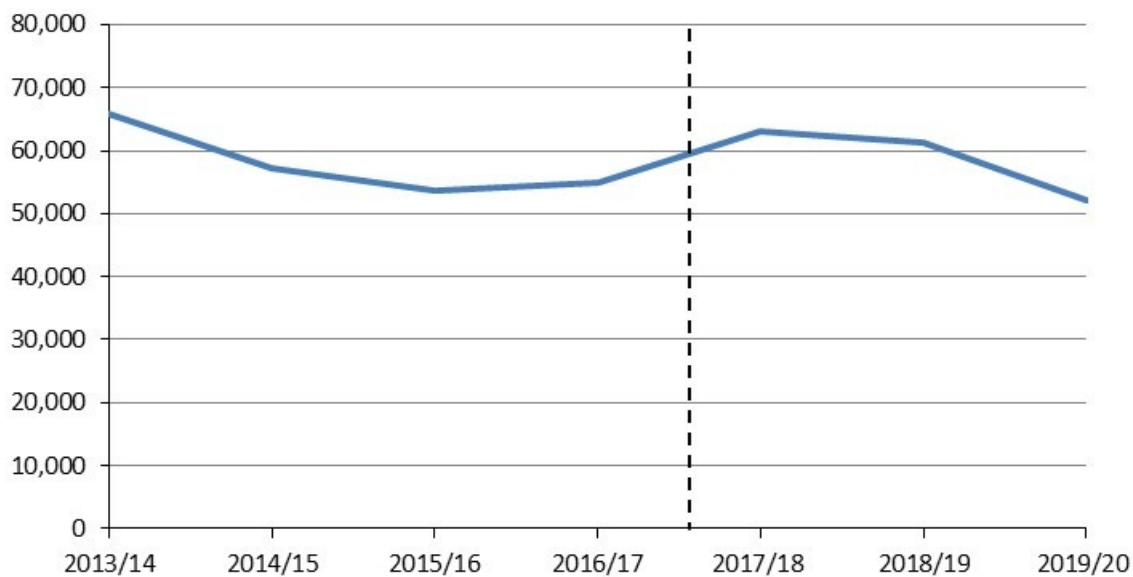
Chart 2e: Learners in adult learning, 2013/14 to 2019/20



The number of learners in work-based learning has seen a large decrease

The overall number of apprenticeship and traineeship learners within work-based learning provision has seen a decrease of 15 per cent compared with the previous year [\[Table 2, Chart 2d\]](#).

Chart 2f: Learners within work-based learning provision, 2013/14 to 2019/20



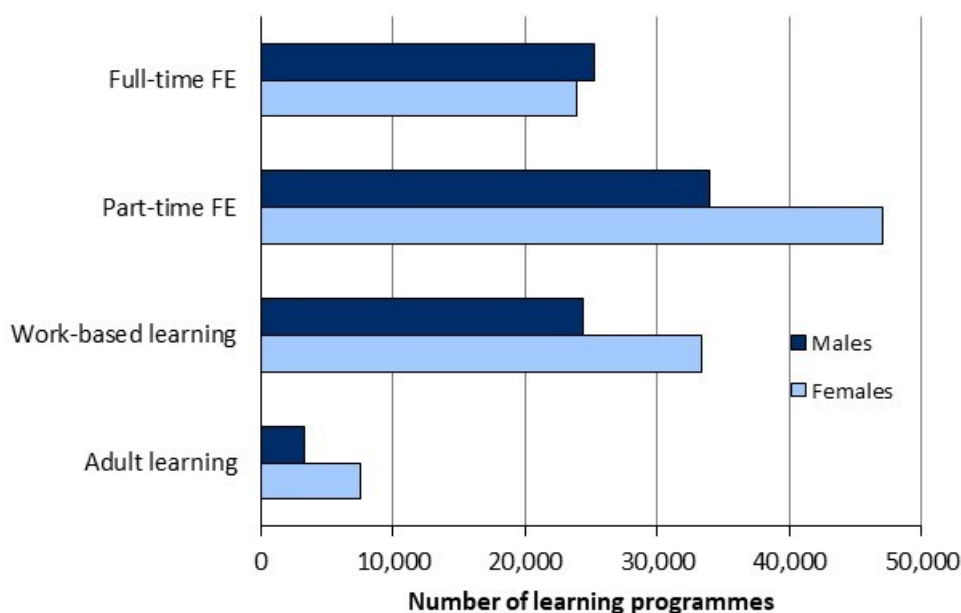
Learning programmes

A **learning programme** is a defined period of learning undertaken by the learner. A learner can be recorded on multiple learning programmes in a single academic year and therefore learning programme counts can be larger than learner counts, which do not include this element of multiple counting. Further details can be found in the notes at the end of this release.

There were more learning programmes being undertaken by females than males

Over the academic year 2019/20 there were 198,755 active learning programmes in total. This includes new enrolments in the 2019/20 academic year and any learning programmes continuing from previous academic years. Of these, 46 per cent were part-time, 25 per cent were full-time and 29 per cent were in WBL [Chart 3a, [Table 3](#)]. 56 per cent of all learning programmes were undertaken by female learners. Learners aged 25-39 have been the main contribution towards this proportion.

Chart 3a: Learning programmes at further education institutions, adult learning or work-based learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2019/20



FE Provision (excluding adult learning)

During the 2019/20 academic year, 130,220 further education learning programmes were recorded. Around 38 per cent of these were full-time.

Adult Learning Provision

10,800 learning programmes were recorded in 2019/20. The number of distinct learners enrolled on adult learning activities was 8,200 (see Table 2).

Work-based Learning Programmes

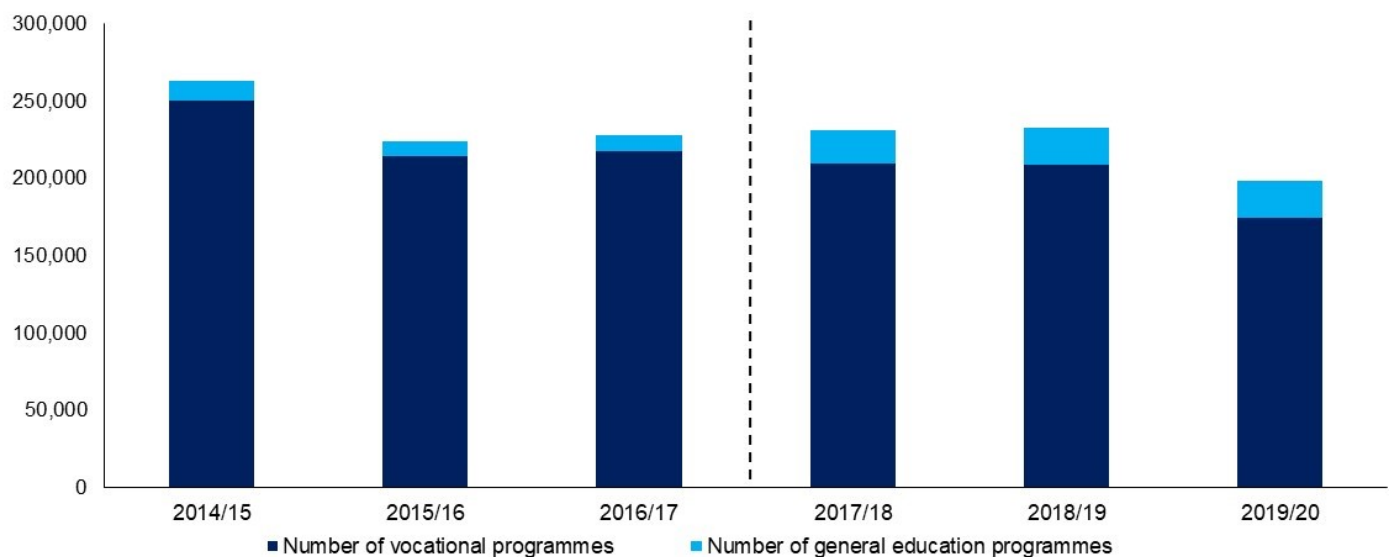
57,725 learning programmes were recorded in 2019/20 within work-based provision, of which 18,475 were provided by FE institutions (including those participating as members of consortia) and 39,250 by other training providers. [Table 4](#) provides a breakdown by programme type.

The proportion of vocational programmes has remained constant

For the purposes of this analysis, **vocational** learning programmes are defined as all WBL programmes and any programme in FE or adult learning not identified as a GCSE, AS level, A level or International Baccalaureate learning programme.

Over the academic year 2019/20 there were 174,755 vocational programmes - 88 per cent of all programmes, although this proportion has fallen slightly over the last few years.

Chart 3b: Vocational learning programmes at further education institutions, adult learning or work-based learning providers, 2013/14 to 2019/20



The number of apprenticeship learning programmes started has decreased



The overall number of new apprenticeship learning programmes started for all foundation, level 3 and higher apprenticeship programmes was 22,335 during 2019/20 - this is 14 per cent lower than in 2018/19. The number of new apprenticeship programmes started peaked at 31,360 in 2017/18.

Apprenticeship programmes can start at any point during the academic year, unlike programmes undertaken in further education, which tend to start at the beginning of the academic year. Learners often continue working towards their apprenticeship into the following academic year. The reduction in starts in 2019/20 is likely to be at least partly due to the disruption caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. [\[Table 4, chart 4a\]](#). Apprentices may also have been furloughed or made redundant during the Coronavirus pandemic. We are continuing to publish [monthly management information](#) on this for the duration of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

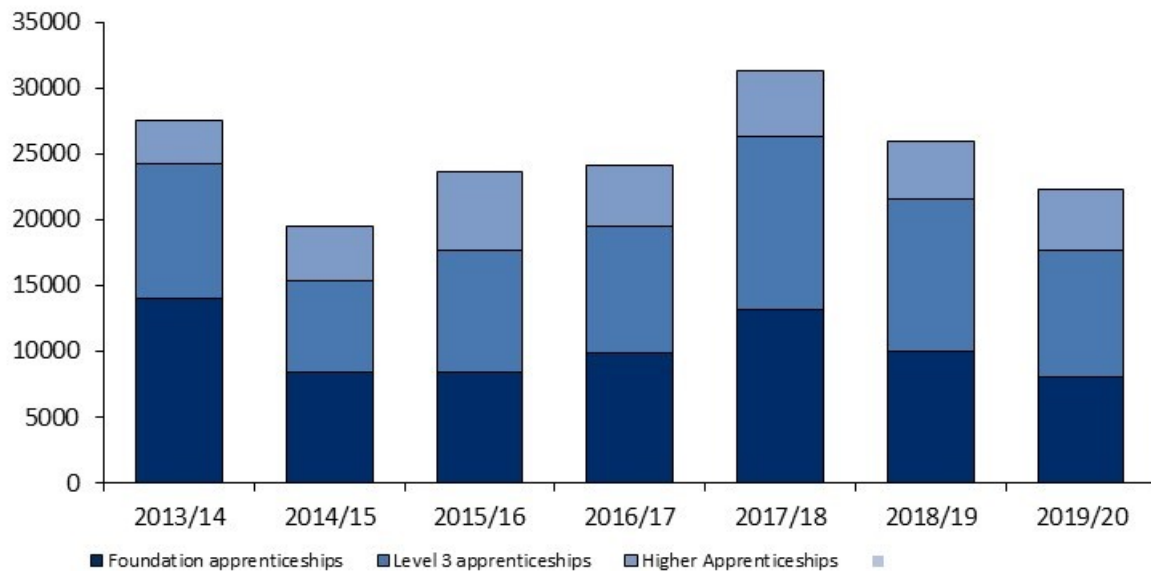
The number of apprenticeship starts in 2019/20 is inflated by the transfer of learners from consortium members that were previously part of the Vocational Skills Partnership to new lead providers. For a fuller explanation see page 14.

The Welsh Government has set a target to introduce 100,000 all-age apprenticeships within the term of the current programme for government. A more rigorous measure in relation to the target, which takes account of early drop outs (within first 8 weeks) and transfers between apprenticeships, records **18,680 learning programmes started in 2019/20** - this is 19 per cent lower than in 2018/19. By the end of 2019/20, **98,275 apprenticeship learning programmes have started since the target was introduced** [\[Table 4\]](#).

Management information derived from the LLWR indicates that, as of 22 October 2020, there has been in excess of 100,000 apprenticeship learning programmes started according to the target measure. It should be noted that this management information has not undergone validation or further data quality checks, which are undertaken for the official statistics published in this release.

Quarterly statistics on [apprenticeship learning programmes started](#) will continue to be updated to reflect progress towards the target according to the pre-announced timetable. It is expected that the 2020/21 quarter 1 release will reflect the target being reached. This is provisionally scheduled for publication in May 2021.

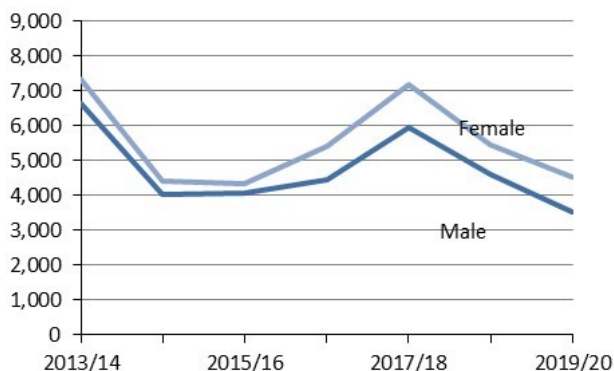
Chart 4a: Apprenticeship learning programmes started, 2013/14 to 2019/20



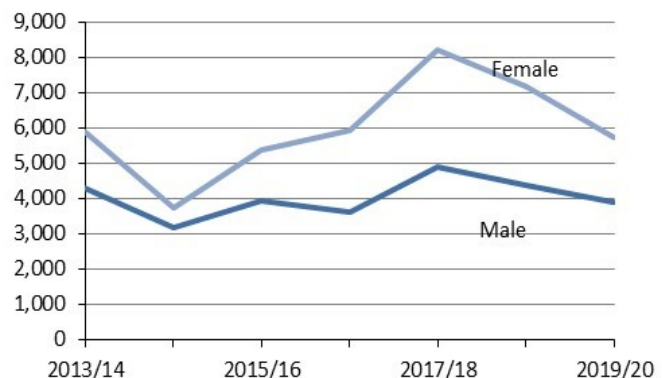
Females continue to contribute to more apprenticeship programmes started

Chart 4b: Trends in apprenticeship learning programmes started by gender, 2013/14 to 2019/20

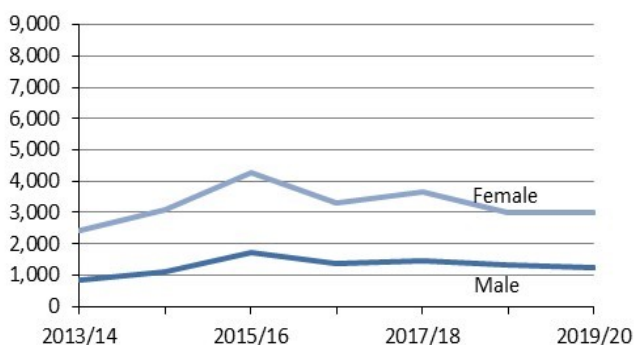
Foundation apprenticeships:



Level 3 apprenticeships:



Higher apprenticeships:



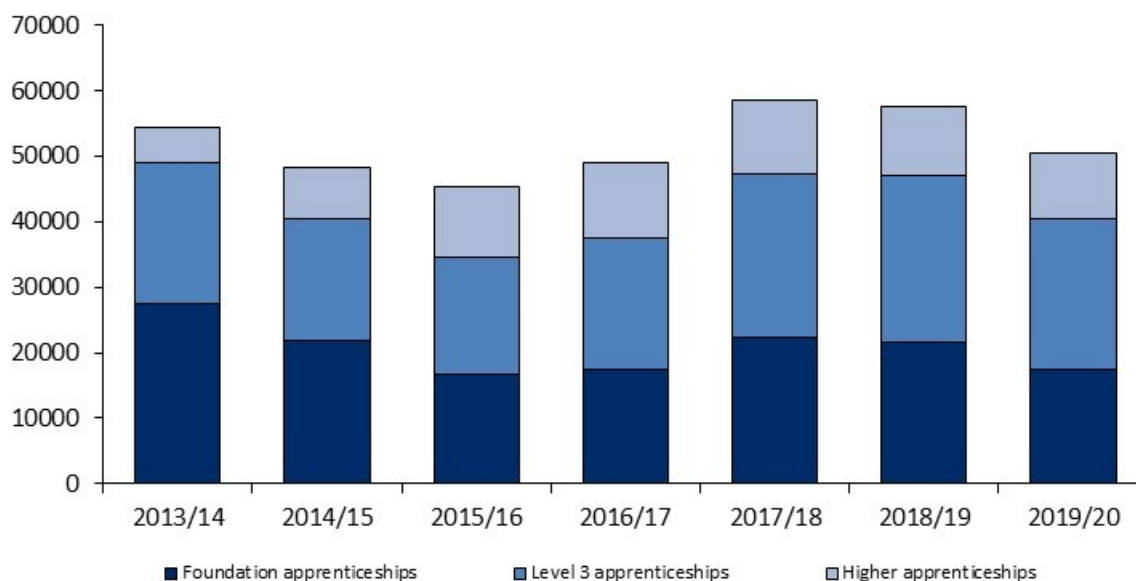
61 per cent of all apprenticeship learner programmes were started by females. A similar proportion was seen last year. Apprenticeship programmes started by females decreased by 13 per cent on the previous year.

More detailed information on apprenticeship learning programmes started, including sector breakdowns, can be found within our [interactive dashboard](#).

Numbers of apprenticeship learning programmes in progress has decreased slightly

The number of apprenticeship programmes in progress (This includes those programmes started in the academic year and continuing programmes from previous years) for foundation, level 3 and higher apprenticeship programmes was 50,610 during 2019/20 – this is 12 per cent lower than in 2018/19.

Chart 4c: Apprenticeship learning programmes in progress, 2013/14 to 2019/20



The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is likely to have had an impact on the number of new learning programme enrolments from March 2020 onwards

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak began in China in December 2019 and spread to the UK in January 2020. During spring 2020, the UK and Welsh Governments gradually increased social distancing measures designed to slow the spread of Coronavirus. Welsh schools, colleges, universities and training providers closed for face-to-face learning on Friday 20 March (apart from core provision in schools for vulnerable children and the children of key workers).

In the post-16 sector, providers shifted to remote learning delivery as far as possible, primarily through digital methods; in practice, the arrangements varied, given the wide range of learner circumstances, access to devices and connectivity, and course types. The Welsh Government published its [COVID-19 Resilience Plan for the Post-16 Sector](#) in May 2020. This contains more information on the groups of learners likely to be particularly affected by the pandemic and set out how the sector and Welsh Government will respond to these circumstances.

[Chart 5a](#), [Chart 5b](#), [Chart 5c](#) and [Chart 5d](#) show the number of new learning programmes started by month and provision type. Figures are also provided for the previous academic year, unaffected by the Coronavirus pandemic, as a comparator. From March 2020 onwards, the number of part-time FE [\[Chart 5b\]](#) and adult learning [\[Chart 5d\]](#) programmes started were much lower when compared with the same month in the previous year. This is likely to be, at least partly, due to the disruption to learning caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The number of full-time FE [\[Chart 5a\]](#) learning programmes started was relatively unaffected as nearly all of them start in September, prior to the pandemic. This impact on the number of new learning programmes will also affect other figures presented in this release, such as the number of unique learners and the number of learning activities undertaken.

The effect on work-based learning [\[Chart 5c\]](#) programmes started is less clear, partly because numbers for April and June 2020 are inflated by the transfer of learners from consortium members that were previously part of the Vocational Skills Partnership to new lead providers. Around 865 new starts were recorded in April and 795 were recorded in June as a result of these transfers. The number of new starts in May and July, during the period of the Coronavirus pandemic, are well below the previous year.

Chart 5a: Full-time Further Education Learning programmes started by month.

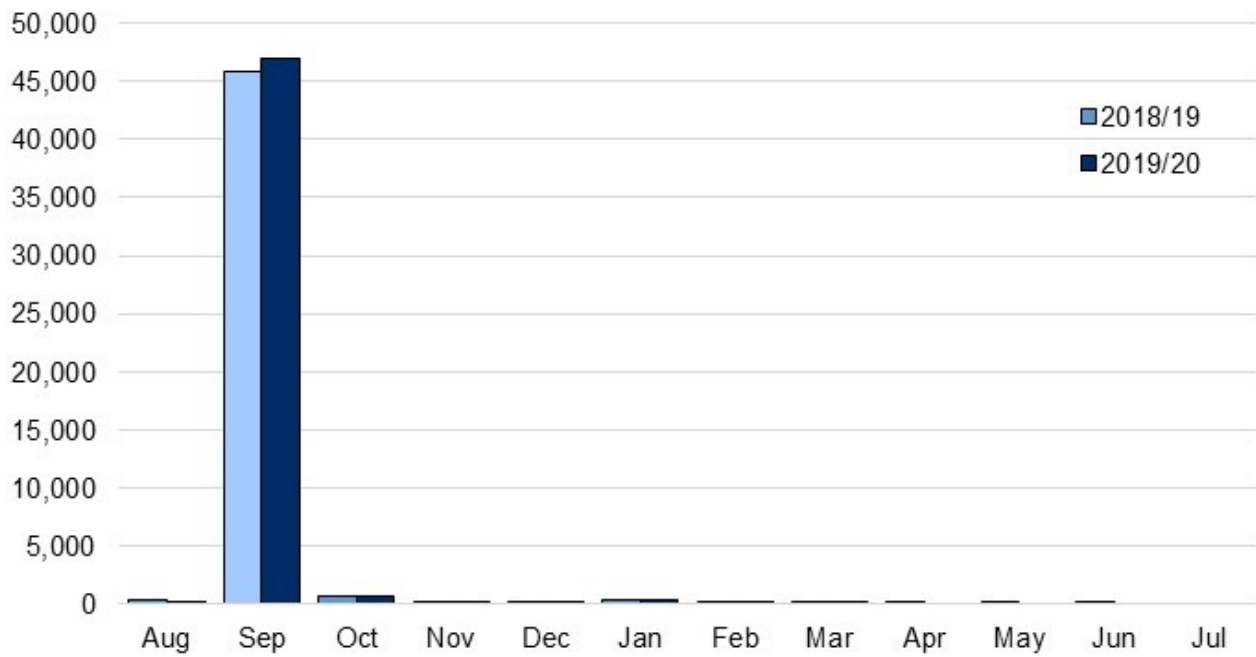


Chart 5b: Part-time Further Education learning programmes started by month.

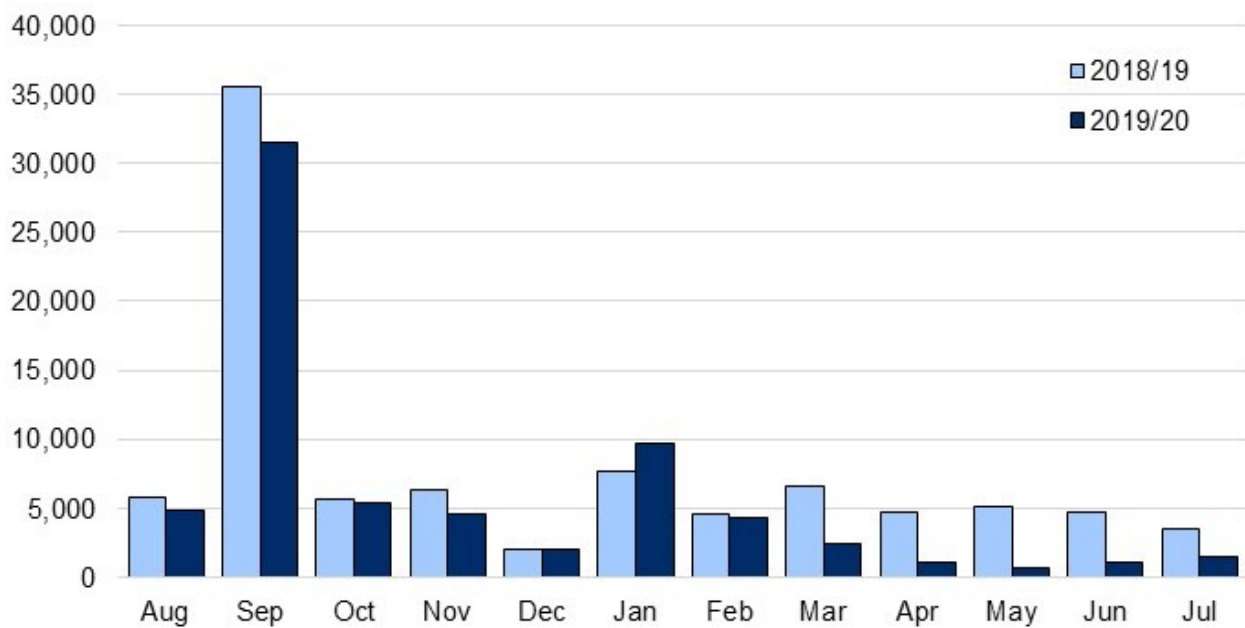


Chart 5c: Work-based Learning programmes started by month.

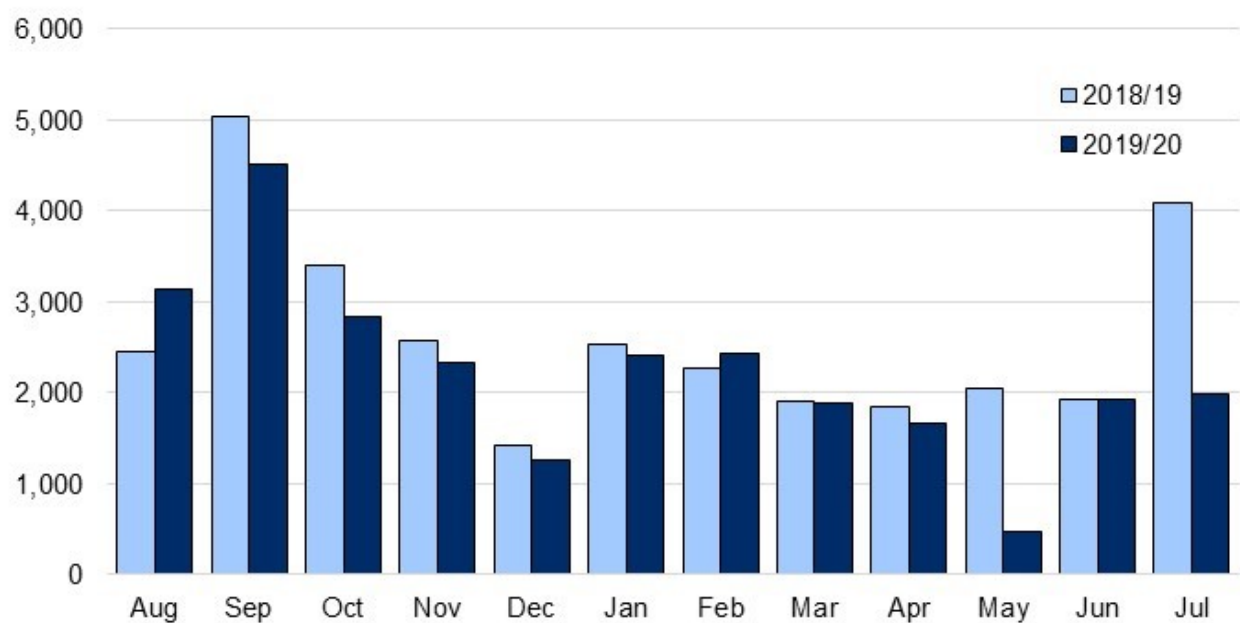
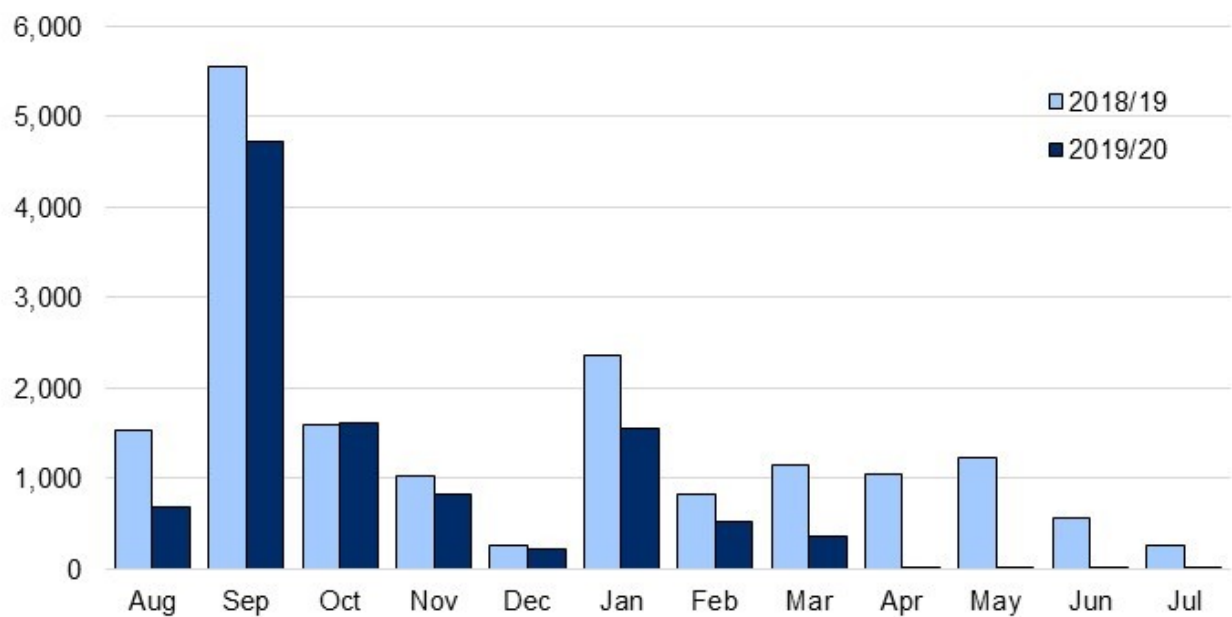


Chart 5d: Adult Learning programmes started by month.



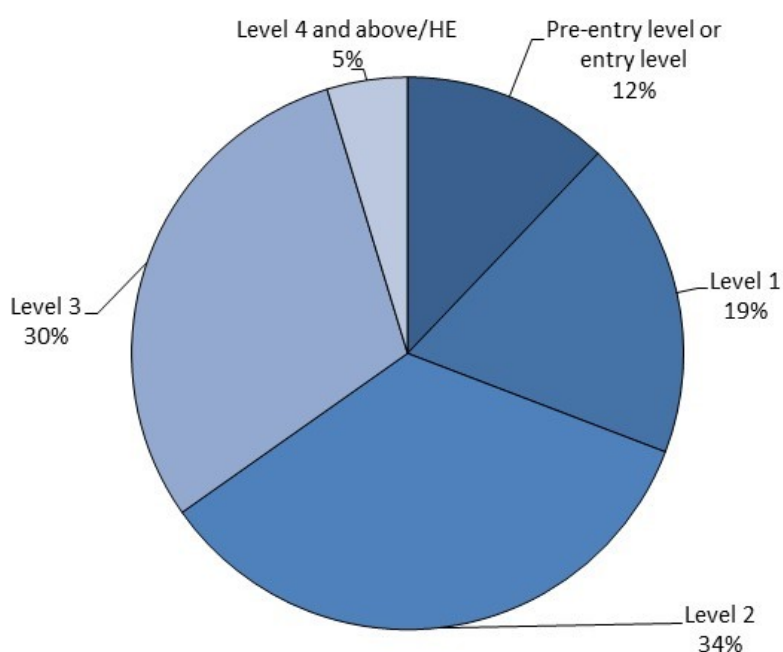
Learning activities and qualifications

A **learning activity**, typically, is a specific qualification or course pursued by a learner. A learning programme consists of a group of related learning activities.

Level 2 qualifications accounted for the largest proportion of activities

In 2019/20, there were 417,965 active learning activities. This includes new enrolments in the 2019/20 academic year and any learning activities continuing from previous academic years. This is a decrease of 16 percent on the previous year. Of the learning activities for which the [qualification level](#) was known, 19 per cent were at level 1, 34 per cent were at level 2 and 30 per cent were at level 3 [[Table 5](#), Chart 6]. ^(a)

Chart 6: Learning activities by qualification level, 2019/20



(a) 13 per cent of qualification levels were unknown or not applicable. For further education and work-based learning provision the figure was 12 per cent but for adult learning provision 43 per cent of qualification levels were unknown or undefined, as is the case for some leisure-related learning activities.

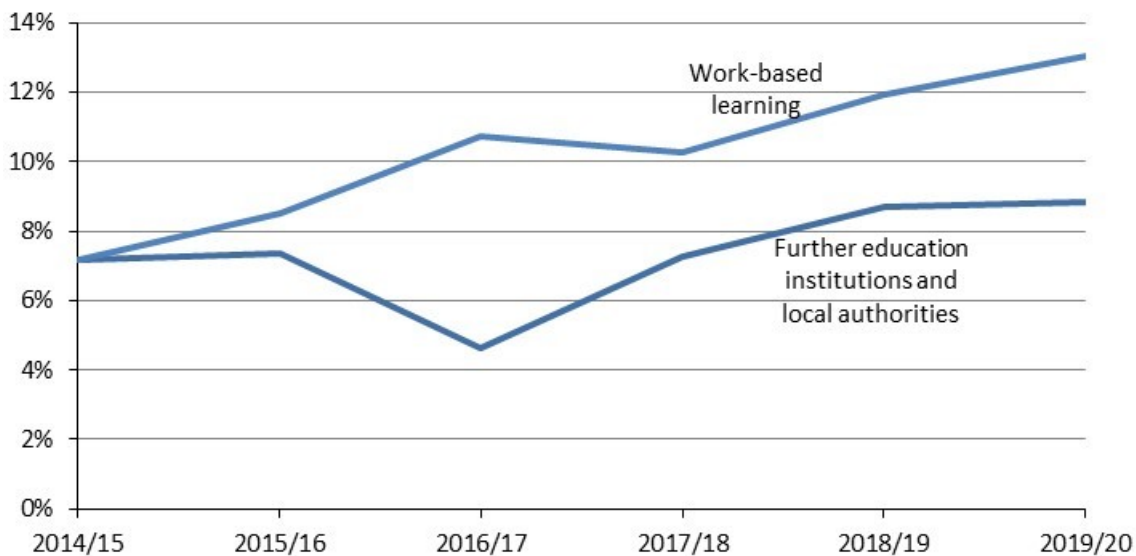
Welsh medium learning activities

A learning activity can be delivered through the medium of Welsh, English or bilingually. The learning activity is recorded according to the medium of learning and the language of assessment of individuals.

The proportion of learning activities delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements has seen an upward trend

There were 293,940 learning activities in further education and adult learning in 2019/20 – 9 per cent were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements. 124,025 learning activities were taken in work-based learning – 13 per cent were delivered through the medium of Welsh and/or with bilingual elements.

Chart 7: Proportion of learning activities conducted in Welsh or bilingually according to the type of provider



Further breakdowns can be found on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

Tables

Table 1: Numbers of learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by age and gender, 2019/20

Table 2: Trends in learner numbers at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers, 2013/14 to 2019/20

Table 3: Learning programmes at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2019/20

Table 4: Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in progress and numbers of learners starting and in progress by programme type, 2019/20

Table 5: Learning activities at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2019/20

Table 1: Numbers of learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers by age and gender, 2019/20 (a)

Age	Males		Females		Persons (b)	
	1 st December (c)	All Year (d)	1 st December (c)	All Year (d)	1 st December (c)	All Year (d)
Under 16	30	370	30	465	60	835
16	8,760	9,720	7,750	8,565	16,550	18,330
17	8,240	9,120	6,950	7,775	15,210	16,920
18	5,070	5,955	3,760	4,610	8,850	10,585
19	3,100	3,795	1,965	2,680	5,070	6,485
20-24	6,780	9,320	6,385	9,675	13,175	19,020
25-49	12,805	20,780	24,310	37,785	37,130	58,595
50-64	2,730	5,115	5,725	9,680	8,455	14,800
65+	755	1,190	1,315	2,060	2,070	3,250
Not Specified	5	15	15	25	25	40
Total	48,280	65,385	58,210	83,325	106,605	148,860

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

(a) Age at 31 August 2019. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

(b) The all persons total includes a small number of learners not recorded as male or female.

(c) Snapshot of learners enrolled during the week of December 1st.

(d) Count of learners throughout the academic year.

Reports on [StatsWales](#) contain the information provided in table 1 with a breakdown by ethnicity.

Table 2: Trends in learner numbers at Further Education institutions, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning providers, 2015/16 to 2019/20 (a)(b)(g)

	2015/16	2016/17		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Further Education Institutions (c)			Data submission changes			
Full-time learners at FEIs	48,270	46,120		45,850	45,875	46,290
Part-time learners at FEIs	65,345	65,875		52,660	56,290	47,930
WBL provision at FEIs	15,935	16,695		20,075	19,880	17,885
Total at FEIs	129,550	128,690		118,590	122,040	112,105
Work-based learning provision (d)						
All WBL provision	53,735	54,840		63,120	61,290	52,190
Learners pursuing WBL programmes	53,735	54,840		63,120	61,290	52,190
Adult Learning (e)	14,510	13,910		12,680	13,050	8,200
Total learners at FE Institutions, Local Authority Community Learning and Work-based Learning providers (f)	172,460	172,470		166,640	168,810	148,860

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

- (a) Counts are of unique learners, so removing, from each individual row, multiple counting of learners present at more than one learning provider and/or provision type. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
- (b) In calculating each in-learning count, the population is largely determined by the actual start and end dates of learning programmes and activities. However an additional constraint is applied to each year in that learning activities with an expected end date more than two years before the start of the given academic year are excluded.
- (c) Learner numbers at FE institutions (FEIs) include learners pursuing work-based learning programmes at FEIs and franchised adult learners, enrolled at FEIs, whose teaching is contracted out to local authorities.
- (d) Work-based learning (WBL) provision includes learners pursuing WBL programmes at FEIs and provision at other training providers.
- (e) Includes both those learners enrolled at local authorities directly and learners who are enrolled at FEIs but whose teaching is contracted out to local authorities.
- (f) The use of unique learner counts and definitional overlaps mean, for any given year, that the total for FE/WBL/adult learners is lower than the sum of the figures in the preceding rows.
- (g) As from 2017/18 learning activities (and hence learners) not funded by the Welsh Government are no longer collected through the LLWR. Additionally Welsh for Adults provision is no longer part of the collection. Therefore 2017/18 data is not directly comparable with earlier years.

Table 3: Learning programmes at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by provision type, mode of study and gender, 2019/20 (a)

	Males		Females		Persons (d)	
	1 st Dec (e)	All Year (f)	1 st Dec (e)	All Year (f)	1 st Dec (e)	All Year (f)
Further Education excluding Adult Learning at FEIs						
Full-time	21,445	25,210	20,525	23,870	42,055	49,180
Part-time	18,040	33,940	24,350	47,020	42,430	81,045
Total	39,485	59,150	44,875	70,890	84,480	130,220
Work-based Learning Provision						
WBL programmes at FEIs	7,865	10,700	4,915	7,765	12,785	18,475
Programmes at other training providers	7,780	13,680	13,775	25,560	21,565	39,250
Total	15,645	24,380	18,690	33,325	34,350	57,725
Adult Learning (b)						
Full-time: enrolled at FEIs	*	*	10	10	15	15
Part-time: enrolled at FEIs	860	1,240	1,525	2,475	2,385	3,720
Full-time: enrolled at local authorities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time: enrolled at local authorities	985	2,030	2,440	5,030	3,430	7,065
Total	1,850	3,275	3,975	7,515	5,825	10,800
All Levels of Study (c)						
Full-time	21,450	25,215	20,535	23,880	42,070	49,190
Part-time	19,880	37,210	28,320	54,525	48,250	91,835
Work-based Learning	15,645	24,380	18,690	33,325	34,350	57,725
Total	56,980	86,805	67,545	111,730	124,670	198,755

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

(a) Numbers greater than 0 and less than 5 have been replaced by *. Other figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Also see notes for definitions of level and mode.

(b) Excludes 'assisted' Community Learning provision and direct FE community learning not involving local authorities (see notes).

(c) Total includes 10 cases which are still classed as Higher Education, although these are no longer recorded on LLWR.

(d) The all persons total includes a small number of learners not recorded as male or female.

(e) Snapshot of learners enrolled during the week of December 1st.

(f) Count of learners throughout the academic year.

Table 4: Work-based learning provision: Numbers of learning programmes starts, leavers and in progress and numbers of learners starting and in progress by programme type, 2019/20 (a)

	Full year learning programmes (a)				Learners (b)		
	Starts	Leavers (c)	In learning	Starts target Measure (d)	1st Dec (e)	31 st July (e)	All year
Work-based Learning programmes							
Foundation Apprenticeship	8,085	8,080	17,535	6,840	10,570	9,515	16,065
Apprenticeship (Level 3)	9,635	9,855	23,020	8,285	14,685	13,240	21,495
Higher Apprenticeship	4,610	4,510	10,055	3,555	5,905	5,605	8,980
Traineeships	4,495	7,050	7,115	N/A	2,595	60	5,650
Other WBL Programme	*	0	*	N/A	0	*	*
Total	26,830	29,500	57,725	18,680	33,760	28,420	52,190

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

- (a) Represents cumulative count of learning programmes enrolled at any point during the academic year. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
- (b) Distinct learners categorised according to their most recent learning programme of the year.
- (c) Counts of leavers exclude those who have transferred to another learning programme at the same provider. They are also restricted to those identifiable from the standard database of learning providers for 2015/16. (All figures include early leavers.)
- (d) A separate apprenticeships starts measure has been introduced in relation to the 100,000 target to take account of early drop outs (within first 8 weeks) and transfers of apprenticeships.
- (e) Number of learners on the reference date.

Table 5: Learning activities at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers by qualification level and gender, 2019/20

Qualification level	Further and Higher Education and Work-based Learning			Adult Learning		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Pre-Entry Level	790	1,110	1,905	165	145	305
Entry Level	19,045	18,870	37,970	1,380	2,440	3,825
Level 1	33,780	32,400	66,285	430	1,120	1,550
Level 2	56,475	66,880	123,485	360	1,090	1,450
Level 3	46,090	62,520	108,775	65	245	310
Level 4 and above / HE	6,050	11,055	17,115	0	0	0
Unknown or not required	23,165	26,040	49,275	1,610	4,105	5,720
Total	185,395	218,880	404,800	4,010	9,145	13,160

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

(a) All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

Notes

1. Context

1.1 General

This statistical first release summarises data on learner numbers in post-16 education and training at providers receiving funding from the Welsh Government for the academic year 2019/20. Prior to 2017/18 the figures were not restricted to fundable learners at those providers. From 1 August 2017, information relating to learning activities not funded by the Welsh Government is no longer collected. This has affected the number of part-time learners in further education in most recent years.

The release contains information on the post-16 sector including Further Education institutions, Work-based Learning providers and Adult Learning providers but excluding HE institutions, the Learn Welsh sector and school sixth forms.

1.2 Policy context

Within the Welsh Government, this release and other outputs from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) data underlying it play a role in supporting decision making processes in relation to:

- The [Post-16 Planning and Funding Framework](#) which enables the delivery of relevant learning to support the Government priorities and aims to improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness. It focuses on the quality of the learning offer in terms of the outcome for individual learners. Programmes rather than qualifications are at the core of the framework with each programme having a defined purpose and outcome against which it will be monitored.
- The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 “aims to provide wider learner choice, reduce duplication of provision and encourage higher quality learning and teaching, but it applies to all post-16 provision. Providers are expected to establish effective collaboration to underpin 14-19 entitlement and maximise the chances of successful learner outcomes.”
- The commitment to the delivery of apprenticeships is set out in the Programme for Government and within Prosperity for All – the National Strategy. Both refer to the delivery of 100,000 all-age apprenticeships within the term of the current Programme for Government.

See also section 5.1 on ‘Relevance’.

2. Data source

Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

The [Lifelong Learning Wales Record](#) is the data collection system employed by the Welsh Government to enable FE, WBL and Adult Learning providers to submit on-line individualised data on learners, their learning programmes, activities and awards. Welsh Government systems load the data on to a post-16 database to facilitate analysis. Further information on LLWR including user support manuals can be found on the Welsh Government’s website.

The primary purpose of the LLWR is to provide FE/WBL/Adult Learning data to facilitate the planning and funding of learning delivery. The LLWR data are also a basis for the Welsh Government's Quality and Effectiveness Framework, monitoring of performance and outcomes, informing strategy and development and the provision of statistics on FE/WBL/Adult Learning in Wales.

3. Definitions and methods

Learner numbers, learning programmes and learning activities

- The Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) has datasets based on learners, their learning programmes and their constituent learning activities (as well as awards which are not included in this release). [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) are based on counts of individual learners using a methodology which counts a learner present at more than one provider only once. [Table 3](#) is based on counts of learning programmes, as are the first three columns of table 4, the remainder of which uses unique learners. A learner represented in table 1 or [Table 2](#) will have one or more learning programmes in [Table 3](#). [Table 5](#) is based on counts of learning activities, there being one or more of these constituents to each learning programme.

Learners at Further Education Institutions, Adult Learning or Work-based Learning providers ([Table 1](#), [Table 2](#), [Table 3](#) and [Table 5](#))

- Information was collected from FE institutions, local authorities and work-based learning providers via the LLWR, from which data were extracted on 17 December 2020.
- Adult Learning is a broad definition that can encompass, for instance, provision at FE institution outreach centres and Adult Basic Education. This release only identifies Adult Learning provision (see 'Provision Type' notes) and hence this is the term used throughout.
- WBL provision is included whether at an FE college, at a WBL subsidiary of an FE institution or at another training provider.
- Where a provider is part of a WBL consortium, the assignment to 'WBL at FEIs' or to 'WBL at Other training providers' has been made according to the status of the consortium member (which may differ from the status of the lead provider of the consortium).
- December 1st counts are based on a snapshot of the week of 1 December 2019. All-year counts are based on all learners enrolled during the academic year.
- Ages are as at 31 August 2019.
- Includes students on courses with Adult Learning Wales.

Work-based Learning ([Table 4](#))

This table summarises enrolments on work-based learning programmes.

- Starts and leavers in the first two columns denote the cumulative number of new starts and leavers of learning programmes during the academic year.
- Counts of leavers exclude those who have transferred to another learning programme at the same provider. They are also restricted to those leavers who are identifiable from the standard

database population used for this release. All figures (except the target starts measure) include early leavers.

- In progress figures are expressed as learning programme counts (in the third column), as the number of distinct learners at any time during the full year (final column) and also as learner counts on December 1st 2019 and July 31st 2020. The latter counts are for single days, in contrast to the December 1st figures in tables 1 and 3 which are based on a full week (and are therefore slightly higher).

From 2017/18 we additionally include a measure of starts specifically related to the target of 100,000 apprenticeships. This measure discounts starts that are recorded as early leavers (less than 8 weeks) and those that are recorded as transferred to another apprenticeship. Under this measure, **18,680** learning programmes started in 2019/20 and **98,275** started since the target was introduced.

Management information derived from the LLWR indicates that, as of 22 October 2020, there has been in excess of 100,000 apprenticeship learning programmes started according to the target measure. It should be noted that this management information has not undergone validation or further data quality checks, which are undertaken for the official statistics published in this release.

Quarterly statistics on apprenticeship learning programmes started will continue to be updated to reflect progress towards the target according to the pre-announced timetable. It is expected that the 2020/21 quarter 1 release will reflect the target being reached. This is provisionally scheduled for publication in May 2021.

Welsh Government first funded degree apprenticeships from academic year 2018/19. In 2019/20 there were 380 new and continuing [degree apprenticeships in Wales](#).

Provision type

The provision type is determined at the learning programme level. This statistical release is not a funding report and definitions can differ from those used for funding purposes. For example, some of the WBL provision included in this release will not have been included in the calculation of funding for WBL providers.

For the purpose of this statistical release,

- **Further Education (FE)** provision is defined as that submitted to the LLWR by an FE provider excluding:
 - learning programmes categorised below as HE or WBL; and
 - learning delivered by a Local Authority via a subcontracted arrangement with an FE provider.
 - junior apprenticeship programmes (with learners additionally being recorded through school enrolment figures). 265 unique learners were recorded with at least one programme for 2019/20.

- **Higher Education (HE)** provision comprises learning programmes categorised as higher education

The figures for HE include learners whose programme is designated as HE level but exclude learning programmes where the overarching learning programme is not designated as 'HE' although an element of the learning (i.e. one or more learning activities) is at HE level. Note that almost all HE learners in Further Education institutions are now recorded through HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) data rather than LLWR. Historically franchised Higher Education has been collected through HESA (and therefore not part of this release) and from 2016/17 all new HEFCW funded learners are also recorded through HESA. The remaining programmes consist mainly of those for HEFCW funded learners commencing prior to the 2016/17 academic year, and other HE provision delivered without Welsh Government or HEFCW funding.)

Historically this has included the following types of qualification, but just a very small number of programmes now remain.

- Higher National Certificate; Higher National Diploma;
 - HE professional / HE vocational programme;
 - Foundation Degree; HE First Degree; other undergraduate qualification;
 - HE postgraduate;
- **Adult Learning** provision is defined as that submitted to the LLWR:
 - by a Local Authority directly ('maintained' or 'contracted-out' provision); or
 - by an FE provider but where the learning is delivered by a Local Authority through a partnership, franchise or subcontracted arrangement ('contracted-in' provision).

The Adult Learning figures **exclude** 'assisted' provision, i.e. courses controlled and managed by another organisation but which the local authority supports either financially or by providing premises or other facilities free of charge or at subsidised rates.

- **WBL programmes** are submitted to the LLWR by contracted WBL providers (including some FE institutions) and include the following programmes:
 - Apprenticeship (Level 3);
 - Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2);
 - Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4 plus);
 - Traineeships;

Subjects

Apprenticeship subject information is based on Sector Framework information, whilst that for individual learning activities is based on the Sector Subject Area (SSA) definition, based on the 15 first-tier areas of learning.

4. Rounding

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and there may be apparent slight discrepancies between the sum of the constituent items and the total. An asterisk '*' represents numbers greater than 0 and less than 5.

Percentages are also calculated using the unrounded figures; therefore, it may not be possible to recreate the percentages quoted throughout this release from the information included in the tables.

5. Key Quality Information

5.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and officials in the Welsh Government;
- Members of the Senedd and researchers in the Senedd Cymru.
- other government departments;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers and local authorities;
- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research;
- inclusion in reports and briefings;
- advice to Ministers;
- informing and evaluating the education policy-making process in Wales. (See section 1.2 on 'Policy Context'.)

LLWR data are used to underpin funding and performance reports for learning providers, to calculate NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures and in student finance modelling.

5.2 Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the LLWR data management team and, where relevant, with learning providers before tables are published.

The LLWR data underlying this release are intended to be final, for non-funding purposes.

The annual timescale for the production of data balances timeliness against the need for accurate data quality. Final statistics on a given academic year have previously been drawn from a database based on the LLWR as at February following the end of the academic year. Following consultation in previous years we brought forward the publication of the statistical release (previously April following the academic year) and StatsWales data (May), to publish both in February, and therefore using the December rather than February freeze of data. Providers have been encouraged to complete their data to this new timetable, with the data also being used as the basis for learner outcomes, we do not therefore consider there to be any arising data quality issues from the change of date.

5.3 Timeliness and punctuality

From 2016/17 onwards, with bringing forward the date of publication to February, we have ceased publication of provisional statistics for the same academic year, which previously occurred in November. Users were consulted on this change, and there have been no issues arising from the change. Additionally we now publish provisional quarterly information on apprenticeship starts to provide more timely data in this area of interest.

5.4 Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on StatsWales, a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

5.5 Comparability and coherence

Apprenticeship learning programmes

The number of apprenticeship learning programme starts and the number of in-learning programmes will be inflated by the transfer of learners from consortium members that were previously part of the Vocational Skills Partnership to new lead providers. There were around 1,660 new programme starts recorded in 2019/20 as a result of these transfers.

Data for previous years

The following changes were made to the data collection for 2017/18.

Unfunded learning

From 1 August 2017, information relating to learning activities not funded by the Welsh Government is no longer collected through the LLWR; whilst the change is at individual activity level it will have an impact on the overall number of learners recorded. Because funding is recorded at activity rather than learner level, it is difficult to give a firm assessment of impact, as the change may also affect the way providers code their data.

Learn Welsh sector

From 1 August 2017, information relating to Learn Welsh/Welsh for Adults provision in Further Education institutions is no longer collected through the LLWR. The [National Centre for Learning Welsh](#) has been responsible for providing leadership to the Welsh for Adults programme and co-ordinating provision across Wales on behalf of Welsh Government from 2015.

These two changes mean that, particularly for part-time further education and adult learning, it is not possible to draw any conclusions around trends in the number of learners compared with the previous year. The decrease seen may be fully accounted for by the changes to the data collection. For completeness the following charts show the time series – but indicate the break in the series and that figures for 2017/18 are not comparable with earlier years.

Resit codes

From 2017/18 there was a change to recording of GCSE resits, through separate part-time programmes alongside other programmes of learning. In 2018/19 approximately 14,600 such programmes were recorded by around 11,800 unique learners.

5.6 In-learning population

In-learning counts for all years in the current release (and in the other bulletins using LLWR data listed at the end of this release) are on an adjusted population basis.

The in-learning population is adjusted by excluding unclosed activities with an expected end date more than two years earlier than the start of the given academic year. Having excluded these activities, the population is then determined from the remaining activities by means of the actual start and end dates (in conjunction with the learning programme end date, where available separately for WBL programmes).

The adjusted population was introduced in order to produce a more accurate reflection of 'live' activity after identifying an increasing number of unclosed activities since the inception of the LLWR.

5.7 Mode of learning

Prior to 2014/15, Mode of learning was been derived using guided contact hours sourced from the LLWR field LA19. Non-WBL learning programmes were classified for statistical purposes as full-time if they contained at least 450 guided contact hours per year and other non-WBL learning programmes were designated as part-time. Owing to a change in LLWR data collection, this is no longer possible on the same basis. Instead, from 2014/15 onwards, the mode is determined directly from a marker in the new Learning Programme Code LLWR field (LP74).

The LLWR field LA19 used in derivation of the former mode of learning was not collected after the end of 2013/14 and the new field LP74 was not collected before the start of 2014/15. This lack of a period of overlap means that a direct comparison cannot be made. However the trend from the one mode to the other appears smooth. In the context of FE and adult learning data, the new mode appears to have very similar characteristics to the old.

5.8 Gender

The all persons total includes a small number of learners not recorded as male or female.

National Statistics status

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

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's

regulatory arm, the Office for Statistics Regulation. The OSR considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2012 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice.

Following reviews by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy and Welsh Government targets
- Expanded the coverage of topics to include protected characteristics and Welsh medium learning.
- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables.

Most recently, the Office for Statistics Regulation published its UK-wide review, [Exploring the public value of statistics about post-16 education and skills](#), in July 2020.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

This release is available at:

<https://gov.wales/further-education-work-based-learning-and-adult-learning-august-2019-july-2020>

StatsWales

Only summary tables have been provided in this release. Additional tables supplying greater detail, including analysis by programme and qualification type, subject, age, disability status and ethnicity, are available via the Welsh Government's online dissemination service [StatsWales](#).

Other statistical outputs using the LLWR data underlying this release

- [‘Learner Outcome Measures for Work-based Learning and Adult Learning’](#) - Statistics on learner outcomes at WBL providers and Adult Learning providers.
- [‘Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(achievement\)’](#) – Statistics on the achievement of learners in FE institutions (derived from LLWR data) and school sixth forms (derived from school data sources)

These releases will not be published for the 2019/20 academic year after the Minister for Education set out changes to qualification awards and performance measures in Written Statements dated [18 March 2020](#) and [3 July 2020](#).

- During 2018 we introduced [quarterly reporting of work-based learning information](#), and we welcome any feedback on this output.

UK nations

Examples of similar outputs from other UK nations can be found at:

England - [Further education and skills: statistical first release - gov.uk](#)

Northern Ireland - [Further Education Enrolments - Department for Employment and Learning](#)

Scotland - [Scottish Lifelong learning Statistics: statistical first release](#)

However, owing to differences in methodology and data collection, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons with the figures contained in this release.

Next update

February 2022

Period covered: 2020/21 (August to July)

Statistical First Release report and StatsWales cubes.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to post16ed.stats@gov.wales

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