



## ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

# Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary

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# Summary findings

This publication contains statistics on Fair Start Scotland (FSS), an employability support service that aims to help unemployed people into sustainable employment:

- 37,378 referrals were received and 24,380 people started receiving employability support in the first 9 quarters of FSS from April 2018 to June 2020. Compared to April – June 2019, the number of FSS referrals in April – June 2020 were 39% lower, and the number of FSS starts are 25% lower. This decrease is associated with the Department for Work and Pensions (the main referring organisation) pausing referrals into FSS at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown period to respond to the increase in demand for benefit claims. FSS set out to support 38,000 people in the first three years. FSS has achieved 64% of this figure, with 9 months left of year 3 to report on.
- 58% of referrals to FSS in the first year went on to start on the service, rising to 70% in the second year. In the latest quarter (April to June 2020) the start rate has increased to at least 82%<sup>1</sup>, which may be linked to the changing referral sources during the COVID-19 lockdown period.
- People receiving FSS support experience different and often multiple barriers to finding work. Health conditions and/or disabilities are the most commonly reported<sup>2</sup>. 65% of people in FSS reported a long-term health condition and 47% were disabled.
- So far, 7,050 people started a job after joining FSS. Rates of job starts and outcomes for each start group are reported when the full time available to reach them has passed. Where we can report complete data:
  - most people who started FSS did not enter work or go on to sustain employment: 33% started a job, 23% sustained employment for 3 months, 17% sustained employment for 6 months, and 14% sustained employment for at least 12 months.
  - but people who started work had high rates of sustaining it: 72% of people starting work went on to sustain employment for 3 months, 77% of those who sustained employment for 3 months went on to reach at least 6 months, and 76% of those who sustained employment for 6 months went on to reach at least 12 months.
  - job starts and sustained outcomes are lower for older age groups compared with younger age groups, and also lower for those reporting that their long-term health conditions limited daily activities ‘a lot’ compared with those who have long-term health conditions that do not limit daily activities.
- Where we can report complete data<sup>3</sup>, 51% of people left FSS early without completing the programme of support or achieving a job outcome. The percentage was highest (57%) for those reporting a long-term health condition limiting daily activities ‘a lot’.

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<sup>1</sup> The start rate for the most recent quarter (April to June 2020) is not complete yet and may rise further.

<sup>2</sup> Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: overview of year one - November 2019  
[www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/)

<sup>3</sup> April 2018 to June 2019

# Introduction

This publication presents statistics on the number of referrals, starts and job outcomes for Fair Start Scotland, an employability support service aiming to help unemployed people into sustainable employment, up to the end of June 2020. The Scottish Government launched Fair Start Scotland on 3 April 2018 with the target to support 38,000 people to find sustained employment.

The service is designed to support people in Scotland who face a range of challenges in obtaining work, including people with a disability or health condition, people with convictions, care-experienced young people, single parents, refugees, ethnic minorities, and people who live in some of the most deprived areas in Scotland. More information about the service can be found [here](#).

Fair Start Scotland is delivered by different providers across nine geographical areas throughout Scotland. Potential participants can engage with Fair Start Scotland in a variety of ways. A referral can be made by an individual's Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Work Coach. Alternatively, participants can be signposted to Fair Start Scotland through third party organisations or they can self-refer to their local Provider if they meet specific criteria. Third-party referrals relate to referrals from outwith JCP.

After a referral is made, the participant is matched with a Provider in their local area, the Provider makes contact and offers an introduction in which the service is fully explained, and the participant is then given the necessary information to engage with Fair Start Scotland.

## **How has COVID-19 impacted the delivery of Fair Start Scotland?**

This publication includes data over a period (March – June 2020) when the UK and Scotland were subject to public health measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Over this period:

- 1) the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) refocused their work to deal with the increased demand for benefit claims, so Fair Start Scotland referrals from DWP were paused. Referrals into Fair Start Scotland continued through other avenues – for example, those providing Fair Start Scotland services generated referrals through marketing efforts. Since June, the DWP have restarted referring people to Fair Start Scotland.
- 2) Fair Start Scotland switched from face to face interaction to delivery via phone calls and online interaction. This has had an impact on the equalities data collected, with fewer people joining Fair Start Scotland disclosing information on protected characteristics like ethnicity.

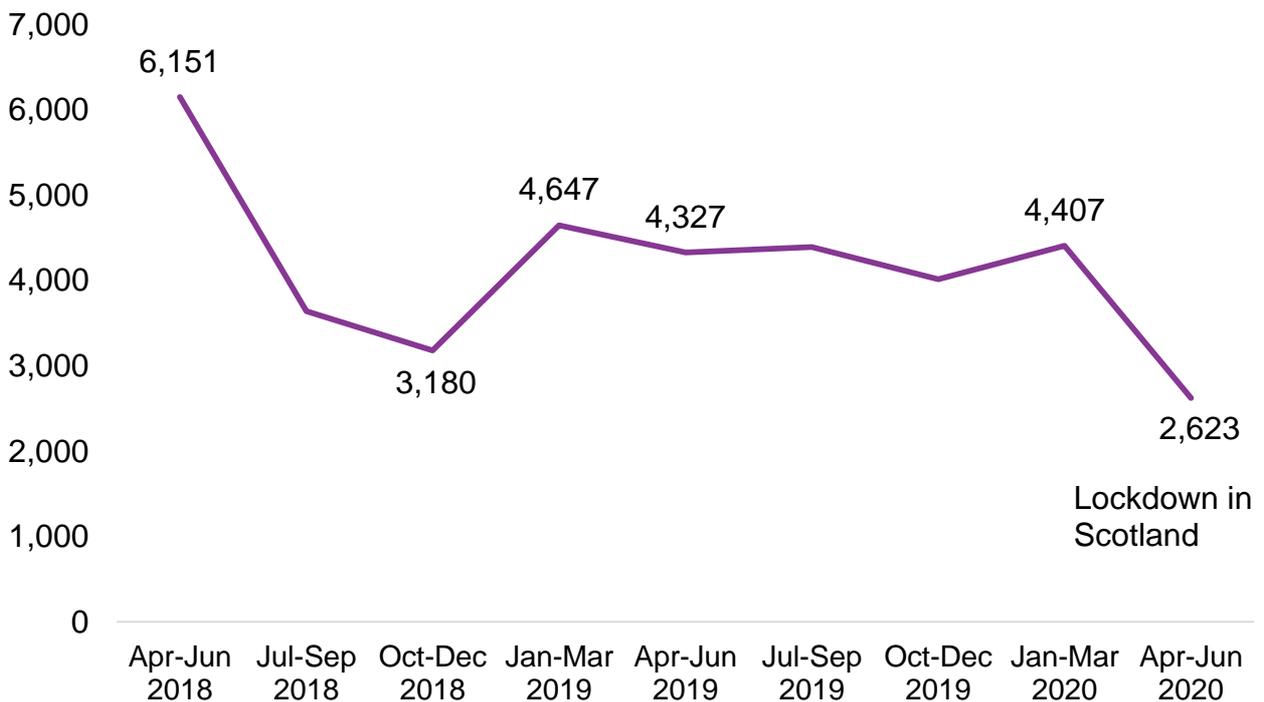
# Fair Start Scotland (FSS)

## How many people have joined FSS?

37,378 people were referred to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of June 2020.

COVID-19 had an impact on the referral process into FSS as the DWP refocused their work on responding to COVID-19. This will explain some of the drop in referrals since March 2020, illustrated in Figure 1 below. Referrals in April – June 2020 were 39% lower than April – June 2019.

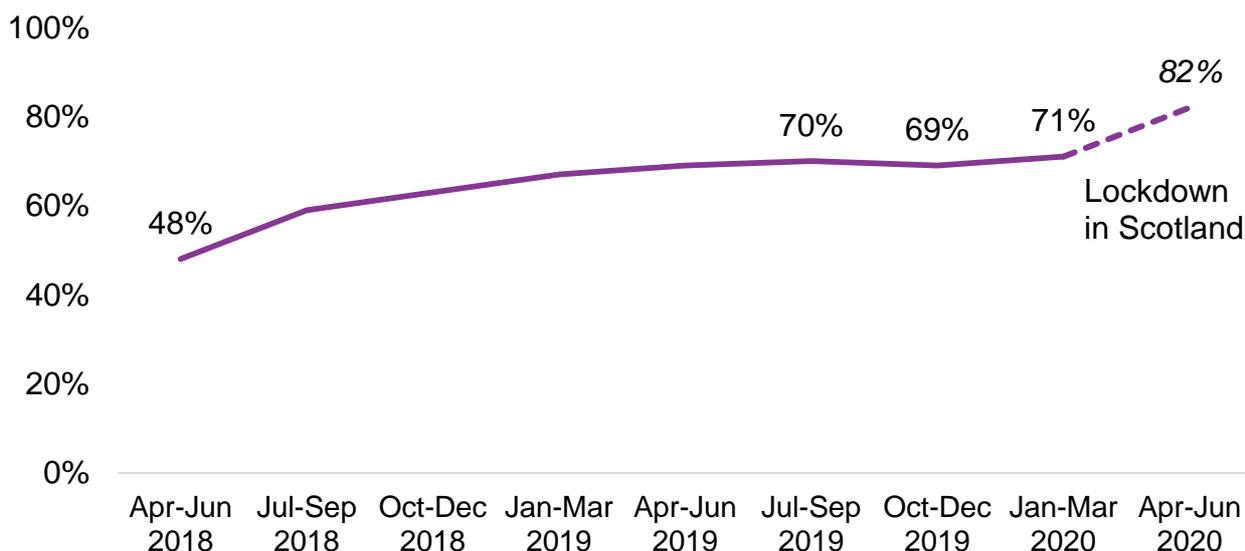
**Figure 1: Number of people referred into Fair Start Scotland by quarter of referral, April 2018 - June 2020**



Of the total number of people referred to FSS, 24,380 people went on to receive employability support services. FSS set out to support 38,000 people in the first three years. FSS has achieved 64% of this figure, with 9 months left of year 3 to report on. The proportion of referrals starting FSS support has increased over time. On average, in the first year, 59% of referrals joined FSS, rising to 70% in the second year, and at least 82% in the first quarter of year 3 (the latest quarter).

As Figure 2 shows the start rate in the latest quarter is higher than any previous quarter, and may still increase as not everyone referred over the quarter has had enough time to decide whether or not to join FSS. The changes in referral sources (described in the introduction section) were highlighted as a possible reason for the increase in start rate over the last quarter.

**Figure 2: The percentage of people referred into Fair Start Scotland that join the service per quarter, from April 2018 to June 2020**



Note:

1. The April – June 2020 start rate is not complete yet and may rise further.

The Scottish Government’s evaluation of the first year of the service<sup>4</sup> highlighted that compared to the unemployed population of Scotland there are some groups under-represented in FSS: women, people from a minority ethnic background and young people. Since the first year of FSS, there have been changes in the demographic composition of those joining the service, the latest data (Figure 3) shows that overall:

- 36% of people joining FSS are women and 64% are men. The proportion of women has increased over time: from 35% in year 1, to 37% in year 2, and now 40% in the first quarter of year 3.
- the most common age group for people joining FSS was 35-49 years (28% of people), followed by 50 years old and over (26%), 25-34 years old (23%), and 16 to 24 years old (19%). The proportion of people joining FSS in the younger age groups (16 to 34) has increased, from 38% in year 1, to 44% in year 2, and is now at 56% in the most recent quarter. There has been a corresponding fall for the older age groups (35 and over), from 60% in year 1, to 52% in year 2, to 43% in the most recent quarter.
- 69% of people joining FSS are white, with 5% of people joining from minority ethnic backgrounds. Ethnicity data is not available for the remaining 26%. A comparison over time is not presented due to an increase in missing information on ethnicity in year 2 and the latest quarter<sup>5</sup>.

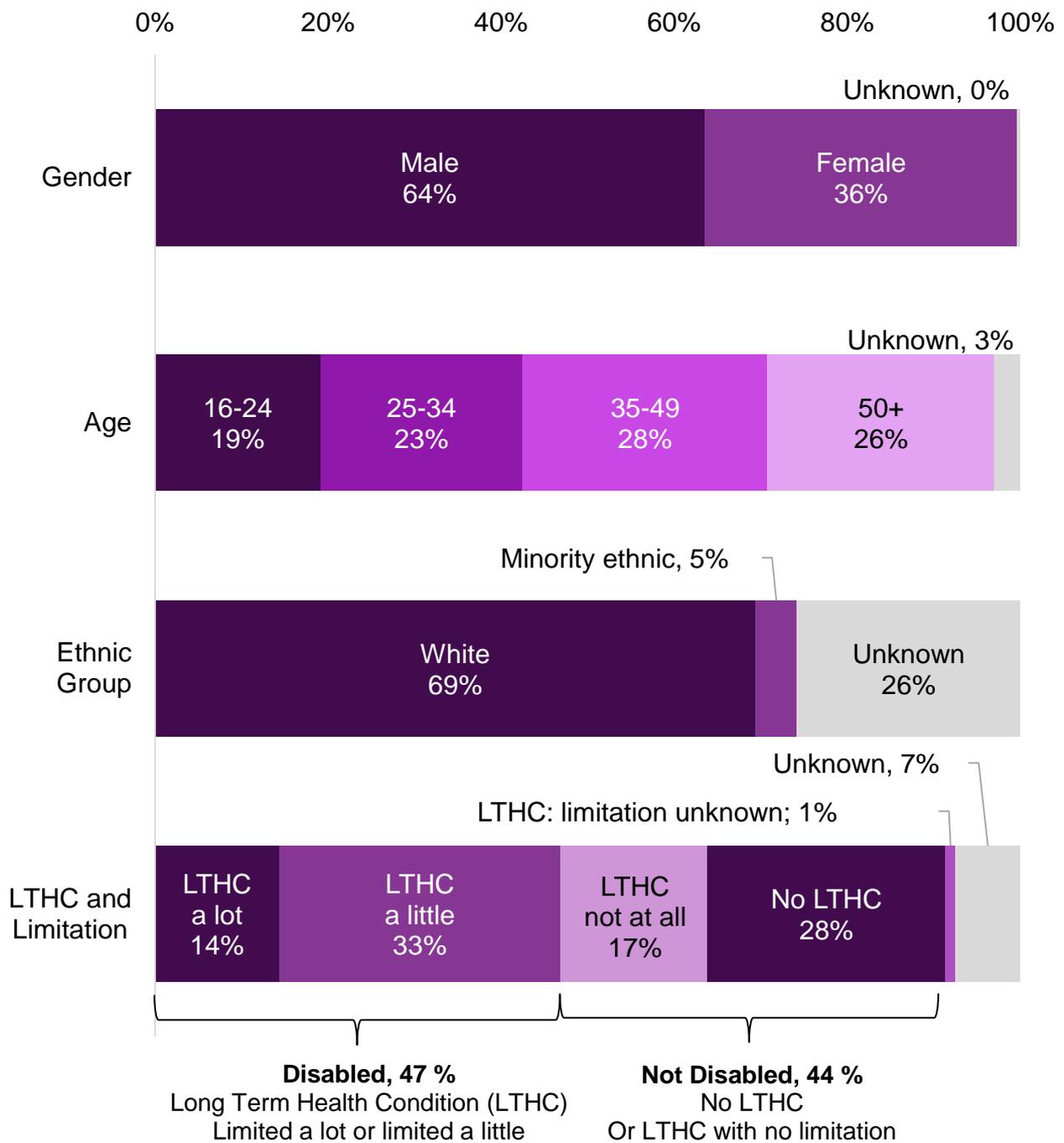
<sup>4</sup> Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: overview of year one - November 2019

[www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/)

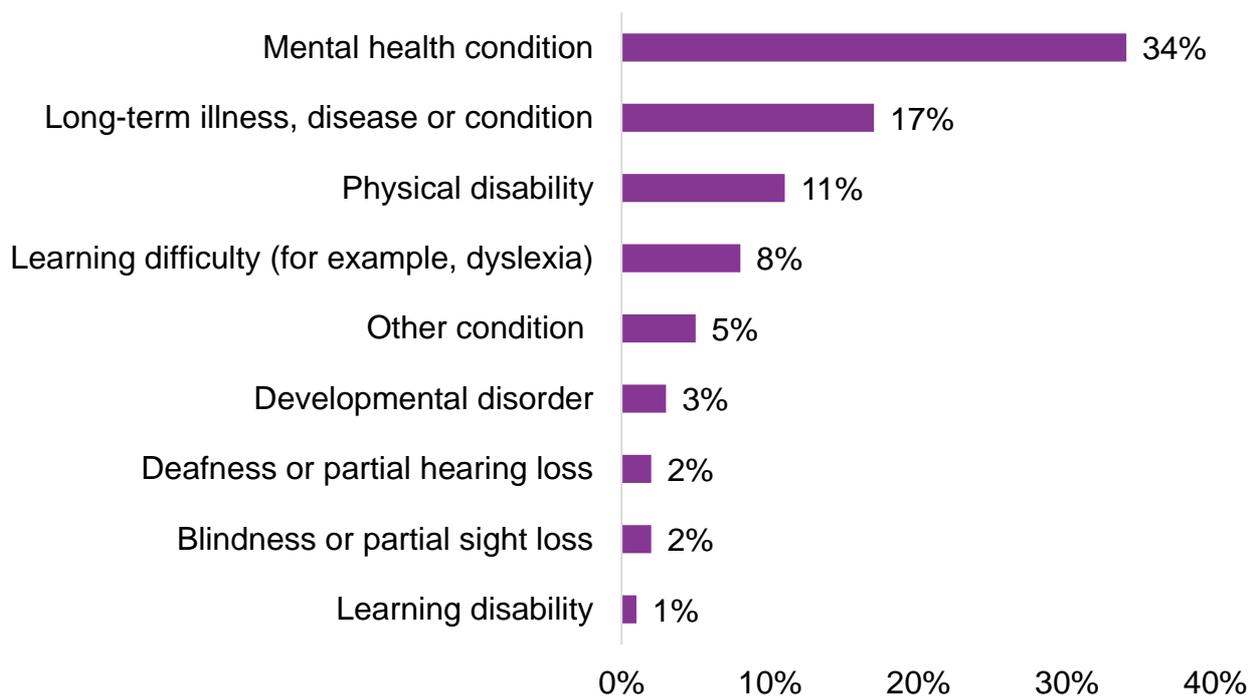
<sup>5</sup> Since the COVID-19 lockdown FSS is delivered over the phone or online, with face to face interaction paused. This has impacted the collection of equalities data. We will be engaging with FSS service providers to ensure ethnicity response rates are maximised going forward. For more information, see Data Quality section in the Background Information for further information

- 47% of people joining FSS reported a disability. The proportion reporting a disability decreased from 55% in year 1 to 44% in year 2, and is only 27% in the most recent quarter. There has been a corresponding increase in people who are not disabled, from 37% in year 1, to 47% in year 2, to 64% in the most recent quarter.
- 65% of people joining FSS reported having a long-term health condition, and 28% reported no long-term health condition, with the rest unknown.
- Figure 4 shows that the most common health condition reported was mental health (34%). Between year 1 and 2 there was a 5 percentage point increase in people reporting a mental health condition among those joining FSS, from 31% to 36%; with the most recent quarter remaining at 36%.
- The second most common health condition category reported was long-term illness, disease or condition, which affects 17% of people joining FSS and has not changed much over time.
- Physical disabilities were the third most common long-term health condition category reported. The number of people reporting a physical disability has declined over time: from 14% in year 1, to 10% in year 2, to 5% in the most recent quarter.

**Figure 3: Percentage of people joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group, from April 2018 to June 2020**



**Figure 4: Percentage of people joining Fair Start Scotland who report long term health conditions, broken down by type of long term health condition, from April 2018 to June 2020**



### How many people left FSS early?

Someone is defined as having left FSS early (an ‘early leaver’) if they leave FSS before the end of the pre-employment support period and without having sustained employment for at least 3 months. The pre-employment support period usually lasts for up to 1 year. In some cases, it can last up to 18 months, but this has only applied to a small number of people so far.

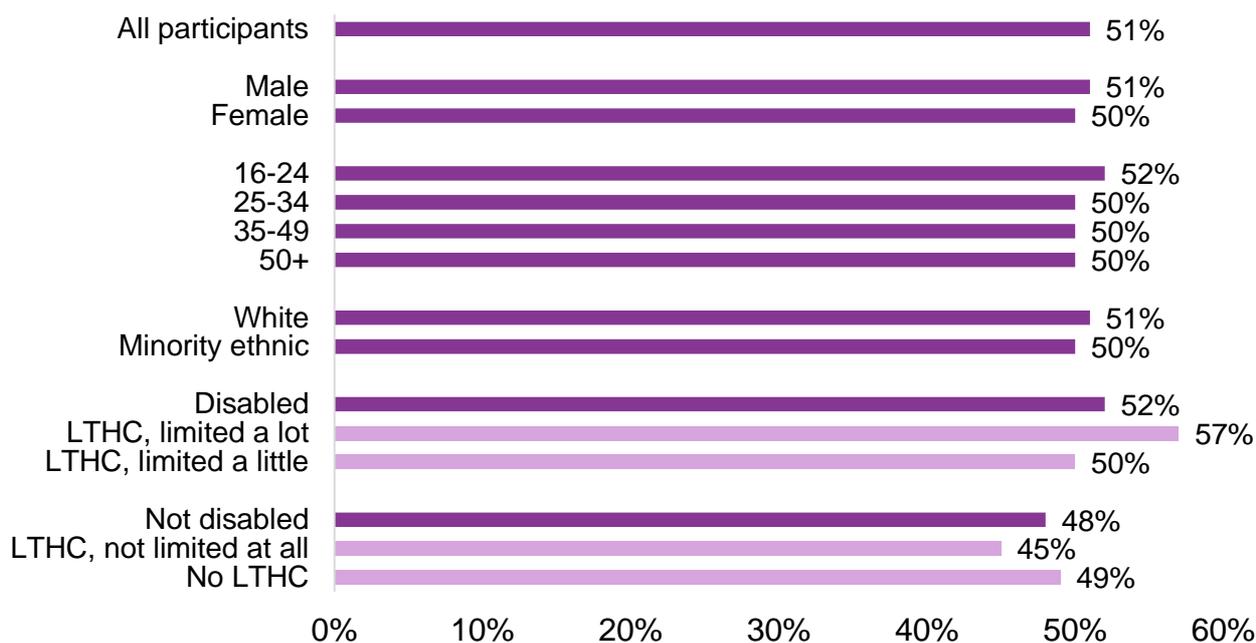
Overall, 8,472 people have left FSS early. As with job outcomes, as time goes on we get a more complete picture of numbers staying on FSS or leaving early. Where we have a complete picture<sup>6</sup>, 51% of people starting left the service early.

In the latest quarter the number of people leaving early was far lower than in previous quarters. In April – June 2019, 15% of those who started over the previous 12 months left FSS early. This proportion decreased to 3% in the latest quarter (April – June 2020). This decrease needs to be considered in relation to the changing context in the labour market and the delivery of FSS due to COVID-19.

Figure 5 shows that the percentage leaving early is broadly similar for most of the equalities groups. However, the percentage is higher for those reporting a disability, particularly for those who have a long-term health condition that limits daily activities a lot (57% left early). The proportion of people leaving early was lower for those who had a long-term health condition that did not limit daily activities at all (45%).

<sup>6</sup> A complete picture is available for those who started before the end of June 2019.

**Figure 5: Percentage of people that leave Fair Start Scotland early, broken down by equality characteristic group, from April 2018 to June 2020 <sup>7 8</sup>**



### How many people entered and sustained employment?

A total of 7,050 people joining have started a job. On average, most people who started a job found employment within three months of joining FSS.

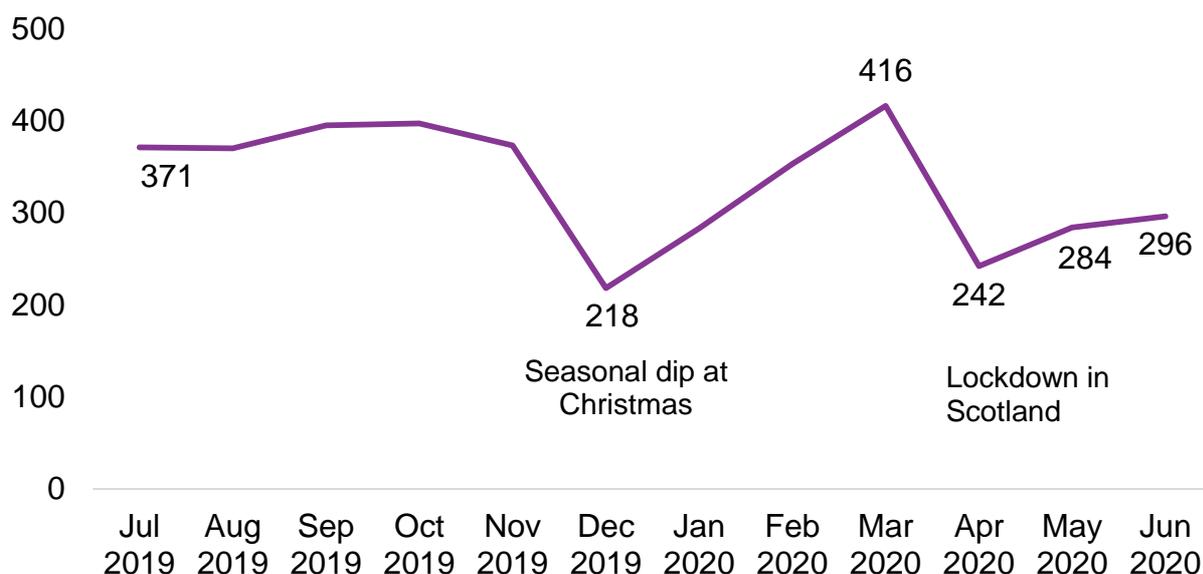
COVID-19 has had an impact on the labour market, and the number of job vacancies<sup>9</sup> available. Figure 6 has been included to show changes in FSS job starts since the COVID-19 lockdown period began in March 2020. It shows that FSS job starts in April – June 2020 were 20% lower than the same period in 2019.

<sup>7</sup> LTHC stands for Long Term Health Condition.

<sup>8</sup> The early leaver rate is calculated for people who joined FSS between April 2018 – June 2019 as we have the most complete data. This is 13,069 starts.

<sup>9</sup> [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirustheconomyandsocietyfasterindicators/06august2020#online-job-adverts](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirustheconomyandsocietyfasterindicators/06august2020#online-job-adverts)

**Figure 6: Number of people starting work after joining Fair Start Scotland, by the month job was started, from July 2019 to June 2020**



Of the 7,050 people who started work, 4,193 of those had sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 2,753 were employed for at least 6 months (26 weeks) and 1,238 were employed for at least 12 months (52 weeks).

Job outcome rates can only be reported for start cohorts where enough time has passed in pre employment support and for outcomes to be achieved. These show:

- most people who started FSS did not enter work or go on to sustain employment: 33% started a job, 23% sustained employment for 3 months, 17% sustained employment for 6 months, and 14% sustained employment for 12 months.
- however, many people who started jobs went on to sustain them: 72% of people starting jobs went on to sustain employment for 3 months, 77% of the people who sustained employment for 3 months went on to reach 6 months, and 76% of those who sustained employment for 6 months went on to reach at least 12 months.

Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 show how the rates of job starts and outcomes compare between different equality groups.

The rates of job starts and outcomes do not show a large difference by gender, and are never more than 1 percentage point different. More men (33%) than women (32%) start a job. The opposite is true when looking at 3 month (men: 23%, women: 24%), 6 month (men: 17%, women: 18%), and 12 month (men: 13%, women: 14%) job outcomes.

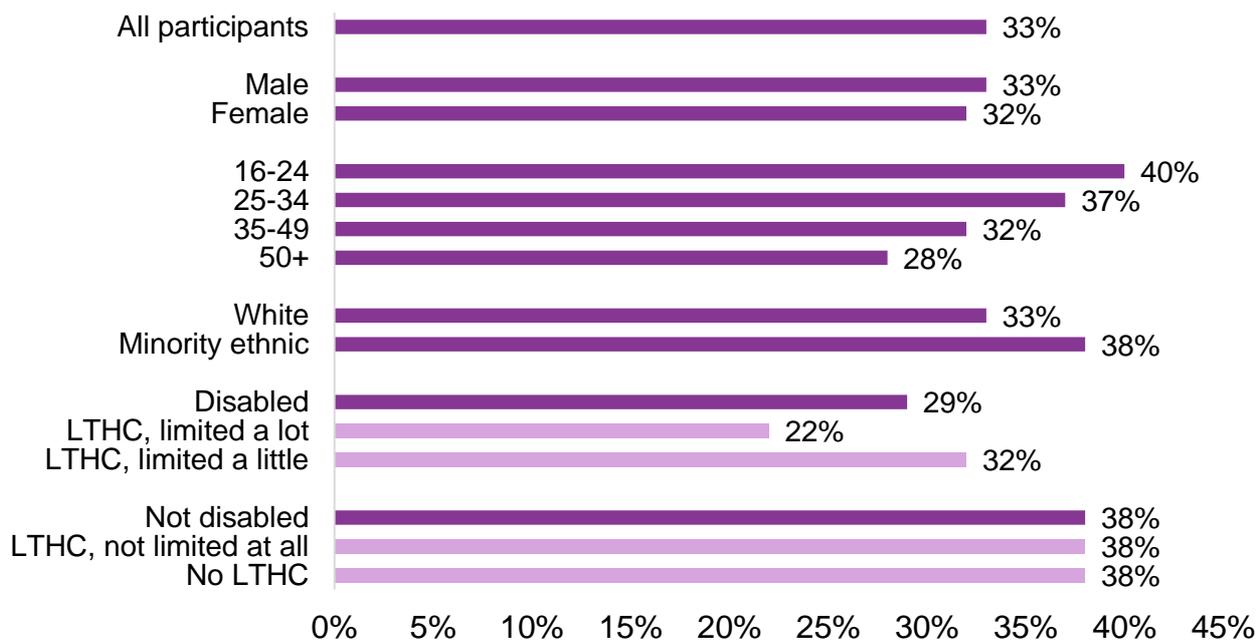
The biggest differences are seen with age and with long-term health conditions, which are often related. 40% of 16-24 year olds started work after joining FSS, whereas a lower proportion (28%) of those aged 50 and above started work – a difference of 12 percentage points. The difference between these two groups narrows when considering duration of employment at 3 month (9 percentage points), 6 month (5 percentage points) and 12 month (1 percentage point) sustained jobs outcomes

22% of those with a long-term health condition that limited daily activities a lot went on to start work, whereas a higher proportion (38%) of those with a health condition that did not limit daily activities went on to start work. This is a difference of 16 percentage points. The difference between these two groups narrows when considering duration of employment at

3 month (12 percentage points) 6 month (9 percentage points) and 12 month (6 percentage points) sustained outcomes.

33% of white participants went on to start work, whereas a higher proportion of minority ethnic participants (38%) went on to start work. This is a gap of 5 percentage points, which remains similar for 3 month (3 percentage points) and 6 month (5 percentage points) job outcomes, but is much higher at 12 months (11 percentage points).

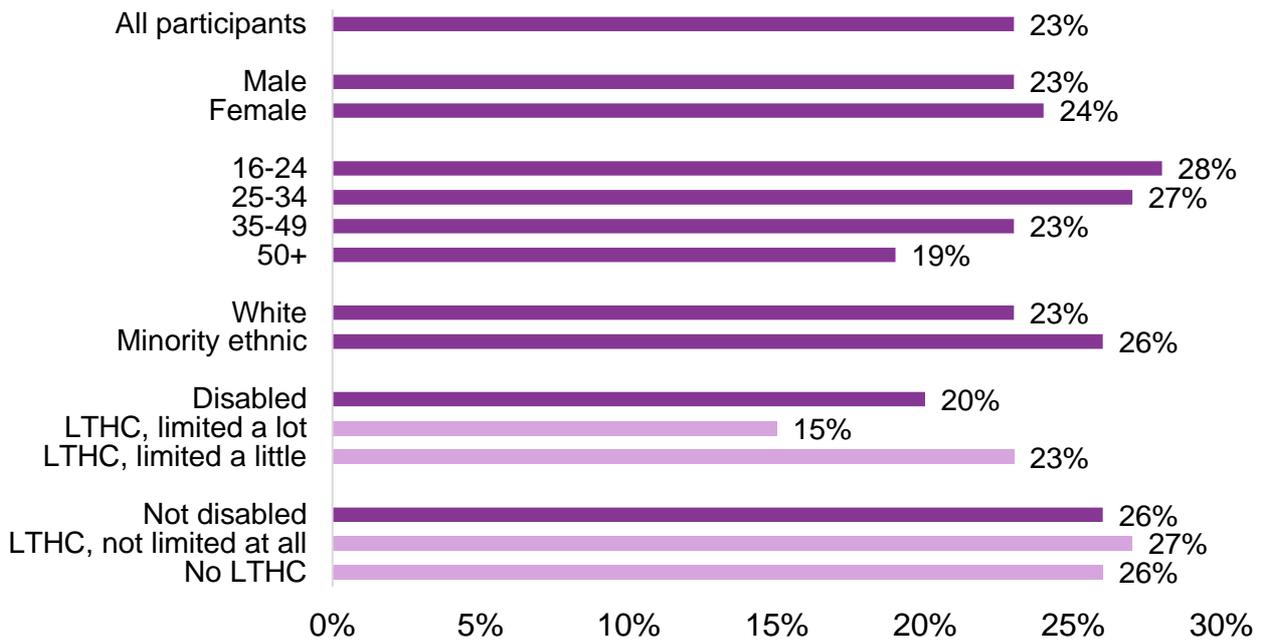
**Figure 7: Percentage of people starting work after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group <sup>10 11</sup>**



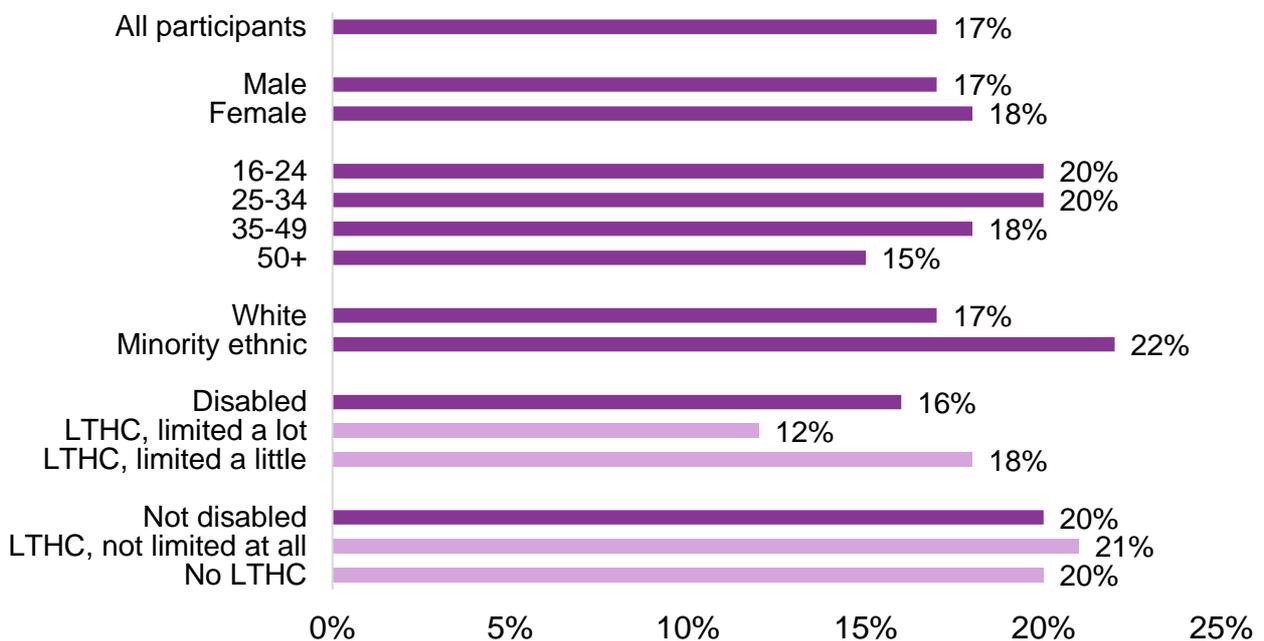
<sup>10</sup> LTHC stands for Long Term Health Condition.

<sup>11</sup> The job start rate is calculated for people who joined FSS between April 2018 – June 2019 as we have the most complete data. This is 13,069 starts.

**Figure 8: Percentage of people staying in work for 3 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group<sup>12 13</sup>**



**Figure 9: Percentage of people staying in work for 6 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group<sup>14</sup>**

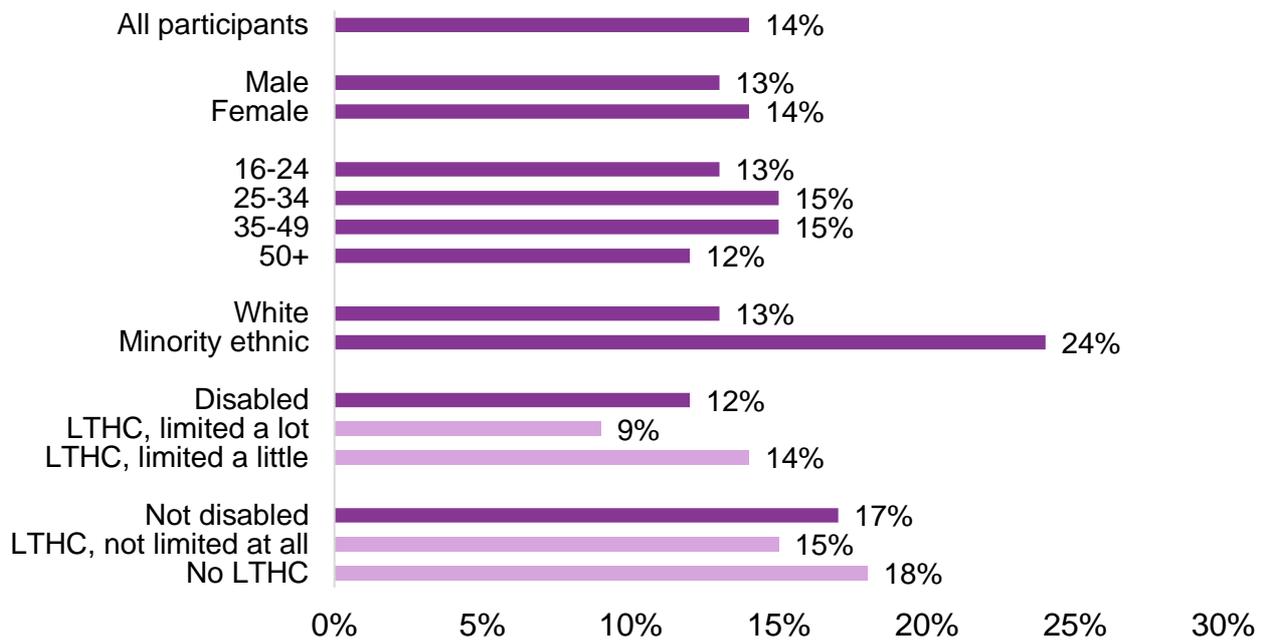


<sup>12</sup> LTHC stands for Long Term Health Condition.

<sup>13</sup> The 3 month job outcome rate is calculated for people who joined FSS between April 2018 – March 2019 as we have the most complete data. This is 10,063 starts.

<sup>14</sup> The 6 month job outcome rate is calculated for people who joined FSS between April 2018 – December 2018 as we have the most complete data. This is 7,032 starts.

**Figure 10: Percentage of people staying in work for 12 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group<sup>15 16</sup>**



<sup>15</sup> LTHC stands for Long Term Health Condition.

<sup>16</sup> The 12 month job outcome rate is calculated for people who joined FSS between April 2018 – June 2018 as we have the most complete data. This is 2,815 starts.

# Background Information

## 1. Official Statistics

These are official statistics – they are no longer classified as experimental statistics.

Experimental statistics are defined by the Code of Practice for Statistics as ‘a subset of newly developed or innovative official statistics undergoing evaluation, that are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in the assessment of their suitability and quality at an early stage’. This early stage has now passed, with user feedback used to improve the publication, though any comments or feedback are still welcome. More detail on designation of statistics is given by the [UK Statistics Authority](#).

## 2. Reporting periods

**Fair Start Scotland.** This publication reports on all referrals and starts from 13 March 2018 to the end of the most recent quarter (30 June 2020). The service was launched on 3 April 2018 (Q1). There was an opportunity for referrals to be made and starts to be recorded for a short period prior to the launch of the service, commencing 13 March 2018. Referrals and starts which occurred before the official launch of the service are reported along with the April 2018 data.

## 3. Fair Start Scotland (FSS) background information

### Tables

Detailed statistics on the number of referrals to FSS, number of starts and job outcomes are presented in the accompanying tables, numbered 1 to 8. Tables 1 to 7 show changes to FSS over time, and table 8 provides a breakdown of data by local authority and FSS delivery area. The caveats that apply to national data also apply to local authority data (see Background Information Section 3).

### Data sources

#### The Scottish Employability Tracking System (SETS)

SETS is the Scottish Government referrals tracking system for Fair Start Scotland. Information on those referred (‘referrals’) and outcomes relating to those individuals, including those who join FSS (‘starts’), enter employment (‘job starts’), and subsequently achieve employment outcomes (‘job outcomes’), is recorded on SETS. It tracks the progress of referrals made to the service and provides management information in relation to performance.

The statistics in this release are based on figures extracted from SETS on 14 July 2020.

#### Information provided by service providers

The statistics on age, gender, long-term health conditions, disability and ethnic group are derived from information collected by service providers when an individual joins FSS. Information is collected via a combination of face-to-face interviews and SG equalities monitoring forms, using SG recommended questions and published using related output classifications. The statistics in this release are based on returns for the period 13 March 2018 to 30 June 2020.

## **Methodology**

### **Referral**

The referral numbers published in this release are net figures, which excludes 1075 rejected referrals. The vast majority of these were duplicates.

### **Starts**

The 'start rate' i.e. the percentage of people who joined FSS is calculated by dividing the number of starts by the number of referrals within a given period. People who were referred in the most recent quarter, particularly in June 2020, may not have had time to join the service by the end of the month. Because of this, the start rate for the most recent quarter should not be used for considering the overall performance of the service.

### **Early leavers**

An early leaver is someone who exits the service before the end of the pre-employment support period without achieving an employment outcome.

### **Job starts**

When an individual progresses into work, service providers record a 'job start' for the individual on SETS. An individual can enter employment more than once; however the figures in this publication are for the individual's first recorded job only. The number of job starts is therefore equal to the number of people who had entered employment. All figures are up to 30 June 2020.

### **Employment outcomes**

A 3 month (13 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 13 weeks out of 16; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 13 out of 16 weeks.

A 6 month (26 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 26 weeks out of 30; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 26 out of 30 weeks (breaks in employment must total no more than 4 weeks).

A 1 year (12 month, 52 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 52 weeks out of 60; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 52 out of 60 weeks (breaks in employment must total no more than 8 weeks).

### **Data quality**

Some inconsistencies in responses to the questions on long-term health conditions and disability, as reported by service providers, were identified and amended as follows:

Of those people who responded 'No' to the question asking whether respondents had a physical or mental health condition lasting, or expected to last 12 months or more:

- 2,445 participants answered the second question on extent of limitation (63 yes, a lot; 321 yes, a little; 2,061 not at all). These responses were excluded from the totals.
- 527 people reported one or more long-term health condition (597 conditions in total were recorded). These conditions have been excluded from the count of long-term health conditions.

## **Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on data quality**

Due to COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines, FSS providers have had to adapt their methods of engaging people receiving support, moving from contact in person to telephone and online contact. This has led to lower rates of data completion of equalities information, whilst data collection methods have been adapted to the new circumstances in consideration of data protection guidance. It has also caused disruption to some providers where data is held in the workplace and is not currently accessible to staff now working from home.

## **Comparisons with other employment services' data**

Please use caution when comparing FSS data with data from other employment services across the UK, as features of service design (e.g. whether voluntary or mandatory, eligibility criteria) and definitions (e.g. how job outcomes are measured) may differ.

### **Local authority data**

Please use caution in interpreting data at lower levels of geography, as numbers are small in some instances and there are many factors contributing to variations in totals across LAs. The Scottish Government's evaluation of year 1 of FSS suggests factors include the local reputation of FSS staff, the prior roles of staff and the reputation of previous services, range of other existing services available in the area, relationship between FSS provider staff and JCP work coaches, and the range and scale of local job opportunities<sup>17</sup>.

## **4. Previous editions of this publications**

This publication has previously reported on Work First Scotland (WFS), Work Able Scotland (WAS), and the Health & Work Support pilot in Dundee and Fife. These services have now closed. The final statistics for WFS and WAS were published 26 February 2020, and the final statistics for the Health & Work Support pilot were published on 27 May 2020. Other services operate within Scotland, including those run by local authorities and third sector providers which are not included in this publication.

## **5. Correspondence and enquiries**

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Office of the Chief Statistician

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E-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot)

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<sup>17</sup> Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: local area case studies - November 2019  
[www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-local-area-case-studies-year-1-november-2019/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-local-area-case-studies-year-1-november-2019/)

## **6. Complaints and suggestions**

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