

Young Person's Guarantee:

Overview of the current evidence on the employment and education landscape for young people in Scotland

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Executive summary

The Young Person's Guarantee was introduced in November 2020 in response to challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. The ambition of the Guarantee is that "every person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland has the opportunity, depending on their circumstances, to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in formal volunteering."

This paper looks to provide an overview of the current evidence on the employment and education landscape for young people aged 16 to 24 in Scotland, with equalities and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) breakdowns provided where possible.

Participation in Education, Employment or Training

Based on current evidence, young people's participation in education, employment or training has been on the rise for several years. However, data shows that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact with Annual Population Survey (APS) data on 16 to 24 year olds indicating a fall in the proportion of those participating in education, employment or training in the first full year of the pandemic (April 2020-March 2021). Annual Participation Measure (APM) data for those aged 16 to 19, on the other hand, while not showing a fall in the overall participation rate, indicates a change in participation activity, with more young people participating in education and less in employment.

Looking at equalities, participation rates for young women are currently higher than for young men, with women particularly more likely to participate in education. This is the same for those identifying as minority ethnic. Those with a self-declared disability, on the other hand, have a lower participation rate, as do those who come from more deprived areas, compared to their counterparts.

Employment, Fair Work and Skills

Annual Population Survey data shows that the pandemic has had an impact on employment and unemployment rates for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland, with the unemployment rate having increased from 8.9% in 2019/20 to 12.5% in 2020/21 (April-March datasets) which represents a statistically significant increase over the year. While young people account for 11.3% of the total workforce in Scotland, they make up a much higher proportion in sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services; Wholesale and Retail; and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation which have been hit hardest by the pandemic. Young people are also less likely to be in contractually secure employment, and more likely to earn less than the real Living Wage than older age groups.

In terms of gender, APS data shows a small employment rate gap between men and women aged 16 to 24, with women having a higher employment rate, however, young women are less likely to be in contractually secure employment. Similarly, while the gender pay gap is currently negative (i.e. women earn more than men) for young people, data suggest that gender pay gap issues start to present themselves

from age 25 onward. This will be partly impacted by subject choices typically made in senior phase, further and higher education and apprenticeships; workplace practices including the “motherhood penalty”; and occupations being low paid because of the way skills and values are socially constructed which can mean that certain types of work generally undertaken by women is undervalued.

Data for other equality groups presents more obvious gaps, with the employment rate for young people with a disability considerably lower and unemployment rate considerably higher than for non-disabled young people. Similarly, while employment estimates for young people by ethnicity are not presented in this paper as the data for young people is not as reliable as for other age groups, UK level studies suggest considerable employment gaps between those from a minority ethnic background compared to those who are white.

School Leavers

School leaver destinations data suggests that there may be more pupils staying in school for longer, and more leavers are also moving onto Further (FE) and Higher Education (HE), with less leavers going into employment compared to previous years.

Equalities data on school leavers indicates that women are more likely to reach a positive destination than men, and those from a minority ethnic background more likely to reach a positive destination than those who are white. On the other hand, those with Additional Support Needs, those who come from more deprived areas and looked after children are less likely to be in positive destination after leaving school.

College

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) data on colleges suggests an overall fall in the number of 16 to 24 year old enrolments across both FE and HE courses in the past five years to 2019/20. Male students tend to dominate college enrolments, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) related courses. Similarly, there are more enrolments from the 20% most deprived areas than from the 20% least deprived areas in college. The share of enrolments for those with a self-declared disability as well as those identifying as minority ethnic have increased over the past five years, as have enrolments for those who are care experienced.

Students completing HE college courses tend to have a higher successful completion rate than those completing FE courses. Female students are more likely to successfully complete HE courses than male students. This is reverse for FE. Looking at other equality groups, those with a self-declared disability, those identified as minority ethnic and those from the most deprived areas in Scotland are all less likely to successfully complete their college courses than their counterparts. Successful completion rates are considerably lower for those who are care experienced, compared to any other group.

Looking at college leaver destinations data, HE leavers are more likely to go into a positive destination compared to FE leavers. FE leavers who are from the most

deprived areas, leavers with a self-declared disability and leavers with care experience were least likely to go into a positive destinations compared to their counterparts in 2019/20. Differences between different equality groups were smaller for HE leavers.

University

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data shows that Scottish universities have seen an increase in 16 to 24 year old enrolments in the five years to 2019/20, and UCAS data indicates a further increase, particularly in Scottish domiciled First degree entrants to university, in 2020/21 and 2021/22, likely influenced by the pandemic.

Female enrolments are higher for this age group overall, although women are less likely than men to be enrolled in Science based subjects. There has been an increase in the share of both disabled and minority ethnic enrolments. Similarly, the share of enrolments from 20% most deprived areas has increased, although there continues to be a considerably larger share of university enrolment from the least deprived areas.

In terms of destinations after leaving university, based on 2018/19 leaver cohort, around two-thirds of university leavers tend to be in employment 15 months after graduation, with a further one-fifth in further study or further study and employment. Around 6% of university leavers are unemployed. Looking at level of study, Postgraduate (Taught) leavers are most likely to be in employment, while Postgraduate (Research) leavers are most likely to enter further study. They are also least likely to end up unemployed.

Apprenticeships

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) data on apprenticeships shows that Foundation (FA), Modern (MA) and Graduate (GA) Apprenticeships (with the exception of pilot FAs) all saw a decrease in the number starts aged 16 to 24 between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Although the fall in the number of starts is likely to be partially due to the pandemic, the percentage of Modern and Graduate apprentices aged 16 to 24 of total starts has been decreasing for several years.

Looking at equalities, the female share of MA and GA starts is lower than the male share. On the other hand, the share of female FA starts is higher than the male share. The share of starts with a self-declared disability is considerably higher in MAs and FAs than in GAs. However, there is a considerably higher proportion of GA starts identifying as minority ethnic than in MAs or FAs. The share of starts identifying as care experienced remains low in all apprenticeship types.

MA achievement rate has remained relatively steady for the past several years for the total 16 to 24 year old cohort. Looking at equalities, MAs who identify as disabled and those who are care experienced have considerably lower achievement rates than any other group.

Employer Perspective

The Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS) data tells us that when young people are recruited, they are most likely to be recruited by large employers and to lower level roles, although this varies by sector.

In 2019, 30% of employers said they had recruited directly from education. This is a reduction from previous years and largely due to a reduction in recruitment directly from university. However, the percentage of employers offering apprenticeships or having apprentices has shown gradual signs of increasing.

Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting public health policies have had a significant and disproportionate effect on young people. Literature¹ tells us that young people are typically the first to lose jobs, are less likely to be recruited into new jobs, and experience a ‘scarring effect’ as a result of a recession. A recent Resolution Foundation report² finds that since the pandemic began, young people have been more likely than older age groups to have lost working hours, been put on furlough or have lost their job. This is in part driven by the large proportion of young people working in sectors such as retail, hospitality, and arts and leisure, all of which have been under severe business constraints during the pandemic.

Young people are not only losing their jobs, but recent education leavers entering the labour market for the first time are struggling to find jobs. The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS)³ finds that, based on research on previous recessions, graduates will be less likely to find work and will start their careers in occupations with lower pay than they might have expected. The Resolution Foundation⁴ suggests that this employment and pay scarring as a result of the pandemic could be larger and longer-lasting than that seen after the 2008 financial crisis.

Several studies⁵ also find that the impact of the pandemic is unevenly spread among young people, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities and negatively impacting social mobility.

Young Person’s Guarantee

The Young Person’s Guarantee was introduced in November 2020 in response to these challenges. The ambition of the Guarantee is that “every person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland has the opportunity, depending on their circumstances, to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in formal volunteering.”

This paper looks to provide background data on the different elements of the Guarantee, covering the most recent available data on young people and their participation in education, training, employment and volunteering. It also looks to provide a breakdown, as far as possible, on how the trends vary by equalities characteristics, including gender/sex, disability, ethnicity, care experience and level of deprivation (SIMD).

¹ Resolution Foundation (2020), [‘Young Workers in the coronavirus crisis.’](#)

² Resolution Foundation (2021), [‘Uneven Steps: Changes in youth unemployment and study since the onset of Covid-19.’](#); The Sutton Trust (2020)

³ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2020), [‘A bad time to graduate’](#)

⁴ Resolution Foundation (2020), [‘Class of 2020: Education leavers in the current crisis’](#)

⁵ Resolution Foundation (2021), [‘Uneven Steps: Changes in youth unemployment and study since the onset of Covid-19.’](#); The Sutton Trust (2020), [‘Lost Learning, Lost Earnings’](#); Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021), [‘Inequalities in education, skills and incomes in the UK: The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic’](#); and Institute for Employment Studies (2021), [‘An Unequal Crisis: The impact of the pandemic on the youth labour market’](#).

The paper draws from various different data sources that report on young people in education, employment and training, including SDS, SFC, HESA, and several Scottish Government statistical publications. The paper should be treated as secondary analysis that compliments these existing statistical publications by pulling together key data on young people's economic activity under one source.

The findings of this paper also inform and compliment the development of the Measurement and Evaluation Framework of the Guarantee, including the already published Key Performance Indicators⁶.

Structure of the paper

The paper is structured into seven broad chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of the size of the 16 to 24 year olds population in Scotland, as well as looking at the available high level measures on young people's participation in economic activity. The following sections will then look at each economic activity in more detail, with Chapter 2 focussing on labour market data, Chapter 3 on school leaver data, Chapter 4 on college data, Chapter 5 on university data and Chapter 6 on apprenticeships data. Finally, Chapter 7 will focus on the employer perspective, looking at available data on employers recruiting young people.

The paper uses the most recent available data on each of these topics⁷. In some cases this has allowed for initial observations to be made on the impact of the pandemic on young people. However, in other instances, latest data available pre-dates the pandemic.

⁶ Scottish Government (2021), '[Young Person's Guarantee Key Performance Indicators](#)'

⁷ Chapter 2 uses April 2020-March 2021 data on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity as it provides a useful view of the first full year of the pandemic. However, more recent, July 2020-June 2021, data is available. It can be viewed through Scottish Government (2021). '[Labour Market Statistics for young people \(16-24 years\): Scotland and UK – July 2020 to June 2021](#)'.

1. Demographics and participation in economic activity

This chapter provides a short overview of the size of the 16 to 24 year old population in Scotland and how it is projected to develop in the short and long term as well as a general, high level, overview of young people’s participation in economic activity.

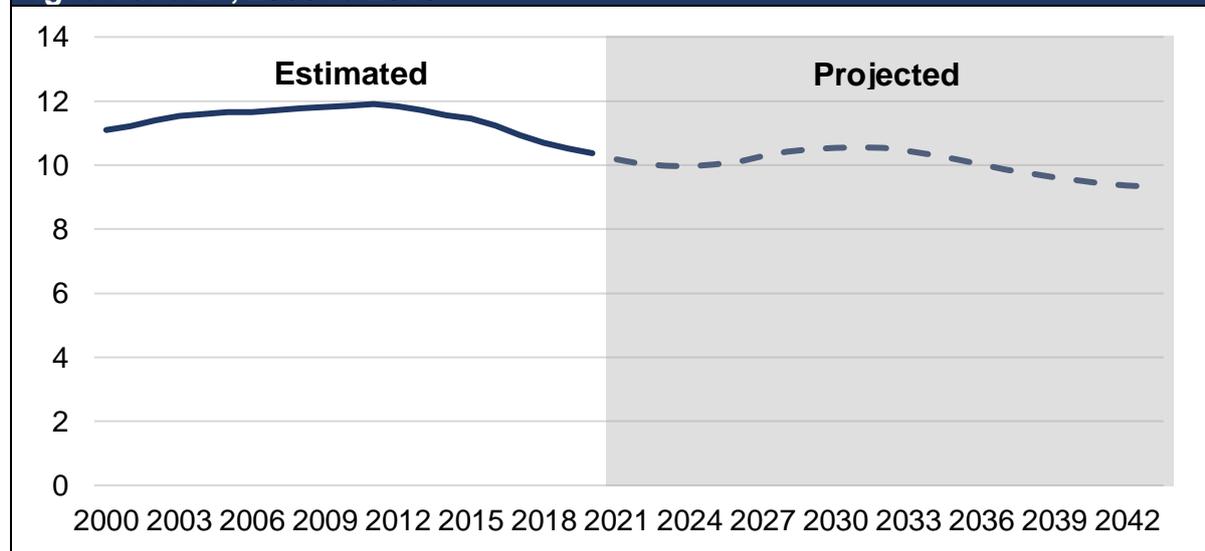
Scotland’s population estimates and projections for those aged 16 to 24

The number of young people has been decreasing since 2011, falling from 631,000 (11.9% of total population) to around 567,000 (10.4%) in 2020, and is projected⁸ to continue to do so long term, with the proportion of young people falling by around 1.1 percentage points (pp) between 2020 and 2043 (see Chart 1.1). In the shorter term, the population aged 16 to 24 is expected to fall until 2023, after which a brief increase is expected, peaking in 2031 at around 586,000 before continuing to fall again.

In 2020, 16 to 19 year olds accounted for 4.1%, and 20 to 24 year olds 6.3% of total population. Longer term, both cohorts, as a proportion of total population, are expected to fall, with the 16 to 19 cohort falling from 4.1% in 2020 to 3.9% in 2043 while the 20 to 24 cohort is projected to fall from 6.3% in 2019 to 5.4% in 2043.

While the pandemic has impacted the number of deaths across Scotland and restricted movement across the UK and overseas, the statistics presented here only capture the impacts on the population for the first four months (March to June 2020) of the pandemic.

Chart 1.1: Estimated and projected proportion (%) of Scotland’s population, aged 16 to 24, 2000 to 2043



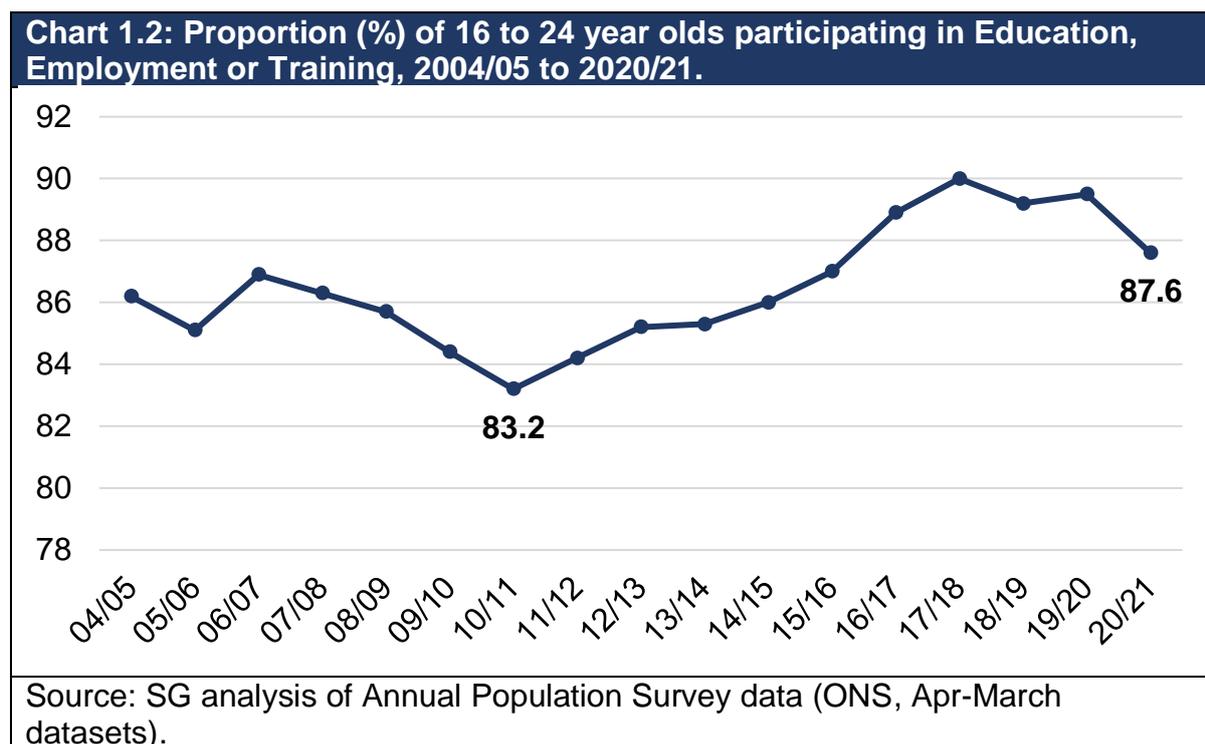
Source: NRS (2021), ‘Mid-2020 Population Estimates Scotland’ and NRS (2019) ‘Projected Population (2018-based)’.

⁸ It is worth noting that National Records Scotland (NRS) projections do not attempt to predict the impact of political circumstances such as Brexit. If recent changes have not yet affected population estimates or trend data that the projections are based on, they will not affect the projections.

Young people's participation in education, employment and training

Chart 1.2 shows the proportion of 16 to 24 year olds participating in Education, Employment and Training in Scotland. This measure is an inverse of the 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' indicator⁹ which is based on the ONS Annual Population Survey data.

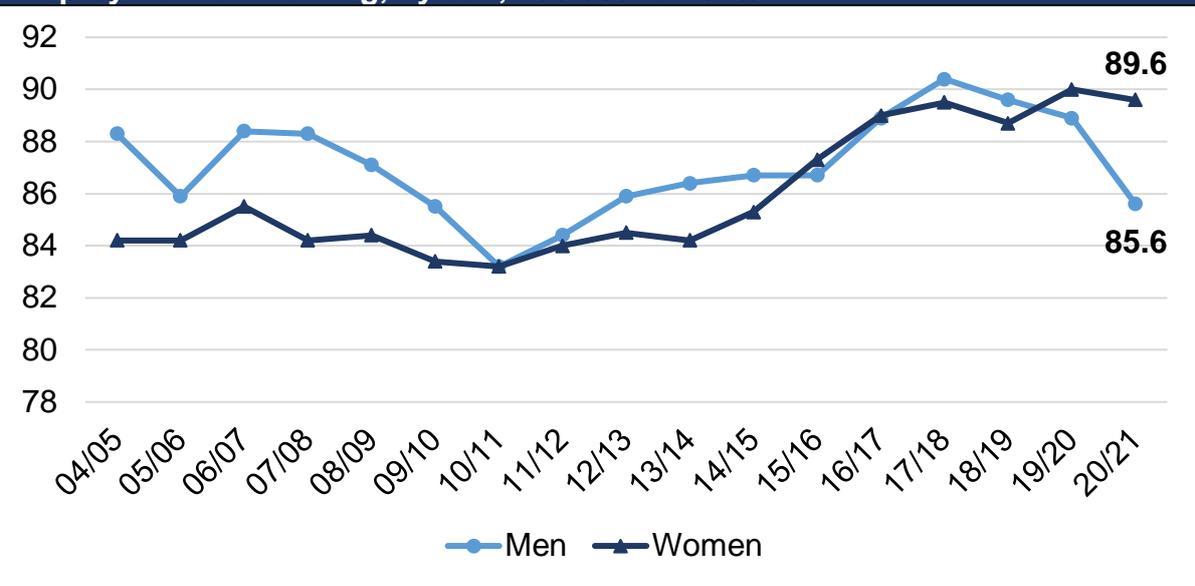
In 2020/21, 87.6% of young people aged 16 to 24 were participating in education, employment or training. This is a fall of 1.9 pp since 2019/20, but an increase of 4.4 pp from 83.2% in 2010/11 (the low following the 2008 recession).



The percentage of 16 to 24 year olds participating in education, employment or training has typically been lower for women (see chart 1.3) than for men, particularly in the years to 2014/15. However, the percentage for men fell to 85.6% in 2020/21, which is 4.0 pp lower than for women.

⁹ A more detailed definition of 'NEET' is: "anybody who is not enrolled on an education course, doing an apprenticeship, on a government supported employment or training programme, working or studying towards a qualification, had job-related training or education in the last four weeks or in some form of paid work, including part-time employment."

Chart 1.3: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year olds Participating in Education, Employment or Training, by sex, 2004/05 to 2020/21.



Source: SG analysis of Annual Population Survey data (ONS, Apr-March datasets).

This indicator is a useful, and currently only, tool that shows the proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 participating in employment, education or training in Scotland. However, it has its limitations. The indicator does not include voluntary work in its definition and the measure cannot be broken down by activity. Similarly, data on equality groups beyond gender is not readily available.

Participation statuses of young people aged 16 to 19 years

SDS produces an Annual Participation Measure (APM) which also measures the participation status of young people. The APM includes a wider range of activities in its definition: School pupil, Further Education, Higher Education, Modern Apprenticeships, Full-time employment, part-time employment, self-employed, Employability fund stages 2-4, Activity agreements, other formal training, Personal/Skills Development, and Voluntary Work. The measure can also be broken down to individual activity grouping and by several equality groups as well as by level of deprivation (SIMD). However, the limitation of this measure is that it currently only covers ages 16 to 19 due to lack of robust data on older age groups.¹⁰ The following sections provide an overview of what the APM data says about young people's, aged 16 to 19, participation statuses.

In 2021, the APM data showed that the participation rate for those aged 16 to 19 was 92.2%, a slight 0.1 pp increase on 2020, and the highest participation rate recorded since the inception of the participation measure (see Table 1.1). Most of those participating were in some form of education (74.8%), with school pupil the most common status (43.2%) followed by Higher Education (20.1%). The participation rate for those in education has increased by 2.8 pp compared to 2020 (72.0%).

¹⁰ Scottish Government and SDS are working together to try to expand the APM to 16-24 year olds.

In 2021, 15.5% of 16 to 19 year olds were in employment, a 2.7 pp decrease compared to 2020 and the lowest rate ever reported. This is likely to have been a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on available opportunities. Similarly, the rate of those participating in MAs has decreased by 1.2 pp, from 6.1% in 2020 to 4.9% in 2021, likely caused by the reduced opportunities due to the pandemic.

The percentage of 16 to 19 year olds not participating decreased every year from 2018 to 2020 but increased in 2021, with 3.2% not participating, out of which 1.3% unemployed seeking and 1.9% unemployed not seeking.

Table 1.1: Participation (%) statuses, 16 to 19 years, 2018 to 2020.					
		Annual Participation Measure			
		2018	2019	2020	2021
	Total 16 to 19 cohort (count)	211,255	207,133	205,981	207,529
% Participating					
Education	School Pupil	40.5	41.0	41.4	43.2
	Higher Education	19.8	19.9	19.6	20.1
	Further Education	11.0	10.6	11.0	11.5
	% Participating in Education	71.3	71.4	72.0	74.8
Employment	Modern Apprenticeship	6.5	5.9	6.1	4.9
	Full-Time Employment	9.4	9.5	9.6	8.2
	Part-Time Employment	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.3
	Self-Employed	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	% Participating in Employment	18.7	18.2	18.3	15.5
Training and Other Personal Development	Employability Fund	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6
	Other Formal Training	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.8
	Personal/Skills Development	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Activity Agreement	0.6	0.6	-	-
	Voluntary Work	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
	% Training & Other Development	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.8
% Not Participating					
	Unemployed seeking	1.7	1.5	1.1	1.3
	Unemployed not seeking	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.9
% Unconfirmed					
		4.7	5.3	5.1	4.6

Source: SDS (2021), 'Annual Participation Measure 2021 – Supplementary Tables'.

Age

Participation was highest amongst 16 year olds (99.1%) with the majority of them at school (92.0%). The high participation rate for this age group is heavily influenced by most pupils leaving school at a later age.

The lowest participation was amongst 19 year olds (85.4%), with this age group most likely to be participating in higher education (42.7%).

The 18 and 19 age groups were most likely not to participate (5.0% and 4.1%). Similarly, 10.5% of the 19 year olds¹¹ had an unconfirmed status compared to 0.2% of those aged 16.

SIMD

Those living in more deprived areas are less likely to be reported as participating than those from the less deprived areas. However, the participation gap between those living in the 20% most deprived areas and those in the 20% least deprived areas continues to narrow. The gap has narrowed to 9.3 pp in 2021, compared to 12.9 pp in 2016¹².

Those from the less deprived areas were more likely to remain in education compared to those from more deprived areas. The proportion reported as participating in education in 2021 from the 20% least deprived areas (quintile 5) was 84.6% compared to 67.8% for those from the 20% most deprived areas (quintile 1), a difference of 16.8 pp (see Table 1.2).

In contrast, those from more deprived areas are more likely to be participating in employment than those from least deprived areas.

A higher proportion from more deprived areas were unemployed seeking and unemployed not seeking compared to those from less deprived areas. For example, 2.4% of those from quintile 1 were unemployed seeking compared to 0.6% from quintile 5, and 3.4% of those from quintile 1 were unemployed not seeking compared to 0.7% from quintile 5.

¹¹ It may be that many of the 19 year olds identified as unconfirmed have taken up employment, however, it has not been possible to confirm this as SDS does not currently have any regular administrative data feed of employment information. SDS continues to work with the Scottish Government and HMRC to make progress in obtaining employment related data.

¹² More detailed time series data tables can be found from SDS (2021), '[Annual Participation Measure 2021 Supplementary tables](#)'.

Table 1.2: Participation (%) statuses by SIMD quintiles, 16 to 19 years, 2021.

	SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived)	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived)
Participating	87.1	90.4	93.3	94.6	96.4
Education	67.8	70.1	74.6	78.1	84.6
Employment	15.8	18.0	17.1	15.4	11.1
Training and Other Personal Development	3.4	2.2	1.5	1.1	0.7
Not Participating	5.8	4.1	2.6	2.0	1.3
Unemployed Seeking	2.4	1.6	1.1	0.8	0.6
Unemployed Not Seeking	3.4	2.5	1.5	1.2	0.7
Unconfirmed	7.2	5.5	4.1	3.4	2.3
Source: SDS (2021), 'Annual Participation Measure 2021 – Supplementary Tables'.					

Equalities

Women (93.2%) are more likely than men (91.2%) to be participating in education, training or employment. Similarly, women (79.9%) are more likely to be participating in education than men (70.0%). On the other hand, men (19.0%) are more likely than women (11.9%) to be participating in employment, a 7.1 pp difference. Men are also more likely to be unemployed seeking.

Those with a self-declared disability (88.3%) are 4.1 pp less likely to be participating than those identified as not disabled (92.4%). The proportion participating in employment for those identified as disabled is 9.5%, and is markedly lower than those not identified as disabled (15.8%). The proportion unemployed not seeking is also considerably higher for those identified as disabled (5.1%) compared to those with no disability (1.8%).

The participation rate of those identified as minority ethnic (95.4%) was 3.4 pp higher than for those identified as White (92.0%) in 2021. Those self-identifying as minority ethnic are particularly likely to be participating in education, with the participation rate for this activity at 89.0%, 15.2 pp higher than those who are white. The dominance of education as a post 16+ choice for this group has resulted in lower representation in other statuses, meaning they are less likely to be in employment, less likely to be unemployed seeking and less likely to have an unconfirmed status.

Table 1.3: Participation (%) statuses by equalities, 16 to 19 year olds, 2021

	Gender		Disability		Ethnicity	
	Female	Male	Disabled	Not Disabled	Minority Ethnic	White
Participating	93.2	91.2	88.3	92.4	95.4	92.0
% Participating in Education	79.9	70.0	73.1	74.9	89.0	73.8
% Participating in Employment	11.9	19.0	9.5	15.8	5.3	16.3
% Training & Other Development	1.5	2.2	5.7	1.7	1.1	1.9
Not Participating	2.8	3.6	6.7	3.1	2.1	3.3
% Unemployed Seeking	0.9	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.3
% Unemployed Not Seeking	1.9	1.9	5.1	1.8	1.1	2.0
Unconfirmed	3.9	5.2	5.0	4.6	2.5	4.7

Source: SDS (2021), 'Annual Participation Measure 2021 – Supplementary Tables'.

Participation Rates Across Scotland

The participation rate also varies by local authority. In 2021, East Renfrewshire had the highest participation rate (97.2%), 7.8 pp higher than Aberdeen City (89.4%) which had the lowest rate.¹³

While there is some variability in rankings across years, the same local authorities tend to stay within the top and the bottom of the scale. For example, Shetland Islands, East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire and Eilean Siar have all ranked in the top 5 for the past five years. Conversely, Dundee City and Glasgow City have both ranked in the bottom five during the same time period.

Volunteering

There is very little existing data on volunteering, with the APM the only source of reliable data on young people, which is why volunteering is only covered in this chapter.

In the APM publication, SDS defines Voluntary Work as work that “involve[s] a young person giving of his/her time and energy through a third party. It will benefit both the young person and others, including individuals, groups and organisations, communities, the environment and society at large. Some volunteering may include

¹³ More detailed data on participation rates by local authorities can be found from the SDS (2021), '[Annual Participation Measure 2021 Supplementary tables](#)'.

a financial allowance. Work experience that is not organised via a formal training programme and un-paid work would also be recorded here.”

The participation in Voluntary Work by those aged 16 to 19 has remained relatively steady for the past four years, at 0.2% between 2018 and 2020, falling to 0.1% in 2021. Breaking this down further by age, 16 year olds’ participation in Voluntary Work is very minimal (less than 0.05%), while 18 year olds have the highest participation rate in Voluntary Work. 17 and 19 year olds tend to align more closely with the average for Voluntary Work for the total 16 to 19 cohort.

In terms of gender, women have tended to be slightly more likely to participate in Voluntary Work than men (0.3% compared to 0.2% in 2019 and 2020), although this was reversed in 2021 (0.1% compared to 0.2%).

Those identifying as disabled are more likely to be participating in Voluntary Work than those who do not. In 2021, 0.3% of those who identify as disabled participated in Voluntary Work compared to 0.1% of those who do not.

Those from the least deprived areas are somewhat more likely to participate in Voluntary Work than those from the most deprived areas.

Table 1.4: Participation (%) in Voluntary Work by age, equalities and SIMD, 2018 to 2021.				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Age				
Total 16-19 Cohort	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
17	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
18	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.3
19	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Gender				
Female	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1
Male	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ethnicity				
Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and other ethnic groups	*	0.3	0.2	0.1
White	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Not Known/Not Disclosed	*	0.2	0.3	0.2
Disability				
Identified as Disabled	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3
Not Identified as Disabled	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
SIMD				
20% Most deprived	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
20% Least Deprived	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1
Source: SDS (2021), ‘Annual Participation Measure 2021 – Supplementary Tables’				
*Disclosure control has been applied where figures are less than 5 or where such small numbers can be identified through differencing.				

2. Employment, Fair Work and Skills

This section examines the statistics on employment, unemployment and inactivity rates for young people aged 16 to 24. It will also look at statistics on the quality of work as well as examine statistics on skill levels for those in employment.

Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates for young people in Scotland

As shown in Table 2.1, in 2020/21 (April-March), the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds (including those in full-time education) was estimated at 52.8%, 1.8 pp lower than a year ago (54.7%). The rate is now the lowest since 2013/14.

As expected, the employment rate for those not in full-time education is higher, although this has also fallen by 2.7 pp over the year to 71.9%.

The unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was estimated at 12.5% in 2020/21, 3.6 pp higher than the year before (8.9%). The last time the unemployment rate for young people was higher was in 2015/16 (15.0%). The unemployment rate excluding those in full-time education follows very similar patterns and was estimated at 13.2% in 2020/21, a 4.7 pp increase over the year.

The inactivity rate¹⁴ for 16 to 24 year olds was estimated at 39.6% in 2020/21, 0.4 pp lower than the year before (40.0%). Since the series began, the rate has been steadily rising, and has increased by 4.7 pp in the past six years. Over three quarters 76.8% of young people (16 to 24 years) in 2020/21 who were economically inactive were in full-time education¹⁵, which is why the inactivity rate for those not in full-time education is at a considerably lower level than for 16-24 year olds overall.

¹⁴ Individuals who are neither employed nor unemployed under the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition are classed as economically inactive. There are many reasons why people may be inactive and not considered an active part of the labour supply: they may have a long-term illness or disability, be studying for a qualification, staying at home to look after their family, or have retired.

¹⁵ Scottish Government (2021), '[Labour Market Statistics for Young People \(16 to 24 year olds\): Scotland and UK – April 2020 to March 2021](#)'.

Table 2.1: Employment, Unemployment and Inactivity rates (%) for 16 to 24 year olds by full-time education status, 2013/2014 to 2020/2021.

	Employment (%)		Unemployment (%)		Inactivity (%)	
	Not in Full-Time Education	All	Not in Full-Time Education	All	Not in Full-Time Education	All
2013/14	69.2	52.1	17.8	19.7	15.8	35.1
2014/15	70.9	54.4	16.3	16.4	15.4	34.9
2015/16	72.2	55.9	14.3	15.0	15.7	34.3
2016/17	74.9	57.2	9.3	10.0	17.4	36.4
2017/18	76.2	58.8	8.4	9.3	16.8	35.2
2018/19	76.8	58.3	9.4	9.9	15.2	35.3
2019/20	74.6	54.7	8.5	8.9	18.5	40.0
2020/21	71.9	52.8	13.2	12.5	17.2	39.6

Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Labour Market Statistics for young people (16-24 years): Scotland and UK – April 2020 to March 2021.

Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates for 16 to 24 year olds by equalities and SIMD

Gender

There is no considerable gap in employment rates between women and men aged 16 to 24. In April 2020 to March 2021, young women had a higher employment rate (53.5%) than young men (52.2%), however, this has varied across the past several years.

Young women, in general, tend to have lower unemployment rates compared to young men (11.9% compared to 13.1% in 2020/21), but a higher economic inactivity rate, except for in 2020/21 when men had a slightly higher inactivity rate (39.9% compared to 39.3%).

Table 2.2: Employment, Unemployment and Economic Inactivity Rates (%) for 16 to 24 year olds by sex, 2013/14 to 2020/21.

	Employment (%)		Unemployment (%)		Economic Inactivity (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2013/14	51.0	53.3	19.5	19.7	38.4	35.1
2014/15	56.1	52.7	13.0	19.7	35.5	34.4
2015/16	57.2	54.6	12.1	17.7	35.0	33.6
2016/17	58.2	56.3	7.7	12.1	36.9	36.0
2017/18	57.1	60.5	8.5	10.0	37.6	32.9
2018/19	56.8	59.9	8.8	10.8	37.8	32.8
2019/20	54.9	54.5	8.3	9.4	40.1	39.9
2020/21	53.5	52.2	11.9	13.1	39.3	39.9

Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Labour Market Statistics for young people (16-24 years): Scotland and UK – April 2020 to March 2021.

Disability¹⁶

Looking at the employment rate by disability, the gap between the disabled and not disabled employment rates for 16 to 24 year olds has shown very little improvement in the past six years. The gap was at its lowest in the series in 2019/20, at 16.4 pp, however, rising to its highest in 2020/21, to 26.1 pp, as the employment rate for those aged 16 to 24 who are disabled fell by 9.5 pp from 41.1% in 2019/20 to 31.6% in 2020/21 while the rate for those aged 16 to 24 who are not disabled rose by 0.2 pp from 57.5% to 57.7%.

Similarly, the disability inactivity rate gap has shown no improvements in this time period, and was at its highest in 2020/21, at 21.1 pp, with the inactivity rate at 56.6% for those aged 16-24 who are disabled compared to 35.6% for those who are not.

Finally, the disability unemployment rate gap for young people also remains considerable, and rose from 4.1 pp to 16.7 pp between 2019/20 and 2020/21. However, it should be noted that the unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 24 who are disabled in 2020/21 is based on a small sample size which may have resulted in less precise estimates and should therefore be used with caution.

Table 2.3: Employment, Unemployment and Economic Inactivity Rates (%) for 16 to 24 year olds by disability, 2014/15 to 2020/21.

	Employment (%)		Unemployment (%)		Economic Inactivity (%)	
	Not Equality Act Disabled	Equality Act Disabled	Not Equality Act Disabled	Equality Act Disabled	Not Equality Act Disabled	Equality Act Disabled
2014/15	56.7	36.7	14.8	32.6	33.5	45.6
2015/16	58.3	38.5	14.0	23.0	32.2	49.9
2016/17	60.4	38.6	9.3	15.4	33.4	54.4
2017/18	61.1	42.5	8.0	20.4	33.6	46.6
2018/19	61.9	37.0	8.3	23.0	32.5	52.0
2019/20	57.5	41.1	8.3	12.3	37.3	53.2
2020/21	57.7	31.6	10.4	27.1	35.6	56.6

Source: SG analysis of Annual Population Survey data (ONS, April-March datasets).

Note: Shaded estimates are based on a small sample size. This may result in less precise estimates, which should be used with caution.

Ethnicity

While the APS does collect data on personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, the employment rate estimates for the minority ethnic 16 to 24 year old population are not as reliable as the estimates for other age groups and are therefore not presented here.

¹⁶ Since 2014, disability has been defined based on the Equality Act 2010 definition. This GSS harmonised definition is based on self-reported health conditions which have lasted 12 months or more which limit ability to carry out day-to day activities a little or a lot.

However, there have been some recent UK-wide studies on the impact of the pandemic on young people from minority ethnic backgrounds that may have relevance in the Scottish context.

Analysis of the UK-wide Office of National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey by the Resolution Foundation¹⁷ and the Institute for Employment Studies¹⁸ suggests that non-white young people have seen larger falls in employment than white young people as a result of the pandemic. As non-white young people had poorer work prospects before the pandemic¹⁹, this has led to the exacerbation of inequalities.

On a UK level, the unemployment rate for young people rose from 11.8% to 14.2%²⁰ during the pandemic. At the same time, the rate rose to 35% for young Black people (a 10 pp increase) and to 24% for young Asian people (a 3 pp increase). This is much higher than the corresponding unemployment rate for young white people which rose to 13% (a 3 pp increase).

Similarly, Black and Asian young people have accounted for two-thirds of the total fall in youth employment, despite only making up an eighth of the number of young people in employment in the UK. The structural barriers that drive disparities for those from minority ethnic backgrounds remain.

SIMD

Looking at employment rates by SIMD between 2017 and 2020 (January-December), we can see that those from 20% least deprived areas have in general had a higher employment rate than those from 20% most deprived areas. However, those from most deprived areas had a higher employment rate in 2020 (50.3% compared to 47.6%).

¹⁷ Resolution Foundation (2021), '[Uneven Steps: Changes in youth unemployment and study since the onset of Covid-19.](#)'

¹⁸ Institute for Employment Studies (2021), '[An Unequal Crisis: The impact of the pandemic on the youth labour market.](#)'

¹⁹ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021), '[Inequalities in education, skills and incomes in the UK: The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.](#)'

²⁰ The Pre-crisis measure is the average of the 2nd and 3rd quarters of years 2015-2019 and the crisis period covers the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2020.

Table 2.4: Employment rates²¹ (%) for 16 to 24 year olds by SIMD, 2017 to 2020.

	20% most deprived	20% least deprived
2017	50.2	54.9
2018	52.9	58.3
2019	54.3	57.4
2020	50.3	47.6

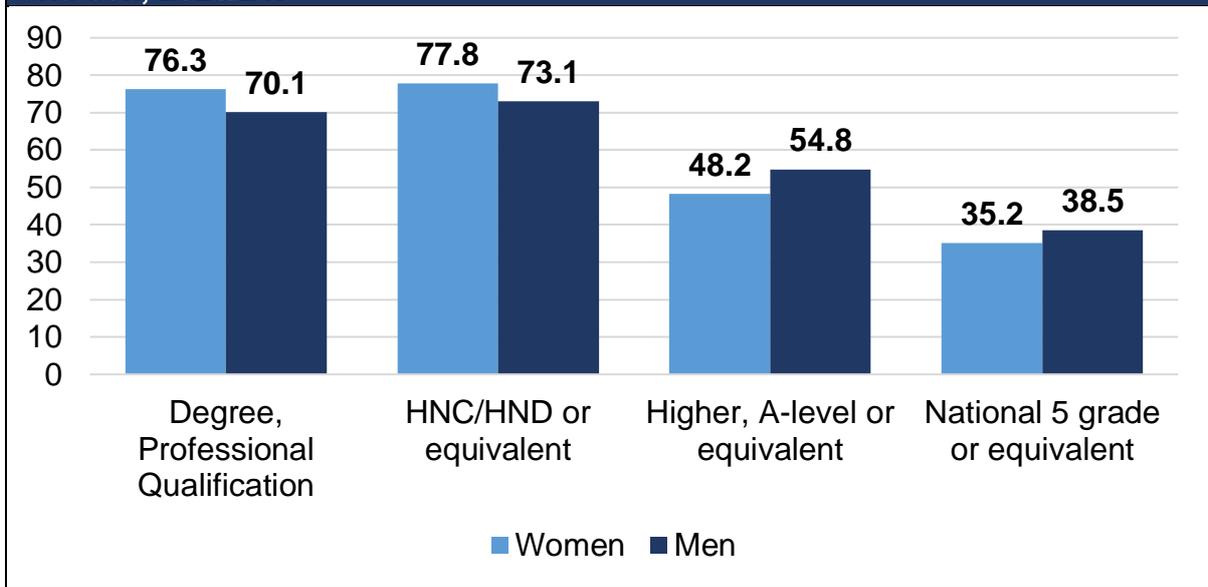
Source: SG analysis of Annual Population Survey data (ONS, Jan-Dec datasets).

Employment rates by level of education

In 2020/21, young people in Scotland with further or higher education qualifications have higher employment rates than those with lower qualifications.

Young women (16-24 years) whose highest qualification was 'Degree, Professional Qualification' or 'HNC/HND or equivalent' had higher employment rates than men aged 16-24 who had the same level of qualification. This was reverse for those young people whose highest qualifications were 'Higher, A-level or equivalent' and 'National 5 grade or equivalent'.

Chart 2.1: Employment rates (%) for 16-24 year olds by highest qualification and sex, 2020/21.



Source: SG analysis of Annual Population Survey data (ONS, Apr 2020-March 2021).

Young people's employment by industry

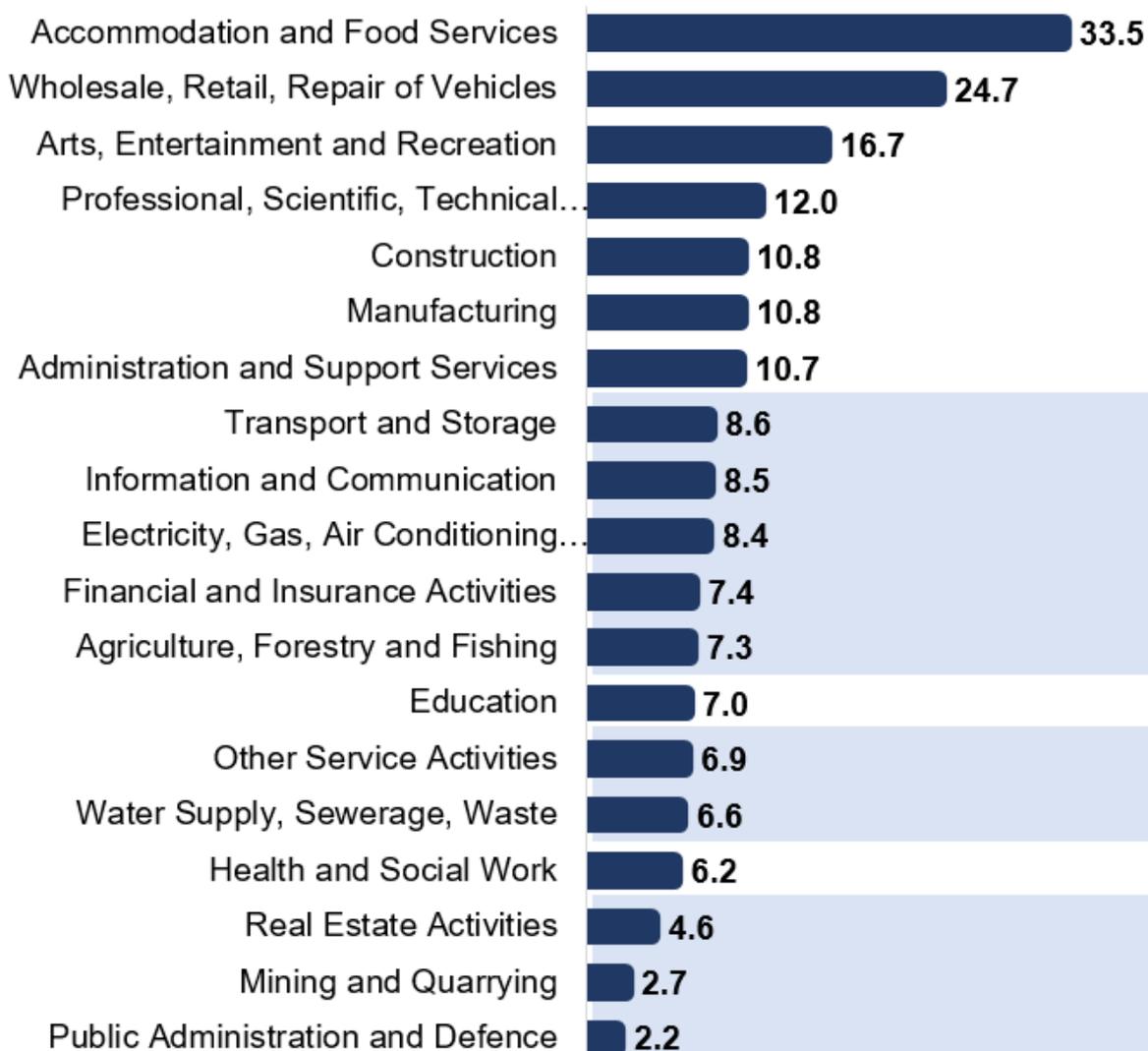
Chart 2.2 shows the proportion of workforce aged 16 to 24 by industry in April 2020-March 2021. People aged 16 to 24 accounted for an estimated 11.3% of the workforce in Scotland, however, they made up an estimated 33.5% of the workforce

²¹ Unemployment and economic inactivity data is not available for 16 to 24 year olds by SIMD status.

in Accommodation and Food Services sector, 24.7% of the Wholesale, Retail, Repair of Vehicles sector and 16.7% of Accommodation and Food Services sector, all of which have been hard hit by the pandemic related restrictions.

Based on a Scottish Government publication on public sector employment in Scotland, young people accounted for 4.6% of total employment in the devolved public sector in the first quarter of 2021.²²

Chart 2.2: Proportion (%) of industry workforce aged 16 to 24, 2020/21.



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS. Data from Scottish Government (2021), 'Scotland's Labour Market - People Places and Regions -Charts - 2021'.

1. Shaded estimates are based on a small sample size. This may result in less precise estimates, which should be used with caution.

²² Scottish Government (2021), ['Public sector employment in Scotland: statistics for first quarter 2021'](#).

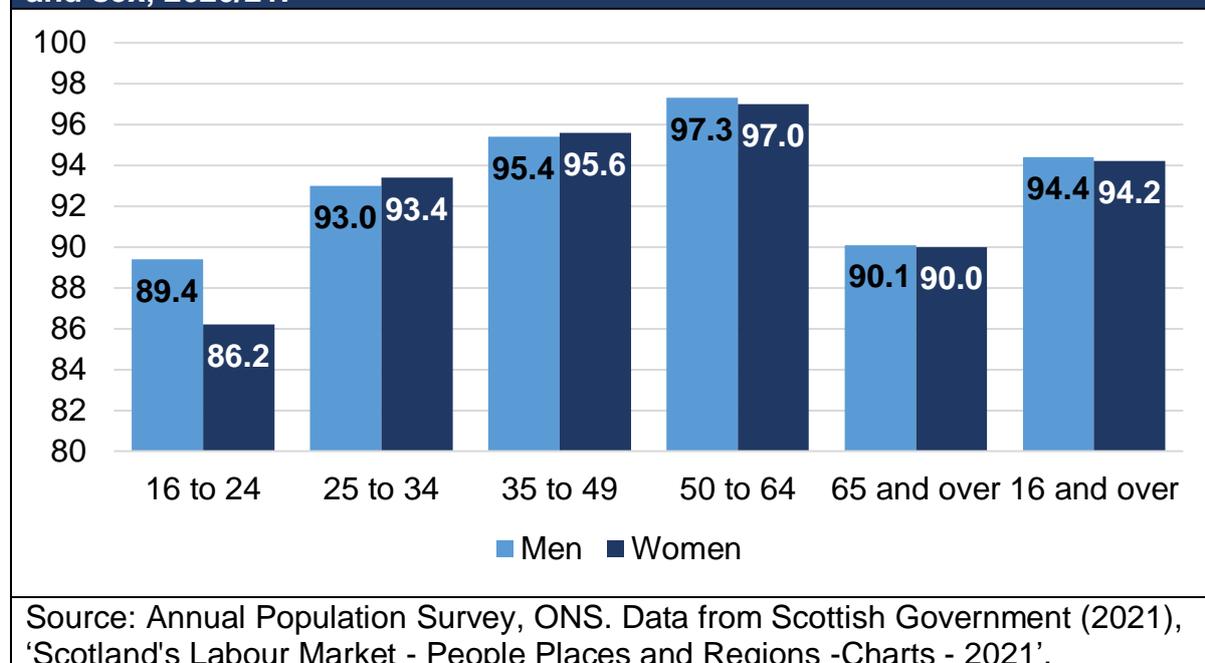
Young people in contractually secure employment

Chart 2.3 shows the proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 years in contractually secure employment by sex in April 2020 – March 2021. Contractually secure employment measures the proportion of employees who have indicated that their job is permanent.

Young people aged 16 to 24 were the least likely to be in contractually secure employment in 2020/21. Across all age groups, the proportion of employees in contractually secure work is above 90.0%, except for those aged 16 to 24 (87.8%)²³.

Women aged 16 to 24 were less likely to be in contractually secure work than men by 3.2 pp. This gap was considerably higher for young people than for the total population aged 16 or over where the gap between women and men in contractually secure work was 0.2 pp.

Chart 2.3: Proportion (%) of employees in contractually secure work by age and sex, 2020/21.



Young people's underemployment

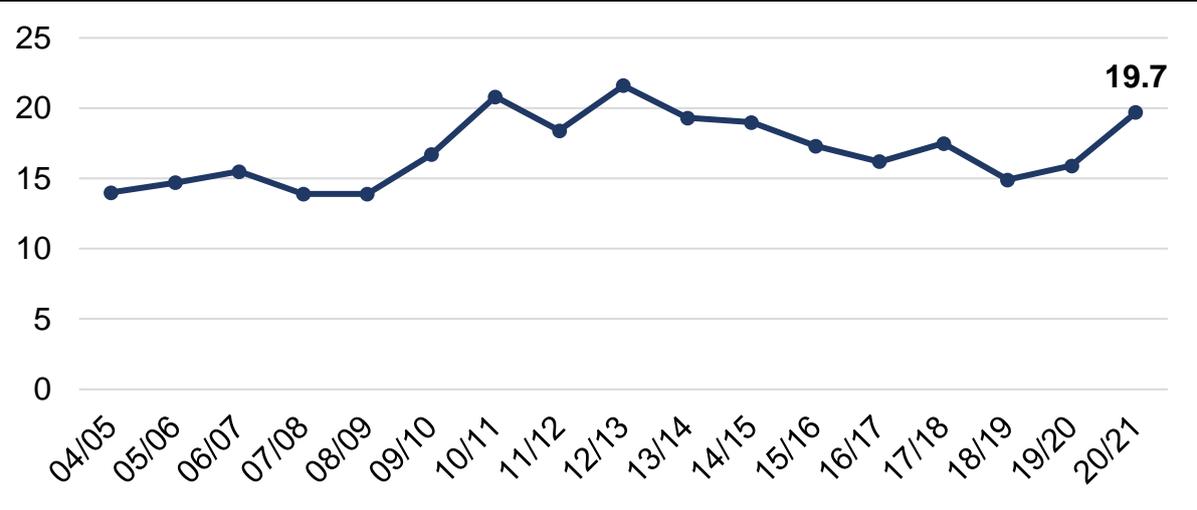
There are two different types of underemployment, hours based and skills based. At the moment, data is only available for the former by age.

Hours based underemployment is defined as those who look for additional hours in their existing role (at the same rate of pay), those who look for an additional job (to supplement their existing job), and those seeking for a different job with more hours.

²³ Scottish Government (2021), '[Scotland's Labour Market – People, Places and Regions – Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2020/21](#)'.

In Scotland, underemployment rate was estimated to be highest amongst those in employment aged 16 to 24 years and, at 19.7% in 2020/21, was over double the average for all age groups (8.5%). The underemployment rate rose after the 2008 recession, linked to the rise of part-time work as companies cut hours to reduce costs but retain employees. Since 2012/13, the rate was on a gradual downward trend, however, increasing again in 2020/21 likely due to the pandemic.

Chart 2.4: Underemployment rate (%), 16-24 year olds, 2004/05 to 2020/21 (April to March).



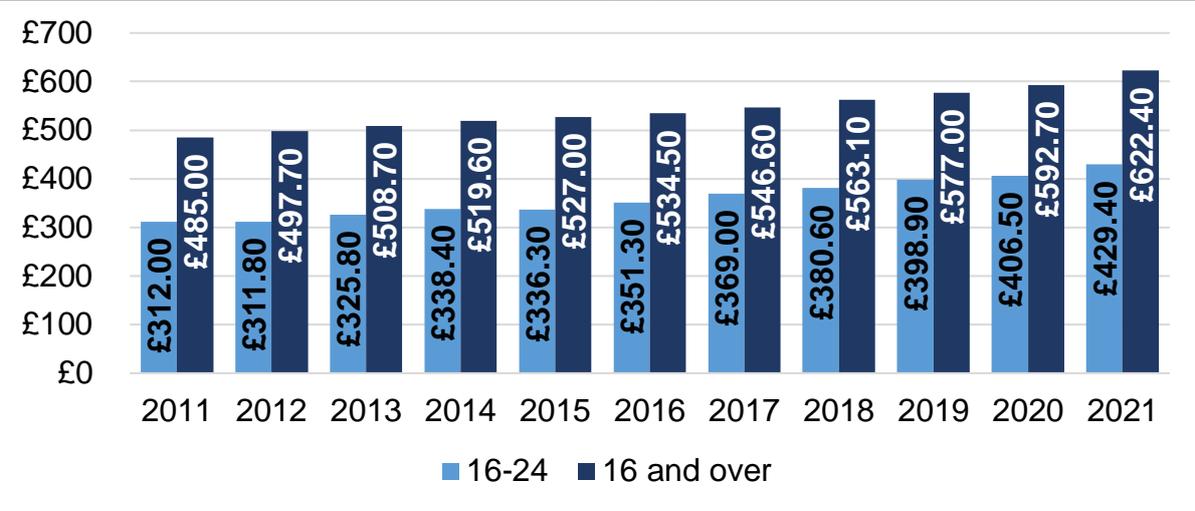
Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS. Data from Scottish Government (2021), 'Scotland's Labour Market - People Places and Regions -Charts - 2021'.

Young people's earnings compare to average earnings across all age groups

Earnings for full-time employees aged 16 to 24 and 16 and over (all adult ages) on adult rates of pay (i.e. excluding those on young, training and apprenticeship rates) have increased in the past decade, with median weekly earnings in 2021 at £429.40 for those aged 16 to 24 and at £622.40 for those aged 16 and over. Young people (16 to 24 years) earn around 31% less than the median for those aged 16 and over.

However, young people's earnings have increased at a faster pace, by around 38% since 2011 compared to around 28% for those aged 16 and over.

Chart 2.5: Median Gross Weekly Earnings (£) for full-time employees aged 16 to 24 and 16 and over on adult rates of pay, 2011-2021.



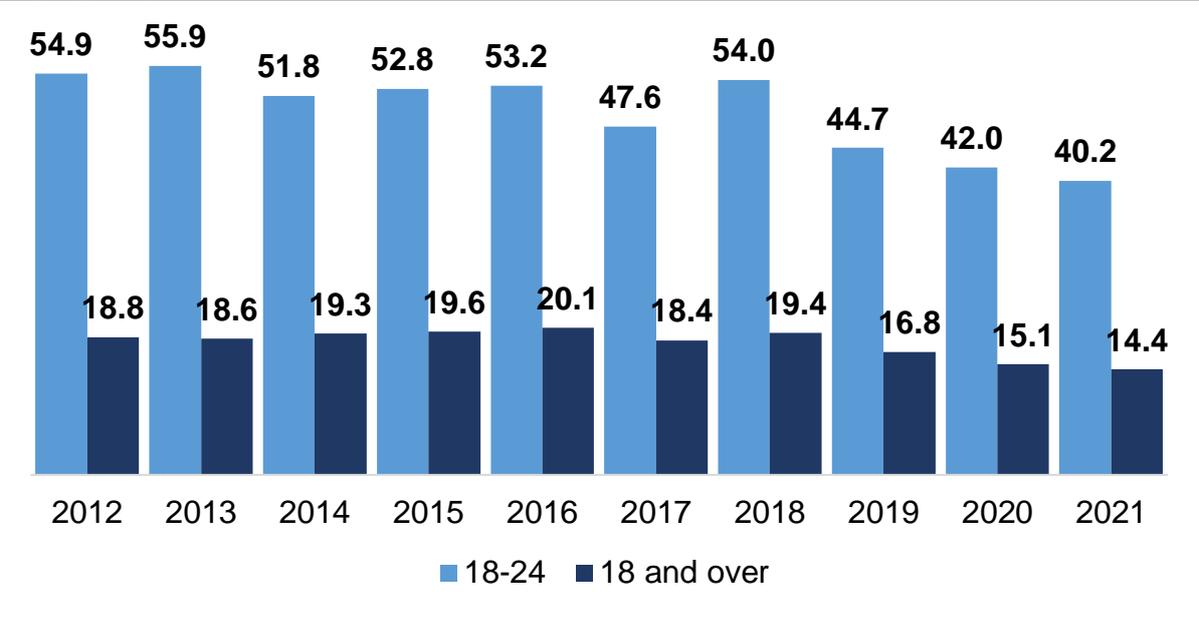
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS.
 16-24 data – SG analysis of Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ONS, 2021);
 data for 16 and over – Scottish Government (2021), ‘Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021’.

The real Living Wage for those aged 18 to 24

In 2021, 40.2% of employees aged 18 to 24²⁴ in Scotland earned less than the real living wage (£9.50). This rate was 14.4% for all employees aged 18 or over. The rate has improved for both age groups since 2012, from 54.9% in 2012 to 40.2% in 2021 for employees aged 18 to 24 years old, and from 18.8% to 14.4% for employees aged 18 and over.

²⁴ Living Wage data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is only available for those aged 18 and over.

Chart 2.6: Proportion of employees earning less than the real Living Wage by age group, 2012 to 2021.



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS. Data from Scottish Government (2021), 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021'.

The gender pay gap for those aged 16 to 24

The gender pay gap for all employees (i.e. including all work patterns) within the 16 to 24 age group has been on a downward trajectory since 2014, falling from 10.6% to -1.8% in 2021, as shown in Table 2.5. A negative gender pay gap means that, on average, women's hourly earnings (excluding overtime) are higher than those of men.

It is in particular in the full-time employment cohort where the gender pay gap was considerably negative, at -17.0% in 2021, for this age group.

It is important to note, that while the gender pay gap for this age group is negative, women still earn less than men on average in the older age groups. For example, for the cohort aged 35 to 49, gender pay gap was 14.1% for all employees (full-time and part-time) and 3.5% for full-time employees in 2021. And as the table shows, the gap continues to grow for both all working patterns and full-time employees the older the age group is. This will be partly impacted by subject choices typically made in senior phase, further and higher education and apprenticeships; workplace practices including the "motherhood penalty"²⁵, whereby women who become mothers suffer a wage penalty; and occupations being low paid because of the way skills and values are socially constructed which can mean that certain types of work generally undertaken by women is undervalued²⁶.

²⁵ Vagni and Breen (2021): '[Earnings and Income Penalties for Motherhood: Estimates for British Women Using the Individual Synthetic Control Method](#)'

²⁶ Scottish Government (2019), '[A fairer Scotland for women: gender pay gap action plan](#)'.

Table 2.5: Gender pay gap for median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) by work pattern and age, 2014 to 2021

	16-24		25-34		35-49		50-64	
	All	Full time						
2014	10.6	14.8	7.7	0.9	20.4	7.5	23.3	12.0
2015	7.3	8.8	6.1	-1.5	19.4	7.7	23.2	12.5
2016	6.7	7.5	8.8	0.7	17.1	6.0	19.3	10.9
2017	3	3.8	11.6	1.8	19.5	8.2	21.1	11.1
2018	1.5	-3.1	8.7	1.0	16.2	8.0	21.8	10.6
2019	0.8	-0.4	13.0	7.4	14.2	6.3	21.2	12.2
2020	-2.7	-8.7	8.5	2.1	12.5	5.1	17.9	5.6
2021	-1.8	-17.0	1.2	-4.3	14.1	3.5	18.8	7.7

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS. Data from Scottish Government (2021), 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021'.

1. Shaded figures indicate a reasonably precise estimate, rather than precise
2. 'All' includes full-time and part-time working patterns.

The Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO)²⁷ data can also be used to examine the gender pay gap as it provides details on earnings for university graduates and completers of Modern Apprenticeships five years post-graduation and college graduates completing an HE level course 3 years post-graduation.

According to the LEO data, which covers all ages, female median earnings in 2016/17 were £3,100 lower than male median earnings five years after graduation for university graduates (£26,000 compared to £29,100)²⁸, £2,100 lower for HE college graduates three years after graduation (£15,000 compared to £17,000), and £9,800 lower for Modern Apprenticeship completers five years after completing (£16,000 compared to £25,800).²⁹

While not restricted to the 16 to 24 age cohort, this data adds to the understanding of how one's earnings develop by gender when an individual moves from education to employment and reinforces the statistics presented above. However, some caution is also required as the differences in earnings can be influenced by subject studied, level of qualification and mode of employment. This is especially the case in Modern Apprenticeship statistics where the large difference in earnings between males and females can partially be explained by the occupation choice.

²⁷ There are three separate publications on [University Graduates](#), [HE college graduates](#) and [Modern Apprenticeship completers](#).

²⁸ More up to date, 2018/19 tax year data, exists for university graduates, however, for comparative purposes 2016/17 data is used in the text. Female median earnings in 2018/19 were £2,600 lower than male median earnings five years after graduation for university graduates (£27,400 compared to £29,900).

²⁹ This data relates to earnings in the 2016/17 tax year of 2010/11 university graduates, 2012/13 HE college graduates and 2011/12 Modern Apprenticeship completers.

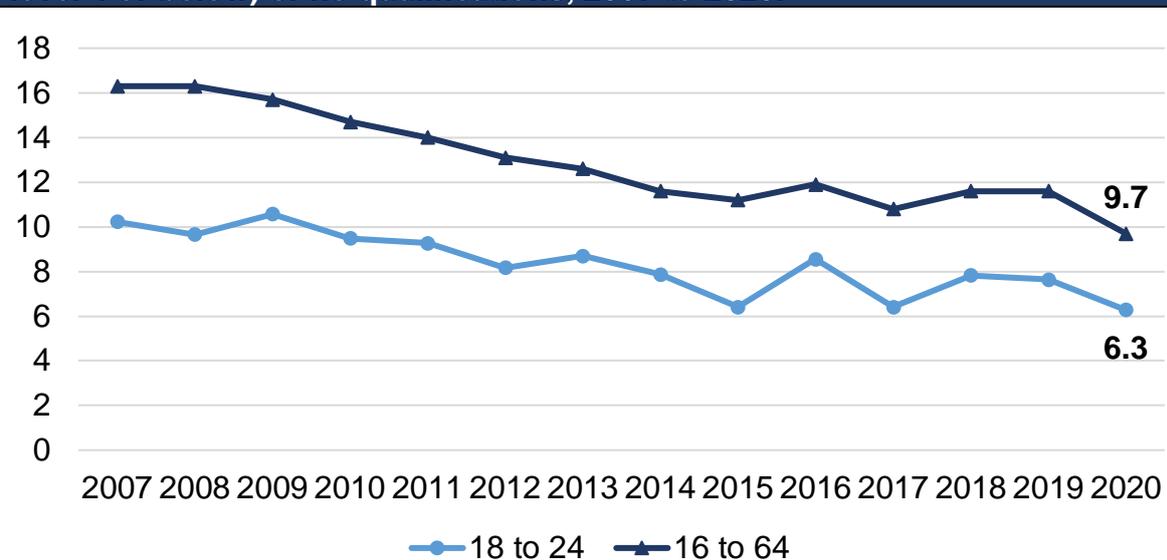
Skills profile of the population aged 18 to 24

One of the National Performance Framework indicators looks at the skill profile of the population through a measure on the proportion of the population (aged 16 to 64) with low (SCQF level 4 or below) or no qualifications.

Chart 2.7 shows that there is a smaller proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 with low or no qualifications compared to the population aged 16 to 64 – 6.3% compared to 9.7% in 2020. However, the gap has narrowed from 6.1 pp in 2007 to 3.4 pp in 2020. The proportion has decreased over time, from 10.2% in 2007 to 6.3% in 2020 for those aged 18 to 24 and from 16.3% in 2007 to 9.7% in 2020 for those aged 16 to 64.

The reason why the focus here is on 18 to 24 year olds rather than 16 to 24 year olds is to allow young people aged 16 to 17 the opportunity to obtain qualifications above SCQF level 4.

Chart 2.7: Proportion of adults aged 18 to 24 and 16 to 64 with low (SCQF level 4 or below) or no qualifications, 2007 to 2020.



Source: SG analysis of Annual Population Survey data (ONS, Jan-Dec datasets)

3. School Leavers

As the Young Persons Guarantee focuses on young people from age 16 to 24, and many individuals in this age range are still in or just leaving school, this section examines the available information and evidence around the senior phase pupils (S4 to S6) and their destinations after leaving school.³⁰

School leaver cohort by stage of leaving

In 2019, there were nearly 128,000 pupils studying in S4, S5 and S6³¹. Separate figures show that there were around 47,500 school leavers in 2019/20³². Comparing these figures suggests that around 80,000, or 62.8%, stayed in school at the end of the academic year 2019/20 - around 89.7% of S4 pupils and 72.6% of S5 pupils are estimated to have stayed in school to continue their studies.

The percentage of the total school leaver cohort who were in S6 fell very gradually between 2015/16 and 2018/19. However, the 2019/20 leaver cohort saw an increase in the percentage of S6 leavers as well as a reduction in the size of the total school leaver cohort – which was reported to be the smallest leaver cohort since consistent records began.³³

According to the Scottish Government Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations³⁴, this reduction in size of the school leaver cohort does not appear to correspond to a reduction in the associated number of senior phase pupils recorded in the school rolls at the beginning of the year. This suggests that some S4 and S5 pupils, who might have otherwise left school in 2019/20, have decided instead to stay at school for reasons related to the pandemic. This would also explain the increase in the percentage of S6 leavers of the total leaver cohort.

School leaver destinations by destination category

As table 3.1 shows, the majority of school leavers are in a positive destination nine months after the end of the school year (92.2% in 2019/20) – i.e. they are in further education, higher education, training, employment or voluntary work.

Of the leavers, 66.5% were in Higher or Further Education, the highest rate since consistent records began in 2009/10. The percentage of school leavers in

³⁰ There are some elements of the Guarantee that may provide some support below the age of 16, however, these numbers are expected to be small.

³¹ Scottish Government (2020), '[Pupil census: Supplementary Statistics](#)'.

³² Scottish Government (2021), '[Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition](#)'.

³³ See Scottish Government (2021), '[Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3 2021 Edition - Supplementary Tables](#)' for further time series data on the school leaver cohort by stage of leaving.

³⁴ Scottish Government (2021), '[Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition](#)'.

Employment, on the other hand, decreased from 28.0% in 2018/19 to 21.3% in 2019/20, the lowest figure on record.

The percentage of school leavers who were unemployed has increased from 5.8% in 2018/19 to 6.8% in 2019/20.

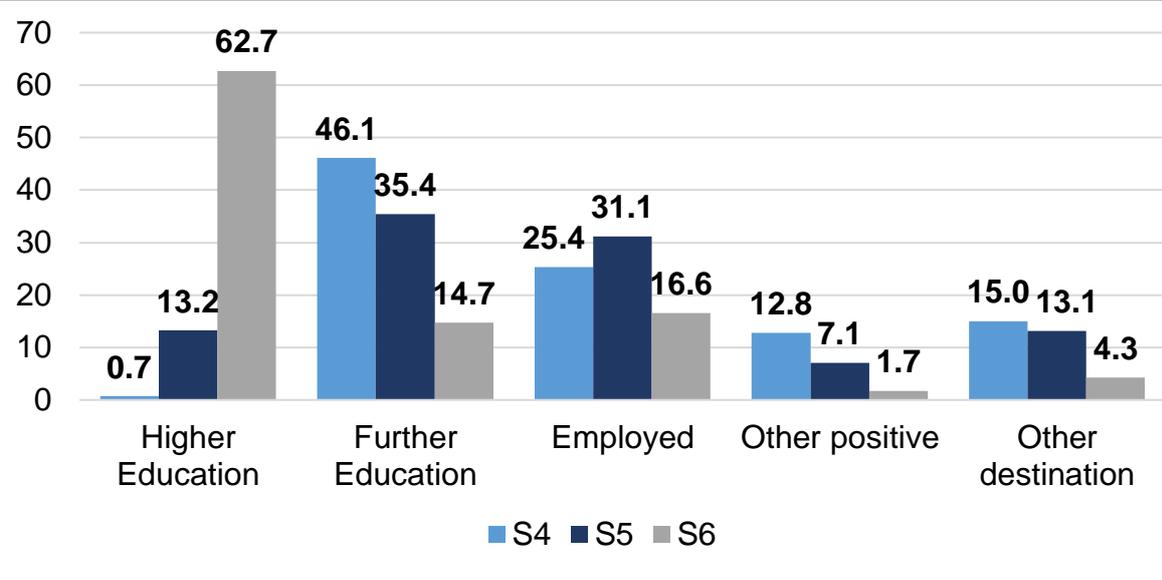
Table 3.1: Percentage (%) of school leavers by follow-up destination category, 2014/15 to 2019/20.						
Destination Category	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Higher Education	36.8	37.3	38.3	39.0	38.4	42.9
Further Education	23.4	22.4	23.0	22.6	23.3	23.6
Training	2.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.3	3.2
Employment	27.8	28.7	28.3	28.3	28.0	21.3
Voluntary work	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3
Other	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.2	0.4	0.8
Positive destinations	92.2	91.6	93.1	93.3	92.9	92.2
Other Destinations						
Unemployment seeking	5.6	5.7	4.3	3.8	3.5	4.1
Unemployment not seeking	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.7
Unknown ³⁵	0.6	0.9	0.7	1.1	1.3	1.0
Other Destinations	7.8	8.4	6.9	6.7	7.1	7.8
Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations'.						

The majority of S6 leavers were in Higher Education nine months after the end of the school year 2019/20, as shown in Chart 3.1. The most common destination for S5 and S4 leavers was Further Education. This is consistent with previous years.

Nine months after leaving school, 15.0% of S4 leavers were in other (i.e. non-positive) destinations, compared to 13.1% of S5 and 4.3% of S6 leavers. For S5 and S6 leavers, these are slightly higher than the previous year, when 16.5% of S4, 11.4% of S5 and 3.4% of S6 leavers were in non-positive destinations. Pupils who leave school at a later stage are more likely to enter a positive destination than those who leave earlier.

³⁵ The pandemic may have affected local partnerships' ability to track some school leavers through home visits which is likely to have affected the proportion of 2018/19 and 2019/20 school leavers with an unknown follow-up status.

Chart 3.1: Follow-up destinations (%) of school leavers by stage of leaving, 2019/20.



Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations'.

School leaver destinations by SIMD

A smaller percentage of pupils from the most deprived areas reach positive destinations than those from the least deprived areas. This gap has been gradually closing, from 18.7 pp in 2009/10 to 8.3 pp in 2019/20, with the positive follow-up destination rate rising in both cohorts. The most recent data show that this rate decreased in the 2019/20 cohort for both groups by roughly the same amount.³⁶

Looking at the breakdown of follow-up school leaver destinations by SIMD for 2019/20, pupils from the most deprived areas are less likely to enter Higher Education than those from the least deprived areas (27.0% of leavers from the most deprived areas compared to 62.6% from the least deprived areas). Further, 10.8% of leavers from the most deprived areas were unemployed, compared to 3.6% of leavers from the least deprived areas.

³⁶ See Scottish Government (2021), '[Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations, No.3 2021 Edition – Supplementary Tables](#)' for time series data on positive school leaver destinations by SIMD.

Table 3.2: Percentage (%) of school leavers by follow-up destination category and SIMD, 2019/20.

Initial Destination	0-20% (Most Deprived)	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	80-100% (Least Deprived)	Percentage point gap
Higher Education	27.0	33.5	42.7	50.3	62.6	35.6
Further Education	31.5	27.8	23.5	20.3	14.2	-17.4
Training	6.3	4.2	2.3	1.7	1.0	-5.3
Employment	20.5	23.8	23.7	21.6	17.4	-3.1
Voluntary Work	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	-0.1
Personal Skills Development	1.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	-1.5
Positive Destinations	87.6	90.3	93.0	94.7	95.9	8.3
Unemployed Seeking	6.6	5.2	3.8	2.7	2.2	-4.4
Unemployed Not Seeking	4.2	3.4	2.2	2.0	1.4	-2.8
Unknown	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.6	-1.1
Other Destinations	12.4	9.7	7.0	5.3	4.1	-8.3

Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations'.

School leaver destinations by equalities

School leavers with and Additional Support Need (ASN) are less likely to be in a positive destination, with 87.2% being in a positive follow-up destination in 2019/20, compared to 94.9% of leavers without a recorded ASN, as shown in Table 3.3.

Data is not available for all ethnic groups for all years due to small numbers of school leavers but, based on the data that is available, pupils of an Asian ethnic background tend to be more likely to be in a positive destination. Pupils from a white or mixed ethnic background were less likely to be in a positive destination in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19. Pupils from Asian or African/Black/Caribbean backgrounds were actually more likely to be in a positive destination in 2019/20 than 2018/19.

Women are more likely to be in a positive destination than men, with 93.6% of women being in a positive follow-up destination in 2019/20 compared to 90.9% of men.

Table 3.3: Percentage (%) of school leavers in a positive follow-up destination, by pupil characteristic, 2014/15 to 2019/20.

Pupil Characteristic	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Sex						
Male	91.4	90.9	92.4	92.4	92.1	90.9
Female	92.9	92.3	94.0	94.3	93.7	93.6
Ethnicity						
White – Scottish	92.1	91.5	93.0	93.2	92.7	92.0
White – non-Scottish	92.2	92.8	93.9	94.2	93.5	92.3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	93.0	93.0	92.7	93.6	92.8	91.7
Asian – Indian	96.3	96.9	*	97.2	94.4	95.4
Asian – Pakistani	95.2	92.5	95.7	93.5	94.8	95.6
Asian – Chinese	97.1	95.9	*	96.8	*	*
Asian – Other	96.2	95.1	95.3	93.9	*	*
African/Black/Caribbean	94.4	92.3	93.9	96.0	94.1	95.1
All other categories	91.2	88.4	94.5	92.0	93.6	93.3
Not disclosed/Not known	90.6	88.8	90.7	89.8	88.9	90.2
Additional Support Needs						
ASN	86.2	85.2	87.7	88.4	87.9	87.2
No ASN	93.7	93.5	95.0	95.3	95.1	94.9
Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations'.						
*value suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information.						

School leaver destinations for looked after children?³⁷

Looked after children are a group of vulnerable young people who are also referred to as 'care-experienced'. A young person may become looked after for a number of reasons, including neglect, abuse, complex disabilities which require specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system.

Based on Scottish Government's report 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children – 2019/20'³⁸ published in June 2021, there were an estimated 943 young people who were looked after at any point between August 2019 to July 2020 and who were in the 2019/20 school leaver cohort. This represents 2% of the 47,454 school leavers in 2019/20.

This data show that looked after children are more likely to leave school in earlier stages (S4 and S5), with 43.2% of looked after children leaving school at S4 or earlier and 39.0% at S5, compared to 11.4% at S4 and 25.8% at S5 of all school

³⁷ The figures in this section refer to children who were looked after within the year unless otherwise specified.

³⁸ Scottish Government (2021), '[Education Outcomes for Looked After Children – 2019/20](#)'

leavers. Only 17.8% of looked after children leave after S6, compared to 62.8% of all school leavers.

In 2019/20, 80.5% of the school leavers who were looked after entered an initial positive destination. While this has improved considerably in the past decade, rising from 58.1% in 2009/10, it is still much lower than the same figure for the entire school leaver cohort (93.3% in 2019/20).³⁹

Compared to all school leavers, looked after children are more likely to go into Further Education (49.1% compared to 28.1% as initial destination) and considerably less likely to go into Higher education (7.2% compared to 44.2%). Looked after children are also more likely to become unemployed compared to all school leavers (18.3% compared to 5.9%).

Looking at follow-up destinations, the data highlight a fall in looked after leavers in positive destinations, 75.3% compared to 80.5% in initial destinations. This is a larger drop than for the entire school leaver cohort, where 92.2% continued to be in positive follow-up destinations compared to 93.3% in positive initial destinations.

Table 3.4: Percentage (%) of looked after school leavers in each initial and follow-up destination, 2019/20.

Destination Category	Looked after leavers		All school leavers	
	Initial	Follow-up	Initial	Follow-up
Higher Education	7.2	6.6	44.2	42.9
Further Education	49.1	42.5	28.1	23.6
Training	13.6	12.0	3.7	3.2
Employment	8.7	10.5	16.2	21.3
Voluntary work	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3
Other	1.7	3.5	0.8	0.8
Positive destinations	80.5	75.3	93.3	92.2
Other Destinations				
Unemployment seeking	9.8	10.1	4.1	4.1
Unemployment not seeking	8.5	11.6	1.8	2.7
Unknown	1.3	2.9	0.7	1.0
Other Destinations	19.5	24.7	6.7	7.8
Source: Scottish Government (2021), 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children – 2019/20'.				
Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.				

School leaver destinations by local authority

The proportion of leavers in a positive destination varies across Scotland. In 2019/20, Aberdeen City had the lowest proportion of school leavers in a positive destination (89.5%), while Na h-Eileanan Siar had the highest proportion (97.1%).

³⁹ Time series data on initial and follow up destinations for looked after children can be found in the Scottish Government (2021), ['Tables and Charts for Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2019/20'](#).

However, it should be noted that the order is variable from year to year. For example, South Ayrshire had the fifth lowest proportion of school leavers in positive destinations in 2018/19 and the third highest in 2019/20.⁴⁰

School leaver destinations by highest SCQF level achieved

School leavers with higher attainment levels are more likely to be in a positive destination – 57.6% of school leavers who did not achieve a pass at SCQF level 3 or better were in a positive destination, as shown in Table 3.5. This increased to 78.3% of leavers who achieved at SCQF level 4, to 89.6% for leavers who achieved at SCQF level 5, 96.0% of leavers who achieved at SCQF Level 6 and 98.1% of leavers who achieved at SCQF level 7.

The table also shows that majority of school leavers with one pass or more at SCQF level 6 or 7 entered Higher Education. The most common destination for school leavers whose highest qualification was at SCQF level 5 or below is Further Education.

Table 3.5: Percentage (%) of school leavers by follow-up destination category and highest SCQF Level achieved, 2019/20

Destination Category	No passes at SCQF 3 or better	SCQF level 3	SCQF level 4	SCQF level 5	SCQF level 6	SCQF level 7
Higher Education	1.6	-	0.4	2.7	54.1	86.9
Further Education	24.3	30.6	38.0	45.8	19.2	3.7
Training	15.0	18.2	11.8	4.3	0.8	0.2
Employment	16.7	15.9	24.7	35.6	21.4	7.3
Voluntary work	*	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.3	*
Personal Skills Development	*	3.9	2.9	1.0	0.2	*
Positive destinations	57.6	69.3	78.3	89.6	96.0	98.1
Other Destinations						
Unemployment seeking	10.7	12.1	11.3	6.0	2.5	0.9
Unemployment not seeking	20.3	14.8	8.3	2.8	0.9	0.5
Unknown	5.5	3.8	2.1	1.6	0.5	0.1
Other Destinations	36.5	30.7	21.7	10.4	4.0	1.5
Source: Scottish Government, June 2021, 'Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations'.						
*value suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information						

⁴⁰ Further data on school leaver destinations by Local Authority can be found in the Scottish Government (2021), '[Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations, No.3 2021 Edition – Supplementary Tables](#)'.

4. Colleges

This chapter examines the available data on 16 to 24 year olds around college enrolments, outcomes, leaver destinations and articulation from college to university. The 16 to 24 year old cohort for enrolments and outcomes data consists of all college students across Further and Higher Education levels and including part-time and full-time modes, however, excluding those in school link programmes. For destinations, the cohort includes full-time qualifiers only who have successfully completed their Further or Higher Education courses. The cohort for articulation data consists of those Higher Education college students moving to university.

The enrolments, outcomes and articulation data examined here largely pre-dates the pandemic, with only the last few months of 2019/20 covered by the first stages of lockdown. College leaver destinations data, however, looks at leavers from the 2019/20 cohort 3 to 6 months after graduation, with the survey period of this data falling in the second half of 2020 and first part of 2021 when the country was under varying levels of covid-19 restrictions.

The number of young people aged 16 to 24 studying in college in Scotland

In 2019/20, there were nearly 106,800 enrolments from students aged 16 to 24. Around 80,700 (or 75.5%) were enrolled in Further Education (FE) courses and around 26,100 (or 24.5%) in Higher Education (HE) courses. The number of enrolments has decreased in both FE and HE courses in the past five years, by 6.1% and 14.9%, respectively.

Table 4.1: Number and proportion (%) of college enrolments by level of study, 16 to 24 year olds, 2015/16 to 2019/20.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Further Education					
No. of FE enrolments	85,929	85,384	81,745	78,378	80,663
% of FE enrolments of total	73.7	73.5	73.8	73.8	75.5
Higher Education					
No. of HE enrolments	30,674	30,854	28,993	27,876	26,114
% of HE enrolments of total	26.3	26.5	26.2	26.2	24.5
Source: SG analysis of SFC college enrolments data.					

College enrolments by those aged 16 to 24 by equalities and SIMD

In 2019/20 there was a higher proportion of enrolments from 20% most deprived than from 20% least deprived areas in both FE and HE college courses – 28.3% compared to 12.7% in FE and 24.4% compared to 18.5% in HE. There has been only minor changes to these proportions since 2015/16.

Both FE and HE college courses, for this age cohort, are male dominated, with the share of female enrolments at 41.6% in FE and 46.6% in HE in 2019/20. The female share has risen in HE by 0.5 pp since 2015/16 but fallen by 1.0 pp in FE.

The share of college enrolments of those with a self-declared disability has risen at both levels, by 4.6 pp in FE and 5.8 pp in HE between 2015/16 and 2019/20. There is a larger proportion of enrolments in FE (21.1% in 2019/20) than in HE (15.8% in 2019/20) by those with a self-declared disability.

There was a higher share of minority ethnic enrolments in HE (8.2%) than in FE (6.8%) in 2019/20. The share of enrolments has increased in both, by 1.3 pp and 1.4 pp, respectively, between 2015/16 and 2019/20.

The share of enrolments by those with care experience has increased at both levels in the past five years as data collection has improved and support for care experienced students has increased. The share enrolments by those with care experience are considerably lower in HE (2.6%) than in FE (7.6%).

Table 4.2: Proportion (%) of college enrolments by level of study and equalities and SIMD, 16 to 24 year olds, 2015/16 to 2019/20.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Further Education					
SIMD					
20% most deprived	30.0	29.5	29.5	28.8	28.3
20% least deprived	11.9	11.8	11.8	12.1	12.7
Gender					
Female	42.6	41.1	41.7	40.2	41.6
Male	57.3	58.8	58.1	59.4	57.8
Disability					
No known disability	83.5	83.4	81.5	78.5	78.9
Self-declared disability	16.5	16.6	18.5	21.5	21.1
Ethnicity					
Minority Ethnic	5.4	5.5	6.0	6.4	6.8
White ^a	94.6	94.5	94.0	93.6	93.2
Care Experience					
No care experience	98.9	98.3	97.7	95.9	92.4
Care experienced	1.1	1.7	2.3	4.1	7.6
Higher Education					
SIMD					
20% most deprived	22.8	23.0	23.3	23.9	24.4
20% least deprived	19.1	19.5	19.1	18.6	18.5
Gender					
Female	46.1	46.5	47.4	46.3	46.6
Male	53.8	53.4	52.4	53.3	53.0
Disability					
No known disability	90.0	89.4	87.8	84.9	84.2
Self-declared disability	10.0	10.6	12.2	15.1	15.8
Ethnicity					
Minority Ethnic	6.9	7.0	6.7	7.3	8.2
White ^a	93.1	93.0	93.3	92.7	91.8
Care Experience					
No care experience	99.6	99.4	99.1	98.2	97.4
Care experienced	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.8	2.6

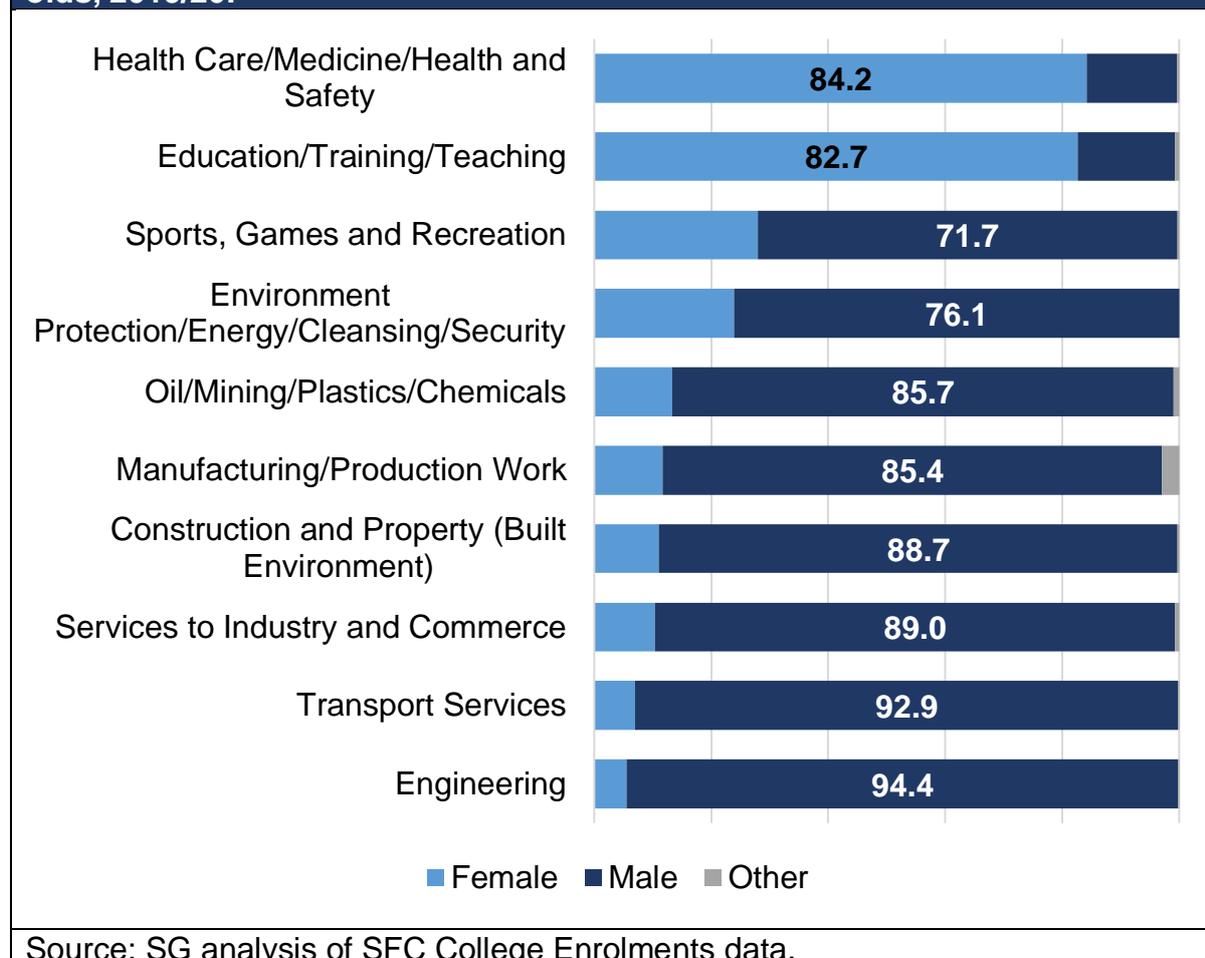
Source: SG analysis of SFC College Enrolments data.

^aThe 'White' ethnicity group includes minority ethnic white groups such as 'Polish' and 'Gypsy/traveller'.

Gender balances in college courses for those aged 16 to 24

All of the ten most gender imbalanced subjects, across HE and FE at college⁴¹, in 2019/20 had gender imbalance of more than 70:30. Eight of the subjects were male dominated, whilst two – Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety and Education/Training/Teaching – were female dominated. The largest gender gap was in Engineering, where 94.4% of enrolments were male (see Chart 4.1).

Chart 4.1: 10 most gender imbalanced (%) college subjects, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.



STEM participation in college for 16 to 24 year olds by equalities

In 2019/20, 38.1% of all FE and 28.8% of all HE enrolments were in STEM.

Equalities data shows us that the largest differences in STEM participation are between female and male enrolments. Women are considerably less likely to participate in STEM, with 19.1% of all female FE enrolments and 8.6% of all female HE enrolments in STEM, compared to 51.9% and 46.6%, respectively, for male enrolments.

⁴¹ The gender balances were very similar in both FE and HE courses.

Looking at other equalities groups, we can see that those from 20% most deprived areas, those with a self-declared disability and those who are care experienced are less likely to be enrolled in STEM than their counterparts.

Breaking STEM enrolments down by ethnicity, on the other hand, shows us that STEM enrolments for those from a minority ethnic background are lower than for those who are white in FE but higher in HE.

Table 4.3: STEM participation (%) at college by level of study and equalities and SIMD, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.		
	Further Education	Higher Education
Total	38.1	28.8
SIMD		
20% most deprived	33.5	25.8
20% least deprived	42.9	29.8
Sex		
Female	19.1	8.6
Male	51.9	46.6
Disability		
No known disability	41.2	29.8
Self-declared disability	26.5	23.5
Ethnicity		
Minority Ethnic	27.8	32.3
White ^a	39.2	28.5
Care Experience		
No care experience	38.9	29.1
Care experienced	29.0	20.1
Source: SG analysis of SFC College Enrolments Data.		
^a The 'White' ethnicity group includes minority ethnic white groups such as 'Polish' and 'Gypsy/traveller'.		

College outcomes for 16 to 24 year olds

In 2019/20, 69.9% of students aged 16 to 24 completed their FE college courses successfully, whilst a further 13.9% had a partial success. FE course withdrawal rate for this age group was 16.2%. The successful completion rates for students in HE courses was higher than for students in FE courses (73.8%) whereas partial success and withdrawal rates were lower (12.7% and 13.5%, respectively).

Those from 20% least deprived areas are more likely to successfully complete their college studies than those from the 20% most deprived areas, with the successful completion rate 9.6 pp higher in FE and 5.4 pp higher in HE in 2019/20. Conversely,

those from most deprived areas are more likely to withdraw from their college programmes than those from least deprived areas at both FE and HE levels.

Looking at gender, male students (72.8%) are more likely to successfully complete FE programmes than female students (66.0%), while the situation is reverse for HE (71.6% compared to 76.3%). Female students are more likely to withdraw from both FE and HE programmes than male students (20.3% compared to 13.1% in FE and 14.1% compared to 12.9% in HE), with the gap particularly large in FE, at 7.2 pp.

Those with no known disability are more likely to successfully complete their college programmes than those with a self-declared disability – 71.3% compared to 65.5% in FE and 74.5% compared to 70.2% in HE. Conversely, those with a self-declared disability are more likely to withdraw from their studies at both levels.

The successful completion rate in HE is almost at parity between those who are white (69.9%) and those from a minority ethnic background (70.0%). However, minority ethnic students are less likely to withdraw from their FE studies and more likely to partially succeed than white students. In HE, white students are more likely to successfully complete (74.5%) than minority ethnic students (70.2), with withdrawal rates for these groups almost at parity.

The successful completion rate for those who are care experienced is considerably lower than for any other group in both FE (58.2%) and HE (61.4%). Similarly, the withdrawal rates for this group are higher than for other groups (22.3% in FE and 20.7% in HE).

Table 4.4: College outcome rates (%) by level of study and equalities and SIMD, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.

	% Successful completion	% Partial success	% Withdrawal
Further Education			
Total	69.9	13.9	16.2
20% most deprived	64.7	15.3	19.9
20% least deprived	74.3	13.5	12.2
Female	66.0	13.7	20.3
Male	72.8	14.0	13.1
Self-declared disability	65.5	15.7	18.8
No known disability	71.3	13.3	15.4
Minority Ethnic	70.0	15.3	14.8
White ^a	69.9	13.8	16.4
No care experience	71.0	13.4	15.6
Care experienced	58.2	19.5	22.3
Higher Education			
Total	73.8	12.7	13.5
20% most deprived	70.1	14.4	15.5
20% least deprived	75.5	12.0	12.5
Female	76.3	9.6	14.1
Male	71.6	15.5	12.9
Self-declared disability	70.2	14.1	15.8
No known disability	74.5	12.4	13.0
Minority Ethnic	70.2	16.0	13.8
White ^a	74.2	12.4	13.5
No care experience	74.2	12.5	13.3
Care experienced	61.4	17.9	20.7
Source: SG analysis of SFC College Performance Indicators data.			
^a The 'White' ethnicity group includes minority ethnic white groups such as 'Polish' and 'Gypsy/traveller'.			

College leaver destinations for those sector leavers aged 16 to 24

The statistics examined in this section look at confirmed destinations for sector leavers who have successfully completed their full-time college studies in the 2019/20 academic year, 3 to 6 months post-qualification. As such, the data was collected during the second half of 2020 and the first half of 2021 when the country was under varying levels of Covid-19 related restrictions. Table 4.5 below presents these leaver destination statistics for 2019/20 by level of study and equalities and SIMD.

The data shows us that HE leavers were more likely to go into positive destinations than FE leavers, 92.8% compared to 75.2% in 2019/20. FE leavers were more likely to go into work (52.6% compared to 27.3%) while HE leavers were more likely to continue their studies (65.5% compared to 22.6%).

Looking at equalities and SIMD, FE leavers who are from the most deprived areas (65.6%), leavers with a self-declared disability (61.0%) and leavers with care experience (57.2%) were the least likely to go into positive destinations compared to their counterparts. Female FE leavers are the most likely to go into further study (34.3%), followed by those from a minority ethnic background (31.6%). Male FE leavers were the most likely to go into work (59.2%), followed by those from the least deprived areas (58.5%) and those with no known disability (58.3%).

The gaps between different equality groups were smaller for HE leavers in 2019/20, with those with a self-declared disability least likely to end up in a positive destination (89.3%). HE leavers from a minority ethnic background were most likely to continue their studies (78.5%), while those who are white were most likely to go into work (28.3%).

The data also highlights that, as with school leaver destinations, college leavers with lower (SCQF level 4 or below) qualifications are less likely to end up in positive destinations than those leaving with qualifications at SCQF level 5 or above (43.8% compared to 89.6% respectively in 2019/20).⁴²

⁴² Data on this can be found in the Background Tables and Charts.

Table 4.5: Proportion (%) of confirmed college destinations for sector leavers by equalities and SIMD, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.

	Negative Destination	Other Destination	Total Positive Destination	Study	Work
Further Education					
Total	19.7	5.1	75.2	22.6	52.6
20% most deprived	26.7	7.7	65.6	17.6	48.0
20% least deprived	14.9	2.6	82.4	24.0	58.5
Female	14.8	6.1	79.0	34.3	44.8
Male	23.8	4.2	72.0	12.8	59.2
Self-declared disability	28.0	11.1	61.0	22.6	38.3
No known disability	16.4	2.7	80.9	22.5	58.3
Minority Ethnic	23.3	5.3	71.4	31.6	39.8
White ^a	19.6	5.1	75.3	22.1	53.2
No care experience	18.8	4.9	76.3	22.8	53.5
Care experienced	35.1	7.7	57.2	18.8	38.5
Higher Education					
Total	6.1	1.1	92.8	65.5	27.3
20% most deprived	7.8	1.6	90.6	64.9	25.8
20% least deprived	5.0	0.8	94.2	69.6	24.6
Female	5.3	1.4	93.3	65.9	27.4
Male	7.2	0.6	92.2	64.9	27.2
Self-declared disability	9.0	1.7	89.3	63.9	25.3
No known disability	5.6	1.0	93.4	65.8	27.7
Minority Ethnic	4.3	0.9	94.8	78.5	16.3
White ^a	6.3	1.1	92.6	64.3	28.3
No care experience	6.2	1.1	92.8	65.2	27.6
Care experienced	5.1	2.6	92.3	74.5	17.9
Source: SG analysis of SFC College Leaver Destinations data.					
^a The 'White' ethnicity group includes minority ethnic white groups such as 'Polish' and 'Gypsy/traveller'.					

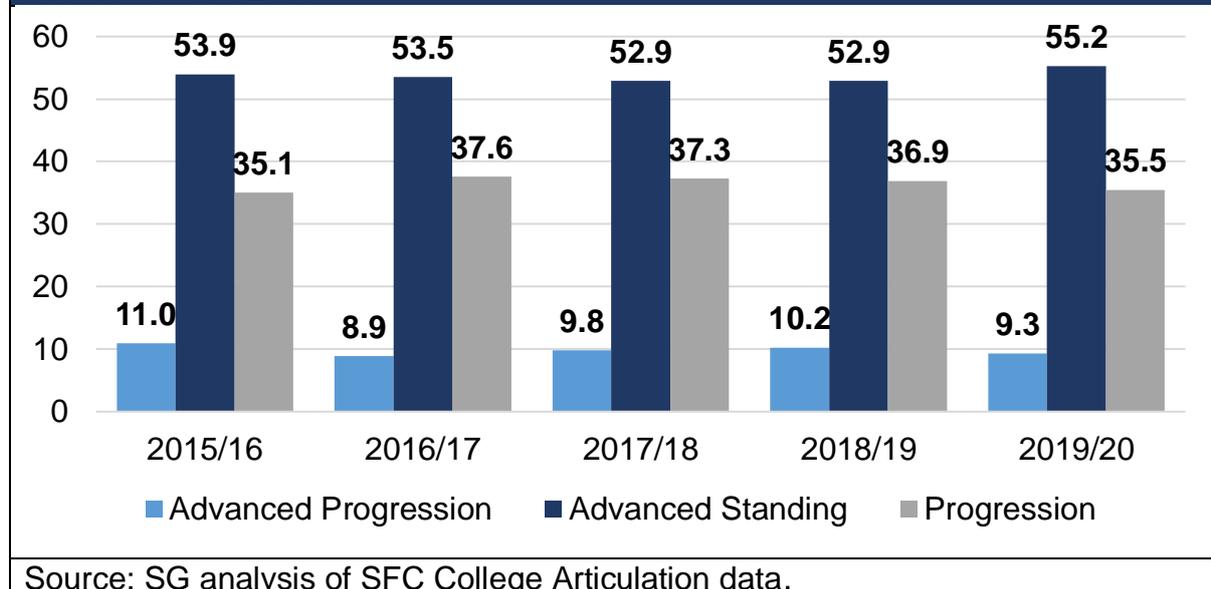
Articulation between Higher National Qualifications (HNQs) at college and university degrees by those aged 16 to 24

Articulation is the movement of students with either a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) gained at college into second or third year of a university degree. When an individual enters a university degree, following completion of these qualifications, there are three ways in which previous study is recognised. These are:

- Progression – where a student enters first year of a degree programme with an HNC/D, therefore receiving no recognition for prior HE study.
- Advanced Progression – where a student, typically, enters second year of a degree programme with a HND, therefore receiving only partial credit for prior HE study.
- Advanced Standing – where a student enters second year of a degree programme with a HNC or third of a degree programme with an HND, therefore receiving full credit for prior HE study.

In 2019/20, there were 5,443 college students who moved from college to a university. As shown in Chart 4.2, over half (55.2%) of those college leavers who went to university did so with Advanced Standing (full academic credit in 2019/20). A further 9.3% only received a partial credit for their prior study, and 35.5% did not articulate and received no credit for their HNC/D level study, entering university at year 1.

Chart 4.2: Proportion (%) of HNC/D entry to University, 16 to 24 year olds, 2015/16 to 2019/20.



Articulation activity by equalities

Data for 2019/20 shows almost equal shares of students moving from HE college courses to university from 20% most and 20% least deprived areas (20.6% compared to 21.0%). This also holds true for both Advanced Standing and Progression, however there is a considerably larger share of students from most

deprived areas than from least deprived areas moving to university with Advanced Progression (26.0% compared to 19.0%). When comparing with university enrolments data, we can see that there is a larger proportion of those from most deprived areas moving from HE college courses to a university degree than the proportion of Scottish domiciled first degree enrolments to university (20.6% compared to 11.8%). This is reverse for those from least deprived areas (21.0% compared to 32.5%).

Gender data shows that a larger proportion of female students move from HE college courses to university compared to male students (52.8% compared to 47.0%), which is consistent with university enrolments. However, further breakdowns of articulation data show that there is a considerably larger proportion of female than male students entering university with Progression (63.2% compared to 36.5%), with male students more likely than female students to articulate with Advanced Progression (59.6% compared to 40.4%) and Advanced Standing (51.7% compared to 48.3%).

Breaking down articulation data by disability, the share of HE college students with self-declared disability moving to university is 17.0%. The share of disabled HE college students articulating with the full Advanced Standing is slightly lower, at 15.1%, which is at the same level as the proportion of Scottish domiciled first degree enrolments to university in 2019/20 (15.2%).

Looking at those from a minority ethnic background, there is a slightly higher proportion of HE college students moving to university with an advanced standing from minority ethnic background (10.4%) than the proportion of Scottish domiciled first degree enrolments from a minority ethnic background at university (9.0%) in 2019/20.

Finally, 2.6% of college leavers moving to university with an advanced standing are care experienced. This is higher than the proportion of Scottish domiciled first degree enrolments to university by those who are care experienced in 2019/20.

Table 4.6: Articulation activity by equalities and SIMD, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.

	Total Leavers moving to university	Progression	Advanced progression	Advanced standing	% of first degree university enrolments
SIMD					
20% most deprived	20.6	21.5	26.0	19.0	11.8
20% least deprived	21.0	19.4	18.7	18.7	32.5
Sex					
Female	52.8	63.2	40.4	48.3	57.9
Male	47.0	36.5	59.6	51.7	42.0
Disability					
Self-declared disability	17.0	19.2	19.9	15.1	15.2
No known disability	83.0	80.8	80.1	84.9	84.8
Ethnicity^a					
Minority Ethnic	10.0	9.5	9.7	10.4	9.0
White	90.0	90.5	90.3	89.6	91.0
Care Experience					
Care experience	2.6	2.7	1.8	2.6	1.1
No care experience	97.4	97.3	98.2	97.4	98.9

Source: SG analysis of SFC College Articulation data and HESA University Enrolments data.

^aThe 'White' ethnicity group includes minority ethnic white groups such as 'Polish' and 'Gypsy/traveller'.

5. University

This chapter examines the available data on those aged 16 to 24 who go to university.

Number of university enrolments by those aged 16 to 24

In the five years up to 2019/20, the overall number of university enrolments for 16 to 24 year olds rose from around 151,500 in 2014/15 to 168,500 in 2019/20 (up 11.2%), as shown in Table 5.1.

The greatest increase was in the number of first degree enrolments (up 11,200) but the greatest proportional increase was the number of taught postgraduate enrolments (up 43.5%). The number of enrolments for postgraduate research courses increased by 5.5% and the number of other undergraduate enrolments decreased by 10.5% during this same five year period.

Table 5.1: Scottish University enrolments of 16 to 24 year olds by level of study, 2014/15 to 2019/20.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Postgraduate (Research)	2,715	2,820	2,820	2,900	3,030	2,865
Postgraduate (Taught)	15,025	15,200	16,135	17,595	19,220	21,565
First Degree	125,175	128,345	131,105	133,550	135,300	136,375
Other Undergraduate	8,580	8,475	8,125	7,810	7,815	7,680
Total	151,495	154,845	158,180	161,855	165,360	168,485

Source: SG analysis of HESA student data.

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Covid-19 impact on university enrolments

The HESA data on university enrolments presented above only shows data up to 2019/20, and therefore is not impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, UCAS publishes data on Scottish domiciled placed applicants to Scottish providers 28 days after SQA results day, with data available up to 2021.

This data suggests that there was an increase in the under 25 year old Scottish domiciled placed applicants to Scottish providers, from 25,510 in 2019 to 26,470 in 2020 (up 3.8% over the year) and 28,170 in 2021 (up 6.3% over the year).

In particular, the number of under 17 year old placed applicants increased by 22.4% in between 2019 (490) and 2020 (600), and a further 1.7% between 2020 and 2021 to 610. Similarly, the number 18 year old placed applicants increased by 4.8% between 2019 (13,410) and 2020 (14,050) and a further 13.7% between 2020 and 2021, to 15,970. The number of 19 and 20 year olds saw more minor changes. The number of 21 to 24 year old placed applicants, on the other hand, increased by 5.8%

between 2019 and 2020, however, the number fell again between 2020 and 2021 by 6%.

The considerable increase in placed university applicants aged 17 and 18 is consistent with the school leaver destinations data presented earlier in chapter 3, which saw an increase in the proportion of school leavers entering Higher Education for 2019/20 leavers.

There are several factors that may have influenced this increase in placed applicants, including fewer EU students applying and accepting university places; an increase in grades in 2020 and 2021, which means students are better-qualified for meeting course requirements and any offers they have received; and fewer job opportunities as a result of the pandemic which may have encouraged more young people to apply to university instead of entering the labour market.

Table 5.2: Scottish domiciled placed applicants to Scottish providers, as at 28 days after SQA results day, 16 to 24 year olds, 2015 to 2021.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
17 and under	380	430	480	500	490	600	610
18	13,770	13,950	13,990	13,980	13,410	14,050	15,970
19	3,660	3,880	3,950	4,190	4,030	3,950	4,110
20	2,550	2,600	2,690	2,650	2,400	2,410	2,330
21-24	4,890	5,140	5,220	5,350	5,180	5,480	5,150
All under 25	25,260	25,980	26,330	26,670	25,510	26,470	28,170

Source: UCAS (2021), 'Statistical Releases – Daily Clearing Analysis 2021'
 Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals may not match due to rounding.

University enrolments by equalities and SIMD for 16 to 24 year olds

The share of enrolments from the 20% most deprived areas increased in the five years up to 2019/20, from 9.9% to 11.7%. At the same time, the share of enrolments from the 20% least deprived areas fell from 32.6% in 2014/15 to 31.8% in 2019/20. Despite this slight fall, there continues to be a considerably larger share of university enrolments from the least deprived areas.

Female enrolments in this age group are higher than male enrolments – 58.4% compared to 41.5% in 2019/20. This gap has widened from 14.1 pp in 2014/15 to 16.9 pp in 2019/20.

There were 23,435 enrolments by those who declared a disability in 2019/20. The share of students with a declared disability rose by 4.1 pp in the years between 2014/15 and 2019/20, from 9.8% to 13.9%.

There were 12,135 UK domiciled enrolments⁴³ by those who are from an ethnic minority background in 2019/20. The proportion of enrolments who are from an ethnic minority has increased by 2.6 pp, from 7.3% in 2014/15 to 9.9% in 2019/20.

The proportion of enrolments by those who are care experienced increased by 0.5 pp between 2014/15 and 2019/20, from 0.2% to 0.7%. Similarly, the proportion of enrolments by those with no care experience increased considerably, by 47.0 pp during the same time period, from 23.6% to 70.5%. These increases are likely due to the improvements in reporting, as the proportion of those with an unknown status decreased by 47.5 pp between 2014/15 and 2019/20. If we exclude the unknown category from the calculations, we find that the proportion of enrolments by those who are care experienced stayed steady, at 0.7% between 2014/15 and 2017/18, increasing by 0.3 pp thereafter.⁴⁴

Table 5.3: Share (%) of total Scottish University enrolments of 16 to 24 year olds by equalities and SIMD, 2014/15 to 2019/20.						
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
SIMD						
20% most deprived	9.9	10.1	10.2	10.9	11.3	11.7
20% least deprived	32.6	32.2	31.9	32.2	31.9	31.8
Sex						
Female	57.1	57.5	57.8	58.0	58.2	58.4
Male	42.9	42.4	42.1	41.9	41.7	41.5
Disability						
Declared Disability	9.8	10.4	11.3	12.1	13.1	13.9
No known disability	90.2	89.6	88.7	87.9	86.9	86.1
Ethnicity						
Minority Ethnic	7.3	7.7	8.2	8.6	9.4	9.9
White	92.7	92.3	91.8	91.4	90.6	90.1
Care Experience^a						
Care experienced	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
No care experience	23.6	53.4	65.7	69.9	70.5	70.5
Unknown	76.3	46.3	33.9	29.6	28.9	28.8
Source: SG analysis of HESA student data.						
^a Unlike other proportions in this table, care experience proportions include those with an 'unknown' status.						

⁴³ HESA does not record ethnicity for non-UK domiciled students, which is why the focus here is on UK domiciled students.

⁴⁴ Underlying data for these proportions can be found in the Background Tables and Charts.

STEM⁴⁵ participation in university by equalities for those aged 16 to 24

Of all university enrolments, 50.5% were in Science based subjects compared to 49.5% in non-Science based subjects in 2019/20

Looking at gender data, males were more likely to be enrolled in Science based subjects than females (58.7% compared to 43.7%). This was reverse for non-Science based subjects (42.2% compared to 56.3%).

Ethnicity data, shows us that those from a minority ethnic background were more likely to be in enrolled in Science based subjects than those who are white (58.5% compared to 49.3%).

Finally, those with a declared disability were slightly less likely to enrol in Science based subjects than those with no known disability – 46.9% compared 49.9%.

Table 5.4: Participation (%) in Science and non-Science based subjects by equalities, 16 to 24 year olds, 2019/20.

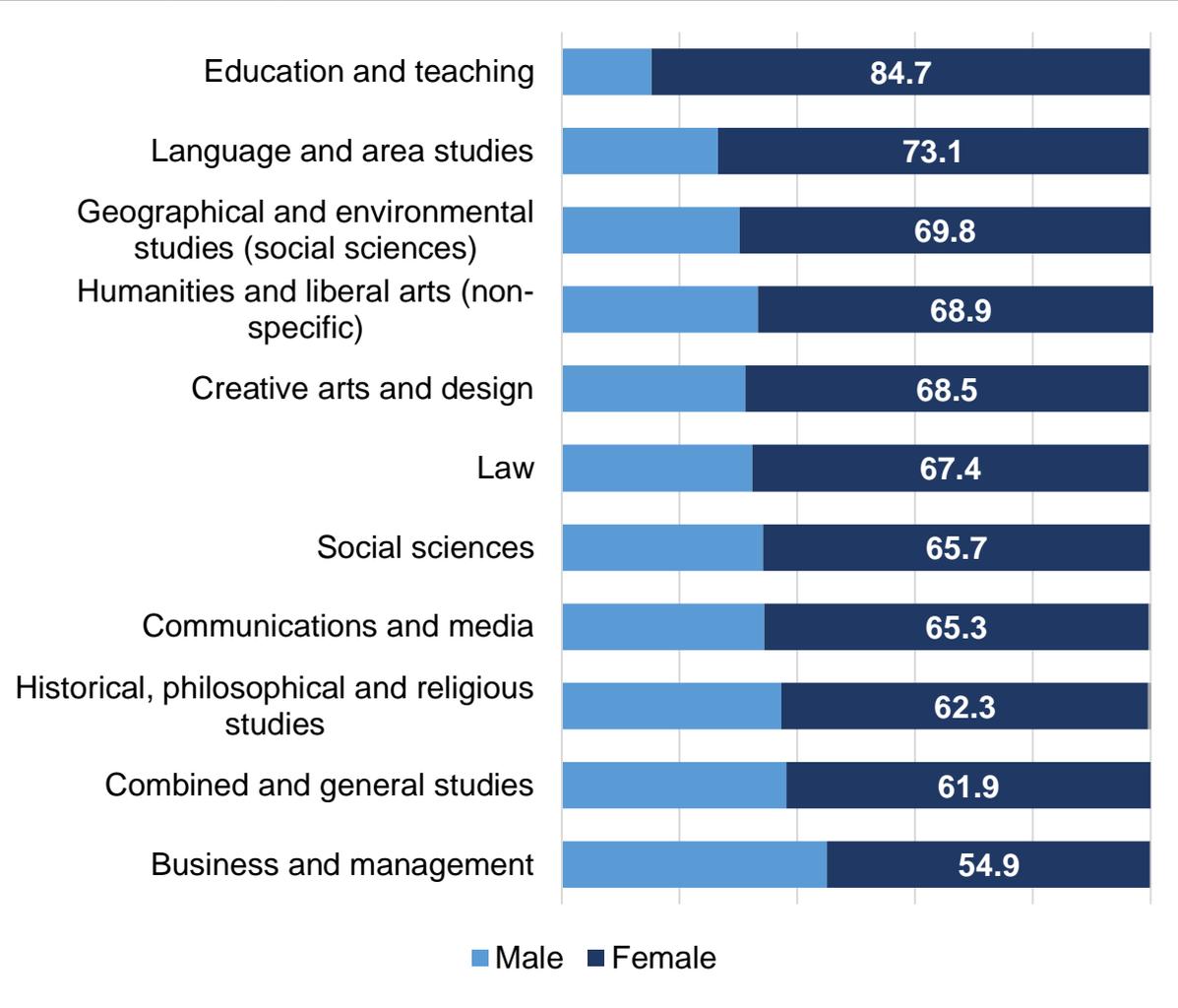
	Science based subjects	Non-Science based subjects
Total	49.5	50.5
Sex		
Female	43.7	56.3
Male	58.7	42.2
Disability		
Declared Disability	46.9	53.0
No known disability	49.9	50.1
Ethnicity		
Minority Ethnic	58.5	41.4
White	49.3	50.7
Source: SG analysis of HESA Student data.		

Gender balances in science and non-science based subjects at university for those aged 16 to 24

More females enrolled in every course type in non-science based subjects than males in 2019/20, though this varies from 54.9% female share in Business and management to 84.7% female share in Education and teaching, as shown in Chart 5.1.

⁴⁵ HESA's science based grouping includes subjects like medicine, nursing and agriculture that may not be included in other definitions of STEM.

Chart 5.1: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year old enrolments in non-science based subjects, by sex, 2019/20.

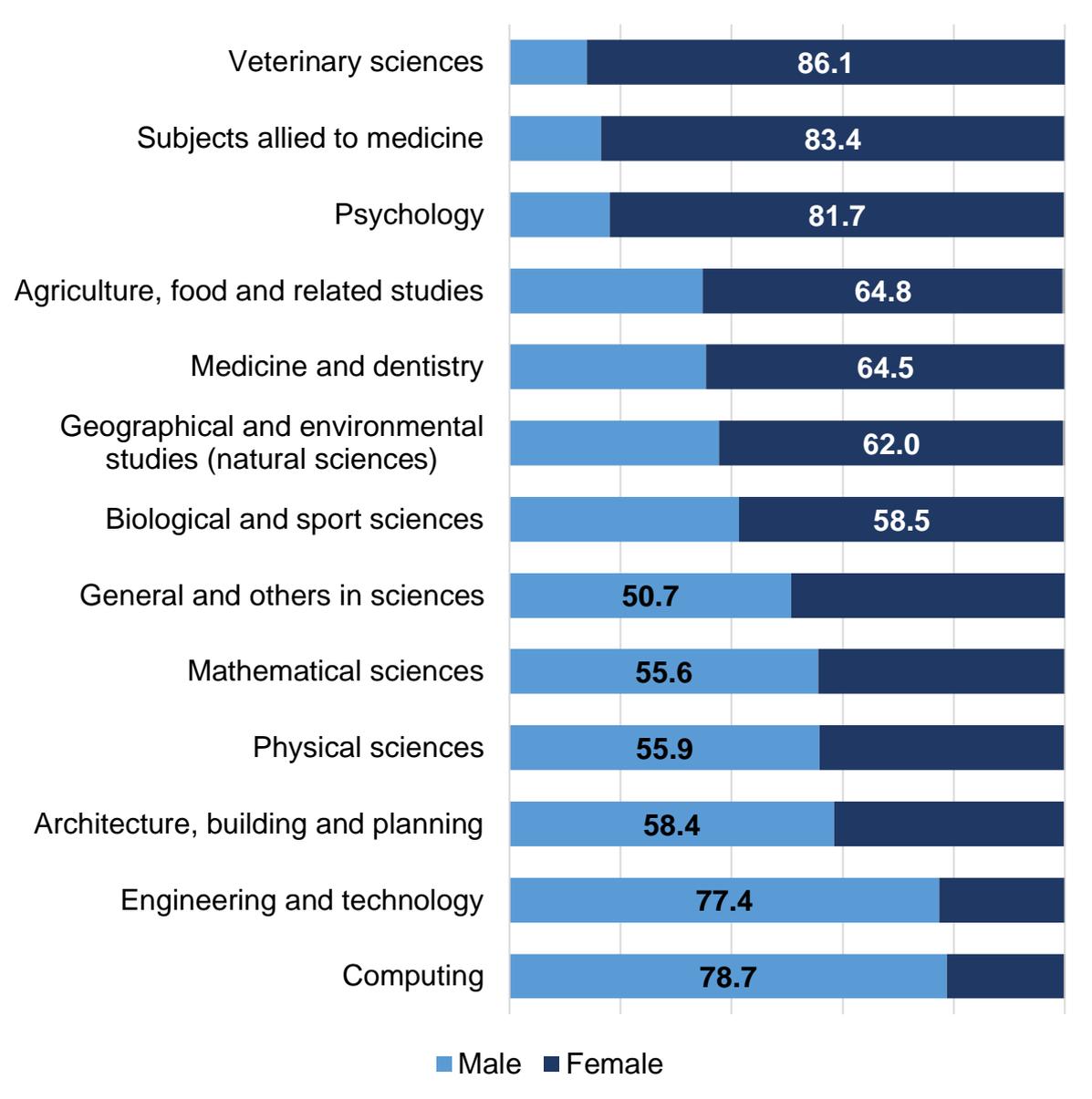


Source: SG analysis of HESA student data.

This is different to Science based subjects, which can be divided into two in terms of gender balances. Subject relating to medicine, biology, geography and agriculture, many of which are not typically defined as STEM, were female dominated in 2019/20. The more traditional STEM subjects, such as engineering, computing, and mathematical sciences, on the other hand, were male dominated.

The largest gender imbalances in 2019/20 could be seen in Veterinary Science (86.1% female share), subjects allied to medicine (83.4% female share), Psychology (81.7% female share) Engineering & Technology (77.4% male share) and Computing (78.7% male share).

Chart 5.2: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year old enrolments in science based subjects, by sex, 2019/20.



Source: SG analysis of HESA student data.

University leaver destinations for those aged 16 to 24 years?

Looking at known destinations data for university leavers 15 months after graduation, of all leavers aged 16 to 24 in 2018/19, the majority went into employment (65.2%). Breaking this down by level, those leaving a Postgraduate (Taught) degree were the most likely to go into employment (72.7%), followed by first degree leavers (64.7%). Of Postgraduate (Research) leavers, 39.1% went into employment.

Of all university leavers aged 16 to 24, 11.1% went to further study, and 11.0% to employment and further study. Postgraduate (Research) leavers were the most likely to enter further study (34.8%), followed by Other Undergraduates (17.5%). Only

6.5% of Postgraduate (Taught) and 11.7% of First Degree leavers went into further study.

Of all 2018/19 leavers aged 16 to 24, 5.8% were unemployed, with a further 0.6% waiting to start further study and 1.1% waiting to start work.

Table 5.5: Proportion (%) of known Destinations for university leavers, aged 16 to 24, by level of study, 2018/19.

	Postgraduate (Research)	Postgraduate (Taught)	First Degree	Other Undergrad.	Total
Employment	39.1	72.7	64.7	46.0	65.2
Further study	34.8	6.5	11.7	17.5	11.1
Employment and further study	17.4	9.5	10.8	18.2	11.0
Voluntary or unpaid work	4.3	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.4
Other including travel, caring for someone or retired	4.3	3.3	3.6	7.7	3.8
Due to start work	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.7	1.1
Due to start study	0.0	0.1	0.6	2.8	0.6
Unemployment	4.3	4.8	6.1	5.3	5.8

Source: SG analysis of HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey 2018/19 data.

Note: Totals may not match due to rounding.

6. Apprenticeships

This chapter examines the available information on Foundation Apprenticeship (FA), Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) provision in Scotland.

MA and GA sections focus specifically on 16 to 24 year olds, however, as with school leaver destinations data presented in Chapter 3, FA statistics have not been broken down by age as most of those participating are senior phase school pupils, although it is worth noting some of the participants will be under the age of 16.

Foundation Apprenticeship starts, achievements and destination

Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) were first introduced in 2016 to provide work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils making their senior phase subject choices. They are delivered through partnerships between schools, a local college, or learning provider and local employers, and support learner pathways into jobs, including MA and GAs, and into Further and Higher Education. This differs from MAs and GAs which are considered full-time paid employment.

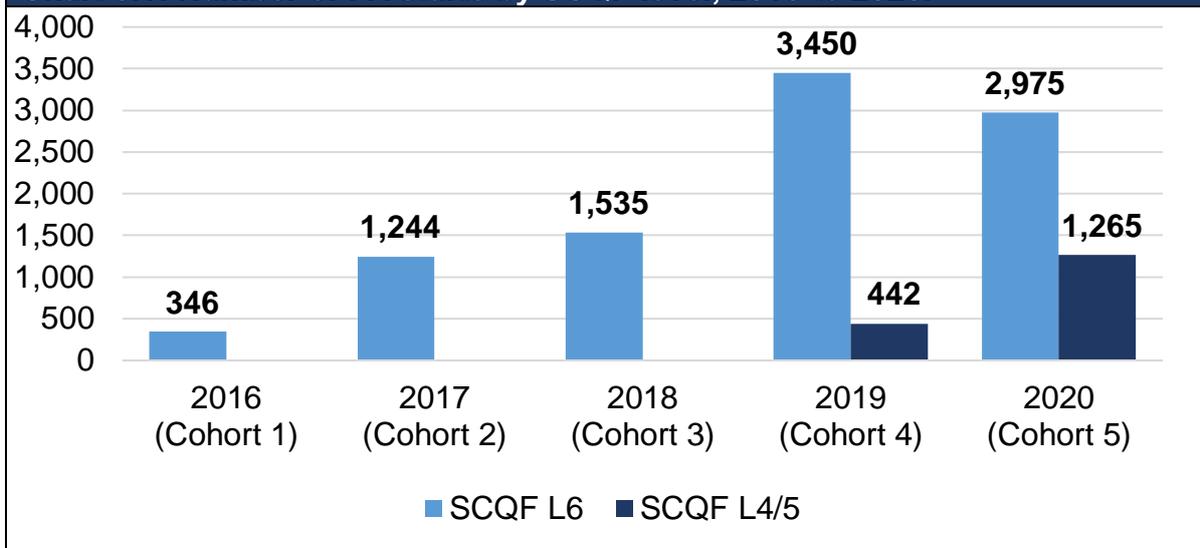
Until recently (cohorts 1-3) FAs provided qualifications at SCQF Level 6 which is the same level of learning as a Higher. More recently (cohorts 4-5), further pilot work has extended the offer at SCQF Levels 4 and 5.⁴⁶

Chart 6.1 provides the number of FA starts by year (cohort) and level. It shows that there was a steady increase in FA starts across the first four years of delivery, with the number rising from 346 in 2016 to 3,450 in 2019 at SCQF Level 6. However, the FA uptake at this level decreased during the pandemic in 2020, with number of starts falling to 2,975.

The number of pupils undertaking Pilot FAs at SCQF level 4/5, however, saw a considerable increase between 2019 and 2020, rising from 442 to 1,265, respectively, as they were rolled out across more Local Authorities and schools.

⁴⁶ Most of the participants in the SCQF level 4/5 pilot programme are under the age of 16.

Chart 6.1: Number of FA starts by SCQF level, 2016 to 2020.



Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report.

Table 6.1 shows FA starts relative to completers and achievers⁴⁷ for cohorts 1-3 between 2016 and 2018⁴⁸. In 2018, just over half (55.6%) of those who started in cohort 3 completed their FA programmes. In 2018, 46.6% of the starts and 83.7% of all completers gained a full achievement.

While not presented here, some pupils leave their FA programmes with partial achievements, such as National Progression Award, National Certificate or SVQ units, which are certified through SQA.⁴⁹

Table 6.1: FA completers and achievers, SCQF Level 6, 2016 to 2018.

	2016 (Cohort 1)	2017 (Cohort 2)	2018 (Cohort 3)
Starts	346	1,244	1,535
Completers	154	652	854
Full achievers	129	502	715
Partial achievers	146	501	557
Completers as a % of starts	44.5	52.4	55.6
Full achievers as % of starts	37.3	40.4	46.6
Full achievers as % of completers	83.8	77.0	83.7

Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report.

Table 6.2 looks at the FA leaver destinations. College was the most popular destination for full achievers in 2016 and 2017 (49.6% and 43.4%). However, in

⁴⁷ Completers are those who did not leave their study early. Full achievers are those who achieved the full FA qualification.

⁴⁸ Cohorts 4 and 5 still have pupils in training and therefore completion and achievement rates for these cohorts are not included here.

⁴⁹ Where pupils either do not complete the course, or complete but do not achieve their full FA qualification, they are certificated, through SQA, for any of the components they have achieved.

2018, more achievers moved into university than college (42.2% compared to 34.3%). In 2018, 18.9% of full FA achievers went into employment or started an MA.

Table 6.2: Proportion (%) of FA leaver destinations for achievers, SCQF level 6, 2016 to 2018.			
	2016 (Cohort 1)	2017 (Cohort 2)	2018 (Cohort 3)
Full Achievers			
Other FA	-	-	-
Employment or MA	27.1	22.3	18.9
College	49.6	43.4	34.3
University	19.4	29.1	42.2
Other Training	*	*	-
Remain in school	-	3.6	3.4
Unemployed	*	*	1.3
Unknown	-	-	-
Partial Achievers			
Other FA	-	*	*
Employment or MA	28.1	24.2	22.4
College	19.2	28.5	27.1
University	6.2	6.2	9.2
Other Training	3.4	2.0	1.1
Remain in school	40.4	36.9	37.2
Unemployed	*	1.2	*
Unknown	*	*	1.1
Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report. *Disclosure control has been applied where figures are less than 5 or where such small numbers can be identified through differencing.			

Foundation Apprenticeship starts⁵⁰ by equalities and SIMD

SIMD

In 2020 there was a reasonably even spread of starts among pupils across all SIMD areas at SCQF Level 6, with pupils slightly more likely to be from less deprived areas. However, for those undertaking a FA at SCQF level 4/5, pupils are more likely to be from more deprived areas, with 12.6% from 10% most deprived and 3.5% from 10% least deprived areas.⁵¹

Equalities

Since FAs were introduced in 2016, there has been a steady growth in the proportion of female FA starts at SCQF Level 6, rising from 49.7% in 2016 to 58.0% in 2020.

⁵⁰ Due to relatively small numbers of FA completers and achievers so far, data is not available with equality breakdowns.

⁵¹ Further data on FA SIMD breakdowns can be found in the SDS (June 2021), [Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report](#).

According to SDS, part of this change relates to the frameworks that were available in 2016, relative to 2020.

The proportion of pupils self-declaring a disability has seen a 9.3 pp increase since the start of the FA programme, rising from 7.1% to 16.4% in one year between 2018 and 2019, respectively. According to SDS, there is no obvious explanation for this increase, however improvements in reporting are likely to have had a positive impact. The rate has continued to increase by 1.2 pp between 2019 and 2020.

The proportion of minority ethnic FAs increased by 1.5 pp between 2016 and 2019, from 4.9% to 6.4%, respectively. The proportion saw a minor, 0.1 pp decrease between 2019 and 2020. At 6.4% this exceeds the Scottish population share.

Table 6.3: Proportion (%) of FA starts at SCQF level 6 by equalities, 2016 to 2020.					
	2016 Cohort 1	2017 Cohort 2	2018 Cohort 3	2019 Cohort 4	2020 Cohort 5
Female	49.7	53.7	56.6	57.0	58.0
Male	50.3	46.3	43.4	43.0	42.0
Self-declared disability	8.0	7.4	7.1	16.4	17.6
Minority ethnic	4.9	5.0	6.2	6.5	6.4
Care experienced	1.3	7.8	5.1	2.4	2.8

Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report.

FA starts in the Pilot SCQF Level 4/5 are dominated by male pupils, with the male share of starts at 88.5% in 2019 and 82.5% in 2020. This is likely due to the scope of the available subject areas, some of which have long engrained gender segregation issues.

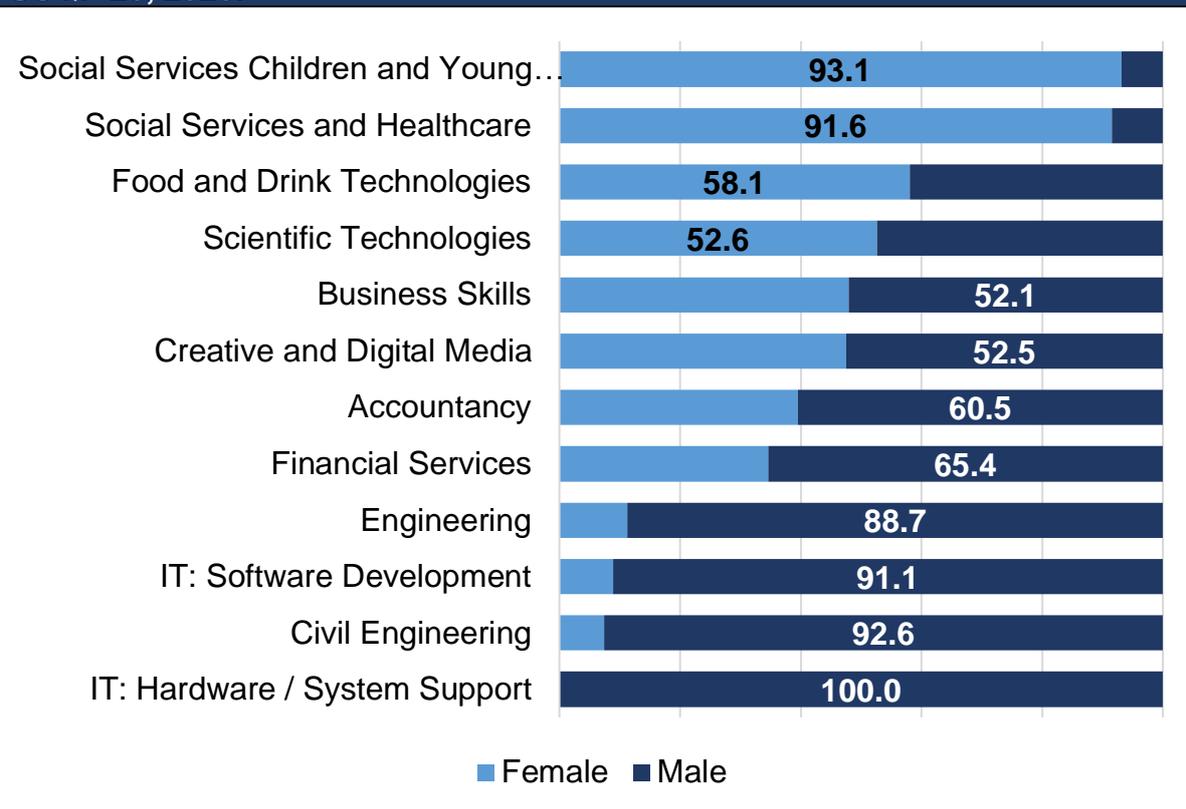
The proportion of FAs at SCQF Level 4/5 self-declaring a disability rose by 8.2 pp from the initial pilot in 2019 (17.1%) to the 2020 (25.3%) intake. It is likely that this increase is at least partly due to levels 4 and 5 being available to a broader range of pupils. The SDS definition of disabled also includes those with Additional Support Needs and Learning Difficulties, which could explain the large proportion of FAs self-declaring a disability. Of those pupils studying at SCQF level 4/5 in 2020 who self-identified a disability, the categories with the biggest proportions were: learning disability (60.0%), social communication impairment (18.6%) and mental health (10.4%).

The proportion of minority ethnic pupils at SCQF Level 4/5 is lower, at 2.4% in 2020 (increased slightly from 2.1% in 2019). Although there are now more schools offering pilot FAs at this level, they are not yet available in every local authority, which may make them less accessible to minority ethnic pupils.

Gender balances across FA frameworks/subject areas and in STEM related courses

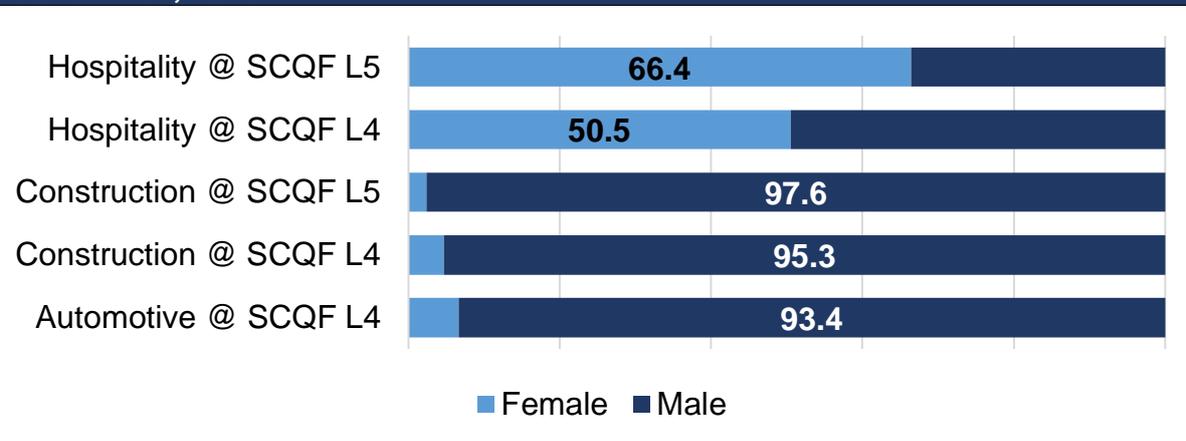
As with colleges and universities gender balances vary between subject areas. For SCQF level 6 females tend to dominate social services frameworks and males are most prevalent in engineering and IT frameworks. While at SCQF levels 4 and 5, male pupils dominate Construction and Automotive frameworks/subjects, with only hospitality showing a slight female majority (see charts 6.2 and 6.3).

Chart 6.2: Proportion (%) of FA starts by framework/subject area and gender, SCQF L6, 2020.



Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report.

Chart 6.3: Proportion (%) of FA starts by framework/subject area and gender, SCQF L4/5, 2020.

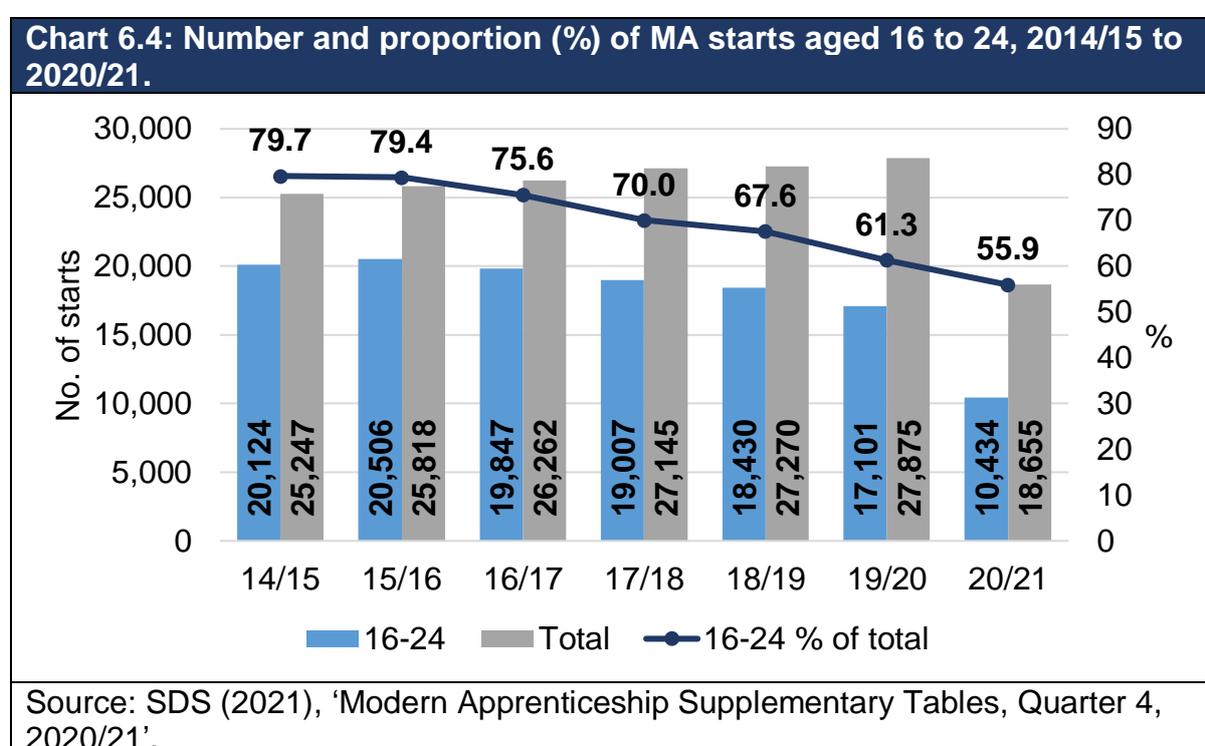


Source: SDS (June 2021), Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report.

STEM related frameworks/subject areas have a considerable male majority. The gap has been narrowing for SCQF level 6 FAs, with female share in STEM having increased from 8.1% in 2016 to 24.5% in 2020. At SCQF Levels 4/5 males currently represent 95.5% of STEM related frameworks/subject areas, and females 4.4%.⁵²

Modern Apprenticeship (MA) starts aged 16 to 24

The number of MA starts aged 16 to 24 has been decreasing since 2015/16, falling from 20,506 to 17,101 in 2019/20, a 16.6% drop (see Chart 6.4). At the same time, the number of all MA starts has consistently increased due the increasing amount of MA starts aged 25 and above, with the share of young people as a proportion of total MA starts falling by 18.4 pp, from 79.7% in 2014/15 to 61.3% in 2019/20.



In 2020/21, the number of starts across all age groups decreased compared to 2019/20, primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 fundamentally changed the context in which employers make decisions about recruitment and staff learning, and in which apprenticeship training is delivered. Following a complete shut down during the first quarter of the year and the varying degrees of lockdown that followed, Scotland's businesses and particularly the sectors including tourism, hospitality and retail where, under normal circumstances, take up of apprenticeships would be high, have been hit hard.

The younger age groups were disproportionately affected during this year, with the share of young people as a proportion of total MA starts falling even further, to

⁵² Further data on FA STEM participation can be found in the SDS (June 2021), [Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report](#).

55.9%. This decrease may be in part due to the ongoing adverse effects of the pandemic on young people, with employers less able to recruit young people into retail and hospitality, where they tend to dominate, because of social distancing and the turndown in business activity. It could also, in part, relate to the decline in 16 to 24 year old population over recent years, highlighted in Chapter 1 of this paper, as well as the relative increase in the proportion of MAs aged 25 and over.

In both 2019/20 and 2020/21, the majority of MA starts were at SCQF level 6 or above. The proportion of starts at level 6 and above increased by 6.6 pp, from 72.5% in 2019/20 to 79.1% in 2020/21. However, the number of MA starts at level 6 and above fell from around 12,400 to around 8,250, consistent with the overall reduction in starts due to the pandemic.⁵³

Equalities and SIMD

The proportion of young MA starts who live in the 20% most deprived areas is higher than for those who reside in the 20% least deprived areas (see Table 6.4). Over the last few years, the gap between starts from the most and least deprived has gradually narrowed, falling from 9.8 pp in 2017/18 to 4.9 pp in 2020/21.

Men have consistently made up the largest share of MA starts aged 16 to 24, with 58.9% male in 2020/21 and 41.1% female. This is similar for the total MA starts (60.3% male, 39.8% female). While the gender balance of total MA starts has remained relatively constant historically, the gap between young male and female MA starts has been gradually widening.

The proportion of those self-identifying an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty has been rising between 2017/18 and 2019/20, from 12.3% to 17.1%. However, this proportion fell to 15.4% in 2020/21 and could be a demonstration of the impact of the pandemic on this group.

There has been no change in the share of MA starts who self-identify as minority ethnic. As shown in Chapter 1 of this evidence paper, the Participation Measure demonstrates that there is a higher rate of 16 to 19 year olds from minority ethnic groups who participate in Further and Higher Education, on leaving school. This, according to SDS⁵⁴, in part, explains their lower levels of representation in Modern Apprenticeships.

⁵³ Further data on MA starts by SCQF levels can be found in the SDS (2021), [‘Modern Apprenticeship Supplementary Tables, Quarter 4, 2020/21’](#).

⁵⁴ SDS (2021), [‘Modern Apprenticeships Statistics, Quarter 4, 2020/21’](#).

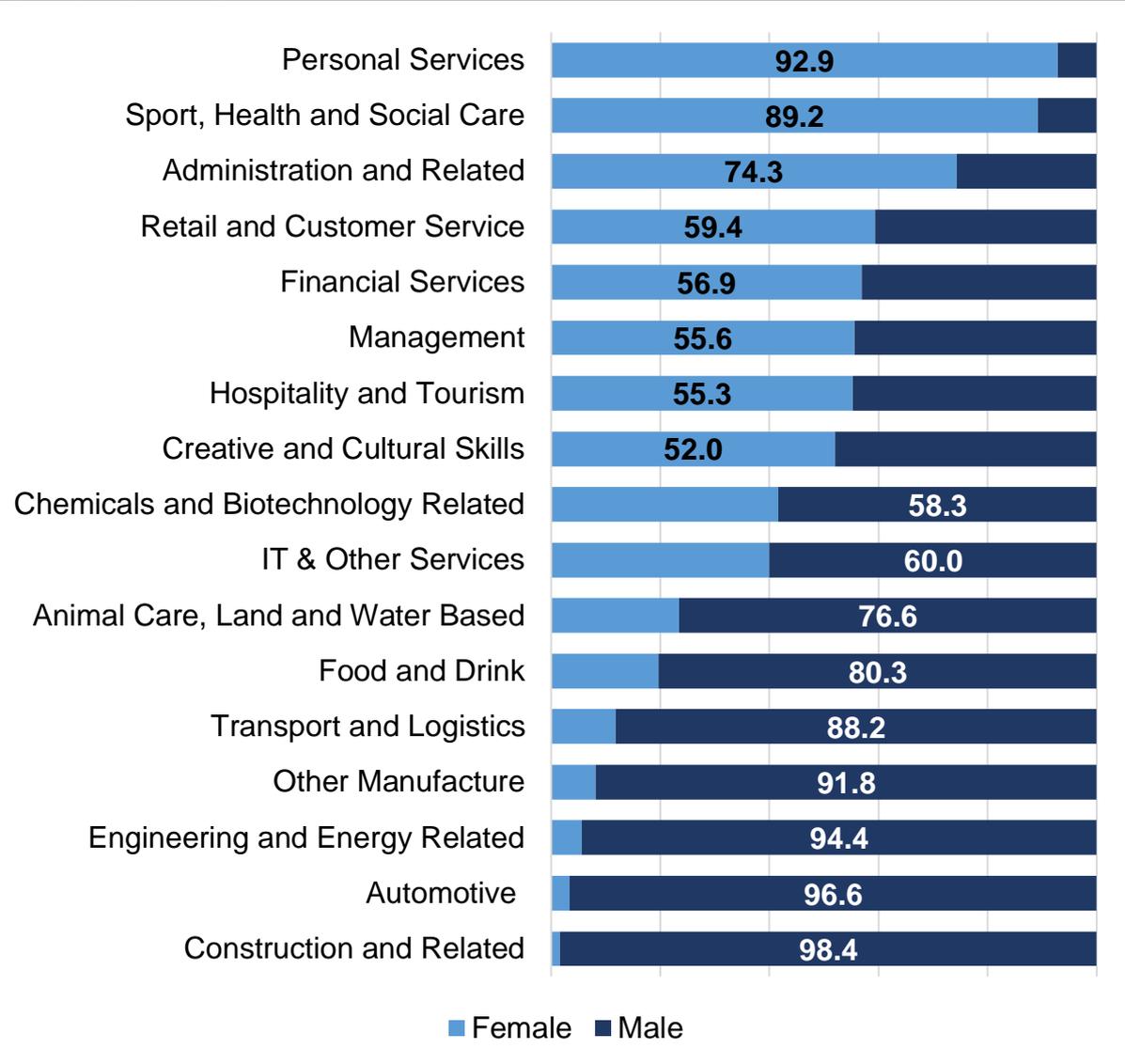
Table 6.4: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year old MA starts by equalities and SIMD, 2017/18 to 2020/21.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
SIMD: 20% most deprived	24.1	23.4	22.6	20.6
SIMD: 20% least deprived	14.3	14.6	15.1	15.7
Female	43.3	42.4	41.7	41.1
Male	56.7	57.6	58.3	58.9
Self-declared disability	12.3	15.2	17.1	15.4
Minority ethnic	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.2
Care experienced	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.0
Source: SDS (2021), 'Modern Apprenticeship Supplementary Tables, Quarter 4, 2020/21'; SIMD data is SG analysis of SDS Modern Apprenticeships data.				

Gender balances

Gender balances vary depending on occupational groupings (see chart 6.5). In 2020/21 Administration and Related (74.3%), Personal Services (92.9%) and Sport, Health and Social Care (89.2%) groupings had a higher proportion of females overall whereas Animal Care, Land and Water (76.6%), Automotive (96.6%), Construction and related (98.4%), Engineering and Energy Related (94.4%), Other Manufacture (91.8%) and Transport and Logistics (88.2%) groupings had a higher proportion of males overall. Four out of nine occupational groupings that were male dominated in 2020/21 had over 90.0% male majority, whereas only one out of eight female dominated groupings had over 90.0% female majority.

Chart 6.5: Proportion (%) of MA starts aged 16 to 24 by occupational grouping and gender, 2020/21.



Source: SG analysis of SDS Modern Apprenticeship Statistics.

STEM subjects are particularly male dominated. In 2020/21, 87.4% of STEM starts were male and 12.6% were female. Whilst the gender gap in total MA starts has been widening the gender imbalances in STEM starts has shown some, albeit slow, signs of narrowing with the male share of STEM starts falling by 2.1 pp from 89.6% in 2017/18 to 87.4% in 2020/21.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Further data on MA STEM starts can be found in the background tables and charts.

MA achievers aged 16 to 24

The achievement rate for 16 to 24 year olds has been falling in recent years, from 77.1% in 2016/17 to 74.8% in 2019/20, though rising again to 75.4% in 2020/21.

Those who live in the 20% least deprived areas have a higher MA achievement rate (79.2% in 2020/21) than those who come from the 20% most deprived areas (72.2% in 2020/21). This is consistent with college statistics covered in Chapter 4 of this paper.

Young women tend to have a higher achievement rate than young men – 76.0% and compared to 74.9% in 2020/21, respectively.

The achievement rate for those self-identifying as disabled is considerably lower than for those with no disability – 68.7% compared to 76.4%, respectively, in 2020/21. The gap between those identifying as disabled and those who do not was narrowing until 2019/20, falling from 12.2 pp in 2017/18 to 6.4 pp, however rising again to 7.7 pp in 2020/21.

Those self-identifying as minority ethnic have a lower achievement rate than those self-identifying as white (71.3% vs 75.3% in 2020/21). This differs slightly from the overall (all ages) MA achievement rates for those from minority ethnic communities, where the gap is much smaller (75.2% vs 76.4% in 2020/21), suggesting that this is a particular issue for the younger age groups. No improvement has been seen in the achievement rate for those from minority ethnic communities in the past four years.

The achievement rate for care experienced MAs is considerably lower than for those who are not (58.6% compared to 75.3% in 2020/21). This reflects a similar trend to other sources such as the Education Outcomes for Looked After Children which shows that looked after young people in Scotland tend to have poorer outcomes including lower attainment and fewer securing positive destinations.

When examining by SCQF levels⁵⁶, achievement rates tend to be higher for those with higher levels of qualification. For example, the achievement rate at SCQF levels 5 and 6 were 68.5% and 68.9% in 2020/21, compared to 86.6% and 83.1% at SCQF levels 8 and 9. Levels 10 and 11 have a 100.0% achievement rate, however this may be due the very small number (less than 5) of leavers and achievers at this level.

⁵⁶ Further data on achievement rates by SCQF levels can be found in the background tables and charts.

Table 6.5: MA achievement rates (%) for those aged 16 to 24 by equalities and SIMD, 2017/18 to 2020/21.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total	76.8	75.0	74.8	75.4
SIMD: 20% most deprived	73.9	71.4	71.6	72.2
SIMD: 20% least deprived	80.1	77.9	77.3	79.2
Female	76.8	75.0	75.9	76.0
Male	76.7	75.0	74.0	74.9
Self-declared disability	66.0	66.5	69.4	68.7
Not disabled	78.1	76.3	75.8	76.4
Minority ethnic	71.4	72.9	70.9	71.3
White	77.2	75.2	74.9	75.3
Care experienced^a	-	-	61.4	58.6
No care experience^a	-	-	74.8	75.3

Source: Total and Gender data from SDS (2021), 'Modern Apprenticeship Supplementary Tables, Quarter 4, 2020/21'; SIMD, Disability and Care experience data is SG analysis of SDS Modern Apprenticeship data.

^aData with care experience breakdowns only available from 2019/20 onward as this is the first year the dataset is complete.

MA redundancies and re-entrants aged 16 to 24⁵⁷

There were 734 16 to 24 year old MAs made redundant in 2020/21. This is more than double the amount of MA redundancies made in 2019/20 (343) for this age group. This is likely to be due to the adverse impact of the pandemic.

There were also 303 re-entrants following redundancy in 2020/21. Similarly to redundancies, this is double the number of re-entrants in 2019/20 (151). Re-entrants following redundancy includes individuals supported through Adopt an Apprentice.

Destinations for those who have finished their Modern Apprenticeships

SDS does not, on a regular basis, collect data on destinations after the individual has left their MAs. However, they published a report on Modern Apprenticeship Intermediate Outcomes⁵⁸ in 2016 based on analysis of a telephone survey of 2,000 MAs in Scotland, who had left their apprenticeship around six months previously which provides some idea of outcomes after MAs for those aged 16 to 24.

⁵⁷ Data tables for MA redundancies and re-entrants can be found in the Background Tables and Charts.

⁵⁸ SDS (2016), '[Modern Apprenticeship Intermediate Outcomes](#)'.

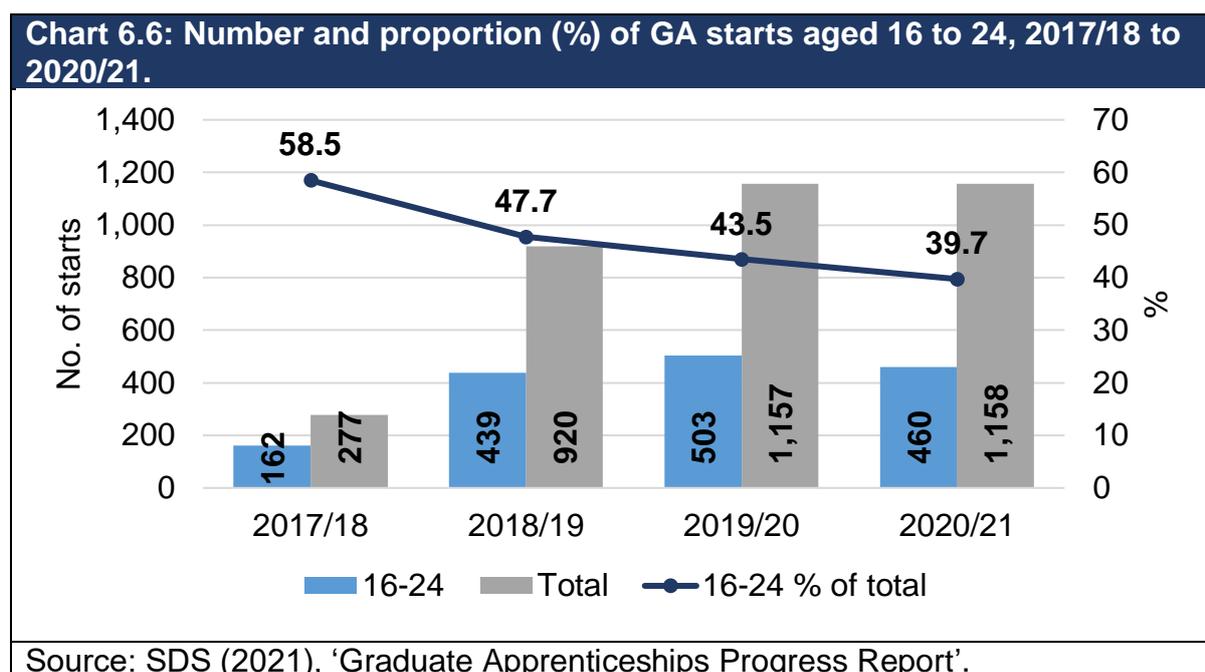
This report shows that those in either work or education is relatively equally spread across age groups, with 94% of those aged over 25 and 20 to 24 and 92% of those aged under 20 in work or education.

Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) starts aged 16 to 24

The number of GA starts aged 16 to 24 increased between 2017/18 and 2019/20, from 162 to 503, respectively (see Chart 6.6). However, the growth has been slower than for older age groups, with the share of 16 to 24 year old starts as a proportion of total GA starts consistently falling from 58.5% in 2017/18 to 39.7% in 2020/21.

While the number of GA starts in older age groups remained relatively stable or increased, the 16 to 24 age group saw a fall from 503 in 2019/20 to 460 in 2020/21.

As reported by SDS⁵⁹, the trends in the increasing number of older GA starts compared to younger age groups could be linked to work-based learning likely attracting older, more experienced employees as a means of up-skilling, whereas younger age groups may be more attracted to the freedom and lifestyle that full-time study provides.



Equalities

There is a considerably higher proportion of GA starts aged 16 to 24 from the least deprived areas compared to those from the most deprived areas: 12.8% compared to 26.7%, respectively, in 2020/21 (see Table 6.6). This is consistent with data on university enrolments highlighted in Chapter 5. However, there was a 2.5 pp increase in the proportion of those from 20% most deprived areas, rising from 10.3%

⁵⁹ SDS (2021), '[Graduate Apprenticeships Progress Report](#)'

in 2019/20 to 12.8% in 2020/21, while the proportion of starts from the 20% least deprived areas saw a 0.5 pp fall from 27.2% to 26.7% over the same time period.

There has been a consistent male majority in GA starts aged 16 to 24, although the gap has been slowly narrowing. The female share of GA starts has increased by 19.2 pp in the past four years, from 13.0% in 2017/18 to 32.2% in 2020/21.

The proportion of those aged 16 to 24 self-declaring a disability has increased between 2017/18 to 2019/20, from 4.1% to 11.4%, respectively. However, the proportion has fallen by 1.7 pp to 9.7% in 2020/21. This is consistent with overall GA figures.

The proportion of 16 to 24 year old GAs self-identifying as minority ethnic has remained relatively constant at just below 5% across the past three years⁶⁰. This differs from the overall GA start figures which include all age groups, where the proportion of those self-identifying as minority ethnic has increased from 3.5% in 2018/19 to 5.2% in 2020/21.

Table 6.6: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year old GA starts by equalities and SIMD, 2017/18 to 2020/21.				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
SIMD: 20% most deprived^a	-	-	10.3	12.8
SIMD: 20% least deprived^a	-	-	27.2	26.7
Female	13.0	27.6	29.0	32.2
Male	87.0	72.4	70.8	67.8
Self-declared disability	4.1	7.3	11.4	9.7
Minority ethnic	*	4.7	4.4	4.8
Source: SG analysis of SDS Graduate Apprenticeships Statistics.				
^a Data is only available from 2019/20 onwards.				
*Disclosure control has been applied where figures are less than 5 or where such small numbers can be identified through differencing.				

Gender balances across GA frameworks⁶¹

As with MAs, gender balances vary across GA frameworks. Most GA frameworks (10 out of 13) are STEM related.

There are four GA Frameworks where disclosure control has not been applied that were female dominated: Accounting (Pilot), Early Learning and Childcare, Business

⁶⁰ There were less than 5 GAs self-identifying as minority ethnic in this age group in 2017/18.

⁶¹ Further data on gender balances in GA frameworks can be found in the Background Tables and Charts.

Management and Civil Engineering Level 8⁶². The first three of these frameworks are non-STEM. All the seven male dominated frameworks, where disclosure control has not been applied, are STEM.

While the gender imbalances in GA frameworks are large, the female share has been increasing in some, consistent with the overall increases in the female share of all 16 to 24 year old GA starts. For example, the female share rose from 37.5% in 2019/20 to 42.1% 2020/21 in Data Science and from 25.0% to 38.5%, in IT Management for Business. Similarly, the female share in Accounting and Business Management, which were already female dominated, has increased.

In other STEM related frameworks, gender imbalances have shown very little improvement, with one, Construction and the Built Environment, showing signs of becoming even more male dominated, with the female share falling from 27.6% in 2019/20 to 23.1% in 2020/21.

However, these figures should be interpreted with caution, as the number of starts in each framework is relatively low.

Early leavers from Graduate Apprenticeships aged 16 to 24

A Graduate Apprentice is categorised as an early leaver if they leave their apprenticeship before achieving the full qualification they were registered for. Early leavers also include those who exit at a recognised point (e.g. achieve a qualification at SCQF level 9 rather than 10).

The percentage of 16 to 24 year old GA entrants who are early leavers is decreasing year on year. This is likely at least partially due to the elapsed time for each cohort, as would be expected, but, according to SDS, it may also reflect the continued evolution and maturity of GAs.

The share of 16 to 24 year old early leavers as a proportion of all leavers is also decreasing, suggesting that leavers are increasingly likely to be from older age groups.

Table 6.7: Proportion (%) of 16 to 24 year old GA Early Leavers, 2017/18 to 2020/21.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
% of all 16-24 GA starts	21.0	19.1	13.7	3.0
% of all early leavers	42.5	36.8	37.5	31.8
Source: SG analysis of Graduate Apprenticeships Statistics provided by SDS.				

⁶² Female representation in this Framework is at 100%, this is likely due to very low participation (less than 5).

GA achievers aged 16 to 24

Other than Civil Engineering at level 8 taking two years to complete and Early Learning and Childcare at Level 9 taking three years to complete, all GA frameworks are 4-year degree programmes. This means that, to date, only a very small number of students have achieved their full GAs.

There have been 58 achievers to date aged 16 to 24, 8 (13.8%) of which were female and 50 (86.2%) male.⁶³

⁶³ Further data on GA achievers can be found in the Background Tables and Charts.

7. Employer Perspective

This chapter looks at the recruitment of young people from the employers' perspective.

A key publication looking at this is the Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS), a bi-annual publication that investigates employers' approaches to recruitment and training. We will here focus on the latest publication of this report, published in 2019, and comparisons will also be made to the earlier publications in 2014 and 2016.

It is important to note that some of the questions asked in the survey, and covered in this chapter (i.e. recruitment directly from education, recruitment of apprentices and work experience/inspiration activity offering), do not explicitly focus on young people, however it is reasonable to assume that young people will have a significant presence in these areas.

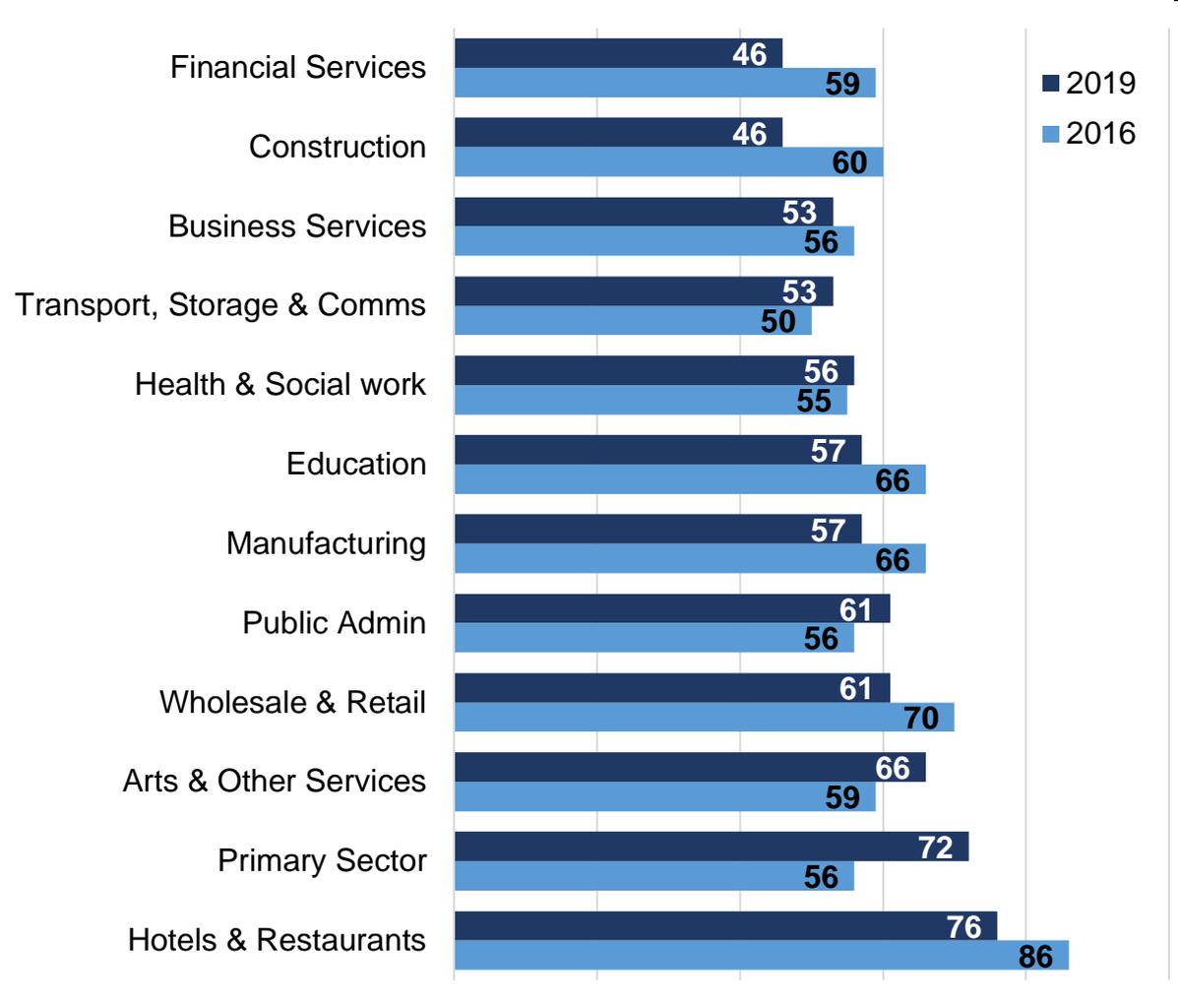
Trends in the recruitment of young people

According to the 2019 EPS, three out of five employers (60%) who had recruited in the year preceding the survey had recruited a young person aged under 25, a decrease compared to 2016 when 64% of those who had recruited had recruited a young person.

Employers were almost twice as likely to have recruited at least one young person aged between 19 and 24 (50% had done so) than to have recruited at least one 16 to 18 year old (28%). This is consistent with previous years, although the proportion of recruiting those aged 19 to 24 has decreased by 6 pp since the 2016 survey.

The decreases in recruitment of young people are reported to be greatest amongst the public sector and the Construction sector. Employers in the Hotels and Restaurant and Primary and Utilities sectors, on the other hand, were particularly likely to have recruited a young person. The Hotel and Restaurant sector is particularly likely to recruit both those aged 16 to 18 (41% compared to 28% overall) and those aged 19 to 24 (67% compared to 50% overall).

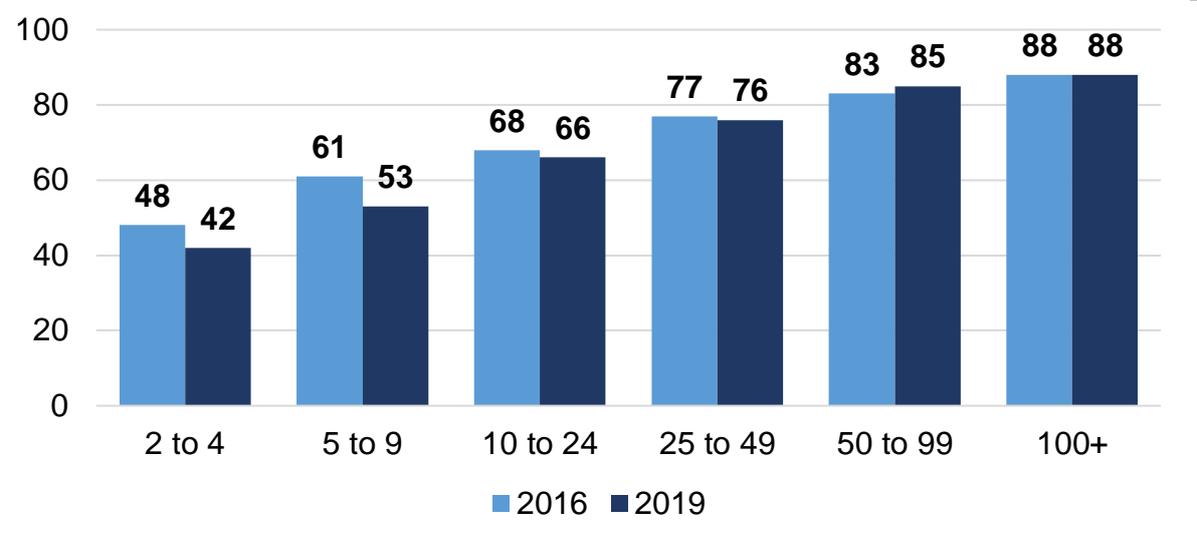
Chart 7.1: Proportion (%) of employers who had recruited a young person in the last 12 months, by sector, 2016 and 2019.



Source: Scottish Government (2019), 'Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2019: research report'.

Based on the 2019 survey, large companies are more likely to have recruited a young person, with 88% of those with 100+ employees having done so in the 12 months preceding the 2019 survey. Compared to the 2016 survey, there has been a drop in smaller employers recruiting young people. In 2016, 48% of those with between 2-4 employees had recruited a young person compared to 42% in 2019. Similarly, amongst those with 5-9 employees there was a decrease from 61% in 2016 to 53% in 2019, with particularly steep decrease in recruitment of 19 to 24 year olds, from 50% to 38%.

Chart 7.2: Proportion (%) of employers who had recruited a young person in the last 12 months, by size, 2016 and 2019.



Source: Scottish Government (2019), 'Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2019: research report'.

According to the survey, when young people are recruited it was typically to fill 'lower level' roles. Around three-fifths (59%) of employers who recruited a young person within the year preceding the 2019 survey hired them for a relatively low skilled occupational area; 28% elementary, 14% caring, leisure and other service, 13% sales and customer service, 4% process, plant and machine operatives.

Smaller employers were particularly likely to have recruited for an elementary occupation (43% of those with 2-4 employees compared to 17% of those with 100 employees or more).

One in ten employers (10%) who recruited a young person in the last year placed their most recent young recruit in a skilled trade occupation and around the same proportion (9%) in an administrative or secretarial occupation.

In total only 13% of employers who recruited a young person hired their most recent young worker for a relatively high skilled role; 8% associated professional and technical, 4% professional and 1% as a manager, director or senior official.

It is important to note that there is considerable variation by sector, reflecting occupational structures. For example, employers in the Education sector were particularly likely to have hired a young person for a professional role, Business Services employers to administrative or secretarial roles and construction sector for skilled trade roles.

Proportion of employers recruit directly from education

To further understand employers' experience of recruiting young people, the EPS also investigates the proportion of employers who have taken on an education leaver. However, it is important to note that while these results are likely to include a

large proportion of young people, they do not directly refer to the young people cohort aged 16 to 24.

In 2019, 30% of employers had recruited an employee to their first job after leaving school, college or university. This is a reduction from 32% reported in 2016 and 2014.

Breaking this measure down further, 20% of employers had recruited directly from a Scottish secondary school and 12% had recruited from a Scottish college in the year before the 2019 survey. There has been very little change for these figures since 2014 and 2016.

However, there has been a drop in university recruitment, with 11% of employers having recruited from a Scottish university in 2019, a decrease from 2014 (13%) and 2016 (14%). This reduction was driven by a decrease in recruitment of university leavers amongst employers in the Arts, Public Administration, Business Services, Manufacturing, and Hotels and Restaurants sectors, as well as those employers who are smaller (under 50 employees).

Table 7.1: Proportion (%) of employers recruiting directly from education, 2014, 2016 and 2019.

	2014	2016	2019
Total	32	32	30
Schools	19	19	20
Colleges	11	11	12
Universities	13	14	11

Source: Scottish Government (2019), 'Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey: 2019'.

Proportion of employers recruit Apprentices

At the time of the 2019 survey, 16% of employers were offering apprenticeships or had at least one apprentice, unchanged from the proportion of employers offering apprenticeships in 2016 (15%), however higher than in 2014 (12%)⁶⁴.

Table 7.2: Proportion (%) of employers with apprenticeship offerings, 2014, 2016 and 2019.

	2014	2016	2019
Offer apprenticeships and have at least one apprentice	9	10	11
Offering apprenticeships but have no apprentices at the moment	3	5	5
Total % offering apprenticeships	12	15	16

Sources: Scottish Government (2019), 'Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2019: research report', UK Government (2017), 'Employer perspectives survey 2016' and UK Government (2015), 'Employer Perspectives Survey 2014: Scotland data'.

⁶⁴ The 2014 figures are employers who report offering formal apprenticeships. This data does not apply specifically to young people aged 16 to 24.

Large employers were more likely than smaller ones to offer apprenticeships, ranging from 8% of employers with 2-4 staff to 56% among those with 100+ staff. By sector, the offering of apprenticeships was most common in the Education and Construction sectors (32% and 28% respectively).

Among employers offering apprenticeships, 90% offered them to people aged under 25 years and 44% offered apprenticeships only to young people. Offering apprenticeships to young people was fairly uniform across size, sector and region and is in line with the 2016 survey results.

Among those employers who have engaged with their local DYW Lead or Regional Group, this increases to 98% of those offering an apprenticeship having offered these to young people.

Since 2016, however, overall the proportion of employers offering apprenticeships only to young people has decreased from 52% to 44%. This decrease was particularly pronounced in the Manufacturing (63% to 32%) and Public Administration (48% to 22%) sectors.

Among employers offering apprenticeships, 43% only offered them to new employees recruited specifically as apprentices, 7% only offered them to existing employees and 46% offered them to a combination of both new recruits and existing employees. This has not changed significantly since the last EPS in 2016.

Proportion of employers offer work experience and work inspiration activities

The EPS highlights the positive impact on employment that work placements afford young people, the unemployed and graduates and has included a chapter on the support offered to individuals to enter work, including work placements and work inspiration activities.

Based on the 2019 survey, work experience placements (including education placements, broad adult placements and internships) were provided by 36% of employers (a drop compared to 39% in 2016), and work inspiration activities by 15% (an increase from 13% in 2016). The smallest employers were half as likely as those with five or more employees to provide work placements, the majority of employers with at least 10 employees did provide work experience.

In total, employers offering work placements each took an average of just over 6.2 individuals on to a placement in the 12 months before the 2019 survey, and increase from an average of just over 5 individuals per establishment in 2016. Therefore, although the proportion of employers offering placements in Scotland has decreased, those who do are offering to more individuals. Almost 333,000 placements were offered to individuals by employers, an increase of 6% from just under 315,000 in 2016

The most common form of work placement provided was an education placement, provided by 28% of employers, which is broadly in line with 2014 and 2016 results

(28% and 30% respectively). 20% of employers had provided a placement for people at school; 12% for those at college; and 11% for those at university.

Broader, adult work placements were provided by 12% of employers, most commonly in the form of work trials for potential new recruits (9% of employers) but also placements to give work experience to the unemployed (4%). Internships (paid or unpaid) were provided by 5% of employers – a slight but considerable decrease from the 7% who did so in 2016.

Table 7.3: Proportion (%) of Employers offering work experience placements, 2014, 2016 and 2019.			
	2014	2016	2019
Total Education Placements	28	30	28
- Placements for school students	20	21	20
- Placements for college students	11	10	12
- Placements for university students	11	13	11
Broad Adult Placements	-	15	12
Internships	5	7	5
Sources: Scottish Government (2019), 'Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2019: research report' and UK Government (2015), 'Employer Perspectives Survey 2014: Scotland data'.			

The likelihood of having provided any form of work experience increases steadily with size, from 23% of those with 2-4 employees, to 78% among those with 100+ employees.

A third (34%) of employers who provided work placements had gone on to recruit the trainee into a permanent or long-term paid role, similar to the 31% who had done so in 2016. In most cases this was directly following their placement (25%), though 10% hired them upon completion of their course.

Work placements for those at university or college were more likely to lead to permanent employment than for those who were still at school (24% and 23% compared to 14%).

Overall, 15% of employers had engaged with schools, colleges or universities during the 12 months preceding the study to provide 'work inspiration' activities for students in addition to or instead of providing work placements. This may have involved hosting site visits for students, talking to them about careers, or conducting activities such as mock interviews to improve their employability.

Establishments that were aware of DYW Regional Groups were considerably more likely to have provided work inspiration activities than those who were unaware (33% compared to 12% respectively).

Combining the provision of work experience and work inspiration, some form of work experience and work inspiration was offered by 40% of employers in the year preceding the 2019 survey. Nearly all larger employers offered either work experience or work inspiration (87% of those with 100+ employees), as did a large majority of those in the Education sector (86%).

Three in five (60%) of all employers offered neither work experience or work inspiration. This increases to three-quarters (74%) of those with 2-4 employees, 78% of those in the Construction sector and 79% of those that do not offer any training.

The survey also asked about what the barriers were to offering work-related experience from those who did not provide any work placement/internship programmes. Structural issues were the most common barrier, raised by 68% of establishments. Within this group, 38% thought they had no suitable roles and 20% did not have time or resources.

The EPS report highlights a clear opportunity for expanding the number of employers offering work placements, with one in five (21%) employers unaware of what they might be able to offer. This includes 16% that had not been approached about providing work experience or work inspiration activities, and 5% had simply never considered it. A lack of awareness is particularly likely amongst establishments with between five and 24 employees, and it is less likely that those in this size band have made an active choice not to provide work experience.

Proportion of employers were aware of and engaged with their DYW Regional Group

In the 2019 survey, 14% of all employers were aware of the DWY Regional Group and 19% of those who had heard of the Groups had engaged with them over the past 12 months by offering work-related experience to school/college students, equating to 3% of all employers.

Of employers with 2-4 employees, 11% were aware of their DYW Regional Group rising to 37% of those with 100+ employees. Larger employers were also more likely to have engaged with a DYW Regional Group.

Awareness levels are twice as high amongst employers who provided work experience (20% compared to 10% of those who did not), and around three times as high amongst those who provide 'work inspiration' activities for students (e.g. site visits or careers talks). Again, these employers were more likely to have gone on to engage with a DYW Regional Group.

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