

ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary

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Summary findings

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

41,007 referrals were received and 27,076 people started receiving employability support in the first 2 and a half years of FSS from April 2018 to September 2020. Referrals and starts between July and September 2020 were higher than the quarter before, with a 38% increase in referrals and a 20% increase in starts. However, they are still lower than levels seen before the period of COVID-19 disruption, with referrals 17% lower than July – September 2019 and starts 12% lower.

People receiving FSS support experience varying and often multiple barriers to finding work. Health conditions and/or disabilities are the most commonly reported¹. 65% of FSS participants reported a long-term health condition and 44% were disabled.

So far, 8,329 people started a job after joining FSS. There were 848 job starts in April – June 2020, 20% lower than the same period in 2019, but they increased to 1,252 in July – September 2020, 10% higher than the same period in 2019.

Rates of job starts and outcomes for each start group are reported when the full time available to reach them has passed. For participants where data is complete, most people who started FSS did not enter work or go on to sustain employment: 33% started a job, 23% sustained employment for 3 months, 18% sustained employment for 6 months, and 13% sustained employment for at least 12 months.

However, people who started work had high rates of sustaining it: 71% of people starting work went on to sustain employment for 3 months, 78% of those who sustained employment for 3 months went on to reach at least 6 months, and 77% of those who sustained employment for 6 months went on to reach at least 12 months.

Job starts and sustained outcomes were lower for older age groups compared with younger age groups, and also lower for those reporting that their long-term health conditions limited daily activities 'a lot' compared with those who have long-term health conditions that do not limit daily activities.

Where we can report complete data², 50% of people left FSS early without completing the programme of support offered and without having sustained employment for at least 3 months. The percentage was highest (56%) for those reporting a long-term health condition that limited daily activities 'a lot'.

¹ Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: overview of year one - November 2019
www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/

² Participants who started on FSS April 2018 to September 2019

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

This publication includes data over a period from March 2020 onwards when the COVID-19 pandemic, associated public health measures, and economic and labour market impacts, have caused several changes which impact the statistics published here. This includes

- 1) the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) refocused their work to deal with the increased demand for benefit claims, so FSS referrals from DWP were paused until June 2020. Since then, the DWP have restarted referring people to FSS, but referrals remain at a lower level than they were before March 2020.
- 2) As a result of this, there has been an increase in referrals to FSS through other avenues, particularly from FSS providers' own marketing efforts.
- 3) FSS switched from face-to-face interaction to delivery via phone calls and online interaction. This has had an impact on the equalities data collected, with fewer people who join FSS disclosing information on protected characteristics like ethnicity.
- 4) There was a relaxation of rules specifying how often participants must be in contact with providers, from March to September 2020. This meant that some people who would otherwise be considered to have left the service during this period stayed on FSS.
- 5) There have been fewer job vacancies, making it harder for participants to start jobs and achieve job outcomes.

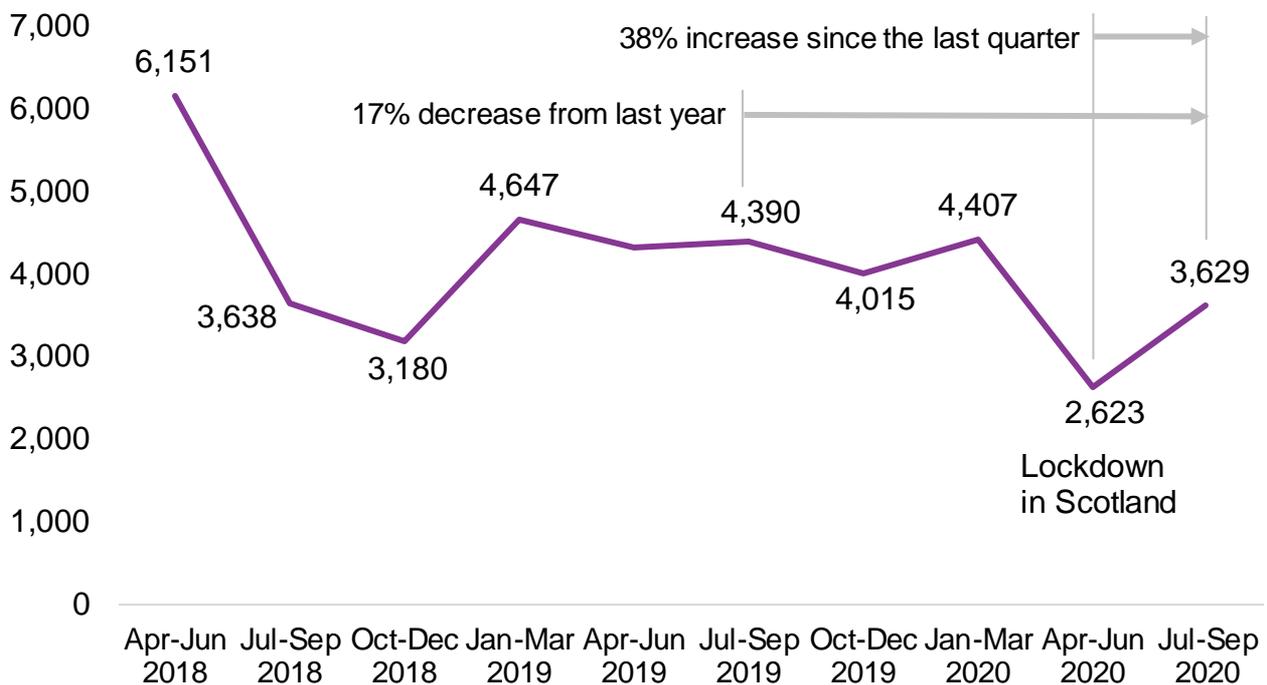
Fair Start Scotland (FSS)

How many people have joined FSS?

41,007 people were referred to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of September 2020.

COVID-19 had an impact on the referral process into FSS as the DWP paused referrals in March – June 2020 (see Introduction section). This will explain some of the drop in referrals in the previous quarter, illustrated in Figure 1 below. Referrals in July – September 2020 were 38% higher than April – June 2020, but were 17% lower than July – September 2019.

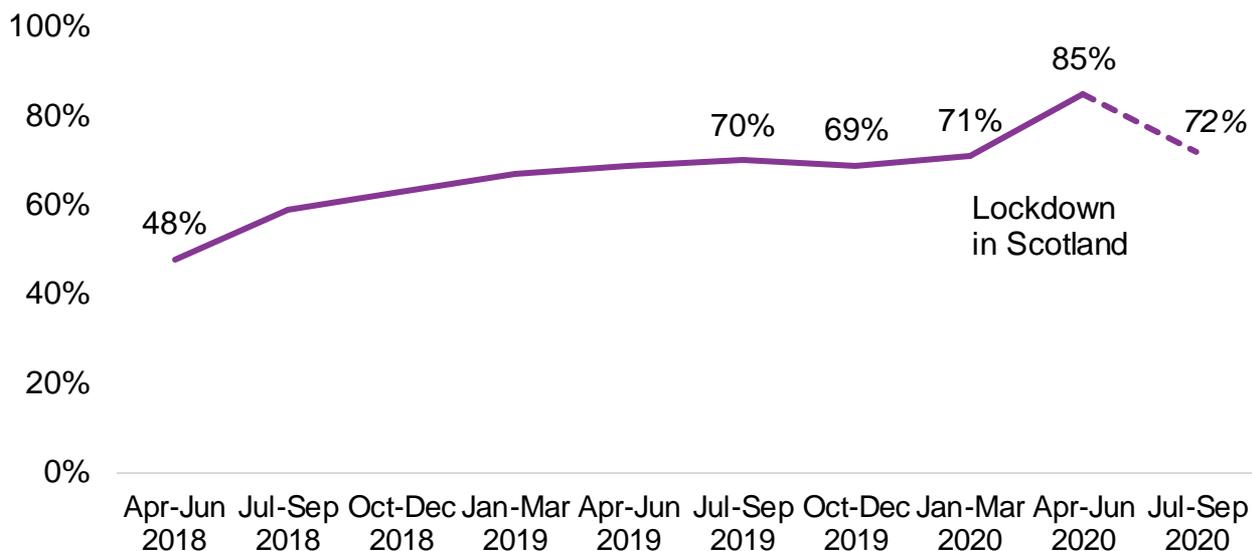
Figure 1: Number of people referred into Fair Start Scotland by quarter of referral, from April 2018 to September 2020



Of the total number of people referred to FSS, 27,076 went on to receive employability support services. Since the start of FSS, there has been an increase in the start rate, the proportion of people referred who decide to join FSS, with an average of 59% in year 1, to 60% in year 2, and a further increase in year 3. In the first quarter of year 3, the start rate increased to 85%, before decreasing again to at least 72% in July-September³. This is shown in Figure 2. The changes in referral sources (described in the introduction section) were highlighted as a possible reason for the increase in start rate in April – June 2020.

³ The start rate for the most recent quarter is expected to rise by a few percentage points as it has done previously, as not everyone referred during that time has had sufficient time to join FSS.

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



Note:

1. The July - September 2020 start rate is not complete yet and may rise further.

The Scottish Government's evaluation of the second year of the service⁴ highlighted that compared to the unemployed population of Scotland there were some groups under-represented in FSS: women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and young people; while a higher proportion of disabled people and older people used the service. This is the same as for the first year of FSS⁵.

The breakdown of equalities groups for FSS is shown in Figure 3. There have been changes in the demographic composition of those joining the service over time.

In total 37% of people joining FSS were women and 63% were men. The proportion of women has increased over time: from 35% in year 1, to 37% in year 2, and 40% in the first and second quarters of year 3.

The most common age group of people joining FSS was 35-49 years (28% of people), followed by 50 years old and over (26%), 25-34 years (24%), and 16-24 years (20%).

Over time, the proportion of younger participants has increased, while the proportion of older participants has decreased. In the most recent quarter, the proportion of people from younger age groups (16 to 34) was 54%, with 45% from older age groups (35 and over). This shows little change from the quarter before (56% younger, 44% older), but the proportion of younger participants has increased since year 1 (38% younger, 60% older) and year 2 (44% younger, 52% older).

⁴ Fair Start Scotland - evaluation report 3: year two – overview - November 2020
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-3-overview-year-two/>

⁵ Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: overview of year one - November 2019
www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/

67% of people joining FSS were white, with 5% of people joining from minority ethnic backgrounds. Ethnicity data is not available for the remaining 28%. The rate of unknowns was high and increased in years 2 and 3, making comparisons over time difficult. ⁶

44% of people joining FSS reported a disability. The proportion of disabled participants has decreased over time; from 55% in year 1 to 44% in year 2, to 27% in April – June 2020. In the most recent quarter there was a large increase in the proportion of unknown data, so it is not possible to report on the change in the proportion of disabled people in July – September 2020.

65% of people joining FSS reported having a long-term health condition, and 28% reported no long-term health condition, with the rest unknown.

Figure 4 shows that the most common health condition reported was mental health (35%). Between year 1 and 2 there was a 5 percentage point increase in people reporting a mental health condition among those joining FSS, from 31% to 36%. This then remained at a similar level in the the first two quarters of year 3 (36% in April – June, 38% in July – September).

The second most commonly reported type of health condition was a long-term illness, disease or condition, which affected 16% of people joining FSS and has not changed much over time.

Physical disabilities were the third most common long-term health conditions reported. The number of people reporting a physical disability declined over time until April – June 2020 (14% in year 1, 10% in year 2, 5% in April – June 2020), and was 7% in the most recent quarter.

⁶ Since the COVID-19 lockdown FSS is delivered over the phone or online, with face-to-face interaction paused. This has impacted the collection of equalities data. We are working with FSS service providers to ensure response rates are maximised going forward. For more information, see the Data Quality section in the Background Information.

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

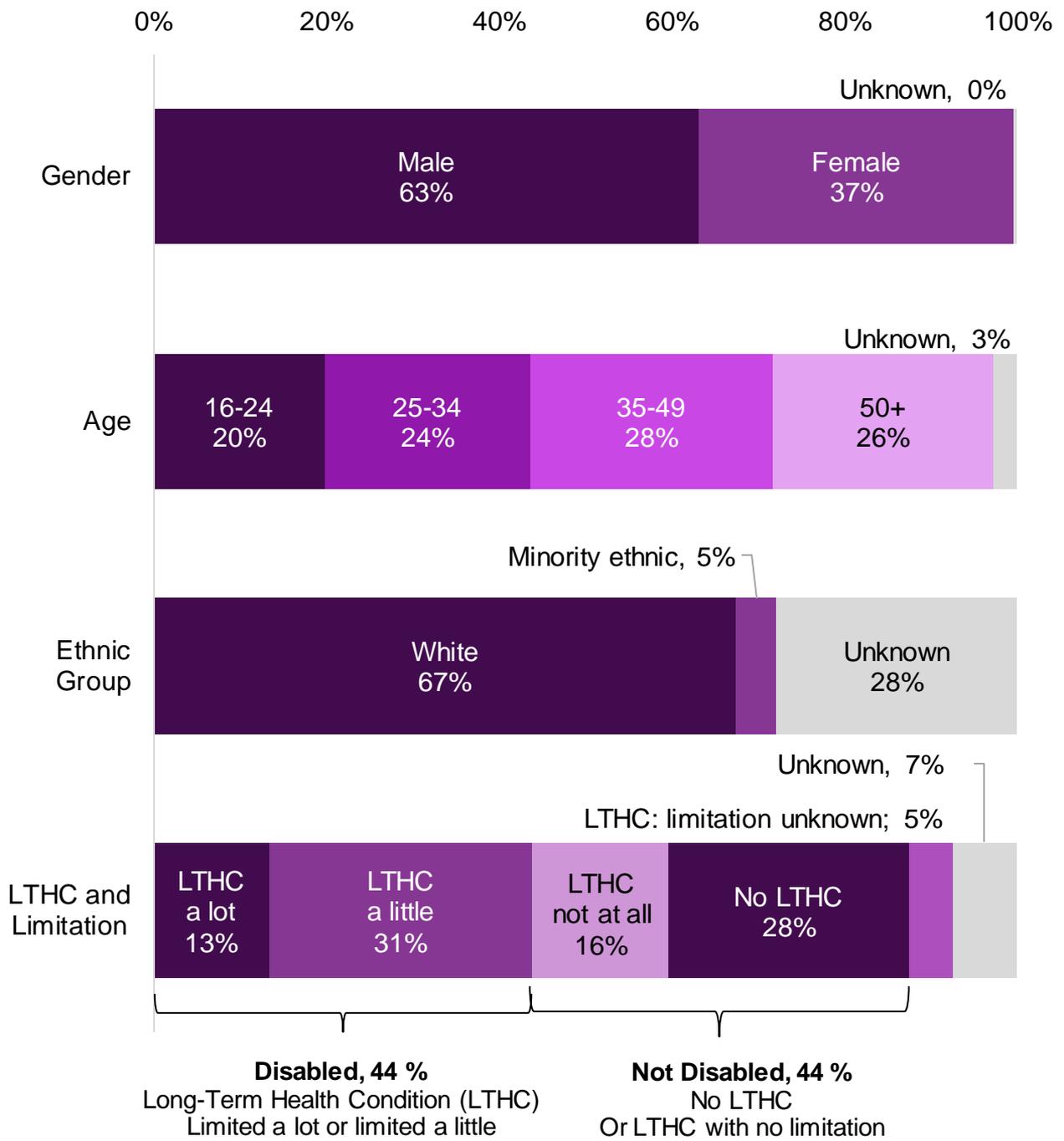
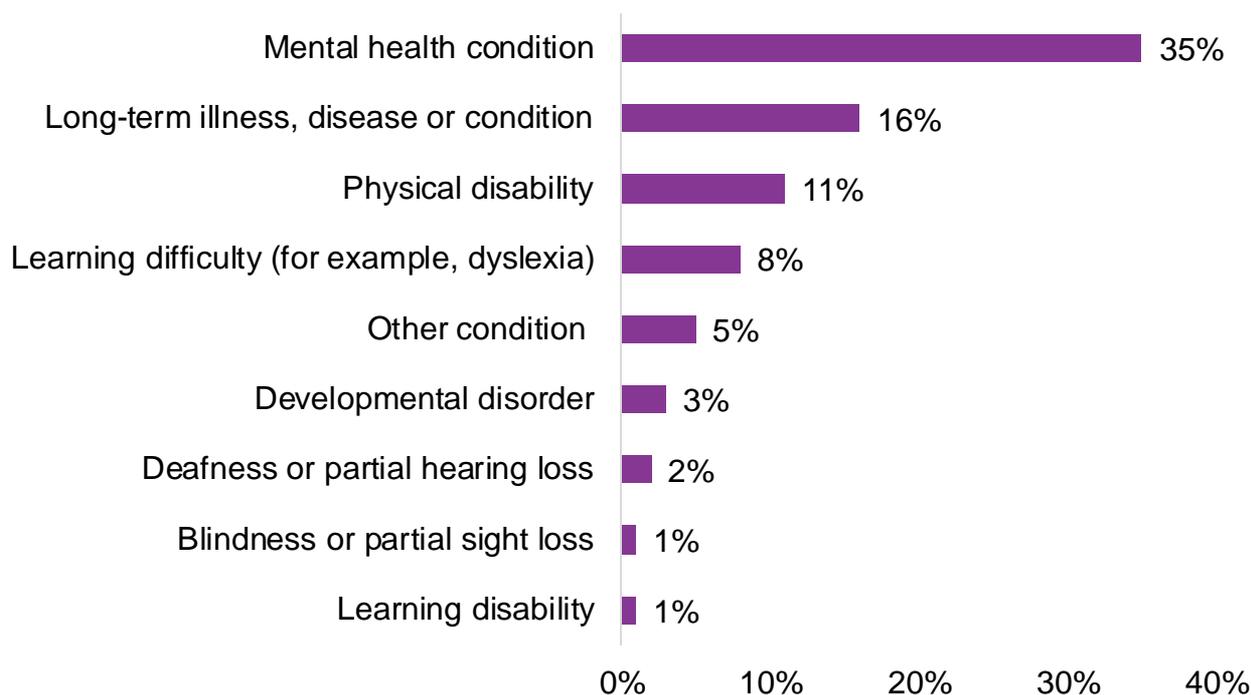


Figure 4: Percentage of people joining Fair Start Scotland who report long-term health conditions, broken down by type of long-term health condition, from April 2018 to September 2020



How many people left FSS early?

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

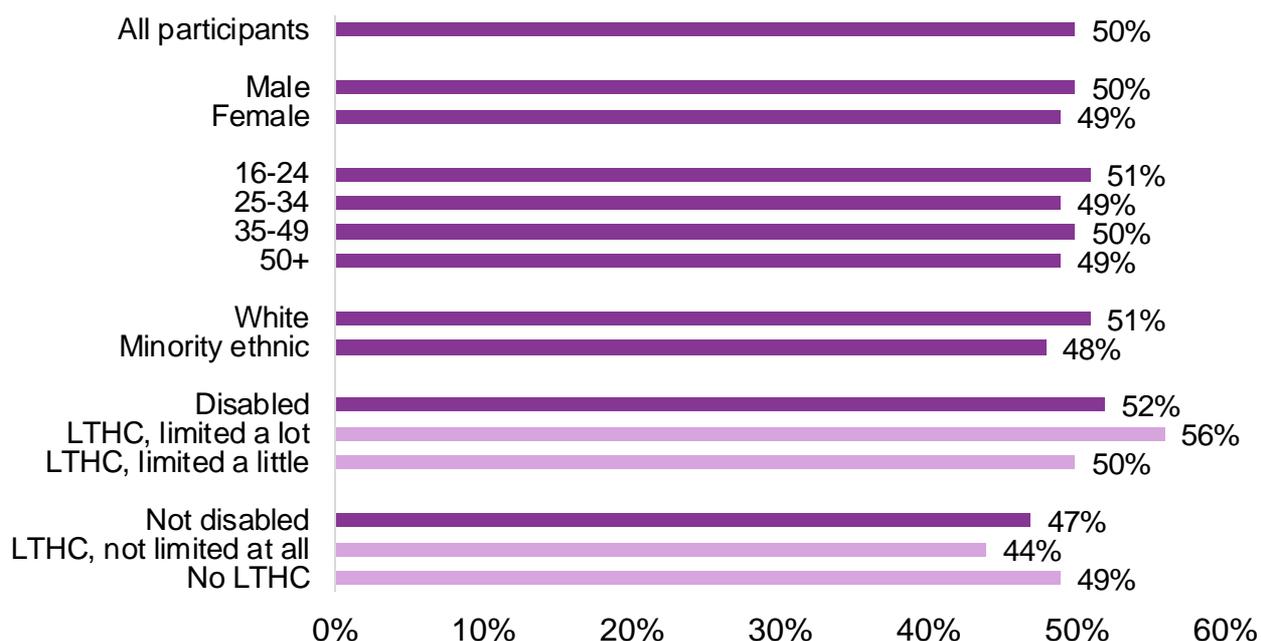
Overall, 10,029 people have left FSS early. As with job outcomes, as time goes on we get a more complete picture of numbers staying on FSS or leaving early. Where we have a complete picture⁷, 50% of people joining left the service early.

The numbers of people leaving early decreased in April – June 2020 (see attached tables, table 3). This decrease needs to be considered in relation to the changing situation for the delivery of FSS due to COVID-19, particularly with a temporary relaxation of rules for participants remaining in contact with providers (see Introduction section). In the most recent quarter, numbers of people leaving early has increased and is now similar to pre COVID-19 levels.

Figure 5 shows that the percentage of people leaving early was broadly similar for most of the equalities groups. However, the percentage was higher for those reporting a disability, particularly for those who have a long-term health condition that limits daily activities a lot (56% left early). The proportion of people leaving early was lower for those who had a long-term health condition that did not limit daily activities at all (44%).

⁷ A complete picture is available for those who started FSS before the end of September 2019

Figure 5: Percentage of people that leave Fair Start Scotland early, broken down by equality characteristic group, from April 2018 to September 2020 ^{8 9}



How many people entered and sustained employment?

A total of 8,329 people who joined FSS have started a job. On average, most people who started a job found employment within three months of joining FSS.

COVID-19 has had an impact on the labour market, and the number of job vacancies¹⁰ available. Figure 6 has been included to show changes in FSS job starts since COVID-19 restrictions began in March 2020. It shows that FSS job starts in April – June 2020 were 20% lower than the same period in 2019, but then increased, so that in July – September 2020 they were 10% higher than the same period in 2019.

⁸ LTHC is an abbreviation of Long-Term Health Condition.

⁹ The early leaver rate is calculated for the 16,141 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2019 as we have the most complete data.

¹⁰

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirustheuketheconomyandsocietyfasterindicators/5november#online-job-adverts>

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



Of the 8,329 people who started work, 4,761 of those had sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 3,320 were employed for at least 6 months (26 weeks) and 1,735 were employed for at least 12 months (52 weeks), as of September 2020.

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

- most people who started FSS did not enter work or go on to sustain employment: 33% started a job, 23% sustained employment for 3 months, 18% sustained employment for 6 months, and 13% sustained employment for 12 months¹¹
- however, when people start jobs they have high levels of sustaining them: 71% of people starting jobs went on to sustain employment for 3 months, 78% of the people who sustained employment for 3 months went on to reach 6 months, and 77% of those who sustained employment for 6 months went on to reach at least 12 months

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

The rates of job starts and outcomes did not show a large difference by gender, and were never more than 1 percentage point different. More men (33%) than women (32%) started a job. The opposite is true when looking at 3 month (men: 23%, women: 24%), 6 month (men: 18%, women: 19%), and 12 month (men: 13%, women: 14%) job outcomes.

The biggest differences were observed with age and long-term health conditions, which are often related. 39% of 16-24 year olds started work after joining FSS, whereas a lower proportion (28%) of those aged 50 and above started work – a difference of 11 percentage points. The difference between these two groups narrows when considering duration of

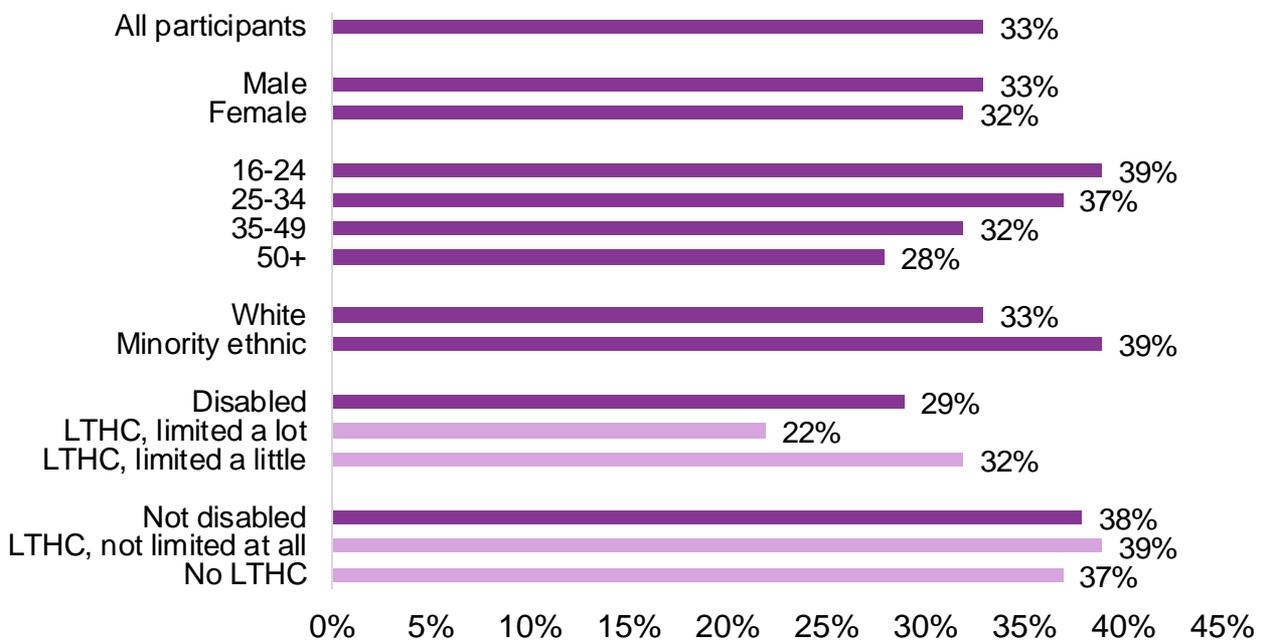
¹¹ Data from the Total Rates columns of Table 4 in the supplementary tables.

employment at 3 month (7 percentage points), 6 month (4 percentage points) and 12 month (2 percentage point) sustained jobs outcomes.

22% of those with a long-term health condition that limited daily activities a lot went on to start work, whereas a higher proportion (39%) of those with a health condition that did not limit daily activities went on to start work. This is a difference of 17 percentage points. The difference between these two groups narrows when considering duration of employment at 3 month (10 percentage points), 6 month (8 percentage points) and 12 month (7 percentage points) sustained outcomes.

33% of white participants went on to start work, whereas a higher proportion of minority ethnic participants (39%) went on to start work. This is a gap of 6 percentage points, which narrows slightly for 3 month (4 percentage points) and 6 month (3 percentage points) job outcomes, but is higher at 12 months (8 percentage points). Thus 21% of minority ethnic participants sustained a job for 12 months compared to 13% of white participants.

Figure 7: Percentage of people starting work after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group ^{12 13}



¹² LTHC is an abbreviation of Long-Term Health Condition.

¹³ The job start rate is calculated for the 16,141 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2019 as we have the most complete data.

Figure 8: Percentage of people staying in work for 3 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group^{14 15}

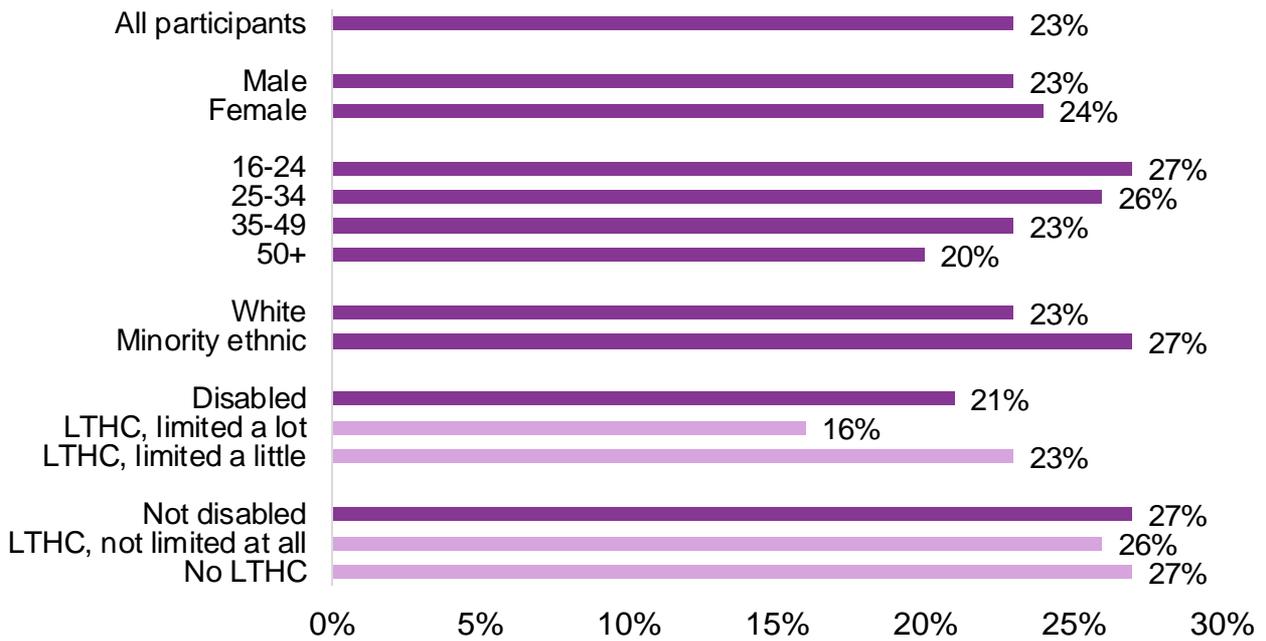
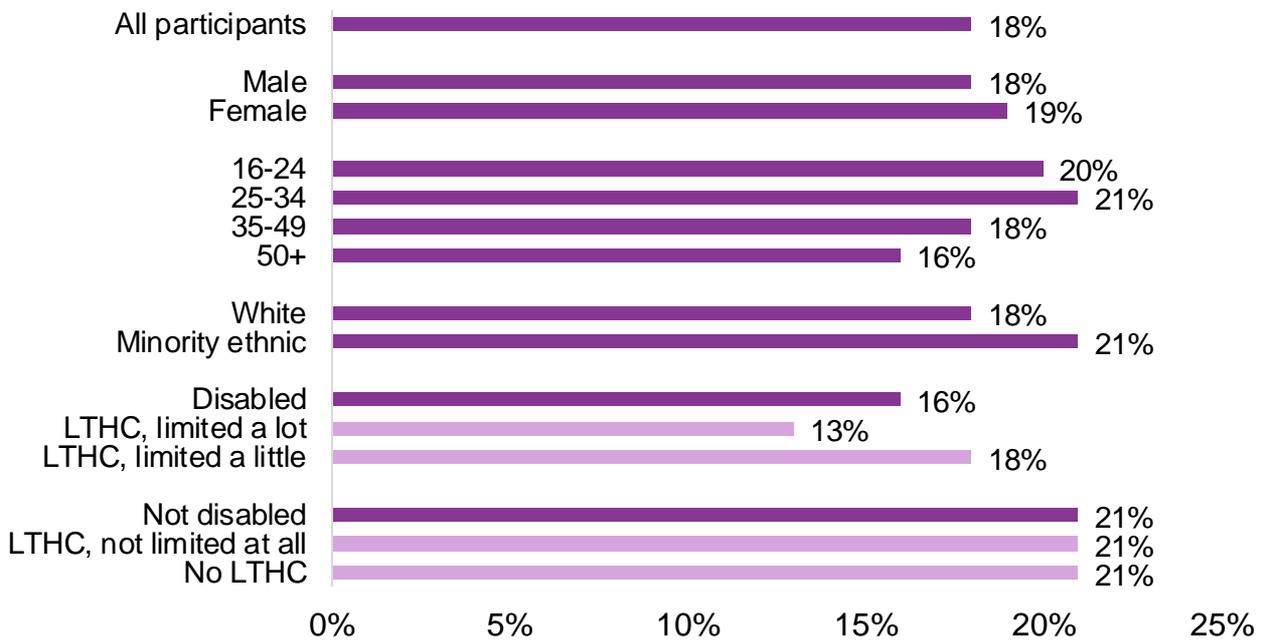


Figure 9: Percentage of people staying in work for 6 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group^{14 16}

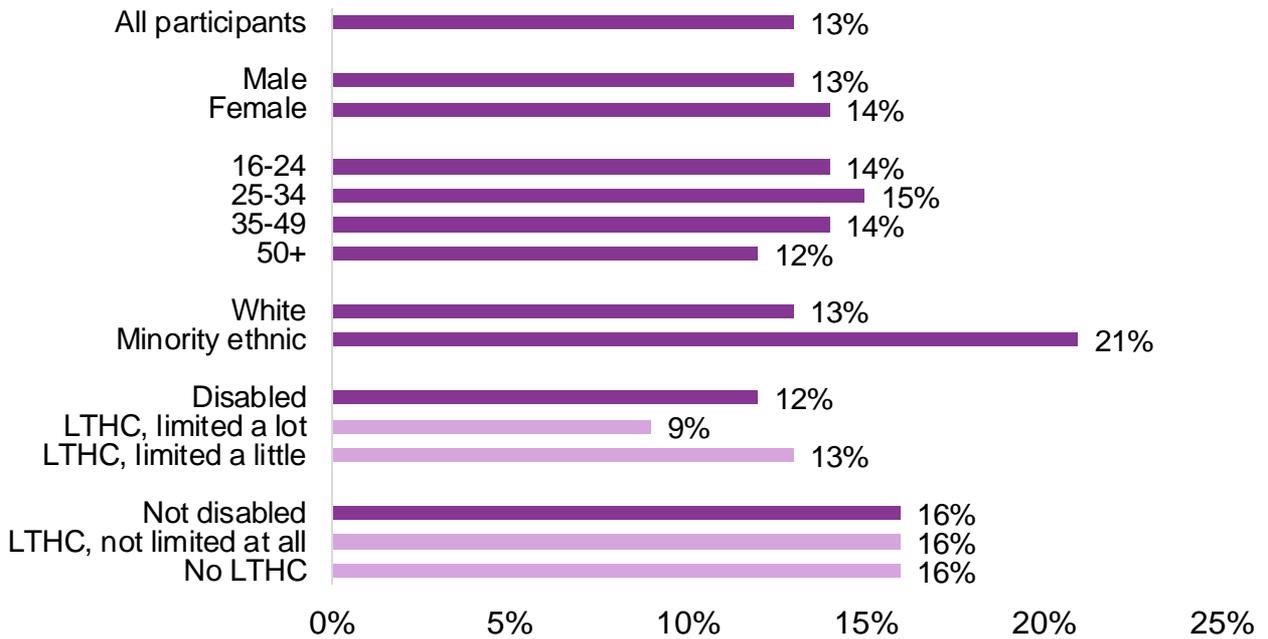


¹⁴ LTHC is an abbreviation of Long-Term Health Condition.

¹⁵ The 3 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 13,069 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – June 2019 as we have the most complete data.

¹⁶ The 6 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 10,063 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – March 2019 as we have the most complete data.

Figure 10: Percentage of people staying in work for 12 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group^{17 18}



¹⁷ LTHC is an abbreviation of Long-Term Health Condition.

¹⁸ The 12 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 4,979 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2018 as we have the most complete data.

Background Information

1. Official Statistics

These are official statistics – they are no longer classified as experimental statistics. Experimental statistics are defined by the Code of Practice for Statistics as ‘a subset of newly developed or innovative official statistics undergoing evaluation, that are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in the assessment of their suitability and quality at an early stage’. This early stage has now passed, with user feedback used to improve the publication, though any comments or feedback are still welcome. More detail on designation of statistics can be found at:

<https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/what-we-do/uk-statistical-system/types-of-official-statistics/>

2. Reporting periods

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

3. Fair Start Scotland (FSS) background information

Tables

Detailed statistics on the number of referrals to FSS, number of starts and job outcomes are presented in the accompanying tables, numbered 1 to 8. Tables 1 to 7 show changes to FSS over time, with Tables 4 to 7 providing breakdowns of equalities characteristics. Table 8 provides a breakdown of data by local authority and FSS delivery area. The caveats that apply to national data also apply to local authority data (see the end of Background Information Section 3).

Data sources

The Scottish Employability Tracking System (SETS)

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

The statistics in this release are based on figures extracted from SETS on 13 October 2020.

Information provided by service providers

The statistics on age, gender, long-term health conditions, disability and ethnic group are derived from information collected by service providers when an individual joins FSS. Information is collected via a combination of face-to-face interviews, SG equalities monitoring forms, phone conversations and electronic questionnaires (see section *Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on data quality*); using SG recommended questions and

published using related output classifications. The statistics in this release are based on returns for the period 13 March 2018 to 30 September 2020.

Methodology

Referral

The referral numbers published in this release are net figures, which excludes 1245 rejected referrals. The vast majority of these were duplicates.

Starts

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

Early leavers

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

Job starts

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

Employment outcomes

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

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

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

Data quality

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

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

- 2,493 participants answered the second question on extent of limitation (64 yes, a lot; 331 yes, a little; 2,098 not at all). These responses were excluded from the totals.

- 710 people reported one or more long-term health condition (800 conditions in total were recorded). These conditions have been excluded from the count of long-term health conditions.

Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on data quality

Due to COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines, FSS providers have had to adapt their methods of supporting people, moving from contact in person to telephone and online contact. This has led to lower rates of data completion of equalities information, whilst data collection methods have been adapted to the new circumstances in consideration of data protection guidance. It has also caused disruption to some providers where data is held in the workplace and is not currently accessible to staff now working from home. There are particularly high levels of missing data for ethnicity in July to September 2020 in the North East (94%), Tayside (100%) and Lanarkshire (80%) delivery areas.

Comparisons with other employment services' data

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

Local authority data

Please use caution in interpreting data at lower levels of geography, as numbers are small in some instances and there are many factors contributing to variations in totals across LAs. The Scottish Government's evaluation of year 1 of FSS suggests factors include the local reputation of FSS staff, the prior roles of staff and the reputation of previous services, the range of other existing services available in the area, the relationship between FSS provider staff and JCP work coaches, and the range and scale of local job opportunities¹⁹.

4. Previous editions of this publications

This publication has previously reported on Work First Scotland (WFS), Work Able Scotland (WAS), and the Health & Work Support pilot in Dundee and Fife. These services have now closed. The final statistics for WFS and WAS were published 26 February 2020 (<https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839605901>), and the final statistics for the Health & Work Support pilot were published 27 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839607677>). Other services operate within Scotland, including those run by local authorities and third sector providers which are not included in this publication.

5. Correspondence and enquiries

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¹⁹ Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: local area case studies - November 2019
www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-local-area-case-studies-year-1-november-2019/

6. Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service, or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St. Andrews House, EH1 3DG; telephone 0131 244 0302; e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at www.gov.scot/statistics

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