



ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary

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Summary findings

This statistical publication provides summary information on Scotland's devolved employability services. This, the 17th edition, publishes statistics for the first three and a half years of Fair Start Scotland (FSS) from April 2018 to September 2021, and experimental statistics on employability support delivered under the No One Left Behind strategic approach, reporting on the first two and a quarter years from April 2019 to June 2021.

FSS is an employability support service, launched in April 2018, which aims to help unemployed people into sustainable employment. No One Left Behind is a new approach to employability delivery which moves away from funding and delivering a number of separate and distinct employability programmes to a more flexible approach¹.

For FSS, there were 58,811 referrals and 39,147 starts from its launch in April 2018 up to September 2021. The number of starts includes 1,338 people who have previously received support on FSS - this has been allowed since April 2021².

In the three month period from July – September 2021, there were 4,850 referrals and 3,221 starts on FSS. Referrals were 7% lower than the previous quarter (April – June 2021), and 34% higher than the same quarter in 2020. Starts were 6% lower than the previous quarter (April – June 2021) and 20% higher than the same quarter in 2020. The large increase since last year mainly reflects disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

So far, 13,204 people have started a job after joining FSS. There were 1,209 job starts during July – September 2021, which is 19% lower than the quarter before, and 11% lower than the same period in 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. For participants where data is complete, 49% of people left FSS early without completing the programme of support offered or achieving a job outcome (53% from year 1, and 46% from year 2), 36% started a job (32% from year 1, 34% from year 2, 49% for starts in the first and second quarter of year 3), 25% sustained employment for 3 months, 19% for 6 months and 15% for at least 12 months.

People who started work had high rates of sustaining it: 70% 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.

Experimental statistics for No One Left Behind show that 8,380 people³ were supported during the period April 2019 to June 2021, with 3,824 people starting in year 1 (April 2019 – March 2020), 3,566 in year 2 (April 2020 – March 2021) and 990 in the first quarter of year 3 (April 2021 – June 2021).

¹ [Employment support programme: equality impact assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/employment-support-programme-equality-impact-assessment/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

² See 'Starts' note within Fair Start Scotland (FSS) background information

³ This total includes 752 people who were previously on Activity Agreements.

Fair Start Scotland (FSS)

Introduction

Fair Start Scotland is the Scottish Government's devolved employability support service, and aims to help those further from the labour market to move into and sustain fair work. FSS launched on 3 April 2018 with funding to support up to 38,000 people into work over an initial three year referral period to end March 2021. In response to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, referral into the service has been extended to March 2023.

FSS provides individualised one-to-one support to unemployed people who face the greatest challenges to 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 a mixed economy of public, private and third sector 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 many people have joined FSS?

There were 58,811 referrals to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of September 2021. Of the total referrals to FSS, 39,147 went on to start receiving employability support. This includes 1,338 people who have already been supported by Fair Start Scotland⁴.

Referrals and starts have decreased from the high level seen in the previous quarter, but remain high compared to levels seen in recent years, and especially when compared to the lower numbers of referrals and starts seen in the quarters after the first lockdown (April – June 2020 onwards, see Background Information section on the impact of COVID-19). Referrals have fallen by 7% to 4,850 this quarter and starts have decreased by 6% to 3,221. Compared to the equivalent quarter last year, referrals have risen 34% and starts have increased 20%.

⁴ This is a result of a change made to the service during April – June 2021. See 'Starts' note within Fair Start Scotland (FSS) Background Information

Figure 1: Number of referrals into Fair Start Scotland by quarter of referral, from April 2018 to September 2021

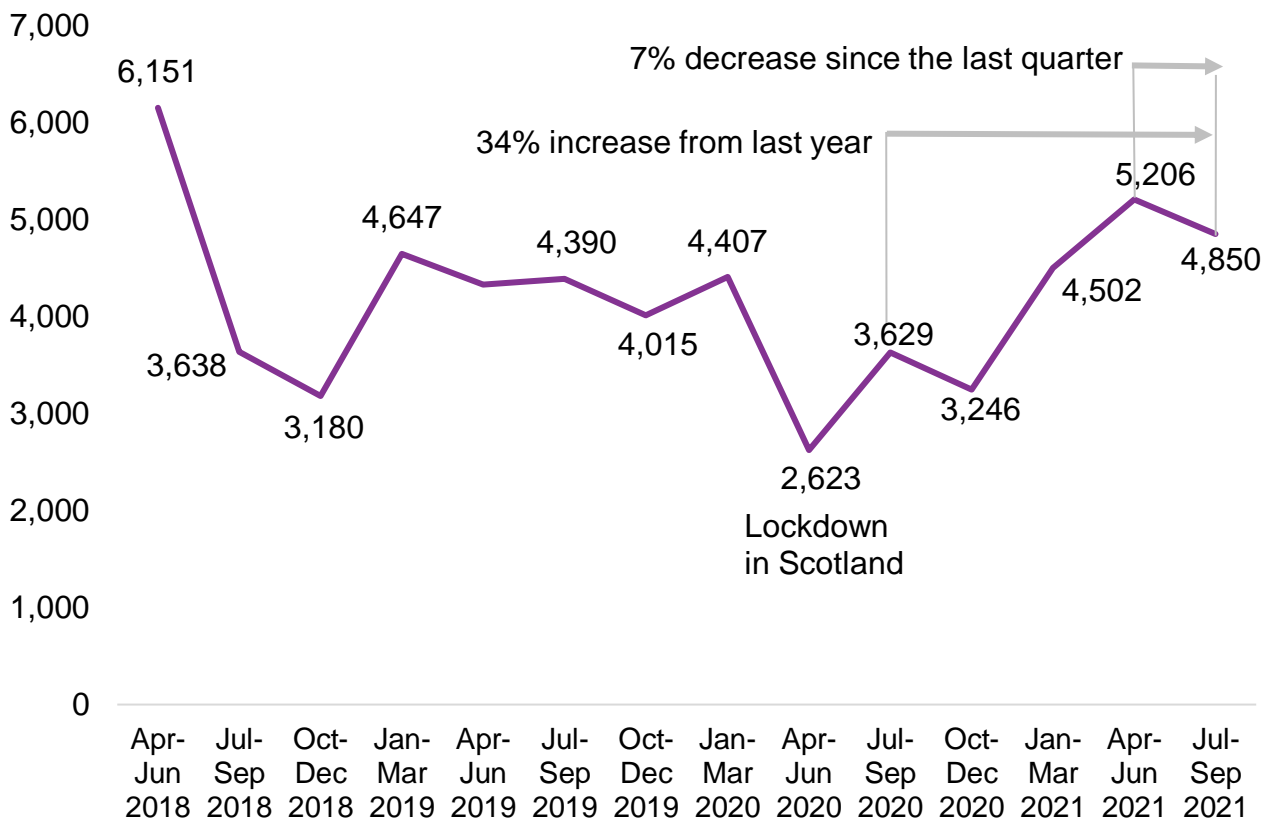
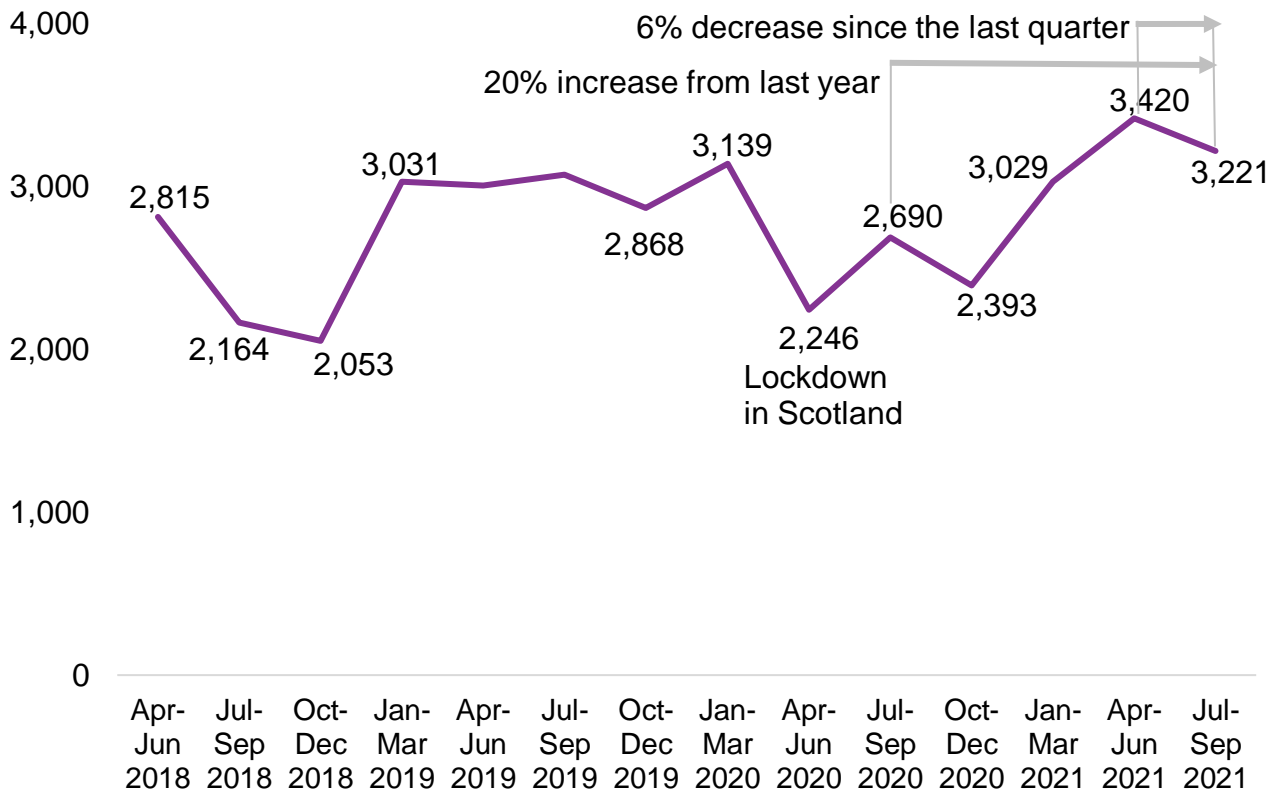


Figure 2: Number of starts on Fair Start Scotland by quarter, from April 2018 to September 2021



The Scottish Government's evaluation of the third year of the service was published in October 2021⁵ - with accompanying statistics tables published at the same time⁶. It showed that compared to the unemployed population of Scotland there were some groups that were under-represented in FSS in year 3: women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people from the youngest (16-24) and oldest (50-64) age bands, while a higher proportion of disabled people and people aged 25-34 used the service. For gender, ethnic group and disability, this pattern was also true for year 1⁷ and year 2⁸. For age there was a change – all younger age groups (16-34, rather than just 16-24) were under represented and older groups were over represented before year 3.

Further explanation on the changes to proportions of these groups using the service follows below. The breakdown of equalities groups for FSS is shown in Figure 3.

Overall, 38% of people who have joined FSS were women and 62% were men. The proportion of women in FSS increased from years 1 to 3: from 35% in year 1, to 37% in year 2 and 40% in year 3. In the most recent quarter of year 4 (July – September 2021), 40% of participants were women.

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

Over the course of years 1 to 3, there was an increase in the proportion of participants from the younger age bands (16-34), and a decrease in the older age bands (35+). Participants aged 35 and over made up 60% of all starts in year 1, 52% in year 2, 47% in year 3. There was an increase in the proportion of older (35+) participants in the first half of year 4, to 57%, mainly due to an increase in participants aged 50+, from 21% in January – March 2021 to 28% in July – September 2021. Participants aged 16-34 made up 38% of all starts in year 1, 44% in year 2, and 53% in year 3. In the first half of year 4, 42% of participants were 16-34. This drop is primarily due to a decrease in 16-24 year old participants, from 23% in January – March 2021 to 16% in July – September 2021.

Overall, 5% of people who have joined FSS were from minority ethnic backgrounds and 70% were white, with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 25% of participants. In the most recent quarter, 6% of participants were from a minority ethnic group and 75% of participants were white. Monitoring changes to the proportion of minority ethnic participants over time is difficult due to the percentage being low and high proportion of unknowns, and there is ongoing work to improve data quality and collection⁹. In year 1, 4% of participants were minority ethnic, 6% in year 2, 4% in year 3, and 6% so far in year 4.

⁵ [Fair Start Scotland: evaluation report 4 - year 3 overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-4-year-3-overview/)

⁶ [Fair Start Scotland year three evaluation and annual reports: accompanying statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-year-three-evaluation-and-annual-reports-accompanying-statistics/)

⁷ Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: overview of year one - November 2019
<http://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-overview-year-1-november-2019/>

⁸ 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/>

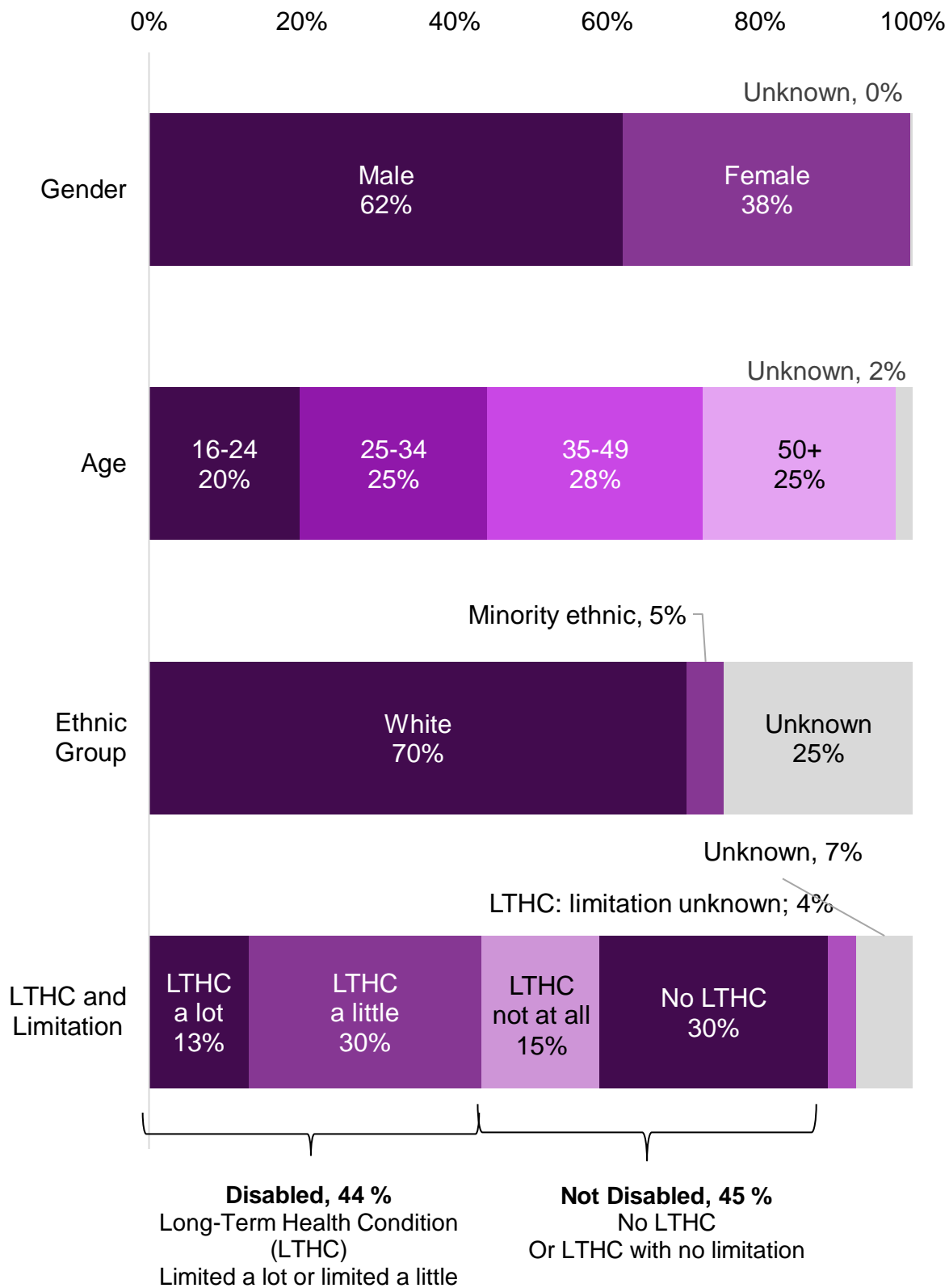
⁹ Since the first COVID-19 lockdown FSS has mostly been delivered over the phone or online, with face-to-face interaction paused. This has impacted the collection of equalities data. We have been working with FSS service providers to ensure response rates are maximised. For more information, see the Data Quality section in the Background Information.

44% of people joining FSS reported a disability. The proportion of disabled participants decreased between years 1 to 3: from 55% in year 1, to 44% in year 2, and 32% in year 3¹⁰. In year 4 it increased once more to levels similar to year 2: 45% in April – June 2021, and 43% in the most recent quarter.

Overall, 63% of people joining FSS reported having a long-term health condition, 30% reported no long-term health condition, with the rest (7%) unknown. In the most recent quarter of year 4, 57% of people reported a long-term health condition, 34% did not, and for 9% this was unknown.

¹⁰ Data for disabled participants in year 3 showed a lot of change throughout the year, as both data completeness and people identified as disabled decreased immediately after the first COVID-19 lockdown in the first half of the year.

Figure 3: Breakdown of Fair Start Scotland starts by equality characteristic group, from April 2018 to September 2021



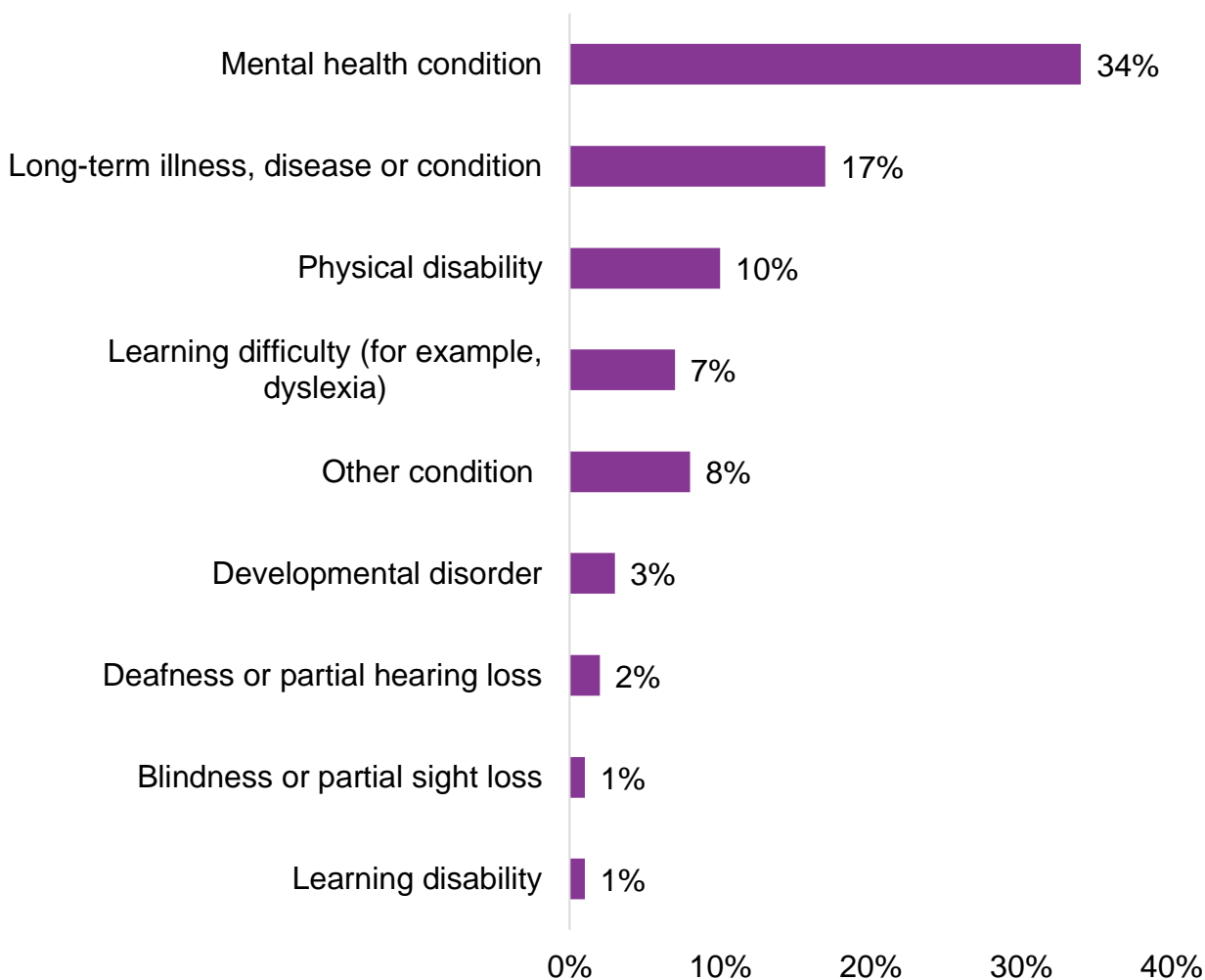
These breakdowns are for starts, not unique individuals, and do not exclude people who have previously been on FSS

Figure 4 shows that the most common type of long-term health condition reported was mental health (34%). Between year 1 and 2 there was a 5 percentage point increase in people reporting a mental health condition among those joining FSS, from 31% to 36%. This remained at 36% in year 3, but decreased to 30% in both of the first two quarters of year 4.

The second most commonly reported type of health condition was a long-term illness, disease or condition, which affected 17% of people joining FSS and has remained close to this level over time. In the most recent quarter, the proportion was 16%.

A physical disability was the third most common type of long-term health condition reported. The number of people reporting a physical disability has varied over time from 14% in year 1, to 10% in year 2, 6% in year 3, and 8% in the most recent quarter (July – September 2021).

Figure 4: Percentage of starts on Fair Start Scotland who report long-term health conditions, broken down by type of long-term health condition, from April 2018 to September 2021



These breakdowns are for starts, not unique individuals, and do not exclude people who have previously been on FSS

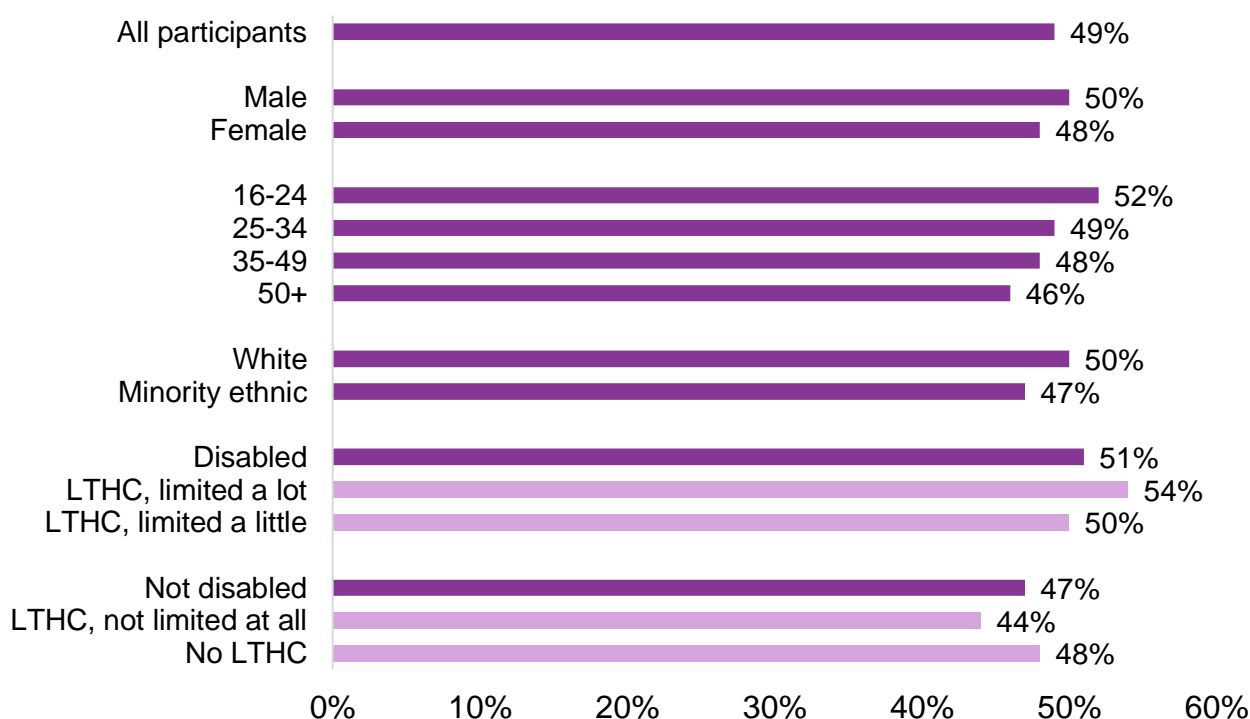
How many people left FSS early?

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, 16,672 people have left FSS early. As with job outcomes, as time goes on we get a more complete picture of the numbers of people staying on FSS or leaving early. Where we have a complete picture¹¹ 49% of people left the service early. There has been a reduction over time – 53% of participants who joined in year 1 left early, and 46% of participants who joined in year 2 left early.

Figure 5 shows that the percentage of people leaving early does not have large differences 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 (54% 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%). Younger participants also had higher rates of leaving early: 52% of those 16-24, compared with 46% of those 50+.

Figure 5: Percentage of people that leave Fair Start Scotland early, broken down by equality characteristic group, from April 2018 to September 2021^{11 12}



¹¹ The early leaver rate is calculated for the 27,084 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2020 as we have the most complete data.

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

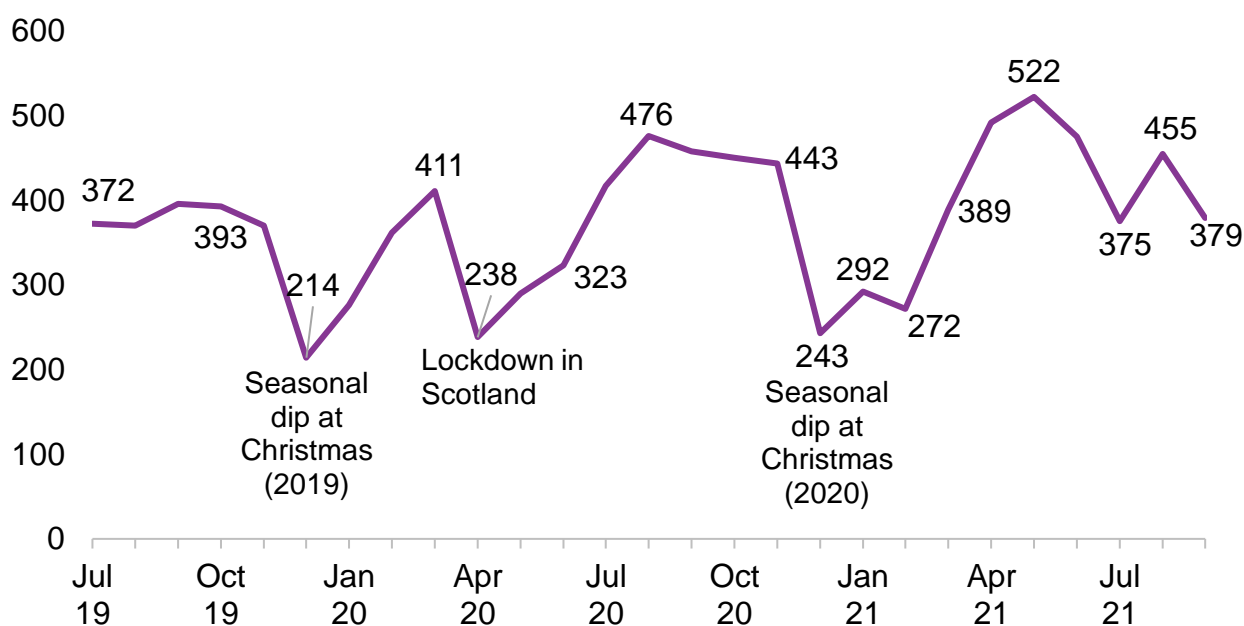
How many people entered and sustained employment?

A total of 13,204 people who joined FSS have started a job.

COVID-19 has had an impact on the operation of FSS as well as the labour market context¹³ (see background notes for more information). This has had an impact on job starts within FSS, though there is not a simple explanation for changes.

Figure 6 shows changes in FSS job starts since July 2019. Since COVID-19 restrictions began in March 2020 this has shown a lot of variation. There was a reduction in job starts from April 2020 after the first lockdown in Scotland followed by a large increase peaking in August 2020. A high level of job starts remained until November followed by a large drop in December 2020, with low levels of job starts seen through to February 2021. Some of the December decrease was likely to be seasonal, as decreases were also seen in 2018 and 2019. Levels of job starts rose again in March 2021, reaching a peak of 552 jobs in May 2021 before falling again afterwards, with between 375 and 455 job starts each month in the last quarter. However, figures for recent months are likely to increase in future publications as there can be a delay between a participant starting a job and it being recorded by service providers.

Figure 6: Number of people starting work after joining Fair Start Scotland, by the month job was started, from July 2019 to September 2021



¹³ [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

Of the 13,204 people who started work, 8,175 had sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 5,660 sustained employment for at least 6 months (26 weeks), and 3,441 sustained employment for at least 12 months (52 weeks), as of September 2021.

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: 36% started a job, 25% sustained employment for 3 months, 19% sustained employment for 6 months, and 15% sustained employment for 12 months¹⁴
- however, high levels of those starting jobs sustain them: 70% 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 do not show a large difference by gender, though slightly higher rates of outcomes were achieved by women. For both men and women, 36% started a job. 3 month job outcomes were achieved by 26% of women and 24% of men, 6 month job outcomes were achieved by 20% of women and 18% of men, and 12 month outcomes were achieved by 16% of women and 14% of men.

The biggest differences in job start and outcomes rates were observed in age and long-term health conditions, which are often related. 40% of 16-24 year olds started work after joining FSS, compared with 32% of those aged 50 plus – a difference of 8 percentage points. Differences are also seen in the proportions of people sustaining employment at 3 months (26% for 16-24; 22% for 50+), 6 months (20% and 17%) and 12 months (16% and 13%).

24% of those with a long-term health condition that limited daily activities a lot went on to start work, compared to 44% of those with a health condition that did not limit daily activities. The difference between these two groups was also observed in the proportions of people sustaining employment at 3 months (17% for those limited a lot, and 30% for those not limited at all), 6 months (14% and 23%) and 12 months (11% and 17%).

37% of minority ethnic participants went on to start work, compared to 35% of white participants. Small differences are seen for 3 month outcomes (25% for minority ethnic participants; 24% for white participants) and 6 month outcomes (20% and 19%), with a larger difference seen for 12 month outcomes (19% and 15%).

¹⁴ Data from the Total Rates columns of Table 4 in the supplementary tables.

Figure 7: Percentage of people starting work after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group ^{15 16}

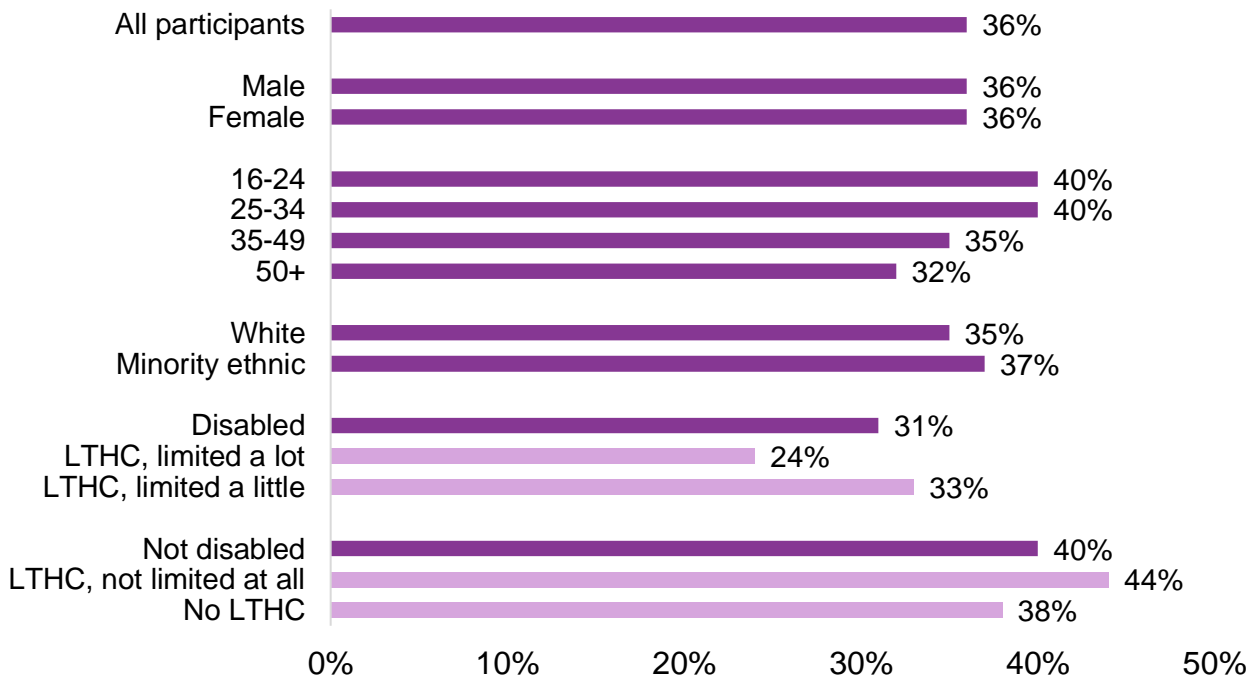
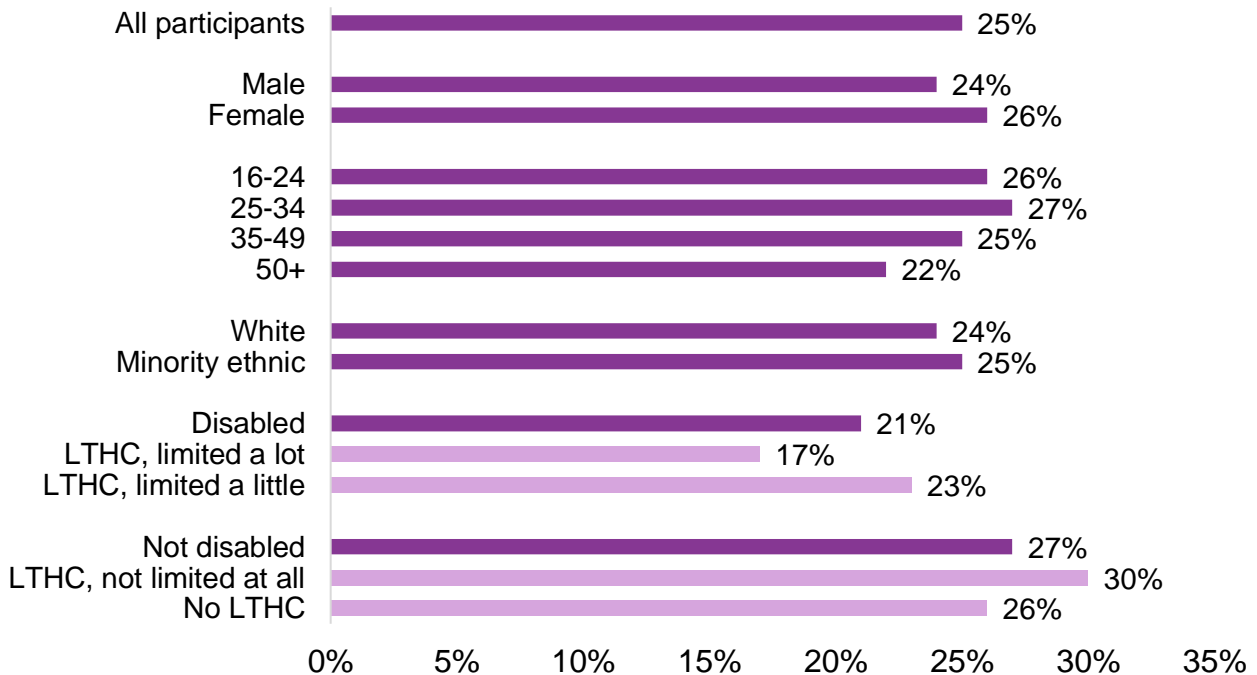


Figure 8: Percentage of people staying in work for 3 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group ^{15 17}



¹⁵ LTHC is an abbreviation of Long-Term Health Condition.

¹⁶ The job start rate is calculated for the 27,084 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2020 as we have the most complete data for this group.

¹⁷ The 3 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 24,394 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – June 2020 as we have the most complete data for this group.

Figure 9: Percentage of people staying in work for 6 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group ^{15 18}

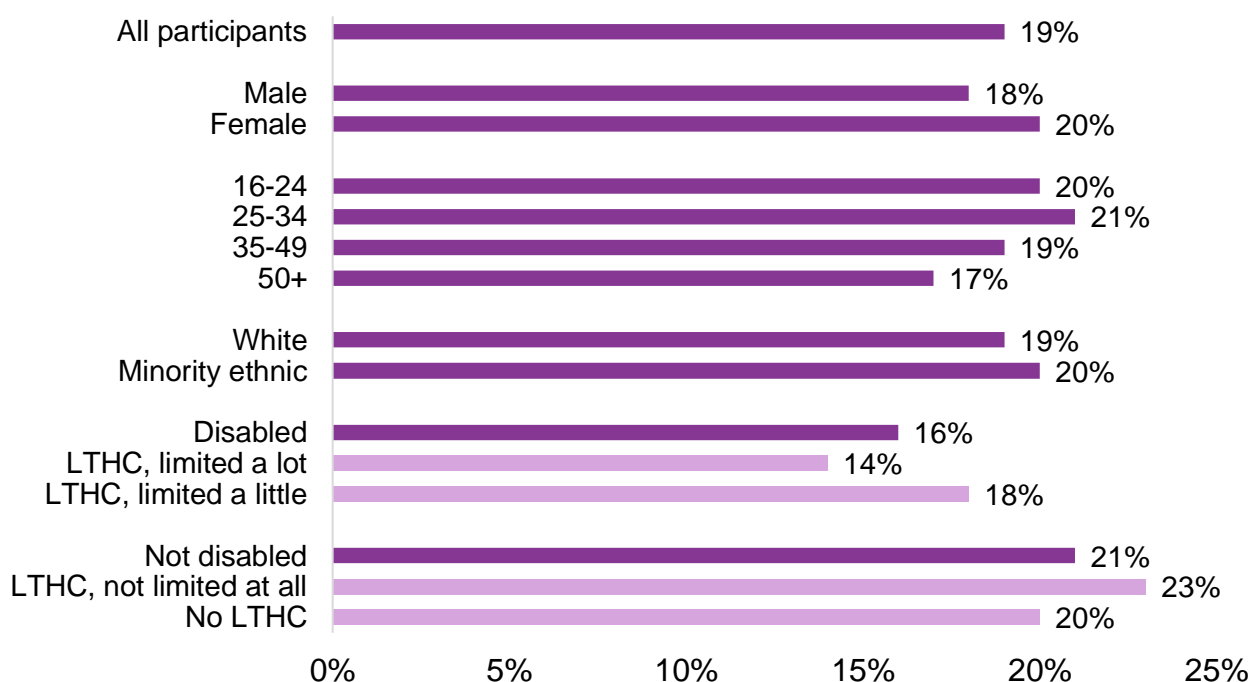
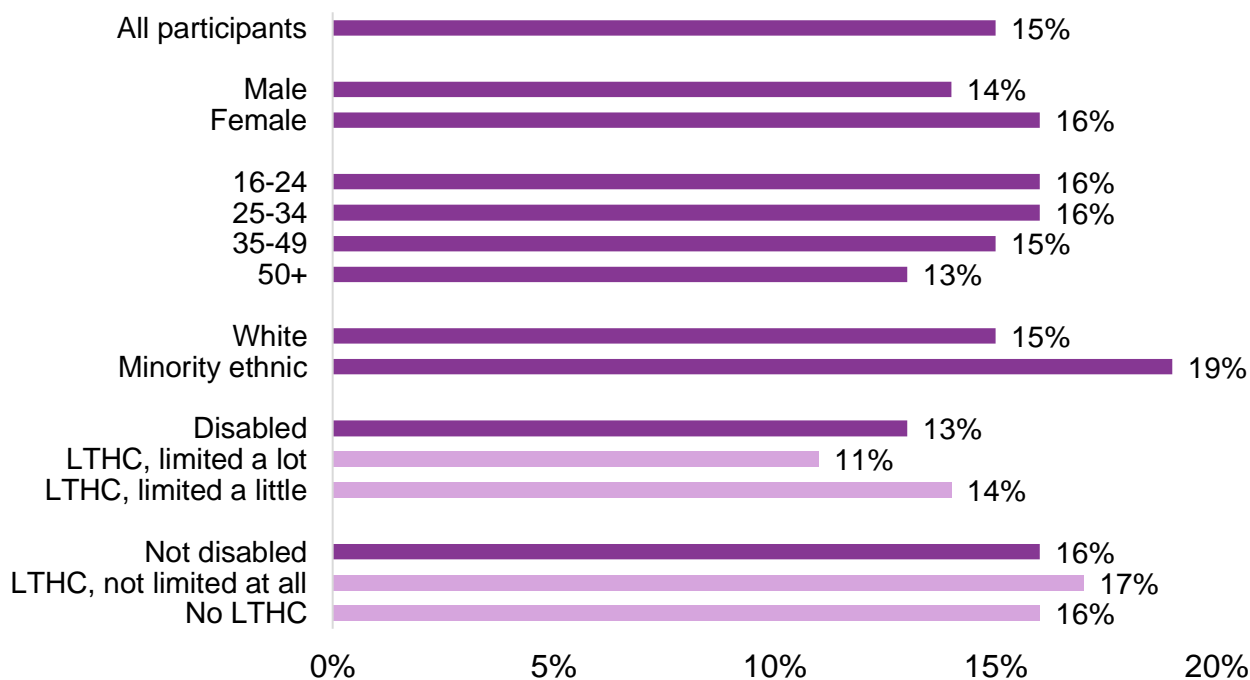


Figure 10: Percentage of people staying in work for 12 months after joining Fair Start Scotland, broken down by equality characteristic group ^{15 19}



¹⁸ The 6 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 22,148 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – March 2020 as we have the most complete data for this group.

¹⁹ The 12 month job outcome rate is calculated for the 16,141 people who joined FSS from April 2018 – September 2019 as we have the most complete data for this group.

No One Left Behind (Experimental Statistics)

Introduction

No One Left Behind is a strategy for placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. The transition to this new approach, delivered through a partnership agreement between Scottish and Local Government, commenced on 1 April 2019.

The No One Left Behind approach moves away from funding and delivering a number of separate and distinct employability programmes, to a more flexible approach. Scottish and Local Government are working with third and private sector to deliver support which aims to be more joined-up and responsive to the needs of individuals of all ages and to local labour market conditions.

The support provided may vary from short, focused interventions or longer term support, dependent on individual circumstances. Participants can access the support they require on an ongoing basis and can engage and disengage at times that best suit their needs.

Individuals can self-refer to No One Left Behind support, or be referred through a variety of channels, including educational providers, local authorities, third sector organisations, Jobcentre Plus, and other local services.

How many people received support?

A total of 8,380 people were supported over the period April 2019 to June 2021, with 3,824²⁰ people starting in year 1 (April 2019 - March 2020), 3,566 in year 2 (April 2020 – March 2021) and 990 in the first quarter of year 3 (April 2021 – June 2021).

The national lockdown in Scotland took effect on 23 March 2020, at the end of year 1, and so any effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to only be seen from year 2 onwards. Data for year 1 was reported as aggregate totals by local authorities. Individual level data collection was put in place from April 2020 and so more breakdowns for the period April 2020 to June 2021 are available.

Overall, 39% of people who received support were women and 60% were men. The proportion of women who started receiving support decreased slightly from 40% in year 1, to 39% in year 2 before increasing to 41% in the first quarter of year 3. Meanwhile the proportion of men who started receiving support increased from 60% in year 1, to 61% in year 2 before decreasing to 58% in the first quarter of year 3.

During the period April 2020 – June 2021 (year 2 and the first quarter of year 3²¹), the proportion of women across the different age groups was mostly similar to the overall proportion of women (39%), but slightly lower (37%) in the 20-24 age group and slightly higher (43%) in the 35-49 age group. However, overall numbers in the different age groups vary and numbers are small, so differences at this stage should be interpreted with caution.

²⁰ This total includes 752 young people who were participating in Activity Agreements the previous year. [Activity agreements - mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot/activity-agreements)

²¹ As year 1 data was not reported at an individual level, these breakdowns are currently only possible for year 2 onwards

The proportion of participants in younger age groups (15-24) has decreased over time, from 87% (year 1) to 77% (year 2), and finally to 66% (first quarter of year 3). Meanwhile, proportions in older age groups (25 years and older) have increased, from 13% in year 1, to 23% in year 2, and to 33% in the first quarter of year 3.

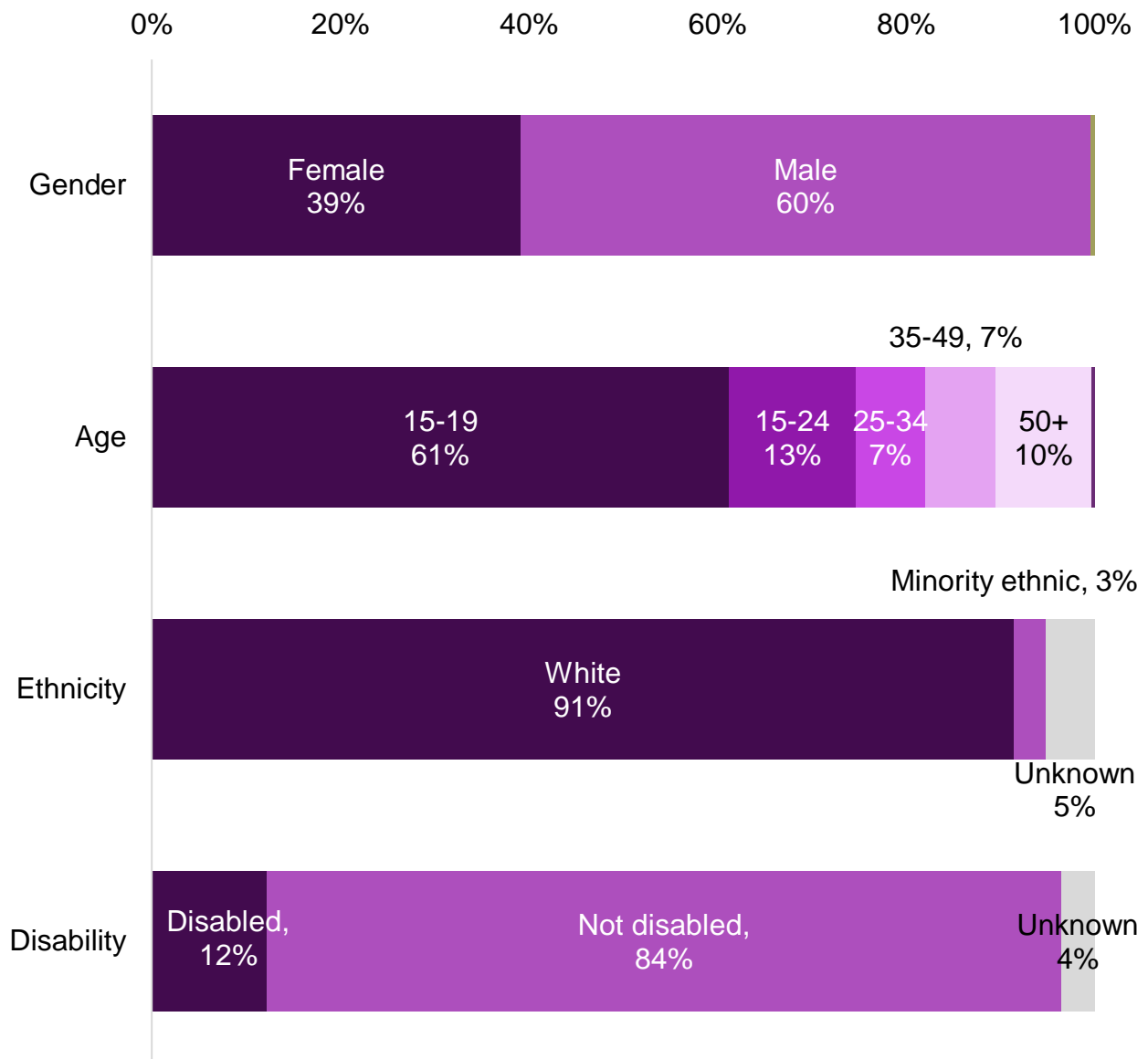
In the first quarter of year 3, 5% of participants were from minority ethnic groups, 91% of participants were white, with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 5%. For year 2, 3% of participants were from minority ethnic groups, 92% of participants were white, with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 5%. These statistics are not currently available for year 1 participants.

In the first quarter of year 3, 18% of participants were disabled (with 77% recorded as not disabled and 6% unknown) whilst in year 2, 11% of participants were disabled (with 86% recorded as not disabled and 3% unknown). This compares to 17% of participants who were disabled in year 1.²²

Employment outcome figures for year 1 participants were last reported in February 2021.

²² Disability reported in context of being a barrier to work. See background section for more information.

Figure 11: Percentage of people supported through No One Left Behind, broken down by equality characteristic group when data is complete year 2 onwards (April 2020 to June 2021)²³



²³ The data we currently hold for year 1 is not consistent with data collected from year 2 onwards and so is not included in this chart – year 1 data does not include ethnic group, full disability information and all age categories. See 'Developing these statistics' for more information

Developing these statistics

We have begun publishing data on people receiving employability support delivered under the No One Left Behind strategic approach. Publishing these statistics will contribute to understanding the impact of the approach, by providing information over time about participant journeys and achievements.

As part of our plans to develop these statistics, in future publications we will expand the scope of our data to include more people who are receiving employability support delivered under the NOLB approach from a wider range of SG funding than we have reported on to date. We are also doing work to develop the limited data we have for year 1 participants (April 2019 to March 2020) and combine it with data currently being collected. This will allow us to, for example, provide more information on outcomes achieved by participants who started over the course of year 1 (April 2019 to March 2020) in future publications.

The flexible, person-centred support No One Left Behind seeks to put in place means that participants may experience support differently, based on their individual circumstances and needs – for example, being able to disengage and reengage in support as required. As a result, participant journeys will differ in nature and pace, and progression and achievements will vary based on what a positive outcome for the individual would be. This means broadening our understanding of success from a focus on job outcomes to understanding the steps taken and progress made towards work.

As delivery under No One Left Behind is expanded over time (see the [Delivery Plan](#)) and we learn more about which data are important to report on to describe the journeys of the people who receive support, we will develop a range of statistics that are appropriate. Whilst we expect to produce some statistics that are similar to those for FSS, the range of data that we use and how we present them is likely to change and evolve over time, building a picture of the whole user journey. A key product to help us realise that ambition will be the Shared Measurement Framework.

The Employability Shared Measurement Framework

A key finding presented in the [No One Left Behind: review of employability services](#) was the requirement to align and streamline data collected across services, to enable a consistent approach to measurement and greater transparency of data across the system. The Shared Measurement Framework will initially set out key questions we need to answer to understand how well services are reaching and working for people, and then develop recommendations on which data we need to collect and report on to answer them.

We will gradually align our statistics reporting, where appropriate, to these recommendations over time. They will be particularly important to help us understand the journeys of those who are furthest away from the labour market and to develop the range of data that we publish.

Feedback

To ensure the statistics are developed in a way which is useful to users, we will be asking for views on a range of topics as the development work described above is taken forward. If you have comments or questions in the meantime please contact: employabilitydata@gov.scot.

Background Information

1. Official and Experimental Statistics

Statistics for No One Left Behind are 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’.

Statistics for Fair Start Scotland are official statistics – they are no longer classified as experimental statistics. 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/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 2021). 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.

No One Left Behind. This publication reports on all participants who received support from 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2021.

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 9. Tables 1 to 8 show changes to FSS over time, with Tables 4 to 8 providing breakdowns of equalities characteristics. Table 9 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).

In May 2021, data on FSS participants who are parents was published, covering years 1 to 3 of FSS. This is not included in this publication as it will be updated on an annual basis.

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 12 October 2021.

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 usually 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 2021.

Methodology

Referral

The referral numbers published in this release are net figures, which excludes 2,210 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 at the end, 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.

Before April 2021, individuals were only able to receive support from FSS once, therefore the number of starts on the service is the same as the number of unique individuals who have received support. With the extension of FSS beyond the initial three year period, from April 2021 people who have previously received support may start again on FSS. There must be a break of at least 13 weeks since the person left FSS to become eligible. As a result of this change, the total number of starts in FSS is not the same as the number of individuals who have received support.

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 the end of September 2021.

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:

- 3,706 participants answered the second question on extent of limitation (87 yes, a lot; 441 yes, a little; 3,178 not at all). These responses were excluded from the totals.
- 1,640 people reported one or more long-term health condition (1,830 conditions in total were recorded). These conditions have been excluded from the count of long-term health conditions.

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 local authorities. 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 opportunities²⁴.

²⁴ Fair Start Scotland evaluation report 2: local area case studies - November 2019
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-start-scotland-evaluation-report-2-local-area-case-studies-year-1-november-2019/>

Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on Fair Start Scotland

This publication includes data for FSS 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.

Key changes to FSS include the following:

- 1) Early in the pandemic, 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 between April and June 2020.
- 2) As a result of this, there was an increase in the proportion of 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 affected the equalities data collected, with a decrease in people disclosing information on protected characteristics like ethnicity on joining FSS. Data collection methods were adapted to the new circumstances in consideration of data protection guidance. It also caused disruption to some providers where data was held in the workplace and was not available to staff working from home. There were particularly high levels of missing data for ethnicity in July to September 2020. Data collection has since improved. During the quarter April-June 2021 some providers had a limited return to meeting participants in person, depending on the local situation and participant's preference.
- 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 were fewer job vacancies in Scotland for approximately one year. ONS data²⁵ showed a sharp reduction in job vacancies in Scotland during April 2020 to approximately 40% of the level seen in February 2020, finally returning to February 2020 levels by April 2021. Lower levels of job vacancies would be expected to affect rates of job starts and outcomes in FSS, but numbers of job starts in FSS didn't necessarily follow trends in job vacancies.

4. No One Left Behind Background Information

Data collection

All participant data is collected and recorded on management information systems by Scottish local authorities. Data returns are submitted to the Scottish Government on a quarterly basis. No centralised recording system is in place.

Self-assessed disability is reported only if and when it is perceived by the participant as being a barrier for them to finding employment. This means that recording and reporting of disability is not comprehensive and is not currently collected using the SG recommended questions.

During the first transitional year of delivery, data was submitted to the Scottish Government by local authorities as aggregate totals rather than individual level data. This means that further breakdowns or cross-tabulations of data are not possible. Individual

²⁵ [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

level data reporting for No One Left Behind was put in place from April 2020; the start of year 2 delivery.

Starts

People are registered to start receiving support by a Local Authority Key Worker

Employment outcomes

Employment outcomes are defined as follows:

Where the participant has sustained employment (employment, self-employment, Modern Apprenticeship) for 13 weeks a self-declaration signed by the participant and countersigned the Employability Key Worker will confirm the 13 week milestone has been achieved.

Where the participant has sustained employment (employment, self-employment, Modern Apprenticeship) for 26 weeks a self-declaration signed by the participant and countersigned the Employability Key Worker will confirm the 26 week milestone has been achieved.

Comparisons with other employment services' data

When comparing with Fair Start Scotland:

Starts and employment outcomes are measured in a similar way and are therefore comparable. However, both the support offered and the groups targeted by these services are different, which may affect both the demographics and outcomes of participants.

For other services across the UK, features of service design (e.g. whether voluntary or mandatory, eligibility criteria) and definitions (e.g. how job outcomes are measured) may differ to a greater extent.

5. 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, and these are not included in this publication.

6. Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication, please contact:

Robert Cook

E-mail: EmployabilityData@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics, please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician

Telephone: 0131 244 0442

E-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

7. 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

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