



Economy And Labour Market

Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: Statistical Summary for July to September 2023

Main Points

This report presents statistics for Scotland's Devolved Employment Services including Fair Start Scotland and No One Left Behind. Statistics are presented to the most recent quarter of July to September 2023.

- There have been 111,105 starts on either Fair Start Scotland (FSS) or No One Left Behind since April 2018 up to September 2023. In the most recent quarter, July to September 2023, there were 6,967 starts. This was a 5% decrease on the previous quarter and a 6% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.
- Official statistics in development for No One Left Behind show a total of 47,342 people started receiving support from April 2019 to September 2023. The number of people starting to receive support has increased each year from 2,711 in year 1 (2019/20) to 17,367 in year 4 (2022/23).
- In the most recent quarter, quarter 2 of year 5, 3,968 people started to receive support through No One Left Behind. This was a 5% decrease on the previous quarter and a 13% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.
- Of the 47,342 people receiving support on No One Left Behind, 14,822 (31%) have entered employment, while a further 7,301 (15%) entered further or higher education or training.
- There have been 63,763 starts to FSS since April 2018, including 5,615 re-joins which has been possible since April 2021. There were 2,999 starts in the most recent quarter, 5% lower than the previous quarter but 5% higher than the same quarter in 2022.
- For FSS, there were 1,256 job starts this quarter, 8% lower than the previous quarter but 3% higher than the same quarter in 2022. Overall, there has been 22,659 job starts since FSS launched.

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About this publication

This is the 25th edition of this quarterly statistical report providing summary information on Scotland's devolved employability services. The report is split into three sections:

- No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland (FSS) combined,
- Official statistics in development covering the No One Left Behind strategic approach (April 2019 to September 2023), and,
- Official statistics covering FSS (April 2018 to September 2023).

Further detailed statistics are published in accompanying tables alongside the report.

Fair Start Scotland

FSS is an employability support service, launched in April 2018, which aims to help unemployed people into sustainable employment. Please refer to the supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more details on FSS and associated data.

No One Left Behind

No One Left Behind, introduced from April 2019, is a different approach to employability delivery which moves away from funding and delivering a number of separate and distinct employability programmes, to a more flexible approach. Please refer to supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more details on No One Left Behind and associated data.

No One Left Behind Shared Measurement Framework Data Reporting Template

From October 2022 (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities who adopted the new template early), a new data reporting template ([Access the new data template from here - opens in a new window](#)) co-designed with Local Authorities and aligned to the Shared Measurement Framework (SMF) has been in place. We continue to work closely with Local Authorities to improve the accuracy and quality of returns following this transition.

Official Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics ([Access the Code of Practice – opens in a new window](#)) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. The statistics presented for Fair Start Scotland are Official Statistics and statistics presented for No One Left Behind are Official Statistics in Development.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards by emailing: employabilitystatistics@gov.scot. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing: regulation@statistics.gov.uk.

Data Developments in this Edition

For the first time, this publication presents the following data for No One Left Behind:

- More breakdowns at Local Authority level (splits by sex, ethnicity and disability).
- Breakdowns by long-term health condition, including type and number of conditions.
- Data on the type of barriers to employment different groups of participants face.
- More breakdowns for progression (splits by sex, ethnicity and disability).

No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland

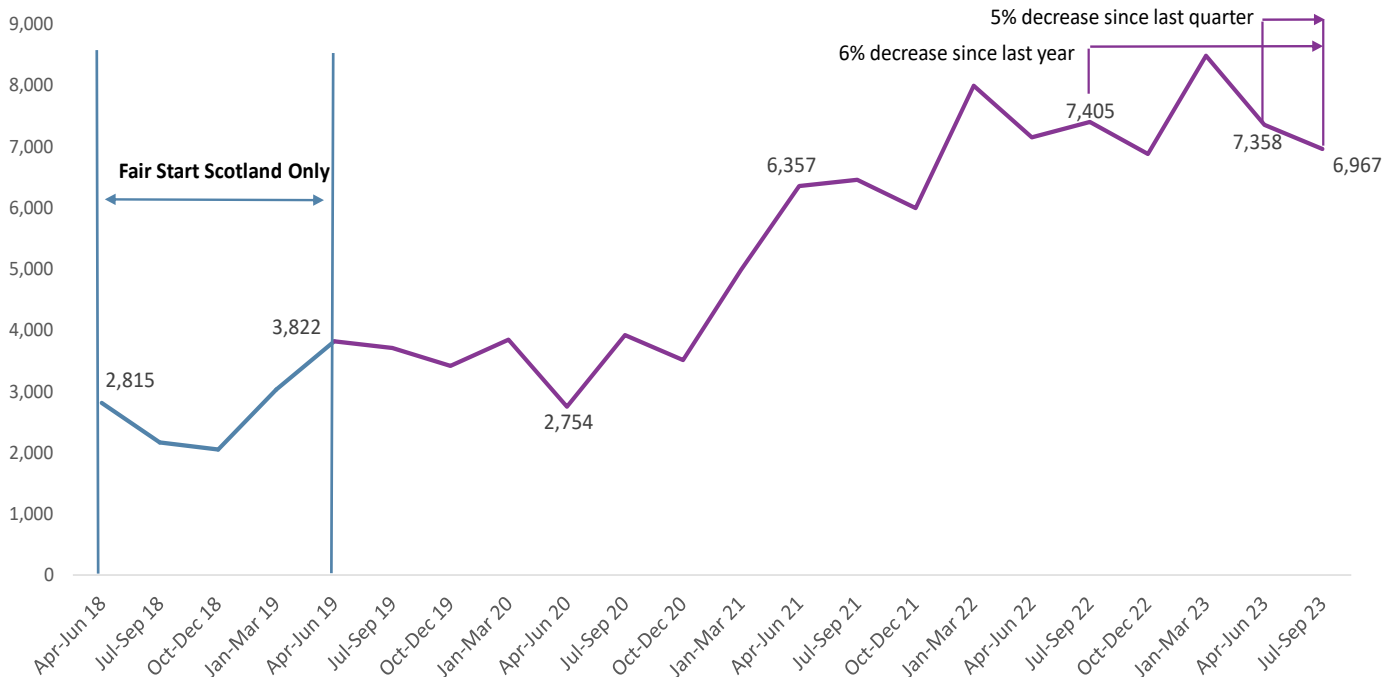
This section considers No One Left Behind and FSS together to give an indication of total demand for Scottish Government funded employability support over time. Both are distinct approaches to employability support, varying over time in support offered and groups targeted. It is also possible that people have accessed both No One Left Behind and FSS. It is not recommended to make direct comparisons between No One Left Behind and FSS.

There have been 111,105 starts on either No One Left Behind or FSS between April 2018 and September 2023. In the most recent quarter, July – September 2023, there were 6,967 starts across No One Left Behind and FSS, a 5% decrease on the previous quarter and a 6% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.

Key differences between these programmes can be found in the supplementary Background and Methodology Report. These are likely to impact the demographics and outcomes of participants.

Figure 1: Starts on employability services in Scotland decreased this quarter

Starts on No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland, by Quarter, Apr 2018 to Sept 2023



No One Left Behind (Official Statistics in Development)

Official Statistics in Development

Official statistics in development are official statistics that are undergoing development. They may be new or existing statistics and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. These were previously referred to as experimental statistics.

Users should be aware that official statistics in development may have a wider degree of uncertainty and require extra caution when interpreting results. We continue to work with data suppliers to improve the accuracy and quality of returns following the move to our new data template. We have implemented an enhanced process of data quality checks targeted at those areas requiring the most development. We will re-assess the official statistics in development label at the end of 2024. Please see the supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more details.

Introduction

No One Left Behind is a strategy for placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. Key features of this service to consider when reviewing these statistics are contained in Table 3 in the supplementary Background and Methodology Report.

Since April 2019, a range of Scottish Government funding has been made available to Local Government partners as the scope of delivery under No One Left Behind expanded over time. This includes:

- funding for the initial phase of No One Left Behind (April 2019),
- the Parental Employability Support Fund (February 2020) and
- the Young Person's Guarantee (November 2020).

Since February 2022, the statistics in this publication have included people supported by the totality of these funds. The funding aims to provide support for people of all ages with a range of differing characteristics and circumstances, including parents who need help on their journey towards work. Note that the statistics in this publication relate only to Scottish Government funded activity and do not report on the entirety of employability related activity in each Local Authority area.

Shared Measurement Framework

The first SMF publication was released in April 2022. It was updated in December 2022 to reflect work undertaken with Local Authorities during the summer of 2022 to agree and finalise the new data template to be used for collection of No One Left Behind employability statistics.

The initial data recommendations built on existing data collection practice and activity in place between Local and Scottish Government, formalising key data items collected around the 'progression' theme. The new data collection template is further aligned with

the 'reach' and 'progression' themes of the SMF and the data published in this report will increasingly reflect this in the future.

The SMF publication is not a final product and more work is required to develop certain areas and themes. They will be particularly important to help us understand the journeys and achievements of those who are furthest away from the labour market and to develop the range of data that we publish.

Participant journeys will differ in nature and pace, and progression and achievements will vary based on what a positive outcome means to that individual. This means broadening our understanding of success from a focus on job outcomes to focus on the actual steps taken and progress made towards work.

We first published statistics on participants supported by No One Left Behind in February 2021 for year 1 participants, derived from the aggregate data that was collected during that period. Since then we have developed year 1 data and combined it with data collected quarterly for subsequent periods. This has allowed us to provide more detailed information for year 1 participants, including their achievements. It should be noted that the flexibility of the No One Left Behind approach allows people to come in and out of support as often as is needed, so the time between the initial start date and that to achieve certain progression outcomes can vary considerably.

Reach of Services: Who are we reaching and what challenges do they face?

SMF Theme 1 – Reach: Employability services are reaching all those who need support to progress towards, move into and sustain fair work.

All Participants

A total of 47,342 people started receiving support from April 2019 to September 2023. The number of people receiving support has increased over time from 2,711 in year 1 (2019/20) to 17,367 in year 4 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter (July – September 2023) 3,968 people started to receive support.

Age

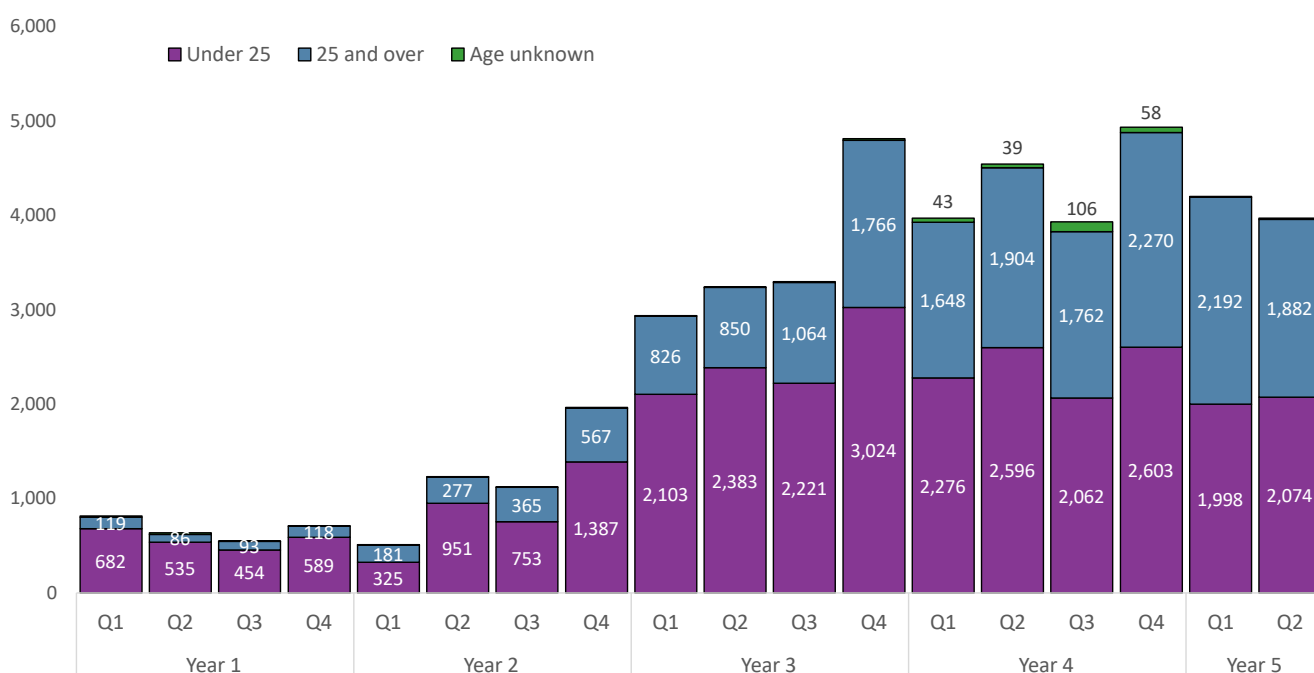
Most people supported through No One Left Behind were aged under 25 (61%; 29,016). Of these, 20,935 (72%) were aged 15 to 19 and 8,081 (28%) were aged 20 to 24. The remaining 18,326 (39%) participants were aged 25 and over, and of these; 6,388 (35%) were aged 25 to 34, 7,661 (42%) aged 35 to 49 while only 3,921 (21%) were aged 50 or over. Age was unknown for 1% (356) of participants.

The proportional difference between the under 25 and 25 and over age groups has decreased each year of No One Left Behind, with 55% of people aged under 25 and 44% aged 25 and over in the most recent full year (year 4 – 2022/23). In the latest quarter, there was a smaller difference between the age groups, with people aged under 25 representing 52% of participants and 25 and overs representing 47% of participants.

There was a notable increase in participation of people under 25 between January and March 2021 (Year 2 Quarter 4) which coincided with the introduction of additional funding to support young people.

Figure 2: The age of people starting No One Left Behind has been increasing

No One Left Behind participants, by age and quarter, April 2019 to September 2023 (labels for ‘age unknown’ are only included where participants number 30 or more)



Sex

Most people starting on No One Left behind were male (56%; 26,395), while the remaining 20,631 (44%) were female. Sex was unknown for 1% (316) of participants. Overall the difference in sex has remained relatively stable over time. However, in the most recent quarter the proportion narrowed to 51% males (2,040) and 48% females (1,908).

Sex differences by age are more varied. For the middle age groups, 25 to 34 and 35 to 49, the sex difference reverses and females account for the highest proportion of participants, 55% and 58% respectively. The youngest age group, 15 to 19, has the lowest proportion of females at 37%.

Trans status

Trans status was reported for the first time in July 2023. This is a new variable included in the new data reporting template since October 2022 (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities who adopted the new template early). Data are only available for participants starting on or after the 1st October 2022. This question is voluntary.

A total of 239 people have responded yes to the question on trans status. Of these, 93 identified as a trans man, 83 as non-binary, and 35 as a trans woman, with the remaining 28 people choosing the “other” option.

Ethnicity

Overall, people from a minority ethnic background have accounted for 7% (3,174) of participants since April 2019. The proportion of minority ethnic participants has varied across years with the highest proportion (7%) in the most recent full year (year 4 – 2022/23). In the most recent quarter (July - September 2023), the proportion was 12%.

There are age differences. The proportion of people aged 25 and over from a minority ethnic background is 12%, compared to 4% for those aged under 25.

All figures should be interpreted with caution as some percentages are based on small numbers and the proportion of unknowns can vary across time periods.

Long-Term Health Condition

Data on long-term health conditions are reported for the first time. Overall, 8,607 people have reported a long-term health condition (LTHC). However, this has only been possible since the introduction of the new data reporting template from October 2022 (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities who adopted the new template early). In the most recent quarter (July - September 2023) 40% of participants reported a LTHC.

Of those participants with a LTHC, over half (4,820; 56%) reported one condition, while a further 2,224 (26%) reported two conditions and 1,563 (18%) reported three or more conditions. The most commonly reported LTHC is a mental health condition, followed by participants reporting a long-term illness, disease or condition. In the most recent quarter (July – September 2023), 1,576 (40%) of participants reported a LTHC, with 23% reporting a mental health condition, 10% reporting a long-term illness, disease or condition and 9% reporting a learning difficulty.

Disability

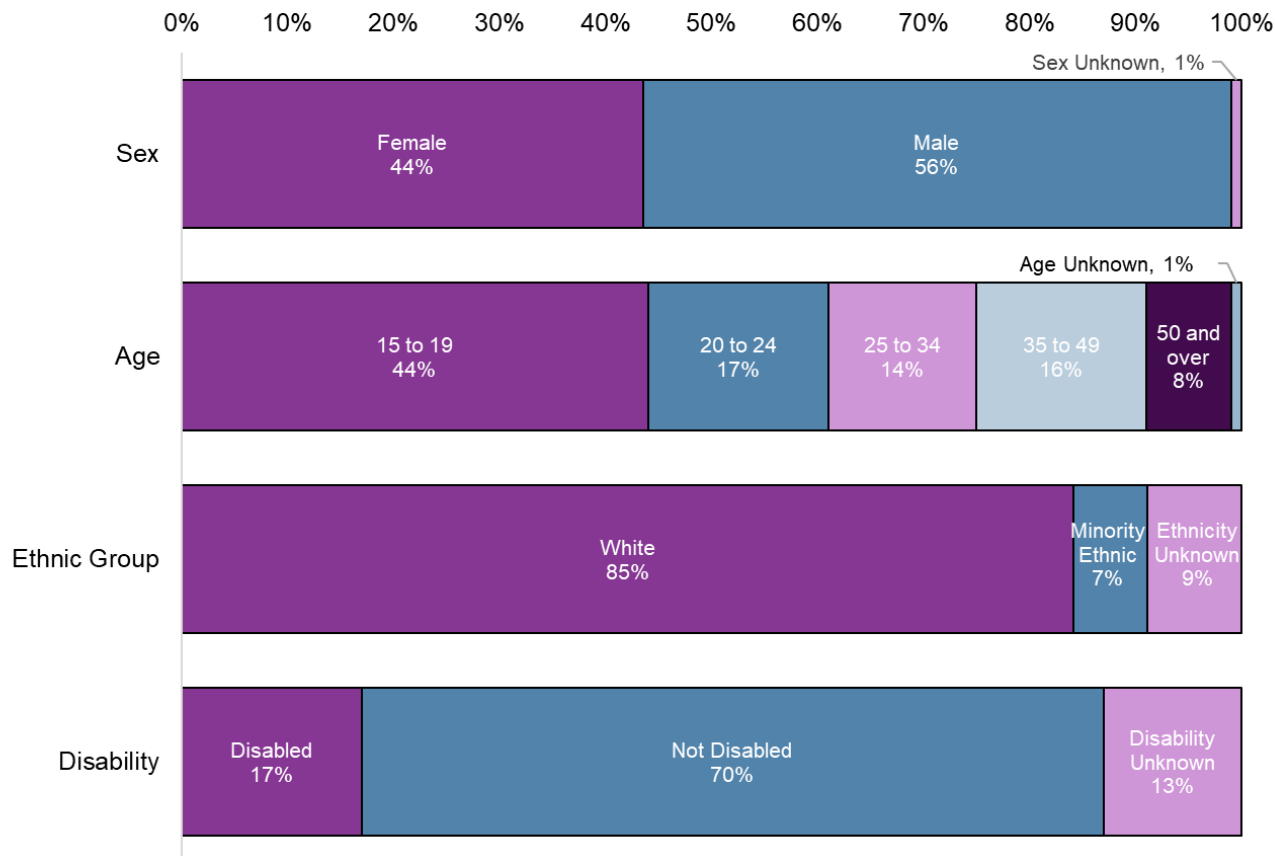
Overall, 17% of participants accessing No One Left Behind support reported having a disability (see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for disability definition). The proportion of participants reporting a disability has been consistent with the

exception of a notable decrease in year 2 (2020/21). This year covered the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic and a noticeable decrease was also observed in FSS during this year. In the most recent quarter (July - September 2023), the proportion was 24%, the biggest proportion in a single quarter to date.

These figures should be used with caution as some percentages are based on very small numbers and the proportion of unknowns can vary across time periods.

Figure 3: No One Left Behind participants are most likely to be male, white and under 20

Equality Characteristics of People Starting No One Left Behind, Apr 2019 to Sept 2023



Barriers to Employment

Prior to the new data template, barriers to employment were collected via a single variable with multiple options. While more than one barrier could be chosen, often only the most significant barrier was selected. This means data prior to October 2022 (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities who adopted the new template early) has a large number of unknowns. Following the introduction of the new data template, all barriers were presented as stand-alone variables that must be completed. This has greatly improved the proportion of unknowns across these variables.

Criminal Convictions

Data on participants reporting a criminal conviction were reported for the first time in October 2023. In the most recent quarter, 233 people (6%) reported a criminal conviction, while 3,704 (93%) reported having no criminal conviction. This information was unknown for 31 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting a criminal conviction was 7% in the previous three quarters since the introduction of the new data template.

Armed Forces Veteran

Data on armed forces veterans are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 34 people (1%) reported being an armed forces veteran, while 3,910 (99%) reported not being an armed forces veteran. This information was unknown for 24 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting being an armed forces veteran has been consistently around 1% since the introduction of the new data template.

Homelessness

Data on homelessness are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 139 people (4%) reported homelessness, while 3,804 (96%) reported not being homeless. This information was unknown for 25 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting homelessness has been consistently around 4% since the introduction of the new data template.

Substance Related Conditions

Data on participants with substance related conditions are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 108 people (3%) reported a substance related condition, while 3,838 (97%) reported having no substance related condition. This information was unknown for 22 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting a substance related condition has ranged from 2 – 3% since the introduction of the new data template.

No or Limited Work Experience

Data on participants with no or limited work experience are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 1,732 people (44%) reported having no or limited work experience, while 2,215 (56%) reported that no or limited work experience was not a barrier. This information was unknown for 21 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting having no or limited work experience has ranged from 39 – 44% since the introduction of the new data template.

Asylum Seekers

Data on asylum seekers are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 18 people (1%) reported being an asylum seeker, while 3,928 (99%) reported not being an asylum seeker. This information was unknown for 22 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting being an asylum seeker has been consistently around 1% since the introduction of the new data template.

Refugees

Data on refugees are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 183 people (5%) reported being a refugee, while 3,766 (95%) reported not being a refugee. This information was unknown for 19 people (1%). The proportion of people reporting being a refugee has ranged from 5 – 6% since the introduction of the new data template.

Child Care

Data on participants with childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 590 people (15%) reported childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment, while 2,959 (75%) reported this was not a barrier. This information was unknown for 419 people (11%). The proportion of people reporting childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment has ranged from 13 – 15% since the introduction of the new data template.

Transport

Data on transport as a barrier are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 717 people (18%) reported transport as a barrier, while 3,033 (76%) reported transport was not a barrier. This information was unknown for 218 people (6%). The proportion of people reporting transport as a barrier has ranged from 15 – 18% since the introduction of the new data template.

Care Experienced

Data on participants that are care experienced are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 400 people (10%) reported being care experienced, while 3,235 (82%) reported that they were not care experienced. This information was unknown for 333 people (8%). The proportion of people reporting being care experienced has ranged from 7 – 10% since the introduction of the new data template.

Caring Responsibilities

Data on participants with caring responsibilities are reported for the first time. In the most recent quarter, 526 people (13%) reported having caring responsibilities, while 3,093 (78%) reported having no caring responsibilities. This information was unknown for 349 people (9%). The proportion of people reporting having caring responsibilities has ranged from 12 – 13% since the introduction of the new data template.

Economic Status at Start Date

Data on the economic status of participants were reported for the first time in October 2023. While most participants joining No One Left Behind are unemployed, some participants may already be in employment, or may be classed as economically inactive, where they are not in employment, and have not actively sought work in the last four weeks. This may include students in full-time education, some people who are sick or disabled, or those who have retired. In addition, a small number of No One Left Behind participants are school pupils. See supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more in-depth definitions of these categories.

Most participants were unemployed at start date (25,280; 53%), while a further 11,460 (24%) were economically inactive and 4,863 (10%) were employed when starting. There have been 3,010 (6%) school pupils joining No One Left Behind. In the most recent quarter, 60% of participants were unemployed at start date, 19% economically inactive and 12% in employment.

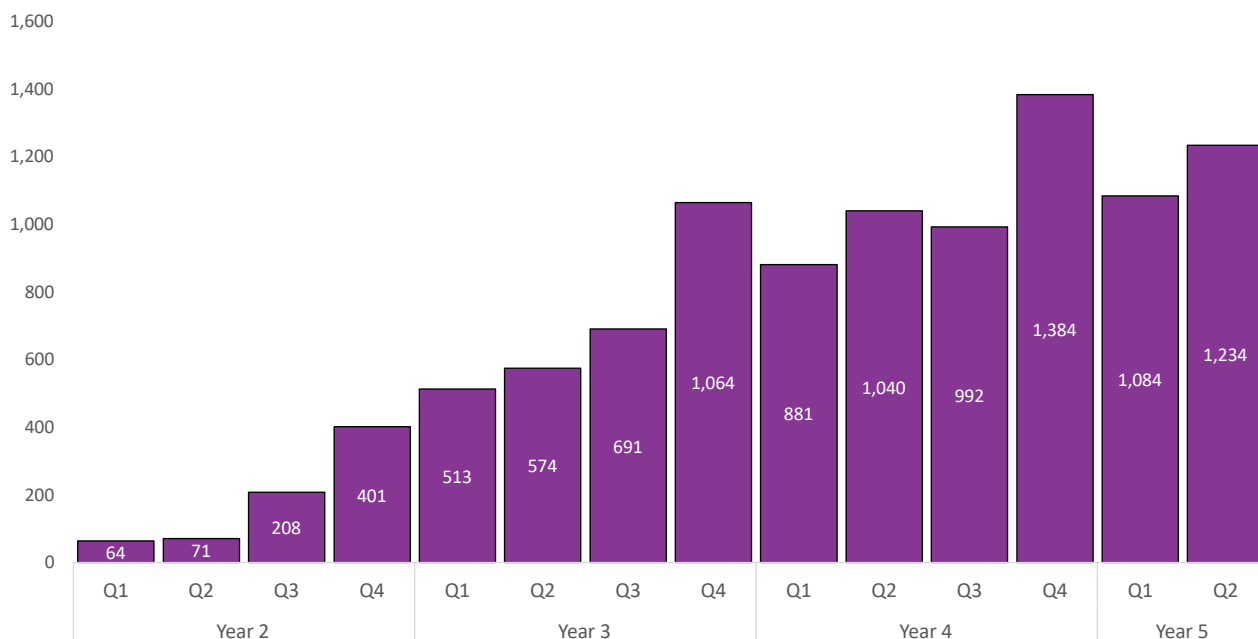
Further information is available for those in employment at start date. While most participants are male, the majority of the 4,863 participants in employment at start date are female (2,867; 59%). Participants employed at start date also tend to be older than those overall, with 1,459 (30%) aged 35 to 49 and 1,083 (22%) aged 25 to 34.

Parents

Parents are a subgroup of all participants supported during the period April 2020 to September 2023 (year 2 onwards). Of the 44,631 people who started to receive support from year 2, 10,201 (23%) were parents. The number of parents has generally increased reaching a high of 1,384 (28%) parents in the January - March 2023 quarter. In the most recent quarter, 1,234 (31%) parents started on No One Left Behind.

Figure 4: The number of parents being supported through No One Left Behind has generally been increasing

Parents Receiving No One Left Behind Support, by Quarter, April 2020 to September 2023



Age

Most parents are aged 25 and over (86%; 8,811), with the majority in the 35 to 49 years age group (47%; 4,746) and the lowest proportion in the youngest (15 to 19 year olds; 3%; 267) and oldest (50 and over; 8%; 798) age groups.

Sex

While female participants account for a lower proportion of all participants (44%), they account for a majority of the parent subgroup (73%; 7,475 female). Females have accounted for a substantially higher proportion of parents across the period; however, the proportion of male parents accessing support has generally increased over time accounting for 14% of parents receiving support in April - June 2020 and increasing to 26% in the latest quarter.

Ethnicity

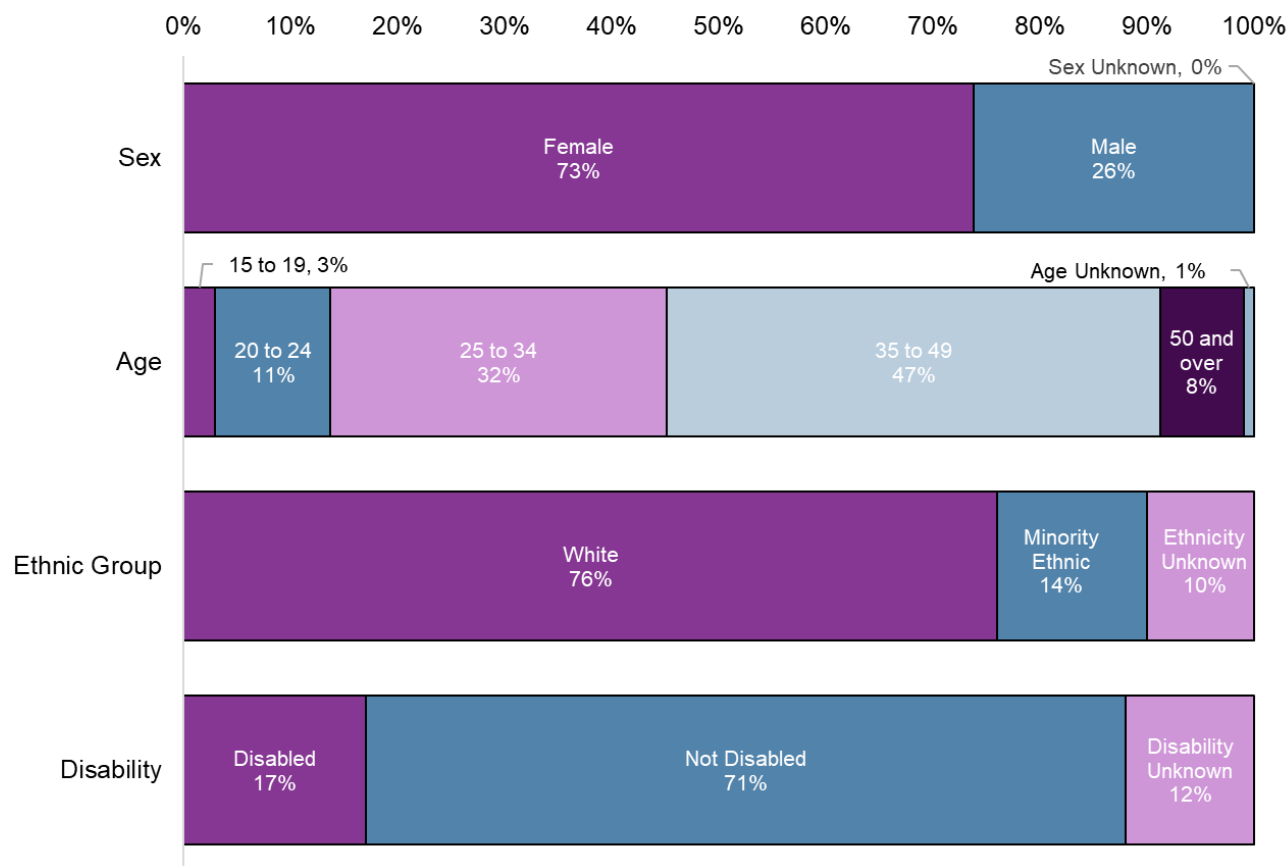
Of parents accessing No One Left Behind support, 14% (1,468) were from a minority ethnic background, while this was true for 22% (268) of parents in the most recent quarter. Proportions have fluctuated across time periods and caution is required as some percentages are based on very small numbers and the proportion of unknowns can vary across quarters.

Disability

Overall, 17% (1,755) of parents reported having a disability. The proportion of parents reporting a disability has increased over time from 13% in year 2 (2020/21) to 17% in year 4 (2022/23). It was 24% in the most recent quarter.

Figure 5: No One Left Behind parents are most likely to be female, white and 25 or over

Equality Characteristics of Parents Starting No One Left Behind, Apr 2020 to Sept 2023



Priority Family Groups

There were 1,234 parents in the most recent quarter (July - September 2023). Of these, the following groups were observed in terms of parents and those from families at highest risk of being affected by child poverty (some adults may appear in one or more of these family groups):

- 296 (24%) were disabled,
- 649 (53%) were lone parents,
- 125 (10%) were parents aged under 25,
- 290 (24%) were parents with three or more children,
- 75 (6%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,
- 229 (19%) had a disabled child or adult within the family (this refers to any other disabled adult within the family, not adults who are participants).

Overall, of the 10,201 parents receiving support since year 2:

- 1,755 (17%) were disabled,
- 6,019 (59%) were lone parents,
- 1,336 (13%) were parents aged under 25,
- 2,410 (24%) were parents with three or more children,

- 828 (8%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,
- 1,357 (13%) had a disabled child or adult within the family (this refers to any other disabled adult within the family, not adults who are participants).

Please see [Tackling Child Poverty Priority Families Overview \(opens in a new window\)](#) for further information on the priority family groups and their definitions. Information has been collected based on these family groups with further details on parent data and the alignment to the priority family groups found in the supplementary Background and Methodology Report.

Local Authority Breakdowns

Data broken down by age at the Local Authority level has previously been available in the accompanying tables of this report. Further breakdowns by sex, ethnicity and disability are reported for the first time.

Of the 47,342 participants being supported through No One Left Behind, the highest proportion (11% of all) are being supported in Glasgow City, which is also the most populated Local Authority area. Fife supports the next highest proportion of participants (8%), followed by City of Edinburgh (6%). The lowest proportion of participants are often being supported in those Local Authority areas with smallest populations, such as the Island authorities, however this is not always the case. It is worth noting that while population size can serve as a guide for understanding differences between Local Authorities, local labour market conditions will also be a significant factor for differences, as well as other employability support that may be available.

Overall, most participants being supported through No One Left Behind are aged under 25 (61%). However, this does vary by Local Authority area. Aberdeen City (55%), Aberdeenshire (54%) and Inverclyde (54%) have a higher proportion of participants aged 25 and over. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (82%), North Lanarkshire (77%) and West Lothian (76%) have the highest proportion of participants aged under 25.

Most participants supported through No One Left Behind are male (56%). However, there are more female participants in seven Local Authority areas, with the highest proportion in Scottish Borders (56%) and East Renfrewshire (56%).

Participants from a minority ethnic background represent 7% of all participants. The City of Edinburgh has the highest proportion (25%) of participants from a minority ethnic background, followed by East Renfrewshire (20%) and Aberdeen City (14%).

Overall, 17% of participants supported through No One Left Behind have a disability. This varies by Local Authority. Orkney Islands have the highest proportion (28%), followed by Clackmannanshire (27%), North Ayrshire (26%) and South Ayrshire (26%).

Differences between Local Authorities will reflect the demographic profile of areas, local labour market conditions and/or targeted interventions in local areas.

Progression of Participants: What are the achievements of those supported by No One Left Behind so far?

SMF Theme 2 - Progression: To enable an individual's progression towards fair work and sustained employment. Considering aspects such as improving well-being, confidence and motivation, maintaining or re-engaging with support, and developing aspirations and skills.

All Participants

Of the 47,342 people supported under the No One Left Behind approach between April 2019 and September 2023, 14,822 people (31%) entered employment. Of those that entered employment; 5,371 people (36%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 1,662 people (11%) started modern apprenticeships and 237 people (2%) entered self-employment.

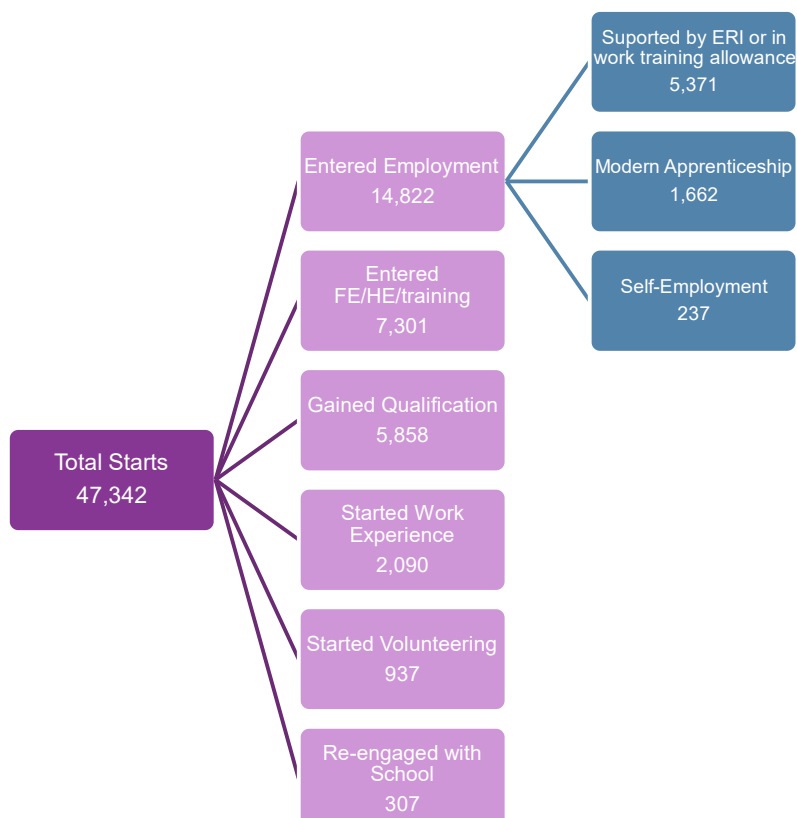
Data on the number of people in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks was reported for the first time in October 2023. Of the 14,822 people that entered employment, 4,851 (33%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 4,872 (33%) at 13 weeks, 4,534 (31%) at 26 weeks, and 2,644 (18%) at 52 weeks after entering employment.

Additionally, 7,301 (15%) people supported entered further or higher education or training, 5,858 people (12%) gained a qualification, 2,090 people (4%) started work experience opportunities, 937 people (2%) started volunteering and 307 people (1%) re-engaged with school.

Please see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for definitions on employment at follow-up.

Figure 6: Most participants achieving an outcome enter employment

Outcomes achieved by No One Left Behind participants, April 2019 to September 2023



Parents

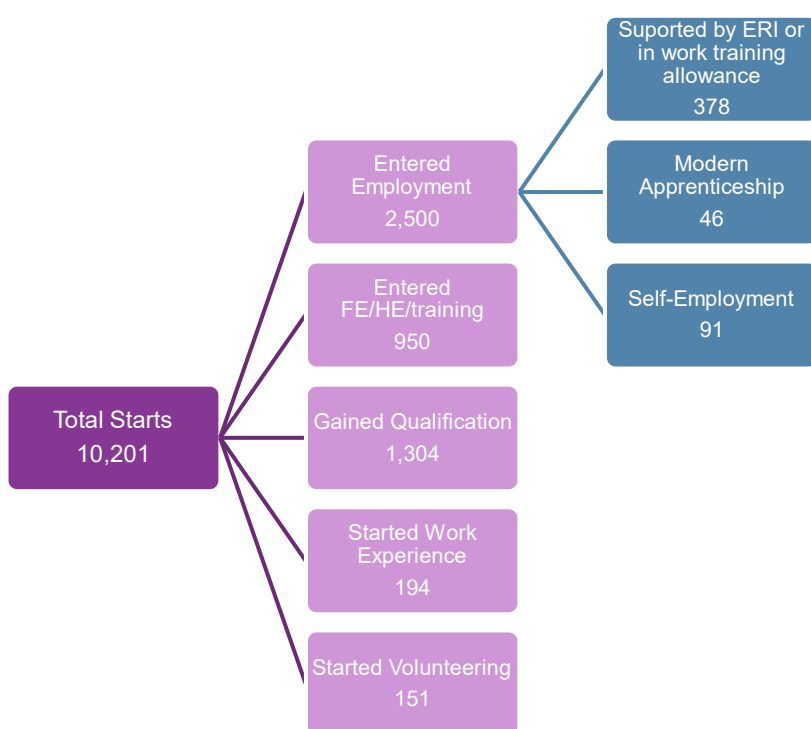
Please note, the following statistics on parents are from year 2 (April 2020) onwards. Of the 10,201 parents supported under the No One Left Behind approach, 2,500 (25%) entered employment. Of those; 378 (15%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 46 (2%) started modern apprenticeships and 91 (4%) entered self-employment.

Data on parents in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks is reported for the first time. Of the 2,500 parents that entered employment, 1,095 (44%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 1,006 (40%) at 13 weeks, 823 (33%) at 26 weeks, and 390 (16%) at 52 weeks.

Additionally, 950 (9%) parents supported entered further or higher education or training, 1,304 (13%) gained a qualification, 194 (2%) started work experience and 151 (1%) started volunteering.

Please see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for definitions on employment at follow-up.

Figure 7: Most parents achieving an outcome enter employment
Outcomes achieved by No One Left Behind parents, April 2020 to September 2023



Age

A total of 10,259 people aged under 25 entered employment. This is 35% of all under 25 participants. For those aged 25 and over, 4,518 entered employment. This is 25% of all participants aged 25 and over.

Of those people aged under 25 entering employment, 4,377 (43%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, while this was the case for 990 (22%) of those aged 25 and over. A higher proportion of people entering employment aged under 25 also started a modern apprenticeship (1,617; 16%) than for those aged 25 and over (42; 1%). The proportion of

people aged 25 or over that entered self-employment (155; 3%) was higher than the proportion of those aged under 25 (82; less than 1%).

There was a similar proportion aged under 25 (3,792; 13%) and aged 25 and over (2,053; 11%) gaining a qualification. Those under 25 were more likely to enter full time or higher education or training (5,801, 20%) than those in the older age group (1,459; 8%).

Sex

A total of 6,164 (30%) female participants entered employment compared to 8,063 (33%) male participants. Of those female participants entering employment, 2,004 (33%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, while this was the case for 3,347 (39%) of male participants. A similar proportion of female participants entering employment started a modern apprenticeship (648; 11%) compared to male participants (1,012; 12%).

There was also a similar proportion of female participants gaining a qualification (2,392; 12%) compared to male participants (3,434; 13%), and female participants entering full time or higher education or training (3,265, 16%) compared to male participants (3,970; 15%).

Ethnicity

A total of 700 (22%) participants from a minority ethnic background entered employment compared to 13,412 (33%) white participants. A smaller proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background entering employment were supported by a subsidy to do so (140; 20%) compared to white participants (4,911; 37%). A lower proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background entering employment started a modern apprenticeship (44; 6%) compared to white participants (1,516; 11%), while proportions were the same for entering self-employment (2% for both groups).

The same proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background gained a qualification (411; 13%) as white participants (5,060; 13%), and a similar proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background entered full time or higher education or training (496, 16%) compared to white participants (6,051; 15%).

Disability

A total of 1,730 (22%) participants with a disability entered employment compared to 11,707 (35%) of participants without a disability. Of those participants with a disability entering employment, 540 (31%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, compared to 4,390 (37%) of those without a disability. A similar proportion of disabled participants started a modern apprenticeship (176; 10%) compared to participants without a disability (1,358; 12%).

A similar proportion of disabled participants gained a qualification (903; 12%) and entered full time or higher education or training (1,131, 14%), compared to participants without a disability (4,320; 13% and 5,180; 16%, respectively).

Please see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more detail on outcome definitions and criteria.

Fair Start Scotland (Official Statistics)

Introduction

FSS is Scotland's devolved employability support service which aims to help those further from the labour market move into and sustain fair work. FSS launched on 3 April 2018 with funding to support a minimum of 38,000 people into work over an initial three year period ([Fair Start Scotland Statement - opens in a new window](#)). The service has been extended to March 2024. Further details on the nature of Fair Start Scotland can be found in table 3 of the supplementary Background and Methodology Report.

This report refers to the following groups throughout:

- **People** – unique individuals counted only once. If a participant has joined the service more than once, they will only be counted once under the people metric.
- **Starts** – number of starts on the service. As people can now re-join, the number of starts may not equal the number of unique people. For example, if a participant has joined the service on two separate occasions, this will be counted twice under starts but only once under people.
- **Re-joins** – refers to starts that are not first time starts. It should also be noted people may re-join more than once. The sum of the people metric and re-joins equals the number of starts on the service.

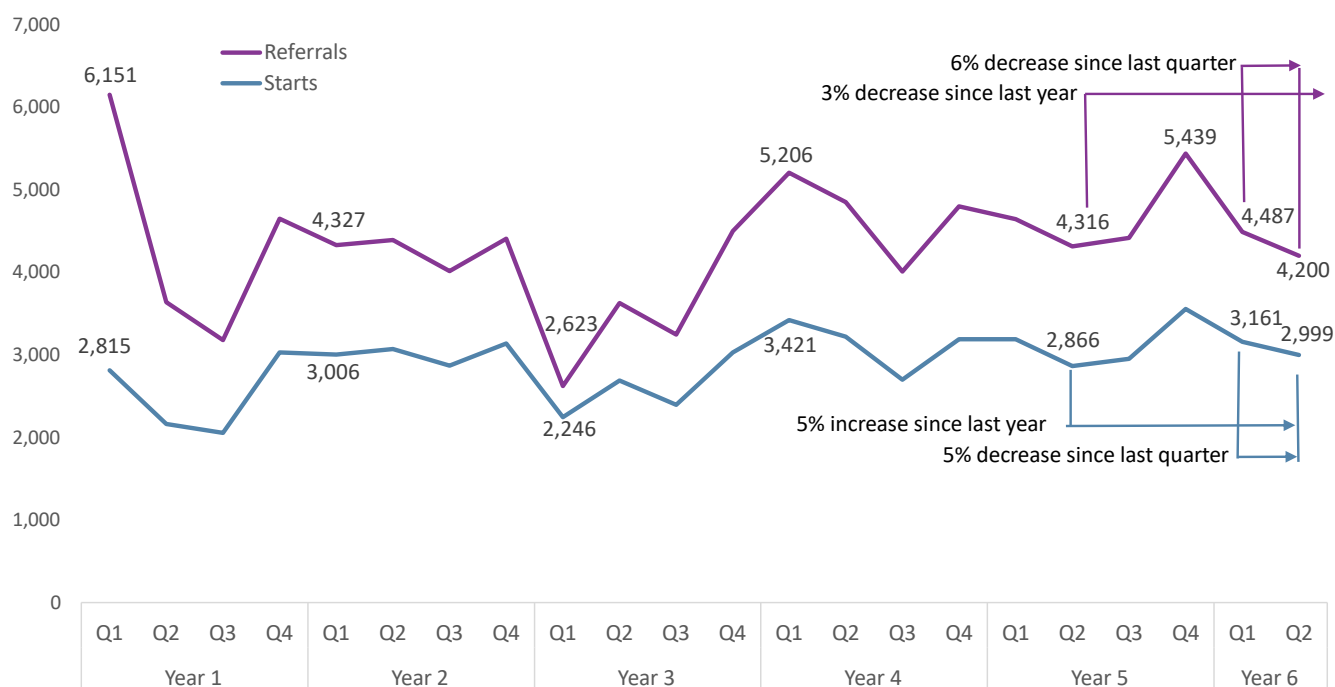
Most of the statistics in this report cover the period since FSS was launched in April 2018 up until the most recent quarter (July - September 2023). However, for some data items such as job outcomes, it is more appropriate to only consider those participants where enough time has passed that we have complete data. This varies depending on the metric but is noted within the relevant sections of the report.

How many FSS referrals and starts have there been?

There were 95,118 referrals to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of September 2023. Of the total referrals to FSS, 63,763 started receiving employability support, including 5,615 re-joins to the service.

In the most recent quarter, referrals decreased by 6% from 4,487 last quarter to 4,200 this quarter. Compared to the equivalent quarter in 2022, referrals are 3% lower. Starts have decreased by 5% from 3,161 last quarter to 2,999 this quarter. This is 5% higher than the equivalent quarter in 2022.

Figure 8: Referrals and starts on Fair Start Scotland decreased this quarter
Referrals and Starts on Fair Start Scotland, by Quarter, April 2018 to September 2023



Who are the people that have joined FSS?

Of 63,763 FSS starts, 58,148 people have started on the service, with the difference reflecting participants re-joining the service. The following breakdown of equality groups are based on the characteristics of those 58,148 people when they first joined FSS.

Sex

Most people joining FSS are male (62%; 35,853) while 38% (22,152) are female. The proportion of females has increased from 35% in year 1 (2018/19) to 39% in year 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter (July - September 2023), 38% of participants were female.

Age

The most common age group of people joining FSS is 35 to 49 years (29%; 16,970), followed by 25 to 34 year olds (25%; 14,453). The lowest proportion is the 16 to 24 years old age group (20%; 11,493).

The proportion of participants in the youngest and oldest age groups tends to show larger fluctuations than those in the 25 to 34 and 35 to 49 years age groups. Those in the youngest age group represented 16% of all participants in year 1 (2018/19) compared to 25% in year 3 (2020/21). In the most recent quarter, the proportion was 24%. In comparison, the oldest age group represented 30% in year 1 (2018/19) compared to 20% in year 3 (2020/21). In the most recent quarter, the proportion was 20%.

Ethnicity

Overall, 7% (4,243) of people joining FSS were from a minority ethnic background and 74% (43,139) were white with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 19% (10,766) of participants. In the most recent quarter, 16% of participants were from a minority ethnic

background and 79% were white. This, alongside the previous quarter, is the highest proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background in a single quarter.

Monitoring changes to ethnicity can be challenging due a high proportion of unknowns. However, there has been continued improvement in response rates for this variable. In the most recent quarter, unknowns represented 5% of all participants. This compares to the higher proportions observed in earlier years (year 1: 17%, year 2: 31%, year 3: 29%).

Disability

Disability is defined based on answers to two questions related to long-term health condition (LTHC) and ability to carry out activities. Overall, 44% (25,464) of FSS participants have a disability compared to 48% (27,815) who do not. This was unknown for the remaining 8% (4,869) of participants.

The proportion of disabled people has varied across years with the highest proportion (55%) in year 1 (2018/19) and the lowest (32%) in year 3 (2020/21). The collection of equalities data in year 3 was impacted by the move away from face to face service delivery and policies such as shielding during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the proportion of disabled people accessing FSS has subsequently increased from this low point, it continues to fluctuate. In year 4 (2021/22), the proportion increased to 47% but decreased to 43% in year 5. In the most recent quarter, 43% of people reported a disability.

Convictions

People with a conviction may find it harder to enter employment. There has been 6,216 people (11%) joining FSS that reported having a conviction. In year 4 (2021/22) this peaked at 13% but reached a low point of 8% in year 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 192 people (8%) reported having a conviction.

Urban/Rural

People living in rural areas may be more limited for job opportunities compared to those living in urban areas. There has been 4,936 people (8%) joining FSS who live in a rural area, while 52,411 people (90%) live in an urban area. This has remained consistent across years with the highest proportion of people living in rural areas (9%) in years 3 (2020/21), 4 (2021/22) and 6 so far (to September 2023), and the lowest proportion (8%) in years 1 (2018/19), 2 (2019/20) and 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 256 people (10%) reported living in a rural area. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

Deprivation

There has been 20,541 people (35%) joining FSS who lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. This has remained consistent across years with the highest proportion (38%) in year 1 (2018/19) and the lowest proportion (33%) in years 3 (2020/21) and 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 825 people (34%) lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

Length of Time Unemployed

People who have been out of the labour market for a longer period of time may find it more difficult to find employment. Most people (37%; 21,303) joining FSS have been unemployed for 24 months or more. A similar proportion have been unemployed for less than 6 months (18%; 10,586) and between 6 – 12 months (16%; 9,582) with a further 15% unemployed between 12 – 24 months (8,923). This information is unknown for the

remaining participants (13%; 7,754). In the most recent quarter, 742 people (30%) reported being unemployed for 24 months or more.

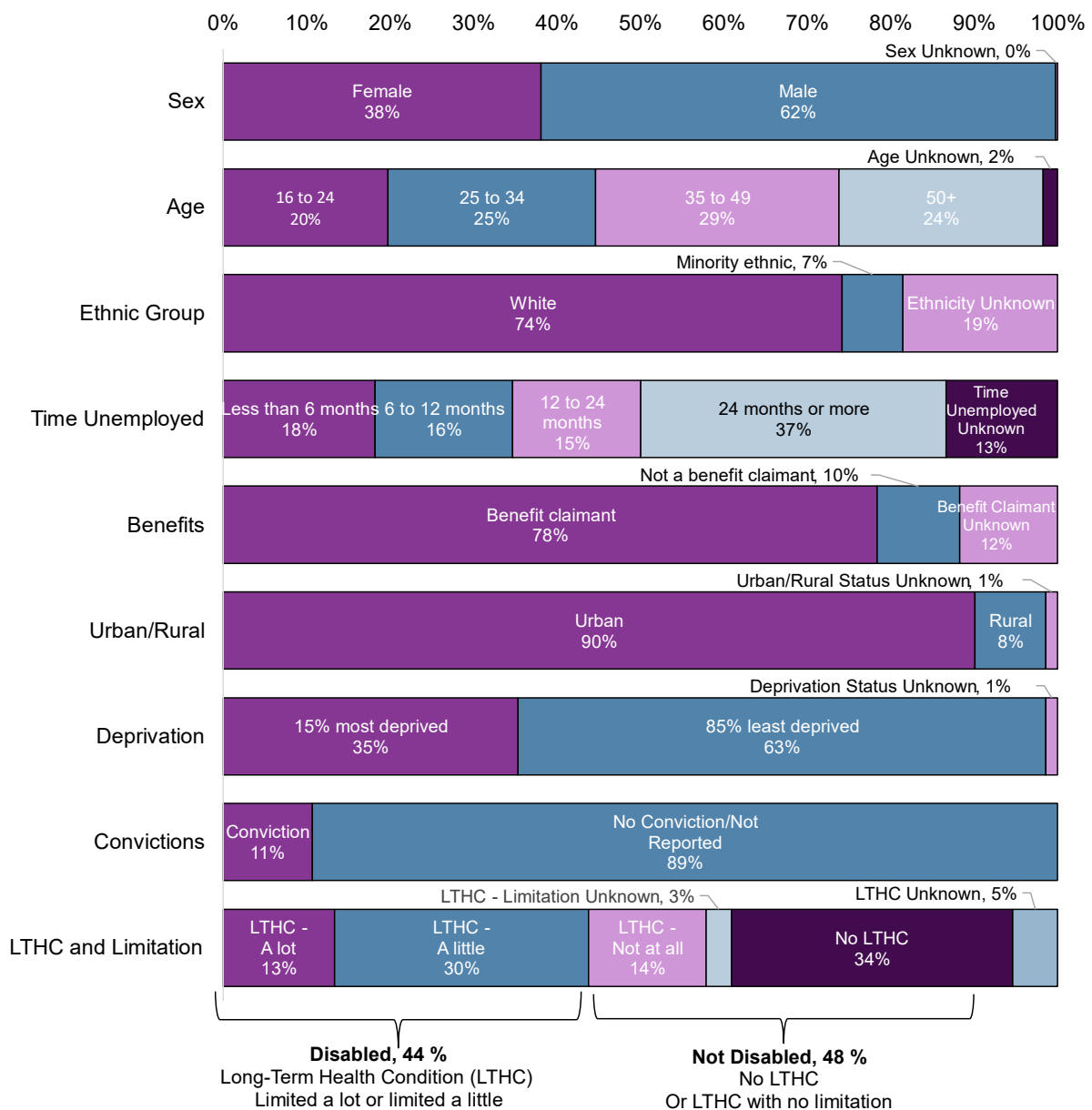
Benefit Claimants

The majority of people (78%; 45,578) joining FSS are benefit claimants. This proportion was at its lowest in year 1 (2018/19) at 74% and peaked in year 4 (2021/22) at 87%. It should be noted that the proportion of unknowns was higher in the first few years of the programme but has since improved. In the most recent quarter, 1,861 (76%) people reported claiming benefits. This continues a quarterly decrease in the proportion of people joining FSS that are benefit claimants since October – December 2022.

See supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more detail on impact of Covid-19 pandemic and the precise definition of characteristics reported here.

Figure 9: Most people starting on Fair Start Scotland are male, white and live in an urban area

Equality Characteristics of People Starting on Fair Start Scotland, Apr 2018 to Sept 2023



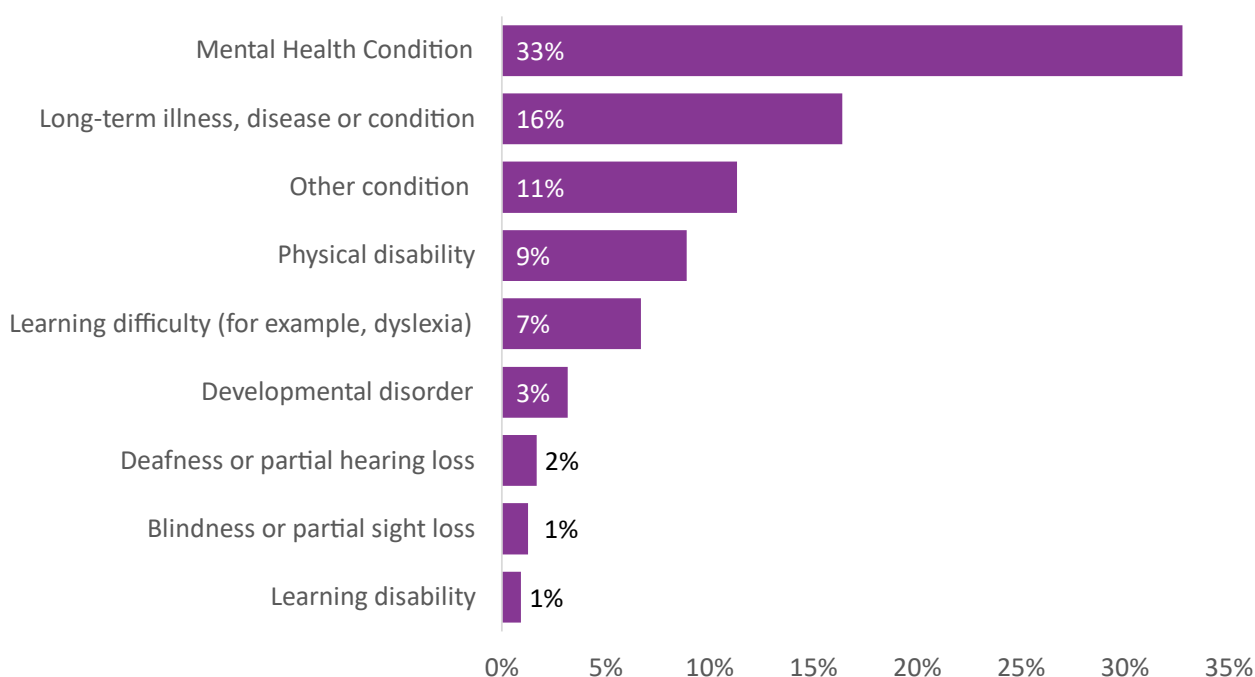
Long-Term Health Condition

Overall, 61% (35,417) of people joining FSS reported a LTHC, 34% (19,626) reported no LTHC, with 5% (3,105) unknown. In the most recent quarter, 55% reported a LTHC.

Many LTHC can impact upon a person's ability to gain and maintain employment without additional support and participants can report more than one LTHC. The most commonly reported LTHC by participants joining FSS was a mental health condition (33%; 19,064), followed by a long-term illness, disease or condition (16%; 9,525).

Figure 10: Mental health condition is the most reported long-term health condition for people starting on Fair Start Scotland

LTHC Reported by People Starting on Fair Start Scotland, April 2018 to September 2023



Parents

Annual data on parents was first published in May 2021. Quarterly parent data for year 4 is published for the first time in this publication whilst quarterly parent data covering year 5 onwards was published from August 2022.

Cumulative totals should be interpreted with caution and comparison of data between years is not advised due to the way the collection has developed over time. Please see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more details.

Of people joining FSS for the first time 12,615 were parents, while there has been 13,797 total parent starts on the service since its launch in April 2018, including re-joins.

In the latest quarter, of the 745 parent starts on FSS there were 647 people who were parents accessing FSS support for the first time. These 647 parents represented 26% of all 2,460 people accessing FSS support for the first time in this quarter. This is the same proportion as the previous quarter.

Parents and families from certain groups are at higher risk of being affected by child poverty (see supplementary Background and Methodology Report). Of the 647 parents accessing support for the first time this quarter:

- 35% were disabled (37% overall),
- 34% were lone parents (43% overall),
- 2% were mothers aged under 25 (3% overall),
- 20% were parents with three or more children (18% overall),
- 40% had a child aged under 12 months (27% overall), and,
- 23% were from a minority ethnic background (12% overall).

How many FSS early leavers have there been?

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 12 months but can last up to 18 months in some cases, though this has only applied to a small number of people to date.

There have been 30,273 early leavers from the 63,763 FSS starts (including 5,615 re-joins). As time passes, there is a more complete picture of the proportion of starts that stay on FSS or leave early.

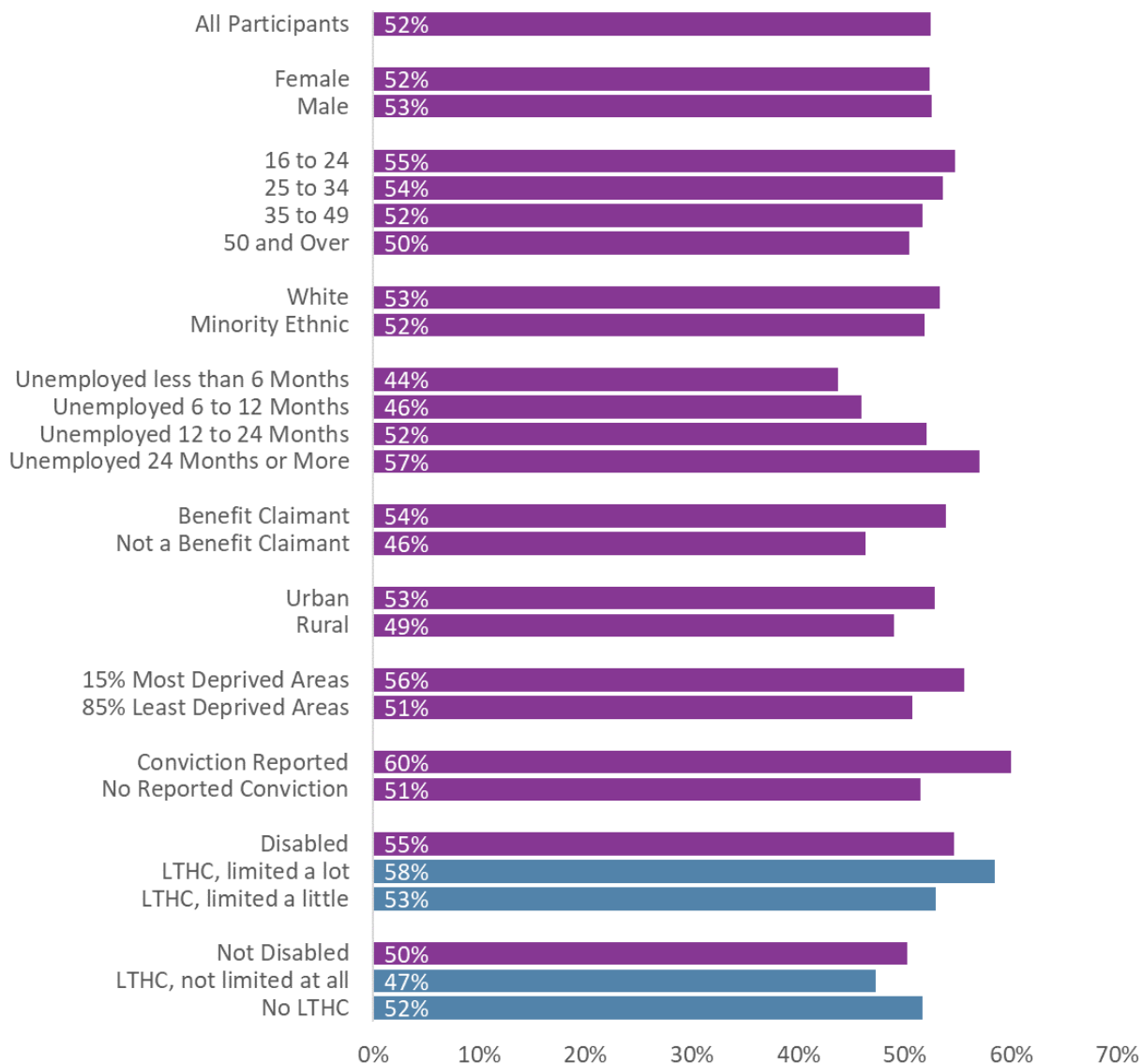
Where we have a complete picture, based on participants with a start date one year ago or longer, 26,802 (52%) of starts have left early. This rate is based on a cohort of 51,094 starting between the period April 2018 and September 2022 (including 3,463 re-joins).

The percentage of early leavers was higher for those reporting a disability, particularly for those who have a LTHC that limits daily activities a lot (58%); compared with those with a LTHC that did not limit daily activities at all (47%). Younger participants (16 to 24) were also more likely to leave early (55%) compared to the older participants (50%) (50 years and over). There is little difference between male and female participants or between white and minority ethnic participants.

Participants with a conviction were more likely to leave early (60%) than those not reporting a conviction (51%). Those participants who lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas were more likely to leave early (56%) compared to those who lived in one of the 85% least deprived areas (51%). Participants unemployed for 24 months or more also have higher rates of leaving early (57%) compared to those unemployed less than 6 months (44%), 6 – 12 months (46%) and 12 – 24 months (52%).

Figure 11: FSS starts reporting a conviction, living in one of the 15% most deprived areas or are unemployed 24 months or more are most likely to leave FSS early

Proportion of Starts on Fair Start Scotland leaving early, April 2018 to September 2022 (Disability is classified as those with a long-term health condition (LTHC) that limits daily activities while Not Disabled is classified as those with a LTHC that does not limit daily activities or those with no LTHC)



How many FSS starts entered and sustained employment?

Overall, there has been 22,659 job starts in total from the 63,763 FSS starts, including the 5,615 re-joins to the service, since the launch of FSS. Of these job starts, so far 15,645 have sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 12,010 at least 6 months (26 weeks), and 8,270 at least 12 months (52 weeks), as of September 2023.

When considering job outcomes, to properly assess how participants have progressed, it is more appropriate to calculate this for cohorts of participants where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved.

For example, pre-employment support lasts 12 months so for a participant to complete this support and also sustain employment for 12 months, a total of at least 24 months is

required from their start date. Calculating 12 month job outcomes for participants where this time has not passed will under estimate outcomes for this measure. The following table summarises time periods and denominators for each outcome type.

Table 1: Outcome type by respective service start time period and number of participants covered in each outcome

Outcome	Time Required to Pass	Time period of starting on service	Participants	Re-joins
Job Starts	12 month support	April 2018 to September 2022	51,094	3,463
3 month job outcome	12 month support + 3 months	April 2018 to June 2022	48,288	3,017
6 month job outcome	12 month support + 6 months	April 2018 to March 2022	45,040	2,450
12 month job outcome	12 month support + 12 months	April 2018 to September 2021	39,151	1,339

For those starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 37% (18,928 out of 51,094) have entered employment, 27% have sustained employment for 3 months (13,088 out of 48,288), 22% have sustained employment for 6 months (10,023 out of 45,040) and 18% have sustained employment for 12 months (6,925 out of 39,151).

However, when starts enter employment, there tends to be a high level of sustainment. Of those starts entering employment, 74% sustained employment for 3 months (13,088 out of 17,805 job starts up to June 2022 – 12 months support plus 3 months job outcome). Of the starts sustaining employment for 3 months, 82% went on to continue sustainment to 6 months (10,023 out of 12,238 job starts up to March 2022 – 12 months support plus 6 months job outcome). And of the starts sustaining employment for 6 months, 78% went on to reach at least 12 months employment (6,925 out of 8,839 job starts up to September 2021 – 12 months support plus 12 months job outcome).

Sex

There are no sex differences in job starts (37%) but female participants are more likely to sustain employment with differences increasing over longer sustainment periods. For example, 28% of female starts sustain employment for 3 months compared with 26% of male starts, while 20% of female starts sustain employment for 12 months compared to 17% for male starts.

Age

Younger participants are more likely to enter employment compared to the oldest participants, however, there is little difference in job sustainment at 12 months. The youngest age group (16 to 24) accounts for the lowest proportion of FSS starts but have the highest job starts (42%). For starts in the oldest age group (50 years and over), 32% enter employment. However, at 12 month job sustainment, all age groups have similar levels of sustainment (range: 17-18%).

Long-Term Health Condition and Disability

The extent to which a LTHC limits daily activities is a more important factor in terms of entering and sustaining employment than simply having or not having a LTHC. For FSS starts with no LTHC, 40% entered employment. However, this is higher for those with a LTHC that does not limit daily activities at all (45%). In comparison, for starts with a LTHC that limits daily activities a lot, 25% enter employment. This general trend is also maintained for sustained outcomes, where 13% of starts with a LTHC that limits daily activities a lot sustain employment for 12 months compared with 21% for starts with a LTHC that does not limit daily activities at all. However, the gap between these groups is narrower for longer sustainment periods compared to shorter periods.

Ethnicity

FSS starts from minority ethnic backgrounds have slightly higher job starts and outcome sustainment compared to white participants, with differences ranging between 2-3 percentage points. For example, 39% of starts from a minority ethnic background enter employment compared to 36% of starts who are white, while 19% of starts from a minority ethnic background sustain employment for 12 months compared to 17% of starts who are white.

Convictions

Having a conviction is one of the biggest barriers to entering and sustaining employment for FSS participants. For job starts, 30% of starts reporting a conviction enter employment compared to 38% of starts not reporting a conviction. Only 10% of starts reporting a conviction maintain employment for 12 months compared to 19% for those starts not reporting a conviction.

Urban/Rural

There is almost no difference in outcomes between those living in an urban or rural setting with those observed for all participants.

Deprivation

FSS starts living in the 85% least deprived areas have higher job starts and outcome sustainment compared to those living in the 15% most deprived areas, with a 3 percentage point difference across all outcome measures. For example, 38% of those living in one of the 85% least deprived areas entered employment compared to 35% for those living in one of the 15% most deprived areas, while for 12 month sustained employed, this was 19% and 16%, respectively.

Length of Time Unemployed

Length of time unemployed is an important factor for entering and sustaining employment. Those out of employment for a longer period are less likely to enter and sustain employment. For example, 57% of FSS starts unemployed for less than 6 months entered employment compared to 23% for starts unemployed for 24 months or more. For starts unemployed less than 6 months, 28% sustained employment for 12 months compared to 11% for those starts unemployed for 24 months or more.

Benefit Claimants

While most FSS participants reported claiming a benefit (79%), 34% of these starts entered employment compared to 57% of starts not claiming a benefit. Although the gap narrows at longer sustainment outcomes, it still remains wide. For example, 15% of starts

claiming a benefit sustain employment for 12 months compared to 31% for those not claiming a benefit.

How many parent starts on FSS entered and sustained employment?

For the 13,797 FSS starts that were parents, job outcomes are only reported where enough time has passed in pre-employment support (12 months) and for outcomes to be achieved, as is the case for all participants. The following table summarises this for each outcome type.

Table 2: Outcome type and respective service start time period and number of parents covered in each outcome

Outcome	Time Required to Pass	Time period of starting on service	Parents Included	Parent Re-joins
Job Starts	12 month support	April 2018 to September 2022	10,441	763
3 month job outcome	12 month support + 3 months	April 2018 to June 2022	9,693	662
6 month job outcome	12 month support + 6 months	April 2018 to March 2022	8,891	543
12 month job outcome	12 month support + 12 months	April 2018 to September 2021	7,305	309

For those parent starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 38% (3,918 of 10,441) have entered employment, 28% have sustained employment for 3 months (2,712 out of 9,693), 23% have sustained employment for 6 months (2,054 out of 8,891) and 19% have sustained for 12 months (1,366 out of 7,305). These proportions are comparable to those observed for all participants.

Priority Family Groups

Disabled Parents

The proportion of disabled parents entering employment is the same as disabled participants who are not parents (both 32%) but lower than both parents who are not disabled (41%) and participants who are not a parent nor disabled (42%), highlighting the challenge for participants who are disabled regardless of parental status.

Job sustainment was also consistently lower for disabled parents compared to parents who are not disabled. For example, 16% of disabled parents sustained employment for 12 months compared to 20% for parents who are not disabled.

Lone Parents

The proportion of lone parents entering employment is lower (32%) than for all parents (38%). This is consistent across sustained employment. For example, 16% of lone parents sustained employment for 12 months compared to 19% for all parents.

Mothers under 25

The proportion of mothers under 25 entering employment is lower (34%) than for all parents (38%). This remains the case for sustained employment. For example, 13% of mothers under 25 sustained employment for 12 months compared to 19% for all parents.

While job starts are higher for mothers under 25 than disabled and lone parents and 3 month job outcomes are similar, this group note a higher drop-off for longer sustainment periods compared to the other mentioned groups.

Parents with three or more children

The proportion of parents with three or more children entering employment is closer (36%) to all parents (38%) than previously mentioned groups. This remains the case for sustained employment. For example, 18% of parents with three or more children sustained employment for 12 months compared to 19% for all parents.

Youngest child under 12 months

The proportion of parents with a youngest child under 12 months entering employment is the same as parents with three or more children at 36%. Parents with a youngest child under 12 months have lower sustainment rates compared to all parents. For example, 16% of parents with a youngest child under 12 months sustained employment for 12 months compared to 19% for all parents.

Parents from a minority ethnic background

The proportion of parents from a minority ethnic background entering employment is one percentage point higher (39%) than all parents (38%). This generally remains the case for sustained employment except for 12 month sustainment where 18% of parents from a minority ethnic background sustain employment compared to 19% for all parents.

The Scottish Government has identified a number of 'priority family groups' at risk of child poverty, further information can be found here: [Tackling child poverty priority families overview \(opens in a new window\)](#). Please also see supplementary Background and Methodology Report for further details on definitions and data comparisons.

Previous editions of this publication

Previous editions of this publication can be accessed via [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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 ([Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary - February 2020 \(opens in a new window\)](#)), and the final statistics for the Health & Work Support pilot were published 27 May 2020 ([Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary - May 2020 \(opens in a new window\)](#)).

Other services operate within Scotland, including those run by Local Authorities and third sector providers, and these are not included in this publication.

Coherence

Links to other relevant documents and published collections:

- [Fair Start Scotland Years Four and Five Evaluation Report \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Fair Start Scotland Year Three Evaluation Report \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Fair Start Scotland Year Two Evaluation Report \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Fair Start Scotland Year One Evaluation Report \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Fair Start Scotland: Year 4 Annual Report \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Fair Start Scotland: Year 4 Annual Report Accompanying Statistics \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [A range of Labour Market Statistics for Scotland are published by the Scottish Government: Labour market statistics \(opens in new window\)](#)

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Glossary of Acronyms

Table 3: Glossary of acronyms used in this publication

Acronym	Meaning
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ERI	Employment Recruitment Incentives
FSS	Fair Start Scotland
ID	Identification
ILM	Intermediate Labour Market
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LTHC	Long-term Health Condition
NC	National Certificate
NOLB	No One Left Behind
NPA	National Progression Award
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OSR	Office for Statistics Regulation
SETS	Scottish Employability Tracking System
SG	Scottish Government
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SMF	Shared Measurement Framework
UK	United Kingdom
WAS	Work Able Scotland
WFS	Work First Scotland

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