



## Economy And Labour Market

# Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: Statistical Summary for October to December 2023

## Main Points

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

- There have been 120,915 starts on either No One Left Behind or Fair Start Scotland (FSS) since April 2018 up to December 2023. In the most recent quarter, October to December 2023, there were 7,114 starts. This was an 11% decrease on the previous quarter and a 1% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.
- Official statistics in development for No One Left Behind show a total of 54,475 people started receiving support from April 2019 to December 2023. The number of people starting to receive support has increased each year from 2,677 in year 1 (2019/20) to 18,226 in year 4 (2022/23).
- In the most recent quarter, quarter 3 of year 5, 4,439 people started to receive support through No One Left Behind. This was an 11% decrease on the previous quarter but a 5% increase on the same quarter in the previous year.
- Of the 54,475 people receiving support on No One Left Behind, 17,242 (32%) have entered employment, while a further 7,934 (15%) entered further or higher education or training.
- There have been 66,440 starts to FSS since April 2018, including 6,134 re-joins which has been possible since April 2021. There were 2,675 starts in the most recent quarter, 11% lower than the previous quarter and 9% lower than the same quarter in 2022.
- For FSS, there were 1,104 job starts this quarter, 16% lower than the previous quarter and 4% lower than the same quarter in 2022. Overall, there has been 23,824 job starts since FSS launched.

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## About this publication

This is the 26<sup>th</sup> 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 December 2023), and,
- Official statistics covering FSS (April 2018 to December 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 and the [FSS section](#) 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 and the [No One Left Behind section](#) 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 - 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: [employabilitydata@gov.scot](mailto:employabilitydata@gov.scot). Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing: [regulation@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:regulation@statistics.gov.uk).

# No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland

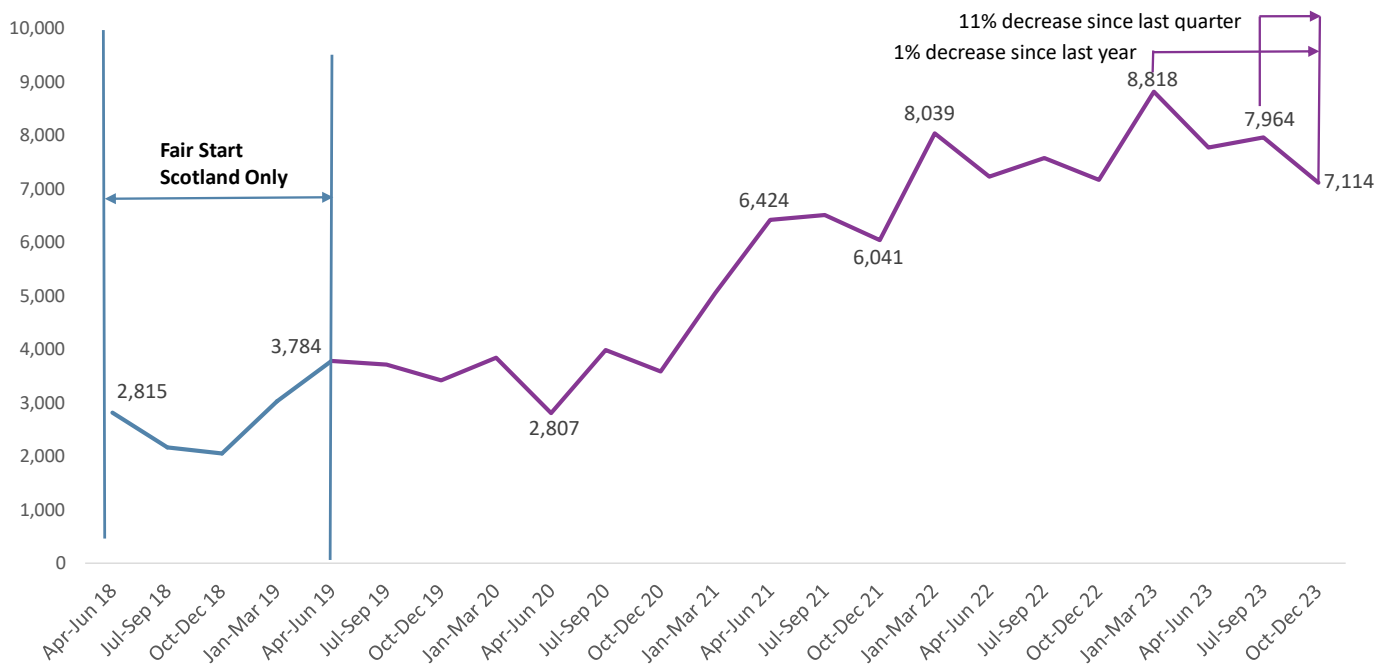
This section considers No One Left Behind and FSS together to give an indication of total demand for Scottish Government funded employability support over time. Both are distinct approaches to employability support, varying over time in support offered and groups targeted. It is also possible that people 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 120,915 starts on either No One Left Behind or FSS between April 2018 and December 2023. In the most recent quarter, October - December 2023, there were 7,114 starts across No One Left Behind and FSS, an 11% decrease on the previous quarter and a 1% 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 Dec 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 and subsequently 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 practices 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, which 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 54,475 people started receiving support from April 2019 to December 2023. The number of people receiving support has increased over time from 2,677 in year 1 (2019/20) to 18,226 in year 4 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter (October – December 2023) 4,439 people started to receive support.

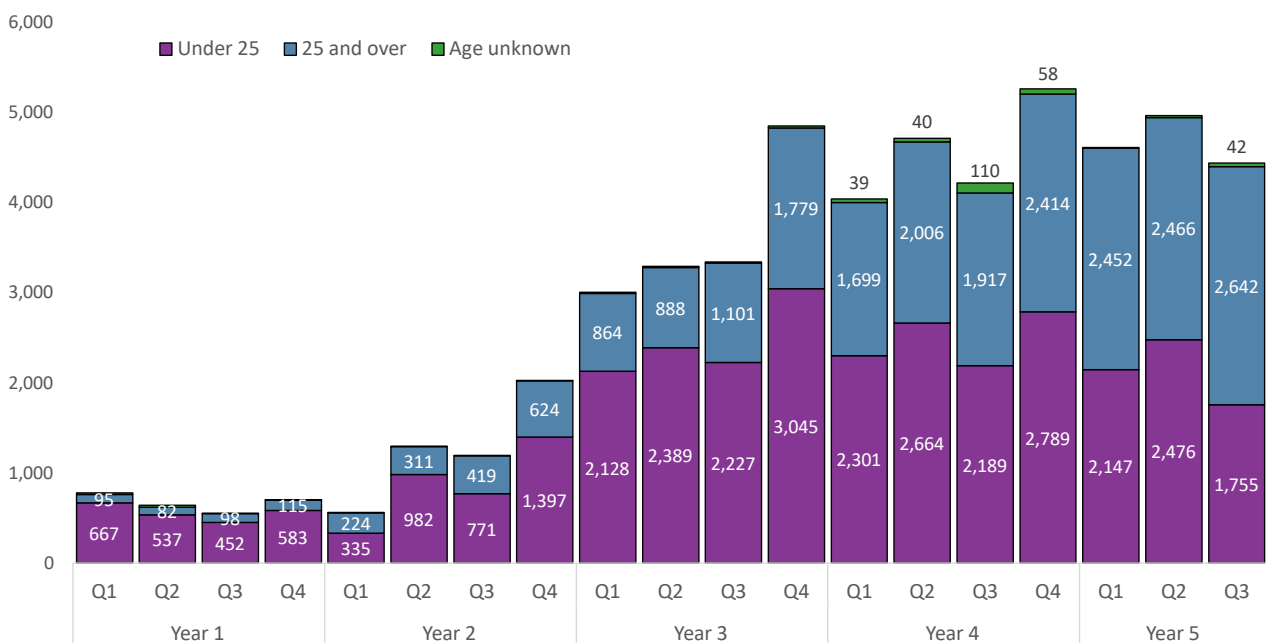
### Age

Most people supported through No One Left Behind were aged under 25 (58%; 31,834). Of these, 22,948 (72%) were aged 15 to 19 and 8,886 (28%) were aged 20 to 24. The remaining 22,196 (41%) participants were aged 25 and over, and of these; 7,898 (36%) were aged 25 to 34, 9,670 (44%) aged 35 to 49 while only 4,628 (21%) were aged 50 or over. Age was unknown for 1% (445) 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, people aged under 25 represented 40% of participants and people aged 25 and over represented 60% of participants, the highest proportion in a single quarter.

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**  
**Participants starting No One Left Behind, by age and quarter, Apr 2019 to Dec 2023 (age unknown less than 30 are not labelled)**



## **Sex**

Most people starting on No One Left behind were male (55%; 29,695), while the remaining 24,368 (45%) were female. Sex was unknown for 1% (412) of participants. Overall the difference in sex has remained relatively stable over time. However, in the most recent quarter, there were more female participants (2,290; 52%) than male (2,104; 47%).

Sex differences by age are more varied. For the middle age groups, 25 to 34 and 35 to 49, females account for the highest proportion of participants, 56% and 60%, 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022. This question is voluntary.

A total of 299 people have responded yes to the question on trans status. Of these, 119 identified as a trans man, 108 as a non-binary person, 41 as a trans woman, with the remaining 31 people choosing the “other” option.

## **Ethnicity**

Overall, people from a minority ethnic background have accounted for 8% (4,198) 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 (October - December 2023), the proportion was 14%.

There are age differences. The proportion of people aged 25 and over from a minority ethnic background is 13%, 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 was reported for the first time in February 2024. Overall, 11,403 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). Since the introduction of the new template, the proportion of participants reporting a LTHC has ranged from 38 – 41%.

Of those participants with a LTHC, over half (6,361; 56%) reported one condition, while a further 2,953 (26%) reported two conditions and 2,089 (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 (October – December 2023), 1,674 (38%) of participants reported a LTHC, with 23% of all participants reporting a mental health condition, 10% reporting a long-term illness, disease or condition and 8% reporting a learning difficulty.



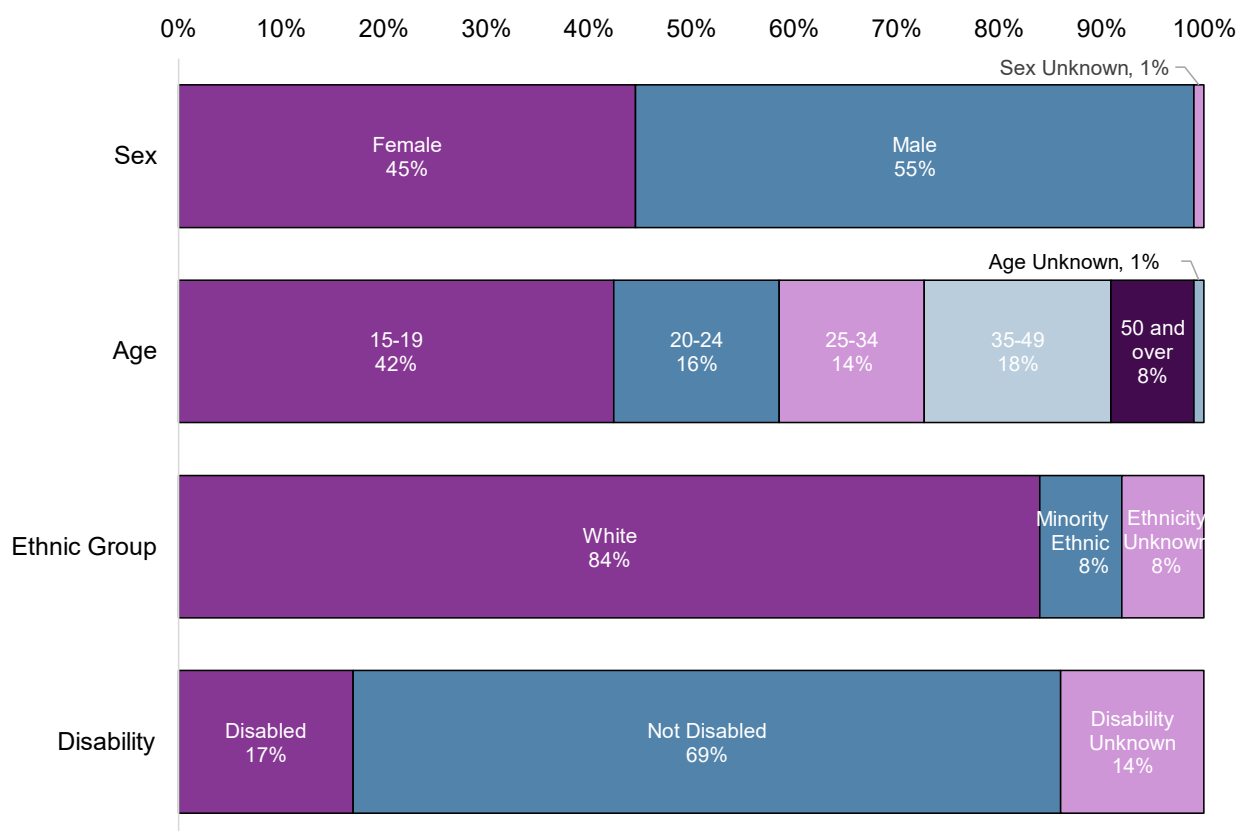
## Disability

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 (October - December 2023), the proportion was 25%, the largest 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 Dec 2023**



## Barriers

Prior to the new data template, barriers was a single variable with multiple options. While more than one barrier to employment could be chosen, often only the most significant barrier was selected. This means data prior to October 2022 has a significant number of unknowns. Following the introduction of the new data template, all barriers were presented as stand-alone compulsory variables. This has significantly 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, 279 people (6%) reported a criminal conviction, while 3,965 (89%) reported no criminal conviction. This information was unknown for 195

people (4%). The proportion of people reporting a criminal conviction ranged between 6 and 7% since the introduction of the new data template.

### **Armed Forces Veteran**

Data on armed forces veterans were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 47 people (1%) reported being an armed forces veteran, while 4,270 (96%) reported not being an armed forces veteran. This information was unknown for 122 people (3%). 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 were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 192 people (4%) reported homelessness, while 4,128 (93%) did not report homelessness. This information was unknown for 119 people (3%). The proportion of people reporting homelessness has been consistently around 3 – 4% since the introduction of the new data template.

### **Substance Related Conditions**

Data on participants with substance related conditions were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 115 people (3%) reported a substance related condition, while 4,177 (94%) did not report a substance related condition. This information was unknown for 147 people (3%). The proportion of people reporting a substance related condition has consistently been 3% since the introduction of the new data template.

### **No or Limited Work Experience**

Data on participants with no or limited work experience were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 1,581 people (36%) reported having no or limited work experience, while 2,744 (62%) did not report having no or limited work experience. This information was unknown for 114 people (3%). The proportion of people reporting having no or limited work experience has ranged from 36 – 43% since the introduction of the new data template.

### **Asylum Seekers**

Data on asylum seekers were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 34 people (1%) reported being an asylum seeker, while 4,289 (97%) did not report being an asylum seeker. This information was unknown for 116 people (3%). 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 were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 186 people (4%) reported being a refugee, while 4,144 (93%) did not report being a refugee. This information was unknown for 109 people (2%). The proportion of people reporting being a refugee has ranged from 4 – 6% since the introduction of the new data template.

### **Child Care**

Data on participants with childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 974 people (22%) reported childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment, while 3,032 (68%) did not. This information was unknown for 433 people (10%). The proportion of people reporting childcare responsibilities that are a barrier to employment has ranged from 14 – 22% since the introduction of the new data template.

## **Transport**

Data on transport as a barrier were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 897 people (20%) reported transport as a barrier, while 3,331 (75%) did not report transport as a barrier. This information was unknown for 211 people (5%). The proportion of people reporting transport as a barrier has ranged from 15 – 20% since the introduction of the new data template.

## **Care Experienced**

Data on participants that are care experienced were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 389 people (9%) reported being care experienced, while 3,748 (84%) did not report being care experienced. This information was unknown for 302 people (7%). The proportion of people reporting being care experienced has ranged from 7 – 9% since the introduction of the new data template.

## **Caring Responsibilities**

Data on participants with caring responsibilities were reported for the first time in February 2024. In the most recent quarter, 669 people (15%) reported having caring responsibilities, while 3,486 (79%) did not report having caring responsibilities. This information was unknown for 284 people (6%). The proportion of people reporting having caring responsibilities has ranged from 12 – 15% 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 (30,316; 56%), while a further 11,962 (22%) were economically inactive and 5,921 (11%) were employed when starting. There have been 3,415 (6%) school pupils joining No One Left Behind.

In the most recent quarter, 61% of participants were unemployed at start date, 15% economically inactive and 16% in employment. This represents the largest proportion of participants employed at start date in a single quarter and the lowest for economically inactive participants.

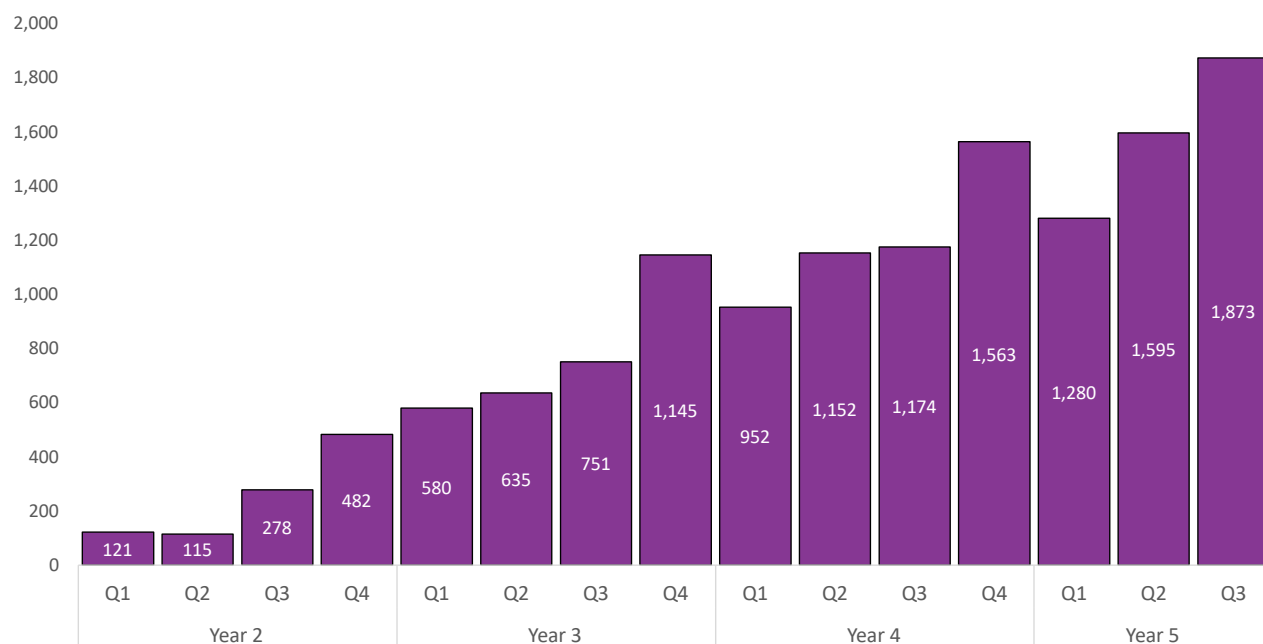
Further information is available for those in employment at start date. While most No One Left Behind participants are male, the majority of the 5,921 participants in employment at start date are female (3,565; 60%). Participants employed at start date also tend to be older than those overall, with 1,934 (33%) aged 35 to 49 and 1,373 (23%) aged 25 to 34.

## **Parents**

Parents are a subgroup of all participants supported during the period April 2020 to December 2023 (year 2 onwards). Of the 51,798 people who started to receive support from year 2, 13,696 (26%) were parents. The number of parents has generally increased reaching a high of 1,873 (42%) parents in the most recent October – December 2023 quarter.

**Figure 4: The number of parents starting to receive support through No One Left Behind has generally been increasing**

**Parents Receiving No One Left Behind Support, by Quarter, Apr 2020 to Dec 2023**



### Age

Most parents are aged 25 and over (87%; 11,904), with the majority in the 35 to 49 years age group (47%; 6,500) and the lowest proportion in the youngest (15 to 19 year olds; 3%; 397) and oldest (50 and over; 8%; 1,076) age groups.

### Sex

While female participants account for a lower proportion of all participants (45%), they account for a majority of the parent subgroup (73%; 10,027 female). Females have accounted for a significantly higher proportion of parents across the period. However, the proportion of male parents accessing support has generally increased over time accounting for 17% of parents receiving support in April - June 2020 and increasing to 25% in the latest quarter.

### Ethnicity

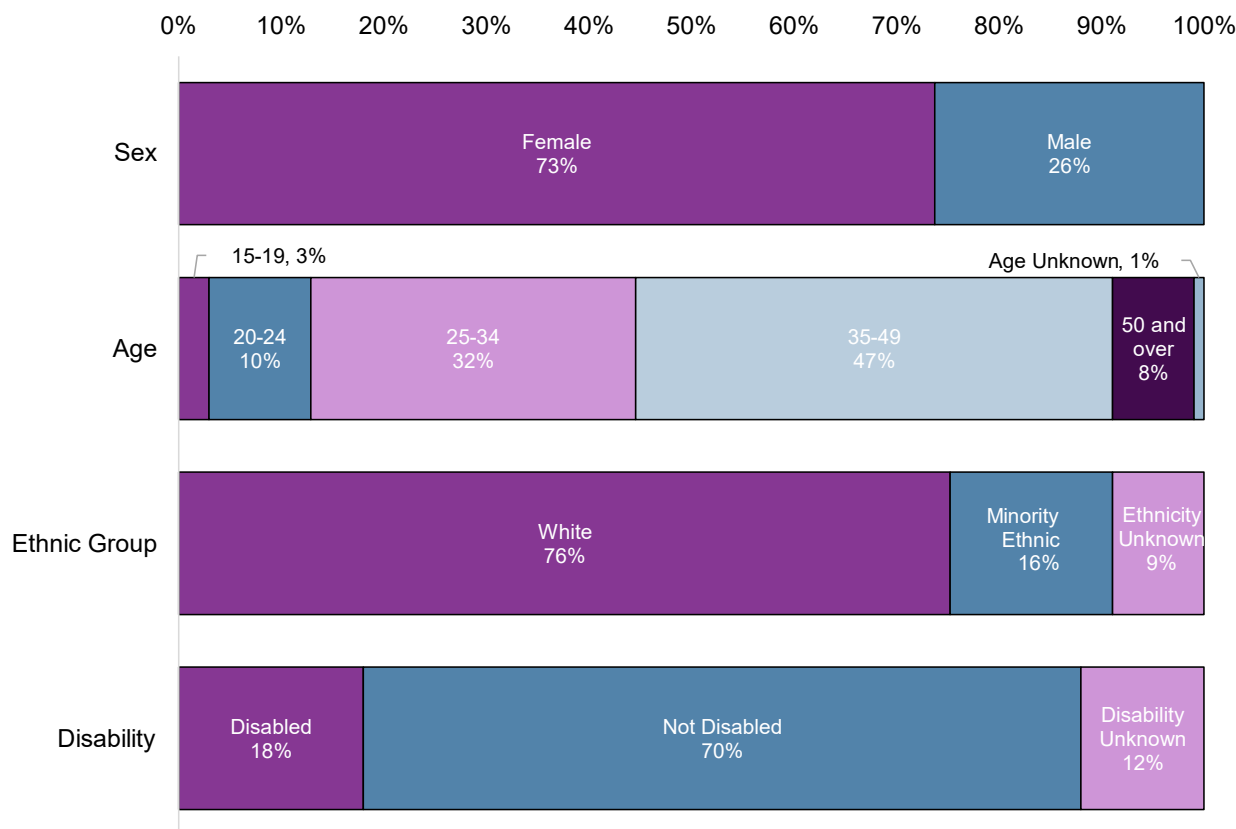
Of parents accessing No One Left Behind support, 16% (2,123) were from a minority ethnic background, while this was true for 19% (364) of parents in the most recent quarter. Proportions have fluctuated across time periods and caution is required as some percentages are based on very small numbers and the proportion of unknowns can vary across quarters.

### Disability

Overall, 18% (2,457) of parents reported having a disability. The proportion of parents reporting a disability has increased over time from 11% in year 2 (2020/21) to 17% in year 4 (2022/23). It was 23% 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 Dec 2023**



### Priority Family Groups

There were 1,873 parents in the most recent quarter (October - December 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):

- 436 (23%) were disabled,
- 996 (53%) were lone parents,
- 144 (8%) were parents aged under 25,
- 427 (23%) were parents with three or more children,
- 138 (7%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,
- 387 (21%) 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 13,696 parents receiving support since year 2:

- 2,457 (18%) were disabled,
- 7,917 (58%) were lone parents,
- 1,716 (13%) were parents aged under 25,
- 3,172 (23%) were parents with three or more children,
- 1,096 (8%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,

- 1,936 (14%) 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.

## Local Authority Breakdowns

Of the 54,475 participants being supported through No One Left Behind, the highest proportion (12% 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 North Lanarkshire (6%). The lowest proportion of participants are often being supported in those Local Authority areas with the 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 (58%). However, this does vary by Local Authority area. Aberdeen City (58%), Inverclyde (56%), Aberdeenshire (54%) and West Dunbartonshire (51%) have a higher proportion of participants aged 25 and over. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (83%), East Ayrshire (72%) and West Lothian (71%) have the highest proportion of participants aged under 25.

Most participants supported through No One Left Behind are male (55%). However, there are more female participants in eight Local Authority areas, with the highest proportion in East Renfrewshire (57%) and Scottish Borders (56%).

Participants from a minority ethnic background represent 8% of all participants. The City of Edinburgh has the highest proportion (26%) of participants from a minority ethnic background, followed by East Renfrewshire (22%) and Glasgow City (14%).

Overall, 17% of participants supported through No One Left Behind have a disability. This varies by Local Authority. Clackmannanshire have the highest proportion (29%), followed by North Ayrshire (28%) and South Ayrshire (27%). Dundee City (3%) and Moray (3%) have the lowest proportion of participants with a disability.

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 54,475 people supported under the No One Left Behind approach between April 2019 and December 2023, 17,242 people (32%) entered employment. Of those that entered employment; 5,315 people (31%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 1,957 people (11%) started modern apprenticeships and 297 people (2%) entered self-employment.

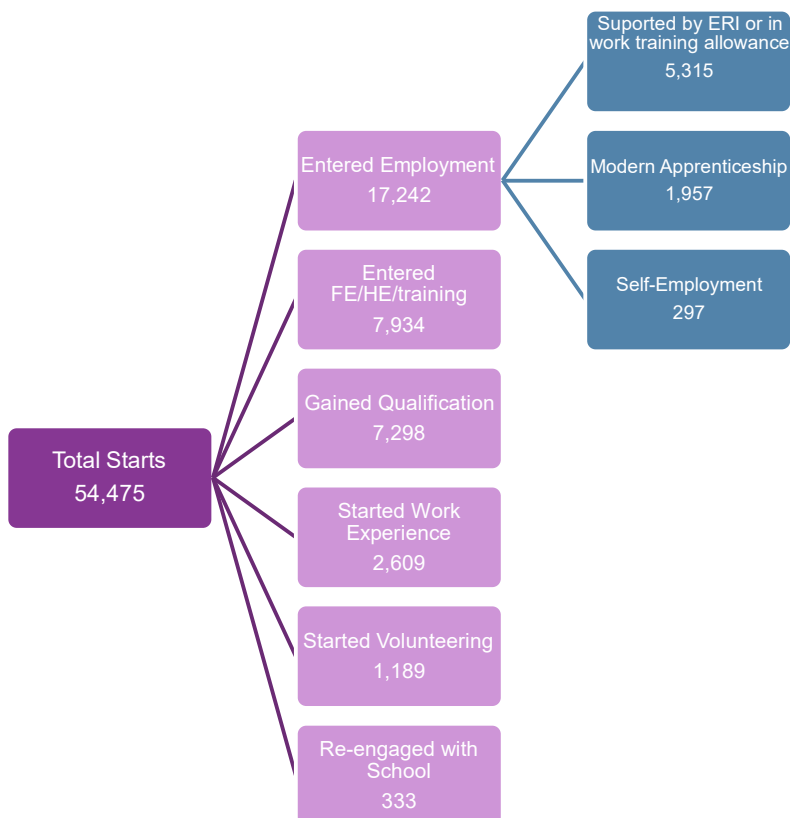
Data on the number of people in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks was reported for the first time in October 2023. Of the 17,242 people that entered employment, 6,203 (36%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 6,153 (36%) at 13 weeks, 5,411 (31%) at 26 weeks, and 3,036 (18%) at 52 weeks after entering employment.

Additionally, 7,934 (15%) people were supported entering further or higher education or training, 7,298 people (13%) gained a qualification, 2,609 people (5%) started work experience opportunities, 1,189 people (2%) started volunteering and 333 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 December 2023



## Parents

Please note, the following statistics on parents are from year 2 (April 2020) onwards. Of the 13,696 parents supported under the No One Left Behind approach, 3,583 (26%) entered employment. Of those; 430 (12%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 73 (2%) started modern apprenticeships and 164 (5%) entered self-employment.

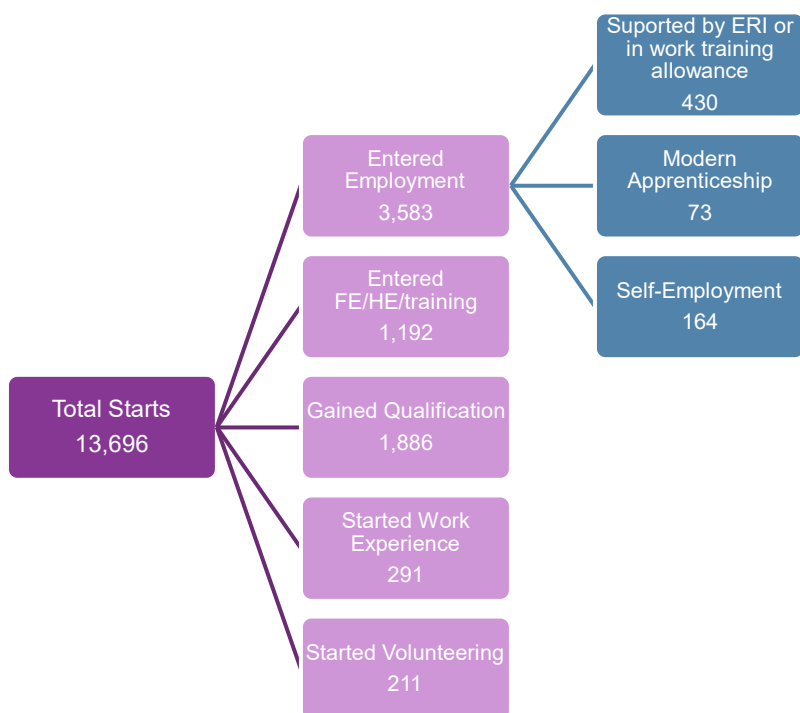
Data on parents in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks were reported for the first time in February 2024. Of the 3,583 parents that entered employment, 1,556 (43%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 1,524 (43%) at 13 weeks, 1,275 (36%) at 26 weeks, and 574 (16%) at 52 weeks.

Additionally, 1,192 parents were supported (9%) entering further or higher education or training, 1,886 (14%) gained a qualification, 291 (2%) started work experience and 211 (2%) 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 December 2023



## Age

A total of 11,349 people aged under 25 entered employment. This is 36% of all under 25 participants. For those aged 25 and over, 5,841 entered employment. This is 26% of all participants aged 25 and over.

Of those people aged under 25 entering employment, 4,282 (38%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, while this was the case for 1,023 (18%) of those aged 25 and over. A higher proportion of people entering employment aged under 25 also started a modern apprenticeship (1,897; 17%) than for those aged 25 and over (57; 1%). The proportion of



people aged 25 or over that entered self-employment (245; 4%) was higher than the proportion of those aged under 25 (50; less than 1%).

There was a little difference in the proportion of those under 25 gaining a qualification (4,447; 14%) compared to those 25 and over (2,830; 13%) but those under 25 were more likely to enter full time or higher education or training (6,117, 19%) than those in the older age group (1,780; 8%).

## Sex

A total of 7,369 (30%) female participants entered employment compared to 9,785 (33%) male participants. Of those female participants entering employment, 2,017 (27%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, while this was the case for 3,271 (33%) of male participants. A similar proportion of female participants entering employment started a modern apprenticeship (757; 10%) compared to male participants (1193; 12%).

There was also a similar proportion of female participants gaining a qualification (3,028; 12%) compared to male participants (4,229; 14%) and female participants entering full time or higher education or training (3,539, 15%) compared to male participants (4,229; 15%).

## Ethnicity

A total of 962 (23%) participants from a minority ethnic background entered employment compared to 15,347 (33%) white participants. A lower proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background entering employment were supported by a subsidy to do so (139; 14%) compared to white participants (4,847; 32%). A lower proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background entering employment started a modern apprenticeship (60; 6%) compared to white participants (1,744; 11%), while proportions were similar for entering self-employment (2% for both groups).

There was a similar proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background gaining a qualification (585; 14%) compared to white participants (6,276; 14%) and participants from a minority ethnic background entering full time or higher education or training (583, 14%) compared to white participants (6,582; 14%).

## Disability

A total of 2,125 (22%) participants with a disability entered employment compared to 13,334 (36%) of participants without a disability. Of those participants with a disability entering employment, 531 (25%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, compared to 4,327 (32%) of those without a disability. A lower proportion of disabled participants started a modern apprenticeship (205; 10%) compared to participants without a disability (1,580; 12%).

A similar proportion of disabled participants gained a qualification (1,238; 13%) compared to participants without a disability (5,217; 14%) and disabled participants entering full time or higher education or training (1,310, 14%) compared to participants without a disability (5,515; 15%).

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.

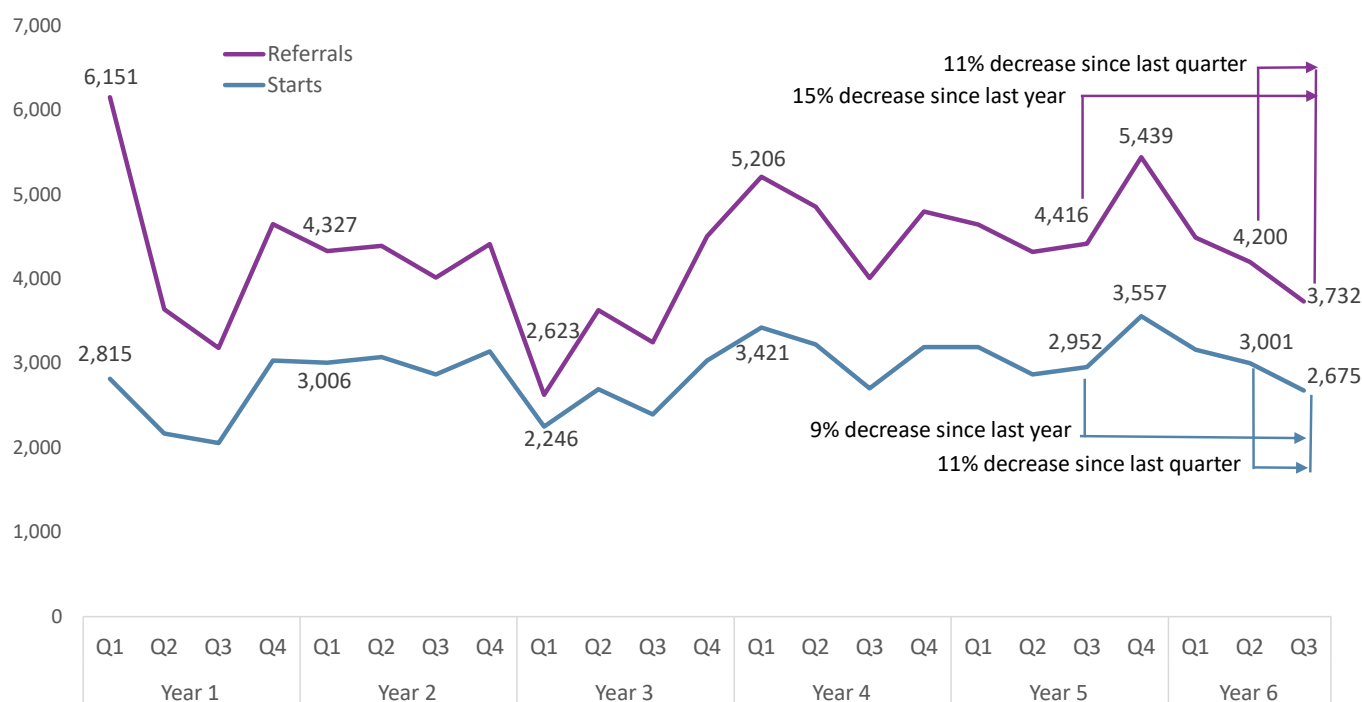
## How many FSS referrals and starts have there been?

There were 98,850 referrals to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of December 2023. Of the total referrals to FSS, 66,440 started receiving employability support, including 6,134 re-joins to the service.

In the most recent quarter, referrals decreased by 11% from 4,200 last quarter to 3,732 this quarter. Compared to the equivalent quarter in 2022, referrals are 15% lower. Starts have decreased by 11% from 3,001 last quarter to 2,675 this quarter. This is 9% lower 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, Apr 2018 to Dec 2023**



## Who are the people that have joined FSS?

Of 66,440 FSS starts, 60,306 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 60,306 people when they first joined FSS.

### Sex

Most people joining FSS are male (62%; 37,237) while 38% (22,915) 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 (October - December 2023), 35% of participants were female.

### Age

The most common age group of people joining FSS is 35 to 49 years (29%; 17,586), followed by 25 to 34 year olds (25%; 15,008). The lowest proportion is the 16 to 24 years old age group (20%; 11,954).

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 21%. 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 23%.

### Ethnicity

Overall, 8% (4,598) of people joining FSS were from a minority ethnic background and 74% (44,713) were white with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 18% (10,995) of participants. In the most recent quarter, 16% of participants were from a minority ethnic

background and 73% were white. Each quarter in year 6 (2023/24) has had the joint 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 11% 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 conditions (LTHC) and ability to carry out activities. Overall, 44% (26,392) of FSS participants have a disability compared to 48% (29,004) who do not. This was unknown for the remaining 8% (4,910) 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 6,407 people (11%) joining FSS that reported having a conviction. In year 4 (2021/22) this peaked at 13% but reached a low of 8% in year 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 191 people (9%) reported having a conviction.

### **Benefit Claimants**

The majority of people (78%; 47,194) 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, 1,616 (75%) people reported claiming benefits. This continues a quarterly decrease since October – December 2022.

### **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 (36%; 21,970) joining FSS have been unemployed for 24 months or more. A similar proportion have been unemployed for less than 6 months (18%; 11,154), between 6 – 12 months (17%; 10,073) and 12 – 24 months (15%; 9,266). This information is unknown for the remaining participants (13%; 7,840). In the most recent quarter, 666 people (31%) reported being unemployed for 24 months or more.

### **Deprivation**

There has been 21,267 people (35%) joining FSS who lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. The highest proportion, 38%, was in year 1 (2018/19) and the lowest proportion, 33%, in year 3 (2020/21) and year 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 726 people (34%) lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

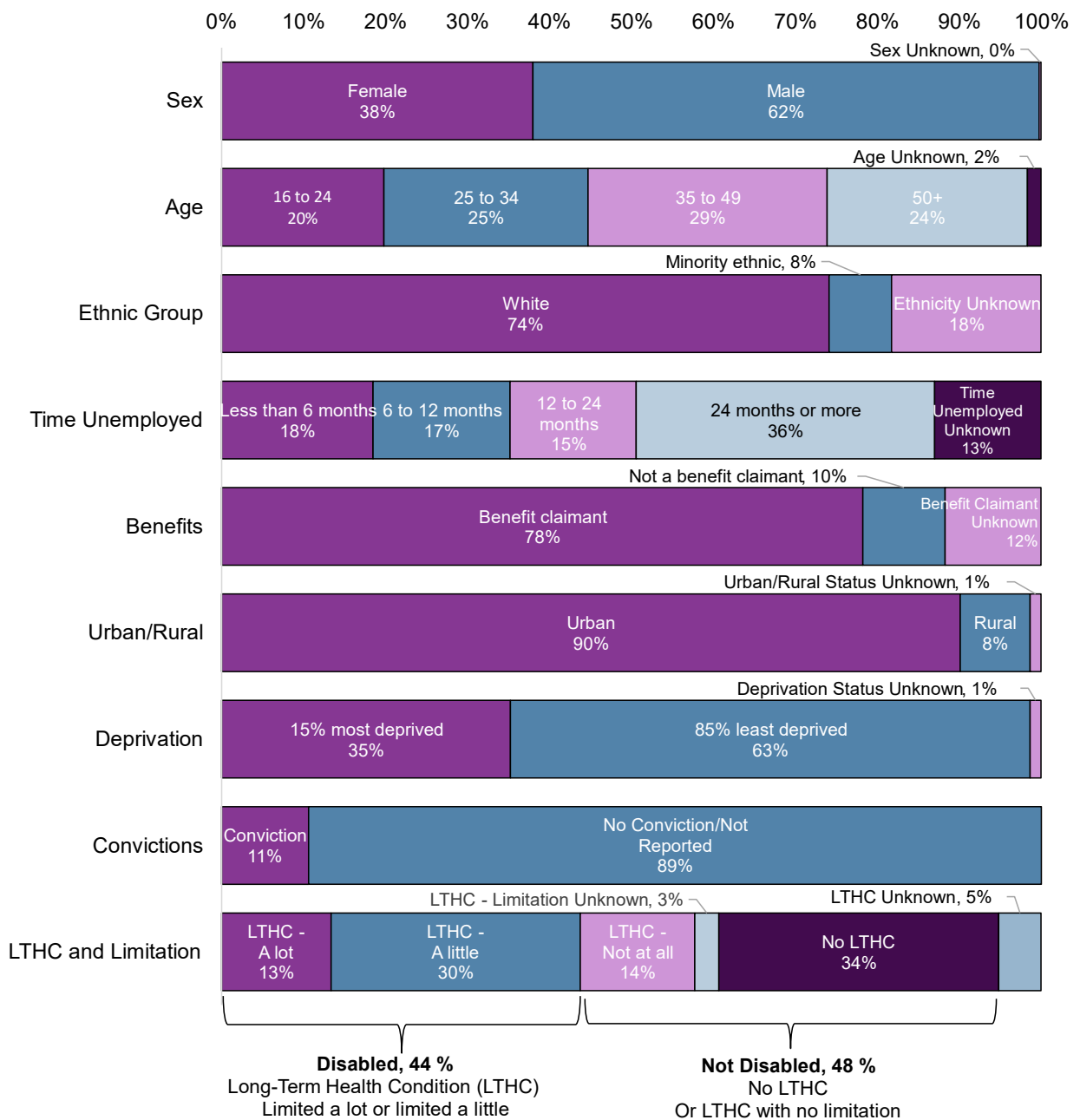
## Urban/Rural

People living in rural areas may be more limited for job opportunities compared to those living in urban areas. There has been 5,125 people (8%) joining FSS who live in a rural area, while 54,356 people (90%) live in an urban area. This has remained consistent across years with the highest proportion (91%) in years 1 (2018/19) and 4 (2021/22) and the lowest proportion (88%) in year 3 (2020/21). In the most recent quarter, 189 people (9%) reported living in a rural area. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

See supplementary Background and Methodology Report for more detail on impact of the 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 Dec 2023**



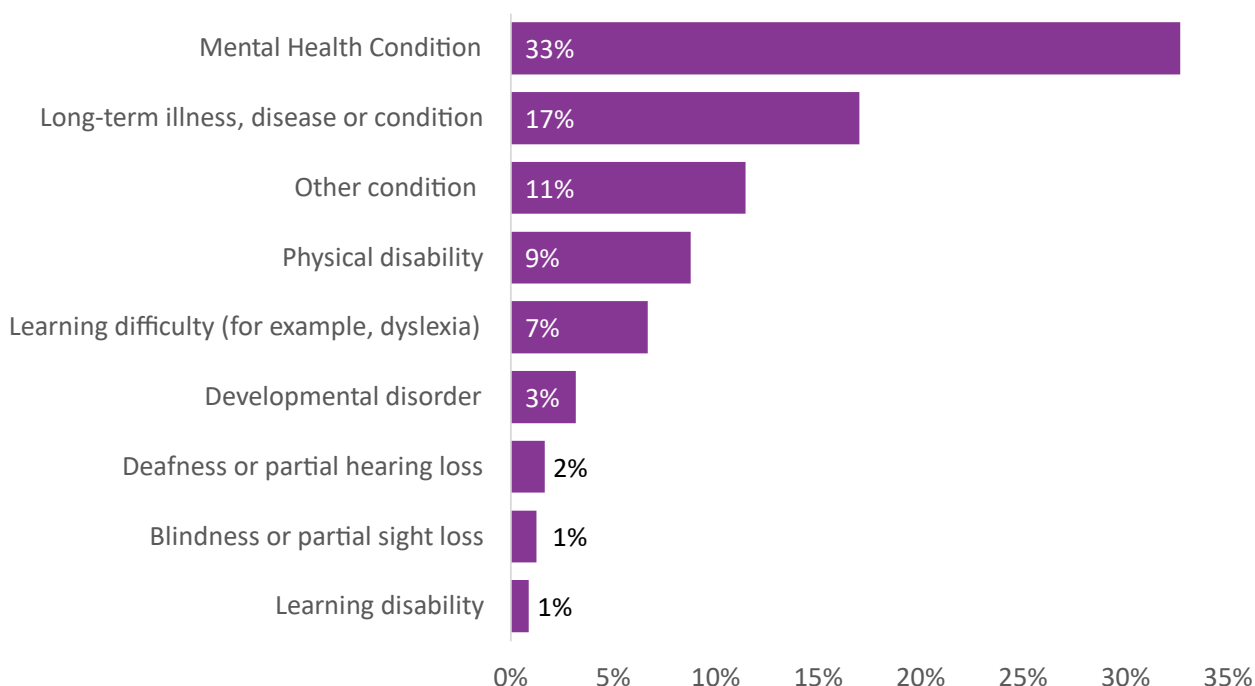
## Long-Term Health Condition

Overall, 61% (36,596) of people joining FSS reported a LTHC, 34% (20,573) reported no LTHC, with 5% (3,137) unknown. In the most recent quarter, 1,179 people (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%; 19,702), followed by a long-term illness, disease or condition (17%; 10,258).

### 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, Apr 2018 to Dec 2023



## Parents

Annual data on parents was first published in May 2021. Quarterly parent data for year 4 was published for the first time in the previous 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 13,202 were parents, while there has been 14,490 total parent starts on the service since its launch in April 2018, including re-joins.

In the latest quarter, of the 693 parent starts on FSS there were 587 people who were parents accessing FSS support for the first time. These 587 parents represented 27% of all 2,156 people accessing FSS support for the first time in this quarter. This is similar to 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 587 parents accessing support for the first time this quarter:

- 44% were disabled (38% overall),
- 30% were lone parents (43% overall),
- 2% were mothers aged under 25 (3% overall),
- 22% were parents with three or more children (18% overall),
- 38% had a child aged under 12 months (27% overall), and,
- 20% 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 31,617 early leavers from the 66,440 FSS starts (including 6,134 re-joins). As time passes, there is a more complete picture of the proportion of starts that stay on FSS or leave early.

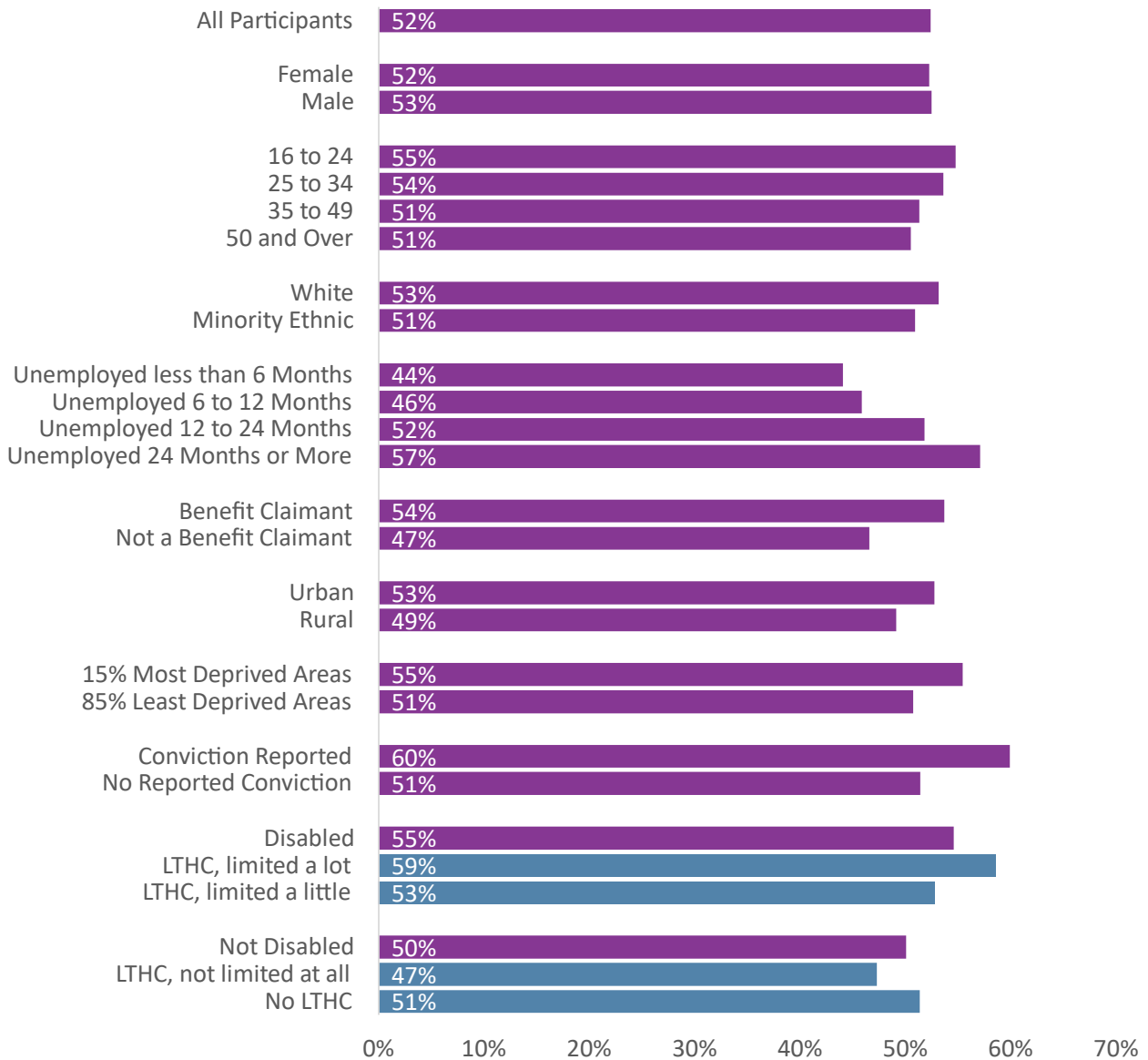
Where we have a complete picture, based on participants with a start date one year ago or longer, 28,327 (52%) of starts have left early. This rate is based on a cohort of 54,046 starting between the period April 2018 and December 2022 (including 3,899 re-joins).

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 (59%); 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 (51%) (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 (55%) 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 December 2022 (Disability is classified as those with a 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 23,824 job starts in total from the 66,440 FSS starts, including the 6,134 re-joins to the service, since the launch of FSS. Of these job starts, so far 16,664 have sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 12,890 at least 6 months (26 weeks), and 8,825 at least 12 months (52 weeks), as of December 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 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Job Starts</b>           | 12 month support             | April 2018 to December 2022        | 54,046       | 3,899    |
| <b>3 month job outcome</b>  | 12 month support + 3 months  | April 2018 to September 2022       | 51,094       | 3,463    |
| <b>6 month job outcome</b>  | 12 month support + 6 months  | April 2018 to June 2022            | 48,228       | 3,017    |
| <b>12 month job outcome</b> | 12 month support + 12 months | April 2018 to December 2021        | 41,850       | 1,864    |

For those starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 37% (20,121 of 54,046) have entered employment, 27% have sustained employment for 3 months (13,942 out of 51,094), 22% have sustained employment for 6 months (10,763 out of 48,228) and 18% have sustained employment for 12 months (7,362 out of 41,850).

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 (13,942 out of 18,941 job starts up to September 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 (10,763 out of 13,116 job starts up to June 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 (7,362 out of 9,384 job starts up to December 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, 29% of female starts sustain employment for 3 months compared with 27% of male starts, while 20% of female starts sustain employment for 12 months compared to 16% 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), 33% 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, 40% of starts from a minority ethnic background enter employment compared to 37% 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.

## **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. While 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 32% for those not claiming a benefit.

## **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.

## **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. For 12 month sustained employment, this was 19% and 16%, respectively.

## Urban/Rural

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

## How many parent starts on FSS entered and sustained employment?

For the 14,490 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 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Job Starts</b>           | 12 month support             | April 2018 to December 2022        | 11,255           | 854             |
| <b>3 month job outcome</b>  | 12 month support + 3 months  | April 2018 to September 2022       | 10,441           | 763             |
| <b>6 month job outcome</b>  | 12 month support + 6 months  | April 2018 to June 2022            | 9,693            | 662             |
| <b>12 month job outcome</b> | 12 month support + 12 months | April 2018 to December 2021        | 8,052            | 418             |

For those parent starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 38% (4,247 of 11,255) have entered employment, 28% have sustained employment for 3 months (2,951 out of 10,441), 23% have sustained employment for 6 months (2,253 out of 9,693) and 19% have sustained for 12 months (1,492 out of 8,052). 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, 15% 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 (35%) than for all parents (38%). This remains the case for sustained employment. For example, 12% 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 (37%) 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, 15% 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**

| <b>Acronym</b> | <b>Meaning</b>                         |
|----------------|--|
| 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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**Next Update:** July 2024