

## Medr statistics

### Quality and Methodology: Learner outcome measures for apprenticeships and adult community learning

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**Summary:** **Statistics on the success and completion of apprenticeships and adult community learning activities by level of study, type of learning aim, sector, and learner characteristics**

**Theme:** Apprenticeships, Adult Community Learning

**Source:** Lifelong Learning Record Wales (LLWR)



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## What has changed

If you have any feedback on these changes, please contact [statistics@medr.cymru](mailto:statistics@medr.cymru).

### StatsWales

The StatsWales tables have been moved from the [old StatsWales site](#) to the [new site](#).

We have taken the opportunity to simplify and standardise the number of tables available.

We have increased the number of variables within each table. Some tables that were in the accompanying spreadsheet are now covered by StatsWales tables and have been removed from the spreadsheet.

If you need data that is no longer available to you, please contact [statistics@medr.cymru](mailto:statistics@medr.cymru) and we will supply you with the data you need. We can also consider adding any tables that are missing.

### Data changes

Data has been added for:

- Outcomes by disability status
- Outcomes by SEN/ALN status

Data has been modified for:

- Deprivation now uses quintiles instead of deciles

### Suspension of performance measures in 2019/20 and 2020/21

During the first two years of the pandemic, apprenticeship learning took place, but some apprentices were affected by furlough and redundancies. For both types of provision some assessments were cancelled, delayed or adapted.

Due to the changes in how grades were awarded in 2020 and the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic, the Welsh Government did not produce any of its usual performance measures for schools or post-16 learning in 2019/20 or 2020/21.

Statistics were calculated using new methods to assess how learners' outcomes were affected during the pandemic for all types of post-16 learning. These included new statistics on the length of delay in completing learning and on the choices of Year 11 learners going into post-16 learning. They were reported in the [Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(Covid-19\) pandemic](#) reports. The statistics in the pandemic reports should not be compared with the learner outcome measures reported in this release.

## Improvement to adult community learning statistics

Adult community learning data was postponed last year due to a provider reporting substantial errors in their data submitted to the Lifelong Learning Record Wales (LLWR) for 2023/24.

We investigated whether the issue raised may affect other local authorities. The number of learning activities delivered by each provider was compared to funding levels, and local authorities with anomalous patterns were approached. No issues were found.

The data was corrected for 2023/24, and no similar patterns were identified in 2024/25.

Adult Community Learning is partially funded by the Community Learning Grant. Historically the grant has been a relatively small source of funding. Unlike other types of learning, the LLWR data collection is not used for allocating or validating the learning delivered by this grant. As a result, there is more potential for data quality issues that would not affect further education or work-based learning.

As we move forward, the way ACL funding is monitored will exclusively depend on the data that providers submit through the LLWR system. This is a significant shift: until now, LLWR data has mainly been used for performance measures reporting, but from 2026/27 onwards it will directly influence how funding is reported and audited at end of year.

The period between April 2025 and July 2026 acts as a transition period toward this.

Some changes have already begun, including improvements to how data is collected and checked, with detailed guidance published in the ACL programme specification document. Further updates will continue over the next year to make the system more accurate and consistent. The Community Learning Grant funding code is being developed as a direct counterpart to the FE funding code for part-time provision.

The funding allocation has also been mapped to be over the academic year period, rather than over the financial year as before, to further align the Community Learning Grant to the overall post-16 part-time delivery.

Because future reclaim will rely on the LLWR information submitted, providers have a much stronger incentive to ensure their data is complete, correct, and submitted on time.

The closer the link between data and funding, the more important it becomes for everyone to get the data right – and so we expect overall data quality will improve.

# Context

## General

This statistical release summarises data on the success and completion of apprenticeships and adult community learning activities by level of study, type of learning aim, sector, and learner characteristics.

The release contains information on Further Education (FE) institutions, Work-based Learning (WBL) providers and local authority community learning but excluding Higher Education (HE) institutions, the Learn Welsh sector and school sixth forms.

## Policy context

This release and other outputs from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) data underlying it play a role in supporting decision making processes in relation to:

- Post-16 [Planning and Funding Framework](#). Programmes rather than qualifications are at the core of the funding framework with each programme having a defined purpose and outcome against which it will be monitored.
- The [Medr Strategic plan 2025 to 2030](#) sets out our proposed response to the Welsh Government's [statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation](#), issued on 28 February 2024. It also takes account of the legislative requirements placed on us in the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#), as well as other legislation that places duties on public bodies in Wales.
- The commitment to the delivery of apprenticeships is set out in the [Programme for Government](#), which contains a commitment to create 100,000 new all-age apprenticeships.

## Data source

### Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

The [Lifelong Learning Wales Record](#) is the data collection system employed by the Welsh Government to enable FE, WBL and local authority community learning providers to submit on-line individualised data on learners, their learning programmes, activities and awards.

Welsh Government systems load the data on to a database to facilitate analysis. The database is then transferred to Medr for processing and analysing. Further information on LLWR including user support manuals can be found on the [Medr website](#).

The data used in these statistics is extracted from the LLWR on the Thursday of the third full week of December.

The primary purpose of the LLWR is to provide FE/WBL/local authority community learning data to facilitate the planning and funding of learning delivery. The LLWR data are also a basis for monitoring of performance and outcomes, informing strategy and development and the provision of statistics on FE/WBL/local authority community learning in Wales.

### Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

The PLASC is an annual collection of pupil and school level data. It is provided by all maintained schools in Wales in January each year.

### Matched Education Dataset (MED)

The MED links datasets to trace a learner's progression through the education system in Wales. It matches records going back to 2010/11. It is updated annually.

The PLASC and MED are used to match learners to their free school meals history during secondary school.

## Definitions and methods

### Academic Year

The academic year is 1 August to 31 July.

### Age

A learner's age is calculated from the 31 August in the academic year they started learning.

### Apprenticeship/apprenticeship framework

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. In Wales an apprentice will follow an approved apprenticeship framework, which includes a set of mandatory qualifications. The framework ensures an apprentice has the relevant knowledge, skills, and qualifications.

### Attainment rate

The attainment rate is the percentage of completed activities where the qualification was achieved.

### Completion

Completion is the number of activities or apprenticeship programmes that are finished, whether or not the qualification or framework was achieved.

### Early dropouts

Learners are defined as early dropouts if they:

- end their learning within 8 weeks of their start date
- and did not complete that learning
- and the learning had an expected length of 24 weeks or greater

Early dropouts are excluded from learner outcomes measures.

### Ethnic background

Ethnic categories are presented according to the [Government Analysis Function harmonised standards](#). The information is self-reported by the learner.

### Free School Meals

Learners are eligible for free school meals if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments, or are on universal credit. Learners are only recorded as eligible if they have applied for free school meals to their local authority. A learner is defined in this report as "ever eligible for Free School Meals" if they were eligible for free school meals at any point during secondary school in Wales. If they were not eligible in any year of secondary school in Wales they are described as 'never eligible for Free

School Meals'. Learners who could not be matched to a secondary school record in Wales are categorised as Free School Meals eligibility unknown.

### **Home neighbourhood**

The small area called the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) which contains the learner's address.

### **Learning activity**

Learning activities refer to a specific qualification pursued by a learner, for example, an A level or Essential Skill.

### **Programme**

A programme is a collection of learning activities that a learner will study. For example, an apprenticeship programme may include several supporting learning activities.

### **Success rate**

The success rate is the percentage of assessable activities or apprenticeship programmes ended (completed or withdrawn) that were achieved.

### **White unknown (detailed ethnic category)**

Before 2019/20, there was only an overall "White" category for learners with White background. Some learners in this report were recorded under this system, and have been listed as "White unknown" in these statistics.

## Rounding

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and there may be apparent slight discrepancies between the sum of the constituent items and the total. Percentages are rounded to the nearest digit.

Percentages are also calculated using the unrounded figures; therefore, it may not be possible to recreate the percentages quoted throughout this release from the information included in the tables.

A [c] represents a number greater than 0 and less than 5, or a percentage with a denominator less than 23 or a numerator less than 5.

A [k] refers to a percentage that rounds to 0 but is not 0.

A [z] stands for “not applicable”.

## Key Quality Information

### Relevance

The statistics are used both within Medr, the Welsh Government and outside to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Officials and Board members in Medr
- Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers and officials in the Welsh Government;
- Members of the Senedd and researchers in the Senedd Cymru.
- other government departments;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers and local authorities;
- Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales;
- Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research;
- inclusion in reports and briefings;
- advice to Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers;
- informing and evaluating the education policy-making process in Wales.

### Accuracy

Statisticians within Medr review the data and query any anomalies with the LLWR data management team and, where relevant, with learning providers before tables are published.

The LLWR data underlying this release are intended to be final, for non-funding purposes.

The annual timescale for the production of data balances timeliness against the need for accurate data quality. Final statistics on a given academic year are drawn from a database based on the LLWR as at December following the end of the academic year.

### Free School Meals History

The free school meals eligibility history of a learner is found by matching apprenticeship records to historical school records. This uses the Matched Education Dataset. The Matched Education Dataset links datasets to trace a learner's progression through the education system in Wales. It matches records going back to 2010/11. Not all learners are able to be matched. The match rate is higher for younger apprentices.

FSM eligibility history is not available for learners who attended school before 2010/11 or attended school outside of Wales.

**Figure 3: Proportion of apprentices where free school meals history during secondary school was known, by academic year**

<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
38%	32%	33%	45%	49%	46%	45%

Description: The match rate has decreased by one percentage points from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

### Transfers and exclusions

Both the deletion of LLWR records and the incorrect recording of transfers can contribute to an undercount of ended learning activities and/or learning programmes and therefore potentially inflate the success rates detailed within this output.

The guidance for transfers is that they should be to the same or higher level of programme if they take place after 8 weeks. All apprenticeships that end within 8 weeks are already classed as early dropouts. After a transfer, the new learning programme should start within 21 days.

Currently the apprenticeship outcomes rely on the recording of transfers as stated by the provider. This is different from the consistent performance measures for post-16 learning (achievement), where the record of a transfer is validated against matched data.

Analysis is undertaken annually to determine the impact and suitability of transfers.

If transfers were not excluded from 2024/25 calculations the success rate would drop by 1 percentage point.

**Figure 1: Proportion of apprenticeship programmes recorded as transferred, by programme type and academic year**

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
Foundation Apprenticeship	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Apprenticeship	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Higher Apprenticeship	4%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
<b>All Apprenticeships</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Description: The proportion of all apprenticeships recorded as transferred remained the same in 2024/25.

Analysis is undertaken annually to monitor the numbers of exclusions from the outcome measures calculations to determine whether they fall within acceptable thresholds.

**Figure 2: Proportion of apprenticeship programmes excluded from measures, by reason for exclusion and academic year**

Reason for exclusion	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	No.	%												
Early drop-out	2,435	12	3,380	13	2,975	10	2,085	12	1,830	10	1,795	10	1,605	9
Transferred learning programme	505	2	500	2	510	2	390	2	310	2	295	2	300	2
Learner redundancy	245	1	305	1	225	1	100	1	115	1	130	1	145	1
Learner death	10	[c]	10	[c]	10	[c]	15	[c]	15	[c]	10	[c]	15	[c]
Total exclusions	3,200	15	4,195	16	3,720	13	2,570	15	2,570	14	2,225	13	2,065	11
Total ended learning programmes	20,755	100	26,365	100	28,455	100	17,280	100	17,770	100	17,706	100	18,325	100

Description: The proportion of total excluded learners has decreased from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

### Timeliness and punctuality

We additionally publish provisional quarterly information on apprenticeship starts to provide more timely data in this area of interest.

### Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the [Medr.cymru](https://www.gov.wales/medr-cymru) website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on StatsWales, a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

The report follows best practice for reporting and data visualisation to assist accessibility, including using accessible colours and providing written descriptions along with charts.

### Comparability and coherence

Due to the changes in how grades were awarded in 2020 and the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic, the Welsh Government did not produce any of its usual performance measures for schools or post-16 learning in 2019/20 or 2020/21. Instead, special reports were produced on [Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(Covid-19\) pandemic](#). Those statistics are calculated using different methodologies and cannot be compared with this report.

Past releases can be accessed on the [Learner outcome measures for further education, work-based learning and adult community learning](#) page on gov.wales.

Releases before 2018/19 contain information on further education provision. This has now been replaced by the [consistent performance measures for post-16 learning](#). Please note that these figures are not directly comparable.

Equivalent data on post-16 learner outcomes in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found via the following links:

[Skills Funding Agency / Department for Education - Statistics: further education and skills](#)

[Scottish Funding Council - Staff and Student Performance Indicators for FE Colleges](#)

However, due to differences in methodology and data collection, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons with the figures contained within this release.

Statistics on further education and sixth forms in schools are available in the [consistent performance measures for post-16 learning](#) reports. These statistics have been designed to compare learners across different education settings, and to give a picture of the whole learner journey. The methodology is not directly comparable with the statistics in this article.

### **Apprenticeship learning programmes**

From September 2022, all construction apprenticeships start at level 3 instead of level 2. Of the programmes started in 2022/23, 93% were started by males. This has caused a large fall in the number of level 2 apprenticeship starts and an increase in level 3 apprenticeships in this sector compared with previous figures for males.

### **Traineeships and Jobs Growth Wales+**

This release included traineeships in figures for work-based learning up to and including the 2021/22 academic year. The traineeships programme ended in March 2022 and was replaced by Jobs Growth Wales+.

Statistics for Jobs Growth Wales+ are reported separately in the quarterly [Jobs Growth Wales+](#) reports published by the Welsh Government, on a financial year basis. Any 2022/23 statistics for work-based learning provision as a whole are therefore not comparable to previous years. Furthermore, there will be some impact on figures for 2021/22 as the traineeships programme ended part way through that academic year.

Since their introduction in 2011/12, traineeships accounted for between 10% and 20% of all in learning WBL programmes.

This issue will also have a smaller impact on any statistics presented for all three sectors (further education, local authority community learning and work based learning) combined, for example overall counts of unique learners.

### **Data for previous years**

The following changes were made to the data collection for 2017/18.

### **Unfunded learning**

From 1 August 2017, information relating to learning activities not publicly funded is no longer collected through the LLWR; whilst the change is at individual activity level it will have an impact on the overall number of learners recorded. Because funding is recorded at activity rather than learner level, it is difficult to give a firm assessment of impact, as the change may also affect the way providers code their data.

## Learn Welsh sector

From 1 August 2017, information relating to Learn Welsh/Welsh for Adults provision in Further Education institutions is no longer collected through the LLWR. The [National Centre for Learning Welsh](#) has been responsible for providing leadership to the Welsh for Adults programme and co-ordinating provision across Wales on behalf of Welsh Government from 2015.

These two changes mean that, particularly for part-time further education and community learning, it is not possible to draw any conclusions around trends in the number of learners compared with the years prior to 2017/18. The decrease seen may be fully accounted for by the changes to the data collection. For completeness the following charts show the time series – but indicate the break in the series and that figures for 2017/18 are not comparable with earlier years.

## Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for 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](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in Medr's [Statement of Compliance](#) with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

These official statistics demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and value in the following ways.

### Trustworthiness

These statistics have been published according to Medr's [Statement of Compliance](#) and [pre-release access to official statistics policy](#).

### Quality

The data is sourced from the Lifelong Learning Record Wales which is submitted by learning providers. This data is also used to determine funding for learning providers and is subject to audit.

When the data is submitted it must meet certain validation rules. When the statistics are being produced quality checks are undertaken by the statisticians.

### Value

These statistics are produced to provide an insight in the learning being delivered in Wales. They are used for monitoring and evaluating the adult learning, further education, and work-based learning sectors.

### Change in accredited statistics status

These statistics were previously published by the Welsh Government as National Statistics (now known as Accredited Official Statistics). As the statistics are now published by a new organisation, the Accredited Official Statistics status has been temporarily removed.

Medr has continued the systems and processes for producing the statistics from Welsh Government, and the statisticians producing the statistics include statisticians who produced further education, work-based learning and community learning statistics at Welsh Government.

The OSR will assess the processes in place at Medr as an official statistics producer. The OSR will assess whether the statistics meet the requirements for Accredited Official Statistics.

## Further details

This release is available at: [www.medr.cymru](http://www.medr.cymru)

### StatsWales

Additional tables supplying greater detail, including analysis by programme and qualification type, subject, age, disability status and ethnicity, are available via the Welsh Government's online dissemination service StatsWales.

### Other statistical outputs using the LLWR data underlying this release

- [Apprenticeship learning programme started](#).
- [Further education, work-based learning and community learning](#) - Statistics on enrolled learners and their activities.
- [Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(achievement\)](#) – Statistics on the achievement of learners in FE institutions (derived from LLWR data) and school sixth forms (derived from school data sources)
- [Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning \(learner destinations\)](#) – Statistics on the destinations of post-16 learners in the year following their post-16 learning programme.

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