

Official statistics

Apprenticeships learning programmes started: February to April 2026 (provisional)

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Summary:

This publication contains statistics on apprenticeship learning programmes started. Includes data by region of domicile, programme type, age group, sector, gender and academic year.

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Note: Figures with (p) are provisional.

Key points

- There were 4,525 apprenticeship learning programmes started in 2025/26 Q3 (p), compared with 3,915 starts in 2024/25 Q3.
- Higher apprenticeships saw the largest rise compared to Q3 the previous year, a 28% increase (p).
- Healthcare and Public Services apprenticeships were the most popular sector in 2025/26 Q3 (p) with 2,415 programmes started. This accounted for 53% of all apprenticeship learning programmes started.
- 66% of apprenticeship learning programmes started were by female learners in 2025/26 Q3 (p), a 1 percentage point drop from 2024/25 Q3.
- 46% of apprenticeship learning programmes started were by learners aged 25 to 39 in 2025/26 Q3 (p), compared to 44% in Q3 for the previous year.
- 18% of apprenticeship learning programmes started were by learners with ethnic minority backgrounds in 2025/26 Q3 (p), a 2 percentage point rise from 2024/25 Q3.
- 13% of apprenticeship learning programmes started in 2025/26 Q3 (p) were by learners identifying as having a disability and/or learning difficulty, no change from 2024/25 Q3.
- 24% of apprenticeship learning programmes started were by learners living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales in 2025/26 Q3 (p).
- There have been 96,255 apprenticeship starts between May 2020 and April 2026, as part of progress towards the previous Welsh Government's target in the 2021 to 2026 Senedd term of 100,000 apprenticeships. Including the starts which are not counted as part of the more rigorous target measure, there were 105,570 apprenticeship starts overall in the time period.
- The Programme for Government for the 2021 to 2026 Senedd term contained a target to create 125,000 all-age apprenticeships. During the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee meeting on 26 June 2024, the then Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language agreed a new target of 100,000 all-age apprenticeships to maintain the 2016 to 2021 Senedd term's target of 100,000.

The Welsh Government financial year budget for apprenticeships in 2023-24 was £139m and £144m in 2024-25 (Source: [Medr Funding Allocations 2025 to 2026](#)). Previously, there was additional funding for apprenticeships from the European Social Fund (£43m in 2023-24 [Medr Funding Allocations 2025 to 2026](#)). This ceased by the 2024-2025 financial year.

[Apprenticeship learning programmes started: interactive dashboard](#)

Quality and Methodology

Freeze change

Starting from Q2 2024/25, the data freezes used for apprenticeship starts changed. Previously, Q1, Q2, and Q3 would use a snapshot of data of the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) as it stood six months after the end of the quarter. Going forward Q1, Q2 and Q3 will be based on freezes taken three months after the end of the quarter.

The change was made to improve the timeliness of the statistics.

The final figures will continue to be based on the December freeze after the end of the academic year.

The guidance states that a learner should be recorded within 8 weeks of starting. An analysis of Q2 2023/24 starts showed that the three month freeze (April 2024) captured 99.6% of the starts recorded in the sixth month freeze (June 2024), indicating that this change will have minimal impact on accuracy.

Provisional data

The statistics in this report are produced quarterly. Figures for the first three quarters in an academic year are provisional because they are based on earlier freezes of the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). This data will continue to be updated until the final freeze in December after the end of the academic year.

The provisional figures for the year are finalised when quarter 4 (May to July) data are published in February/March each year, based on the December freeze.

Target measure starts

The statistics for the target measures for previous Senedd terms use a more rigorous measure of apprenticeship programme starts than other statistics in this output. This measure takes account of early drop outs (within first 8 weeks) and transfers between apprenticeships.

Degree apprenticeships are now included in the current target measure. Degree apprenticeships in Wales provide the opportunity to combine working with part-time study at university. Data is sourced from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Whilst statistics from HESA have been calculated to be as comparable as possible with statistics for other apprenticeship programmes sourced from the LLWR (for example, removing early drop outs), some methodological differences will remain. Unlike the LLWR, HESA data is only available annually.

More quality information

Other than the provisional data and the target measure, these statistics are produced in the same way as the statistics in the [Further education, work-based learning and community learning annual reports](#). More information can be found in the quality section of those reports.

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 our [Statement of Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and other [statistical policies](#).

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

Trustworthiness

This is produced by professional statisticians complying to the Code of Practice for Statistics. Release dates are pre-announced, protocols around data confidentiality are followed.

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 provide a quicker insight into the uptake of apprenticeships in Wales than the annually produced reports. They are used for monitoring and evaluating the sector. They report the progress against a target set by Welsh Government.

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