

Statistics for England paper on FE and skills system

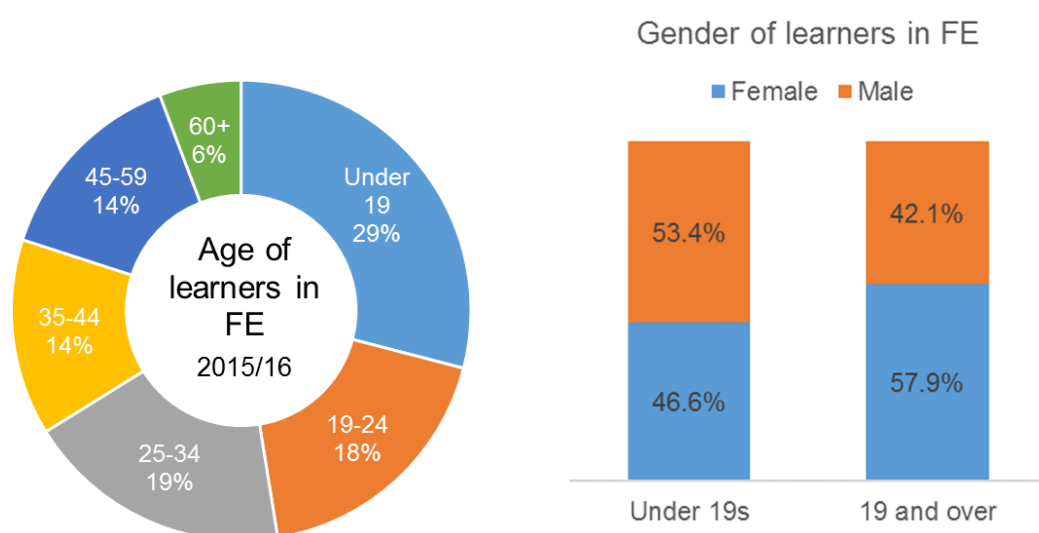
[Note: 16-18 and 19+ education were dealt with by separate government departments for a number of years. For this reason it can be difficult to match statistics across the two departments.]

Definitions: Government funded further education includes learners studying in an FE College (and other colleges), a training provider, or within their local community. It also includes employees undertaking an apprenticeship.

Much of the following data is taken from the Individualised Learner Record, which collects data from Further Education and skills providers in England in order to monitor the spending of ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) funds.

Distribution of FE learning

Figure 1 - Basic demographic details of FE learners and skills participation 2015/16



Source: FE data library – [FE and skills participation: all ages demographic summary 2015/16](#)

Notes: a small proportion (<0.1%) of learners do not have a recorded age or gender (less than 0.1%).

Adults (19+): In 2015/16 there were 2,324,700 unique adult learners (19+) who participated in government captured learning. This is equivalent to 5% of the 19+ population in England¹ (population estimates from NOMIS). Restricting this to those aged 19-59, there were 2,322,160 learners, equivalent to 8% of the 19-59 population².

A large majority (71%) of those engaged in further education are adults. Indeed, the majority are aged 25 and over.

Males are slightly over-represented among young FE learners (53% of under 19 learners). We know that a larger proportion of females stay on at school to go to sixth form (41% of girls from state-funded schools went to a school sixth form, compared with 37% of their male

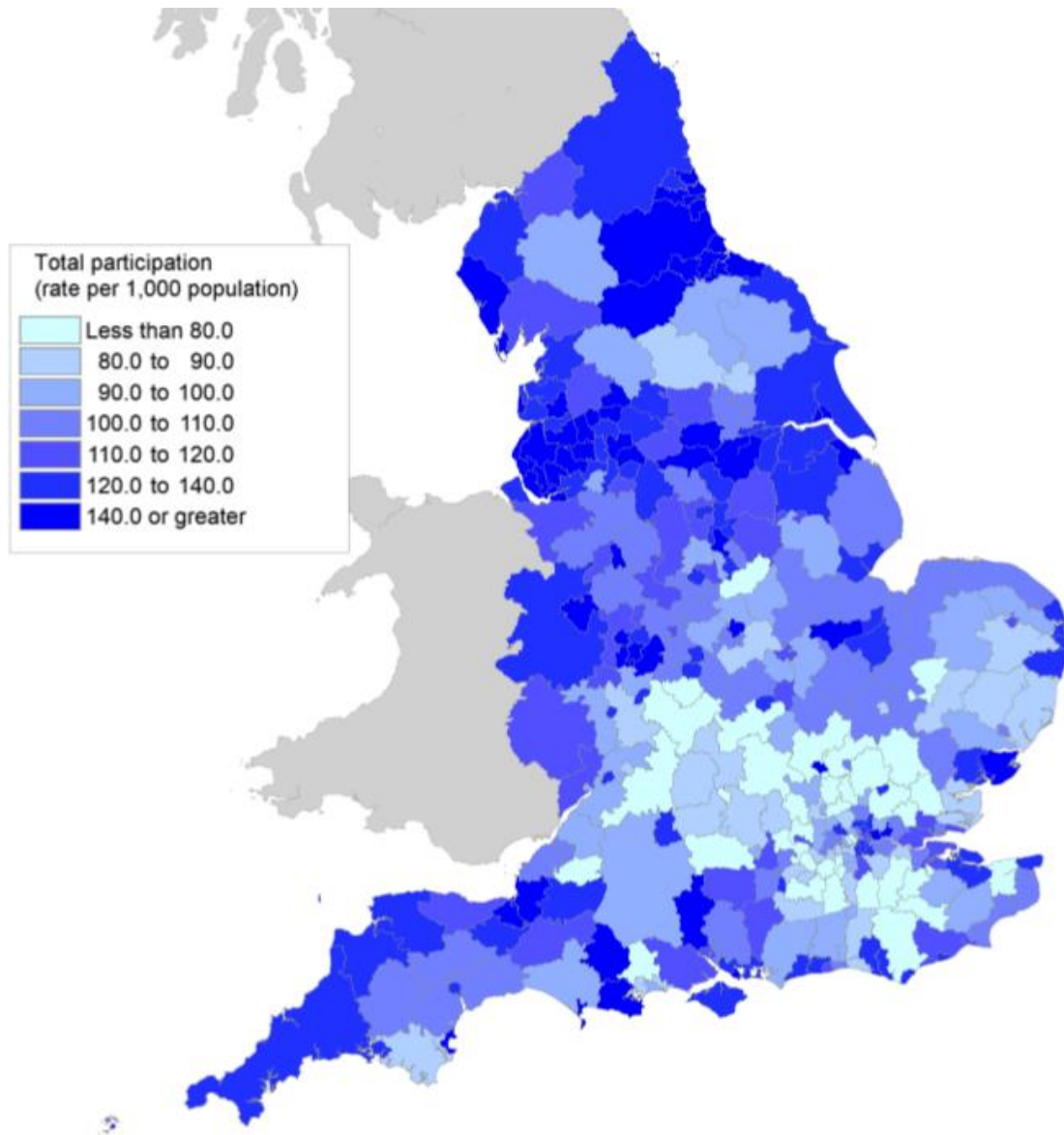
¹ 19+ population of 42,833,872 from population estimates on NOMIS.

² 19-59 population of 30,020,058 from population estimates on NOMIS.

counterparts). Conversely, men are under-represented among **adult** FE learners (42% of all FE learners aged 19 and over).

16-18: At the end of 2016 82% of 16-18 year olds were in education. In the same year, 30% of 16-17 year olds were in full time education in a general FE, tertiary or specialist college.

Figure 2 - Adult (19+) Total Learner Participation Rate, 2013/14



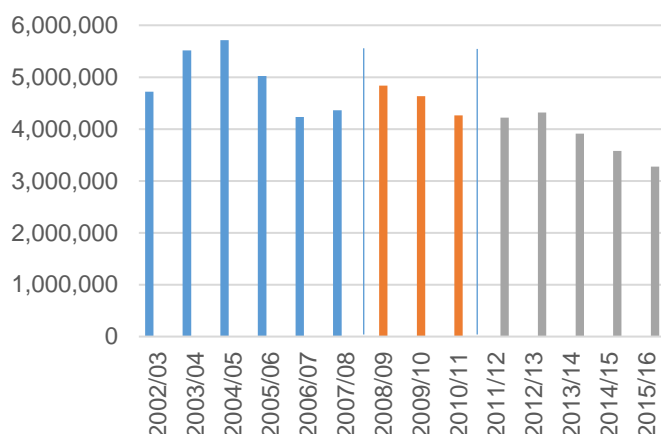
Source: BIS 2014, [FE trends](#)

1. Trends in FE

[Note: There are two discontinuities in the recording methodology. The first is between 2007/08 and 08/09, and the second between 2010/11 and 11/12. Comparing between the discontinuities should be avoided, but we can still get an overall idea of trends by looking at the trends *within* the respective time periods.]

Notwithstanding the breaks in the time series, the number of funded learners in FE has fallen fairly consistently since 2004/05. From the 2011/12 to 2015/16 academic years the number of learners fell by 22%, from 4.2m to 3.3m (figure 3).

Figure 3 – All FE and skills participants on the ILR

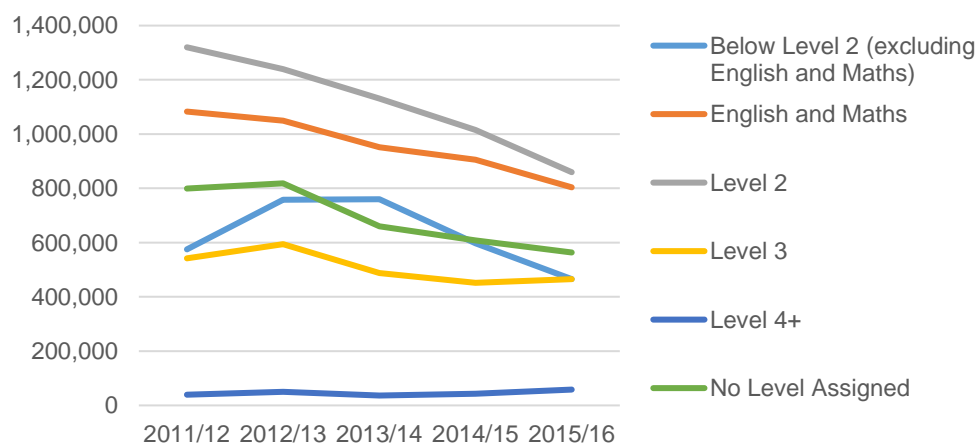


Source: FE data library: [FE and skills: overall split by funding stream - 2002/03 to 2012/13](#); and [Further education and skills geography data tool](#)

Notes: All ages, all types of provision

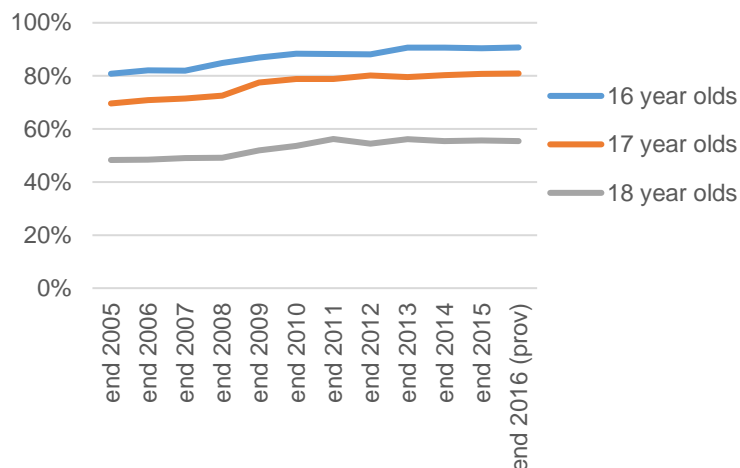
Among adult learners, the reductions have been across a number of different types of provision, but particularly lower level courses and training. For instance, the number of adult learners on level 2 provision fell by 35% between 2011/12 and 2015/16, which contrasts with a fall of 14% for level 3 and an increase of 49% of learners on courses above level 3 (figure 4).

Figure 4 – Adult (19+) FE and Skills Participation by Level, 2010/11 to 2015/16 – Learner volumes



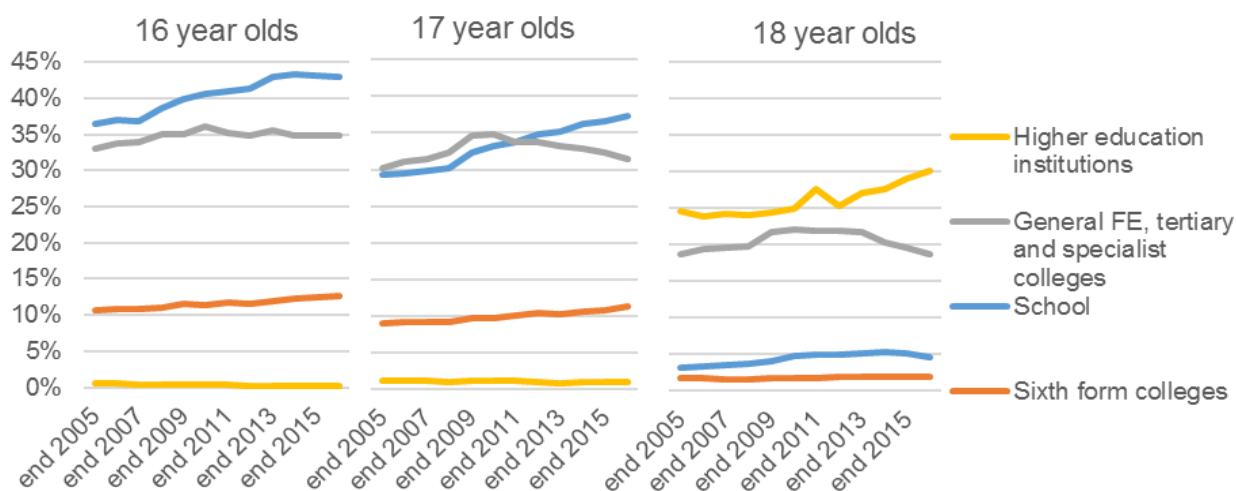
Source: [Further education and skills SFR: March 2017 main tables](#)

Figure 5 – Proportion of 16-18 year olds in education



Source: [Participation in education, training and employment: 2016 \(SFR 29/2017\)](#)

Figure 6 – Proportion of 16-18 year olds in education, by institution type



Source: [Participation in education, training and employment: 2016 \(SFR 29/2017\)](#) Note: 'School' includes state-funded, Special and independent schools

Table 1 – Proportion of all 17 year olds by level of highest qualification aim (full time only)

	end 2005	end 2010	end 2016 (prov)
Level 4+	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%
Level 3	51.8%	59.5%	64.4%
A/AS levels	40.5%	42.3%	43.7%
Other level 3	11.4%	17.2%	20.7%
Level 2	7.5%	8.1%	8.6%
Level 1	2.2%	3.5%	1.7%
Total full-time education	64.0%	73.8%	77.4%

Work based learning 8.3% 6.1% 7.5%

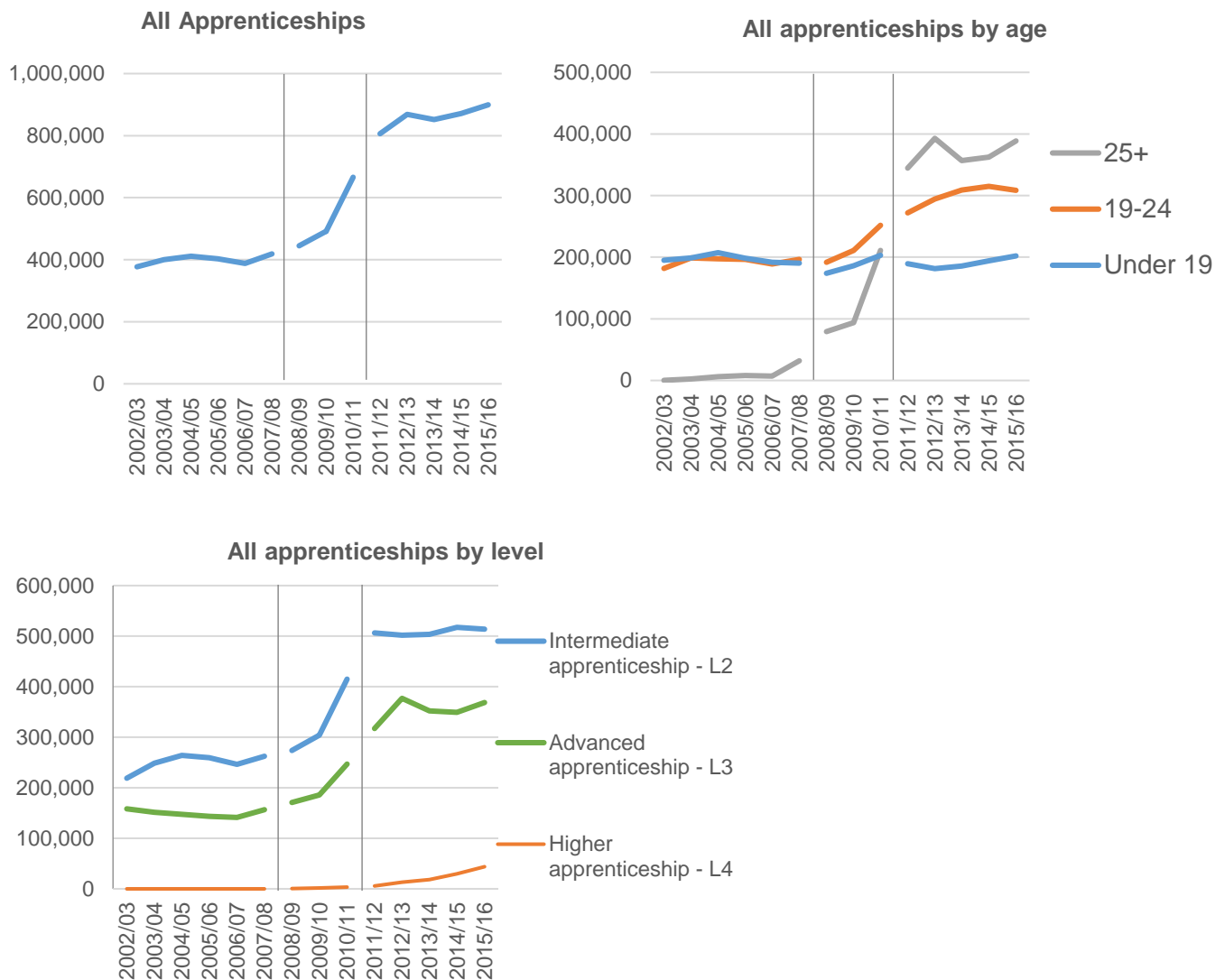
Source: [Table C4, Participation in Education, training and employment: 2016 \(SFR 29/2017\)](#)

2. Apprentices – numbers, ages, sectors

Since 2002/03, the number of apprenticeships in England has more than doubled (figure 7). This is due to increases in apprentices aged 19 and over – in particular the largest increases have been among mature apprentices, those 25 and over. Similarly, nearly all of the increase between 2011/12 and 2015/16 has been in advanced (L3) and higher (L4) apprenticeships

The current government has a target to reach three million apprenticeship starts by 2020. In order to stimulate employer funding of apprenticeships, a levy was introduced in April 2017 for employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million.

Figure 7 – Apprenticeship participation: total, by age, and by level



Source: [FE data library: Apprenticeships participation by level and age](#)

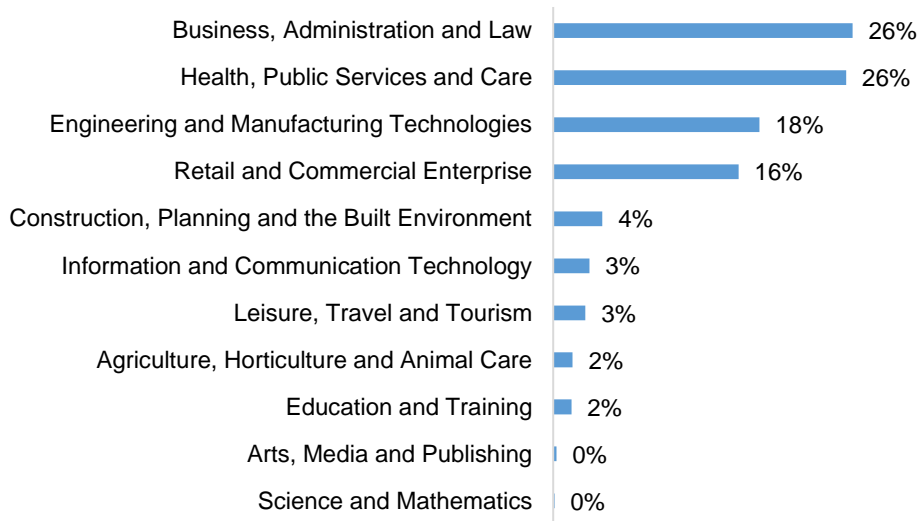
Sector

The vast majority of apprenticeships are undertaken in four sector subject areas, outlined below with the respective shares of all apprenticeships in 2015/16 (also shown in figure 8).

- Business, administration, and law – 26% of apprenticeships
- Health, public services, and care – 26% of apprenticeships
- Engineering and manufacturing technologies – 18% of apprenticeships
- Retail and commercial enterprise – 16% of apprenticeships.

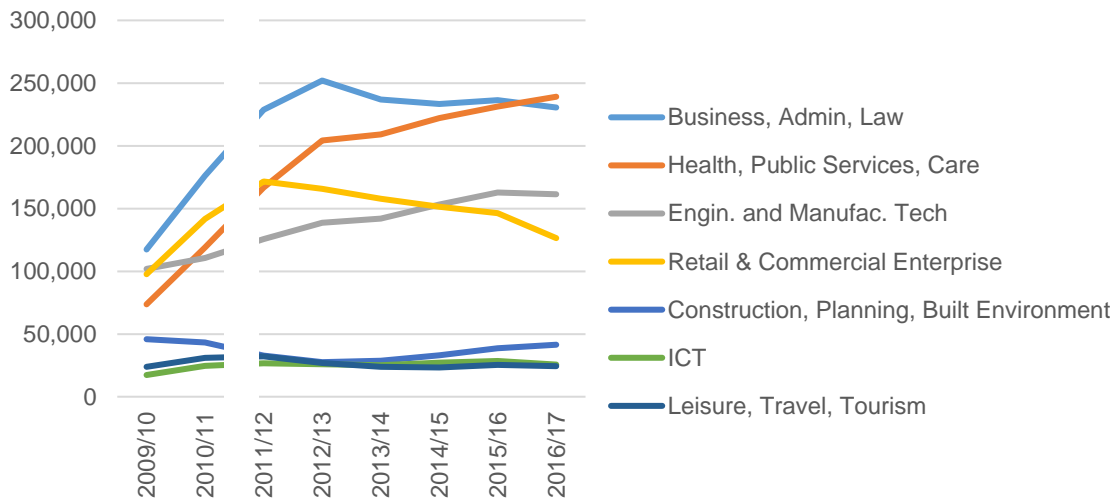
Of these, ‘health, public services and care’, and ‘engineering and manufacturing technologies’ apprenticeships increased year-on-year over the past five years (figure 9).

Figure 8 – Apprenticeship participation by sector subject area, 2015/16 full year



Source: [FE data library: Apprenticeships participation by region and sector subject area](#)

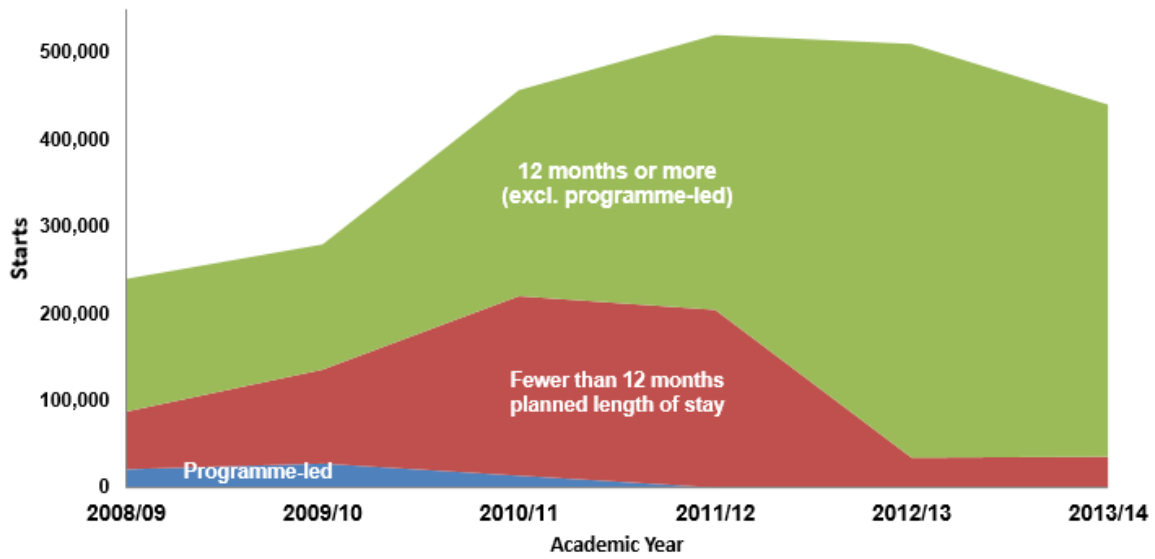
Figure 9 – Apprenticeship participation by sector subject area, 2015/16 full year



Source: [FE data library: Apprenticeships participation by region and sector subject area](#)

Additionally, the average length of apprenticeships increased between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (figure 10).

Figure 10 - All age apprenticeship starts by planned length of stay, 2008/09 to 2013/14

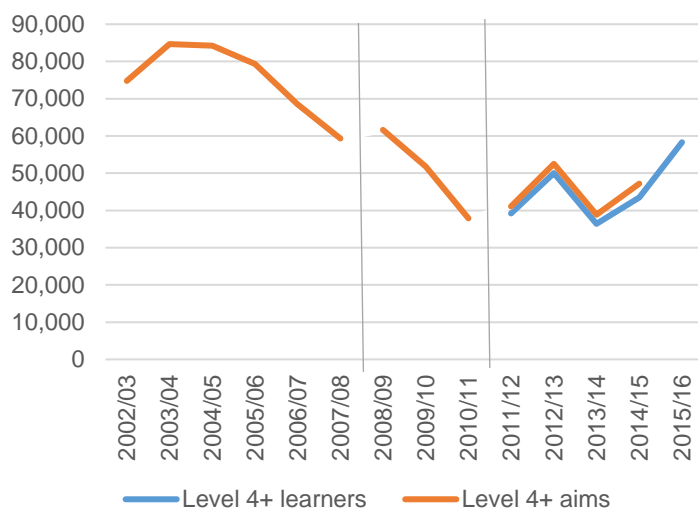


Source: ILR, figure 6 [FE trends](#)

3. Higher level FE

Learning in FE institutions at levels 4 and above decreased throughout the 2000s but has increased in recent years (figure 11).

Figure 11 –Adult (19+) FE and Skills Participation at level 4 or above



Source: Learner volumes: [FE and Skills SFR March 2017, main tables](#). Aims to 2011/12: [FE data library, Participation by Funding stream and Level](#). Aims to 2014/15: [FE data library, FE and skills adult participation by level](#) **Note:** the number of aims is higher than the number of learners as it is possible to be enrolled on multiple aims at the same time.

Funding for more advanced FE education and training courses has shifted from over the past few years. Loans to cover the cost of course fees are in place for all those aged 19 or over and wish to study at level 3 or higher. At the moment, relatively few (7%) applications for loans are for courses at level 4 or higher (table 2), but as loans coverage for higher levels is relatively new we expect these to grow.

Table 2 - Advanced Learner Loans Applications Received for Academic Year 2016/17, by provision type and demographic (up to 31st January 2017)

	Numbers	Proportion
Provision type		
A level	600	1%
QAA Access to HE	18,620	24%
Level 3	52,260	68%
Level 4+	5,230	7%
Unknown	100	0%
Gender		
Male	22,430	29%
Female	54,380	71%
Age		
19-23	18,010	23%
24-30	22,440	29%
31-40	21,260	28%
41-50	11,160	15%
50+	3,910	5%
Unknown	40	0%
Total	76,810	100%

Source: [Advanced learner loan applications: February 2018 \(SFR 10/2017\)](#) **Notes:** covers accepted and in-process applications up to 31st January 2017

4. Destinations – further study or work

Those leaving key stage 4

93% of those who completed key stage 4 in 2013/14 at a state-funded institution went into a sustained education or employment destination in the following year. In total, 38% of the cohort went to an FE provider, 38% went to a school sixth form, 12% went to a sixth form college, and 6% went into an apprenticeship.

Source: [Key stage 4 - national and local authority tables: SFR 01/2017](#)

Those leaving key stage 5

86% of those who completed key stage 5 in a state-funded college in 2013/14 went into a sustained education or employment destination the next year. This was slightly lower than for state-funded schools (90%).

Those who complete college were more likely to be in employment (26% of completers) the following year than those who complete key stage 5 in school (19%). Nevertheless, college leavers were also more likely to not have held a 'sustained destination' (e.g. NEET) (10% vs 7% of state school leavers). College leavers are more likely to carry on their education through an FE provider (19% of completers) compared with school leavers (9%). A substantial minority (38%) of college leavers go onto a higher education destination, which compares with 59% of those who completed key stage 5 in a state-funded school.

Table 3 - Destinations for students in key stage 5 cohort 2013/14

	State-funded schools	State-funded colleges (incl. sixth form)
Number of students	173,720	189,210
	%	%
Overall going to a sustained education and/or employment destination	90	86
<i>Apprenticeships</i>	6	8
Sustained education destination	72	60
<i>Further education college or other FE provider</i>	9	19
<i>UK higher education institution</i>	59	38
<i>Other education destinations</i>	3	2
Sustained employment destination	19	26
Not recorded as a sustained destination	7	10
No activity captured in data	3	4
<i>Recorded as UCAS acceptance for deferred entry</i>	4	2

Source: [Key stage 5 - national and local authority tables: SFR 01/2017](#)

Note: "sustained" means from October to March 2014/15

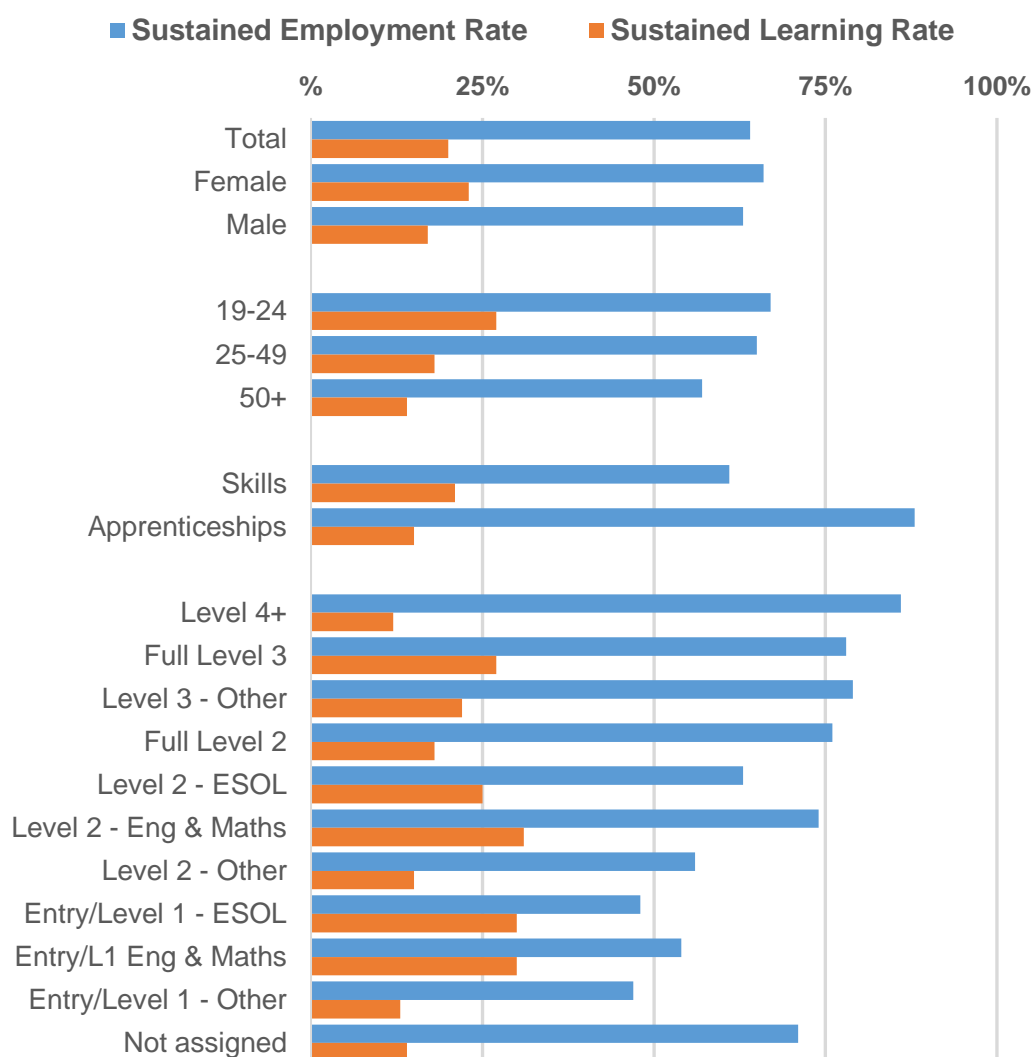
Adult education

DfE produces official statistics on whether funded adult learners are in sustained employment or learning following the completion of a course. **Sustained employment** is measured as 'learners must be in self-assessed employment or in paid employment as recorded by PAYE records in five out of six months between October and March in the following academic year' (DfE 2016). **Sustained learning** is defined as learning in all six months between October and March the following academic year.

For **adult** learners who completed a course in 2013/14, 64% were subsequently in sustained employment, and 20% were in sustained learning. As sustained learning and employment are possible at the same time, the total proportion of learners who go onto a sustained 'positive destination' was 72%.

The destinations do differ a little bit according to the demographics of the learner, and in some cases quite a lot by the level and type of learning. For instance, 86% of those who completed a learning at Level 4 or higher in 2013/14 went onto sustained employment. This contrasts with 47% of those who completed an Entry/level 1 course in a subject other than English and maths. Of course, it is difficult to know how much of this difference is due to the benefits of the course, and how much of it is due to pre-existing characteristics of the learners.

Figure 12 – Destinations of FE learners funded through the Adult Education Budget



Sources: [Adult further education outcome-based success measures](#) (SFR52/2016),