



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

# Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2019 and 2020 (provisional)

Information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24 for 2019 and 2020 (provisional).

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# Contents

## Main points

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### Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education and the labour market

---

### Participation of 19 to 24 year olds in education and the labour market

---

### Policy and operational context

---

### Quality information

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### Contact details

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Final estimates for 2019 are provided along with provisional estimates for 2020 which use the best data currently available for each aspect of participation; this includes some final data, some provisional data and some modelling.

This release provides the definitive source for estimates of the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales. It also contains data for one of the 46 national well-being indicators.

Provisional estimates for 2020 cover part of the period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Some of the changes observed may result from conditions brought about by the pandemic. For example, delayed or missed learning, changes to examinations and assessments and changing labour market conditions during the period of the pandemic.

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# Main points

## 16 to 18 year olds

- Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education or training increased to 79.2% in 2020 compared to 77.1% in 2019.
- The proportion in employment decreased from 36.4% in 2019 to 31.4% in 2020. This is the lowest level seen since 2013.
- The proportion who were NEET increased by 1.1 percentage points between 2018 and 2019 to stand at 11.7%. This is the highest level since 2011. Provisional estimates suggest that this proportion then decreased to 11.1% in 2020.

## 19 to 24 year olds

- The proportion of 19 to 24 year olds in education or training has increased to 40.4% in 2020 from 37.8% in 2019. This is the highest level on record.
- The proportion in employment decreased from 63.9% in 2019 to 61.4% in 2020.
- Provisional estimates suggest that the proportion who were NEET in 2020 was 15.2%, down from 16.1% in 2019. This is close to the lowest level on record (15.1% in 2017).

## Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education and the labour market

Chart 1 shows the trends in participation in education or training, and in employment for 16 to 18 year olds since 2003.

Prior to 2008, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in education or training remained broadly unchanged at 74% to 76%. Following the start of the recession in 2008, there was an increase in the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds

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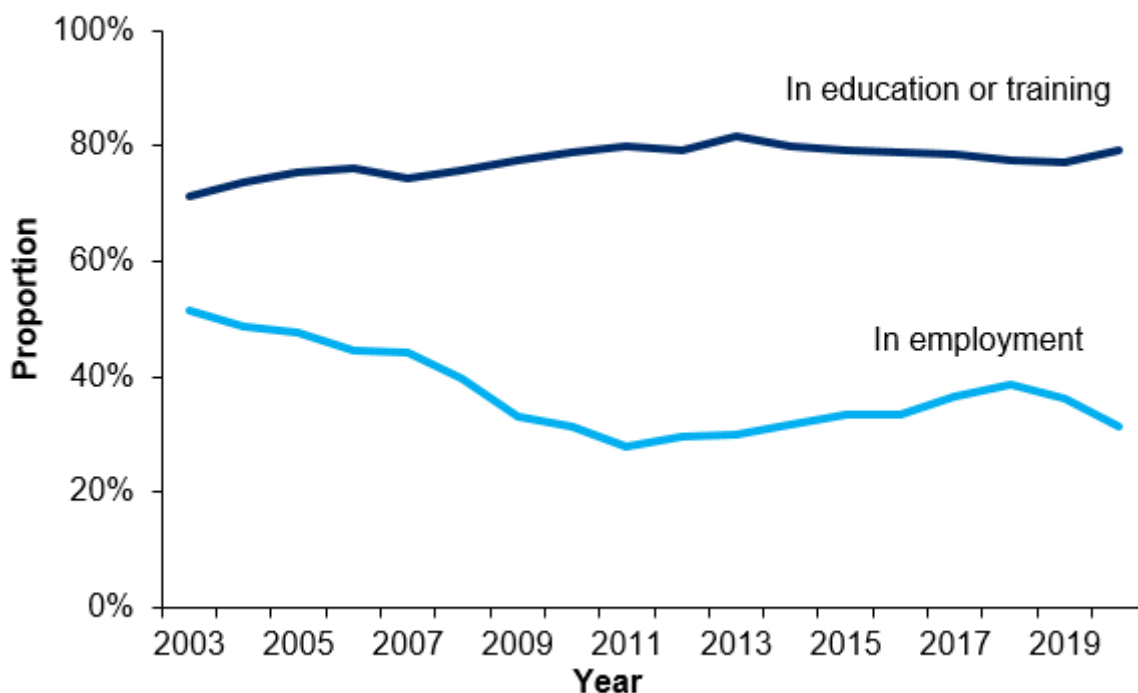
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in education or training, to levels around 80%. This proportion then decreased between 2013 and 2019 before increasing in 2020 to stand at 79.2%.

In contrast, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds in employment decreased overall from 2004, with slightly larger reductions between 2007 and 2009. Between 2011 and 2018 it increased before a 2.1 percentage point decrease in 2019 followed by a 5 percentage point decrease in 2020. It now stands at 31.4%, the lowest proportion since 2013.

**Chart 1: Participation of 16 to 18 year olds in education and the labour market, 2003 to 2020**



Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW

## Participation of adults and young people on StatsWales

### Employment

- In 2020, 31.4% of 16 to 18 year olds were in full or part-time employment.
- Approximately 21.7% of 16 to 18 year olds were estimated to be engaged in some type of education or training *and* in employment in 2020, a decrease

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compared to 25.2% in 2019. Most of these were students in full-time education who were also working part-time.

- In addition, 9.7% were in full or part-time employment but not in education or training in 2020 a decrease from 2019 (11.2%).

## Education and training

- In total, 79.2% of 16 to 18 year olds were engaged in some kind of education or training (full or part-time) in 2020.
- Participation in full-time education was 67.8%, up 4.3 percentage points on 2019.
- A higher proportion of females aged 16 to 18 were in full-time education, 70.9% compared with 64.8% of males in 2020.
- By single year of age, 76.8% of all 16 year olds were undertaking full-time education in 2020 compared with 68.9% of 17 year olds and 57.4% of 18 year olds.
- Participation in training was higher for males than for females. In total, 5,900 16 to 18 year olds were engaged in training (both work-based learning courses and job-related training) in 2020. This is approximately 7.0% of all males in this age group compared with 4.4% of females.

## Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- An estimated 11,300 16 to 18 year olds (11.1%) were NEET, compared to 11,900 (11.7%) in 2019.
- This comprised of 3,900 unemployed young people and 7,400 who were economically inactive.
- 10.5% of males aged 16 to 18 were NEET compared with 11.7% of females.

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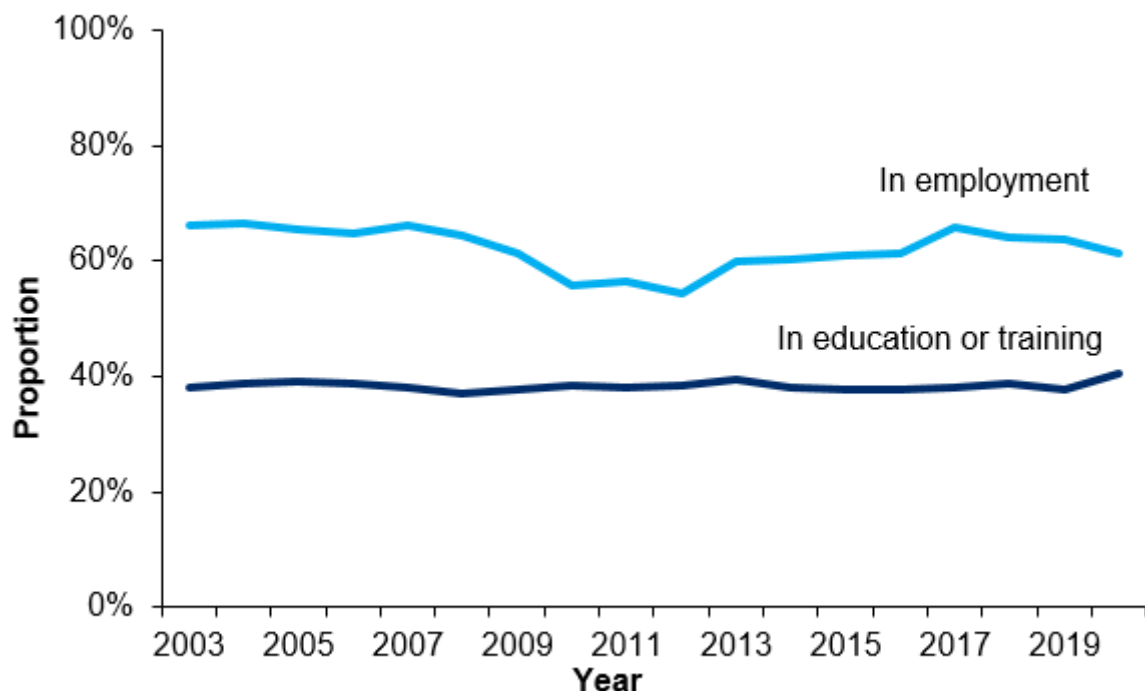
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# Participation of 19 to 24 year olds in education and the labour market

Chart 2 shows the trends in participation in education or training, and in employment for 19 to 24 year olds since 2003.

The proportion in education or training remained broadly unchanged over this period at around 37% to 39%, before increasing by 2.5 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 to stand at 40.4%. This is the largest year on year increase on record. In contrast, the proportion in employment decreased after the start of the 2008 recession to 2010. It then increased each year between 2012 and 2017 before decreasing each year up to 2020, where it currently stands at 61.4%.

**Chart 2: Participation of 19 to 24 year olds in education and the labour market, 2003 to 2020**



Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW

## Participation of adults and young people on StatsWales

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## Employment

- In 2020, 61.4% of 19 to 24 year olds were in full or part-time employment.
- 44.4% of 19 to 24 year olds were in full or part-time employment but not in education or training in 2020.
- In addition, 17.0% 19 to 24 year olds were estimated to be engaged in some type of education or training and in employment in 2020. Most of these were either students in full-time education who were also working part-time or students in training who were also working full-time.

## Education and training

- In total, 40.4% of 19 to 24 year olds were engaged in some kind of education or training (full or part-time) in 2020. This is the highest level on record.
- 30.7% of 19 to 24 year olds were in full-time education in 2020, up from 27.9% in 2019.
- A higher proportion of females, 33.7% were in full-time education compared with 27.9% of males aged 19 to 24 in 2020.
- There were 13,100 (5.5%) 19 to 24 year olds engaged in training (both work-based learning courses and job-related training) in 2020, with participation amongst females at 5.3% and for males 5.6%.
- Participation in full-time education decreased with age. Of all 19 year olds, 56.4% were in full-time education in 2020 compared with 21.0% of 22 year olds and 9.5% of 24 year olds.

## Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- An estimated 36,400 of 19 to 24 year olds (15.2%) were NEET in 2020, a decrease compared to 16.1% in 2019. This is close to the lowest level on record (15.1% in 2017).
- 13.5% of females aged 19 to 24 were NEET compared to 16.8% of males in 2020.
- The 36,400 19 to 24 year olds estimated to be NEET in 2020 comprised of

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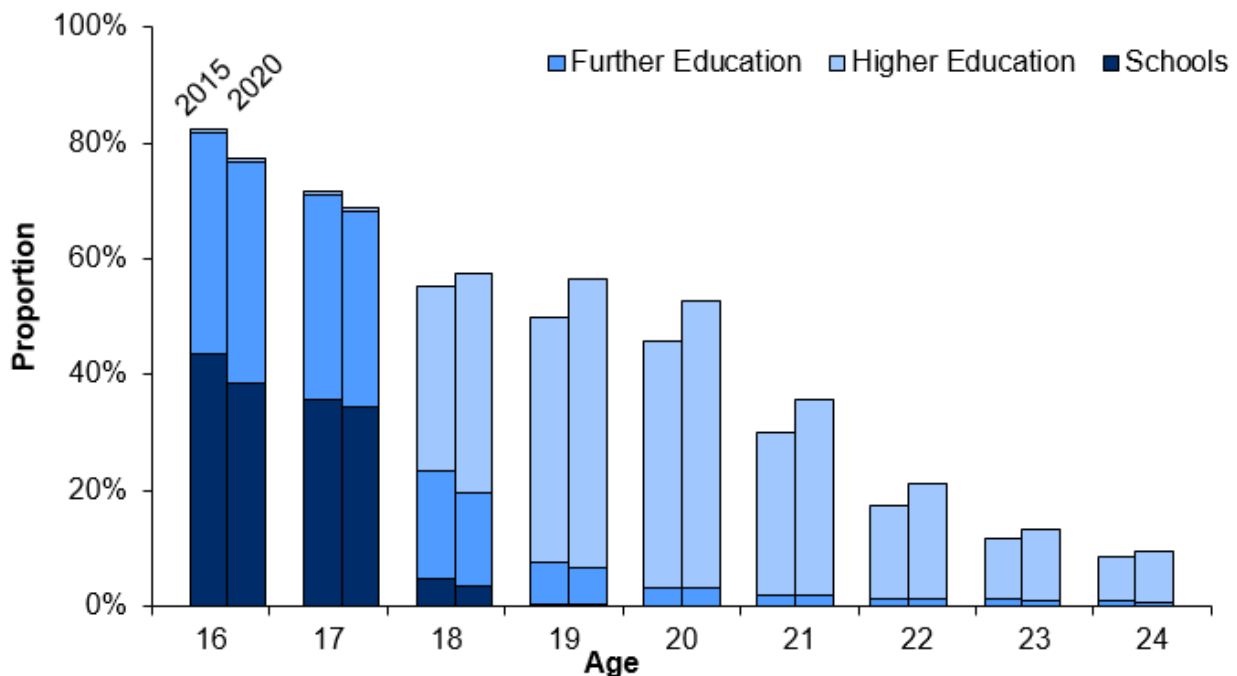
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9,800 unemployed young people and 26,600 who were economically inactive.

Chart 3 compares participation in full-time education by level of study in 2020 compared with the position in 2015. Whilst participation in full-time education decreases with age, the participation rates of those aged 18 to 24 were higher in 2020 than 5 years earlier. For those aged 16, the proportion in full time education decreased by 5 percentage points in 2020 compared to 2015. For those aged 17, this proportion decreased by 2.7 percentage points.

**Chart 3: Participation in full-time education by level of study and age, 2015 and 2020**



Source: Welsh Government, Open University and HEFCW

## Participation of adults and young people on StatsWales

# Policy and operational context

This release presents the annual snapshot of participation of young people in

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education and the labour market. The statistics are used within the Welsh Government to monitor trends in the level of participation in education and training, and the proportion of young people who are NEET.

The **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** was announced in January 2013, with an implementation plan published in October 2013. The Framework outlines the Welsh Government's approach to reducing the number of young people aged 11 to 25 who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET). The framework is based on 6 key building blocks.

1. Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement
2. Better brokerage and co-ordination of support for them
3. Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system
4. Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people
5. Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment
6. Greater accountability for local authorities

Reducing the number of young people who are NEET is also part of the **Prosperity for All: Employability Plan**.

## Quality information

### Relevance

The statistics are used within the Welsh Government to monitor trends in the level of participation in education and training, and the proportion of young people who are NEET.

Other key users of these statistics include:

- members of the Senedd and the Research Service in the Welsh Parliament
- other government departments
- students, academics and universities

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# Accuracy

## Sampling variability

The economic status proportions are estimated from the Annual Population Survey. Therefore, these estimates will be subject to variation due to sampling error and also non-sampling error and should be treated with caution. As a result changes in trend need to be interpreted with a degree of caution, as changes could be attributed to sampling effects as well as real effects. Currently it is not possible to distinguish between these impacts.

In August 2021 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) recalibrated the weights of Annual Population Survey datasets from January 2020 onwards. The population data used to produce labour market estimates were updated to better reflect changes in international migration and other impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The changes ONS have made to the weighting should reduce the bias of estimates at high levels of aggregation. Some smaller breakdowns may be impacted negatively and more extreme changes could be seen given the reduced size of the underlying sample since the start of the pandemic.

## Revisions policy

Provisional 2020 figures will be finalised in next year's publication, due for release in July 2022. The following table shows the difference between the 2019 provisional estimates published in last year's release and the final published estimate for the key series of the proportion who are NEET, and the proportion in education or training.

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**Table 1a: Difference between provisional and final data for 16 to 18 year olds, 2019**

	NEET: number	NEET: per cent	In education or training: number	In education or training: per cent
Provisional	11,200	11.1	78,800	78.3
Final	11,900	11.7	77,800	77.1
Difference	700	0.6	-1,100	-1.2

**Table 1b: Difference between provisional and final data for 19 to 24 year olds, 2019**

	NEET: number	NEET: per cent	In education or training: number	In education or training: per cent
Provisional	37,400	15.7	94,300	39.5
Final	38,900	16.1	91,300	37.8
Difference	1,500	0.4	-3,000	-1.7

These are larger revisions than those generally seen when provisional estimates are updated with final data. This is partly due to downward revisions in the number of young people in full-time and part-time education between last year's provisional data and the final data available for this release.

Revisions for earlier years are only made in line with revisions to source data. Totals may not match due to rounding.

## Comparisons with previous years

There were changes made in the data sources and methodology used to derive the participation estimates introduced for the year end 2004 edition. Care should be taken when comparing these estimates with estimates from year end 2004 onwards. Please contact us for advice before using comparisons with previous years.

In particular the following changes need to be taken into account when making comparisons with previous years:

### Further education and work-based learning

The LLWR replaced the Individualised Student Record (ISR) from the start of the academic year 2004/05, therefore a discontinuity may result from the change in data collection. Prior to the academic year 2004/05 work-based learning activity was collected via the National Trainee Database (NTD). The NTD included college based WBL trainees, who were also included in the number of FE enrolments. This double counting has been removed with the collection of WBL activity via LLWR by the introduction of a unique identifier that is common to the learner no matter where their activity takes place.

### Economic activity

For 2001 to 2003 economic activity was based on the Welsh Local Labour Force Surveys (WLLFS), with a similar sample size to the APS. Prior to 2001/02, economic activity was estimated using the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

## Timeliness and punctuality

This Statistical Release is published annually, usually in July, and covers the preceding year end (provisional data) and the year earlier (final data). It was published later this year due to the reweighting of the Annual Population Survey.

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## Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics & Research website of the Welsh Government. All underlying data for this release as well as other years are available on the [StatsWales website](#).

## Comparability and coherence

For this release, participation in education and the labour market has been estimated using population, education and work-based learning data along with the Annual Population Survey (APS) to estimate the labour market status. Further information on these sources and the derivation of the statistics presented in this release is available in our [methodology note](#).

In addition to this release we publish a bulletin [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#) to provide users with more timely and detailed (but less statistically robust) NEET statistics based on the APS only.

## National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2012 following [a full assessment against the Code of Practice](#).

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Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- included a number of visuals showing long term trends as well as commentary on these trends
- eliminated un-necessary tables from the release as they are freely available of [StatsWales](#)

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes one of the national indicators:

- (22) Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

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As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in their areas.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Next update

Year end 2020 and 2021 (provisional): July 2022

## We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [post16ed.stats@gov.wales](mailto:post16ed.stats@gov.wales)

## Contact details

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