Economy And Labour Market

Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: Statistical Summary for April to June 2023

Main Points

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

- There have been 104,763 starts on either Fair Start Scotland (FSS) or No One Left Behind since April 2018 up to June 2023. In the most recent quarter, April to June 2023, there were 6,412 starts. This was a 27% decrease on the previous quarter and an 11% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.

- Official statistics in development for No One Left Behind show a total of 44,000 people started receiving support from April 2019 to June 2023. The number of people starting to receive support has increased each year from 2,749 in year 1 (2019/20) to 18,484 in year 4 (2022/23).

- In the most recent quarter, quarter 1 of year 5, 3,252 people started to receive support through No One Left Behind. This was a 37% decrease on the previous quarter and a 19% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.

- Of the 44,000 people receiving support on No One Left Behind, 13,953 (32%) have entered employment, while a further 6,080 (14%) entered further or higher education or training.

- There have been 60,763 starts to FSS since April 2018, including 5,076 re-joins which has been possible since April 2021. There were 3,160 starts in the most recent quarter, 11% lower than the previous quarter and 1% lower than the same quarter in 2022.

- For FSS, there were 1,301 job starts this quarter, 13% higher than the previous quarter and 13% higher than the same quarter in 2022. Overall, there has been 21,351 job starts since FSS launched.

Contents

About this publication

This is the 24th 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 June 2023), and,
- Official statistics covering FSS (April 2018 to June 2023).

Further detailed statistics including additional breakdowns 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 Background Information 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 newer 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 the Background Information 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 and over time, more of the statistics in this report will reflect information collected on the new template. 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: employabilitystatistics@gov.scot. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing: regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Data Developments in this Edition

For the first time, this publication presents data on the:

- Economic status of No One Left Behind participants and parents at start date,
- Characteristic breakdowns for participants (all and parents) employed at start date,
- Criminal conviction status of No One Left Behind participants, and,

- the number of participants (all and parents) entering employment who are in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks.

In addition to the accompanying data Excel tables released as part of this report, this edition also includes a separate Excel output containing the data used for each of the figures appearing in this report in one location.

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 104,763 starts on either No One Left Behind or FSS between April 2018 and June 2023. In the most recent quarter, April – June 2023, there were 6,412 starts across No One Left Behind and FSS, a 27% decrease on the previous quarter and an 11% decrease on the same quarter in the previous year.

Key differences between these programmes are shown in Table 3 in the Background Information. 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, April 2018 to June 2023
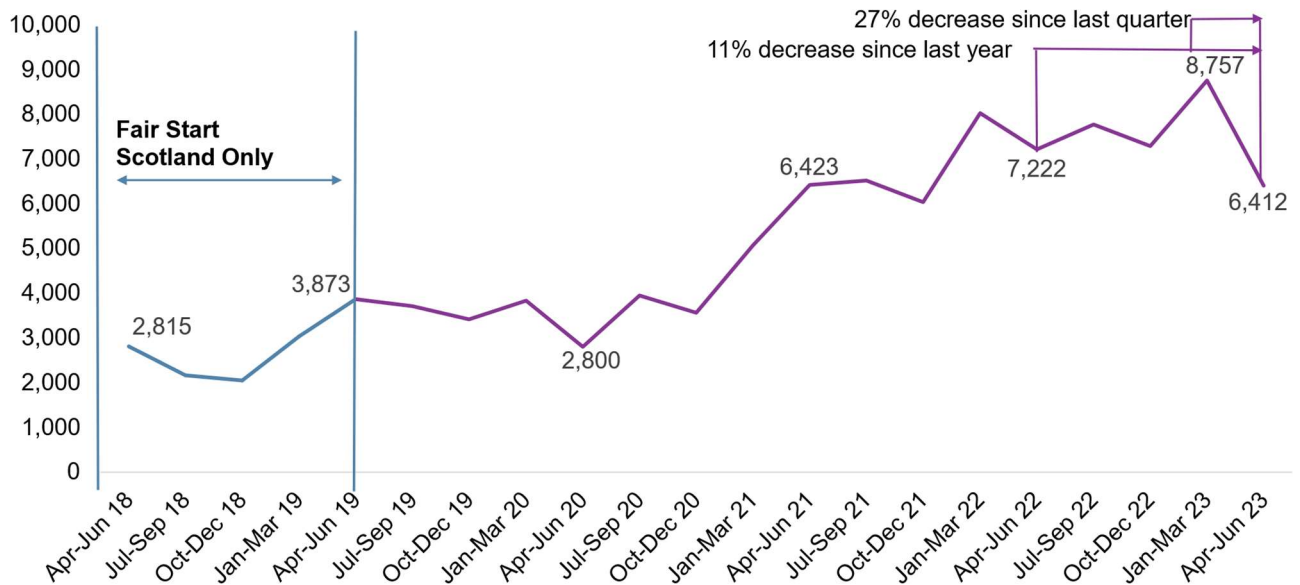
No One Left Behind (Official Statistics in Development)

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 data quality section in the background information 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 Background Information.

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 practice 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 44,000 people started receiving support from April 2019 to June 2023. The number of people receiving support has increased over time from 2,749 in year 1 (2019/20) to 18,484 in year 4 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter (April – June 2023) 3,252 people started to receive support.

Age

Most people supported through No One Left Behind were aged under 25 (62%; 27,480). Of these, 19,821 (72%) were aged 15-19 and 7,659 (28%) were aged 20-24. The remaining 16,093 (37%) participants were aged 25 and over, and of these; 5,752 (36%) were aged 25-34, 6,844 (43%) aged 35-49 while only 3,497 (22%) were aged 50 or over. Age was unknown for 1% (427) 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 43% aged 25 and over in the most recent full year (year 4 – 2022/23). In the latest quarter, there was very little difference between the age groups, with people aged under 25 representing 51% of participants and 25 and overs representing 49% of participants.

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 when starting No One Left Behind continues to increase

No One Left Behind participants, by age and quarter, April 2019 to June 2023 (age unknown less than 30 are not labelled)
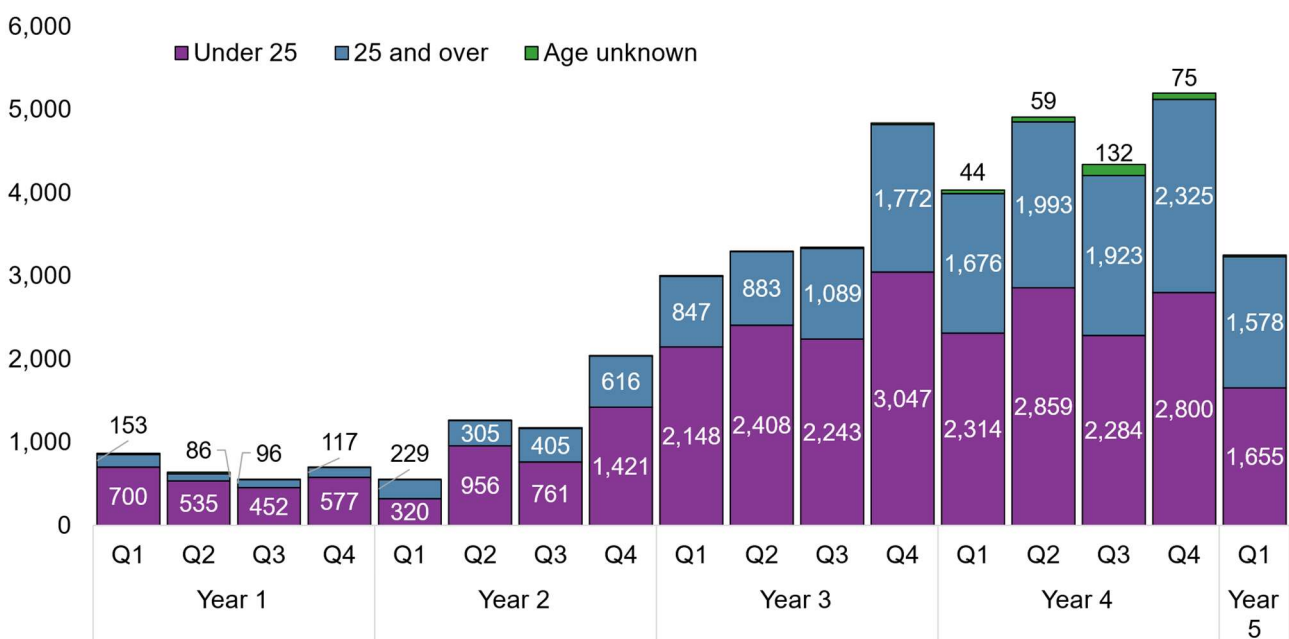
Sex

Most people starting on No One Left behind were male (55%; 24,411), while the remaining 19,194 (44%) were female. Sex was unknown for 1% (395) of participants. This sex difference has remained relatively stable. In the most recent quarter, the proportions match those observed overall.

However, sex differences by age are more varied. For the middle age groups, 25-34 and 35-49, the sex difference reverses and females account for the highest proportion of participants, 56% and 59%, respectively. The youngest age group, 15-19, has the lowest proportion of females at 37%.

Trans status

Trans status was reported for the first time in the last edition of this publication. 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 1ˢᵗ October 2022. This question is voluntary.

A total of 188 people have responded yes to the question on trans status. Of these, 79 identified as a trans man, 62 as non-binary, 27 as a trans woman, with the remaining 20 people choosing the "other" option.

Ethnicity

Overall, people from a minority ethnic background have accounted for 6% (2,641) of participants since April 2019. The proportion of minority ethnic participants has varied across years with the highest proportion (7%) in year 4 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter (April - June 2023), the proportion was 9%.

There are age differences. The proportion of people aged 25 and over from a minority ethnic background is 10%, compared to 3% 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.

Disability

Overall, 15% of participants accessing No One Left Behind support reported having a disability (see Disability section in background information 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 (April - June 2023), the proportion was 23%, the biggest proportion in a single quarter to date. There is less variation by age than observed for other characteristics.

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.
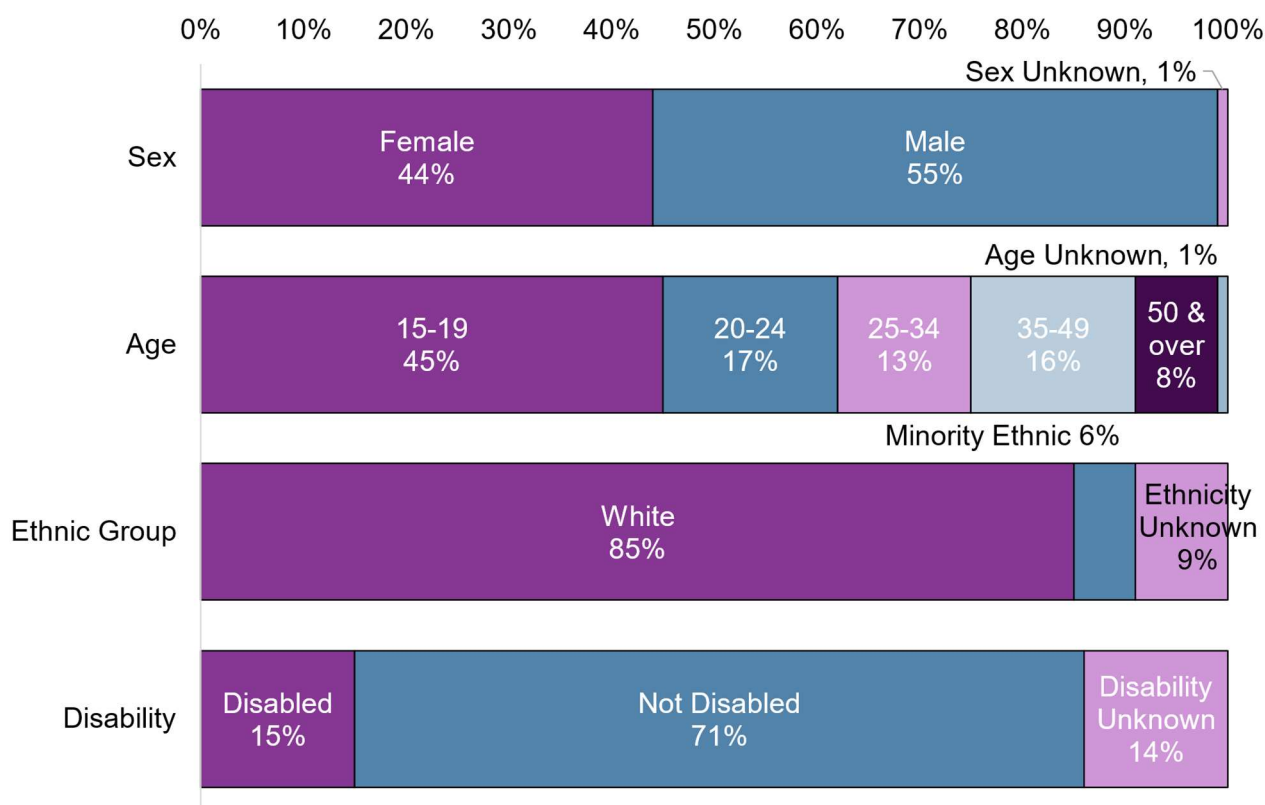
Figure 3: No One Left Behind participants are most likely to be male, white and under 20

Equality Characteristics of People Starting No One Left Behind, April 2019 to June 2023

Criminal Convictions

Data on participants reporting a criminal conviction are reported for the first time. Prior to the new data template, criminal convictions was one option of many within a variable on barriers to employment. While more than one barrier could be chosen, often only the most significant barrier was selected. This means data prior to October 2022 (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities who adopted the new template early) has a significant number of unknowns. Following the introduction of the new data template, all barriers were presented as stand-alone variables that must be completed. This has significantly decreased the proportion of unknowns.

In the most recent quarter, 198 people (6%) reported a criminal conviction, while 2,903 (89%) reported no criminal conviction. This information was unknown for 151 people (5%). The proportion of people reporting a criminal conviction was also 6% in the previous two quarters since the introduction of the new data template.

Economic Status at Start Date

Data on the economic status of participants are reported for the first time. 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 background information for more in-depth definitions of these categories.

Most participants were unemployed at start date (23,217; 53%), while a further 10,745 (24%) were economically inactive and 4,532 (10%) were employed when starting. There

have been 2,716 (6%) school pupils joining No One Left Behind. In the most recent quarter, 58% of participants were unemployed at start date, 21% economically inactive and 10% in employment.

Further information is available for those in employment at start date. While most participants are male, the majority of the 4,532 participants in employment at start date are female (2,638; 58%). Participants employed at start date also tend to be older than those overall, with 1,271 (28%) aged 35-49 and 983 (22%) aged 25-34.

Parents

Parents are a subgroup of all participants supported during the period April 2020 to June 2023 (year 2 onwards). Of the 41,251 people who started to receive support from year 2, 9,316 (23%) were parents. The number of parents has generally increased reaching a high of 1,392 (27%) parents in the previous quarter (January - March 2023). In the most recent quarter, 820 (25%) parents started on No One Left Behind.

Figure 4: The number of parents being supported through No One Left Behind has generally been increasing

Parents Receiving No One Left Behind Support, by Quarter, April 2020 to June 2023
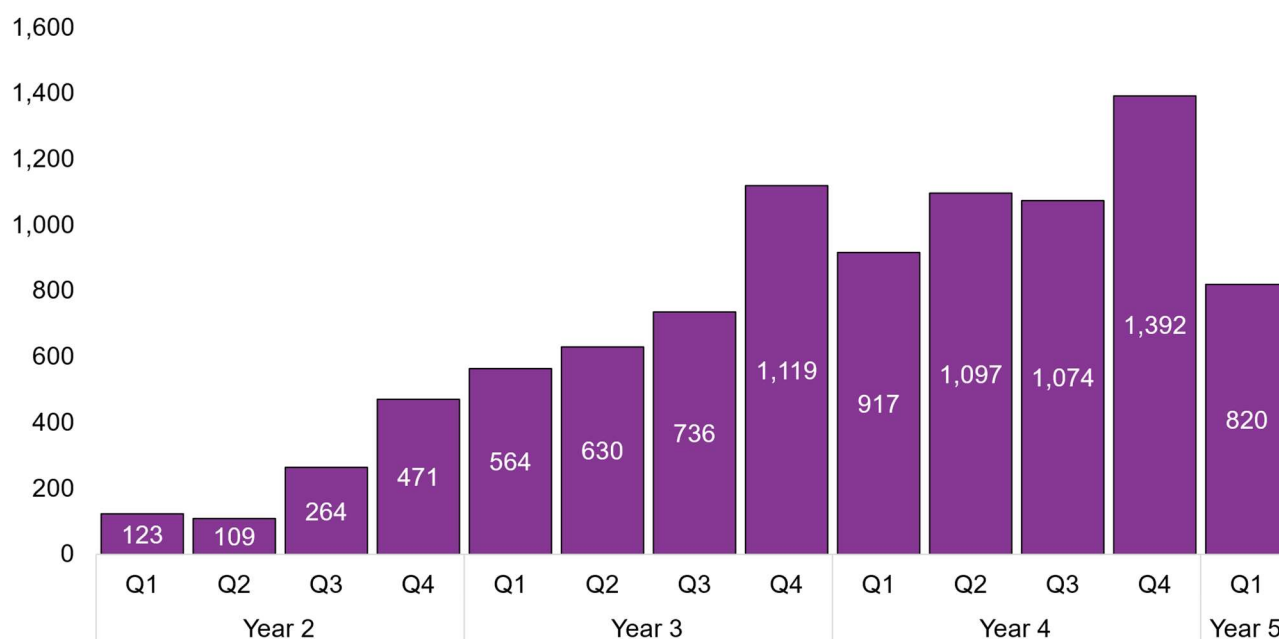
Age
Most parents are aged 25 and over (86%; 7,968), with the majority in the 35-49 years age group (45%; 4,231) and the lowest proportion in the youngest (15-19 year olds; 3%; 256) and oldest (50 and over; 8%; 719) age groups.

Sex
Sex differences are reversed and more pronounced in the parent subgroup (74%; 6,889 female) compared to all participants (44% 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 16% of parents receiving support in April - June 2020 and increasing to 31% in the latest quarter.

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Ethnicity

Of parents accessing No One Left Behind support, 12% (1,137) were from a minority ethnic background, while this was true for 16% (129) 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, 16% (1,448) 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 22% 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, April 2020 to June 2023

Priority Family Groups

There were 820 parents in the most recent quarter (April - June 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):

- 179 (22%) were disabled,
- 480 (59%) were lone parents,
- 43 (5%) were mothers aged under 25 and 25 (3%) were fathers aged under 25,
- 194 (24%) were parents with three or more children,
- 37 (5%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,

- 126 (15%) 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 9,316 parents receiving support since year 2:

- 1,448 (16%) were disabled,
- 5,622 (60%) were lone parents,
- 940 (10%) were mothers aged under 25 and 371 (4%) were fathers aged under 25,
- 2,216 (24%) were parents with three or more children,
- 790 (8%) had a child aged under 12 months, and,
- 1,168 (13%) 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.

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 44,000 people supported under the No One Left Behind approach between April 2019 and June 2023, 13,953 people (32%) entered employment. Of those that entered employment; 5,406 people (39%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 1,696 people (12%) started modern apprenticeships and 180 people (1%) entered self-employment.

Data on the number of people in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks is reported for the first time. Of the 13,953 people that entered employment, 4,885 (35%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 4,712 (34%) at 13 weeks, 4,148 (30%) at 26 weeks, and 2,144 (15%) at 52 weeks after entering employment.

Additionally, 6,080 people supported (14%) entered further or higher education or training, 5,484 people (12%) gained a qualification, 2,103 people (5%) started work experience opportunities, 806 people (2%) started volunteering and 200 people (less than 1%) re-engaged with school.

Please see background 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 June 2023

Parents

Please note, the following statistics on parents are from year 2 (April 2020) onwards. Of the 9,316 parents supported under the No One Left Behind approach, 2,403 (26%) entered employment. Of those; 394 (16%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, 55 (2%) started modern apprenticeships and 88 (4%) entered self-employment.
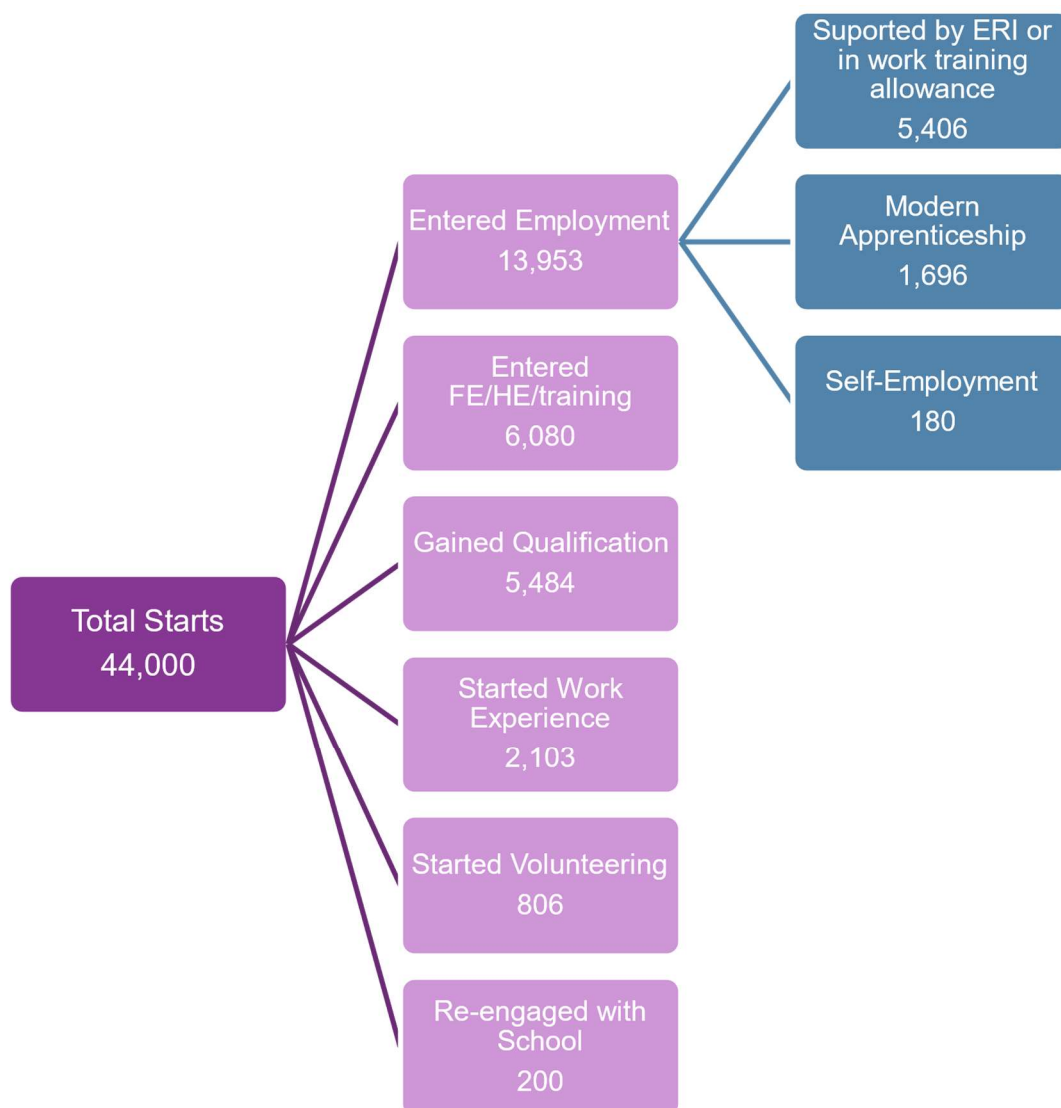
Data on parents in employment at 4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks is reported for the first time. Of the 2,403 parents that entered employment, 1,048 (44%) were in employment at 4 weeks, 1,020 (42%) at 13 weeks, 811 (34%) at 26 weeks, and 314 (13%) at 52 weeks.

Additionally, 895 parents supported (10%) entered further or higher education or training, 1,204 (13%) gained a qualification, 182 (2%) started work experience and 120 (1%) started volunteering.

Please see background for definitions on employment at follow-up.

Figure 7: Most parents achieving an outcome enter employment
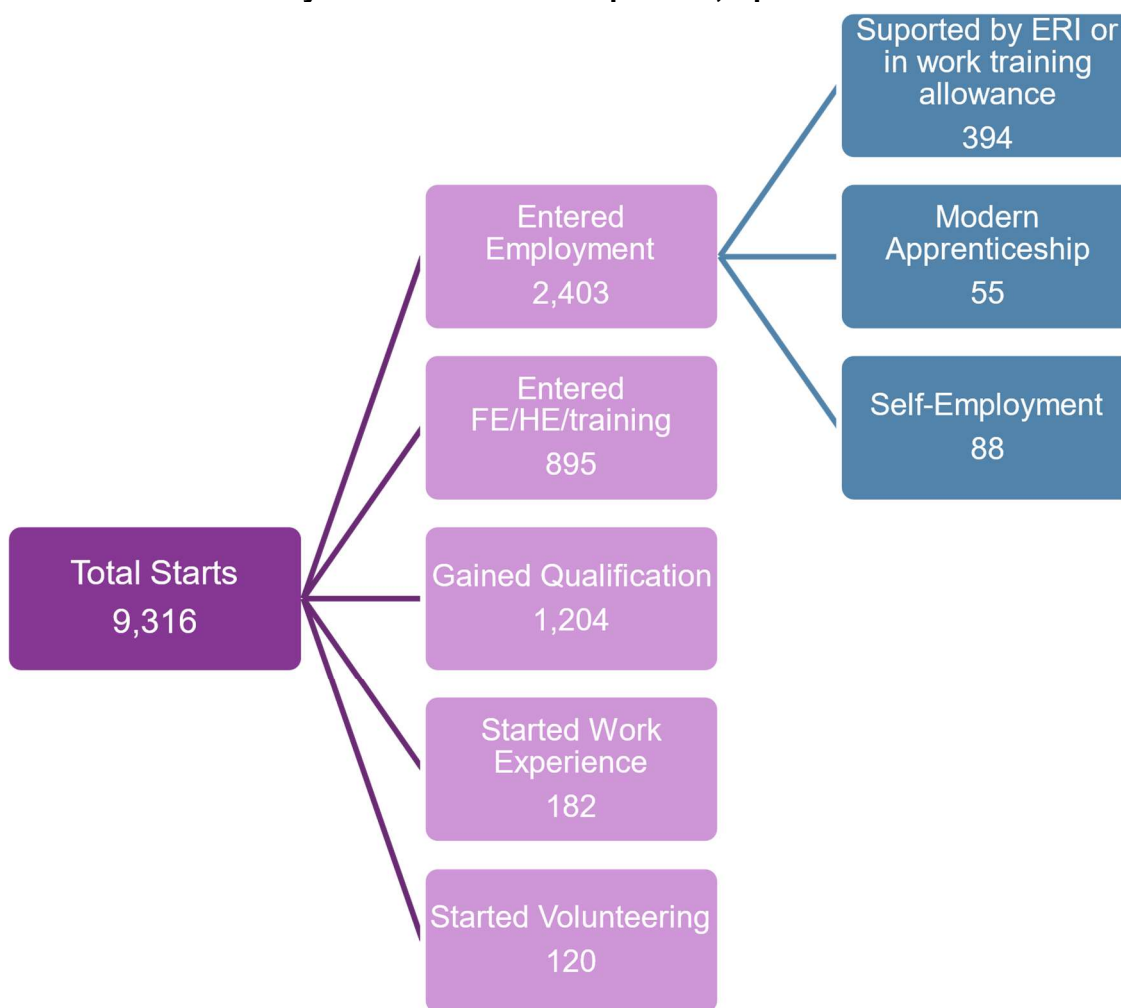**Outcomes achieved by No One Left Behind parents, April 2020 to June 2023**

Age

Progression split by age was reported for the first time in the last edition of this publication.

A total of 9,761 people aged under 25 entered employment. This is 36% of all under 25 participants. For those aged 25 and over, 4,100 entered employment. This is 25% of all participants aged 25 and over.

Of those people aged under 25 entering employment, 4,414 (45%) were supported by a subsidy to do so, while this was the case for 983 (24%) of those aged 25 and over. A higher proportion of people aged under 25 also started a modern apprenticeship (1,643; 17%) than for those aged 25 and over (49; 1%).

The proportion of people aged 25 or over that entered self-employment (141; 3%) was higher than the proportion of those aged under 25 (37; less than 1%). Whilst there was a slight difference in the proportion of those under 25 gaining a qualification (3,638; 13%) compared to those 25 and over (1,831; 11%), those under 25 were more likely to enter full time or higher education or training (4,718, 17%) than those in the older age group (1,324; 8%).

Please see underlined background information 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 in the Background Information.

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 (April - June 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.

See Fair Start Scotland background section for further details.

How many FSS referrals and starts have there been?

There were 90,918 referrals to FSS between its launch in April 2018 and the end of June 2023. Of the total referrals to FSS, 60,763 started receiving employability support, including 5,076 re-joins to the service.

In the most recent quarter, referrals decreased by 18% from 5,439 last quarter to 4,487 this quarter. Compared to the equivalent quarter in 2022, referrals are 3% lower. Starts have decreased by 11% from 3,557 last quarter to 3,160 this quarter. This is 1% 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, April 2018 to June 2023
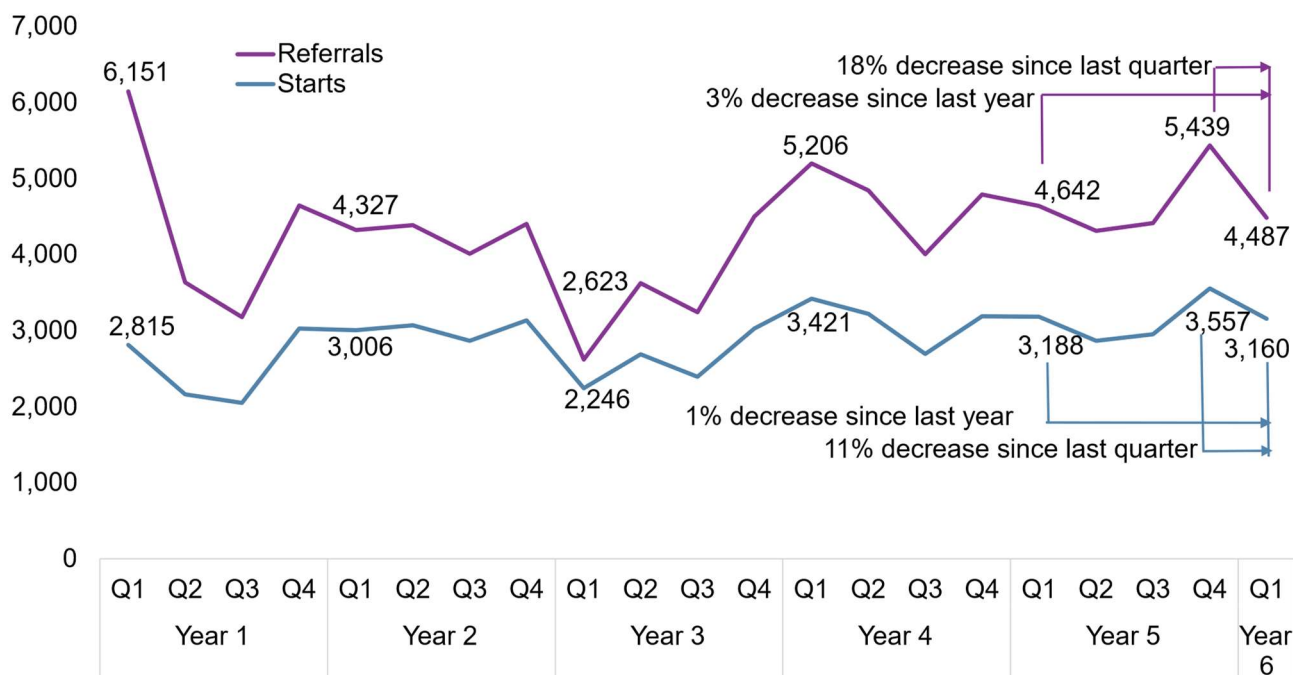
Who are the people that have joined FSS?

Of 60,763 FSS starts, 55,687 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 55,687 people when they first joined FSS.

Gender

Most people joining FSS are male (62%; 34,325) while 38% (21,224) 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 (April - June 2023), 37% of participants were female.

Age

The most common age group of people joining FSS is 35-49 years (29%; 16,213), followed jointly by 50 years old and over (25%; 13,738) and 25-34 years (25%; 13,854). The lowest proportion is the 16-24 years old age group (20%; 10,896).

The proportion of participants in the youngest and oldest age groups tends to show larger fluctuations than those in the 25-34 and 35-49 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 most recent quarter, the proportion was 22%. 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 21%.

Ethnicity

Overall, 7% (3,856) of people joining FSS were from a minority ethnic background and 74% (41,190) were white with ethnicity unknown for the remaining 19% (10,641) of participants. In the most recent quarter, 16% of participants were from a minority ethnic

background and 79% were white. This continues an increasing quarterly trend in the proportion of participants from a minority ethnic background.

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 5% of all participants. This compares to the higher proportions observed in earlier years (year 1: 17%, year 2: 31%, year 3: 29%).

Please see Data Quality in background information for more details on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on equality response rates.

Disability

Disability is defined based on answers to two questions related to long-term health condition (LTHC) and ability to carry out activities. Please see Methodology in background information for more details.

Overall, 44% (24,404) of FSS participants have a disability compared to 48% (26,459) who do not. This was unknown for the remaining 9% (4,824) 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, 40% of people reported a disability.

Figure 9: Most people starting on Fair Start Scotland are male, white and live in an urban setting

Equality Characteristics of People Starting on Fair Start Scotland, April 2018 to June 2023
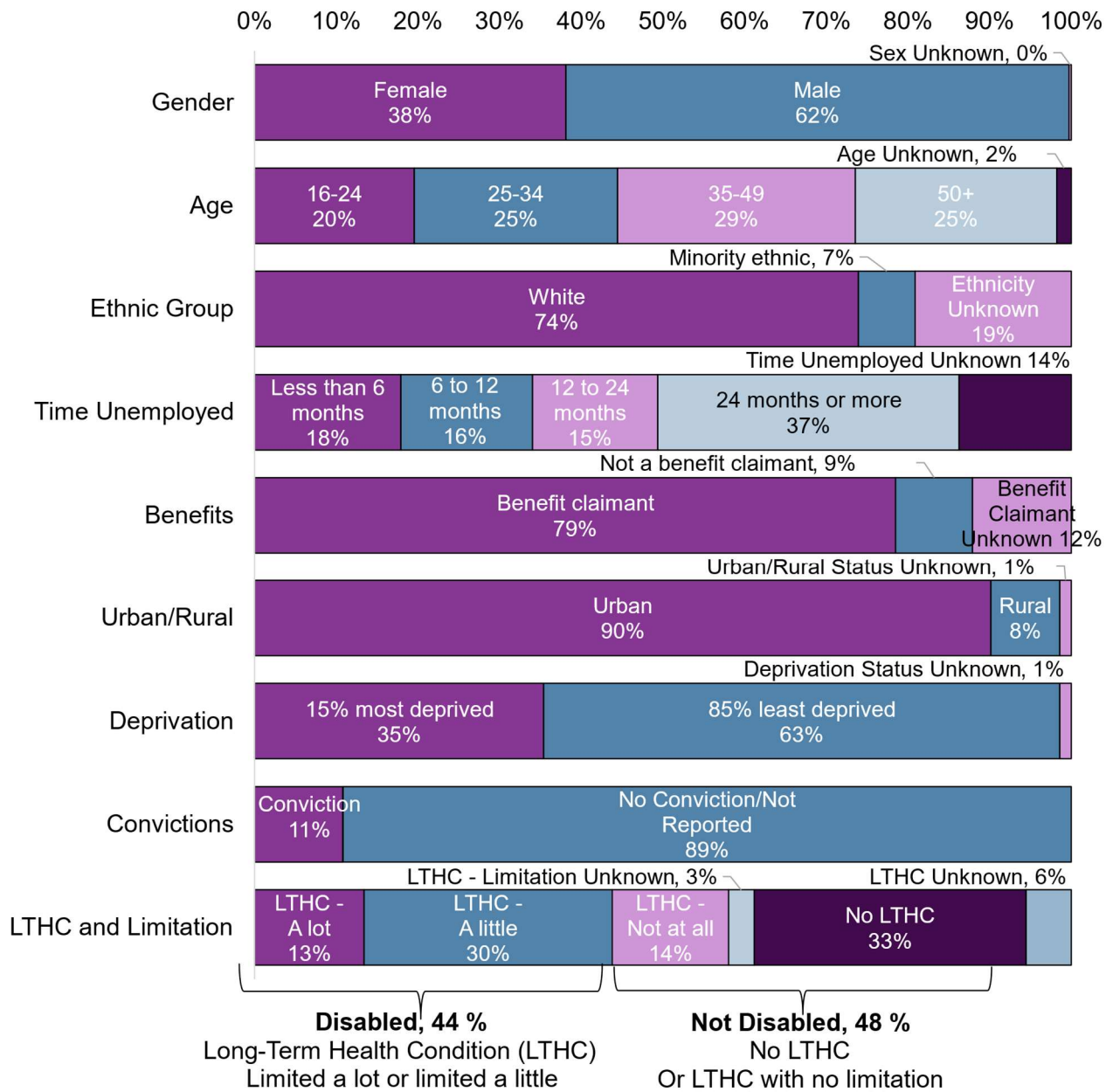
Long-Term Health Condition

Overall, 61% (34,072) of people joining FSS reported a LTHC, 33% (18,542) reported no LTHC, with 6% (3,073) unknown. In the most recent quarter, the proportion was 51% for the third quarter in a row. This is the lowest proportion to date.

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%; 18,350), followed by a long-term illness, disease or condition (17%; 9,199).

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, April 2018 to June 2023
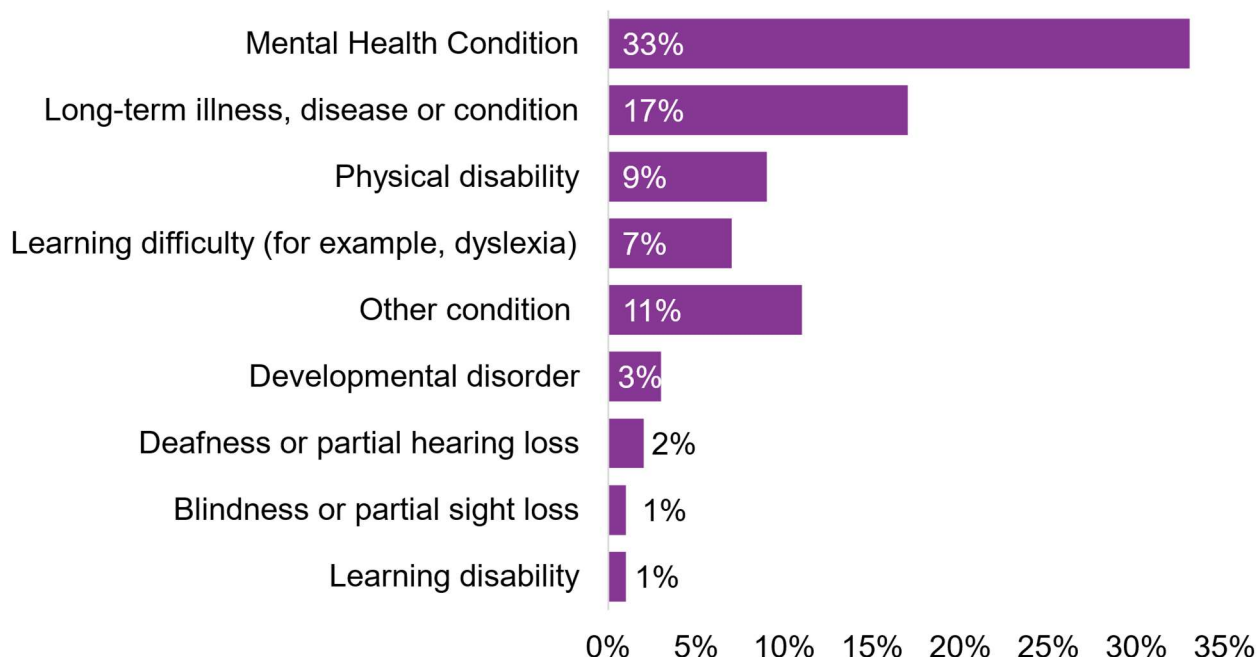
Parents

Annual data on parents was first published in May 2021. From August 2022, quarterly parent data covering year 5 onwards has been published.

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 Methodology in background information for more details.

Of people joining FSS for the first time 11,968 were parents, while there has been 13,052 total parent starts on the service since its launch in April 2018, including re-joins.

In the latest quarter, of the 792 parent starts on FSS there were 683 people who were parents accessing FSS support for the first time. These 683 parents represented 26% of all 2,581 people accessing FSS support for the first time in this quarter. While lower than the proportion in the previous quarter, it is the same as the equivalent quarter in the previous year.

Parents and families from certain groups are at higher risk of being affected by child poverty (see background information on priority groups). Of the 683 parents accessing support for the first time this quarter:

- 33% were disabled (37% overall),
- 35% were lone parents (44% overall),
- 2% were mothers aged under 25 (4% overall),
- 19% were parents with three or more children (18% overall),
- 37% had a child aged under 12 months (26% overall), and,
- 22% were from a minority ethnic background (12% overall).

Convictions

People with a conviction may find it harder to enter employment. There has been 6,024 people (11%) joining FSS that reported having a conviction. In year 4 (2021/22) this peaked at 13% but reached a low point of 8% in year 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 189 people (7%) reported having a conviction.

Benefit Claimants

The majority of people (79%; 43,716) 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 improved since. In the most recent quarter, 2,042 (79%) people reported claiming benefits.

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 (37%; 20,555) joining FSS have been unemployed for 24 months or more. A similar proportion have been unemployed for less than 6 months (18%; 9,970), between 6 – 12 months (16%; 8,983) and 12 – 24 months (15%; 8,533). This information is unknown for the remaining participants (14%; 7,638). In the most recent quarter, 804 people (31%) reported being unemployed for 24 months or more.

Deprivation

There has been 19,716 people (35%) joining FSS who lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. This has remained consistent across years with the highest proportion (38%) in year 1 (2018/19) and the lowest proportion (33%) in years 3 (2020/21) and 5 (2022/23). In the most recent quarter, 930 people (36%) lived in one of the 15% most deprived areas. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

See background information for more detail on deprivation.

Urban/Rural

People living in rural areas may be more limited for job opportunities compared to those living in urban areas. There has been 4,680 people (8%) joining FSS who live in a rural area, while 50,226 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, 221 people (9%) reported living in a rural area. Geographic information was unavailable for 1% of participants.

See background information for more detail on Urban Rural classification.

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 28,770 early leavers from the 60,763 FSS starts (including 5,076 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, 25,276 (52%) of starts have left early. This rate is based on a cohort of 48,228 starting between the period April 2018 and June 2022 (including 3,017 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 (58%); compared with those with a LTHC that did not limit daily activities at all (47%). Younger participants (16-24) were also more likely to leave early (55%) compared to the older participants (50%) (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 (56%) 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 (43%), 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 June 2022

Category	Percentage
All Participants	52%
Female	52%
Male	53%
16-24	55%
25-34	54%
35-49	52%
50 and Over	50%
White	53%
Minority Ethnic	52%
Unemployed less than 6 Months	43%
Unemployed 6 to 12 Months	46%
Unemployed 12 to 24 Months	52%
Unemployed 24 Months or More	57%
Benefit Claimant	54%
Not a Benefit Claimant	46%
Urban	53%
Rural	49%
15% Most Deprived Areas	56%
85% Least Deprived Areas	51%
Conviction Reported	60%
No Reported Conviction	51%
Disabled	54%
LTHC, limited a lot	58%
LTHC, limited a little	53%
Not Disabled	50%
LTHC, not limited at all	47%
No LTHC	52%

How many FSS starts entered and sustained employment?

Overall, there has been 21,351 job starts in total from the 60,763 FSS starts, including the 5,076 re-joins to the service, since the launch of FSS. Of these job starts, so far 14,630 have sustained employment for at least 3 months (13 weeks), 11,219 at least 6 months (26 weeks), and 7,625 at least 12 months (52 weeks), as of June 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
Job Starts	12 month support	April 2018 to June 2022	48,228	3,017
3 month job outcome	12 month support + 3 months	April 2018 to March 2022	45,040	2,450
6 month job outcome	12 month support + 6 months	April 2018 to December 2021	41,850	1,864
12 month job outcome	12 month support + 12 months	April 2018 to June 2021	35,928	689

For those starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 37% (17,796 of 48,228) have entered employment, 27% have sustained employment for 3 months (12,211 out of 45,040), 22% have sustained employment for 6 months (9,325 out of 41,850) and 18% have sustained employment for 12 months (6,338 out of 35,928).

However, when starts enter employment, there tends to be a high level of sustainment. Of those starts entering employment, 73% sustained employment for 3 months (12,211 out of 16,623 job starts up to March 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 (9,325 out of 11,409 job starts up to December 2021 – 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 (6,338 out of 8,122 job starts up to June 2021 – 12 months support plus 12 months job outcome).

Gender

There are no gender differences in job starts (37%) but female participants are more likely to sustain employment with differences increasing over longer sustainment periods. For example, 28% of female starts sustain employment for 3 months compared with 26% 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 older participants, however, there is little difference in job sustainment for 6 and 12 months. The youngest age group (16-24) 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% enter 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, however the difference ranges between 2-3 percentage points. For example, 39% of starts from a minority ethnic background enter employment compared to 36% 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 (80%), 34% of these starts entered employment compared to 57% of starts not claiming a benefit. This gap is similar across each sustained job outcome, for example, 15% of starts claiming a benefit sustain employment for 12 months compared to 31% 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, 27% 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 slightly 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, while for 12 month sustained employed, this was 19% and 16%, respectively.

Urban/Rural

There is 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 13,052 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
Job Starts	12 month support	April 2018 to June 2022	9,693	662
3 month job outcome	12 month support + 3 months	April 2018 to March 2022	8,891	543
6 month job outcome	12 month support + 6 months	April 2018 to December 2021	8,052	418
12 month job outcome	12 month support + 12 months	April 2018 to June 2021	6,373	169

For those starts where enough time has passed in pre-employment support and for outcomes to be achieved, job outcomes show 37% (3,603 of 9,693) have entered employment, 28% have sustained employment for 3 months (2,484 out of 8,891), 23% have sustained employment for 6 months (1,881 out of 8,052) and 19% have sustained for 12 months (1,205 out of 6,373). These proportions are comparable to those observed for all participants.

Priority Family Groups

Disabled Parents

The proportion of disabled parents entering employment is similar (31%) to disabled participants who are not parents (32%) but lower than both parents who are not disabled (40%) 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, 16% 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 (37%). This remains the case for 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 (34%) than for all parents (37%). This remains the case for sustained employment. For example, 12% of lone parents 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 similar (36%) to all parents (37%). 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 similar (36%) to all parents (37%). However, job outcomes are 2 percentage points lower for all sustainment lengths. For example, 17% 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 similar (38%) to all parents (37%). This generally remains the case for sustained employment. For example, 18% of parents from a minority ethnic background sustained employment for 12 months 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 background information for further details on definitions and data comparisons.

Background Information

1. Official Statistics and Official Statistics in Development

Statistics for No One Left Behind are official statistics in development. Official statistics in development are official statistics that are undergoing a 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.

Statistics for Fair Start Scotland are official statistics. While no longer considered in development, user feedback and comments are still welcomed to help improve this publication.

More detail on designation of statistics can be found at: UK Statistics Authority - Types of official statistics (opens in a new window).

2. Reporting Periods

- **No One Left Behind:** This publication reports on all participants who received support from 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2023, except for parents where data covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2023.
- **Fair Start Scotland:** This publication reports on all referrals and starts from 13 March 2018 to the end of the most recent quarter (30 June 2023). The service was launched on 3 April 2018. There was an opportunity for referrals to be made and starts to be recorded for a short period prior to the launch of the service, commencing 13 March 2018. Referrals and starts which occurred before the official launch of the service are reported along with the April 2018 data.

Data are not seasonally adjusted and therefore changes between quarters should be regarded with caution. Decreases in participant numbers are typically observed in October-December due to the festive period, with a subsequent increase observed in January-March. This can also impact on April-June as data subsequently levels off. Comparing a quarter with the same quarter in previous years reduces the impact of seasonality. Please note, quarterly data is also subject to more natural fluctuation compared to annual data.

3. Key features of No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland

No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland are different approaches to employability support and can vary in what support is offered and what groups are targeted. This is likely to impact on both the demographics and outcomes of participants across both approaches. It is therefore not recommended to make direct comparisons.

Table 3: Key features of No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland

	No One Left Behind	**Fair Start Scotland (FSS)**
Start	April 2019	April 2018
Delivery	Scottish and Local Government are working with third and private sector organisations to deliver support which aims to be more joined-up and responsive to the needs of individuals of all ages and to local labour market conditions.	FSS is delivered by a mixed economy of public, private and third sector providers across nine geographical areas throughout Scotland. More information can be accessed at: mygov.scot - find a job (opens in a new window).
Support	The support provided may vary from short, focused interventions or longer term support, dependent upon individual circumstances.	FSS provides individualised one-to-one support to unemployed people facing the greatest challenges to obtaining work, including people with disabilities, convictions, care-experienced young people, single parents, refugees, minority ethnic groups, and those living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.
Duration	Varied	Support is available for 12 months, or up to 18 months in some cases
Re-engagement	The flexible, person-centred support of No One Left Behind acknowledges that participants may experience support differently, based on their individual circumstances and needs – for example, being able to disengage and re-engage in support as required.	Following the extension of FSS beyond the initial three year period, people who have previously received support can re-join the service. There must be a break of at least 13 weeks since the person left FSS to become eligible. As a result, the total number of starts in years 1 to 3 equals the number of people but from year 4 onwards and thus overall, the total number of starts is not the same as the number of people who have received support.

Referral	Individuals can self-refer to No One Left Behind support, or be referred through a variety of channels, including educational providers, Local Authorities, third sector organisations, Jobcentre Plus, and other local services.	A referral can be made by an individual's Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Work Coach. Alternatively, participants can be signposted to FSS through third party organisations or they can self-refer to their local provider if they meet specific criteria. Third-party referrals relate to referrals from outwith JCP.

For other services across the UK, features of service design (e.g. whether voluntary or mandatory, eligibility criteria) and definitions (e.g. how job outcomes are measured) may differ to a greater extent.

4. No One Left Behind Background Information

Data collection

All participant data is collected and recorded on management information systems by Scottish Local Authorities. Data returns are submitted to the Scottish Government on a quarterly basis.

Statistics on No One Left Behind outcomes were first published in February 2021 for year 1 participants, derived from the aggregate data that was collected during that period. Since then year 1 data has been developed and combined with data currently collected for subsequent periods, which has allowed more detailed information for year 1 participants, including their achievements to be released.

Scottish Government carry out quality assurance on returned data, for example ensuring values are returned in the correct range and comparisons are made over time and between Local Authorities. There are specific areas of data quality which Scottish Government is working on improving with Local Authorities as shown in the table 4 below.

Starts

People are registered to start receiving support by a Local Authority Key Worker.

Ethnicity

The No One Left Behind data template collects ethnic group data as defined by the Scottish Government's recommended question (2022 Census) on ethnic group using the question: What is your ethnic group?

The following options are available:

- A. White – (Scottish), (Other British), (Irish), (Gypsy Traveller), (Polish), (Roma), (Showman / Showwoman), (Other)
- B. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- C. Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British – (Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British), (Indian, Indian Scottish, Indian British), (Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish, Bangladeshi British), (Chinese, Chinese Scottish, Chinese British), (Other)
- D. African/Scottish African/British African – (African Scottish, African British), (Other)
- E. Caribbean or Black – (Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish, Caribbean British), (Black, Black Scottish, Black British), (Caribbean or Black – Other)
- F. Other Ethnic Group – (Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British), (Other ethnic group)
- G – (Prefer not to say), (Not recorded)

It is important that results are presented in as much detail as possible but this is often not possible due to small numbers, therefore categories are often combined. While this may hide inequalities that occur between separate ethnic groups, it allows some analysis by ethnicity to be carried out.

For the purposes of this report, category A is presented as White, and categories B, C, D, E, and F are presented as Minority Ethnic. Category G is categorised as Unknown. The term "Minority Ethnic" aids narrative and provides a concise terminology. The terminology used aligns with Scottish Government guidance (opens in a new window).

More detailed breakdowns by ethnicity will be included in future editions when sample sizes allow.

Disability

Before the introduction of the SMF Data Reporting Template (July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities; October 2022 for all Local Authorities), Local Authorities were issued guidance for collecting data on disability status which specified that disability status should be recorded as defined by the Equality Act (2010). Local Authorities then returned data indicating if a participant had a disability by responding, "Yes", "No", "Prefer not to say" or "Not recorded".

However, after the introduction of the SMF Data Reporting Template this approach was replaced by the introduction of two questions which define disability based on the Equality Act: i) Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? ii) Does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

The responses to these two questions are then used to define if a participant is disabled as defined by the Equality Act (2010). If the answer to the first question is "yes", and the answer to the second is either "yes, a lot" or "yes, a little" then the participant is defined as disabled.

 Further information can be found here: Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 (opens in a new window).

Parents

Parent data for No One Left Behind was collected from the start of year 2 (April 2020 onwards), including data on lone parents and age of youngest child. Number of children and disabled child within family were also collected from the start of year 2. Both were updated when the SMF Data Reporting Template was introduced (from July 2022 for 13 Local Authorities; October 2022 for all Local Authorities); to number of dependent children and disabled child or adult within family, respectively. The latter allowed better alignment with the 'families with a disabled person' priority family group. Whether parents were living with dependent children was also introduced with the SMF Data Reporting Template.

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 note that the data presented in this publication and the supplementary statistical tables differs in some aspects from the priority family group definitions due mainly to its focus on participants rather than family units. For example, if a participant's partner is a mother under 25 the participant would not be included in the counts for a family type with a mother under 25 as the participant themself is not a mother under 25, therefore differing from the 'families with a younger mother (under 25)' priority family type.

Economic Status at Start Date

The economic status of participants when support commences. This is not updated if a person re-engages. Through International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines, all people aged 16 and over can be classified into states of economic activity: in employment; unemployed; or economically inactive. Economic activity definitions align to ILO definitions however, No One Left Behind also has an at school category and participants aged under

16 can also be classified into one of the three economic activity states noted as opposed to the under 16 ILO classification.

Unemployed

Under ILO guidelines, anybody who is without work, available for work and seeking work is unemployed. The UK applies this as anybody who is not in employment by the above definition, has actively sought work in the last 4 weeks and is available to start work in the next 2 weeks, or has found a job and is waiting to start in the next 2 weeks, is considered to be unemployed.

Economically Inactive

Those who are not in employment and are not unemployed by these definitions are considered to be economically inactive. There are a number of reasons why someone who is not in work may not be actively seeking work. For example many students in full-time education would not seek work, neither will some sick or disabled people, those who have retired, or those who are looking after a family or home, and many other reasons.

Outcomes

Employment

In general, anybody who carries out at least one hour's paid work in a week, or is temporarily away from a job (e.g. on holiday) is in employment. Also counted as in employment are people who are on government supported training schemes and people who do unpaid work for their family's business.

Only Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs), in-work training allowances and Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) opportunities paid directly to the employer count toward the total of entering employment. Other subsidies such as Long Term Unemployed opportunities, Young Person's Training Allowance and ILM opportunities not paid directly to the employer are not counted towards employment.

Modern apprenticeships and self-employment count towards entering employment. Participants may be counted as starting a modern apprenticeship or entering self-employment and as receiving a subsidy such as ERI or in-work training allowance.

Further/Higher Education Outcomes

Courses expected to achieve a minimum qualification of National Certificate (NC), or equivalent. NCs are designed for full-time delivery over one year (or part-time over two years). They are aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults in full-time education and are at SCQF Levels 2-6. For more information see: National Certificates (NCs) and National Progression Awards (NPAs) - SQA (opens in new window).

Duration of Outcomes

Local Authorities contact participants at set follow-up intervals (4, 13, 26 and 52 weeks) and record their status (e.g. in employment, in further/higher education, in training or in school). Participants do not need to have sustained employment for the full follow-up period (e.g. 4, 13, 26 or 52 weeks). They could enter employment, leave, then have returned to employment by the follow-up point and so be counted as being in employment at this follow-up.

While Local Authorities actively contact participants at set follow-up intervals to record their status, participants do not always engage with them. This means there will be a number of

follow-ups that are missed, and so the count of participants in employment at each time period is likely an undercount.

Enough time may not have passed for some participants to reach later follow-up points.

Duration of support and outcomes

Outcomes are reported for all starts to No One Left Behind, therefore some participants will have been supported through the programme for a short duration and will not have had the opportunity to achieve outcomes at the time of publication.

Table 4: Summary of No One Left Behind areas of data quality improvement

Source of Error	Description	Mitigation
Start dates	Participants can disengage and re-engage for support as often as they need, potentially with a long period of time between engagements. While Local Authorities are encouraged to always report a participant's initial start date and not to update when a participant re-engages, start dates have been updated in some cases. This leads to participants shifting between quarters and leads to variations in both overall numbers, as well as those reported for each characteristic, between quarters	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify this issue. The importance of not updating start dates when a participant re-engages is written in the corresponding data guidance. We quality assure individual Local Authority reports and go back to specific Local Authorities when needed. We discussed this issue at the Scottish and Local Government Data and Reporting Group which meets every quarter to discuss data collection
Age	Participants can disengage and re-engage for support as often as they need, potentially with a long period of time between engagements. While Local Authorities are encouraged to always report a participant's age at start date and not to update when a participant re-engages, ages have been updated in some cases. This leads to participants shifting between age groups.	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify this issue. The importance of not updating age when a participant re-engages is written in the corresponding data guidance. We quality assure individual Local Authority reports and go back to specific Local Authorities when needed.
Updating information	According to the data guidance, certain characteristics can be updated (e.g. trans status or disability), as more information becomes available at a later date. This means responses can change between data submissions, which could lead to a reduction in unknowns. However, occasionally, this has led to changes in the data (e.g. changing ethnic group) – this might be the result of more accurate information becoming available, but can lead to shifts in the data	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify this issue. We have increased the volume and level of quality assurance that we carry out on individual Local Authority reports, allowing us to go back to specific Local Authorities with detailed descriptions of issue we have found.
Unique IDs	Unique IDs should be unique to each participant and should remain the same for their duration of support. However, Local Authorities might have more than one ID per person on their	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify this issue. The importance of unique ID remaining the same for each participant is written in the corresponding data guidance.

	system, depending on their stage of support, or might potentially give a participant a new ID if they have been disengaged for a long time. This could lead to IDs changing over time and artificially inflate numbers. It also means we cannot link back to previous data recorded on our old template, and makes it difficult for us to identify if someone has achieved more than one outcome of the same type.	We quality assure individual Local Authority reports and go back to specific Local Authorities when needed. The introduction of National Insurance number can help identify unique individuals.
Reporting of participants	Each quarter, we ask Local Authorities to report all new participants for the new quarter, in addition to all previously reported participants, providing updated information where appropriate. While some details can be updated (e.g. disability status and outcome details), the actual individuals reported should remain the same as previous quarters. However, in some cases participants disappear from previous quarters, or new ones appear. This leads to variations in both overall numbers, as well as those reported for each characteristic, between quarters.	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify this issue. Guidelines of the data that Local Authorities need to provide is written in the corresponding data guidance. We quality assure individual Local Authority reports and go back to specific Local Authorities when needed.
General	When comparing current data with previous quarters, we sometimes find numbers of certain groups (parents, under 25, and 25 and over) appear to decline or see minimal change. There are a number of potential reasons for this: 1. Changes and upgrades to management information systems. This can lead to issues, for example, participants being missed where they have been reported from external delivery partners. This should improve over time. 2. Updated information on parental status, for instance, whether a participant lives with dependent children. Only parents still living with dependent children are counted in the total for parents. 3. Duplicated entries from earlier reports have been fixed and removed from the current report.	We are working closely with all 32 Local Authorities to rectify these issues. Guidelines of the data that Local Authorities need to provide is written in the corresponding data guidance. We quality assure individual Local Authority reports and go back to specific Local Authorities when needed.

	4. Participants incorrectly being removed when they reach the end of their 52 week sustainment period. As there are no more updates for these individuals, some Local Authorities might incorrectly remove them. Between quarters 3 (Oct-Dec) and 4 (Jan-Mar), changes might be small due to it being quieter over the Christmas period.	
Specific data quality issues in this publication	Please note it was not possible to update progression data for North Lanarkshire in the most recent quarter and thus progression related data for North Lanarkshire in this publication and the accompanying Excel tables reflects achievements up to the January - March 2023 quarter (Year 4 Q4). This only applies to progression related data as data on participants starting support and their respective characteristics are presented up to the most recent quarter of April - June 2023.	We are working with North Lanarkshire to rectify this for the following publication.

5. Fair Start Scotland Background Information

Tables

Detailed statistics on the number of referrals to FSS, number of starts and job outcomes are presented in the accompanying tables. The caveats that apply to national data also apply to Local Authority data.

Data sources

There are two sources of information for the statistics presented in this publication.

The Scottish Employability Tracking System (SETS) is the Scottish Government referrals tracking system for FSS. Information on those referred to FSS ('referrals') and outcomes relating to those individuals, including those who join FSS ('starts'), enter employment ('job starts'), and subsequently achieve employment outcomes ('job outcomes'), is recorded on SETS. It tracks the progress of referrals made to the service and provides management information in relation to performance. It does not contain any personal characteristics.

The statistics in this release are based on figures extracted from SETS on 24 July 2023.

An excel data return is provided quarterly by FSS service providers with personal characteristic information for participants such as age, sex, long-term health condition, disability and ethnic group. It does not contain any service level information.

Both data sources contain an anonymous ID number used to link them together to create a final dataset for analysis.

Information provided by service providers

The statistics on age, gender, long-term health conditions, disability and ethnic group are derived from information collected by service providers when an individual joins FSS. Information is usually collected via a combination of face-to-face interviews, SG equalities monitoring forms, phone conversations and electronic questionnaires using SG recommended questions and published using related output classifications.

Methodology
Referral

The referral numbers published in this release are net figures which excludes rejected referrals. The vast majority of these were duplicates.

Starts

The 'start rate' i.e. the percentage of people who joined FSS is calculated by dividing the number of starts by the number of referrals within a given period. People who were referred in the most recent quarter, particularly at the end, may not have had time to join the service by the end of the month. Because of this, the start rate for the most recent quarter should not be used for considering the overall performance of the service.

Before April 2021, participants were only able to receive support from FSS once, therefore the number of starts on the service is the same as the number of unique people who have received support in years 1 to 3. With the extension of FSS beyond the initial three year period, from April 2021 people who have previously received support may re-join the service. There must be a break of at least 13 weeks since the person left FSS to become eligible. As a result of this change, the total number of starts in FSS, from the beginning of

year 4 onwards and thus overall, is not the same as the number of people who have received support.

Early leavers

An early leaver is someone who exits the service before the end of the pre-employment support period without achieving an employment outcome.

Job starts

When an individual progresses into work, service providers record a 'job start' for the individual on SETS. An individual can enter employment more than once; however the figures in this publication are for the first recorded job. For individuals that re-join FSS, where applicable, their first recorded job during their initial period on the service will be counted as will their first recorded job during any subsequent periods on the service.

Employment outcomes

- A 3 month (13 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 13 weeks out of 16; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 13 out of 16 weeks.

- A 6 month (26 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 26 weeks out of 30; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 26 out of 30 weeks (breaks in employment must total no more than 4 weeks).

- A 1 year (12 month, 52 week) job outcome is achieved when a participant stays in a job, or is self-employed, working 16 hours per week or more, for at least 52 weeks out of 60; that is, continuous employment, but not necessarily in the same job, lasting 52 out of 60 weeks (breaks in employment must total no more than 8 weeks).

Disability

Disability is defined by two questions: i) Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? ii) Does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

If the answer to the first question is "yes", and the answer to the second is either "yes, a lot" or "yes, a little" then the participant is disabled as defined by the Equality Act (2010).

Ethnicity

The Fair Start Scotland data template collects ethnic group data as follows:

- A. White – (Scottish), (Other British), (Irish), (Gypsy Traveller), (Polish), (Other white ethnic group)
- B. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- C. Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British – (Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British), (Indian, Indian Scottish, Indian British), (Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish, Bangladeshi British), (Chinese, Chinese Scottish, Chinese British), (Other)
- D. African – (African, African Scottish, African British), (Other)
- E. Caribbean or Black – (Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish, Caribbean British), (Black, Black Scottish, Black British)

- F. Other Ethnic Group – (Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British), (Other)
- G. – Not Recorded – (Not recorded)

It is important that results should be presented in as much detail as possible but this is often not possible due to small numbers, therefore categories are often combined. While this may hide inequalities that occur between separate ethnic groups, it allows some analysis by ethnicity to be carried out.

For the purposes of this report, category A is presented as White, and categories B, C, D, E, and F are presented as Minority Ethnic. Category G is categorised as Unknown. The term "Minority Ethnic" aids narrative and provides a concise terminology. The terminology used aligns with Scottish Government guidance (opens in a new window).

More detailed breakdowns by ethnicity will be included in future editions when sample sizes allow.

Parents

Data on lone parents was collected from the launch of FSS in April 2018. Data on age of youngest child and number of dependent children was additionally collected from late 2019 and we worked with providers to implement and improve the collection of this data for the remainder of year 2, resulting in better quality data for year 3 onwards. As a result, the percentage of parents increases over time, but this is likely to be a result of data collection changes rather than changes to the number of parents supported.

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 note that the data presented in this publication and the supplementary statistical tables differs in some aspects from the priority family group definitions due mainly to its focus on participants rather than family units. For example, the data covers participants accessing FSS support that are disabled parents but does not include families with a disabled child, therefore differing from the 'families with a disabled adult or child' priority family type.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD - opens in a new window) is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). If an area is identified as 'deprived', this can relate to people having a low income but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation may find it more difficult to find employment.

Urban Rural Classification

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (opens in a new window) provides a consistent way of defining urban and rural areas across Scotland. The classification is based upon population, as defined by the National Records of Scotland, and accessibility, based on drive time analysis to differentiate between accessible and remote areas in Scotland. The classification is available in multiple forms, including 2-fold as used in this publication, as well as 3-fold, 6-fold and 8-fold classifications.

Data quality

Some inconsistencies in responses to the questions on long-term health conditions and disability, as reported by service providers, were identified and amended as follows:

Of those people who responded 'No' to the question asking whether respondents had a physical or mental health condition lasting, or expected to last 12 months or more:

- 5,627 starts answered the second question on extent of limitation (135 yes, a lot; 616 yes, a little; 4,876 not at all). These responses were excluded from the totals.
- 3,241 starts reported one or more long-term health condition (3,615 conditions in total were recorded). These conditions have been excluded from the count of long-term health conditions.

Comparisons with other employment services' data

Please use caution when comparing FSS data with data from other employment services across the UK, as features of service design (e.g. whether voluntary or mandatory, eligibility criteria) and definitions (e.g. how job outcomes are measured) may differ.

Local Authority data

Please use caution in interpreting data at lower levels of geography, as numbers are small in some instances and there are many factors contributing to variations in totals across Local Authorities. The Scottish Government's evaluation of year 1 of FSS suggests factors include the local reputation of FSS staff, the prior roles of staff and the reputation of previous services, the range of other existing services available in the area, the relationship between FSS provider staff and JCP work coaches, and the range and scale of local job opportunities.

Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on Fair Start Scotland

This publication includes data for FSS over a period from March 2020 onwards when the COVID-19 pandemic, associated public health measures and economic and labour market impacts have caused several changes which impact the statistics published here.

Key changes to FSS include the following:

1) Early in the pandemic, The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) refocused their work to deal with the increased demand for benefit claims, so FSS referrals from DWP were paused between April and June 2020.

2) As a result of this, there was an increase in the proportion of referrals to FSS through other avenues, particularly from FSS providers' own marketing efforts.

3) FSS switched from face-to-face interaction to delivery via phone calls and online interaction. This affected the equalities data collected, with a decrease in people disclosing information on protected characteristics like ethnicity on joining FSS. Data collection methods were adapted to the new circumstances in consideration of data protection guidance. It also caused disruption to some providers where data was held in the workplace and was not available to staff working from home. There were particularly high levels of missing data for ethnicity in July to September 2020. Data collection has since improved. During the quarter April-June 2021 some providers had a limited return to meeting participants in person, depending on the local situation and participant's preference.

4) There was a relaxation of rules specifying how often participants must be in contact with providers, from March to September 2020. This meant that some people who would otherwise be considered to have left the service during this period stayed on FSS.

5) There were fewer job vacancies in Scotland for approximately one year. ONS data showed a sharp reduction in job vacancies in Scotland during April 2020 to approximately 40% of the level seen in February 2020, finally returning to February 2020 levels by April 2021. Lower levels of job vacancies would be expected to affect rates of job starts and outcomes in FSS, but numbers of job starts in FSS didn't necessarily follow trends in job vacancies.

6. 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.

7. Coherence

Links to other relevant documents and published collections:

- 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)

8. Glossary of Acronyms

Table 5: Glossary of acronyms used in this publication

Acronym	Meaning
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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