



Adult Education Budget Annual report 2023-2024

March 2025



West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

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Foreword Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire



I am creating a Region of Learning and Creativity, where everyone can get the skills and support to succeed in a stronger and brighter region.

Through our devolved Adult Education Budget, we are opening doors for our residents to new opportunities and good work, putting skills at the heart of our inclusive growth ambitions and giving our economy a major boost through skilled talent.

As we continue to maximise the impact and reach of our funding, I am proud to say we can once again tell an overwhelmingly positive story about the impact on West Yorkshire residents and businesses.

We are developing innovative, place-based solutions in close partnership working with our excellent further education and adult education providers, to offer a holistic,

person-centred approach:

- Our learning programmes have been accessible in over 450 locations across West Yorkshire, ensuring residents have local access to reduce barriers to participation.
- We are doubling down on our efforts to make learning more inclusive. Through intensive targeting, the proportion of learners living in the most acutely deprived neighbourhoods increased to 42%. We were also able to further increase the number of jobless learners for the third year in a row.
- 12,700 learners moved into a job, volunteering or further learning; this is equivalent to 45% of learners with a known destination, a notable increase on the 34% figure recorded in 2022/23.
- Our innovative Out of Court Pathways pilot programme - delivered to women by women - supports women who are at risk of reoffending with a bespoke programme of employability and confidence building. The cohorts are small but early indications show 100% positive progressions.

A total of 43,730 learners were supported through West Yorkshire's devolved Adult Education programme, with 73,100 new course enrolments during the 2023/24 academic year.

With our ambitious West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan now in place and the devolved integrated settlement being introduced in April 2026, we are gearing up for even greater freedom to co-produce and commission provision to reach the most disadvantaged of our residents, raise the skills levels of our workforce and ensure businesses have the right skills to boost productivity so everyone can be part of West Yorkshire's growth journey.

Chair of the Economy Committee

Over the past three years, we have made significant progress in reaching, upskilling and supporting our residents in their next steps towards learning and good work, fuelled by the Adult Education Budget.

This report is the third annual update on progress since budgets for adult education have been devolved from central government to West Yorkshire – bringing decision-making and much needed funds closer to the people affected. A collaborative partnership approach has been central to creating a more efficient, flexible and innovative adult education system.

We are continuing to deliver employer-led training to address acute skills shortages. Our *Route to Success* bus driver programme has trained over 160 drivers in West Yorkshire and is being adopted across other regions as an exemplar of best practice.

We are also addressing critical workforce issues in the early years and adult social care, rail and telecoms sectors.

We are developing West Yorkshire's skills for the future. Starts on Essential Digital Skills courses, which target the fundamental skills needed for work and life, grew by 62% compared with the previous year, rising to around 2,100. This follows net growth of more than 80% in the previous year.

West Yorkshire is fortunate to have major opportunities waiting in the region's high-growth sectors in digital and tech, financial and professional services, health and life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering, creative and cultural and the green economy as well as the delivery of transformational investment programmes including Mass Transit and housing retrofit.

But we need the right skills base to convert opportunities into reality. Further devolution will provide the tools to continue our joint efforts to improve our approach to commission and develop learner and employer-responsive provision.

Councillor James Lewis

Chair of the Economy Committee

Although from 1 August 2024 Adult Education Budget (AEB) is known as Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and Community Learning (CL) is Tailored Learning (TL), as this report is referring to 2023/24 delivery the terms AEB and CL will be used throughout.

The following terminology will be used throughout this report:

Terminology	Description
Adult Education Budget (AEB)	Total allocation, including Community Learning
Community Learning (CL)	Community Learning - a sub-set of the Adult Education Budget, this is first step, non-regulated learning. The purpose of Community learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds. Only Local Authorities and FE Colleges hold this funding.
Adult Skills (AS)	Refers to Formula Funded learning programmes: The amount of funding a provider receives is calculated using a set formula, based on factors like the type of course, its duration, the number of learners, and their achievements.
Free Courses for Jobs (FCfJ)	Level 3 programmes from a delegated fund
Learning Support	Meets the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, for learners who have an identified learning difficulty and/ or disability, to achieve their learning goal
Learner Support	Available to provide financial support for residents with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part/ continuing in learning (i.e., travel, equipment, fee waivers).

Purpose and Summary

This report summarises the position of Adult Education Budget in West Yorkshire for the academic year 2023/24: the priorities for investment and the possibilities available through devolution.

The report has a dual purpose:

- To state specifically what has been delivered in the third year of devolved AEB, in terms of impact on West Yorkshire residents.
- To consider the change of this impact in comparison to the previous year, explore the impact of the flexibilities introduced, and look ahead to priorities for the next year.

Summary

The report shows an overwhelming positive picture in the support that AEB and Free Courses for Jobs delivers for West Yorkshire's residents from a diverse range of backgrounds, with 44,000 residents supported to upskill through over 73,000 new course enrolments. Whilst this headline figure indicates a reduction in overall volumes from previous years, this is due in part to a shift in the profile of provision in 2023/24 towards programmes with higher rates, including at Level 3. This reflects the Combined Authority's strategy to maximise the impact of each aim and increase value for money.

- **There is a continued focus on 'priority' learners.** The proportion of Adult Skills starts that were fully funded (priority learners) through the programme in 2023/24 was 84%, a similar proportion to the previous year.
- **Funds are increasingly targeted to increase inclusivity:**
 - There was a substantial overall increase in the proportion of new learners from an ethnic minority group, growing from 57% in 2022/23 to 61% in 2023/24. This increase was reflected in all programme strands: the proportion grew from 62% to 64% for Adult skills, from 49% to 55% for Community Learning and from 49% to 50% for FCFJ.
 - The overall proportion of learners with a learning difficulty, disability or health condition grew from 17% to 18% year-on-year in 2023/24.
- **Young people accounted for a relatively large proportion of learners.** Around 5,500 Adult Skills and FCFJ learners were aged 19-23, making up 17% of all learners in these programmes. This is up from 15% in 2022/23. Since 19-23 year olds make up 11% of the 19-64 age group in West Yorkshire, it shows that the funds are increasingly aimed at younger learners.
- **There has been a continued focus on getting people into employment within the devolved AEB programme.** The proportion of Adult Skills and FCFJ starts for learners who were out of work (either unemployed or inactive) increased from 71% to 73% year on year.

- **More residents from the most deprived areas are accessing training.** During the 2023/24 academic year around 17,300 learners were residents in the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD decile 1). The proportion increases to more than one half for both Bradford (55%) and Leeds (52%). Year-on-year, the proportion of learners from the most deprived neighbourhoods grew slightly from 41% to 42% and is more than 4 points higher than the pre-devolution (2020/21) share of 37%.
- **More residents are gaining English, Maths or digital skills.** There were 24,000 starts on basic skills courses during the academic year, equivalent to 46% of all Adult Skills starts. This represents a six-percentage point increase on the basic skills share recorded in 2022/23.
- **The funds invested are giving residents their first ever qualifications, and raising skills levels.** Overall, 44% of starts by Adult Skills and FCFJ learners, or 23,700 in absolute terms, were for learning that represented progression during 2023/24. Around 14,900 starts, or 28% of the total, related to study for a first qualification for learners with no previous qualification.
- **Learner success is increasing year on year.** The overall success rate for the Adult Skills strand in 2023/24 was 88%, a small increase on the 87% recorded in 2022/23, following a similar increase in the previous year.
- **Tracking shows that more learners are progressing after their training.** Overall, 12,700 learners achieved positive progression in 2023/24 by moving into an education, employment or voluntary work destination; this is equivalent to 45% of learners with a known destination, a notable increase on the 34% figure recorded in 2022/23.

The picture for 2023/24 therefore demonstrates a strong focus on tackling disadvantage, reflected in the programme's engagement with deprived communities, jobless people, the low-paid and people with basic skills needs, including English language needs.

The partnership of providers continues to work together to improve strategic planning and relationships, while learning programmes have been accessible in over 450 locations across West Yorkshire, ensuring residents have local access to further reduce barriers to participation.

Devolution and the Adult Education Budget

In March 2020, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority) and Government agreed a transformative devolution deal to unlock the region's full potential and improve living standards for local communities through better transport, improved skills and stronger businesses, while tackling the climate emergency. This included control of the annual Adult Education Budget (AEB) to closer align spending on skills to the opportunities and needs in the local economy.

Government is now deepening devolution, and the Combined Authority is working towards a devolved integrated settlement from 2026/2027, which will enable bold, flexible and long-term investment where it will have most impact.

Until an integrated settlement is agreed, the Combined Authority receives its adult skills funding through separate funding agreements with specific purposes and ringfences. This includes AEB, funding for Skills Bootcamps and Multiply as well as allocating the Combined Authority's own core funding – gainshare – to support the Skills Connect offer (as covered in Appendices 1,2 & 3).

Devolution of AEB includes taking control of the then £65million annual budget for West Yorkshire residents and direct management of the training providers in West Yorkshire who deliver the funding provision. It also allows the region to set its own priorities for funding and allows the Combined Authority to align spending on skills to the opportunities and needs in the local economy. Devolved AEB went live in West Yorkshire in August 2021.

Around 60% of AEB across the country is now controlled by devolved areas. Department for Education (DfE) continues to fund AEB delivery in non-devolved areas.

What is AEB?

The principal purpose of AEB is to engage adults and provide them with the skills needed for entering and sustaining work, an apprenticeship or other further learning and to achieve the equivalent of GCSE and A Level qualifications. The funding pays specifically for learning programmes (predominantly qualifications) and provides an element of learner support funding for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

AEB supports the following legal entitlements by providing full funding for eligible learners:

- First Full Level 2
- First Full Level 3
- English and Maths
- Digital

In the national system, there are age restrictions regarding these entitlements, however as part of devolution we have removed these barriers and simplified access for West Yorkshire residents.

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Any adult over the age of 19 is eligible for support through AEB. In particular, the following people are entitled to access free training if they are:

- Unemployed and seeking work
- Wanting to achieve Level 2 in Maths or English for the first time
- Earning a low wage (currently less than £25,000)
- Wanting to achieve basic digital skills
- Wanting to achieve their first GCSE or A Level equivalent qualification and are aged between 19 and 23.

AEB Funding Lines

AEB funding is made up of 4 components. The first 3 components are commonly referred to collectively as Adult Skills (AS) Funding:

- **Formula funding** – funding per learner and per qualification delivered under Adult Skills programme strand. The funding rate achieved is based on the size/type of qualification and is weighted depending on a learner's status (e.g. unemployed) and based on areas of disadvantage. This constituted around £59.4 million of the West Yorkshire AEB pot in 2023/24, and funds sector specific vocational programmes, along with English, Maths, ESOL, digital skills and employability programmes.
- **Learner support** is available to provide financial support for residents with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part/ continuing in learning (i.e., travel, equipment, fee waivers).
- **Learning support** meets the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, for learners who have an identified learning difficulty and/ or disability, to achieve their learning goal.
- **Community Learning** is a sub-set of the Adult Education Budget. It is exceptionally flexible and operates on an open book accounting basis, with providers able to set their own fee policy, based on a set of funding principles. The purpose of Community learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds. Only Local Authorities, FE Colleges and Designated Institutions (e.g. the Workers' Educational Association) hold this funding. Community Learning allocations in 2022/23 accounted for £8.73 million of the allocated AEB funds in West Yorkshire, which was 14% of the total AEB pot.

The West Yorkshire AEB Strategy

As part of preparation for devolution, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority developed and consulted upon the West Yorkshire AEB Strategy to determine the priorities and principles for the devolved fund.

The five priorities for funding are:

- Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment
- Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work
- Make learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents
- Increase the supply of skills to support key sectors in West Yorkshire
- Improve resilience by identifying and delivering the skills needed for the future

The ambition for devolution was to:

- Make the skills system more responsive and accessible through stronger local influence with all training providers
- Focus on our 'place', and ensure the right training and support offers are made to fill the skills gaps which are most prevalent locally
- Deliver a more efficient system by focussing on quality of provision and the impact it has on learners
- Make sure learning opportunities are joined up to local progression opportunities in life and work
- Work closely in partnership with providers to bring together planning of the wider skills and post-16 education system

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To deliver this, the following key values and behaviours were agreed for both the Combined Authority and prospective providers to uphold:



Place-based

Develop a place-based curriculum offer and wrap-around support with a clear focus on learner progression



Outstanding

Strive to deliver outstanding provision that puts the needs of learners and employees at the centre of delivery



Partnership

Work with partners and stakeholders in a positive and effective way, sharing best practice and improving the impact of skills system across West Yorkshire



Openness

Communicate openly and transparently with stakeholders, learners and partners



Progression

Develop approaches and partnerships which support adults to progress and prosper within their communities and employment



Subcontracting

Subcontract with integrity and ensure that positive outcomes for learners and employers is at the heart of all arrangements

This report provides data and examples of the progress made in these areas in year 3, and the alignment to the funding priorities.

Free Courses for Jobs

In September 2020, the Prime Minister announced the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. As part of this, DfE introduced Free Courses for Jobs (FCfJ), previously known as National Skills Fund (NSF) Level 3 offer for adults.

Given that its offer is fundamentally an extension of the Adult Education Budget's eligibility, the delivery of FCFJ has been aligned to the West Yorkshire AEB Strategy in terms of its objectives and priorities.

FCfJ investment helps adults to train and gain the valuable skills they need to improve their job prospects. It supports the immediate economic recovery and future skills needs by boosting the supply of skills that employers require.

Any adult aged 19 and over, who does not already have a level 3 qualification (equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or A levels) or higher, can access hundreds of fully funded level 3 courses to support them to gain new skills and access opportunities to gain employment.

In addition, from April 2022, any adult in West Yorkshire earning below the Real Living Wage or unemployed has been able to access these qualifications for free, regardless of their prior qualification level.

This offer is part of the government's long-term commitment to help everyone gain skills for life. Courses are available in a variety of lengths, to support adults to get the skills they need to boost their careers.

DfE identified the sectors for this offer by reviewing the criteria used to identify qualifications for the high value course premium (HVCP), and adding other relevant sectors based on an assessment of economic need and strategic priority. Combined Authorities continue to have the flexibility in 23/24 to offer qualifications outside of the national list, which West Yorkshire Combined Authority has utilised to approve additional qualifications for delivery that meet the skills shortages of West Yorkshire.

Headlines on Progress (2023/24)

Performance Against Priorities

The following section sets out key messages relating to delivery of devolved AEB in West Yorkshire in 2023/24 academic year to demonstrate the scale and nature of the impact of the programme.

Evidence of impact is mapped against the key outcomes / priorities presented in the Combined Authority's AEB Strategy and also align to the DfE's priorities for devolved adult skills.

Priority: Support the unemployed to gain and sustain employment

The Combined Authority's AEB Strategy prioritises supporting the unemployed to gain and sustain employment through the development of economically valuable skills. In support of this priority, the objectives focus on increasing participation of people in 'good work', and ensuring unemployment support is connected with skills development, particularly working with Job Centres.

In 2023/24, jobless learners accounted for nearly three-quarters (73%) of starts on Adult Skills and FCFJ provision – more than 39,000 starts in total. The proportion of starts for jobless learners was higher than in both 2021/22 (69%) and 2022/23 (71%).

For Adult Skills, 54% of starts in 2023/24 were for learners who were out of work but actively seeking and available for a job, while 19% of starts were for learners not looking for work and/or not available to start work (economically inactive). The programme plays a key role in moving inactive learners closer to the labour market.

Turning to FCFJ, the employment status profile is different, with greater engagement of employed learners. There were 730 employed learners in 2023/24, contributing 54% of starts in this strand (up from 43% in the previous academic year). There were 550 unemployed learners, accounting for 40% of starts, whilst inactive learners contributed 6% of total starts.

More than half (54%) of starts for unemployed learners related to learners who had been out of work for a year or more, with 30% relating to people who had been unemployed for three years or more. **This demonstrates a strong focus on the longer-term unemployed who are more likely to face skills-related barriers to employment.**

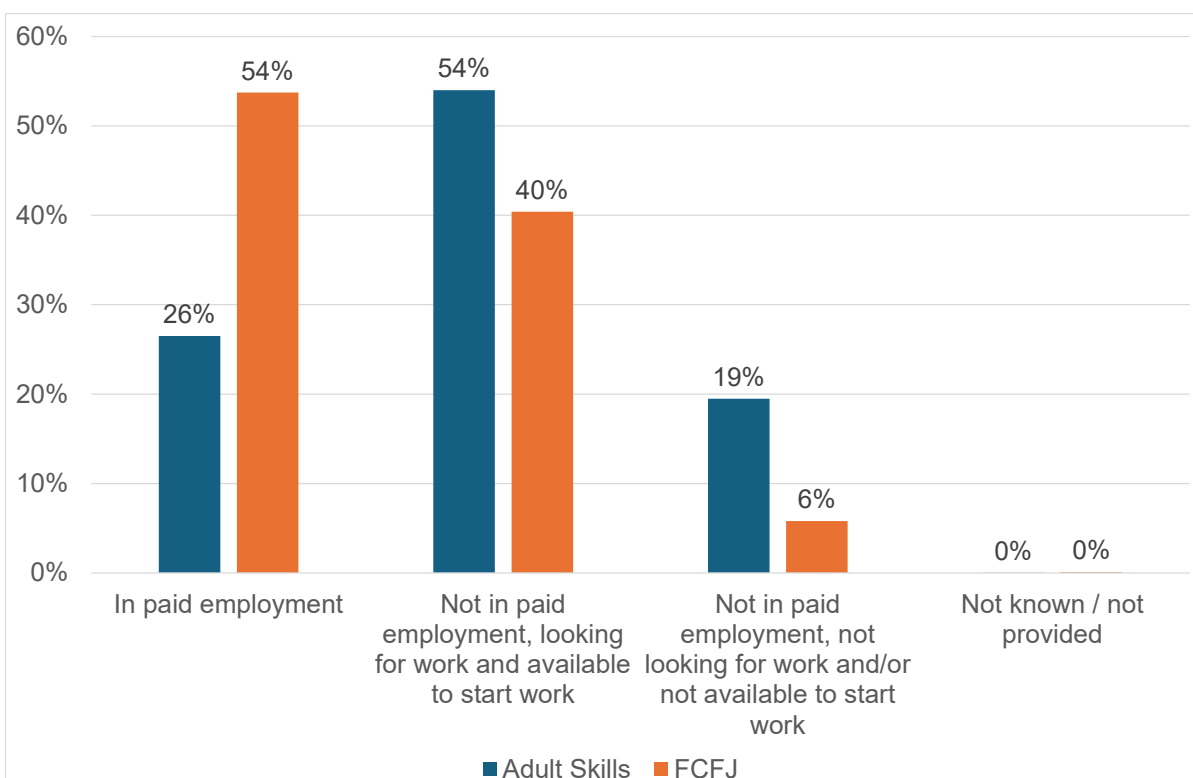
Jobless learners have a strong need for support from the programme. During 2023/24, 64% of starts for unemployed learners related to learners with no formal qualifications or a highest qualification below Level 2. The equivalent figure for inactive learners was 78%, whilst it was lower for employed learners at 45%.

A sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) gives jobseekers the opportunity to apply for jobs, with support in the form of pre-employment training, a short work placement and a guaranteed job interview or help with the application process. During 2023/24, 560 starts on SWAPs were supported through the AEB programme.

The Combined Authority's measure of positive progression shows when a learner moves from unemployment or inactivity to a positive destination, such as employment, education or

voluntary work. Overall, 12,700 learners achieved positive progression in 2023/24; this is equivalent to 28% of all learners and 45% of learners with a known destination; this compares with equivalent figures for 2022/23 of 17% and 34%. Extensive collaboration with the sector is taking place to improve the collection of destination data.

Figure: Profile of Adult Skills and FCFJ starts by learner employment status (% of total starts), 2023/24 academic year



Priority: Unlock progression opportunities and career adaptability through skills, particularly for those on low wages and with insecure work

This priority focusses on improving the career prospects of residents and connecting them to new job opportunities through increased skills.

There were 13,920 Adult Skills starts associated with employed learners in 2023/24, accounting for 26% of total Adult Skills starts, 71% of these were fully funded.

The majority (54%) of starts on FCFJ provision were for employed learners in 2023/24, this equates to 730 new learners in absolute terms. These learners either lacked a full Level 3 qualification at the start of their learning or were in low paid roles (see below). This shows the relevance of Level 3 vocational qualifications to progression in the workplace.

Over time, the programme has increased its focus on learners with a lower “employment intensity”. In 2020/21, 53% of total Adult Skills starts were for learners employed for 30 hours or less per week; by 2023/24 this proportion had increased to 59% of total starts.

The devolved AEB programme makes special provision for learners in employment who are paid below the Real Living Wage:

- 6,100 Adult Skills starts were supported through the low wage pilot during the academic year.
- A further 620 starts were supported through the low wage offer for FCfJ (level 3) learners.

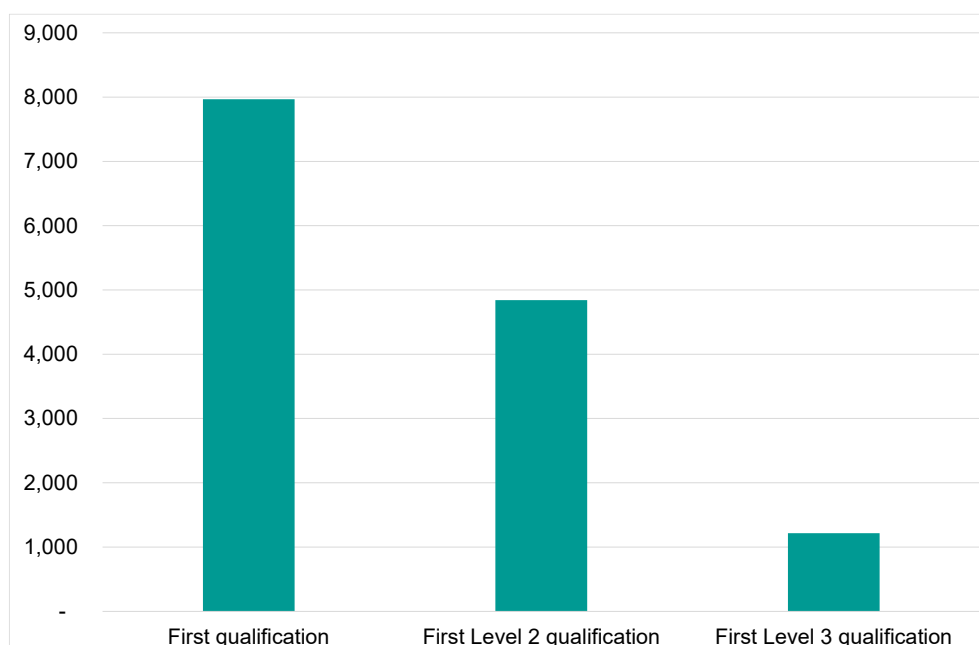
Priority: Make learning more inclusive to support disadvantaged residents

In order to meet this priority, the focus is on increasing participation and skills levels from disadvantaged communities and groups, building confidence of lower skilled learners to engage and progress in learning, and extending the reach of learning opportunities to a broader range of underrepresented groups.

Enabling learners to make crucial steps in their attainment is central to the objectives of the programme and to addressing disadvantage in the labour market. The programme supported a substantial number of people in this regard.

- In 2023/24 around 8,000 learners achieved their first ever qualification through the programme.
- Just under 5,000 learners achieved their first Level 2 qualification.
- And around 1,200 achieved a first Level 3 qualification.

Figure: Qualification attainment, 2023/24



The proportion of learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem increased from 17% in 2022/23 to 18% in 2023/24. There is, however, a recognition across providers that this number is not a true reflection as learners do not always disclose whether they have a learning difficulty or disability. Within Adult Skills/FCfJ, 7% of learners did not declare a learning difficulty, disability or health problem but received learning support, raising the proportion to 25% of total learners with a support need (when added to the 18% of Adult Skills/FCfJ learners with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem).

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The proportion of learners residing in the most acutely deprived neighbourhoods (IMD decile 1) was 42% in 2023/24, a slight increase on the 41% recorded for 2022/23. This represents intensive targeting since 22% of the region's population live in neighbourhoods falling within IMD decile 1.

Utilising data and Local Authority intelligence, areas of under engagement have been identified. This has led to two procured opportunities in Kirklees and Bradford with specified targeted delivery with under-represented groups and geographical areas. The impact of these will be evaluated in 2024/25.

Use of VCSEs across CL, whether as sub-contracted delivery or through robust partnerships, engages in communities and with individuals who traditionally would not engage with mainstream learning. Leeds City Council, who manage the largest CL allocation in WY, received an Outstanding Ofsted judgement in December 2023. The use of sub-contractors (predominately VCSEs) was praised in the report, *'Subcontractors deliver highly effective, bespoke programmes to support the most vulnerable learners to access education.'* More detail on CL is on page 23.

A large proportion of residents in the most deprived communities lack English language skills. In 2023/24, 55% of learners on ESOL provision were from IMD decile 1 neighbourhoods, compared with 44% of Adult Skills learners overall.

The Combined Authority has utilised its flexibilities to make it easier for eligible asylum seekers to access education by providing full funding for AEB courses. This has removed a financial barrier to accessing adult skills provision, such as ESOL courses. More information on changes and flexibilities can be found on page 20.

Extensive Partnership work with Police and Crime and Prison Service has been undertaken to support clear skills referral routes from Probation including those soon to be released from prison. A pilot is currently taking place in partnership with the West Yorkshire Police to create Out of Court Pathways for women to divert them from the Criminal Justice System. Using CL funding, a bespoke programme has been developed, delivered to women by women in a trusted location that includes employability, utilising role models, job matching, confidence and self-esteem support. The cohorts are small but early indications show 100% positive progressions.

A framework for assessing the broader impact of the pilot is being developed.

Across West Yorkshire, officers of the Combined Authority support ESOL partnership groups which engage with VCSEs delivering informal ESOL in the heart of communities. Providers are working to support progression from this engagement to funded progression courses where appropriate. The vast majority of the CL delivered through the Local Authorities is either directly delivered by VCSEs or working alongside them to support individuals in their community.

Providers work closely to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, for example providers visit recovery services and work with Housing Associations to take learning into trusted locations to hand- hold them to progression opportunities. Spend on ESOL aims has more than doubled between 2020/21 and 23/24 with further growth in 24/25. ESOL aims accounted for 24% of total Adult Skills spend in 2023/24. This level of investment is being reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance with other priorities.

Priority: Increase the supply of skills to support key sectors in West Yorkshire

This priority focuses on increasing skill levels, providing skills for key sectors, and ultimately working to decrease skills shortages.

West Yorkshire's Local Skills Improvement Plan aims to encourage alignment between further education and skills provision and the needs of the local economy, including areas of skill shortage. As the following table shows, LSIP priority sectors for West Yorkshire generally have good coverage in terms of provision across programme strands, with the potential for occupational progression. In particular, ICT provision is extensive at all levels and accounts for a substantial proportion of starts in the FCfJ strand. Health and social care is similarly strong with regard to both Adult Skills and FCfJ provision.

Other subjects that provide solid/proportionate coverage at the different levels include *Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Accounting and finance, Transport operations and maintenance* and *Business Management*. The proportion of totals starts for aims in the *Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies* subject area is arguably low relative to the scale of employment in related disciplines in West Yorkshire. In the case of *Warehousing and distribution* (which aligns with the LSIP priority of Transport and Logistics) there is significant provision at the foundation level through the Adult Skills strand, which is the predominant level at which demand resides for this occupational area (warehouse operatives).

Table: Profile of starts by LSIP subject priorities and programme strand, 2023/24 academic year

Sector Subject Area	Adult Skills starts	FCfJ starts	Adult Skills % of total starts	FCfJ % of total starts
Health and Social Care	7,310	470	13.9%	34.5%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2,020	30	3.8%	2.3%
<i>Of which: Transport operations and maintenance</i>	1,070	10	2.0%	2.9%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,740	40	3.3%	3.0%
Information and Communication Technology	2,450	460	4.7%	34.0%
Arts, Media and Publishing	1,270	10	2.4%	0.4%
Accounting and Finance	340	50	0.6%	3.7%
Business Management	670	40	1.3%	2.9%
Warehousing and distribution	510	-	1.0%	0.0%

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In response to increased employer demand highlighted by DWP, in 23/24 the Combined Authority procured bespoke training packages which include the licence to practice certificate that individuals require to gain employment in some key employment sectors. Previously these were not available for AEB funding in West Yorkshire. This provision is roll-on-roll-off and includes sector specific employability skills as well as the opportunity to achieve SIA badge (Security), CSCS card (Construction) or Forklift truck certificate (Warehousing) with guaranteed links to recruiting employers. Delivery took place in the final five months of 23/24 with 42% of learners across the three sectors gaining employment, the highest of which, 58%, in the security sector. This programme is continuing into 2024/25.

Partnerships with providers and NHS Trusts across WY deliver provision to support individuals to gain employment and to progress in the NHS. E.g. Maths and English qualifications are delivered to NHS staff and Trusts which supported 110 individuals to gain promotions and progress onto apprenticeships across a wide range of NHS roles.

WYCA continued to commission *Routes to Success* to address the regional shortages of bus drivers. Codesigned with the Confederation of Passenger Transport, with endorsement from the sector, a two-stage skills programme was launched to support individuals to gain roles as bus drivers. The model has subsequently been adopted across other MCAs and to date it has trained more than 166 drivers in West Yorkshire.

Delivery continued with specialist providers to engage and deliver telecommunications, digital infrastructure and rail engineering skills with established relationships to employers with vacancies. On L2 and L3 Telecoms and Digital Infrastructure, 63% of unemployed learners progressed into employment and on Rail Engineering, 55% progressed. These progressions were achieved without including outcome payments within the commissioning structure.

Targets are included to increase engagement with underrepresented individuals in these sectors. Although women engaging with telecoms and rail is still low (8% were female), providers are actively promoting and recruiting provision that is designed around caring responsibilities as well as working with employers to offer working conditions that are more flexible. A female only telecoms course took place with positive response from the learners.

Level 3 programmes in Early Years and Adult Social Care have provided skills, knowledge, and leadership capabilities to address the critical demands of these sectors. These qualifications have supported career progression for aspiring and current practitioners while addressing a pressing workforce need in these sectors. 49% positively progressed into employment, further learning or volunteering. This provision ensures a pipeline of skilled professionals who can care for more children and adults, comply with regulatory requirements, and maintain the high standards expected in early years education and health and social care.

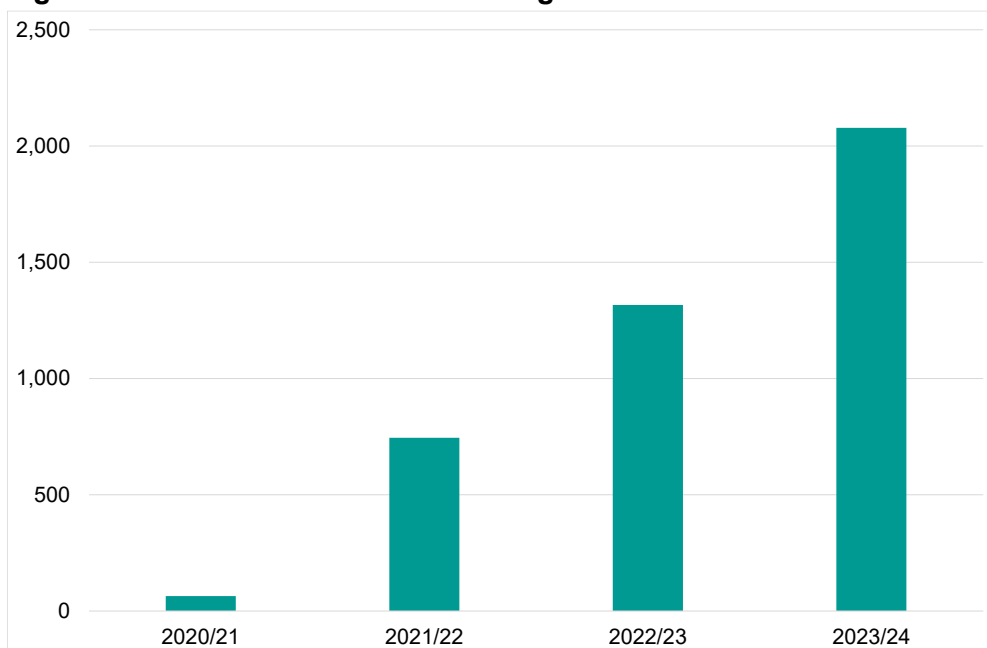
The latest destination data for 2023/24, generated by the ILR, shows a comprehensive improvement in performance across all headline indicators, with an increase in the number of positive outcomes and a higher rate of positive progression.

Priority: Improve West Yorkshire’s resilience by developing skills for the future

Digital skills are increasingly essential in the modern workplace, for changing economic needs and the climate emergency. Improving levels of basic and intermediate digital skills, and the flexible delivery of these, supports inclusion and workplace progression.

Starts on Essential Digital Skills courses, which target the fundamental skills needed for work and life, grew by 62% compared with the previous year, rising to around 2,100. This follows net growth of more than 80% in the previous year.

Figure: Trend in starts on Essential Digital Skills aimsa



The broader digital (ICT) subject area (which excludes Essential Digital Skills aims) saw nearly 3,000 starts across the programme during 2023/24.

Around a third (34%) of all starts on the Free Courses for Jobs strand were for digital qualifications in 2023/24.

West Yorkshire Systemic Changes and Flexibilities

In consultation with West Yorkshire providers, local flexibilities have been implemented to enhance devolved provision in West Yorkshire. These are described and the level of take-up achieved under these flexibilities is examined in the following table. When considering volumes of take-up, it should be noted that this is primarily pilot activity.

Some of the flexibilities introduced during 2022/23 enabled large numbers of starts and therefore widened participation in the programme during 2023/24. This was particularly the case for full funding for asylum seekers, access to full funding for people in low wage employment and for the flexibility in Level 2 courses for 19-23 year olds. The value and impact of all the flexibilities piloted in 2022/23 is currently being reviewed.

Local flexibilities were also utilised for FCfJ provision. Combined Authorities were provided with the facility to nominate learning aims to meet local needs, in addition to qualifications in the national FCfJ offer. In total, there were around 390 starts funded through this flexibility, accounting for 29% of total starts on FCfJ.

Flexibility	Rationale	Impact
Increasing the low wage threshold	The threshold has been increased to the Real Living Wage, which is reviewed and calculated annually, to allow more residents on low incomes to undertake fully funded training.	• 6,100 Adult Skills starts supported through the low wage pilot during the academic year. • A further 620 starts were supported through the low wage offer for FCfJ (level 3) learners.
Expanding the age of entitlement for a 'first full level 2' from 19-23 to 19+	The expansion of the age of entitlement for a 'first full Level 2' qualification from 19-23 to 19+ in West Yorkshire signifies a positive shift for residents. With nearly 400,000 individuals in the region holding qualifications below Level 2, this change offers an opportunity for adults of all ages to pursue these qualifications (equivalent to 5 GCSEs A* to C or 9 to 4), without financial barriers, can undertake these qualifications for free.	• 70 starts under this flexibility during 2023/24. • 26% of starts were for unemployed learners and 44% for learners in employment.

	This change has contributed to our ambition to prioritise funding to those who are more in need, and to simplify eligibility to funds at point of access for the individuals.	
Expanding the 'Digital Entitlement' to ensure digital skills for all	Making sure everyone in Yorkshire and Humber has essential digital skills is a priority for the Combined Authority. Currently, nearly a quarter of adults in the region lack these vital skills for everyday life. Among them, 7% are completely excluded from basic digital tasks like using a device, a mouse or keyboard, connecting to Wi-Fi, or browsing the internet. Feedback from the sector suggested that the limited variety of approved qualifications was a significant reason for this. Working with the sector, efforts have been made to approve funding in West Yorkshire for more digital qualifications. This initiative provides people with the necessary skills by expanding the range of available qualifications.	• 300 starts during 2023/24 academic year • 83% of starts were for unemployed learners.
Test Pilot: Bridging programmes that support progression to Level 3	As a delegated fund, there is little ability to shape and design Free Courses for Jobs, but AEB can be used flexibly to support adults in progressing and taking up this opportunity. This pilot aimed to bridge the 'jump' between level 2 and level 3, particularly when an adult has been out of education for a while. Working with providers who have funding from 'Free Courses for Jobs' to create short 'bridging programmes.' These programs act as a steppingstone to longer Level 3 courses. They could include modules at Level 2 or Level 3, serving as a taste or a refresher, or even a package focusing on self-study or research skills etc.	• Around 60 starts during academic year • Among learners who undertook a Bridging programme 32 have progressed onto a Level 3 aim so far
Test Pilot: Increasing the number of Level 2 courses 19-23s are entitled to	It was identified that adults aged 19-23 face restrictions on the courses they can take due to rules about eligibility for a 'first full Level 2' qualification. This is a result of the combined authority ambition to provide adults with a substantial, GCSE equivalent	• 330 starts during 2023/24 academic year • 83% of starts for unemployed learners.

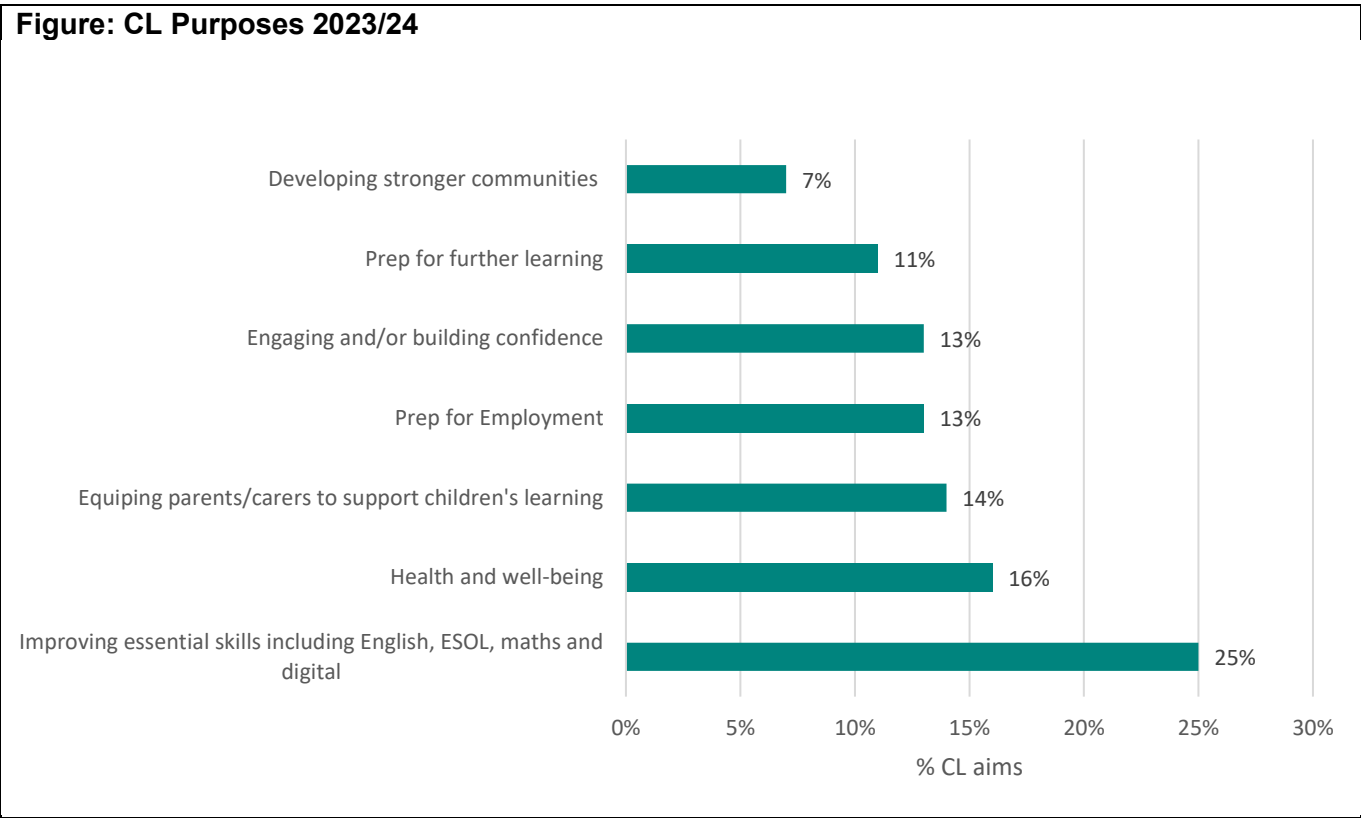
	qualification - but can disadvantage those who would benefit from shorter interventions. To address this, test pilots are in place to explore how we can offer more flexibility to 19-23 year-olds in accessing learning for their first Level 2 qualification. We have worked with providers to expand the range of qualifications available through AEB.	
Providing full funding for eligible asylum seekers	The Combined Authority has made it easier for eligible asylum seekers to access education by providing full funding. Currently, asylum seekers become eligible for AEB funding after residing in the UK for 6 months. However, they still face challenges in accessing courses. Because they cannot work and do not receive benefits, they don't meet the AEB 'unemployed' definition, making them only eligible for co-funding. While some providers waive fees where possible, many do not, creating a significant financial barrier for learners. This financial barrier significantly limits the accessibility of adult skills provision for asylum seekers, many of whom require English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support to help their integration into society.	• 2,450 starts during 2023/24 academic year, for 1,370 new learners

Community Learning

A Review of Community Learning (CL) took place in 2022/23 which demonstrated there is a clear rationale underpinning curriculum planning. Most of the funding is spent on targeted provision in disadvantaged communities, supporting individuals with the most complex and challenging lives: deciding to ‘go where no one else goes’. This is reflected in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) table below.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation	1 - 3	4 -6	7-10
% Learners accessing Provision	66%	18%	16%

The chart below shows the CL Purposes demonstrating how CL is being used in West Yorkshire with a strong focus on improving essential skills. Progression from CL to accredited provision is a priority. In 2023/24, 22% of learners who enrolled for a CL course subsequently enrolled on an Adult Skills course; this is equivalent to 2,600 learners in absolute terms. The wider outcomes collected in 2024/25 will provide further measures of impact.



Following the CL Review, the Employment and Skills Committee recommended in July 2023 to move towards a needs-based methodology for allocating CL funding at local authority level, this is to address the historic under investment in Kirklees and Bradford as highlighted in the CL review.

In November 2023, adult skills colleagues from all five Local Authorities carried out a deep-data-dive into existing provision, geographical and demographic reach and potential cold spots. Mapped to the CL objectives, there was a discussion around which indicators should be considered to identify need. These indicators included population, deprivation, rurality, those with no or low qualifications, unemployed/economically inactive and those limited by long term

health conditions. Population was weighted at 50% with a focus also on those from deprived neighbourhoods, with low level qualifications and not in work.

The data highlighted significant under-investment in Kirklees and Bradford, with low or no engagement on CL provision across several wards despite high levels of deprivation and low skills attainment.

Targeted growth funding was allocated to address “cold spots” in provision through the AEB Responsiveness pot which will be used to address this issue, working with all CL providers across these areas to address the needs.

In Bradford the data showed four IMD 1 wards with no engagement on CL. In collaboration with the Local Authority and consulting with local voluntary sector organisations, a pilot opportunity was designed to engage individuals only from these wards utilising the strong links the VCSE organisations have with many of these individuals. This unique programme must deliver the following:

- Engagement only from the four wards of Keighley West, Little Horton, Manningham, and Tong.
- Fully Funded Learners
- Individuals with low or no qualifications who have not engaged in formal learning for over 6 months
- Outputs: minimum of 80% of learners with one or more of the following positive progressions
 - Volunteering
 - Formal learning
 - Employment

Included in the pilot are contracted outputs and payment for sustained progression at month 2 and month 6. This is the first time that West Yorkshire Combined Authority AEB has utilised outcome payments for sustained progression. The payment facilitates the ongoing support and tracking following the end of the interventions.

There will be a number of learnings from this pilot, predominately the aim is to review which methods of engaging reluctant learners has been successful in achieving a sustained progression, which could be used to influence future CL delivery, justification and utilisation.

Employer Engagement

Over the past 12 months, officers of the Combined Authority have collaborated with regional employers to influence skills priorities. Intelligence feeds into policy development, commissioning plans and informs performance management discussions with contracted providers.

This includes:

- **Economy Committee and Business Board:** Provide updates and consult to inform and receive input on annual performance and strategic development, alongside local employment and skills boards. Membership across these includes employers, Local Authorities, Chamber of Commerce, local education/training providers including HEI, DWP, TUC and Voluntary Sector.
- **Regional employer panels:** Employer voice is fed in through the Mayor's Council board (made up of the region's largest employers including Morrisons, Sky, Haribo and Asda) and the West Yorkshire Business Board where employer representatives from key industries discuss what their skills needs are. These boards aim to ensure employer perspectives directly influence priority-setting and feedback on new initiatives, such as the development of the health tech Investment Zone priorities for skills.
- **Sector-specific and themed roundtables:** In the past twelve months the Combined Authority has organised several forums for specific industries to share skills challenges and opportunities, particularly in vital sectors and themed challenges to the local economy. This includes developing employer voice to shape the soft-skills gaps businesses face to shape our West Yorkshire Promise; convening employers and providers to understand the challenges in tutor shortages and technical pathways for key sectors; and more specific industry roundtables such as in Health Tech and Manufacturing.
- **Surveys and consultations:** Consultation with businesses on skills via targeted surveys to gather data on current and future skills gaps directly from employers particularly around barriers to employers taking on someone with health conditions and around leadership and management.
- **Collaboration with industry associations:** Leverage existing organisations that represent employers, such as FSB, CBI and other sector-specific associations including the Manufacturing Alliance and CITB. Specific collaboration and partnership work with the regional Chambers of Commerce on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), ensuring the priorities identified align with existing and planned adult skills activity.
- **Supply chain engagement:** Collaboration with colleagues working on large scale regional regeneration opportunities including Mass Transit and Retrofit to reach out to both large employers and their suppliers to get a broad perspective on emerging skills needs and challenges to ensure it is achievable.
- **Responding to government changes:** Discussions have taken place with employers to understand the effects of the recent budget changes (such as changes to NI) to factor in new challenges or barriers employers may face which could influence their recruitment and skills decisions. Local employers have been suggested to feed into national

government discussions held with Skills England, incl. on the development of the new Growth and Skills Levy.

- **Ongoing communication:** A team of business engagement officers maintain regular contact with employers through long standing relationships, newsletters, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings to keep the dialogue open and capture acute skills challenges businesses face in the region.

Future Priorities

West Yorkshire was the first region to publish its Local Growth Plan, setting out the region's priorities for growth. The Local Growth Plan was developed in partnership with local authorities, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, and education institutions. This ten-year plan incorporates five priorities and a series of short, medium and long-term actions, with skills as one of three key enablers, alongside investment and connectivity. The plan will deliver sustainable change as part of long-term, integrated investment for the region. The key headline growth sectors for West Yorkshire are Advanced Manufacturing, Green Economy and Emerging Technology, with a number of sub-sectors within this, fitting with wider regional ambitions, such as construction and retrofit, and health tech.

West Yorkshire (WY) has been awarded funding through both the NHS Health and Growth Accelerator and Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programmes, positioning it as one of only three regions in the UK to receive such support. In addition, the region will benefit from the Connect to Work programme funding, which collectively represents a substantial investment aimed at tackling economic inactivity driven by ill health. This aligns with the government's *Get Britain Working* mission to enhance both economic prosperity and population health.

The Combined Authority, ICBs, DWP/JCP and LAs are working closely together to ensure seamless integration of services. This includes a focus on first steps provision, such as CL opportunities, which in 2023/24 supported 30% of economically inactive individuals and delivered over 3,100 courses with the primary purpose to improve health and wellbeing. These efforts will complement and enhance W&H initiatives, particularly in alignment with the region's first Work and Health Plan. This comprehensive approach ensures that both work and health opportunities are fully aligned with the adult skills provision, maximising impact for the local population and contributing to broader regional goals of tackling economic inactivity and improving health outcomes.

In the next reporting year, there will be a focus on aligning sector-focussed training in key areas, across the AEB/Adult Skills Fund, FCfJ, and Skills Bootcamps offer, to ensure the appropriate funding is being used in order to meet the skills needs at entry level, through to technical and higher-level skills. There will also be a focus on early years training, with the development of a West Yorkshire Early Years Workforce Plan, exploring the routes into and through the sector and bolstering provision to ensure the quality and number of early years educators and leaders is sufficient to meet the increasing demand for early years places.

In line with the planned cycle, the initial AEB Strategy for West Yorkshire, developed ahead of devolution, will be evaluated this year. This will consider the impact of AEB (and wider delegated adult skills funds) and how well commissioned provision has aligned to the priorities. The evaluation will inform consultation on Adult Skills priorities over summer, after which the strategy will be refreshed, with a focus on meeting the ambitions of the Local Growth Plan and delivering Skills services under an integrated settlement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Use of DAM (Devolved Area Monitoring) codes for Monitoring and Measuring Impact

Increased monitoring developed in 23/24 utilising DAM codes for 100% pure Distance Learning and Targeted Employment Programmes (TEPs) will provide information on impact and utilisation of funds.

.Prior to 24/25, providers weren't obliged to identify whether there was a tutor taught element to delivery, resulting in an inability to identify pure Distance Learning courses. For 24/25 all providers must identify this provision defined as taking place asynchronously and accessed remotely, with no or minimal interaction with a tutor as 'Software Driven Distance Learning' using Dam Code 073. This will enable us to understand the demographics and prior attainment of the learners and progression.

Similarly for SWAPS and TEPs the ILR (Individualised Learner Records) data did not identify which courses had an employer link and from this how many progressed into employment. Two DAM codes were introduced, one to identify the SWAP/TEP and the other to be used when a learner progresses. The data will be reviewed at the six month point in the year onwards to measure the impact of the employer focussed provision.

Adult Skills Conference

In 2023/24, the scope of the AEB Conference was expanded to include all providers involved in Adult Skills across West Yorkshire. This included those delivering programs such as Multiply, Skills Bootcamps, AEB, and FCfJ, with the goal of unifying discussions and focusing on the impact of adult learning rather than the complexities of individual funding streams. The Mayor, the Combined Authority's CEO, and Inclusivity Champion presented on the region's strategic vision for adult skills, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and skills development. The conference featured a diverse range of workshops led by experts from Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE), Local Authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and internal colleagues, all aimed at supporting providers in enhancing their delivery and ensuring the success of adult learners across the region.

Provider Survey

A provider survey is undertaken annually to gather feedback on progress made and understand where to focus improvements for future years.

Providers were overall positive regarding the experience of devolution and impact made:

- 89% of providers found Key Account Manager relationship positive. ('Excellent. The relationship is very open and leads to better delivery and curriculum decision making')
- 72% of providers reported that they had already seen an impact of the funding rule flexibilities on their ability to engage WY residents.
- 74% of providers said they had already seen an impact in their ability to support eligible asylum seekers from the recent funding flexibility. ('This has been a huge benefit. We've been able to engage with so many learners that had previously been unable to access any funding at all, and therefore had no access to critical learning such as ESOL')

- 89% of providers have found Partnership meetings/conference extremely or very helpful, which is an increase of 19% since year 1, but there is more which could be done. ('Would like to see more sharing of best practice')
- Providers were largely positive about the impact of devolution on residents. ('Whilst still early to see fuller impacts, the flexibilities, determination to target those with greatest need and make up of providers is an excellent platform for impact.')
- 80% of providers have expressed positivity regarding communication methods, such as review meetings, data packs, newsletters, exception reporting, and webinars. ('Excellent use of management information to support discussion and actions.')

Adult Skills Awards and Region of Learning Ambassadors

In June 2024, the inaugural West Yorkshire Adult Learner Awards were held to celebrate the outstanding achievements of individuals involved in adult learning. The event was a great success, with over 150 nominations and 12 adult learners recognised for their dedication to learning and personal development, often overcoming significant challenges. The nominees came from a diverse range of backgrounds, including refugees, individuals who had learned English as a second language, and those returning to education after difficult childhood experiences. Some of the learners applied their new skills to support their communities, helping others overcome addiction, while others made remarkable progress, such as advancing from having no GCSEs to being close to completing a law degree while raising three young children.

The 2025 awards will continue to celebrate the efforts and successes of adult learners, as well as the dedicated educators who contribute to learning delivery across the region.

Building on the enthusiasm generated by the 2024 awards, nominated individuals were invited to become Region of Learning Ambassadors, a role launched by the Mayor in October 2024. These ambassadors will play a key part in supporting the Mayor's vision for West Yorkshire as a Region of Learning and Creativity, sharing their personal experiences with adult skills development and promoting future learning opportunities.

Evaluation - Future Plans

A review of the AEB Strategy for West Yorkshire has been procured for 2025 with a set of in-depth impact evaluations planned to inform this. This will include how well we are aligning funds to achieve the impact required for adult skills.

The AEB affords provision that is designed to engage adults in learning to provide them with the skills needed for employment, or other employment focussed outcomes. The data submitted through the Individualised Learner Records (ILR) is limited in its ability to demonstrate impact as a result of the fields available to providers. In considering options for evaluating this provision, the Combined Authority is looking to concentrate on a few areas of AEB provision and to test different innovative methods of destination data enhancement.

Case Studies

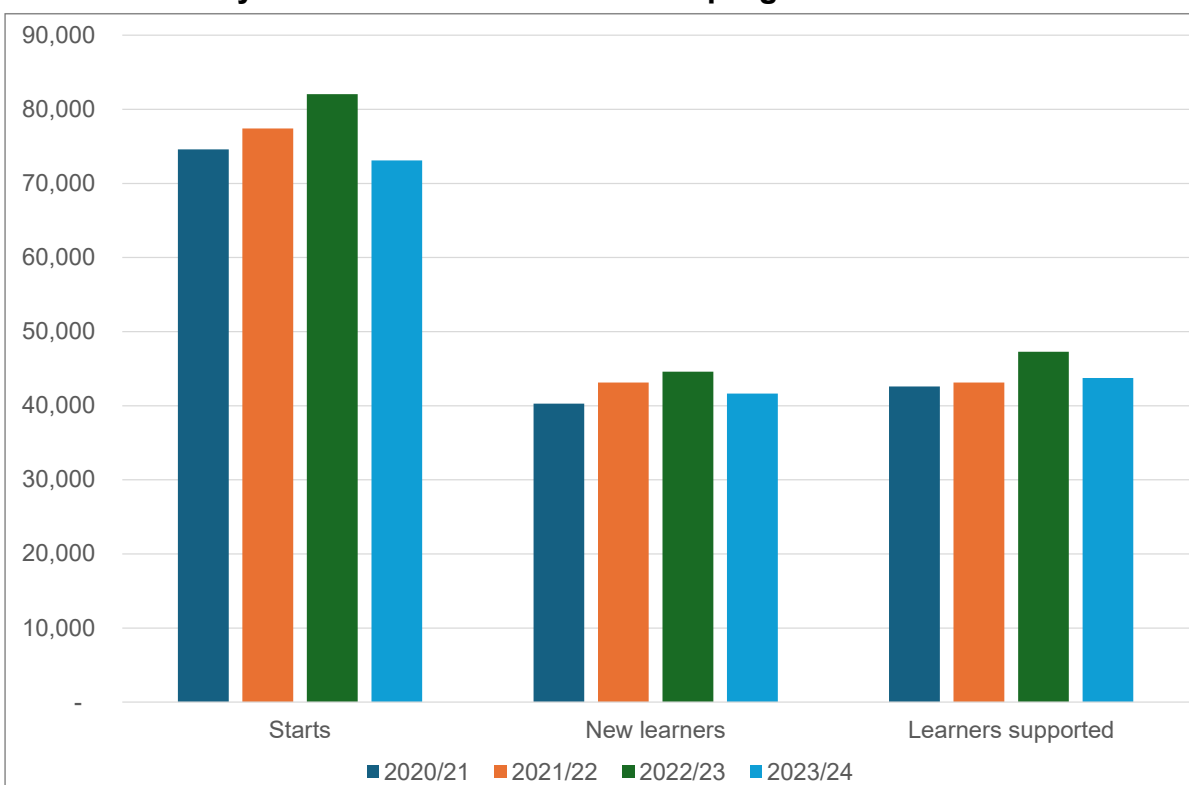
- [Adult Skills funding Aim2Learn Telecoms Training course visit](#)
- [Talented Training Case Study](#)
- [From learning to employment - maths support in Leeds](#)
- [Adult Education Budget Railsafe Case Study](#)

Data Review

Overall metrics

The scale of the AEB programme remained substantial in 2023/24. A total of 43,730 learners (including continuing learners) were supported across the three strands of the programme during the academic year, with 41,630 new learners and 73,100 starts.

Figure: Trend in key volume measures for overall programme



The programme saw a reduction against the key volume measures in 2023/24 compared with the previous academic year. The number of learners supported was down by 8%, the number of new learners down by 7% and starts by 11%.

2020-2021 was the last year before devolution of AEB was implemented in West Yorkshire and provides a baseline year for reviewing the changes brought about through devolution.

Although the number of starts was 2% lower in 2023/24 than in 2020/21, the number of new learners and the number of learners supported were each 3% higher.

The fall in volumes seen in 2023/24 was partly due to a reduction in funding: total spending fell by approximately 4%. It was also partly due to a shift in the profile of provision, away from lower-level vocational provision which has a relatively low average funding rate to provision with higher rates, including ESOL and aims at level 3.

In its management of the devolved programme the Combined Authority has actively pursued a strategy to reduce the number of learning aims undertaken per learner to maximise the impact of each aim and increase value for money. Since the start of the devolved programme the number of starts has fallen, whilst the number of new learners has increased.

The AEB programme consists of 3 distinct strands, which need to be examined separately in terms of volumes.

Explanation of volume measures used in the report

Starts – a count of new course enrolments for which learning started during the academic year. Individual learners often start multiple courses within their programme of learning and each of these is counted as a start.

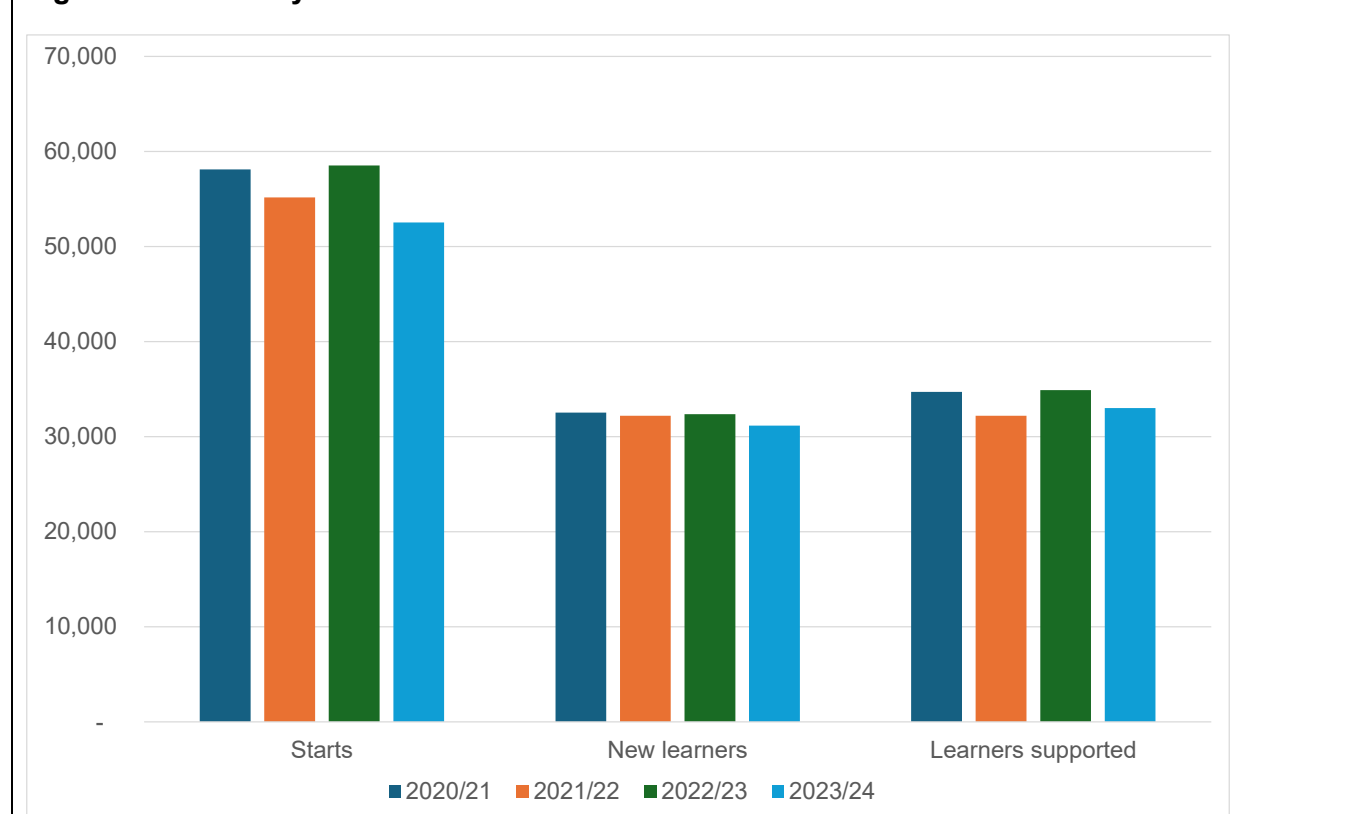
New learners – a count of individual learners who started one or more courses during the academic year. Each learner is counted once no matter how many courses they started during the year.

Learners supported – a count of individual learners who participated in learning during the academic year, including learners who started during a previous year but continued their learning into the current year. Each learner is counted once no matter how many courses they took part in during the year.

Adult Skills

Within the Adult Skills strand 33,020 learners were supported during 2023- 2024 – around three-quarters of total AEB learners participated in the Adult Skills strand. There were 31,160 new learners during the academic year and 52,540 starts.

Figure: Trend in key volume measures for Adult Skills strand



Adult Skills starts fell by 10% (-6,000) in 2023/24 compared with the previous academic year, taking their level 10% below the figure for the baseline year of 2020-2021.

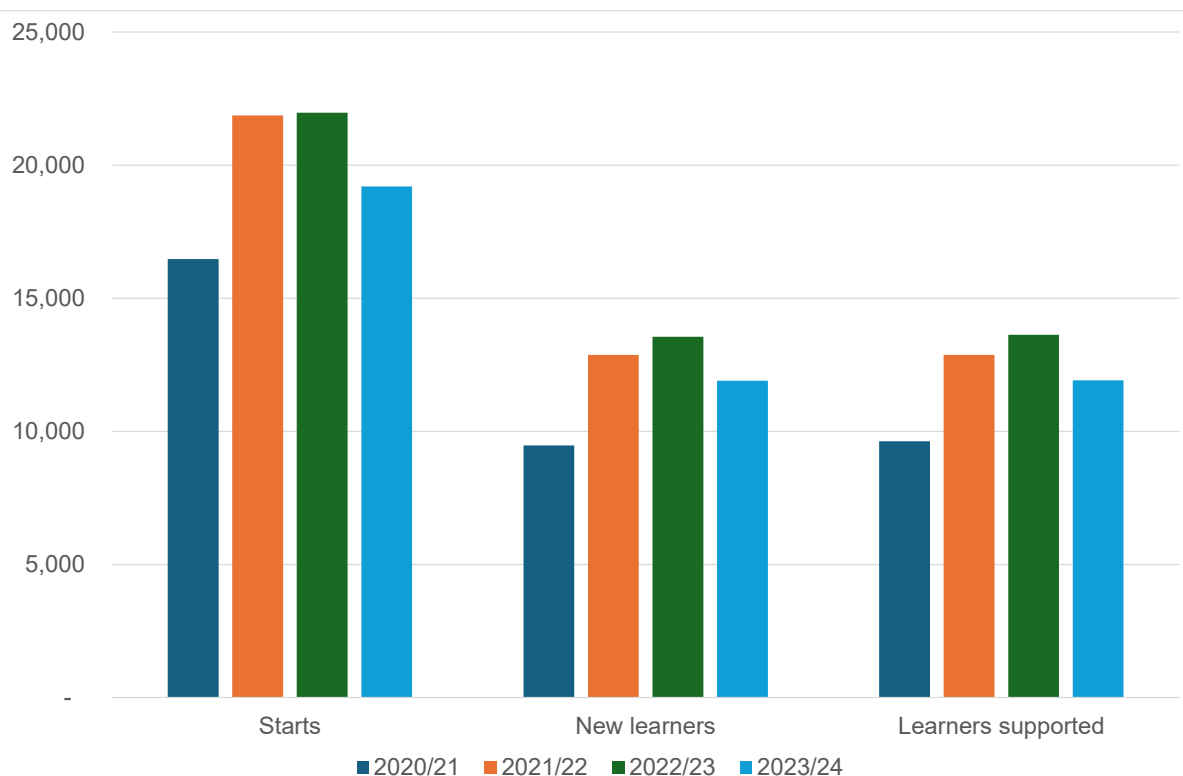
The number of new learners and the number of learners supported fell by 4% and 5% respectively compared with the pre-devo baseline.

The proportion of Adult Skills starts that were fully funded through the programme in 2023/24 was 84%, similar to the previous year. This reflects a continued focus on the most disadvantaged learners.

Community Learning

There were 11,900 new learners on the Community Learning strand in 2023/24 (with a similar number of learners supported), accounting for 19,200 starts.

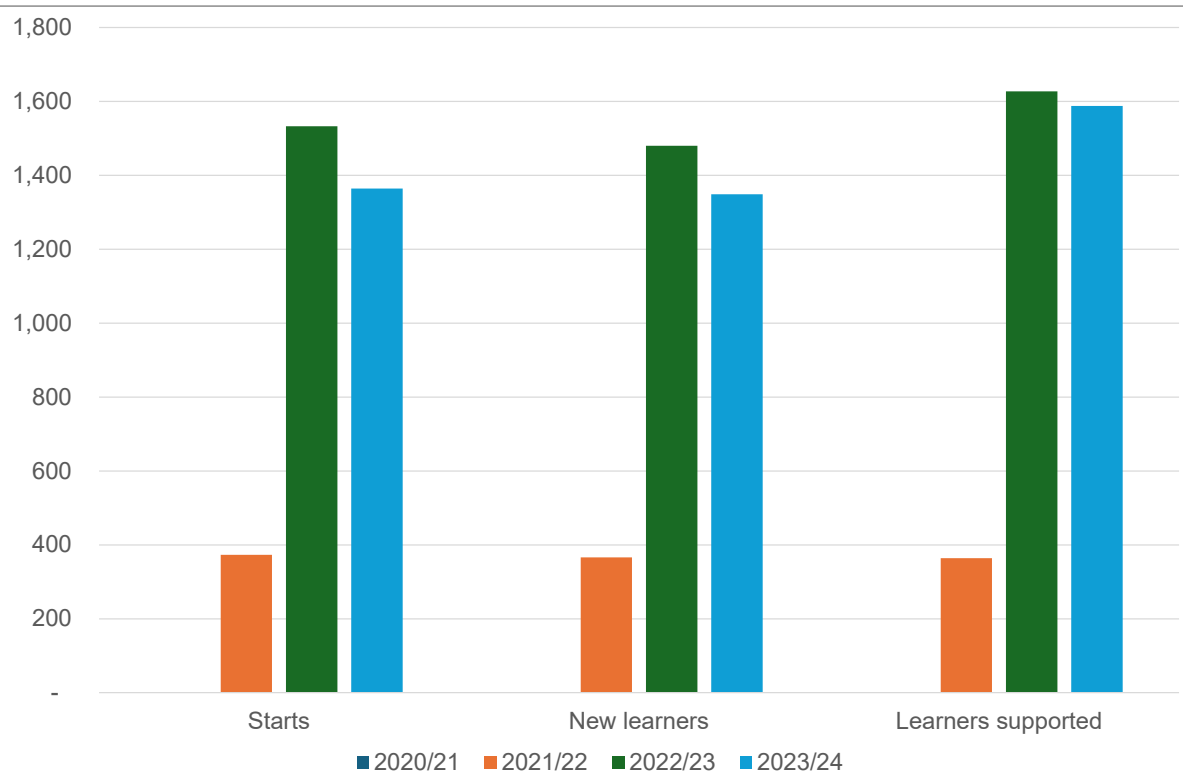
Figure: Trend in key volume measures for Community Learning strand



Although the Community Learning strand was larger in the latest year than in 2020/21, with growth of 24% in learners supported, it was smaller than in the two intervening years, with 13% fewer learners supported in 2023/24 than in 2022/23.

Free Courses for Jobs

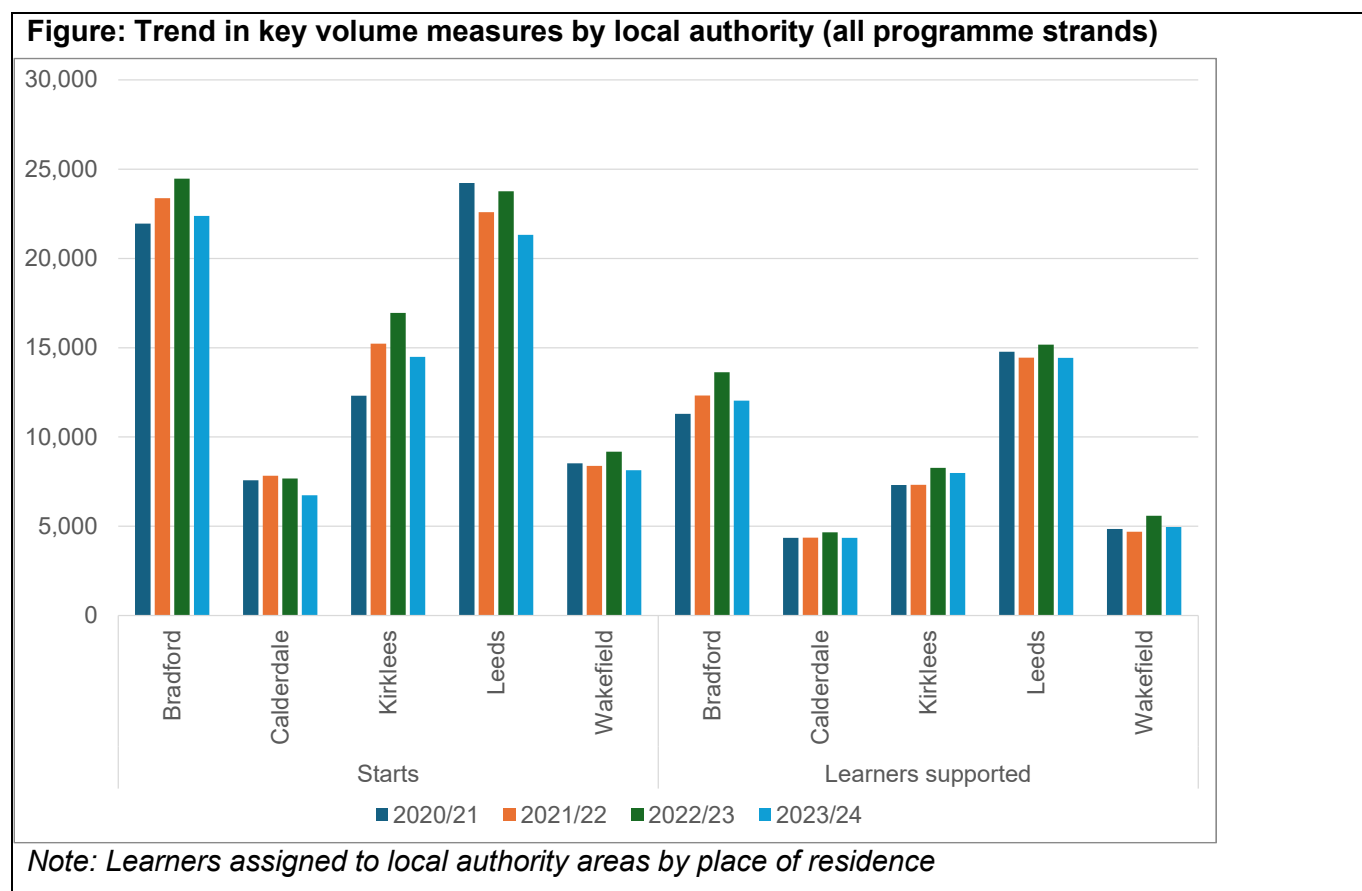
Free Courses for Jobs was introduced in West Yorkshire at the start of 2021/22. Volumes were small in that first year but increased substantially year-on-year in 2022/23 by more than 300% in the case of all three volume measures. In 2023/24 1,560 learners were supported through this programme strand, with 1,350 new learners and 1,360 starts. Starts and new learners fell back from the high of 2022/23, with net reductions of 11% and 9% respectively, although learners supported saw a reduction of only 2%.

Figure: Trend in key volume measures for Free Courses for Jobs strand

In addition to the learners aged 24 and above who are funded through the Free Courses for Jobs programme, learners aged 19 to 23 are also eligible to undertake Free Course for Jobs aims, although they are funded through the devolved Adult Skills strand. There were 420 starts among this group in 2023/24, an increase from the 260 starts recorded in 2022/23.

Participation within Local Authorities

In terms of the overall number of learners supported in 2023/24, Leeds has the largest share among the West Yorkshire local authorities with 33% (14,400 in absolute terms), followed by Bradford with 28% (12,000). Kirklees (18%, 8,000), Wakefield (11%, 5,000) and Calderdale (10%, 4,300) account for smaller shares of provision.

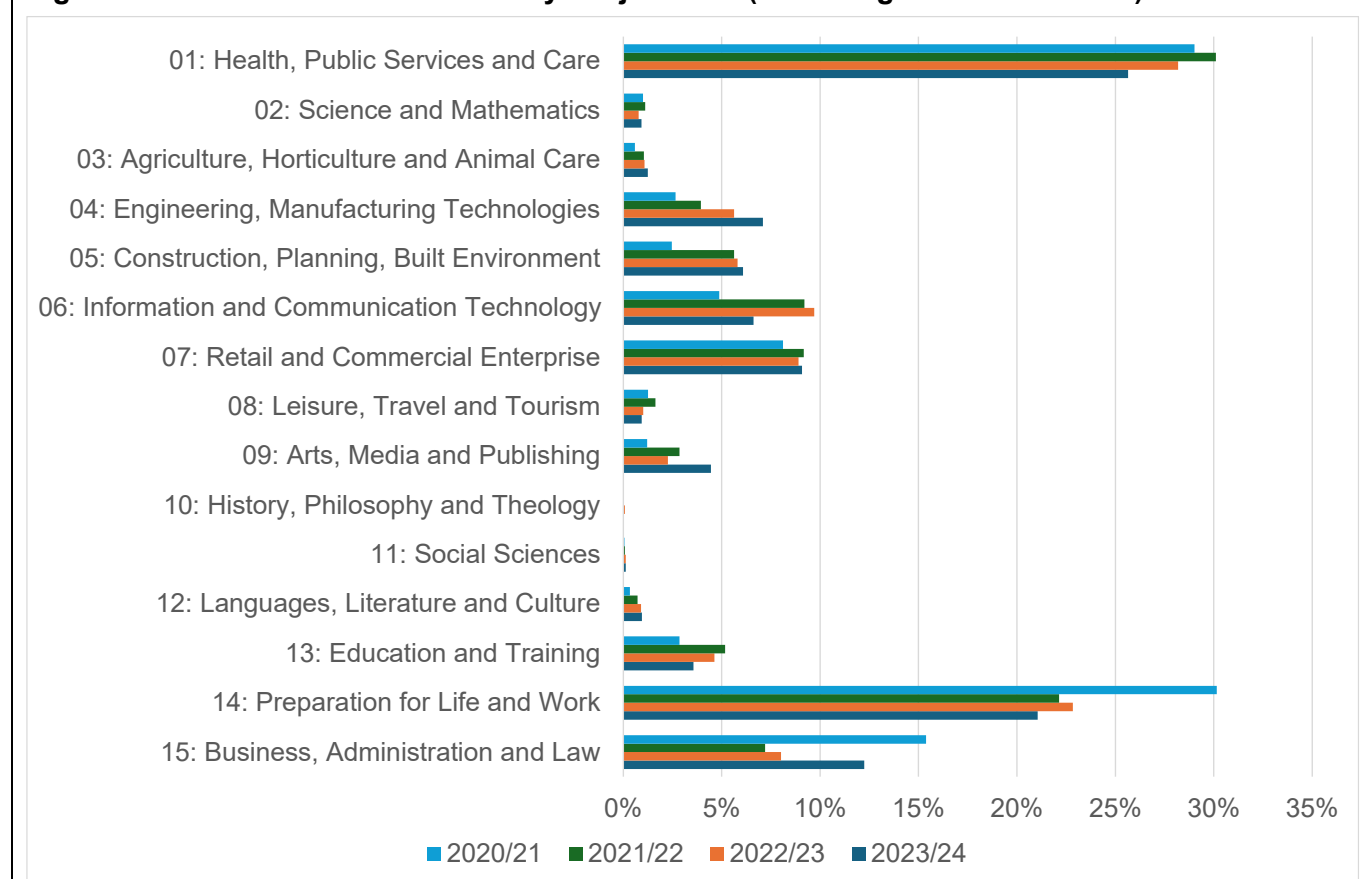


All local authorities shared in the decline in overall starts, with reductions ranging from 8% in Bradford to 15% in Kirklees. The pattern of change in learners supported was different to that of starts due to changes in the ratio of starts to learners at local authority level. The overall number of learners supported (including learners who started in the previous academic year) declined by 8% across West Yorkshire and all local authorities shared in this reduction. Bradford (-12%) and Wakefield (-11%) saw the fastest rates of reduction. Kirklees saw the smallest percentage fall of only 3%, followed by Leeds with -5% and Calderdale, with -7%. All three of these authorities recorded a reduction in the ratio of starts per learner supported.

Subject area

When basic skills aims are excluded, the subject areas with the highest take-up in terms of Adult Skills starts during the 2023/24 academic year were *Health, public services and care* (26% of total starts) and *Preparation for life and work* (excluding enrolments for basic skills aims) (21% of total starts)

Figure: Profile of Adult Skills starts by subject area (excluding basic skills aims)



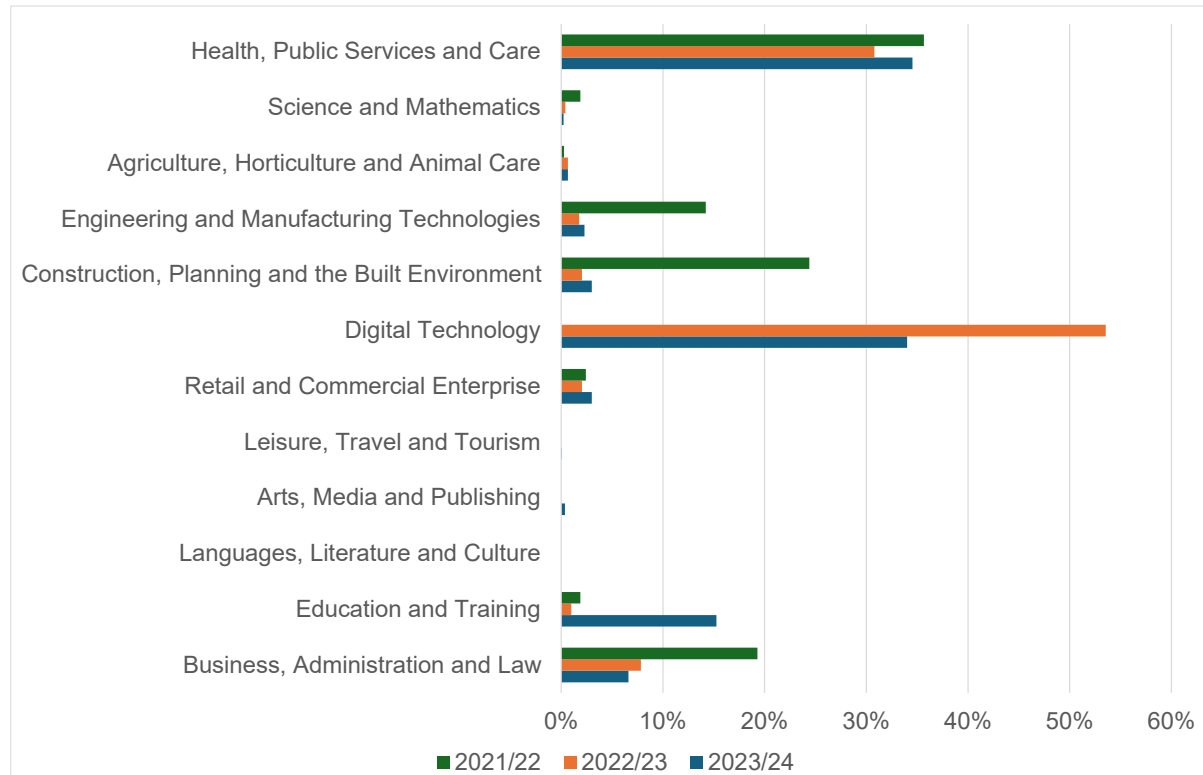
The subjects with the biggest net growth in starts were *Business, administration and law* (+680, +24%), driven by increases in *Administration* and *Business management*; and *Arts, media and publishing* (+680, +60%), driven by an increase in *Crafts, creative arts and design starts*.

There were substantial reductions in starts for a number of subject areas during 2023/24, including the following:

- *Health, Public Services and Care* (-2,570; -26%), which was mainly due to a fall in *Health and social care*.
- *Preparation for Life and Work* (-2,000; -25%).
- *Information and Communication technology* (-1,410, -45%).

FCFJ starts are more narrowly focused in subject terms than Adult Skills starts. In 2023/24 the dominant subjects for FCFJ were Health, public services and care with 470 starts or 35% of the total (these were primarily in Health and social care), followed by Digital Technology with 460 starts or 34% of the total. There were also a substantial number of starts in Education and Training (210, 15% of the total).

Figure: Profile of FCFJ starts by subject area



The most significant year-on-year changes were a decline in Digital Technology starts, from 54% to 34% of the total (a decline of 360 in absolute terms) and an increase in Education and Training starts (from 1% to 15%, a net increase of 190 starts).

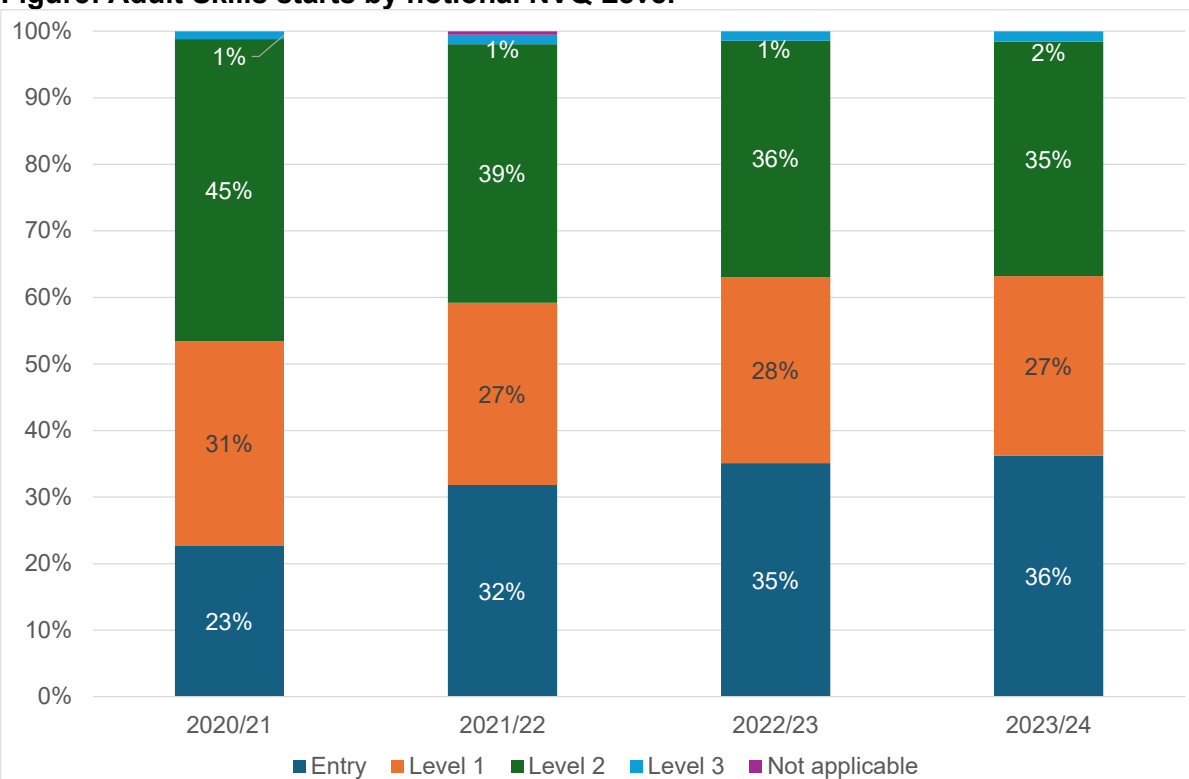
Level

The main focus of Adult Skills provision is on qualifications up to and including Level 2. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE and is typically equated with the qualification level required for basic employability. In addition, some Level 3 provision is fully-funded for 19-23 year olds in line with the relevant legal entitlement.

The profile of Adult Skills starts by level remained largely the same between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Starts at Entry level increased their share slightly from 35% to 36%, whilst Level 1 starts saw a fall in share from 28% to 27%.

There was smaller fall in share (of less than one percentage point) for Level 2 starts but Level 3 starts grew their share slightly, by less than half of one percentage point.

Figure: Adult Skills starts by notional NVQ Level



There was a net decline in the number of starts recorded for most qualification levels, ranging from a decline of 7% for Entry Level starts, to an 11% fall in Level 2 starts and an 13% decrease for Level 1 starts.

Level 3 starts funded through the Adult Skills strand grew by 5% or around 40, although this was offset by the reduction in FCFJ jobs starts at Level 3.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

One of the key objectives of West Yorkshire's devolved AEB programme is to make learning more inclusive. This section examines the profile of learners according to their ethnicity, disability status and sex.

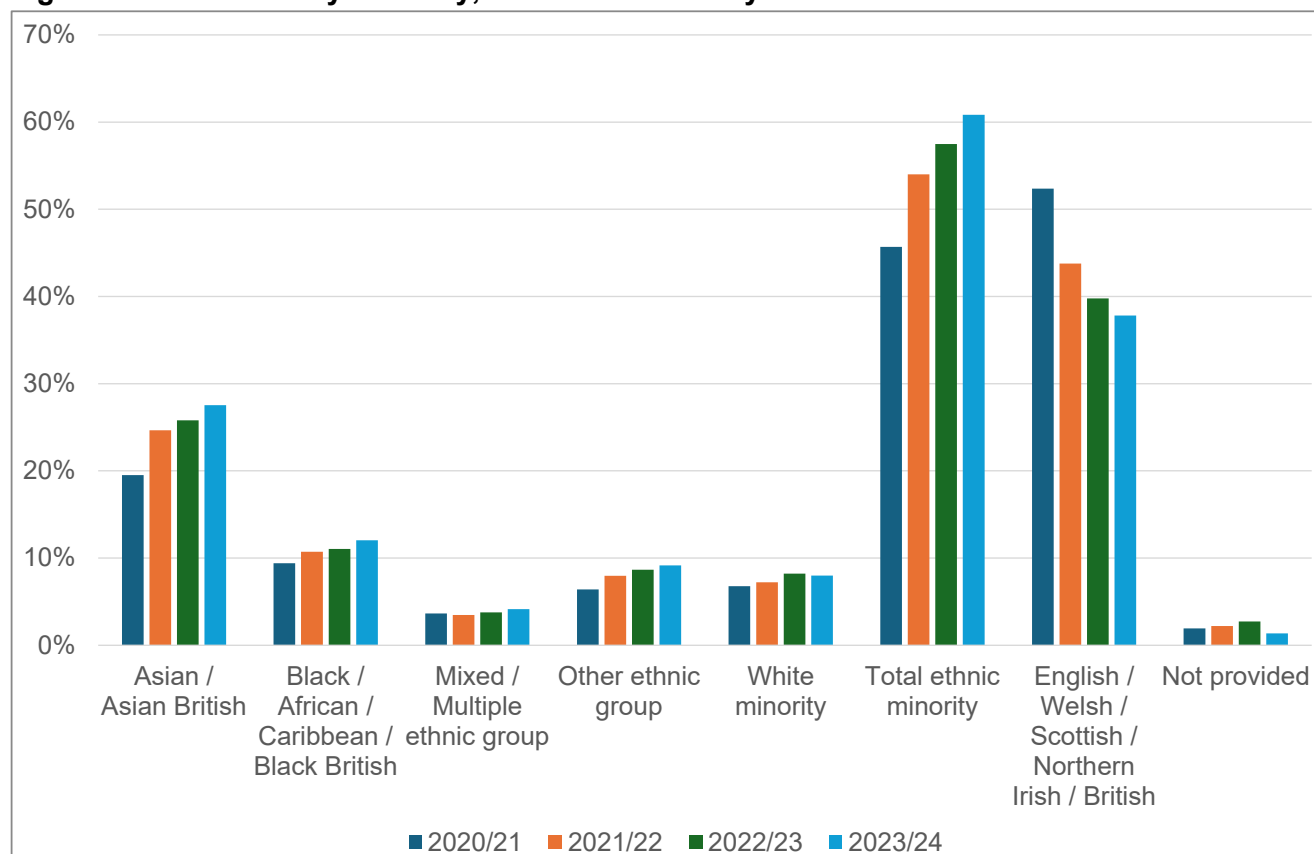
Ethnicity

People from ethnic minority groups are strongly represented among learners undertaking AEB-funded courses in West Yorkshire, with 25,330 learners enrolling on a course during the 2023/24 academic year, equivalent to 61% of all new learners.

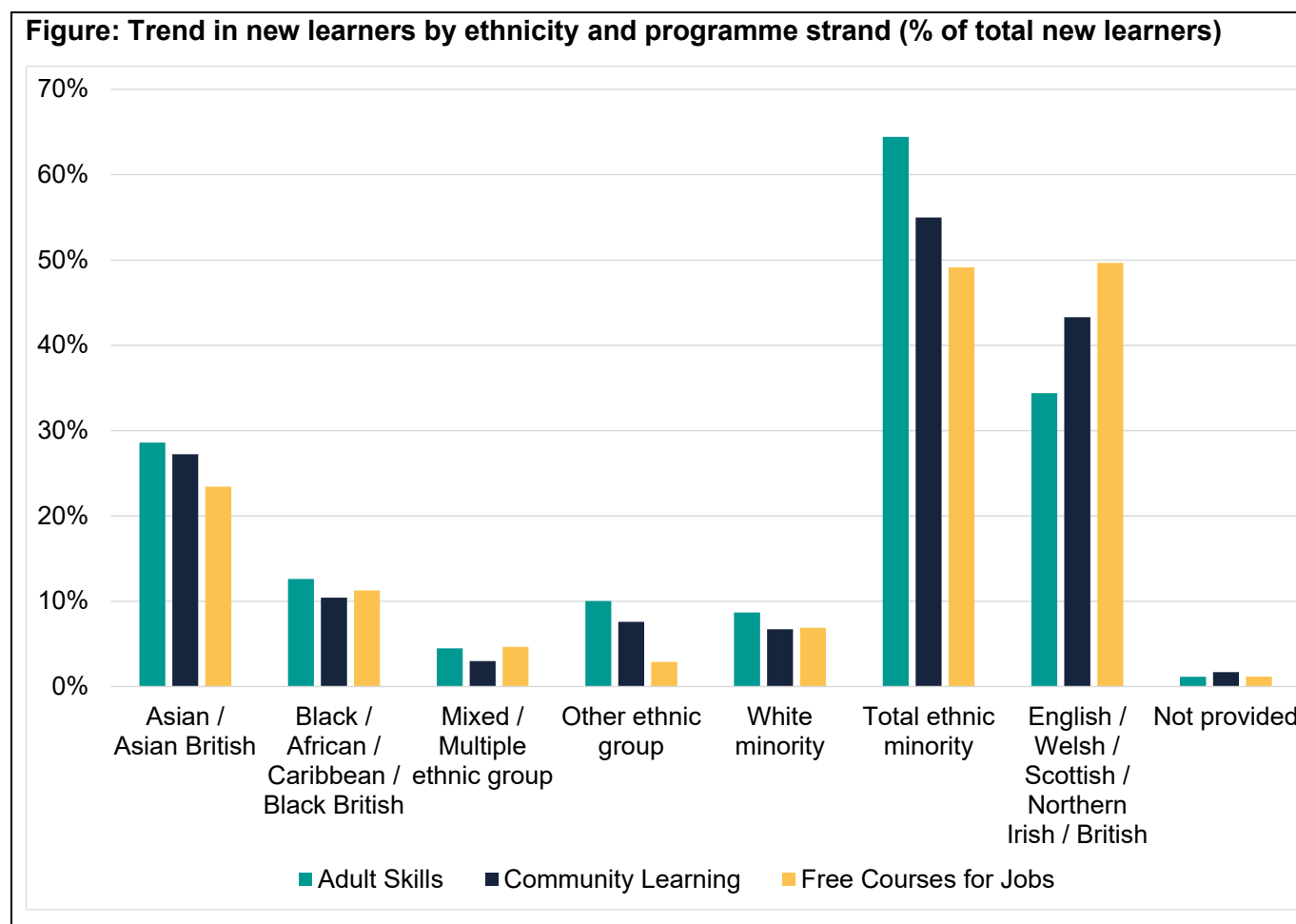
For Adult Skills, Community Learning and FCFJ all broad ethnic minority groups account for a higher proportion of AEB-funded learners relative to their representation in the wider population. However, to provide further context, although 29% of the adult population (aged 19-64) of West Yorkshire are from an ethnic minority group this rises to over 50% of the adult population living in the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD decile 1) and to 40% of the adult population with no qualifications. This suggests that the current levels of engagement with ethnic minority learners are broadly in keeping with what is required to address the most disadvantaged people within this broad group.

Learners from an ethnic minority group were less likely to be in employment and more likely to be unemployed or inactive than English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British learners reflecting the position across the wider population. Only 22% of starts for ethnic minority learners were for learners in employment (compared with a figure of 39% for English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British learners), whilst 56% of starts for ethnic minority learners were for unemployed learners (English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British: 47%).

Figure: New learners by ethnicity, 2023/24 academic year



Figures published by the Department for Education allow comparisons between West Yorkshire and the national position but they have a different basis to those presented above as they relate to learner participation and do not allow for the White minority group to be disaggregated from the wider White group. The figures show that participation by non-white ethnic minority learners was much higher in West Yorkshire than at national level. Sixty-three per cent of participation on adult Education and Training in West Yorkshire in 2023/24 was by non-white ethnic minority learners compared with the national average of 47%. Fifty-five per cent of participation on Community Learning in West Yorkshire in 2023/24 was by non-white ethnic minority learners compared with a national average of 41%.



The proportion of total learners from an ethnic minority group has grown throughout the period of the devolved programme, from 46% in 2020-2021 (pre-devo) to 54% in 2021-2022, to 57% in 2022/23 and to 61% in 2023/24.

The overall count of ethnic minority learners grew by 37% or 6,870 between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

There has been growth across all broad ethnic minority groups since 2020/21. The count of Asian / Asian British learners increased by 3,590 or 45%; learners in Black / African / Caribbean / Black British group grew by 1,210 or 32%; learners from the Mixed / Multiple ethnic group increased by 260 or 18%; learners classified to the Other ethnic group grew by 1,230 or 48%. Finally, people from white minorities increased by 590 or 22%.

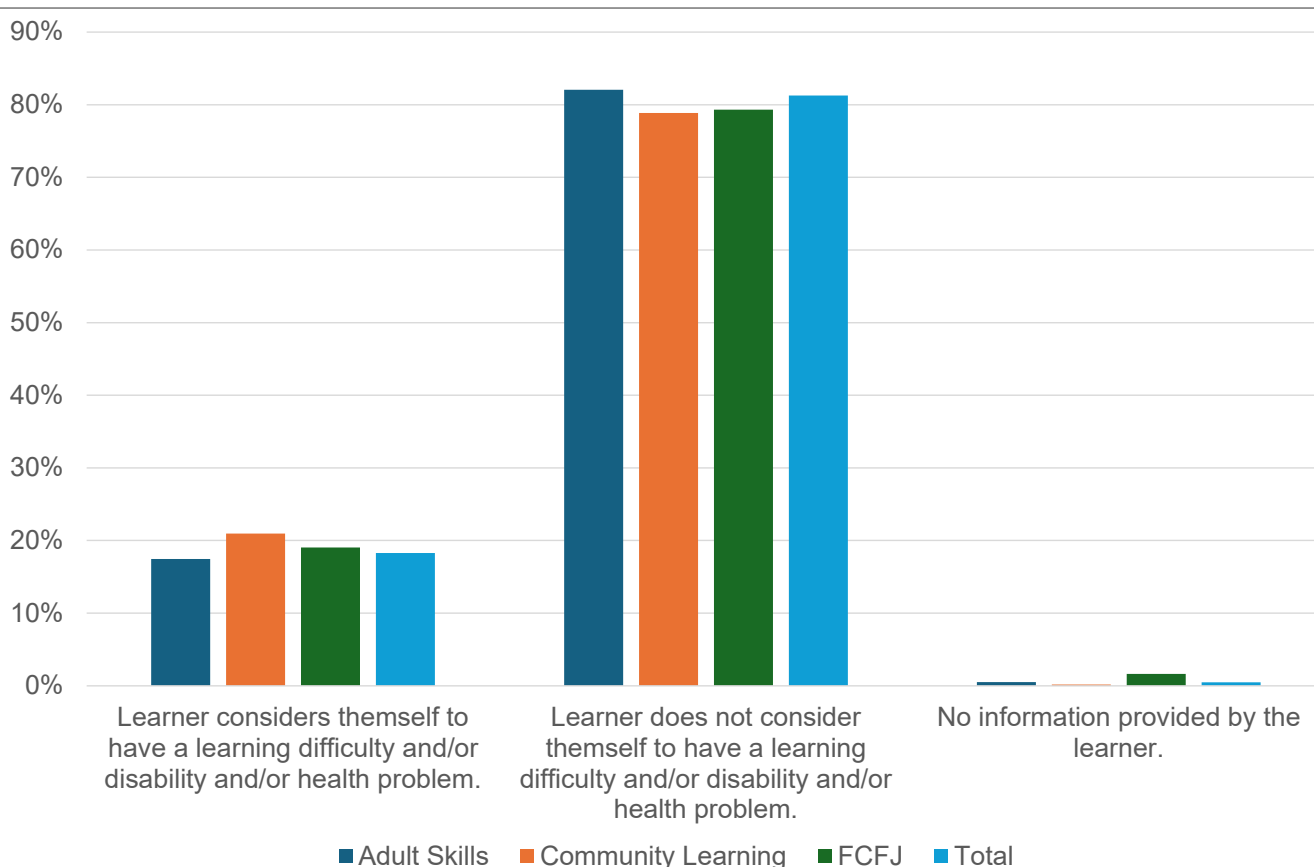
Turning to the AEB programme strands, two of the three saw an increase in the proportion of ethnic minority learners between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The proportion of ethnic minority

learners participating in Adult Skills courses increased from 62% in 2022/23 to 64% in 2023/24, whilst for Community Learning the proportion increased from 49% to 55%. The share of ethnic minority learners in FCFJ fell slightly, from 51% to 49% year-on-year.

Disability

Around 18% of AEB learners in West Yorkshire in 2023/24 indicated that they had a learning difficulty and / or disability and / or health problem. This is lower than the proportion of the wider working age population of West Yorkshire who are Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled in West Yorkshire, which stands at 24%.

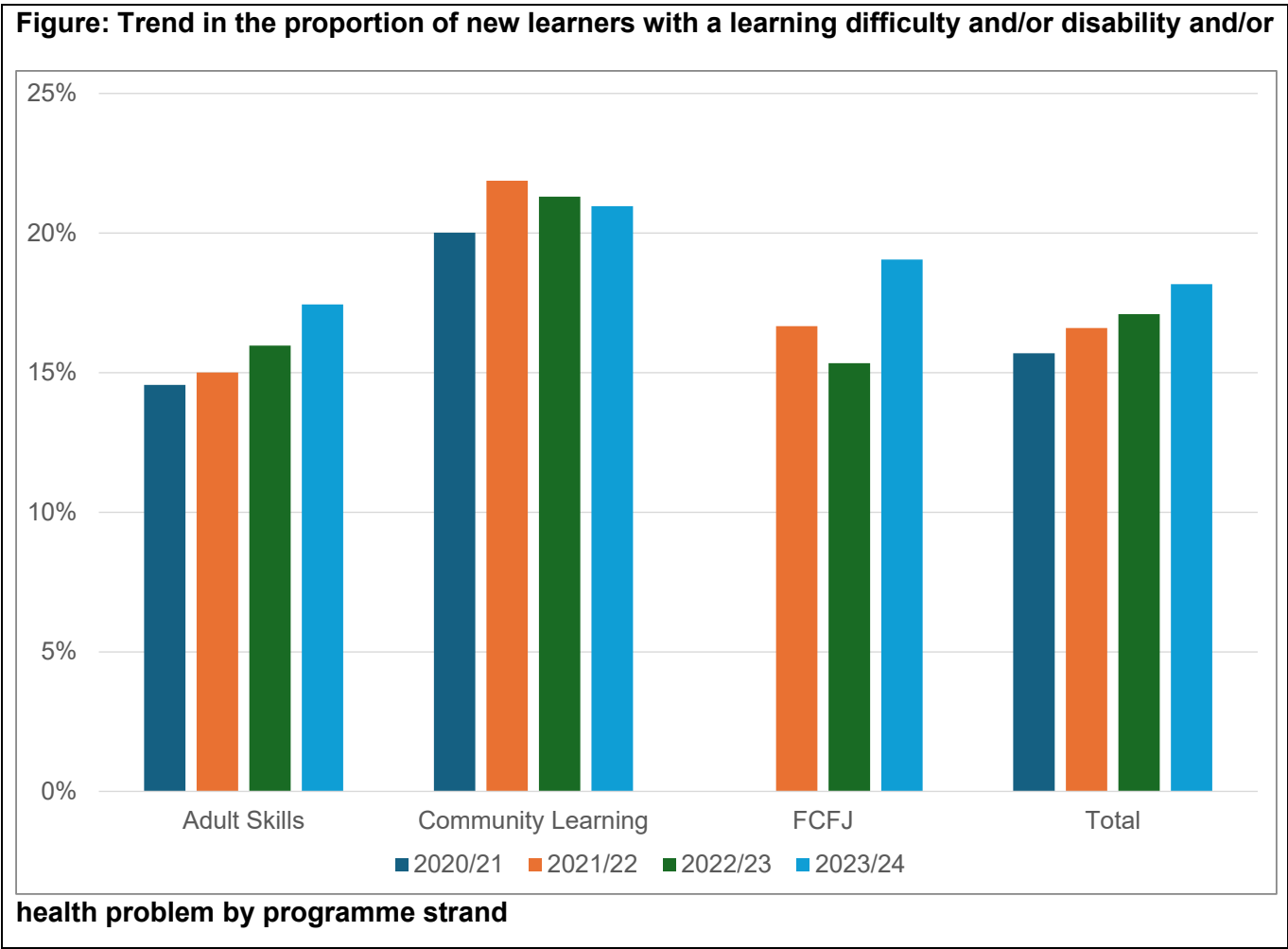
Figure: Profile of new learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem,



2023/24

The proportion of Community Learning participants in West Yorkshire who say they have a learning difficulty / disability / health problem is somewhat higher, at 21%, than the figure of 17% for Adult Skills and FCFJ of 19%. However, for Adult Skills and FCFJ a further 7% of learners who did not declare a learning difficulty, disability or health problem received learning support, raising the proportion with support needs to 25% of total learners in these strands.

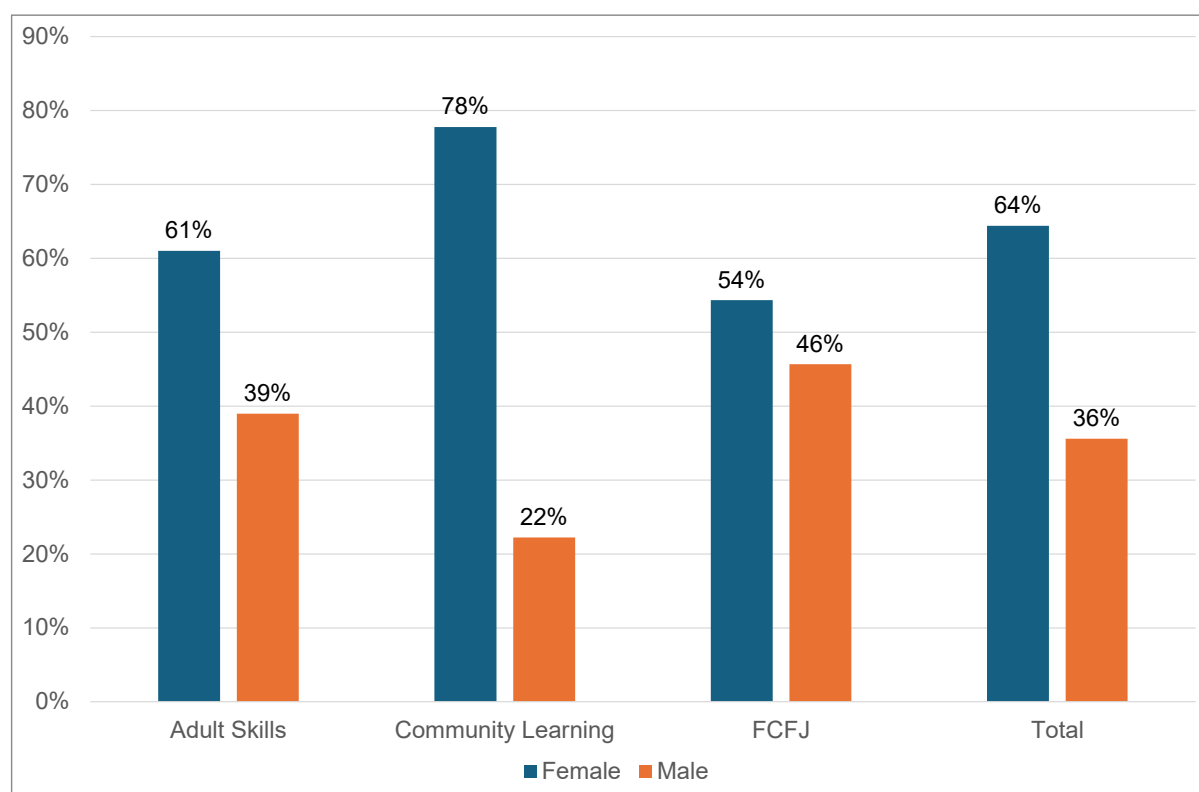
The proportion of learners with a learning difficulty, disability or health problem increased by one percentage point in 2023/24, compared with the previous year. There was an increase in the proportion for the Adult Skills strand of one point and an increase of four points for FCFJ (from 15% to 19%). The figure remained unchanged for Community Learning. The absolute number of learners declaring a learning difficulty, disability or health problem saw little change year-on-year.



Sex

Women are in the majority among West Yorkshire’s learners for two out of three programme strands, accounting for just under two-thirds (64%) of total new learners, 61% of Adult Skills learners and more than three-quarters (78%) of Community Learning participants. Both proportions are much higher than female representation in West Yorkshire’s population aged 19 and above. There is a more even split for FCFJ, with women accounting for 54% of learners in this strand.

Figure: Profile of new learners by sex (% of total new learners)



This picture is in line with the national profile. The national average proportions of female learners are 64% and 74% for 19+ Education and Training and Community Learning respectively.

The proportion of female learners fell slightly between 2022/23 and 2023-2024 (with a corresponding increase in the share of male learners) from 66% to 64%, driven by a fall in the female proportions of learners in the larger Adult Skills strand, whilst women increased their share in both Community Learning and FCFJ strands.

The Adult Skills and FCFJ programmes in West Yorkshire face a similar challenge of gender segregation that is present in other forms of education and training and in the wider employment market.

Women account for the vast majority of enrolments in some subjects, most notably Health, public services and care (71% of the total) and Education and training (91% of the total). But although women contribute almost two-thirds of total enrolments they represent a small minority in “traditionally male” subjects such as Construction (12% of enrolments) and Engineering and

manufacturing (14%). This is a concern because these latter subjects can offer good prospects for pay and progression.

Figure: Proportion of new learners who were female by programme strand (% of total learners)

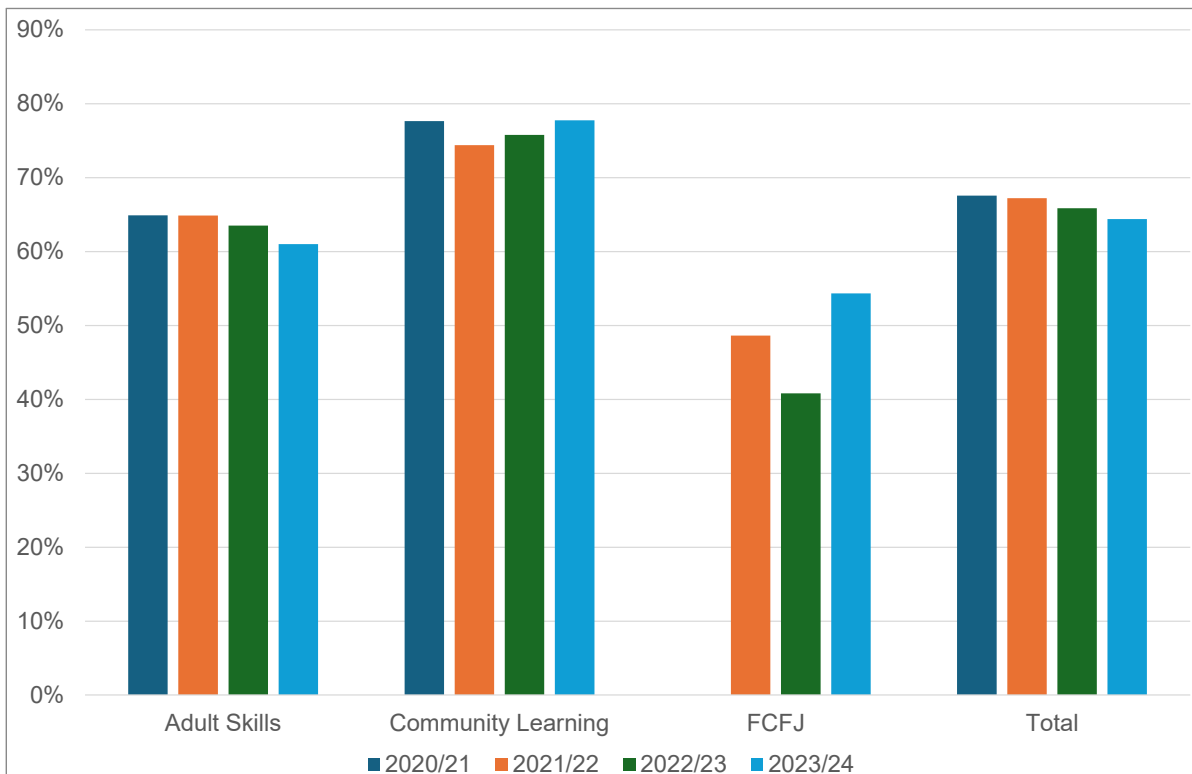
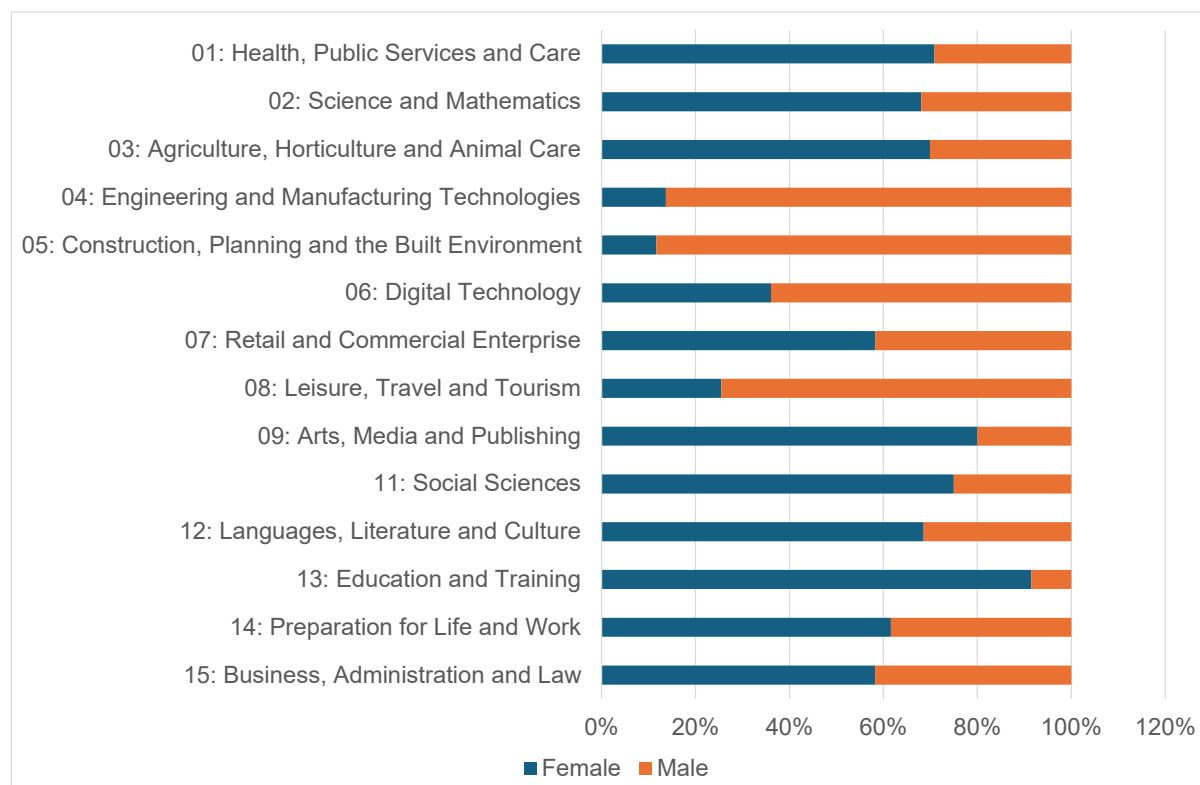


Figure: Profile of Adult Skills and FCFJ starts by subject area and sex of learner (% of total new learners), West Yorkshire, 2023/24 academic year



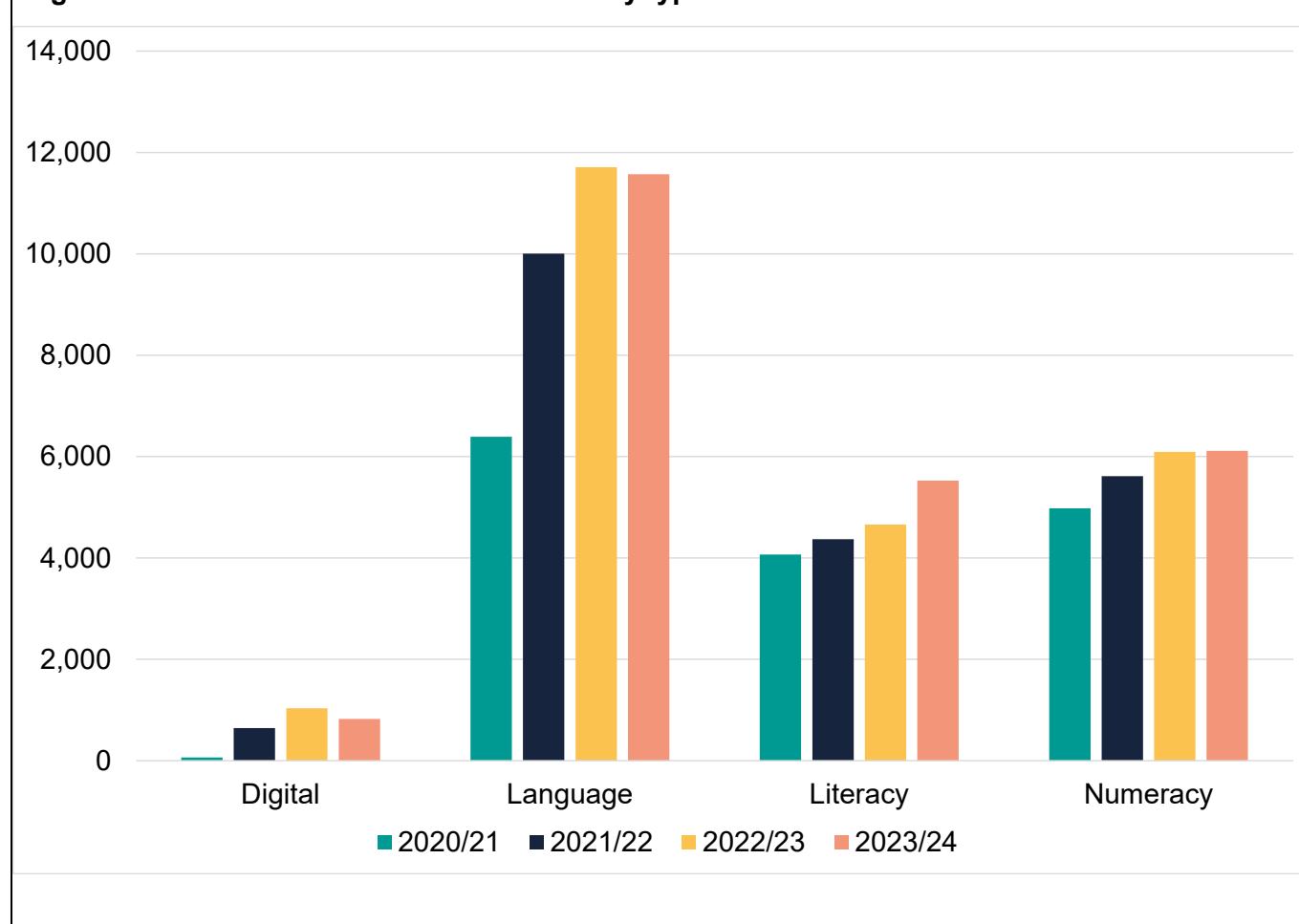
Basic skills

Basic skills provision is a substantial element of the AEB programme, supported by a legal entitlement to full funding for English and maths, up to and including level 2 for adults who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C). There was a total of 24,000 starts on basic skills courses during the 2023/24 academic year, equivalent to 46% of all starts on the Adult Skills programme.

The biggest basic skills category, in terms of both learners and enrolments, was Language, which primarily consists of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision. There were around 11,600 starts on these courses during 2023/24 (22% of all Adult Skills starts). Numeracy was the second largest category with 6,100 starts (12% of the Adult Skills total). There were 5,500 starts on literacy courses during the academic year (11% of total starts).

The fourth basic skills category of Digital¹ had smaller volumes of starts (around 820 or 2% of the total).

Figure: Trend in count of basic skills starts by type



The overall number of basic skills starts grew slightly by 2% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

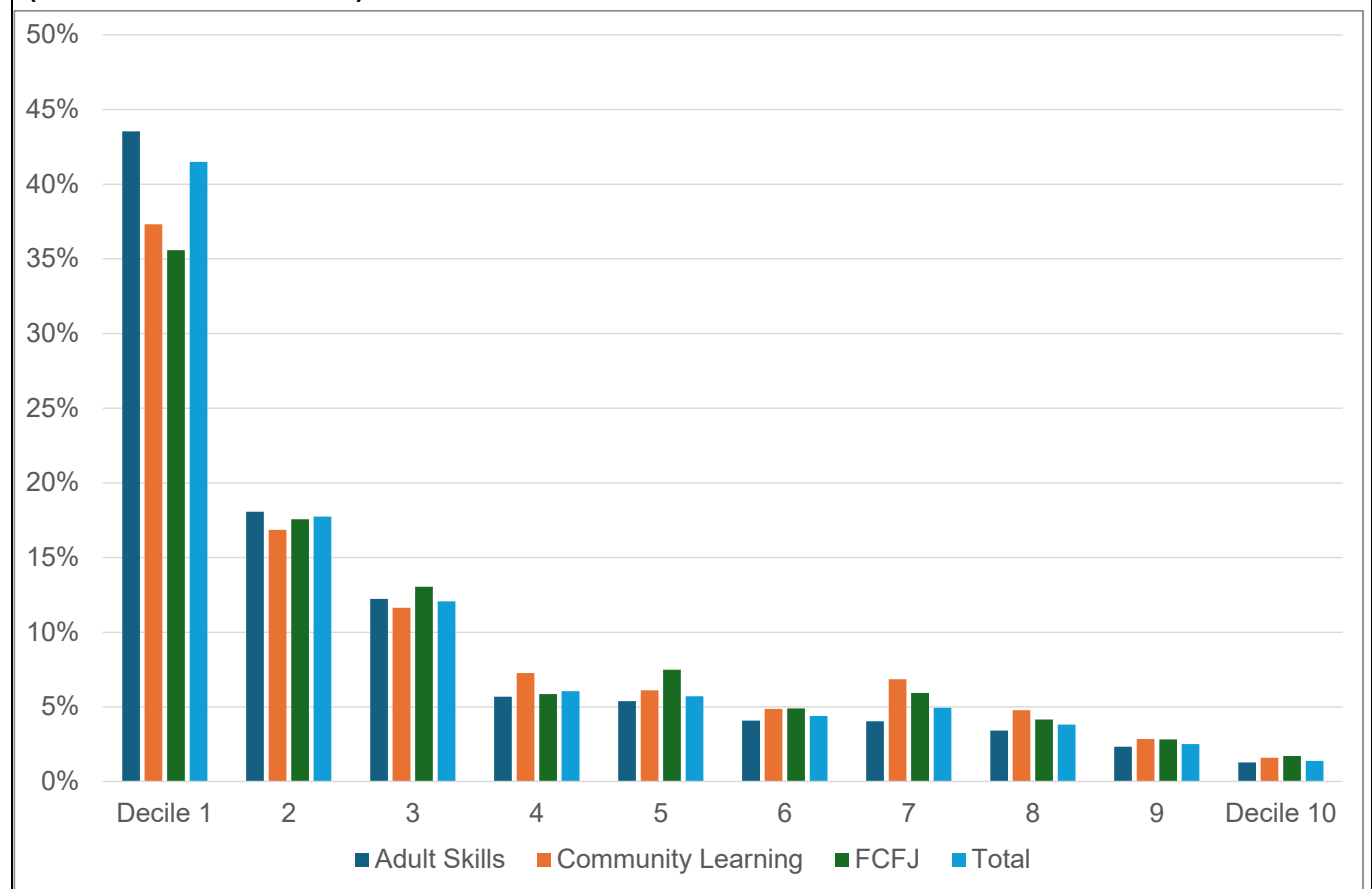
Deprivation

Residents of deprived neighbourhoods are a priority audience for the Adult Education Budget and attract a disadvantage uplift in the Adult Skills funding that providers receive, recognising that they are sometimes more costly to recruit and retain in learning. During the 2023/24

¹ This category of basic skills aims does not include all aims that fall within the digital entitlement.

academic year 17,270 new learners (or 42% of the total) were resident in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD decile 1).

Figure: Profile of new learners by Index of Multiple Deprivation decile and programme strand (% of total new learners)



Around 13,570 Adult Skills learners were residents of the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods, equivalent to 44% of total learners in this strand and somewhat higher than the proportion for Community Learning of 37% (4,440 in absolute terms). For FCFJ, 480 learners, or 36% of the total, were drawn from the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods.

The profile varies across individual local authorities. Bradford and Leeds have much higher proportions of learners who reside in the most acutely deprived neighbourhoods (decile 1), with 55% and 52% respectively, compared with figures ranging from 20% for Wakefield and 24% for Kirklees. This reflects the fact that Bradford and Leeds have a wider prevalence of acute urban deprivation than the remaining local authorities. However, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield each have higher proportions of learners who are drawn from decile 2 than Bradford or Leeds.

The proportion of learners from the most acutely disadvantaged neighbourhoods (which fall into top decile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation) has increased in West Yorkshire since the introduction of devolution, from 37% to 42% for the whole programme. There was a small year-on-year increase of one percentage point in the 2023/24 academic year, and this was also the case for Adult Skills and Community Learning, although the proportion of FCFJ learners drawn from the most deprived neighbourhoods fell by two points.

Figure: Profile of new learners by Index of Multiple Deprivation decile and local authority (% of total new learners)

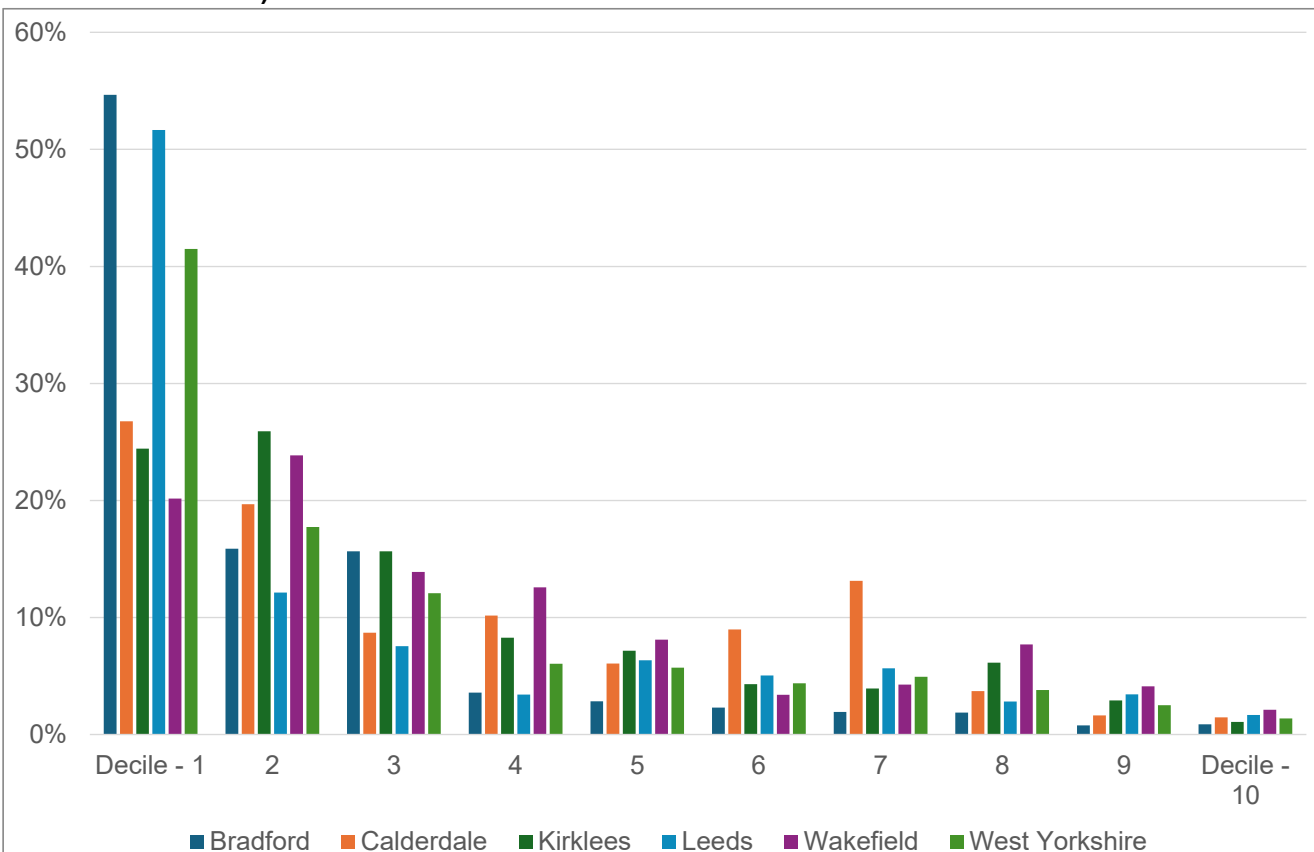
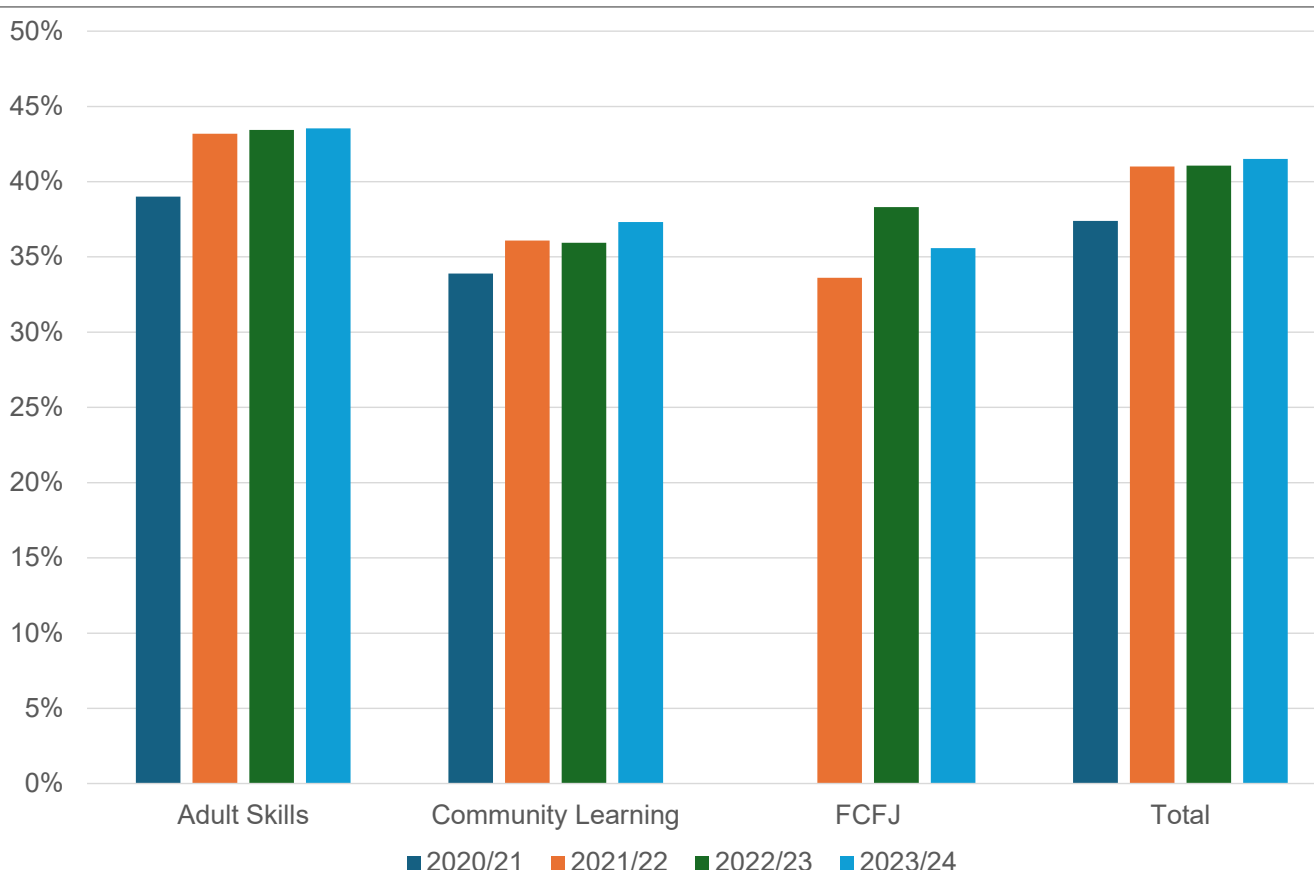


Figure: Trend in the proportion of new learners who live in the most acutely deprived neighbourhoods nationally (IMD decile 1)



Legal Entitlements

The AEB programme includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners. These entitlements apply nationwide and devolved areas are required to honour them. They enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher, and/or
- First full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- First full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- Essential digital skills qualifications, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1.

Total spend on the entitlements through the devolved programme was £10.2m (an increase of 13% on the previous academic year) in support of a total of 8,050 starts.

The overall volume of achievements delivered through the Adult Skills and FCFJ strands in 2023/24 was 48,070, a reduction of 9% on 2022/23. Entry Level achievements fell by 800 or 4%; Level 1 achievements by 2,030 or 14% and Level 2 by 2,330 or 13%. In contrast, Level 3 achievements grew substantially by 360 or 26%. saw the fastest percentage growth of 860 or 163%.

English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher

There were 6,500 starts under this entitlement in West Yorkshire in 2023/24, with around 4,700 learners taking up the entitlement. 44% of starts were for literacy and 56% for numeracy.

There was an increase in starts under this entitlement of 7%, or around 430, between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Total spend (total earned cash) on this entitlement during 2023/24 was £7.2m, including the Combined Authority's funding uplift of 10%, an increase of 17% on the previous year.

First full qualification at Level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23

This is one of two entitlements for learners aged 19-23. These entitlements are important for West Yorkshire because the proportions of young people in the region achieving a qualification at Level 2 and Level 3 by the age of 19 is below the national average.

There were around 160 starts (undertaken by 130 learners) under this entitlement during 2023/24, less than 1% of total starts on the Adult Skills programme. These figures were largely unchanged on those recorded for the previous year.

As a supplement to the national entitlement the Combined Authority has brought in a flexibility which allows learners aged 19-23 who lack a full Level 2 to undertake a qualification at Level 2 that is not classed as full. This is not permitted under the national funding rules. There were 330

starts under this flexibility during the academic year, with four-fifths of them being associated with unemployed learners.

Total spend (total earned cash) on this entitlement during 2023/24 was £479,000, including the Combined Authority's funding uplift.

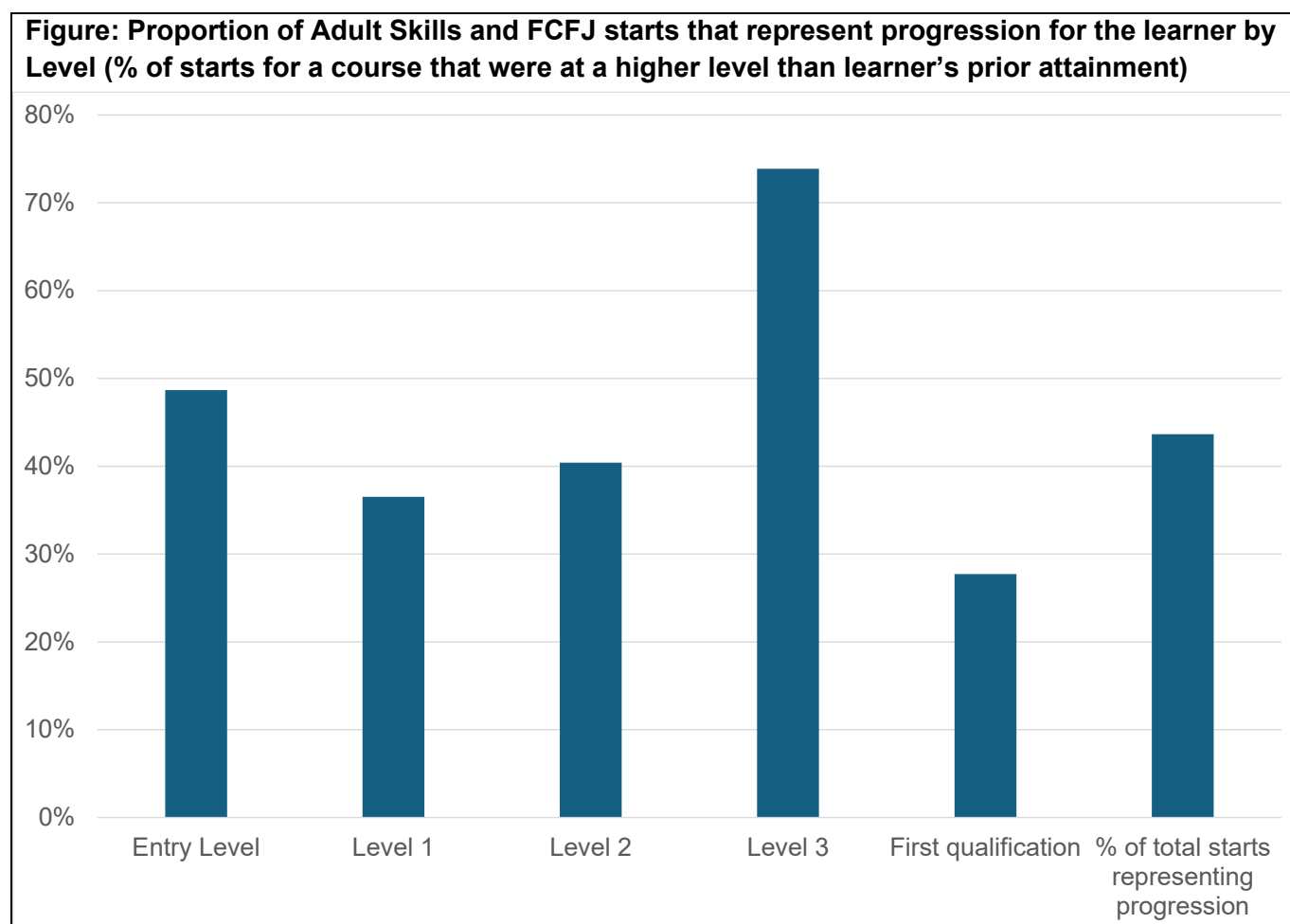
First full qualification at Level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23

There were approximately 430 starts under this entitlement during the 2023/24 academic year, relating to 400 learners. This makes it another small element of total Adult Skills provision, accounting for less than 1% of total starts. The number of starts fell by 14% for this entitlement compared with the 2022/23 academic year.

Total spend (total earned cash) on this entitlement during 2023/24 was £1.7m.

Progression

A key measure of the added value of AEB is the extent to which the programme offers the opportunity for progression. The following analysis focuses on learners who started a course at a higher level than their existing level of attainment or studied for their first qualification.



Overall, 44% of Adult Skills and FCFJ starts, or 23,500 in absolute terms, provided progression for the learner during 2023/24. Around 14,900 starts, or 28% of the total, were for learners with no prior qualifications. Nearly half of starts at Entry level were for learners with no qualifications, whilst 37% of starts at Level 1 were for learners qualified at Entry level or with no prior qualifications. At Level 3 more around three-quarters (74%) of starts were for learners whose highest prior qualifications were at Level 2 and below.

Another measure of progression is the extent to which learners are progressing from Community Learning provision to more formal learning delivered through the Adult Skills programme.

During 2023/24, 22% of learners who enrolled for a Community Learning course subsequently enrolled on an Adult Skills course; this is equivalent to 2,600 learners in absolute terms.

Success rates and achievements

The extent to which enrolments on courses linked to formal qualifications result in achievement of those qualifications is a key measure of the added value of the Adult Skills programme. The publication of official qualification achievement rates for providers and local areas has been suspended in recent years due to the impact of the pandemic. The following analysis is based on calculations undertaken by the Combined Authority.

The method used to calculate success rates for Adult Skills is detailed in the box below.

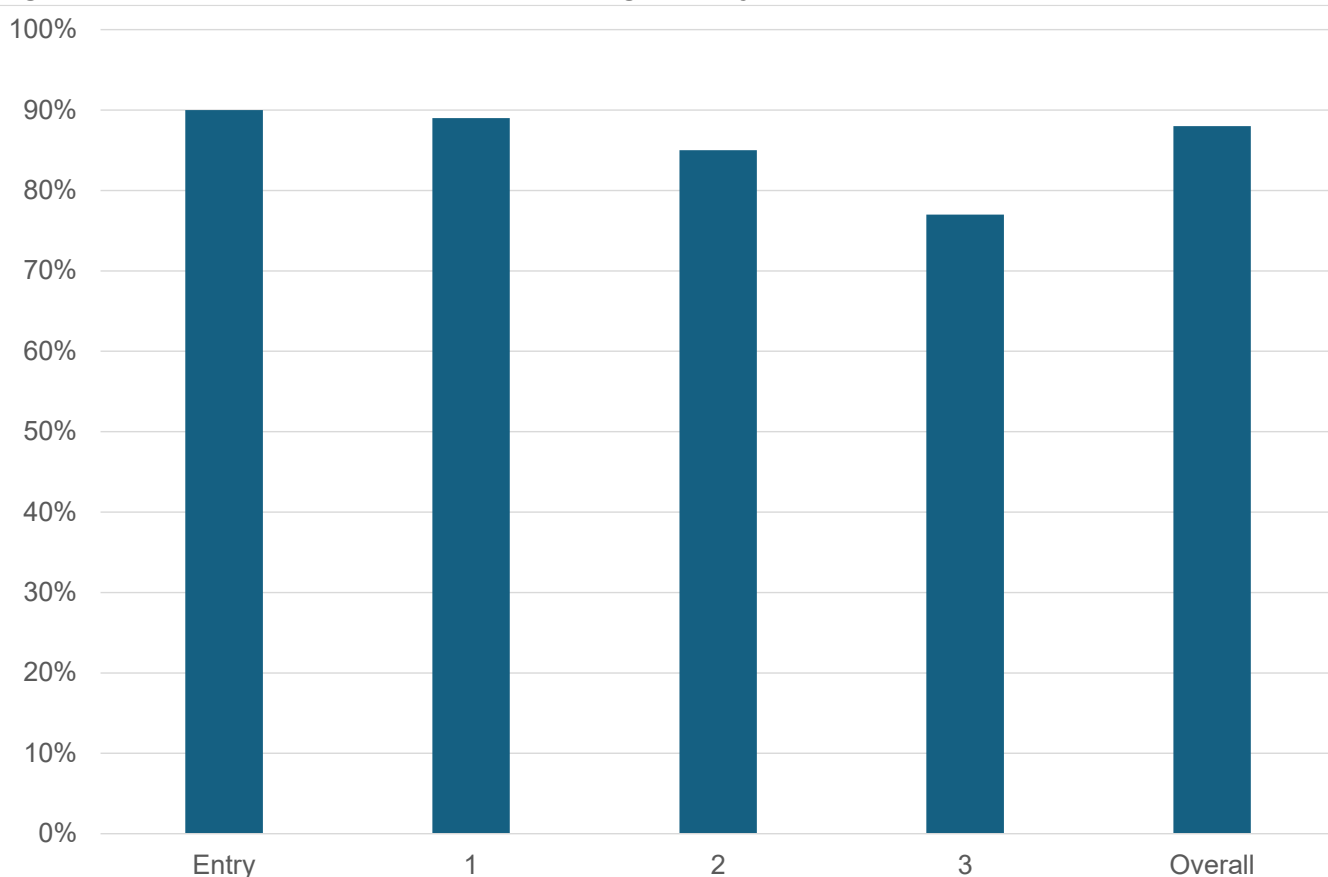
Calculation method for success rate

1. Success Rate = Leavers x Retention x Achievement
2. Retention = Completion status of 2: The learner has completed the learning activities leading to the learning aim (expressed as % of total leavers)
3. Achievement = Achievement Status of 1: Achieved (expressed as % of retained).

The overall success rate for the Adult Skills programme for 2023/24 academic year was 88%. This means that for 92% of starts on a learning aim the learner was retained; of these retained starts, 95% of learning aims were achieved. When multiplied together these two figures give the overall success rate of 88%.

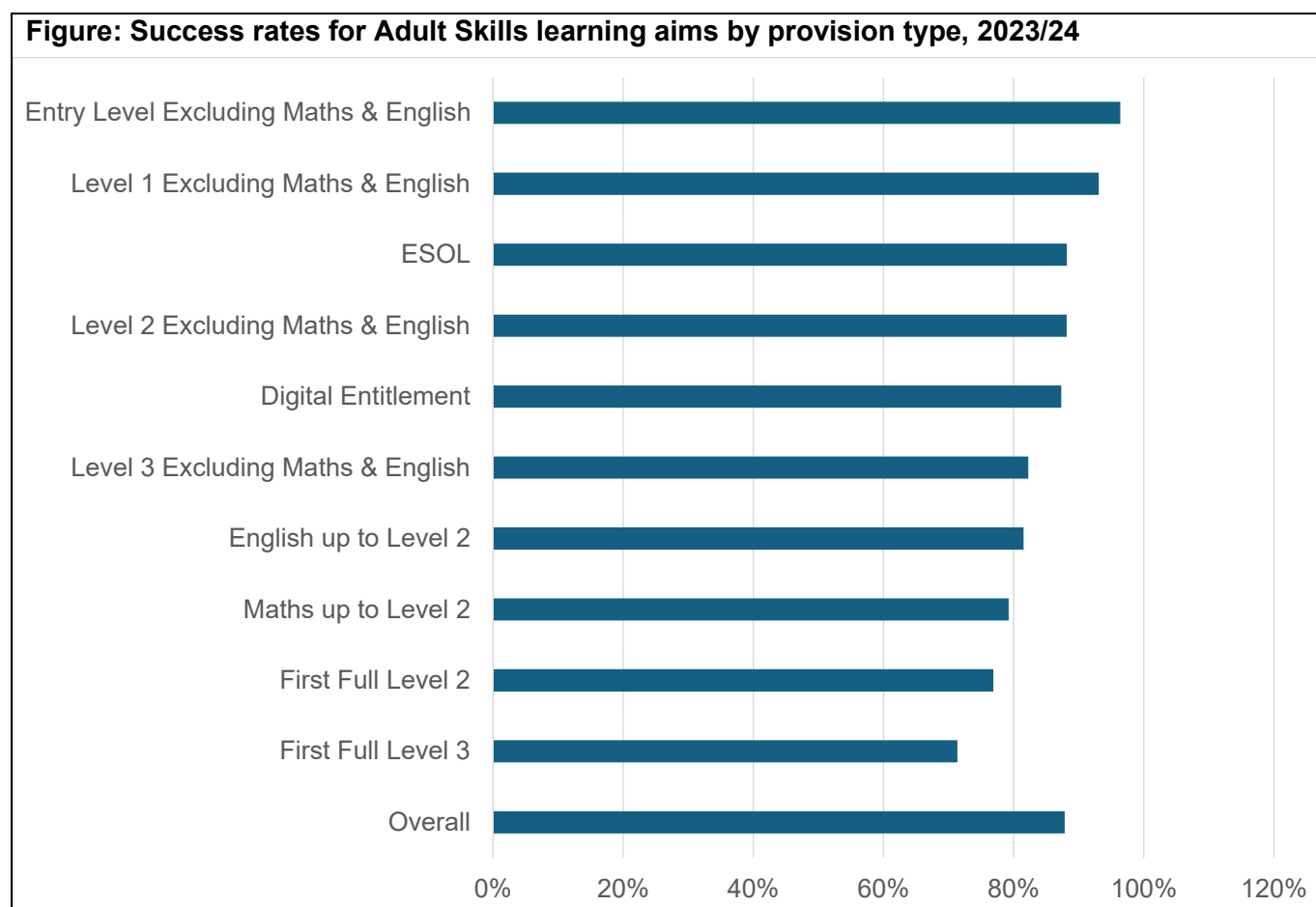
The success rates for the devolved Adult Skills programme have improved over time, increasing by 2 percentage points from 86% to 88% between 2020/21 (immediately before devo) and 2023/24.

Figure: Success rates for Adult Skills learning aims by level, 2023/24

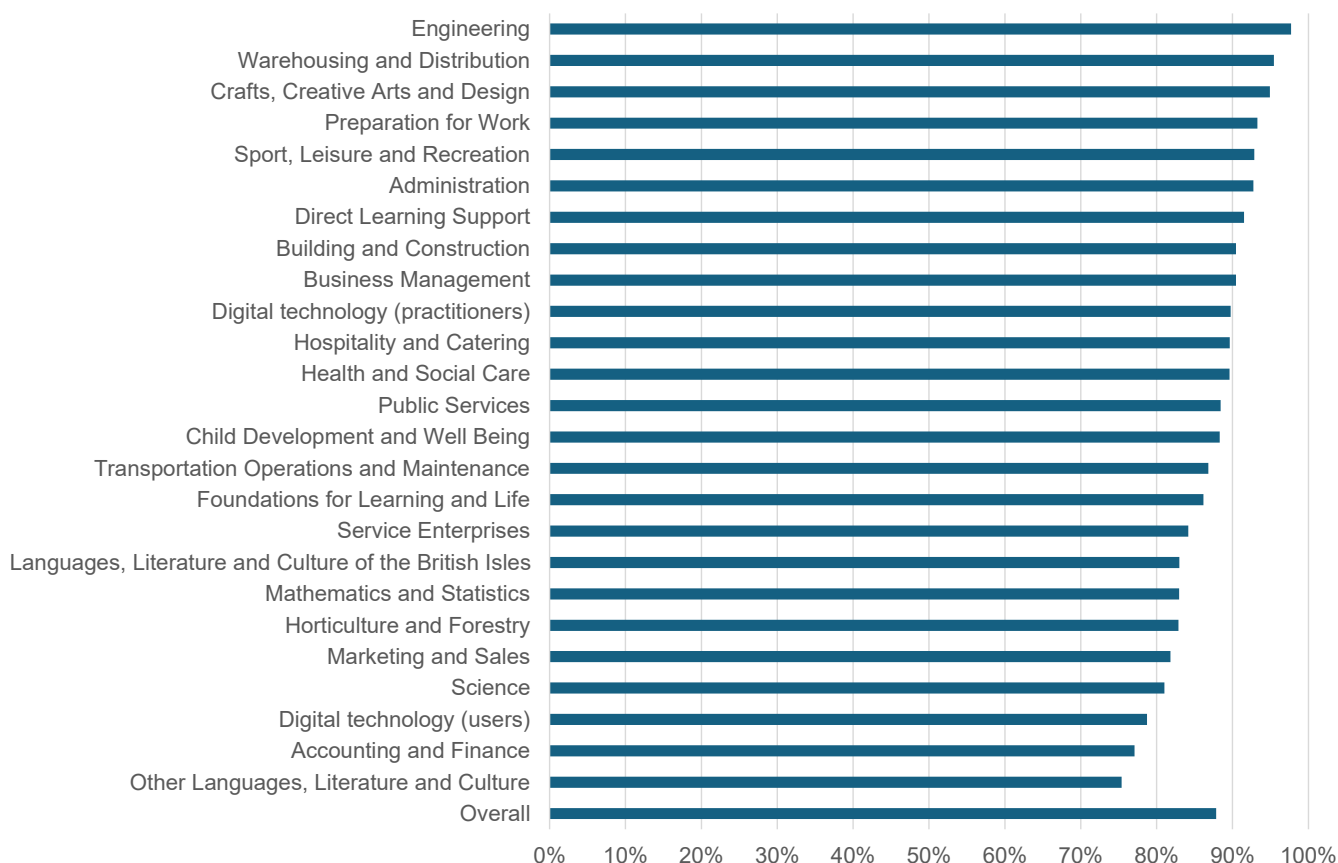


Success rates differ by the notional level of the learning aim. Entry Level and Level 1 aims have the highest success rate and Level 3 courses have the lowest. This is to be expected since Level 3 courses are generally longer and more demanding on the learner. However, it is notable that the success rate for Level 3 aims increased from 64% in 2021/22 and 70% in 2022/23 to 77% in 2023/24.

As the figure (below) shows, vocational aims at Level 1 and Entry Level had the highest success rates followed by ESOL provision. Success rates for full qualifications at levels 2 and 3 were the lowest of any of the categories but still above 70%.



Success rates are fairly consistent across other dimensions, including residence of learner (at local authority level) but vary by sector subject area and this is set out below.

Figure: Success rates for Adult Skills learning aims by subject, 2023/24

Note: Subjects with fewer than 100 starts are excluded

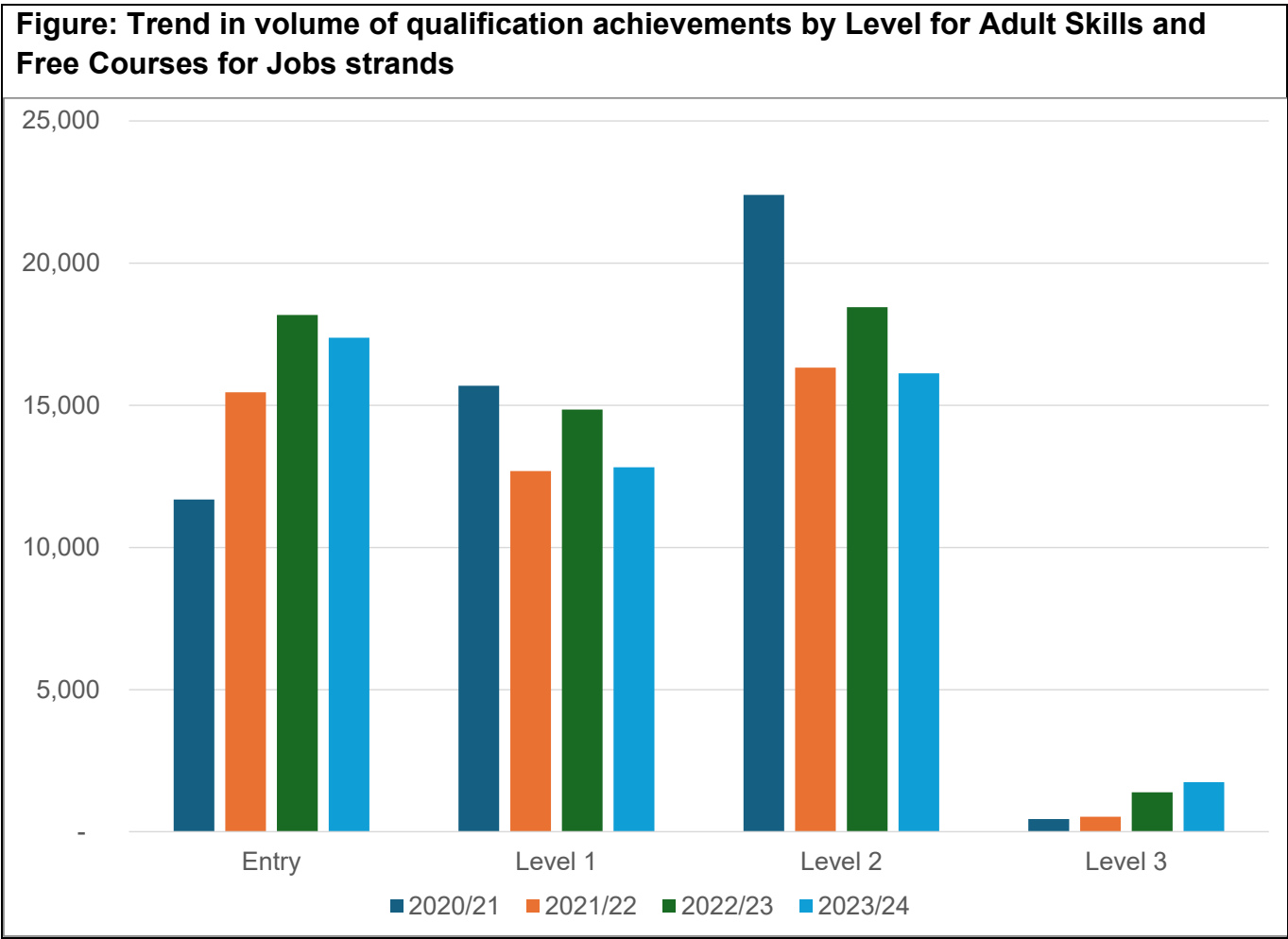
Success rates by subject have a fairly narrow range from 98% for *Engineering* down to 75% for *Other languages, literature and culture*. These differences are partly due to the differing profiles by qualification level of starts by subject area.

National figures are available for Education and Training provision for learners aged 19 and above for 2022/23 – they are not yet available for 2023/24. The scope of this provision is wider than the AEB and therefore the national figures are not directly comparable with our local figures. However, they do show, on an indicative basis, that West Yorkshire's performance was similar to the national average during the period, including for the various qualification levels. Key figures are as follows:

- The national retention rate was 92% in 2022/23 (excluding Level 4 aims).
- The national achievement rate (referred to as pass rate in national reporting) was 94%.
- The national success rate, based on our definition was 87%, slight below the West Yorkshire figure of 88%.

The pattern of success rates by qualification level is broadly similar at national level to the West Yorkshire position in that the lower qualification levels have better rates than higher level qualifications.

The overall volume of achievements delivered through the Adult Skills and FCFJ strands in 2023/24 was 48,100.



Destinations and progression

The following analysis is based on data available from the Individualised Learner Record, as presented in the Destinations and Progression data report. It is acknowledged that this does not provide a full picture of destinations and progression – this information deficit will be addressed through our plans for future evaluation outlined below.

The data for 2023/24 shows an improvement in performance across all the main measures compared with the previous academic year.

Overall, 21,000 learners, or 46% of total learners, were recorded as having a positive destination of employment, voluntary work or education during 2023/24, a significant increase on the 33% recorded in 2022/23. However, many learners do not have a destination recorded: the percentage increases to 74% when the denominator is limited to learners with a known destination. This is also an improvement on the 68% figure for 2022/23.

In addition, many learners are in employment, education or voluntary work when they commence their study. To take account of this we have developed a measure of positive progression which shows when a learner moves from unemployment or inactivity to a positive destination. Overall, 12,700 learners achieved positive progression in 2023/24; this is equivalent to 28% of all learners and 45% of learners with a known destination; this compares with equivalent figures for 2022/23 of 17% and 34%.

The majority of positive progressions relate to entry into education (81% of learners), followed by employment (18%) and voluntary work (3%)².

Table: Summary of learner destinations and progression

All learners			Learners with known destination		
<i>All learners</i>	<i>Positive outcome</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>All learners</i>	<i>Positive outcome</i>	<i>%</i>
46,018	20,965	46%	28,205	20,965	74%
<i>All learners</i>	<i>Positive progression</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>All learners</i>	<i>Positive progression</i>	<i>%</i>
46,018	12,662	28%	28,205	12,662	45%
<i>Unemployed on start</i>	<i>Positive progression</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Unemployed on start</i>	<i>Positive progression</i>	<i>%</i>
30,677	12,662	41%	19,653	12,662	64%

We can also focus down on learners who were unemployed and actively seeking and available for work at the start of their course. Among this group, 41% of all learners experienced positive progression, rising to 64% of unemployed learners with a known destination. Again, this represents an improvement on the respective figures of 29% and 53% recorded in 2022/23.

² Since learners can have multiple destinations these percentages sum to more than 100%.

Appendix 1 – Adult Skills Programmes

Investing in Adults

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) has enabled West Yorkshire Combined Authority to provide the region's adults with the skills needed for entering and sustaining work, an apprenticeship or other further learning. The focus of the funding is to support learning from first steps through to Level 3 (equivalent to A Levels).

Alongside the devolved funds, the Combined Authority has supplemented Adult Skills provision through funding granted from the Department for Education (e.g. Skills Bootcamps), UK Shared Prosperity Funding (e.g. Multiply) and its own Gainshare funding. This has allowed the Combined Authority to deliver provision outside of the eligibility requirements of AEB, including interventions focussed solely on maths (through the Multiply programme), and on upskilling adults via short interventions at Level 3 and above in key industry sectors for West Yorkshire, through Skills Bootcamps and the Gainshare-funded 'Skills Connect' programme.

This appendix provides an overview of these programmes and their impact. While the additional funds have allowed the Combined Authority to provide wider services and impact, drawing out comparison data between programmes is challenging due to the variation in reporting periods, systems and processes. The reporting periods are noted for each programme. This will be addressed in future years with further devolution and integrated settlement.

Multiply

Multiply is an adult numeracy programme, led by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the £2.6bn UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

West Yorkshire Combined Authority was given an allocation of £12.4m for Multiply across three financial years up to 31st March 2025. For the purposes of the annual report 2023/24, this appendix provides information relating to the financial year 2023/24.

Year 2 Progress	Profiled participations	Profiled Budget	Individual Participation (ILR)	Individual Participation (Non - ILR)	Actual Budget Spend	% Actual participations	% Actual Budget Spend
Money Management	720	£487,023.61	906	-	£595,240.41	126%	122%
Community Numeracy	910	£462,580.58	1012	-	£535,741.07	111%	116%
Family Learning	629	£369,735.11	748	-	£432,878.44	119%	117%
FE Booster	425	£367,516.30	564	-	£454,188.35	133%	124%
Business Skills Scans	100	-	-	81	-	81%	-
Business Strand Training	610	£625,000.00	714	-	£523,115.00	117%	84%
Business Strand Numeracy Champs	130	£450,000.00	-	88	£267,450.00	68%	59%
Frontline Staff	360	£432,450.00	-	265	£322,340.65	74%	75%
Capacity Building FE and Local Authority	323	£406,071.75	-	326	£467,415.47	101%	115%
Capacity Building (Procured)	-	£341,483.36	-	228	£153,973.26	-	45%
10% Admin fee	-	£412,909.99	-	-	£434,012.00	-	100%
Total plus admin fee	-	£4,354,770.70	-	-	£4,186,354.64	-	96%

The aim of Multiply is to increase confidence in individuals who lack confidence, are maths fearful and are furthest away from completing a formal qualification. The table below shows data reported to the DfE as the impact measure of Multiply.

Total learners	
Learners reporting increased confidence	98%
Learners reporting removal of barriers	92%
Learners Reporting improved attitude to maths	87%

Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps are flexible training courses for adults aged 19 and over, including employed, unemployed, or self-employed participants looking to enhance their career options. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer fully funded participants a job interview on completion. The scheme can be used to hire new staff or upskill existing staff. Courses are delivered in formats that accommodate diverse learning needs, including online, face-to-face, or a hybrid models.

All courses are developed in consultation with employers to ensure alignment with industry standards and workforce requirements.

Skills Bootcamps are a national policy funded in alignment with financial years. West Yorkshire Combined Authority has been funding Skills Bootcamps since 2021. The table below shows the delivery for each financial year, and the increase in enrolments, completions and progressions as the years (Waves) have progressed:

Skills Bootcamps	Financial year	Enrolments Claimed	Completions Claimed	Progressions Claimed
Skills Bootcamps Wave 3	2022-2023	140	97	53
Skills Bootcamps Wave 4	2023-2024	710	464	181
Skills Bootcamps Wave 5 – still in delivery)	2024-2025	834	420	179

The table below shows the breakdown of enrolments by sector for Wave 4, financial year 2023-2024. These sectors were selected due to their alignment to the needs of the labour market in West Yorkshire. The sector coverage has increased in flexibility year on year, enabling greater focus on West Yorkshire's priority sectors. Performance has increased across enrolments, completions and progressions with each financial/delivery year.

Sector descriptors are defined by DfE:

Sector/focus	Wave 4 (23-24) enrolments
Creative and Cultural	195
Digital	491
Health and Social Care	9
Technical (incl engineering/manufacturing)	15
Total	710

Skills Connect

Skills Connect is the Combined Authority’s adult upskilling programme, providing short, demand-led, fully funded adult training courses across key sectors. Courses are predominantly at Level 3 and above, including the green economy, construction and manufacturing, digital, and health & social care. The programme delivers a blend of face-to-face and online learning formats tailored to participant and sector needs, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.

For the purposes of this annual report, this appendix focuses on the performance, outcomes and spend for the Skills Connect programme to the end of 31st July 2024 (in line with the Adult Skills Fund timeline).

Total delivery budget for Skills Connect: £5,521,924

Total programme target number of starts to March 2025: 4500 participants

Skills Connect Success Measures:

- Address current and emerging skills gaps by delivering industry-relevant training.
- Collaborate with employers to align course content with workforce demands.
- Support participants in accessing high-demand sectors and progressing in their careers.
- Equip adults with practical, employer-focused skills across priority sectors.
- Foster partnerships with industry leaders to co-design courses for real-world applications.

Skills Connect Delivery:

The Skills Connect programme has been running since April 2021. The number of enrolments, and performance on completions and progressions has increased year on year. Data on the page following illustrates overall performance and sectors supported.

Period	Enrolments	Completions	Progressions
August 2023-July 2024	1493	834	557
Cumulative to July 2024	2447	1722	1017
Cumulative % to July 2024		70%	59% ³

Sector/focus	21-22 enrolments	22-23 enrolments	23-24 enrolments
Business management	0	0	41
Construction, planning and the built environment	12	277	100
Arts, media and publishing	0	0	175
Information and communication technology	0	56	65
Engineering and Manufacturing technologies	0	12	0
Green Skills (includes hybrid vehicle maintenance, organisation sustainability)	0	48	75
Health and Social Care	16	483	794
Other (advanced employability for specific demographics, i.e. graduates)	0	50	243
Total	28	926	1493

³ Progression percentage is calculated based on the number of participants who completed the course

Courses delivered in 2023-2024:

- Advanced Skills for Health and Social Care Workers
- Beyond Brontes: The Mayor's Screen Diversity Programme
- Bid to Win Public Sector Grants and Contracts
- Care with Confidence
- Clinical Care Programme
- Embedding Sustainability into Your Business
- Fast-tracking healthcare management: a blended learning model
- First Time Management Training for the Hospice and Health & Care Sector
- Graduate Accelerator - Leadership and Management
- Graduate Accelerator - Making a Difference
- Graduate Accelerator - Working in the UK
- Health and Social Care Passport
- Introduction to Residential Children's Work
- Jumpstart your Career - employability for graduates
- L3 Hybrid and Electric Vehicle
- Nurses into General Practice
- Organisation Sustainability (Green) Champion
- Palliative Care in Health & Social Care
- Real Site Skills
- Reignite Your Career (for women in construction and green sectors)
- Site Managers Safety Training Scheme
- Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme
- Supporting Hong Kong Migrants into Higher Skilled Work
- Supporting Individuals from Underrepresented Groups into Employment
- Volunteer Pathway to Care
- Working in the Civil Service

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