Annual Participation Measure Background Notes

Updated 29th August 2023

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Making skills work for Scotland

Introduction

A joint work stream between the Scottish Government and SDS oversaw the development work to define the annual participation measure (APM) methodology and content. As this is now being used within the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, these notes have been prepared to support users by outlining the reporting methodology used.

The measure is drawn from the shared dataset which is managed by SDS and incorporates data on individuals' statuses from key delivery partners, including Scotland's thirty two local authorities, Scottish Colleges, the Students Award Agency Scotland (SAAS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The shared dataset is held on the SDS customer support system (CSS). CSS is the frontline customer management system used by SDS careers information, advice, and guidance (CIAG) staff in their delivery of CIAG services to customers.

In 2023, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) employment data was included within APM statistical data set for the first time. In April 2023, SDS began to receive individual level data from HMRC for statistical purposes only. This data included employment start and end dates for employment records for individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 year old, residing in Scotland. The data that was supplied by HMRC was amalgamated with data taken from the shared dataset to create the APM dataset for 2023. Further details about this process can be found at the end of this document and within the publication itself.

1. How are records created on the Shared dataset?

The primary source of information to create records on CSS is local authority education (schools) data. This is received as part of the annual school pupil census for publicly funded schools and through ongoing sharing of local authority school data. Where the local authority has supplied a record for an individual and SDS is unable to find a matching record on CSS, a new record will be created using the supplied details.

In addition, new records will be created by SDS staff following direct contact with individuals or their representatives. For example, an individual who moved to Scotland following compulsory schooling elsewhere and have received CIAG support from SDS will have a record created for them. It should be noted that additional records **are not** created for unmatched records supplied by DWP, Scottish Colleges, SAAS, etc.

2. Who is included in the Annual Participation Measure (APM) cohort?

The annual participation measure cohort is based entirely on records held on the SDS customer support system (CSS). As outlined above, this is a shared data set to which partners contribute through data sharing arrangements. The following rules apply:

i. **Age:** To be included in the annual measure the age of the individual on the last day of the period of interest must be between 16 and 19. The age used within the measure is the age of the customer on the last day of the period of interest i.e., 31st March.

ii. **Primary Status Coverage:** to be included in the annual participation measure an individual must have status data covering the whole period of interest 1st April – 31st March. Records created mid-year that do not have a status history

covering the whole the year have been excluded from the measure.

iii. **Excluded Statuses:** individuals who meet the above criteria but have a moved out with Scotland or deceased status at any point during the period of interest are excluded from the measure.

3. **Annual Participation Measure Calculation Methodology**

i. **Headline Classification:** The method used to calculate the annual participation measure is to assign each individual record in the cohort with a headline classification of

Participating, Not-Participating or Unconfirmed.

Each status available on the shared data set has been allocated to a headline classification. The annual headline classification for each person has been calculated by adding up all the days an individual spends in each status and **the classification with the largest number of days** has been assigned to the individual.

Each headline classification is used to calculate the proportion of individuals participating, not participating and unconfirmed.

ii. **Status Grouping:** Once the annual headline classification has been calculated, the same methodology is used to calculate the status grouping.

The status grouping for each person has been calculated by adding up all the days an individual spends in each status within **the annual headline classification and the status grouping with the largest number of days** has been assigned to the individual.

iii. **Status:** The status for each person has been calculated by adding up all the days an individual spends in each status within the assigned status grouping **and the status with the largest number of days** has been assigned to the individual.

4. **Handling the scenario when no largest number of days exists**

There may be a small number of instances where the highest sum of days could not be used as the sum of days was equal.

The following rules used to identify the participation headline, group, and status:

i. **Headline Classification:**

Where the highest sum of days between participating and unconfirmed was equal, the headline classification was recorded as unconfirmed.

Where the highest sum of days between not participating and unconfirmed was equal, the headline classification was recorded as not participating.

Where the highest sum of days was equal between participating and not participating, and the not participating sum was higher than unconfirmed then the headline classification was not participating else the headline classification was recorded as unconfirmed.

ii. **Status Grouping:**

Participating: where the highest sum of days was equal between two or more of the status groups, their final status grouping would be recorded using a hierarchy (1) Employment, (2) Education and (3) Training & Other Development.

Not-Participating: where the highest sum of days was equal between the status groups, their final status grouping would be recorded using the hierarchy (1) Unemployed Seeking then (2) Unemployed not Seeking.

iii. **Status:** Where more than one status had the same number of days within the same status grouping the most recent status was identified from the status records and this status would be reported.

5. **Handling Summer Transitions for those leaving school.**

The period between 1st May and the first Monday in October was identified as a period of transition from school. Where an individual left school within this period and they transitioned from a school status to another status, the period between the date left school to the start of the new status was filled with a transition status. When calculating participation classification and other subcategories these transition statuses are counted within the category being transitioned into.

6. **Handling individuals with gaps in their status history**

Where an individual had one or more statuses covering the whole year, then the sum of all the days should total 365 days. Where gaps existed in this status history the deficit of days were counted as unconfirmed days until everyone had a total of 365 days.

7. **Example Annual Participation Measure calculation**

Start Date	End Date	CSS Status	No of Days
01/04	29/05	School Pupil	59
30/05	21/06	Transition to Unemployed Seeking	23
22/06	17/08	Unemployed	57
18/08	13/09	Unknown	27
14/09	24/01	Part-time Employment	133
25/01	19/03	Further Education	54
20/03	31/03	Modern Apprenticeship	12

Note, the first status available in the period of interest will always have the 1st April as the calculated start date even though the actual start date on CSS could be earlier. Similarly, the last status in the period of interest will have 31st March as the end date.

Headline Calculation

APM Headline	No of Days
Participation	258
Non-Participation	80
Unconfirmed	27
Result = Participation	

Status Grouping Calculation

Status Grouping	No of Days
Education	113
Employment	145
Result = Employment	

Status Calculation

Status	No of Days
Part-Time Employment	133
Modern Apprenticeship	12
Result = Part-Time Employment	

8. Customer Characteristics

On CSS, there are mandatory fields that require to be completed for each customer record and these include date of birth, gender, ethnicity, and disability. When a record is created on CSS from the pupil census data all these fields will be populated with the data supplied by local authority. Data shared by local authority on an ongoing basis only contains date of birth and gender. However, as part of our delivery of CIAG services to customers our staff will confirm details with customers and update the relevant CSS fields, as appropriate.

9. Allocation of a local authority within the annual measure

Several options were considered to report participation at a local authority level and following consultation with the National Reference Group, whose members have responsibility to provide oversight for data governance of the shared data set, it was agreed to adopt the following reporting methodology.

For school pupils, we will report the local authority of the school for publicly funded secondary and special schools. For individuals attending residential schools the local authority of their home area is used based on their postcode or SDS centre.

For those who have left school we would continue to report the individual against the local authority of their school of leaving for a fixed period and thereafter the individual would be reported against the local authority linked to their postcode. If no postcode was available for mapping to a local authority, the SDS centre attached to the customer record would be used. All SDS centres are linked to local authority areas.

It was agreed that the link to the school of leaving would be retained for one year based on fixed points in the year. The change from reporting the local authority of the school to an individual's postcode would happen, as follows:

School Leaving Date between:	Fixed Cohort Leave Date	Date Local Authority link changes from School to Postcode
School census day to the 28th February (Spring Term)	**1st January** (Prior to the start of the Spring Term)	1st January (12 months after the fixed leave date)
1st March (Spring Term) to the day before the census day	**1st June** (Within the Summer Term)	1st June (12 months after the fixed leave date)

10. Reporting at Sub Local Authority Level

The rules for allocating the local authority in the APM means it is possible for an individual to have postcode that is within one local authority whilst being reported in another local authority. As the individual's postcode is used within sub local authority reporting, only individuals whose postcode is within the same local authority as their reporting LA will be included in sub local authority reporting. When reporting at a national level all individuals are included.

Each record on CSS has an address field that will contain a postcode and these contact details should be maintained by SDS advisers. The postcode of the customer at the point the

data is extracted from CSS is compared to the latest postcode available from shared administrative data to identify a valid postcode. The postcode is matched to the latest Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD), published by National Records of Scotland. The SPD data is used to identify the local authority of the postcode and all sub local authority reporting categories e.g., SIMD Quintile, SIMD Decile, Intermediate zones, etc.

Participation Measure Status Definitions
Headline Classification: Participating

1. Education Group

School Pupil
Relates to individuals on the roll of a local authority or grant-aided secondary or special school. It also includes young adults who are receiving education through local authority purchased places at specialist provision, residential schools, those attending college or other providers but are on a school roll. In line with "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC), the local authority should ensure each school maintains an accurate pupil roll. They should ensure their management information system is updated with information related to when a young person is planning to or has left school, and this will be notified to SDS through regular data sharing.

Higher Education
Relates to individuals enrolled at a University, Higher Education Institution or College to follow a course of study at SCQF level 7 or above. This includes degree courses, courses for the education and training of teachers, higher level courses for professional qualification and Higher National Certificate /

Diploma or equivalent. The individual could be enrolled on a Full-Time, Part-Time or distance learning basis.

Further Education
Those enrolled at college or other provider and studying below SCQF level 7, e.g., National Qualifications, Access courses, portfolio courses, portfolio preparation, pre-vocational courses, and special programmes. The individual could be enrolled on a Full-Time, Part-Time or distance learning basis.

2. Employment Group

Employment (full-time & part-time) and Self-Employment
Covers all individuals who consider themselves to be employed through undertaking paid work. This is based on self-classification adopted by the Labour Force Survey.

Individuals will be working full-time if they undertake paid work 16 hours or more per week and part-time for under 16 hours per week. Full-time employment also includes individuals undertaking a Graduate Apprenticeship.

Self Employed is defined as an individual who is earning a living by working independently of an employer, either freelance or by running their own business including anyone working as a professional athlete.

Included in the employment group are those who are undertaking an internship, where a young person has completed an agreed course and is working for a set period in an organisation to enhance their skills and knowledge through practical work experience and for which the individual should be paid.

Modern Apprenticeship

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) provide individuals with the opportunity to secure industry-recognised qualifications while earning a wage. It relates to individuals undertaking a modern apprenticeship where there is a public funding contribution administered by SDS on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Modern Apprenticeship statistics related to the performance of our MA programme are published by SDS as Official Statistics using data derived from the FIPS database. CSS has its own reporting rules which means the data shown here may not match the official account derived from FIPS. There is a transfer of data from FIPS to CSS and the data goes through a series of business rules to update statuses on CSS. Also, a modern apprenticeship status can be created on CSS by data shared from local authorities and by SDS advisers based on information received from another source e.g. individuals, parents, family members and local authorities without the corresponding data being held in FIPS. There is cleansing activity on CSS that updates an MA status to Full-Time employment if a corresponding record is not found on FIPS, but this is only after a set period. Therefore, the data shown here should be used with caution and is provided as a guide only, please refer to the Modern Apprenticeship statistics for official figures.

Data Import - Employed: This status was introduced in late summer 2021 and was used for the first time in the APM in 2022. Through data sharing SDS will receive information that an individual is in employment, but we do not receive information about the hours worked. In these circumstances we are unable to allocate the status to the Full-Time or Part-Time employment.

For example, DWP share data that identifies an individual is claiming Universal Credit but has earnings as part of their claim, in these circumstances the individual will have a Data Import - Employed status created.

From 2023, this status category has also been used for employment records created from HMRC data supplied for statistical purposes only.

3. Training and Other Development Group

Employability Fund (Reported between 2016 and 2022)
Following an announcement from the Scottish Government in October 2021, the Employability Fund ceased in March 2022 with associated funding transferred to local authorities in line with No One Left Behind Strategy.

The Employability Fund aims to support activity that will help people to develop the skills needed to secure a job or progress to more advanced forms of training. The Employability Fund supports participants and activity that map to stages 2 to 4 of the Strategic Skills and employability pipeline (SSP).

Other Formal Training
The integration of funding streams, as part of the ongoing implementation of No One Left Behind (NOLB), means that all young adults supported by local authorities who are undertaking a learning agreement/action plan are recorded within this category. In addition, provision funded via the Young Person's Guarantee will be included in this status.

It also includes young adults on third sector funded training programmes that have a formal attendance arrangement and

normally trainees will be in receipt of a training allowance or grant.

In addition, those receiving a scholarship or sponsorship to concentrate on vocational/sporting activity will be included here. This status would only include individuals who have a non-employed status, but the individual is receiving external funding to participate in the activity.

Community Jobs Scotland, an employability programme delivered by SCVO which works with voluntary sector employers to create job opportunities for unemployed people aged 16 to 29 is also included within the category.

Personal/Skills Development
This status is split into two different categories PSD (Employability) and PSD (Social & Health):

PSD (Employability)
Those who participate in activities with the aim of improving their employability. These formal programmes will often be delivered by community learning and development or third sector organisation. The courses will have a structured attendance pattern.

PSD (Social & Health)
Some young adults may not be ready to enter the labour market and will require access to support from support services to make transitions into learning/ work or adulthood. This status relates to individuals who are undertaking structured opportunities appropriate to their long-term needs or to address their barriers to participation. It includes those whose entry to opportunities will have been planned through the transition planning process

and take account of the strengths, abilities, wishes and needs of the young person as well as identification of relevant support strategies which may be required. In addition, it includes individuals who are facing barriers to participation and are participating in "structured" support for the removal of barriers prior to concentrating on employability.

Voluntary Work
Undertaking voluntary work/volunteering and involves a young adult giving of his/her time and energy through a third party. It will benefit both the young adult and others, including individuals, groups and organisations, communities, the environment, and society at large. Some volunteering may include a financial allowance. Work experience that is not organised via a formal training programme and un-paid work would also be recorded here.

Activity Agreements (Reported between 2016 and 2019)
"No One Left Behind: Next Steps for Employability Support in Scotland", outlined the Scottish Government's plan to deliver more effective and joined-up employability support across Scotland. From April 2019, a new local employability delivery model managed collaboratively between Scottish Government and Local Government was introduced. The integration of funding streams, as part of the ongoing implementation of No One Left Behind, means that although local authorities will provide the same type of support and opportunities for young adults, this activity will no longer be funded under the banner of 'Activity Agreements'. All activity funded via No One Left Behind will be included in the Other Formal Training category.

Headline Classification: Not-Participating

4. Unemployed and seeking employment or training:

This refers to young adults who SDS is aware of and are actively seeking employment/training. This includes those receiving support from SDS, DWP and other delivery partners. It will include individuals who have been identified through regular data sharing from the Department for Work and Pensions e.g., Universal Credit and legacy benefits.

If there has been no contact between the individual and SDS within an 8-week period or if SDS has been unable to confirm with the local employability partner that the individual is still being supported, their status will be updated to "status unconfirmed". Any individual identified through data sharing with DWP are excluded from this update.

5. Unemployed and not seeking employment or training

Includes individuals who are **not seeking employment or training** for a range of reasons. This is split into three main headings:

Economically Inactive – the primary reason for an individual not being able to participate includes young people with caring responsibilities, pregnancy, those with a short-term illness, those who are choosing not to participate, those who due to their complex needs or personal circumstances are not able to participate and those who are taking time out to travel.

Unavailable - ill health – those young people who are unavailable to participate due to a longer-term illness.

Custody - Young people on remand or in custodial care.

6. Headline Classification: Unconfirmed

Individuals with an unconfirmed status refers to those 16-19 year olds who have an individual record within the participation measure but despite multi partner data sharing and attempted tracking by SDS and their partners, it was not possible to identify an up to date status for reporting.

SDS has developed procedures for following up customers as part of their service delivery. These procedures will include attempted contact with those 16-19 year olds with an unconfirmed status.

SDS continues to work with partners to further enhance service delivery through multi-partner data sharing and it is anticipated this work will also help to decrease the number of customers with an unconfirmed status.
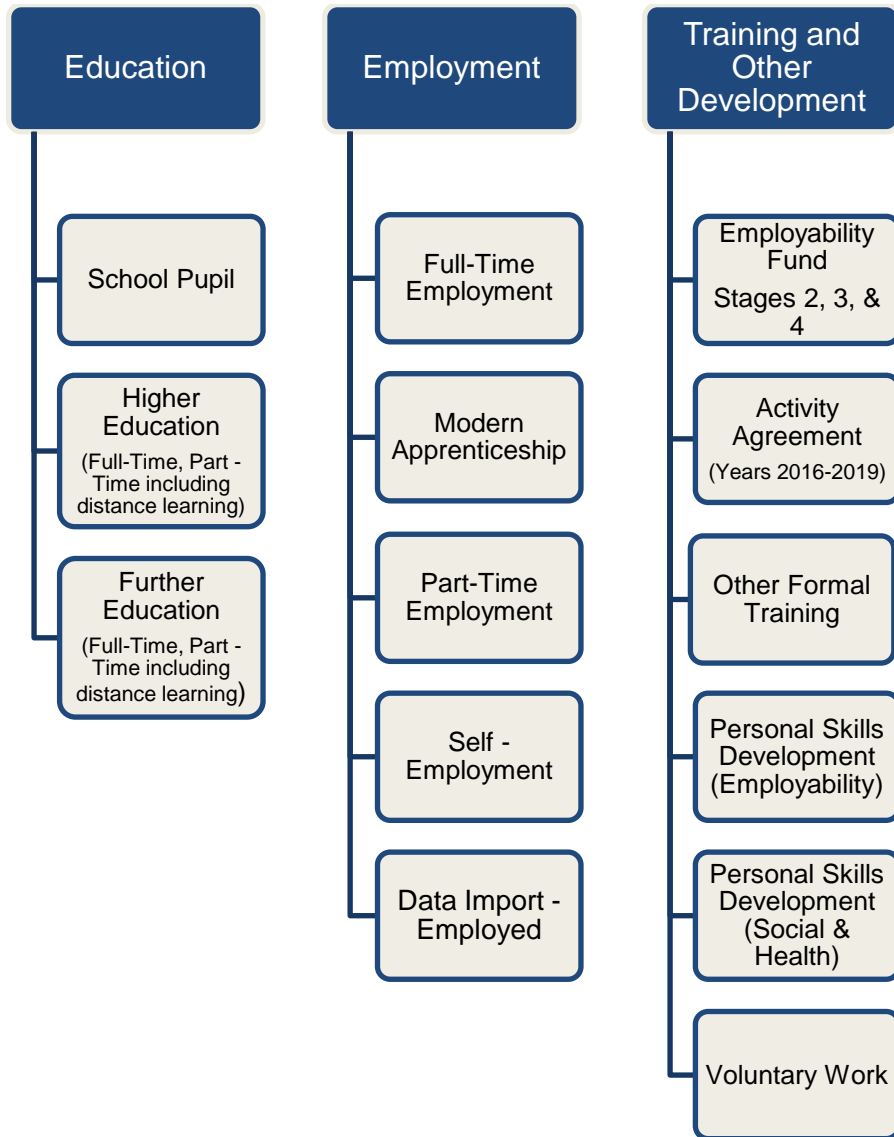
7. CSS Statuses excluded from the measure
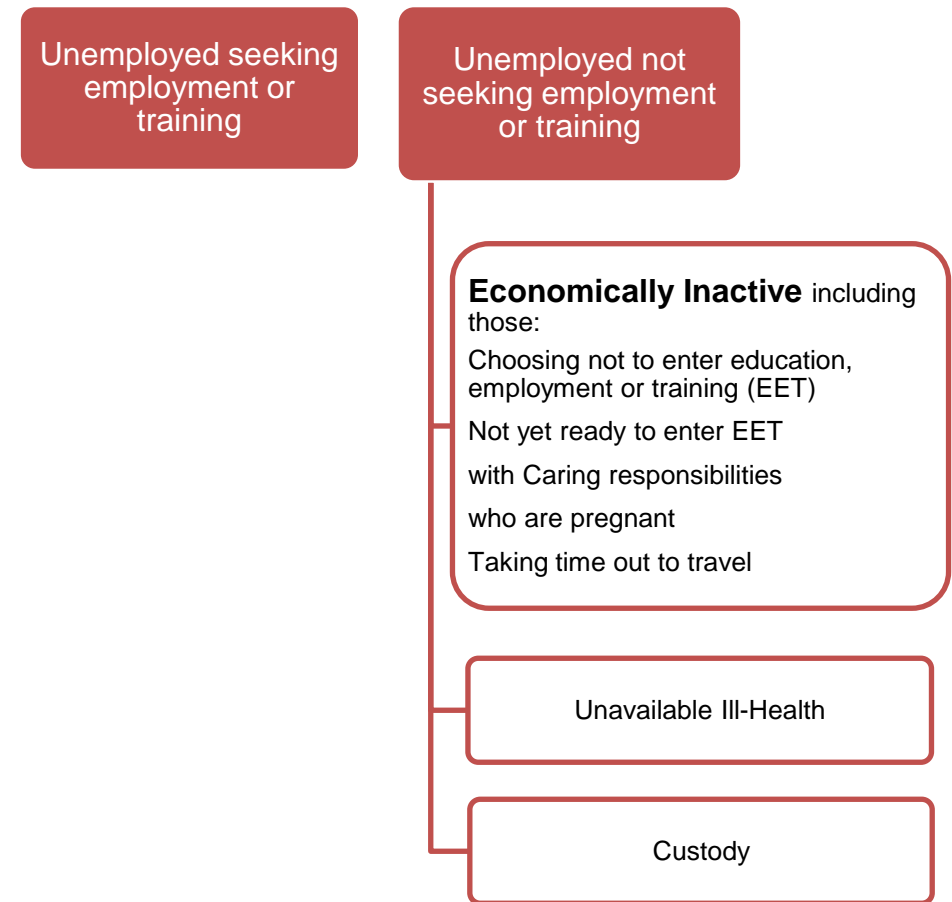
Moved out with Scotland
Where SDS has been notified the young person has left Scotland on a permanent basis. However, those who are ordinarily resident in Scotland and are supported by SAAS to study out with Scotland will be recorded within Higher Education.

Deceased: Where SDS has been notified the young person has passed away.

Headline Classification: Participating

Education
- School Pupil
- Higher Education (Full-Time, Part - Time including distance learning)
- Further Education (Full-Time, Part - Time including distance learning)

Employment
- Full-Time Employment
- Modern Apprenticeship
- Part-Time Employment
- Self - Employment
- Data Import - Employed

Training and Other Development
- Employability Fund Stages 2, 3, & 4
- Activity Agreement (Years 2016-2019)
- Other Formal Training
- Personal Skills Development (Employability)
- Personal Skills Development (Social & Health)
- Voluntary Work

Headline Classification: Not - Participating

Unemployed seeking employment or training

Unemployed not seeking employment or training
- **Economically Inactive** including those:
  - Choosing not to enter education, employment or training (EET)
  - Not yet ready to enter EET
  - with Caring responsibilities
  - who are pregnant
  - Taking time out to travel
- Unavailable Ill-Health
- Custody

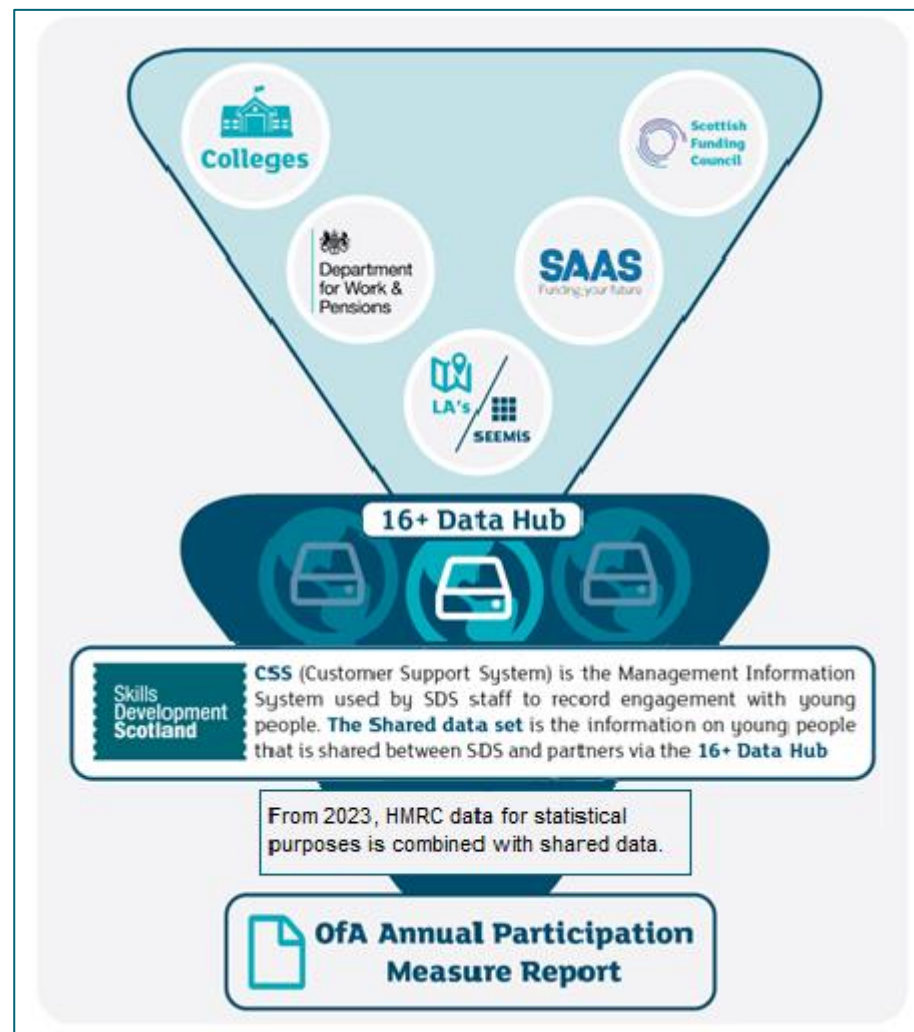**11. Coverage of the annual participation measure**

The [National Records of Scotland](#) provide Mid-Year Population estimates on an annual basis. The latest estimate prior to the 2023 publication was Mid-2021. This provided an estimate of the population of 16-19 year olds in Scotland. We compare the annual participation measure cohort with this estimate, and it will normally represent between 92 and 93 per cent of the population. In 2023, it was approximately 96% of the estimate. The measure does not report on the entire population because the primary source of information to create records on CSS is local authority education (schools) data. This is received as part of the annual school pupil census for publicly funded schools and through ongoing sharing of local authority school data. CSS will not hold records for:

- Those who are attending/attended independent schools or those being home schooled with no previous record of publicly funded schooling in Scotland.
- Individuals who migrated to Scotland for the purposes of study or work who have no record of publicly funded schooling in Scotland and who have not received Careers Information Advice or Guidance support from SDS.

12. Recording and updating statuses on CSS

The participation measure is based on a shared data set which is updated through multi partner data sharing and direct data input by SDS staff, because of contact with individuals, their parents/representatives, or organisations an individual is engaging with. Each organisation that shares data is responsible for the quality of the data held in their system.

However, SDS also uses an additional set of validation and business rules to govern the creation of new statuses from partner data. The graphic and tables that follow outlines the current sources of data that contribute to the shared data source and what statuses are created:

Data Supplier	Primary or secondary statuses which could be created on CSS
Local Authority	a) Creation and update of school pupil statuses for those at publicly funded schools based on the annual school pupil census returns prepared by each local authority. b) Throughout the academic year there is ongoing data sharing from SEEMiS (school management information system). This data will be used to maintain school pupil records, identify school leavers, and create post school statuses where this information is supplied.
Scottish Colleges	a) A student enrolment at Scotland's Colleges creates or updates Further Education (FE) or Higher Education (HE) statuses. b) Withdrawals from FE and HE courses creates an unconfirmed status (unknown)
Student Awards Agency Scotland	a) A student enrolment via SAAS creates or updates Higher Education statuses. b) A student enrolment on a Graduate Apprenticeship will create a Full-Time Employment status. c) Withdrawals from HE courses creates an unconfirmed status (unknown)
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP share both Universal Credit data and legacy benefits e.g., Job Seekers Allowance. SDS receives data for individuals aged between 16 and 24 years old who are in receipt of Universal Credit, both in and out of work. This data is used to update statuses to unemployed seeking, economically inactive, data import – employed or self-employed. Unemployed seeking statuses will be created on receipt of JSA data.
SDS Funding Information & Processing System (FIPS)	Participants in Modern Apprenticeships. Where data is available for Graduate Apprenticeships and Employability Fund relevant statuses are created and maintained. Programme leaver information will be used to update post programme statuses.
Scottish Funding Council (College Leaver Survey)	Variety of statuses created for college leavers based on data gathered through the annual SFC college destination survey.

In addition to the above organisations, SDS also receives data from other partners, e.g., Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

To complement the sharing of the above administrative data by partners, there is ongoing sharing of information at an operational level to support the delivery of services to individuals. SDS advisers continue to track and engage with young adults thus maintaining an accurate record of their circumstances.

13. HMRC data for statistical use only

In 2023, SDS began to receive employment data from HMRC for statistical purposes only. This means the HMRC data must be held separately from the shared dataset that incorporates data shared from data sharing partners or entered by SDS CIAG staff. The HMRC data, supplied at an individual level, was amalgamated with data from the shared data set to create a standalone APM statistical dataset. All outputs from the APM statistical dataset are aggregated with disclosure control applied to prevent the identification of individuals and disclosure of HMRC data. See the section below for details of how HMRC data has been used.

14. Statistical Disclosure Control

Statistical Disclosure Control aims to minimize the risk of an individual being identified through the release of statistics. For example, when breaking down statistics by local authority, gender, and status there may small numbers in specific statuses.

Potentially an individual could identify themselves or others may be able to recognise the individual through this release. Therefore, SDS applies a threshold of five which means any results based on values 1 to 4 will be suppressed, except for the unconfirmed status. We also apply secondary suppression to ensure potentially disclosive data can't be calculated.

15. Calculations

The Annual Participation Measure report may refer to a percentage point (pp) increase or decrease, which means the absolute change between two percentages e.g., the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating increased by x pp. Throughout our analysis we calculate percentage point differences from unrounded percentages which means the actual differences used within the report may differ slightly from those calculated from the percentages shown in the report within text and graphs. Similarly, percentages within this report may not sum to 100%, due to rounding.

16. Comparability to other published statistics

The detail outlined above provides the background to statuses recorded in the shared data set and the APM methodology.

Caution should be exercised when making comparison to published data on specific topics such as Higher Education participation, the Modern Apprenticeship programme, unemployment rates or school leaver destinations.

Other published statistics may use differing methodologies and timings and therefore are not directly comparable.

For example, Modern Apprenticeship (MA) statistics related to the performance of our MA programme are published as Official Statistics using data derived from the SDS Funding Information & Processing System. However, CSS has its own reporting rules which means the data used for the APM will not match the official account derived from FIPS. There is a transfer of data from FIPS to CSS and that data goes through a series of business rules to update statuses on CSS. In addition, modern apprenticeship statuses can be created on CSS by data shared from local authorities and by SDS advisers based on information received from another source e.g. individuals, parents, family members and local authorities without the corresponding data being held in FIPS. There is cleansing activity on CSS that updates an MA status to Full-Time employment if a corresponding record is not found on FIPS, but this is only after a set period. Therefore, the MA status data within the APM should be used with caution and is provided as a guide only, please refer to the Modern Apprenticeship statistics for official figures.

SDS statistics on the Modern Apprenticeship programme can be viewed at **http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/statistics/modern-apprenticeships** likewise SDS statistics on the Employability Fund can be viewed at **http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/statistics/employability-fund/**

HMRC & Universal Credit data

In April 2023, SDS began to receive individual level data from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) for statistical purposes only. This data, supplied monthly, was based on PAYE data from HMRC'S Real Time Information (RTI) system. An employer completes and submits data to HMRC each time they pay an employee to advise HMRC which employees they have paid and provide them with full details of the payment and deductions.

SDS received data about those aged 16-24 years old and resident in Scotland who had received payment within a specific month e.g., data received in August relates to June. The data set included individual employee details used for matching HMRC data to the shared data set. The matching fields supplied were Name, Date of Birth, Gender, and Postcode. HMRC supplied a unique reference for everyone, and this reference only relates this data and does not link to any other data sets.

For unique person we received a row of each record of employment. Each employment record had a unique number and contained a start and end date and, where available, an indication of working hours. The employment record start date was based on the start date supplied by the employer but if this was not available, the initial payment date was used.

The employment records were limited to:
1. Those that started on or after 1st January 2023.
2. Those that ended on or after 1st January 2023.
3. Those that started prior to 1st January 2023 and had not ended by 1st January 2023.

The data that was supplied by HMRC was amalgamated with data from the shared dataset which incorporates data on individuals' statuses from key delivery partners, including local authorities, colleges, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and SAAS. There were specific rules applied to integrate the HMRC data to create a bespoke APM 2023 dataset. This included amending start and end dates of existing data to align with the data supplied by HMRC.

Approximately, 1.9% of records within the APM cohort were updated through HMRC data. HMRC data was mapped to the Data Import – Employed status.

In general, the following rules were applied:

Unconfirmed: if HMRC data was available and it covered the whole unconfirmed period then the unconfirmed days were updated to employment. However, if there were only partial days to cover the unconfirmed status, then the number of days from HMRC data was used and the balance of days remained unconfirmed.

A total of 3,373 individuals were updated from an unconfirmed status with the majority updated to employment.

Education statuses: If a higher education (HE) or further education (FE) status existed, and the source of this status was confirmed by data shared by SAAS or Scottish Colleges but there was also HMRC data covering the same period then HMRC data was ignored, and the existing status remained. School pupil statuses were handled in the same way using the date left school, mainly supplied by local authorities. In these scenarios it was accepted that an individual could be working whilst studying.

If a FE or HE status was available, but it was not confirmed by data or if the mode of attendance for the status was not full-time then each status line was reviewed to incorporate HMRC data for employment that was coded as 16 hours or more. A total of 406 individuals were updated from Education to Employment and this had no impact on the overall participation rate.

Employment statuses: no changes were made to records that were originally identified as employed within the APM 2023 dataset and these were not reviewed alongside HMRC data.

Training and Other Personal Development statuses: each status line was reviewed to incorporate HMRC data for employment that was coded as 16 hours and over. A total of 209 individuals moved to employment and did not impact on the overall participation rate.

Not Participating statuses: each status line was reviewed to incorporate HMRC data for employment, amending status days as appropriate. In total, 133 individuals were updated from non-participating to employment with the majority being from unemployed not seeking statues.

Limitations of the HMRC data:

- The HMRC data did not cover the whole period of interest. If an individual left employment within the period of interest but prior to 1st January 2023 then this data was not available.

- Within the APM dataset, if an individual was originally recorded within employment this data was not reviewed alongside HMRC data.

Universal Credit data

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is one of the key partners who share data with SDS. Since 2014, SDS received data for those aged 18 and over in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. These benefits were replaced by Universal Credit (UC) with the rollout completed by December 2018, however, SDS did not receive UC data until late summer 2021.

The inclusion of UC data for individuals aged 16-19 has led to improvements in data quality and means the measure can now comprehensively report on those who are out of work (unemployed seeking and unemployed not seeking). In addition, the UC data has also been used to identify individuals who are employed and in receipt of universal credit. Unfortunately, DWP was unable to supply historic universal credit data meaning figures and percentages for previous years remain unchanged. Within previous reports we noted that we were unable to reliably quantity the impact the lack of UC data had on the APM. However, we believed we were unable to comprehensively identify or report on young adults who were unemployed and claiming out of work benefits.

It should be noted that through the delivery of post school services and transition support from school, SDS track and engage with unemployed young adults. In local areas, SDS works with DWP to offer support to young unemployed people thus maintaining an accurate record of their circumstances. As a result, the APM for previous years will have accurately reported on unemployment where SDS had delivered support to individuals. Although available to all,

SDS support is mainly delivered between the ages of 16 and 18½ years old. This approach will have to some extent mitigated the absence of UC data in prior years.

The figures and percentages impacted by the lack of UC data included the categories of unemployed seeking, unemployed not seeking, employment and unconfirmed. This meant the headline classifications of participation, non-participation and unconfirmed will have been directly impacted. Examples of how the absence of UC data will have had an impact include:

- DWP data was used to create unemployed seeking statuses and the number of 18 and 19 year olds reported within an unemployed seeking status gradually reduced since 2016.
- DWP data was used to update individuals from unconfirmed or participating to unemployed seeking.

As the results of the 2022 and 2023 report demonstrate, the inclusion of UC data has improved the quality of the shared data, particularly in relation to unemployed and unconfirmed statuses and, within these, the 18 & 19 year old age groups.