

# Modern Apprenticeship Statistics

Quarter 3, 2023/24 [1st April – 29th December 2023]

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## Introduction

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) provide employed individuals (either new or existing) with the opportunity to secure industry-recognised qualifications at a range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels while in employment.

This report provides a summary of Quarter 3 (1<sup>st</sup> April to 29<sup>th</sup> December) statistics for MAs where there is a public funding contribution administered by SDS, on behalf of the Scottish Government. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, all Modern Apprenticeship progressions are included as new starts, please see our [User Guide](#) for more information. Further analysis can be found in the [Supplementary Tables](#) on the SDS website.

We welcome feedback on the report content and format. Please contact [user\\_feedback@sds.co.uk](mailto:user_feedback@sds.co.uk).

## Outlook

Although the outlook for economic growth during early 2024 is forecast as subdued, resilience in the labour market, earnings growth, and the improvements in consumer

sentiment towards the end of Q3 provided a strengthening basis for the more positive levels of growth forecast for later in the year as well as a more positive outlook for employers.<sup>1</sup>

There were significant changes to the contracting methodology in 2023/24 to accommodate delays in approving the broader public sector budget position. This led to delays in awarding new start contracts and, subsequently, in-year reallocations. The combined effect of these delays is reflected in a 6.0% lag in starts relative to Q3 last year.

At the end of quarter 3 this year, there were 18,758 Modern Apprenticeship starts. During Quarter 4, SDS will continue to work with providers and employers to mitigate the impact of these delays, responding to continuing strong employer demand, and maximise the volume of MA starts across contracted providers to the end of March 2023/24.

SDS will also continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to deliver high quality apprenticeships that grow the young workforce and support economic growth in line with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

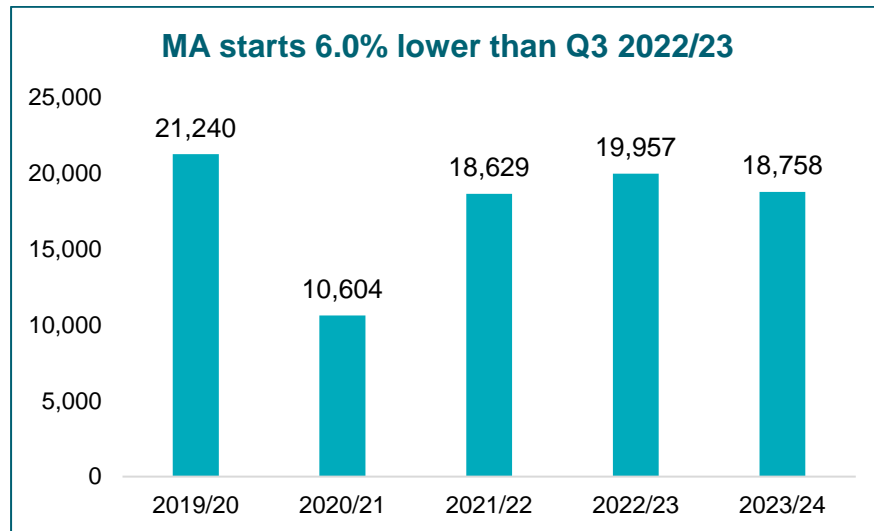
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<sup>1</sup> [Scottish Government: Scottish economic bulletin December 2023](#)

## Modern Apprenticeship Starts

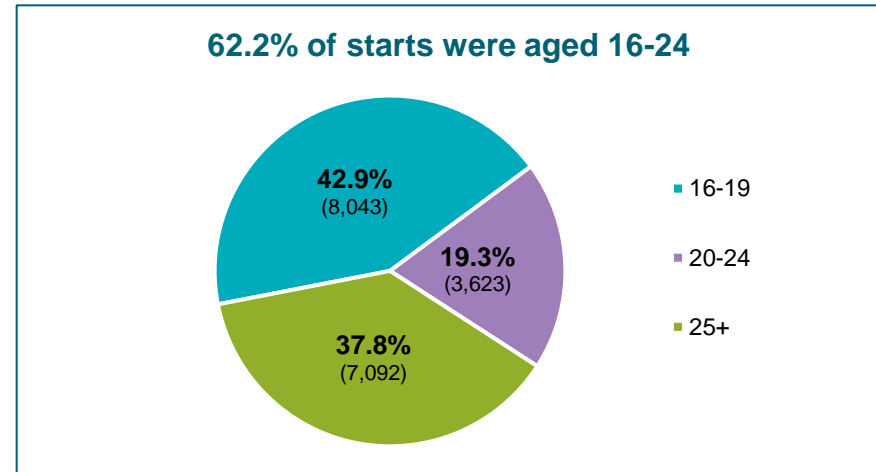
There were **18,758** Modern Apprenticeship starts at the end of Q3. This is 6.0% (-1,199) lower than the same point last year, impacted by the later issue of new start contracts and delays to contract reallocations. SDS will continue to work with providers and employers to mitigate these delays and maximise starts to the end of March 2023/24.

**Figure 1: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts, Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2023/24**



## Starts by age

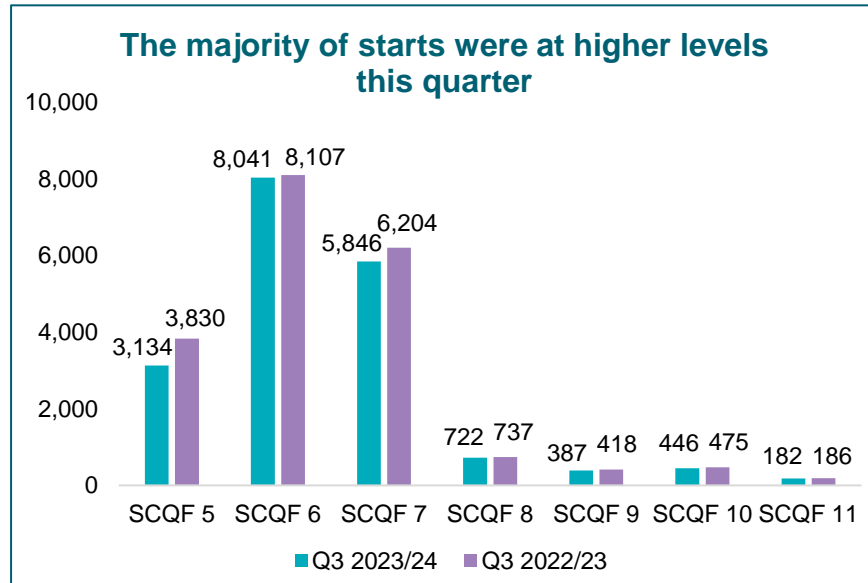
**Figure 2: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by age group, Q3 2023/24**



This quarter, the majority (62.2% or 11,666) of MA starts were aged 16-24, while 37.8% were aged 25+. The proportion of 16-24 year olds was 2.3 pp higher than the same point last year (59.8%) and 3.5 pp higher than the year before (58.6%). This was predominantly driven by an increase in starts in the 16-19 age group, which rose by 2.1% this quarter.

## Starts by SCQF level

Figure 3: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by SCQF level, Q3 2022/23 to Q3 2023/24



This quarter, 83.3% of starts were at SCQF level 6 or higher, 2.5 pp higher than the same point last year. Only 16.7% of starts were at SCQF level 5. The reduction in starts at SCQF level 5 accounted for almost 60% of the drop in overall start volumes this quarter. The increase in the proportion of starts at SCQF level 6 and higher is in line with the Scottish Government's continued policy focus on higher level apprenticeships.

## Starts by occupational grouping

Figure 4: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by occupational grouping, Q3 2022/23 to Q3 2023/24

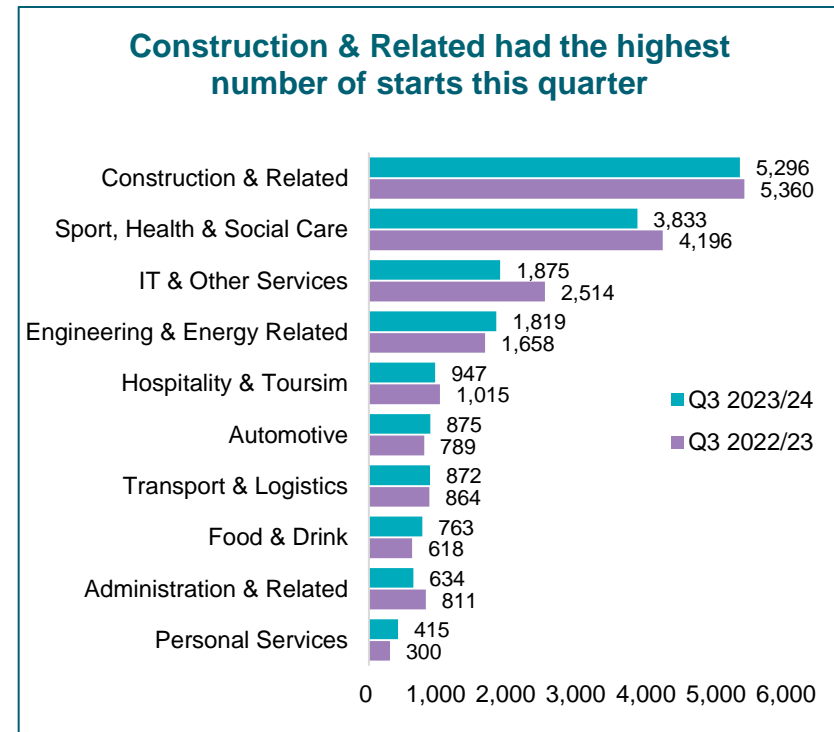


Figure 4 shows the top ten occupational groupings by number of starts. Construction & Related had the highest volume, and greatest proportion of starts this quarter. Accounting for almost a third of all starts (28.2%), the proportion of starts to Construction & Related frameworks

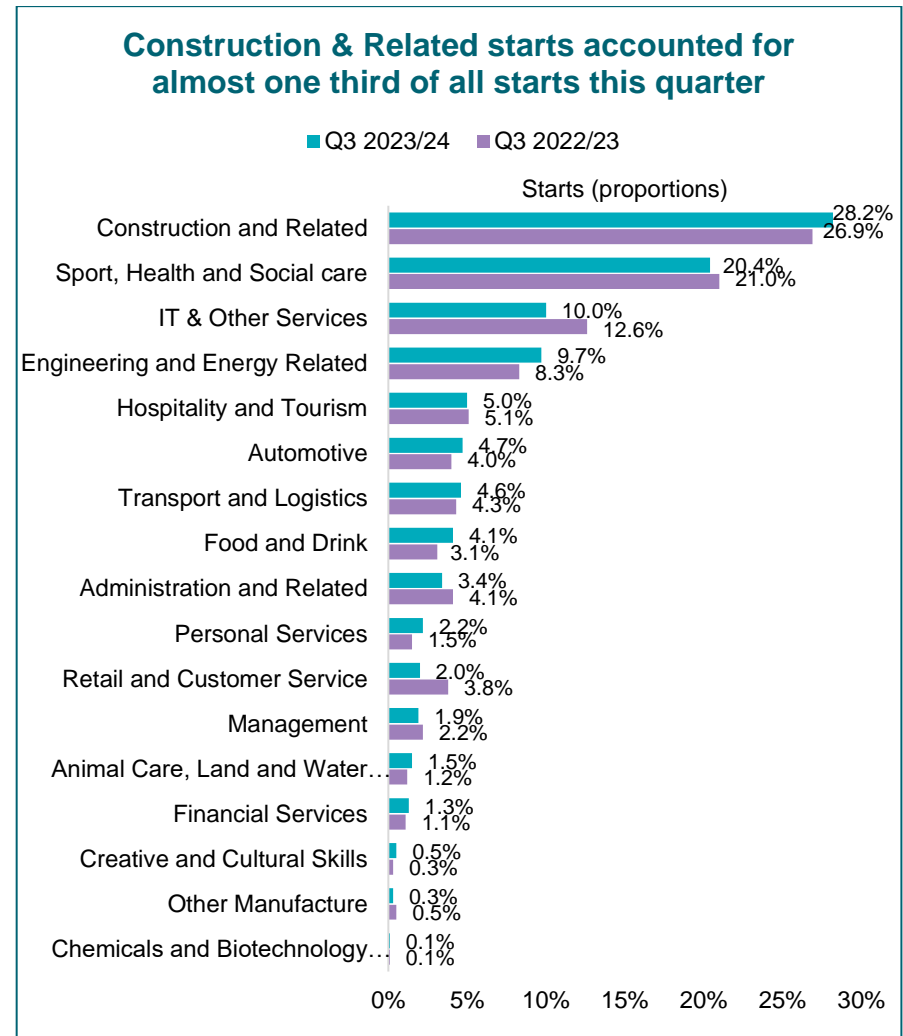
increased by 1.4 pp compared to last year despite a slight decline in absolute starts (-1.2%).

The Sport, Health and Social Care grouping had the second greatest proportion, and the second highest volume of starts at the end of Q3. However, the number of starts to this grouping was 8.7% lower than last year (-363 starts), largely due to the Health and Social Care frameworks where uptake has been impacted by Local Authority budget tightening. This has contributed to the overall drop in female starts, as Health and Social Care tends to be female dominated.

Engineering & Energy Related starts accounted for 9.7% of all starts this quarter, 1.4 pp higher than the same point last year. Starts to this grouping also increased by 9.7% (+161 starts) with the Engineering (SCQF level 6) framework driving the growth. There were also notable increases in starts to Food & Drink and Automotive.

Three other occupational groupings saw a noteworthy decline in starts this quarter, relative to last year: Retail & Customer Service (-50.6% or -382 starts), IT & Other Services (-25.4% or -639 starts), and Administration & Related (-21.8% or -177 starts).

**Figure 5: Proportion of Modern Apprenticeship starts by occupational grouping, Q3 2022/23 to Q3 2023/24**



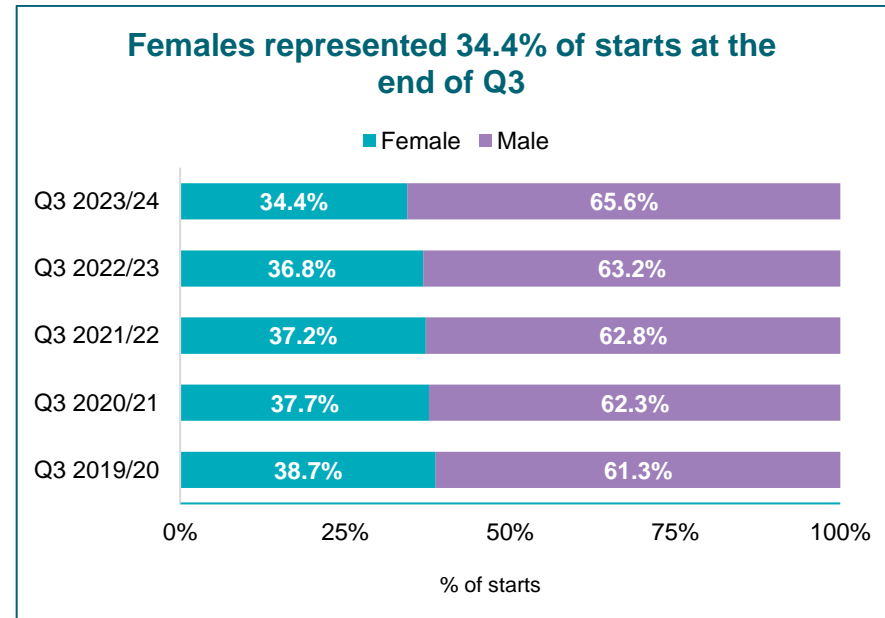
## Starts by gender

At the end of quarter 3, there were 6,406 female starts accounting for **34.4%** of all starts, 2.4 pp lower than the same point last year.<sup>2</sup> The number of female starts was 12.2% lower than last year (-886 starts). The most significant reductions in female starts were in the Sport, Health, and Social Care (-358, or -10.0%), IT & Other Services (-217 or -24.9%), and Retail and Customer Service (-212 or -51.3%) occupational groupings.

The number of male starts also fell this quarter, but by less than female starts. Male starts decreased from 12,526 to **12,238**, a 2.3% decline relative to the same point last year (-288 starts). Like female starts, there were fewer male starts in IT & Other Services and Retail and Customer Service frameworks but most of this decline was offset by more male

starts across other occupational groupings, primarily Engineering & Energy Related.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 6: Gender balance of Modern Apprenticeship starts, Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2022/23<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> Male + female starts

<sup>3</sup> As we continue to see increasing starts in male-dominated sectors it is important we continue to focus our efforts on gender diversity in apprenticeships. In recognition of this, SDS worked with the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board's (SAAB) Gender Commission during 2020 – 2022. The [SAAB Gender Commission report](#) published in October 2022 describes the state of gender diversity in

Scottish apprenticeships and the broader labour market. It presents a series of twelve practical recommendations which employers, government, and educators can follow to deliver tangible benefits for business, for individuals, and for society, both in the immediate future and the longer term to improve gender diversity.

<sup>4</sup> 114 Modern Apprentices recorded their gender as either 'prefer not to say' or 'in another way', 25 fewer than Q3 2022/23.

### Starts by disability

At the end of quarter 3, **16.5%** of starts identified as disabled – the highest proportion reported at this point in the year.<sup>5</sup>

The number of starts self-identifying an impairment, health condition, or learning difficulty increased from 2,905 to 3,029 (+4.3%) relative to the same point last year.

### Starts by ethnicity

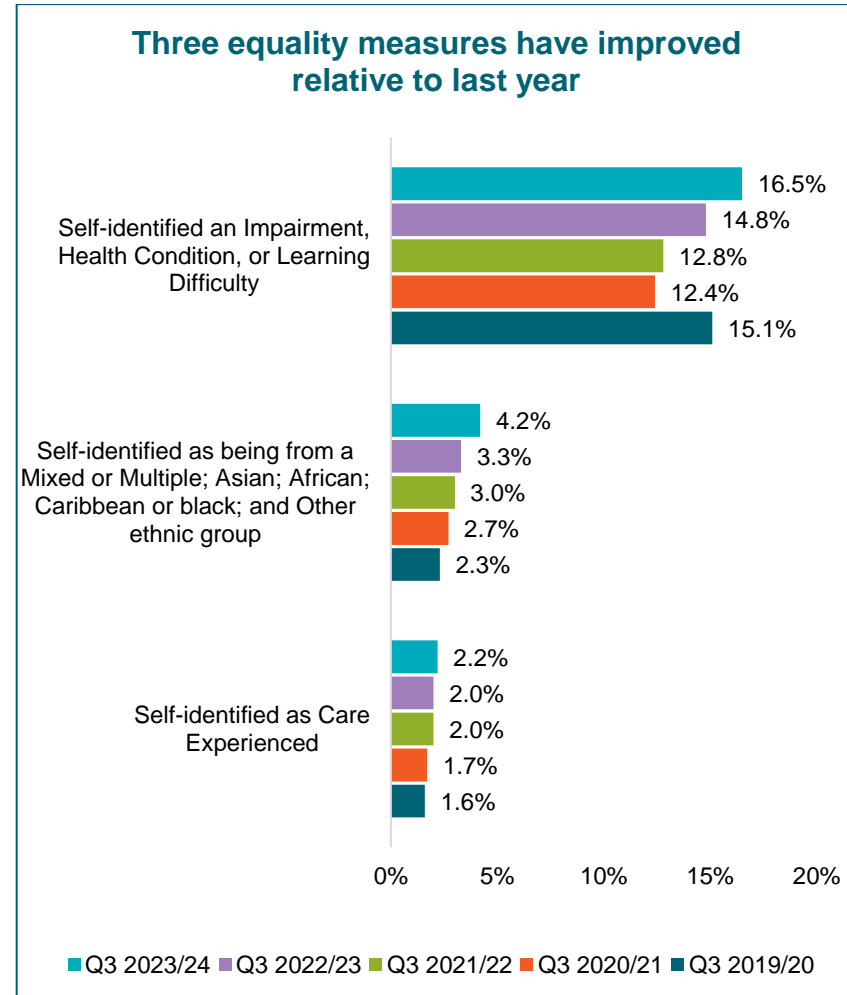
The proportion of starts self-identifying as Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic group was **4.2%**, 0.9 pp higher than last year. The number of starts self-identifying as an ethnic minority increased from 663 to 790 (+19.2%) relative to the same point last year.

### Starts by care experience

The proportion of MAs self-identifying as care experienced was **2.2%** at the end of quarter 3, 0.2 pp higher than the same point last year. The number of care experienced starts increased from 401 to 416 (+3.7%) relative to the same point last year.

<sup>5</sup> The Scottish Health Survey 2022 shows that 22% of those aged 16-24 have a limiting long-term condition (23% for those aged 25-34).

Figure 7: Modern Apprenticeship equality rates, Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2023/24





## Modern Apprentices in Training

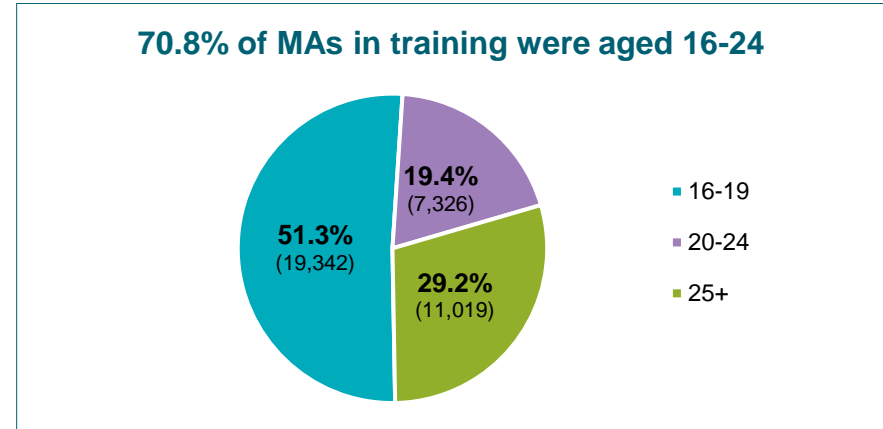
As at 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023, there were **37,687** Modern Apprentices in training, 5.3% (-2,107) lower than the same point last year.

Year on year, this number is susceptible to fluctuation as it is dependent on the number of starts across each framework. Frameworks typically vary in duration and individuals undertaking apprenticeships do so at varying rates, depending on their pace of learning. This, coupled with the backlog due to the pandemic, has resulted in higher volumes of MAs in training over the past few years.

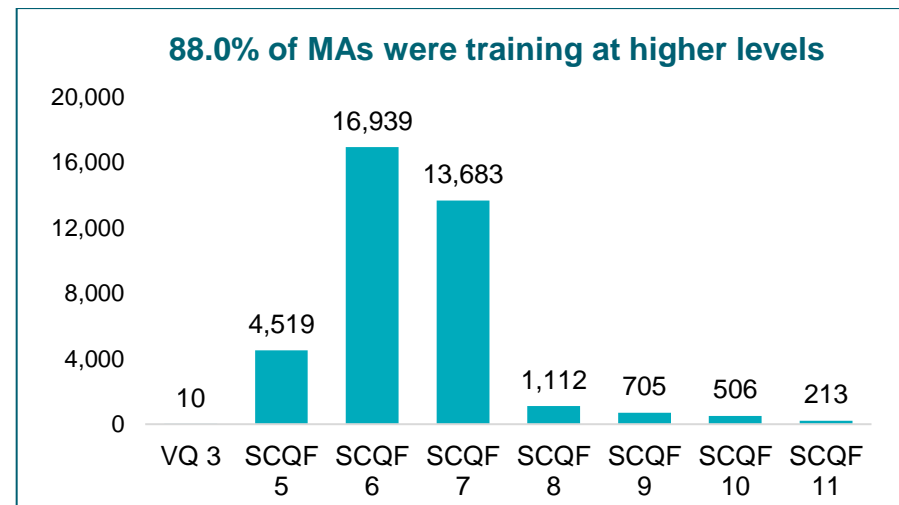
During 2023/24, apprentices that have been in training for longer than expected due to pandemic delays have progressed through their learning to successful completion and achievement. This is reflected in higher achievement rates during 2023/24.

Figures 8 and 9 show Modern Apprentices in training by age group and SCQF level, respectively, at the end of Q3 2023/24.

**Figure 8: Modern Apprentices in training by age group, Q3 2023/24**



**Figure 9: Modern Apprentices in training by SCQF level, Q3 2023/24**

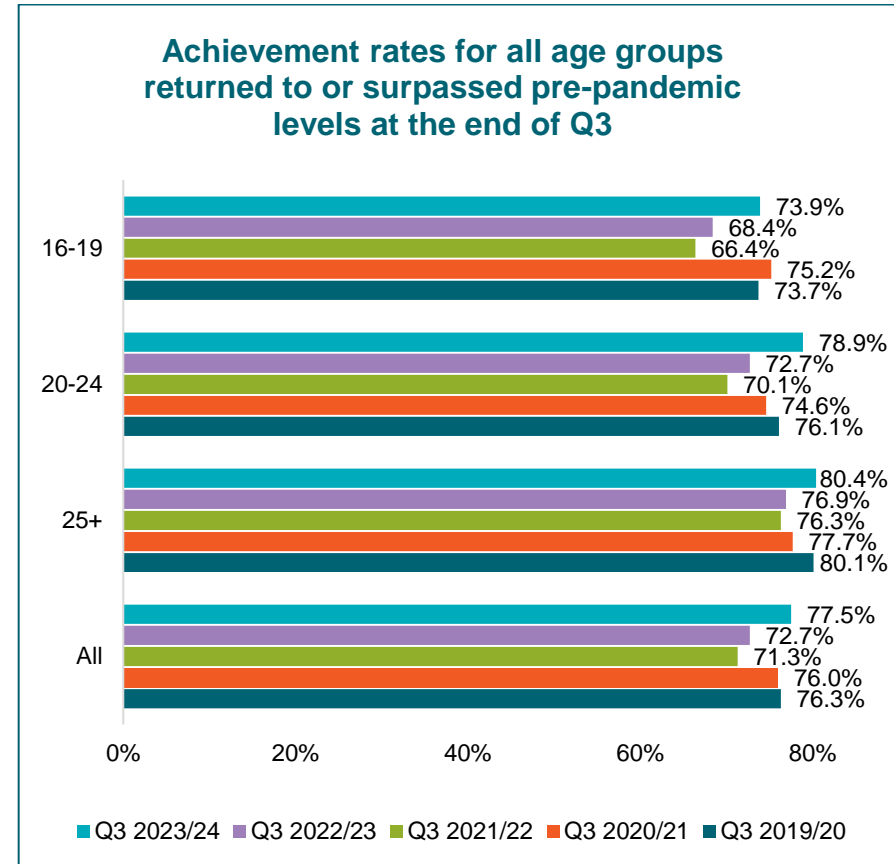


## Modern Apprenticeship Achievements

At the end of quarter 3, the overall achievement rate was **77.5%**, with 15,844 of 20,445 leavers achieving their full Modern Apprenticeship award, 4.8 pp higher than the same point last year.

Figure 10 shows that the overall achievement rate has improved year-on-year post-pandemic and at the end of this quarter surpassed the Q3 2019/20 achievement rate. Likewise, achievement rates for all age groups have improved this quarter relative to the same point last year and have either returned to or improved upon their pre-pandemic levels.

**Figure 10: Modern Apprenticeship achievements by age group, Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2023/24**



**Figure 11: Modern Apprenticeship achievement rates by occupational grouping, Q3 2022/23 to Q3 2023/24**

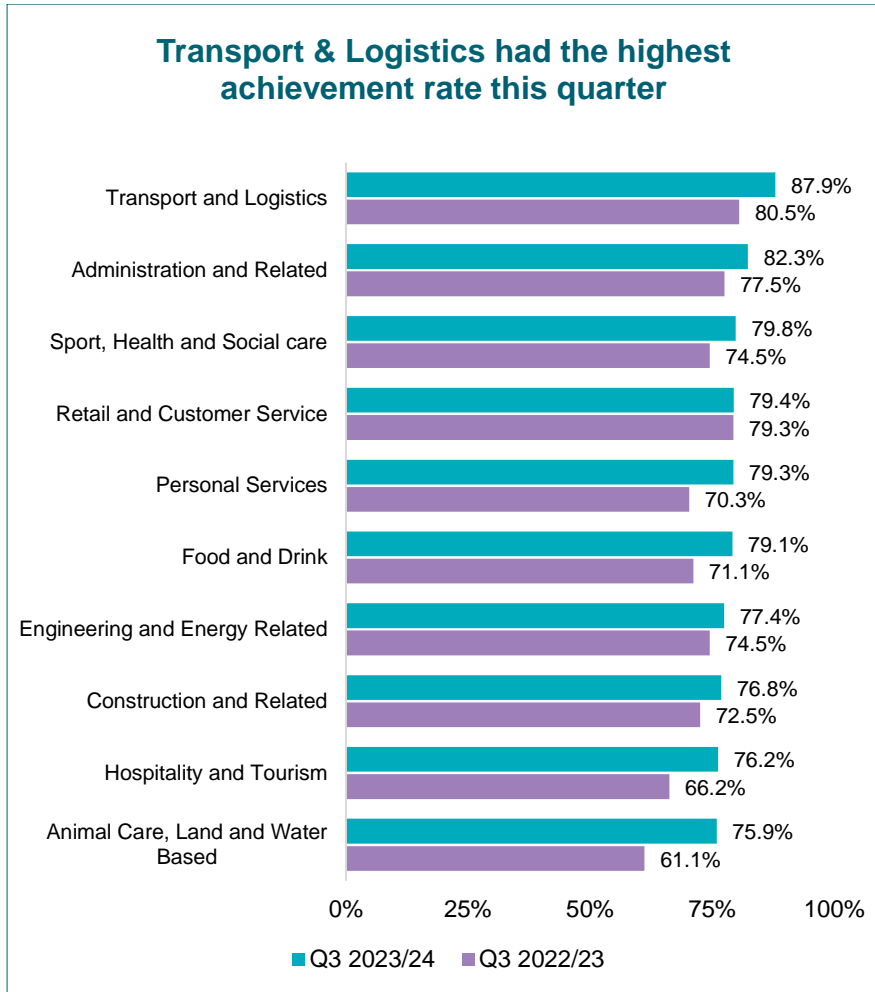


Figure 11 shows the top 10 achievement rates by occupational grouping.

### Modern Apprenticeship Redundancies

At the end of quarter 3 2023/24, 151 Modern Apprentices were made redundant, 64 fewer than at the same point last year (215). Forty-nine individuals continued a Modern Apprenticeship with an alternative employer and one of those was supported via the Adopt an Apprentice initiative, which incentivizes employers to support redundant apprentices to complete their training.

Modern Apprentices who are made redundant can continue to positive destinations without the need for Adopt an Apprentice funding. Adopt an Apprentice information is available on the [Our Skillsforce](#) website.

## Further Information

This report provides analysis of publicly funded Modern Apprenticeship activity up to the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

Statistics associated with Modern Apprenticeships such as starts, in training, leavers, and achievements are provided in summary form. Further information including more detailed breakdowns of these statistics by framework, age, level, and equality characteristics can be found within our [Supplementary Tables](#) on the SDS website.

## Note to Readers

Guidance on how Modern Apprenticeship data is collected and reported is available on the SDS website [here](#). We recommend that the guidance is read prior to any further analysis.

The impact of Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the economy and Modern Apprenticeship data should be considered in this context. We recommend exercising caution when comparing figures to 2019/20 and 2020/21 statistics.

## Gender

To ensure that we enable apprentices to record their gender in the most appropriate way for them, individuals can record their gender as 'female', 'male', 'prefer not to say', or 'in another way'.

## Age

As programme funding is linked to the age of trainees, all age breakdowns in this report are based on the age of the individual when they commenced their Modern Apprenticeship.

## Level

In line with Scottish Government direction, we carried out an exercise to align MA frameworks to SCQF levels (see Appendix A).

## Frameworks

In this report, MA frameworks are classified as belonging to an SDS assigned occupational grouping. Details are available [here](#) on the SDS website.

## Starts

In April 2019 we adjusted the recording of starts, re-entrants, and progressions to accommodate the introduction of a new system to improve how Training Providers manage their contracts. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, all MA progressions are included as new starts. More details can be found [here](#) on the SDS website.

## Calculations

This report may refer to a percentage increase or decrease in values, which means the relative change between two numbers e.g., starts increased by 5% compared to the same quarter last year. The report may also refer to a percentage point (pp) increase or decrease, which means the absolute change between two percentages e.g., the achievement rate for MAs aged 25 or over increased by 8 pp.

Percentages in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Similarly, calculating percentage point differences from the data presented in the report may differ slightly from figures cited in the text. This is also due to rounding.

## Appendix A – SCQF Framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs
12			Professional Development Award	Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11			Professional Development Award	Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship, Professional Apprenticeship, SVQ
10			Professional Development Award	Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship, Professional Apprenticeship, SVQ
9			Professional Development Awards	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship, SVQ
8		Higher National Diploma, Advanced Diploma	Professional Development Award	Diploma of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship, SVQ
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate, Advanced Certificate	Professional Development Award	Certificate of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher	National Certificate	Professional Development Award		Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation Apprenticeship, SVQ
			National Progression Award		
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5	National Certificate	National Progression Award		Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3	National Certificate	National Progression Award		
2	National 2, Awards	National Certificate	National Progression Award		
1	National 1, Awards				

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: [The SCQF Interactive Framework](#)