



Skills  
Development  
Scotland

# Annual Participation Measure for 16 – 19 year olds in Scotland 2021

The 7th annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training, and work activity of 16-19 year olds in Scotland

Annual Participation Measure Contact: Conor McGarvey

Job Title: Performance Analyst Team Leader

Email: [conor.mcgarvey@sds.co.uk](mailto:conor.mcgarvey@sds.co.uk)

Published on 31 August 2021

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
Introduction .....	6
1. Annual Participation Measure Trends .....	7
2. Annual Participation Measure by Status Grouping .....	8
3. Equalities .....	9
4. Participation <sup>#</sup> Rates Across Scotland .....	11
5. Analysis of those Not Participating <sup>#</sup> .....	15
6. Analysis of those with an Unconfirmed Status .....	17
7. Further Information / Resources .....	18
Appendix 1: Impact of Universal Credit .....	19



## Executive Summary

The Annual Participation Measure (APM) reports on the economic and employment activity of 16-19 year olds in Scotland and is the source of the Scottish Government's National Performance indicator **"Percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) participating in education, training or employment"**.

In 2021, this national indicator stood at 92.2%, the highest percentage ever reported. This was a slight increase of 0.05 percentage points (pp) compared to 2020 (92.1%) and 0.6 pp higher than in 2019 (91.6%).

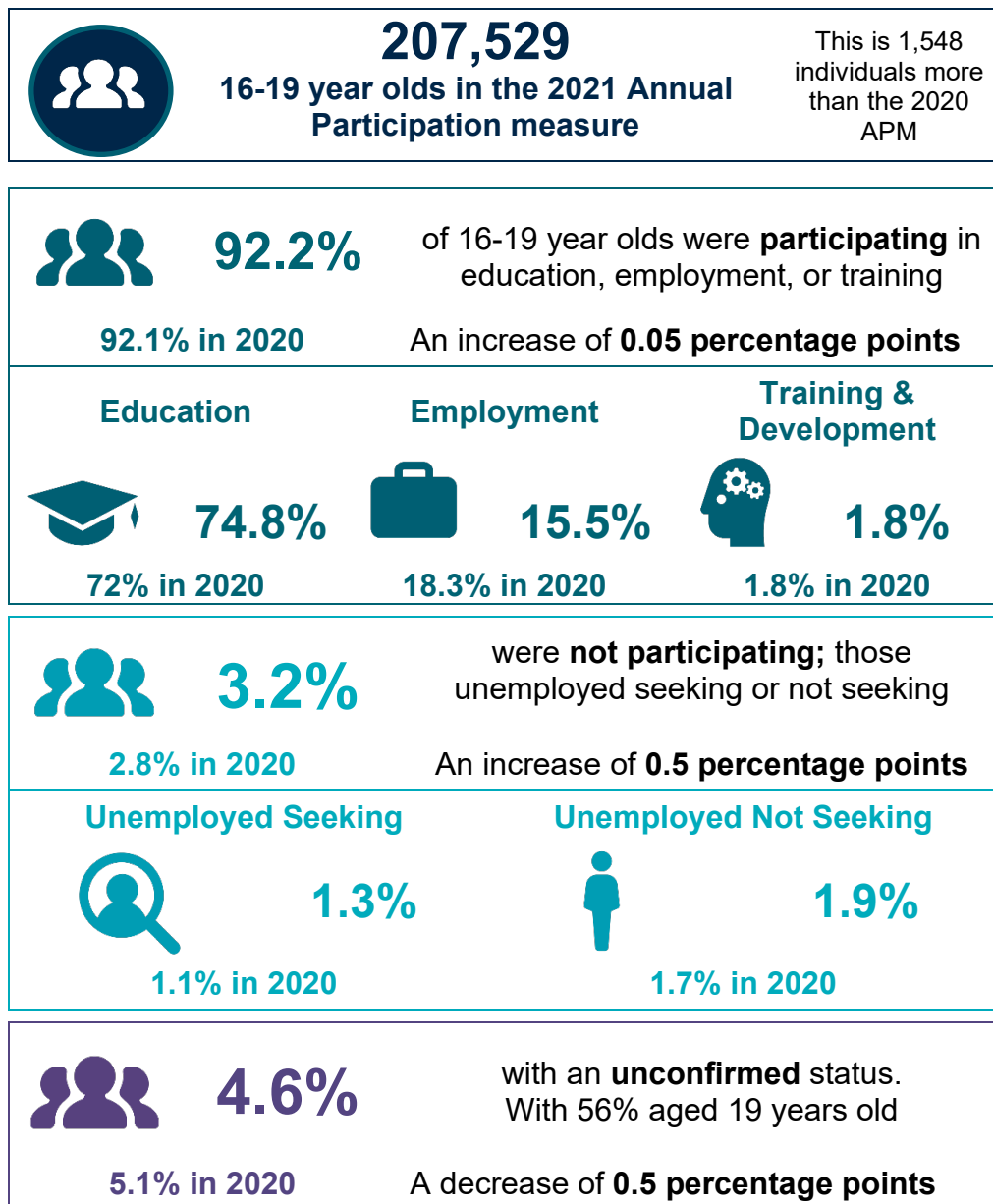
This was due to an increase in young adults remaining in or re-entering education (School Pupil, Higher Education and Further Education). The greatest increase was among School Pupils (increasing by 1.8 pp between 2020 and 2021).

The proportion reported as unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> in 2021 was 4.6%, a decrease of 0.5 pp compared to 2020 and the lowest since the APM was introduced. In line with previous years, the majority of those reported as unconfirmed (56.0%) were 19 year olds.

### Participation by Age

- In 2021, participation<sup>#</sup> was highest amongst 16 year olds (99.1%) and lowest amongst 19 year olds (85.4%).
- The participation<sup>#</sup> rate in 2021 increased for 16 and 19 year olds by 0.1 pp and 1.4 pp respectively but decreased for 17 and 18 year olds by 0.7 pp and 1 pp respectively.
- The percentage of young adults participating in employment decreased by 2.7 pp and fell in each age category with 18 year olds experiencing the largest decline at 4.3 pp.

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)



## Geography

- Between 2020 and 2021 the participation<sup>#</sup> rate rose in 17 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Although substantial variation remains in the participation<sup>#</sup> rate by local authority, the gap between the highest and lowest participation rates increased from 7.5 pp in 2020 to 7.8 pp in 2021. The gap had been decreasing each year from 10.6 pp in 2016.
- The participation<sup>#</sup> gap between those who lived in the 20% most deprived areas and those in the 20% least deprived areas continued to narrow with a gap of 9.3 pp in 2021 (compared to 9.9 pp in 2020 and 10.5 pp in 2019).
- Those with an unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> status were more likely to be in areas of higher deprivation. While just over 22% of the APM cohort lived in the 20% most deprived areas, these areas accounted for over a third of those with an unconfirmed status.

## Equality Characteristics

- Females (93.2%) were more likely to participate<sup>#</sup> than males (91.2%). This difference was primarily driven by a higher rate of female participation in education (79.9% versus 70.0%). This was offset, to a large extent, by greater participation in employment<sup>#</sup> by males than females (19.0% versus 11.9%).
- The participation<sup>#</sup> rate amongst Minority Ethnic groups (95.4%) remained higher than for those from a White ethnic group (92.0%). This difference was mainly driven by a higher rate of participation in education (89.0% versus 73.8%).

- The participation<sup>#</sup> rate amongst those identified as disabled (88.3%) was lower than for those not identified as disabled (92.4%). This was because disabled young people were more likely to fall into the 'unemployed not seeking' status (5.1% versus 1.8%).

## Non-Participation

- Most of those unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> were 18 years old (41.0%), followed by 17 year olds (30.7%). In the APM, 19 year olds were less likely (20.9%) to be classed as unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> but this is likely to be an undercount due to the current absence of Universal Credit data.
- The majority of those unemployed and not seeking employment were 19 years old (38.1%). 18 and 19 years old comprised just under three quarters (73.7%) of this group.
- Those in both unemployed seeking and not seeking groups were more likely to live in areas of higher deprivation. (40.7% and 39.4% respectively lived in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland).

## Unconfirmed

- Compared to 2020, there was a 0.5 pp decrease in the percentage of 16-19 year olds with an unconfirmed status<sup>#</sup> to 4.6%. As has been the case for each year of the APM, the majority of those with an unconfirmed status were aged 19 (56.0%), compared to 60% in 2020.

---

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

## 1. Introduction

The Annual Participation Measure (APM) reports on the economic and employment activity of 16-19 year olds in Scotland. It is the source of the Scottish Government's National Performance indicator **"Percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) participating in education, training or employment"**. This report marks the seventh release of statistics on the participation of 16-19 year olds at a national and local authority level and the sixth using the Annual Participation Measure reporting methodology.

The data set used to produce the APM is managed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and combines data from a range of data sharing partners including local authorities, colleges, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and SAAS, to identify what young adults are doing in 'real time' between the ages of 16-19.

The annual methodology takes account of all statuses for 16-19 year olds in Scotland over one calendar year. For each of the 207,529 individuals included within the 2021 cohort (covering 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021)<sup>1</sup>, the headline participation classification (participating, not participating and unconfirmed) is based on the classification within which an individual spent the greatest number of days within the year.

The effects of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and associated lockdown measures, which have been impacting Scotland and our economy since March 2020, will also have impacted on young adults' participation. The effective closure of the economy is likely to have

affected the opportunities available to young adults and the choices they made e.g., a decline in employment opportunities or choosing to remain in education.

For the period covered by this report and for earlier years, SDS did not receive data from DWP about Universal Credit (UC) claimants. This meant it was not possible to comprehensively identify people who are unemployed and seeking work. Therefore, the unemployed seeking and related status results presented in this report should be treated with a degree of caution. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for further information.

### Accompanying Resources

Background data tables are available in excel format within the APM [supplementary tables](#) on the SDS website.

SDS has created an [interactive Power BI report](#) to complement this publication using APM data from 2016 to 2021.

Background notes that provide an overview of the Annual Participation Measure methodology and data are available on the [APM webpage](#).

#### Further Information / Requests

Any comments or suggestions regarding the content of this report are welcome and can be emailed to: [user\\_feedback@sds.co.uk](mailto:user_feedback@sds.co.uk)

<sup>1</sup> To be included in the APM 2021 cohort an individual must be aged 16 to 19 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and have a customer record on the Opportunities for All shared data set, held on the SDS Customer Support System (CSS),

## 1. Annual Participation Measure Trends

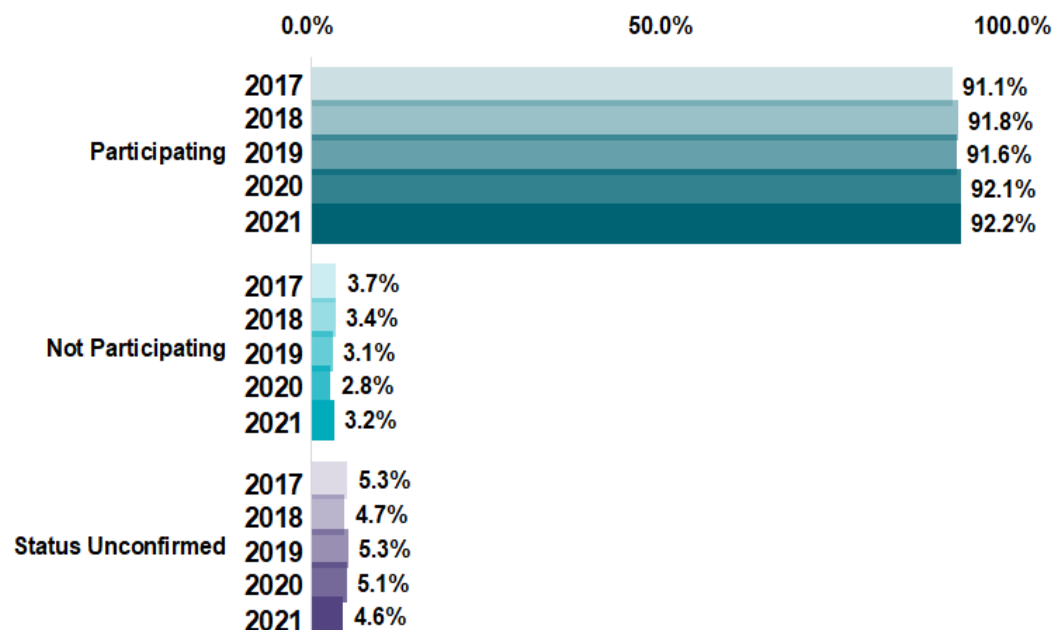
There were 207,529 individuals aged 16-19 within the 2021 APM cohort which was 1,548 more than the 2020 measure. This change is in line with National Records of Scotland 2018-based population estimates that projected the 16 to 19 year olds age group to increase by 1,268 between 2020 and 2021.

**Chart 1** shows the headline participation percentages between 2017 and 2021. The results show the proportion of 16-19 year olds:

- participating<sup>#</sup> in education, training or employment has increased every year between 2017 and 2021 with the exception of 2019. As a result, the rate of participation has increased by 1.1 pp from 91.1% in 2017 to 92.2% in 2021. This has mainly been driven by the year on year increases of 16-19 year olds participating in education. Between 2017 and 2021 this has increased by 3.7 pp, from 71.1% to 74.8%.
- not participating<sup>#</sup> decreased every year from 2017 to 2020 but has increased in 2021. Between 2020 and 2021 there was an increase by 0.2 pp in both unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> and unemployed not seeking<sup>#</sup>. This increase was mainly within the 17 and 18 year old age groups.
- unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> decreased every year since 2019. In the 2021 APM this decrease was balanced with a similar increase in not participating. In line with previous years, the majority of those reported as unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> (56%) were 19 year olds.

<sup>#</sup> Please treat with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

**Chart 1: Annual Participation Headlines 2017 - 2021**



### Note to Readers:

The decrease in not participating since 2017 may be driven by a lack of access to Universal Credit data which has meant it is not possible to comprehensively identify people who are unemployed and seeking work. SDS has worked very closely with DWP to progress to a position where it is likely we will receive regular data about Universal Credit claimants, both in and out of work, from late Summer 2021.

SDS offers support to young unemployed people thus maintaining an accurate record of their circumstances. As support is mainly delivered between the ages of 16 and 18½ years old, the lack of UC data mainly impacts on those out with this age range.

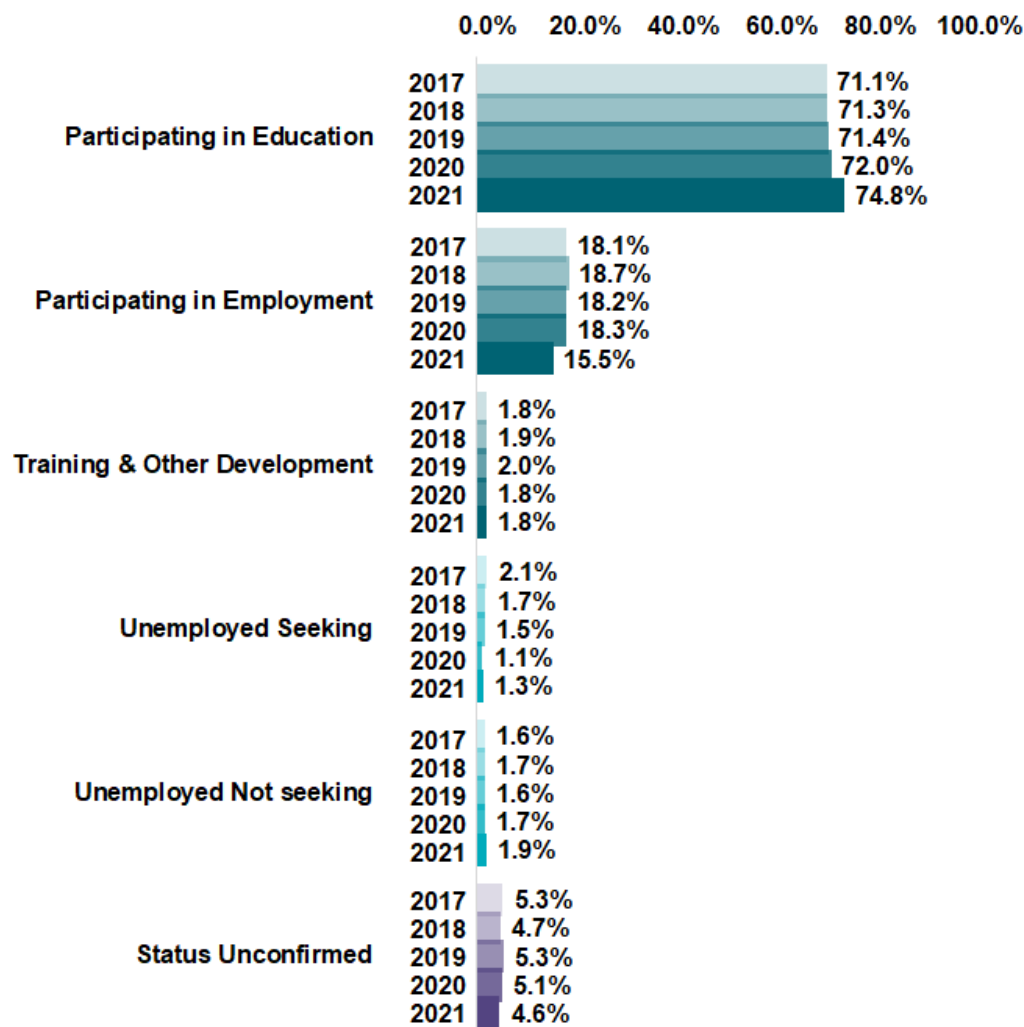
SDS continues to work to reduce the proportion of young adults with an unconfirmed status. This includes ongoing discussions with HMRC to explore whether accessing tax data could enhance the coverage of young adults who are in employment.

## 2. Annual Participation Measure by Status Grouping

**Chart 2** provides a breakdown of the APM by status grouping. In 2021:

- 74.8% 16-19 year olds were in secondary or tertiary education, an increase of 2.8 pp compared to 2020. This was due to an increase of 0.5 pp in those participating in both Further Education and Higher Education statuses, and an increase of 1.8 pp in School Pupils.
- 15.5% 16-19 year olds were in employment#. This was a 2.7 pp decrease compared to 2020 and the lowest rate ever reported which is likely to have been a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on available opportunities. This decrease has been offset by the increase in young adults in education both remaining at school and entering FE/HE.
- 1.3% of 16-19 year olds were unemployed seeking employment# and 1.9% were unemployed not seeking#, an increase of 0.2 pp compared to 2020 in both status groupings.
- 96.6% of 16 year olds were in education compared to 95.7% in 2020, with the majority (92%) in a school pupil status.
- 82.7% of 17 year olds were in education compared to 79.4% in 2020, with the majority (66.4%) in a school pupil status.
- 53.5% of 18 year olds were reported in Higher or Further Education, with the next highest proportion in employment (22.4%).
- 53.9% of 19 year olds were reported in Higher or Further Education, with the next highest proportion in employment (30%) and 10.5% were unconfirmed.

**Chart 2: Annual Participation Groups 2017 - 2021**



# Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)



### 3. Equalities

SDS has a legal duty, under the Equality Act 2010<sup>2</sup>, to ensure that services are inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of customers. To support this, equalities data is collected to enable uptake of services to be monitored and any barriers faced by groups to be identified and addressed.

The equalities data within the shared data set is sourced from school management information systems. Customer records can subsequently be updated by SDS advisers after receipt of information from the individual or their representative.

The APM will be one of the sources of data to report against the following SDS' Equality Outcome for 2021 - 2025:

*People with lived experience of poverty, and from protected characteristic groups known to face inequality, have increased participation and improved progression in learning and employment.*

Care experience is not a protected characteristic. As a corporate parent, SDS is committed to treating care experience in the same way as others with protected characteristics. However, in the absence of reliable data, we are currently unable to include care experience in our analysis.

---

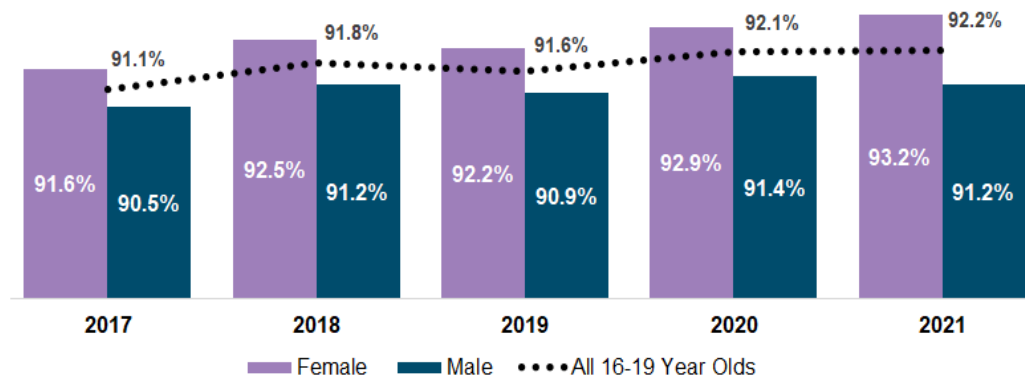
#### Gender

**Chart 3** shows participation by gender. The results show:



- Participation<sup>#</sup> increased for females by 0.4 pp and decreased for males by 0.2 pp.
- Females (93.2%) were more likely than males (91.2%) to be participating in education, training or employment. This has been the case for all years 2017 to 2021.
- The gender participation gap is now 2.0 pp, an increase of 0.6 pp between 2020 and 2021.
- Females were more likely than males to be participating in education (79.9% v 70%) and males were more likely to participate in employment (19% v 11.9%).

**Chart 3: Participation by Gender, 2017 - 2020**



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

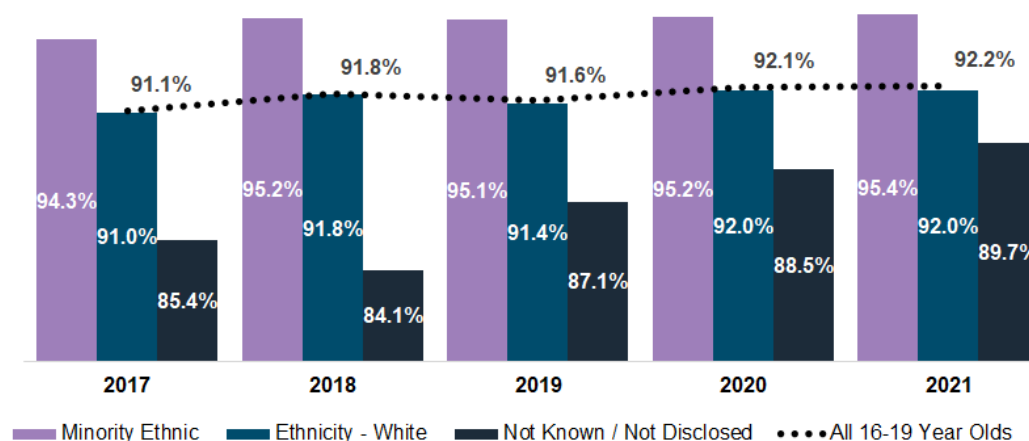
## Ethnicity

Chart 4 shows participation by ethnicity. The results show:



- Whilst the participation# rate between 2020 and 2021 increased for those from minority ethnic groups, it remained static for those identified as white.
- The participation# rate of those from minority ethnic groups was 3.4 pp higher than those identified as white, an increase 0.1 pp between 2020 and 2021.
- Those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in education (89%) than those identified as white (73.8%).

Chart 4: Participation# by Ethnicity, 2017 - 2021



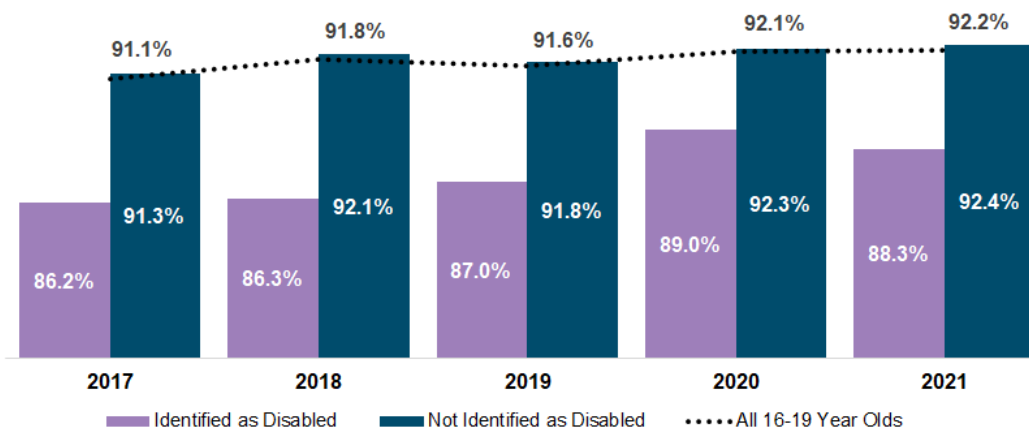
## Disability

Chart 5 shows participation by disability. The results show:



- Participation# amongst those identified as disabled decreased by 0.8 pp between 2020 and 2021 from 89.0% to 88.3%. This was mainly driven by decreased participation in employment and an increase in unemployed not seeking.
- The participation# gap between those identified as disabled and not disabled has widened to 4.1 pp, an increase of 0.9 pp from 2020.
- This is the first year that the participation# rate for those identified as disabled has decreased compared to the previous year. The 2021 figure remains higher than all years prior to 2020.

Chart 5: Participation# by Disability, 2017 - 2021



# Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

## 4. Participation<sup>#</sup> Rates Across Scotland

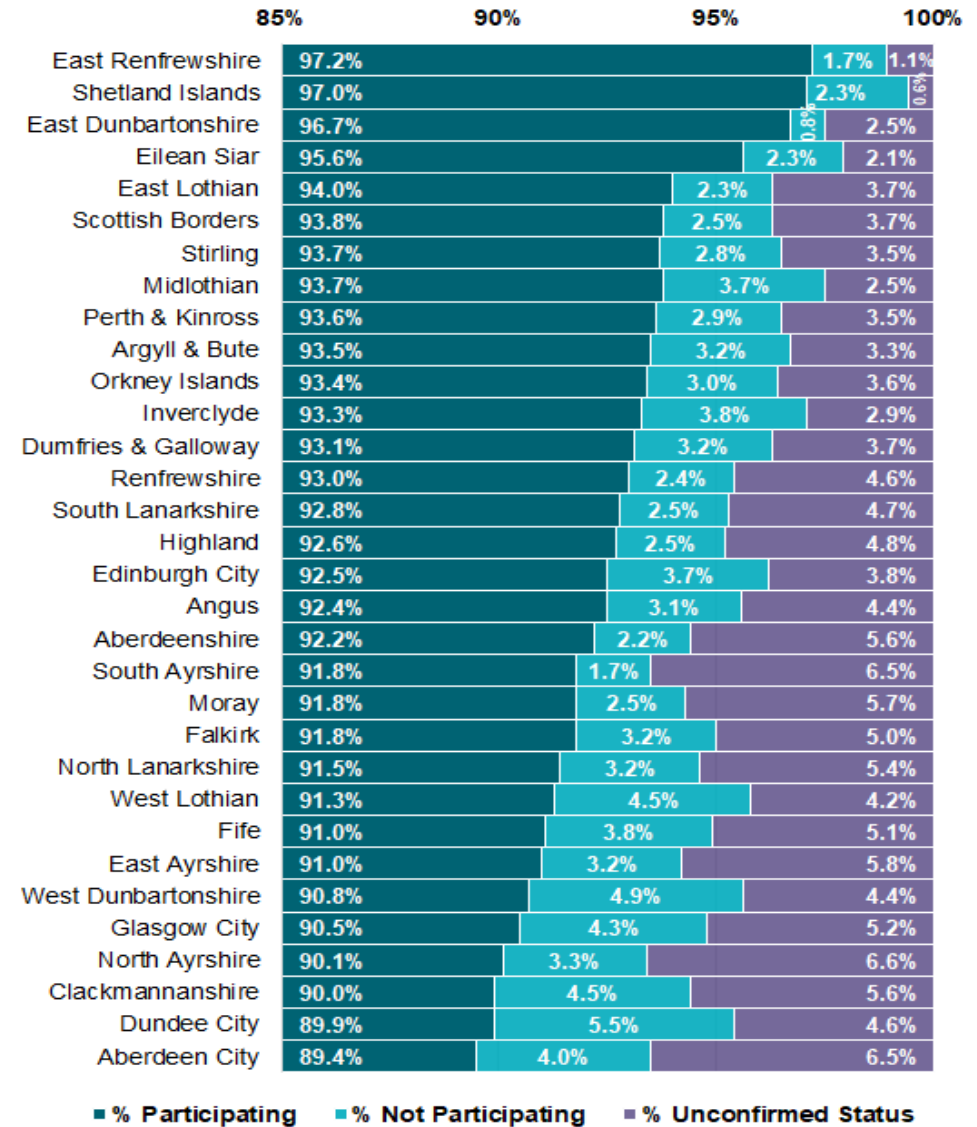
### Local Authority

**Chart 6** provides a breakdown of the 2021 APM headline results by Local Authority. In summary:

- Nineteen local authorities have a participation rate on or above the Scottish average (the remaining thirteen were below).
- The variation between the highest and lowest participation rate was 7.8 pp, up from 7.5 pp in 2020. Between 2016 and 2020, the variation had decreased each year from 10.6 pp in 2016.
- The highest participation<sup>#</sup> rate was in East Renfrewshire (97.2%) which increased by 0.4 pp from 2020. Shetland Islands had the highest participation rate in 2020 (96.8%).
- The lowest participation<sup>#</sup> rate was in Aberdeen City at 89.4%, which decreased by 0.4 pp from 2020. By comparison, Clackmannanshire had the lowest rate in 2020 (89.3%).
- The highest non-participation<sup>#</sup> rate was in Dundee City at 5.5%, an increase of 1 pp compared to 2020. Clackmannanshire had the highest rate in 2020 (5.2%).
- The highest unconfirmed rate<sup>#</sup> was in North Ayrshire at 6.6%, a decrease of 0.6 pp compared to 2020. East Ayrshire had the highest rate in 2020 (7.7%).



**Chart 6: 2021 Participation<sup>#</sup> Headlines by Local Authority**



<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

**Chart 7** shows the percentage point change in participation<sup>#</sup> between 2020 and 2021 by local authority.

In summary, the results show that between 2020 and 2021 the participation rate had:

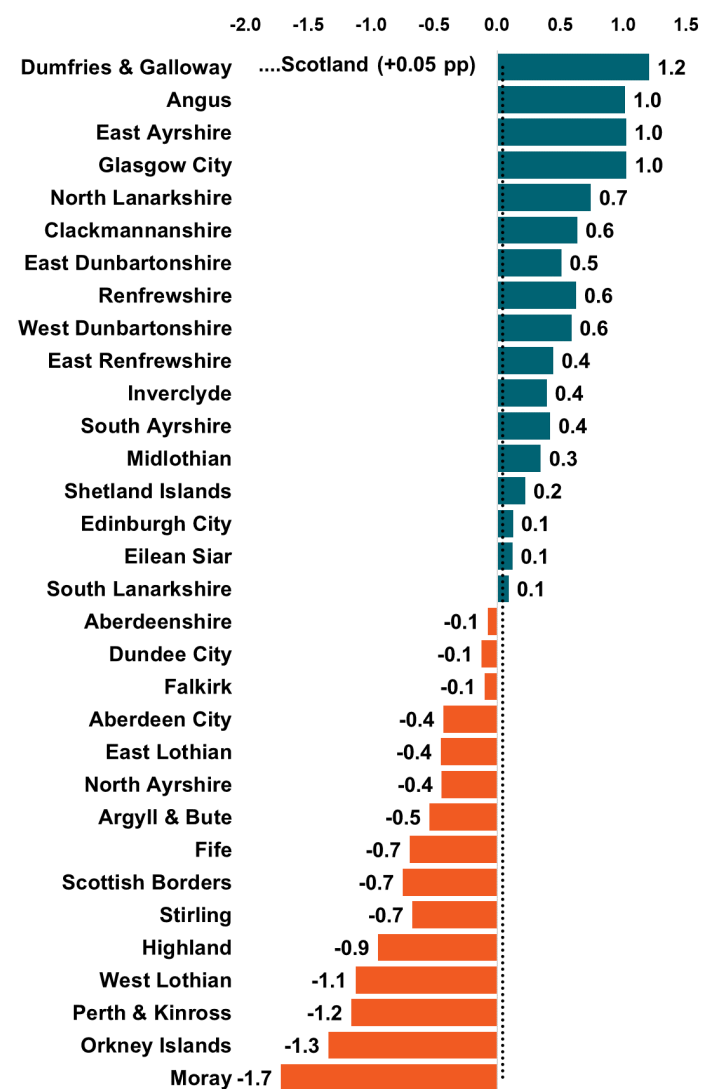
- increased in 17 of the 32 Local Authorities; and
- decreased in 15 of the 32 Local Authorities.

The greatest increase in participation<sup>#</sup> between 2020 and 2021 was in Dumfries & Galloway (+1.2 pp) and the greatest decrease was in Moray (-1.7 pp).

The [supplementary tables](#) provide Local Authority information for participation, non-participation, and unconfirmed statuses for all APM publications. In comparison to 2020:

- There were reductions in the non-participation<sup>#</sup> rate in 5 local authorities and increases in 27.
  - South Ayrshire had the largest decrease in non-participation<sup>#</sup> of -0.9 pp, decreasing from 2.6% in 2020 to 1.7% in 2021.
  - Eilean Siar had the largest increase in non-participation<sup>#</sup> of 1.2 pp, increasing from 1.1% in 2020 to 2.3% in 2021.
- There were reductions in the unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> rate in 23 local authorities and increases in 9.
  - East Ayrshire had the largest decrease in unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> of 1.9 pp, decreasing from 7.7% in 2020 to 5.8% in 2021.
  - Moray had the largest increase in unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> of 1.7 pp, increasing from 4% in 2020 to 5.7% in 2021.

**Chart 7: Percentage point change in participation<sup>#</sup> rate between 2020 and 2021, by Local Authority**



<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020)

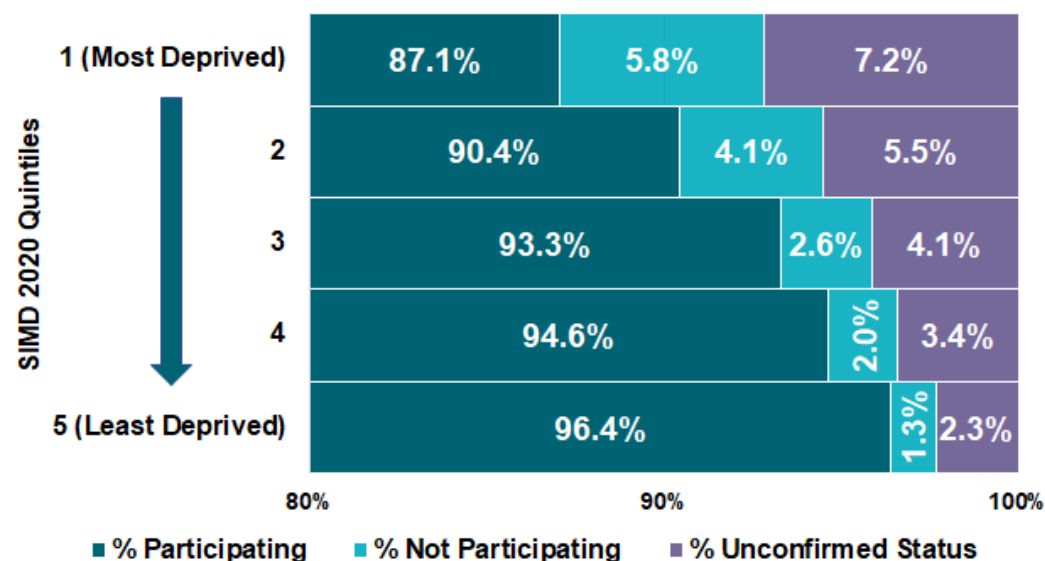
**Chart 8** provides an overview of 16-19 year old participation by SIMD (2020) quintiles. It shows that:

- Those who lived in more deprived areas remained less likely to be participating<sup>#</sup> within the 2021 annual measure than those from the less deprived areas.
- There was a 0.4 pp increase in participation<sup>#</sup> between 2020 and 2021 for those living in Quintile 1 (the 20% most deprived areas).
- Participation within the less deprived areas (quintiles 4 and 5) decreased between 2020 and 2021 by 0.4 pp and 0.1 pp respectively.

Data within the [supplementary tables](#) provides further information regarding participation amongst SIMD quintiles. In 2021:

- 16-19 year olds within the less deprived areas are more likely to stay on at school.
  - 84.6% from the least deprived areas (quintile 5) were reported as participating in education compared to 67.8% for those from the most deprived areas (quintile 1), a difference of 16.8 pp.
- A higher proportion of 16-19 year olds from more deprived areas were unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> compared to those from less deprived areas. For example, 2.4% of those from quintile 1 were unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> compared to 0.6% from quintile 5.

**Chart 8: 2021 Participation<sup>#</sup> Headline by SIMD (2020) Quintiles**



### Note to Readers

More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

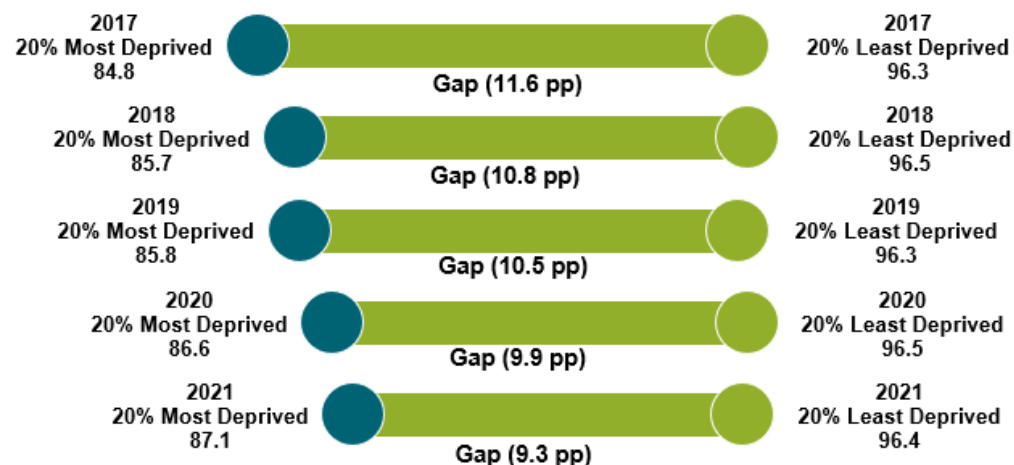
**Chart 9** shows that the participation<sup>#</sup> gap between those living in the 20% most deprived areas and those in the 20% least deprived areas continued to narrow between 2017 and 2021.

In 2021 there was a 9.3 pp gap between participation by 16-19 year olds living in the 20% most and least deprived areas.

The gap has reduced due to a higher rate of increase in participation by those living in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the fluctuations by those living in the 20% least deprived areas.

- Participation<sup>#</sup> in the 20% most deprived areas has increased by 2.3 pp between 2017 and 2021.
- Participation<sup>#</sup> in the 20% least deprived areas has increased very slightly by 0.04 pp between 2017 and 2021.

**Chart 9: Participation<sup>#</sup> Gap Between 20% Most Deprived Areas and 20% Least Deprived Areas (Percentages)**



<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

## 5. Analysis of those Not Participating<sup>#</sup>

Those identified as not participating are unemployed (either unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> or unemployed not seeking). The unemployed and seeking group are those who are known to SDS to be actively seeking employment, education or training. These may include individuals who are not accessing Department for Work and Pensions services or benefits (e.g., 16 and 17 year olds can only claim UC in specific circumstances).

### Deprivation



Those 16 to 19 year olds who were unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> or unemployed not seeking were concentrated in the most deprived areas – around two fifths of both unemployed seeking (40.7%) and unemployed not seeking (39.4%) lived in areas ranked within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

### Urban / Rural



16 to 19 year olds who were not participating<sup>#</sup> were more likely to live in an urban area. Most of both unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> (76.8%) and unemployed not seeking (76.4%) lived in urban areas<sup>3</sup>. By comparison, those living in urban areas accounted for 69.4% of the overall APM cohort.

### Local Authorities



Collectively, Glasgow City, Fife and North Lanarkshire accounted 25.5% of the 16-19 population<sup>4</sup>, however, almost a third (32.8%) of the national total of unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> lived in these council areas. The proportion of unemployed not seeking (25.9%) was broadly in line with the population as a whole.

### Gender



The gender composition of the unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> cohort differed.

Males accounted for 51.3% of the overall APM cohort, however, almost two thirds (65.6%) of those unemployed seeking<sup>#</sup> were male.

There was no gender bias within those unemployed not seeking.

#### Note to Readers



The figures for unemployed young people aged 18 or 19 in this report should be treated with a degree of caution due to the absence of data about Universal Credit claimants. [See Appendix 1.](#)

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Background to Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification.](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2020>

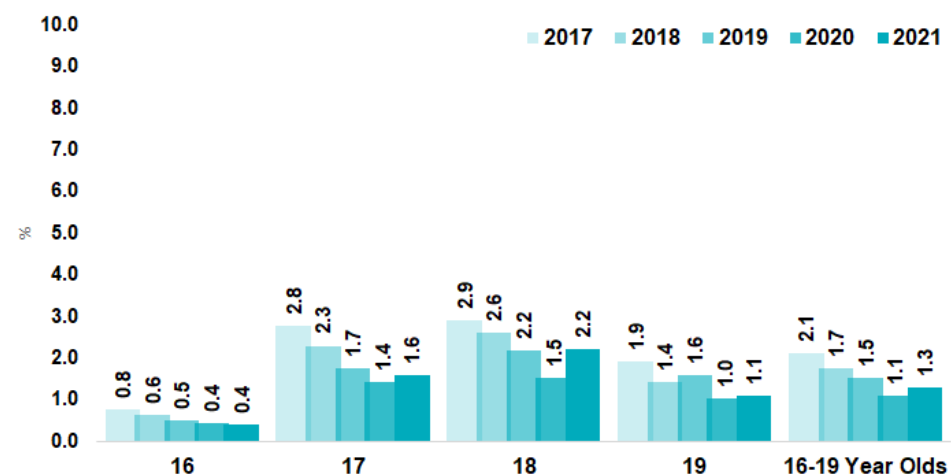
**Chart 10** shows that between 2020 and 2021, all age groups except 16 year olds had an increase in the proportion that were unemployed seeking#. For all 16-19 year olds this was an increase of 0.2 pp.

- The age group with the largest proportion of ‘unemployed seeking#’ was 18 year olds. When combined with 17 year olds, these two age groups accounted for just under three quarters (71.7 %) of those reported as unemployed seeking#.
- Between 2020 and 2021 the largest increase in the unemployed seeking# status was amongst the 18 years old age group, which saw a 0.7 pp increase.

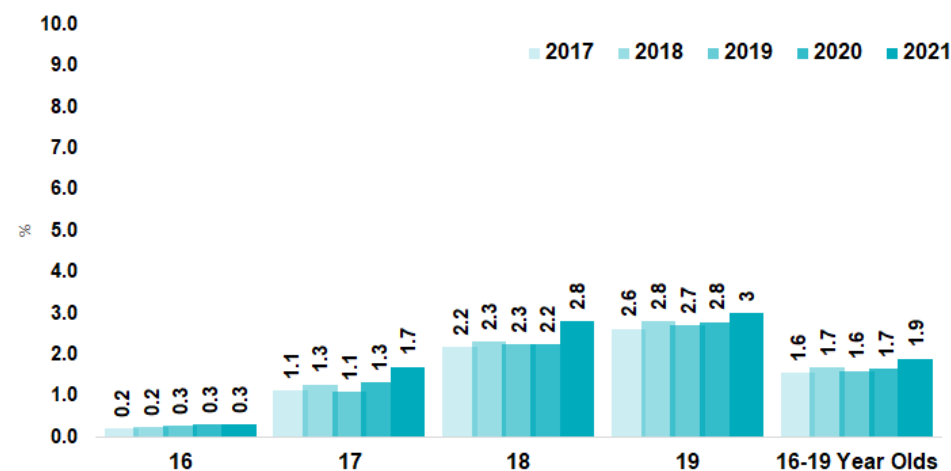
**Chart 11** shows that between 2020 and 2021, all age groups except for 16 year olds had an increase in the proportion that were unemployed not seeking#. For all 16-19 year olds this was an increase of 0.2 pp.

- The largest increase was in the 18 year old age group, increasing by 0.6 pp.
- 19 year olds account for highest proportion of those who were unemployed not seeking employment. Together with 18 year olds, these made up just under three quarters (73.7%) of the unemployed not seeking cohort.

**Chart 10: Percentage Unemployed Seeking# Employment or Training by Age, 2017 - 2021**



**Chart 11: Percentage Unemployed Not Seeking# Employment or Training by Age, 2017 - 2021**



# Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)



## 6. Analysis of those with an Unconfirmed Status

The number of individuals in 2021 with an unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> status was 9,537 (4.6%). **Chart 12** shows how the percentage of 16-19 year olds with an unconfirmed status varied between 2017 to 2021.

- The percentage of 16 to 19 year olds with an unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> status has decreased between 2020 and 2021 by 0.5 pp from 5.1% to 4.6%.
- This has been driven by a decrease in the percentage of 18 and 19 year olds with an unconfirmed status, by 0.3 pp and 1.6 pp respectively between 2020 and 2021.
- The majority of those with an unconfirmed status<sup>#</sup> were aged 19 (56.0%).

Further information regarding those with an unconfirmed status can be found in the [supplementary tables](#).



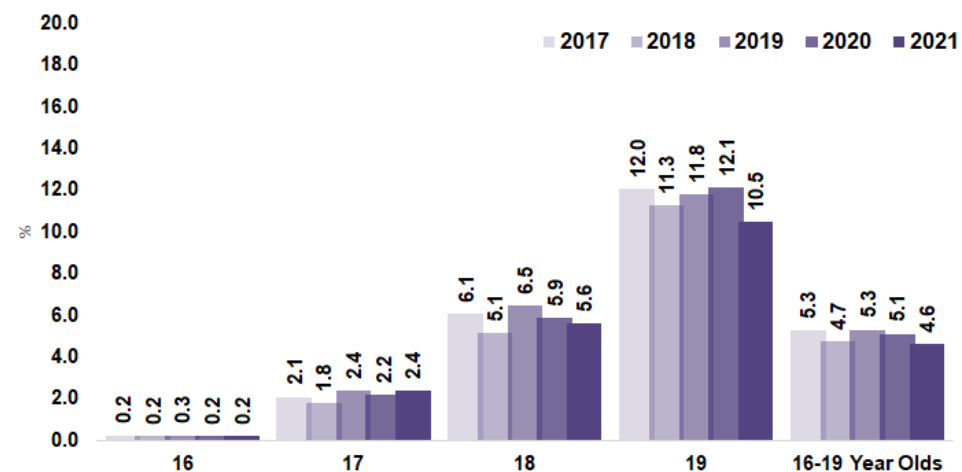
An unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> status was more common amongst males than females.

The gender split for those with an unconfirmed status was 42% female and 58% male.



Those with an unconfirmed<sup>#</sup> status were also more likely to be in areas of higher deprivation. Over a third (34.6%) of 16-19 year olds with an unconfirmed status lived in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland), compared to just over 22% of the overall cohort.

**Chart 12: Percentage with an Unconfirmed Status by age, 2017 - 2021**



### Note to Readers

Individuals within the shared dataset whose predominant status is 'unconfirmed' within each year, means that despite multi-partner data sharing and tracking of individuals, as part of service delivery, it has not been possible to identify full status information.

It may be that some of these individuals had taken up employment, but it has not been possible to confirm this as SDS does not currently have an administrative data feed of employment information. The roll out of UC may also have had an impact on those with an unconfirmed status as for the period covered by the report SDS did not receive data about individuals in receipt of Universal Credit. **(See Appendix 1)**

<sup>#</sup> Due to the lack of Universal Credit data, unemployed seeking and related status results should be treated with a degree of caution. [Please See Appendix 1 for details.](#)

## 7. Further Resources

Further resources are available on the Annual Participation Measure [webpage](#):

- The publication's [supplementary tables](#) provide a breakdown of the Annual Participation Measure by different characteristics including age, gender, ethnicity and disability and by different geographies including local authority and SIMD.
- An [interactive PowerBI report](#) has been created to complement this publication. This provides similar breakdowns to the supplementary tables in a visual format.
- Background notes outlining the annual participation methodology and the sources of data are available on the APM [webpage](#).

### Next Publication:



The next Annual Participation Measure will be published in August 2022.

## Annual Participation Measure Contact



**Contact:** Conor McGarvey  
**Job Title:** Performance Analyst Team Leader  
**Email:** [conor.mcgarvey@sds.co.uk](mailto:conor.mcgarvey@sds.co.uk)

## Appendix 1: Impact of Universal Credit

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is one of the key partners who share data with SDS. Since 2014, SDS has received data for those aged 18 and over in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. JSA data was used to update the status of individuals to unemployed seeking. When SDS was notified by DWP that an individual was no longer claiming, their status was updated to the destination status recorded by DWP or to unconfirmed, if destination information was not known.

These benefits have been replaced by Universal Credit (UC). The rollout of UC commenced in March 2016 and completed in December 2018. As a result, since 2016 progressively more young adults claiming out of work benefits have been receiving UC rather than legacy benefits (e.g., JSA). SDS has not received data from DWP about UC claimants since its introduction, and therefore is not able to comprehensively identify or report on people who are unemployed and claiming out of work benefits. As a result, the impact on the APM of not receiving this data increased progressively during this time. SDS has undertaken exploratory analysis using other official data sources to quantify the impact on the APM of the lack of UC source data. However, it has not been possible to reliably quantify the impact.

The figures and percentages in this and previous reports that will have been impacted by the lack of Universal Credit data are those relating to **unemployed seeking, employment** and **unconfirmed**. As result the headline classifications of **participation, non-participation** and **unconfirmed** will have been directly impacted.

Examples of how the absence of UC data has impacted on the figures and percentages in this report are:

- DWP benefit data was used to create unemployed seeking statuses and the number of 18 and 19 year olds reported within an unemployed seeking status has gradually reduced since 2016.
- In the absence of HMRC data, DWP data was used to identify when 18 to 19 year olds had left employment. This control is no longer available.
- DWP data was used to update individuals from unconfirmed to unemployed seeking when identified as claiming JSA.

It should be noted that through the delivery of our post school services and transition support from school, SDS continues to 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 can accurately report on unemployment where SDS has delivered support to individuals. Although available to all, SDS support is mainly delivered between the ages of 16 and 18½ years old.

### Looking Forward

We have worked very closely with DWP to progress to a position where it is likely we will receive regular data about Universal Credit claimants, both in and out of work, from late Summer 2021. Access to regular UC data will allow us to update statuses of matched individuals which should increase the coverage and robustness of data about those not participating. DWP have indicated that they are unable to supply retrospective data. As a result, it will not be possible to revise this publication and previous APMs to account for missing UC data.