

# Modern Apprenticeship Statistics

**Quarter 3, 2025/26 [1st April – 26th December]**

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**Contact:** Rowena McConkey

**Job Title:** Performance Reporting and Statistics Manager

**Email:** [rowena.mcconkey@sds.co.uk](mailto:rowena.mcconkey@sds.co.uk)

**Contact:** Ellis Cunningham

**Job Title:** MI & Data Analyst

**Email:** [ellis.cunningham@sds.co.uk](mailto:ellis.cunningham@sds.co.uk)

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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 (1st April to 26th December) statistics for MAs where there is a public funding contribution administered by SDS, on behalf of the Scottish Government. Since 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).

## Economic Outlook

Scotland's Modern Apprenticeship system is anchored in the c. 11,000 businesses – over 90% of them SMEs – who invest in developing the future workforce.<sup>1</sup>

Labour market projections show sustained long-term demand, with an estimated 1.3 million workers<sup>2</sup> needed in the next decade due to an ageing workforce and up to £230bn of planned investment.<sup>3</sup>

In the short term, rising business costs and weakened confidence – especially among SMEs – are reducing recruitment, particularly for younger people.<sup>4</sup>

SDS is responding through a flexible allocation strategy, targeted marketing, and coordinated employer and provider engagement to stimulate demand.

The Scottish Government has also announced a review of Modern Apprenticeship contribution rates which will begin in April.

<sup>1</sup> SDS FIPS

<sup>2</sup> [Skills Development Scotland: Scotland's Labour Market Drivers \(October 2025\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Post-School Education and Skills Reform: Consultation on legislation \(September 2024\)](#)

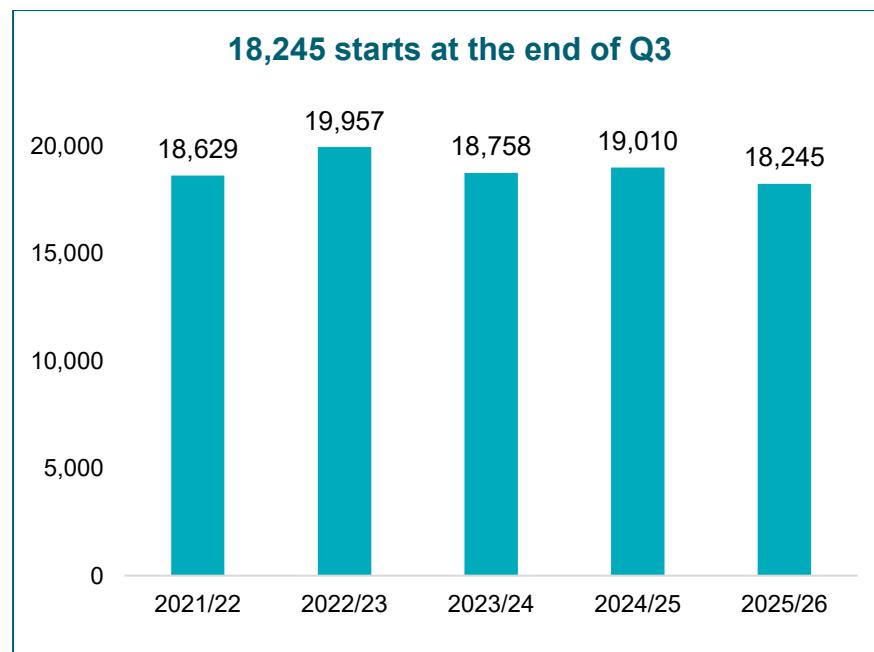
<sup>4</sup> [Skills Development Scotland: Economy and Fair Work Committee Evidence Submission \(March 2025\)](#)



## Modern Apprenticeship Starts

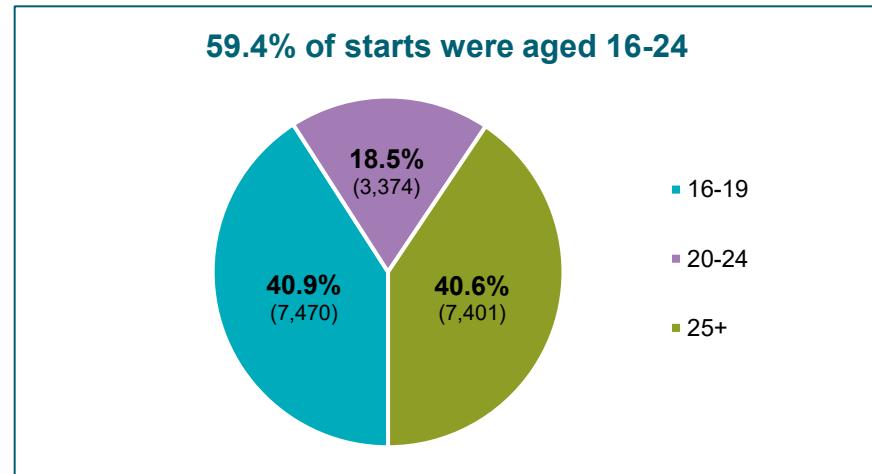
There were 18,245 Modern Apprenticeship starts at the end of Q3. This is 4.0% (-765) lower than last year with fewer starts across all age groups, in particular the 16-19 age group.

**Figure 1: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts, Q3 2021/22 to Q3 2025/26**



## Starts by age

**Figure 2: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by age group, Q3 2025/26**

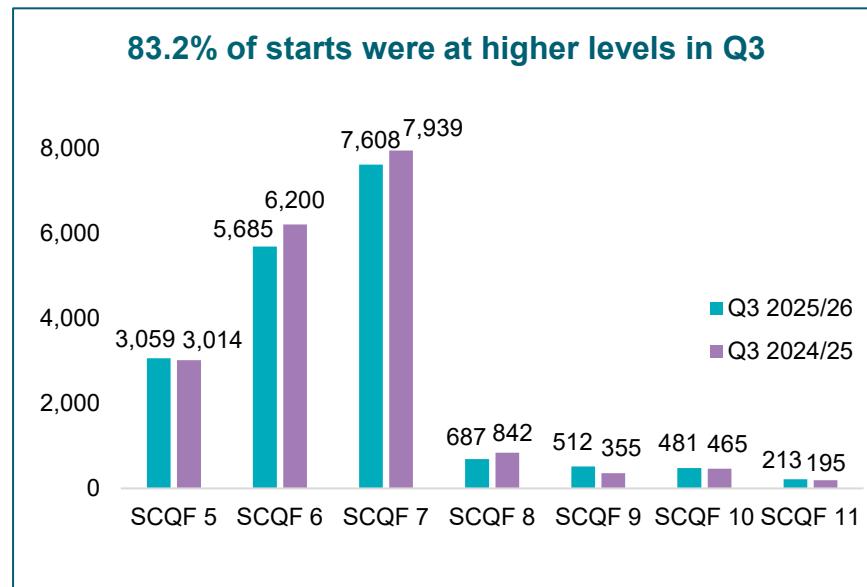


At the end of quarter 3, 59.4% (10,844) of MA starts were aged 16-24 and 40.6% were aged 25+. The proportion of 16-24-year-olds was 0.5 pp lower than the same point last year.

The number of starts declined across all age groups. The largest decrease occurred amongst those aged 16-19 (-5.7% or -449), followed by the 20-24 group (-3.1% or -108) and those aged 25+ (-2.7% or -208).

## Starts by level

**Figure 3: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by SCQF level, Q3 2024/25 to Q3 2025/26**

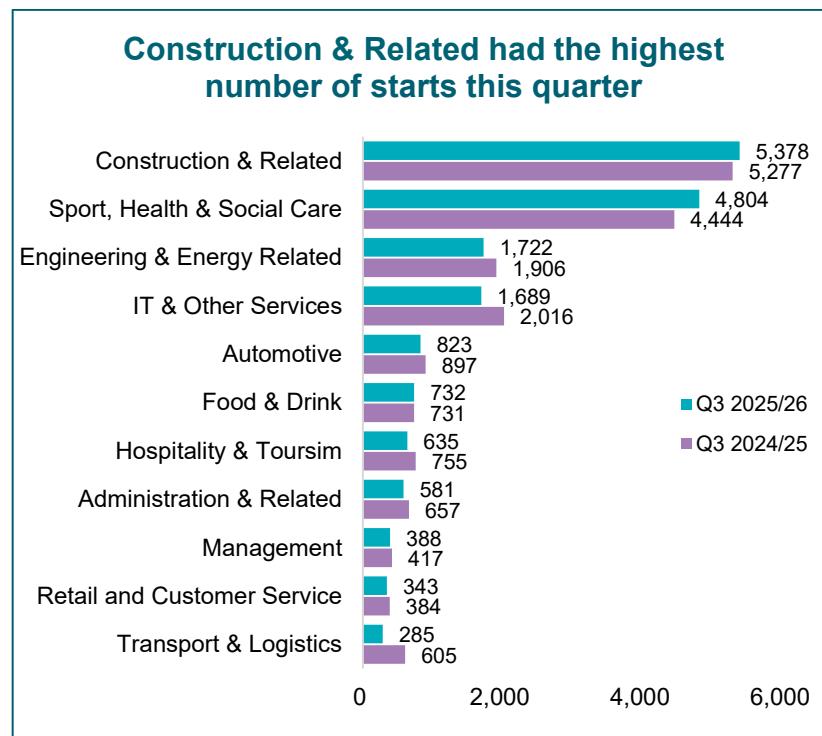


As has been the trend for more than a decade, the majority of starts this quarter were at SCQF level 6 or above. The 4.0% fall in starts at the end of Q3 is reflected across SCQF levels except for levels 5, 9, 10, and 11 where there have been modest increases in volume.

## Starts by occupational grouping

The distribution of starts by occupational grouping can change year-on-year and is influenced by employer demand, procurement policy decisions and MA places allocated, based on economic need.

**Figure 4: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by occupational grouping, Q3 2024/25 to Q3 2025/26**



Construction & Related had the highest number, and the greatest proportion, of starts this quarter (29.5%). The Sport, Health and Social Care grouping accounted for 26.3% of starts, 3.0 pp higher than last year.

### Starts by gender

At the end of quarter 3, there were **6,862** female starts and **11,227** male starts, accounting for 37.9% and 62.1% of all starts, respectively.<sup>5</sup>

### Starts by disability

The proportion of starts self-identifying as disabled was **17.0%** of starts at the end of quarter 3.

### Starts by ethnicity

The proportion of starts self-identifying as an ethnic minority was **6.8%** at the end of quarter 3.

### Starts by care experience

The proportion of MAs self-identifying as care experienced was **2.8%** at the end of quarter 3.

In this release, we provide the proportions of starts by gender, disability, ethnicity, and care experience. We have not provided comparator data for the same point last year due to in-year fluctuations, driven by varying factors. A more detailed analysis, including year-on-year comparisons, will be provided in the year-end (Q4) publication.

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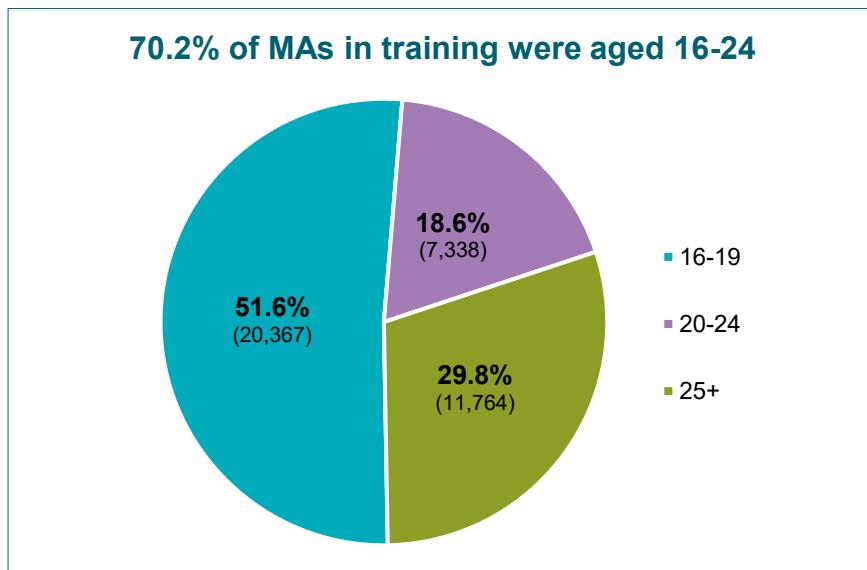
<sup>5</sup> Male + female starts

## Modern Apprentices in Training

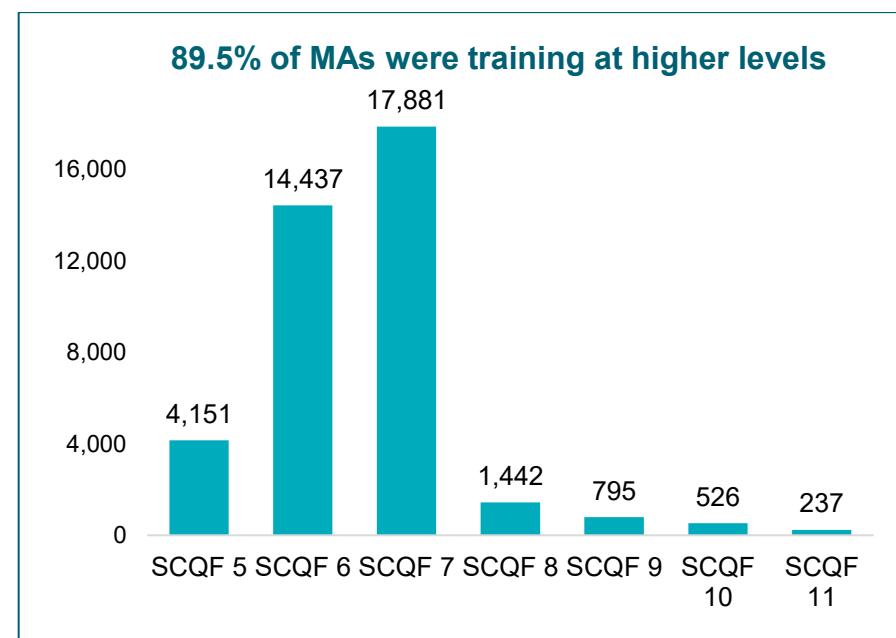
As at 26<sup>th</sup> December 2025, there were **39,469** Modern Apprentices in training, 0.3% lower than last year (-120).

Figures 7 and 8 show Modern Apprentices in training by age group and level, respectively, at the end of Q3 2025/26.

**Figure 5: Modern Apprentices in training by age group, Q3 2025/26**



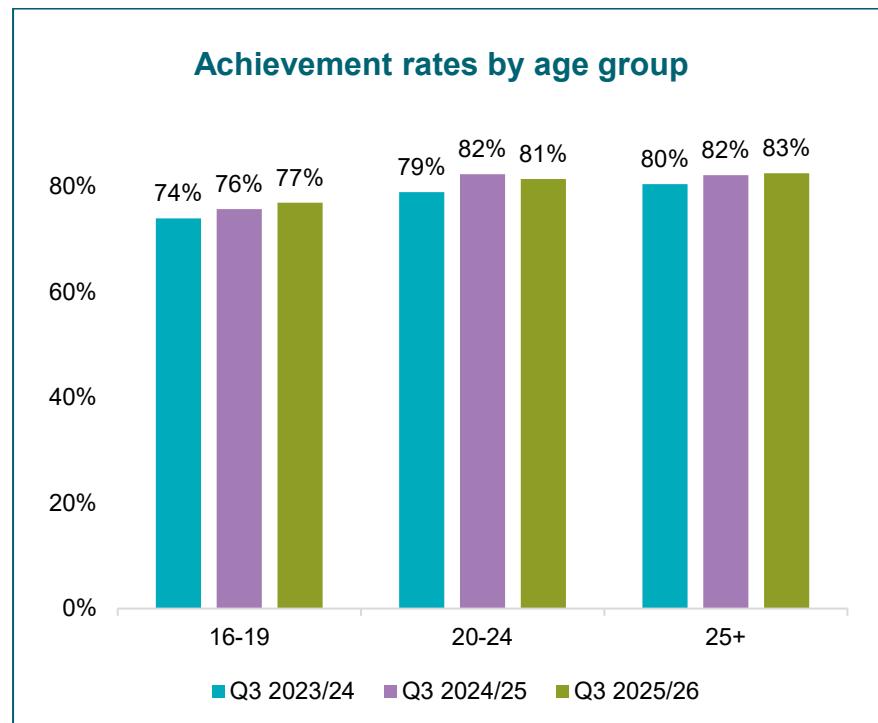
**Figure 6: Modern Apprentices in training by level, Q3 2025/26**



## Modern Apprenticeship Achievements

At the end of quarter 3, the overall achievement rate was **80.0%**, with 14,512 of 18,133 leavers achieving their full Modern Apprenticeship award. The achievement rate was 0.3 pp higher than last year.

**Figure 7: Modern Apprenticeship achievements by age group, Q3 2023/24 to Q3 2025/26**



**Figure 8: Modern Apprenticeship achievement rates by occupational grouping, Q3 2025/26**

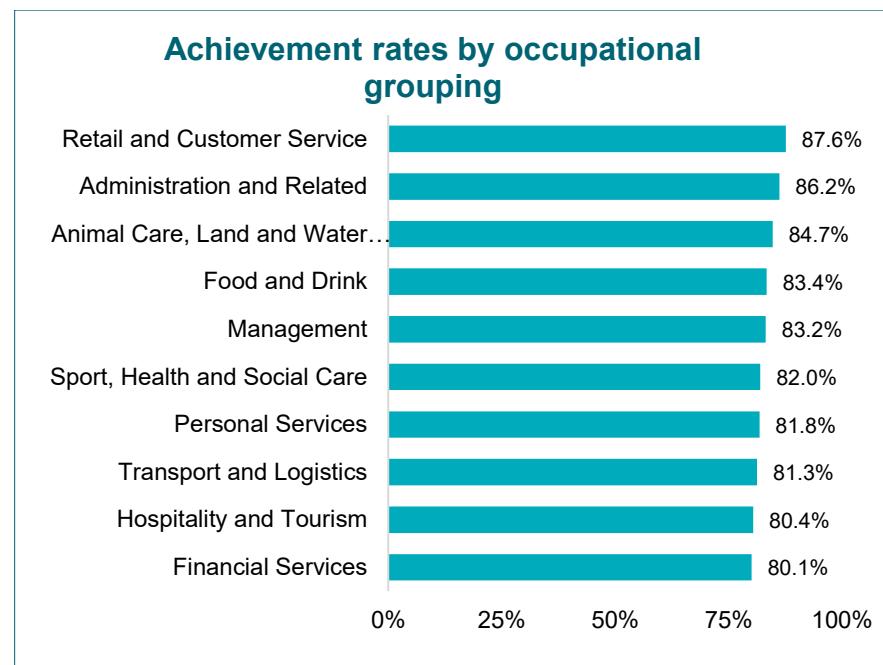


Figure 10 shows the top 10 achievement rates by occupational grouping.

## Modern Apprenticeship Redundancies

In quarter 3 2025/26, 166 Modern Apprentices were made redundant, 22 more than last year. There were 49 individuals who continued their Modern Apprenticeship with an alternative employer.

## Further Information

This report provides analysis of publicly funded Modern Apprenticeship activity up to the third quarter of the 2025/26 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.

## 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. Since 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](#)