

Skills
Development
Scotland

Equality Evidence Review

April 2023

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This document is produced by the SDS Evaluation and Research Team. This version of the EER was published on 17 May 2023 and includes minor amendments to the footnotes for accuracy.

Key Summary

The SDS Equality Evidence Review highlights that individuals across the protected groups can face some of the greatest barriers and poorest outcomes in relation to participation and progression in the education and skills system.

- Those at the **younger and older ends** of the labour market are more likely to face barriers in work and potential discrimination. Young people are less likely to be in employment due to higher numbers in this age group being in education.
- **Girls and women** have strong outcomes in the education system in terms of attainment and progression. However, in the labour market women are disproportionately affected by low pay, poor progression and underrepresentation at higher levels.
- **Care experienced** young people face challenges in relation to educational attainment and labour market progression and their outcomes tend to be poorer than the rest of the population.
- **Disabled** people are underrepresented in the labour market at all levels and are more likely to be in low paid, insecure employment. They are also more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment, although this varies according to disability.
- **Ethnic minority** groups face challenges of underrepresentation, discrimination and low pay despite better educational performance at school and higher education.
- **LGB** young people can often face significant bullying and harassment at school and these challenges can continue in the workplace.
- **Poverty** interacts with other protected characteristics to produce some of the greatest inequalities. Poverty has a significant negative impact on labour market and educational outcomes.
- **Trans** individuals face significant barriers in both education and labour market with bullying and harassment being key issues.
- There is a **strong business case** for equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace with clear benefits for employers and workers in relation to productivity, profitability, innovation and skills. In general, diverse businesses and organisations tend to be more successful.
- **Data availability** is a key issue in relation to equality. In particular, there is little granular data on disability and race.

1. Introduction

Background

The **SDS Equality Evidence Review (EER)** provides up to date evidence on the education and skills system, across the protected characteristics. The review draws on evidence from relevant statistical data sets and academic and policy literature. The focus is primarily on Scottish evidence.

The main purpose of the review is to:

- Support the **SDS Equality Mainstreaming report**
- Provide evidence to support the **SDS Equality Outcomes**
- Provide evidence for **Equality Impact Assessments** in SDS
- Provide **SDS colleagues with up to date information** on equality, diversity and inclusion to inform their work.

Evidence is also provided on care experience, poverty, young carers, veterans and individuals with experience of the criminal justice system, reflecting the broad definition of equality used by SDS. Where available, evidence on intersectionality is included in recognition that the interaction of different protected characteristics can create the greatest inequality. Evidence on the impact of the pandemic and the business case for diversity is also provided.

Gaps in evidence are identified throughout the document and details on data availability are outlined in Appendix 1.

Method

A desk-based review of external data and evidence was carried out to produce the EER including:

- External datasets on education and employment
- Policy reports and government/third sector research
- Academic peer-reviewed research

The approach focused on Scottish data, referring to UK-wide data where Scottish data was unavailable.

Primary data sources consulted for this update included:

- Scottish Qualifications Agency
- Higher Education Statistical Agency
- Scottish Government Statistics
- SDS Participation Measure
- SDS Modern Apprenticeships Statistics
- Scottish Funding Council
- National Records of Scotland
- Office for National Statistics.

In addition, reports and journal articles were added to NVivo (qualitative data analysis software) and coded according to the protected characteristic group the source focused upon. Relevant information from these sources was then added into the EER to provide additional qualitative findings, lived experience, good practice case studies and information on intersectionality.

2. Age

Key points

- Most college and university students are in the younger age groups. The likelihood of having a degree or higher qualification decreases with age.
- Those at the younger and older ends of the labour market are more likely to face barriers in work and potential discrimination.
- Young people are less likely to be in employment due to higher numbers in this age group being in education.
- Gender and ethnicity intersect with age to produce greater labour market disadvantages.
- The proportion of those aged 50-64 in Scotland's labour market has reduced since the pandemic.

Further and Higher Education

Younger age groups make up the majority of college and university students. Those aged 16-24 accounted for 74% of qualifiers at higher education institutions for first degrees in 2020-21. At postgraduate level the largest age group is those aged 25 to 29.¹

In the UK overall, older people are less likely to have a degree. In 2021, 40% of those aged 55–64 had NQF level 4 (equivalent

to completing two thirds of a degree) or above as their highest qualification, compared with 56% of those aged 25–29.²

Labour Market

Those at the younger and older ends of the labour market tend to face the most labour market disadvantages and may be more likely to experience age-based discrimination at work.

Figure 2.1 highlights the fluctuating employment rate for 16 to 24-year-olds and the reducing employment rate for those aged 50 to 64 in Scotland. The rate for workers aged 25 to 49 and 65 plus is steadier over time.

Young adults' experiences of employment have changed in recent years. Young people stay in education longer, start work later and early experiences of work are more likely to be characterised by short term contracts, low paid work, and precarious employment.³

Although the pandemic has had a negative impact on young people's employment, there is no evidence to say that employment prospects will continue to be poorer for young people. However, results from a UK-wide Princes Trust survey suggests that perceptions of young people differ, with 36% of respondents aged 16-25 believing that their job prospects will never recover from the pandemic, and one in three no longer believing that they will achieve their career goals.⁴

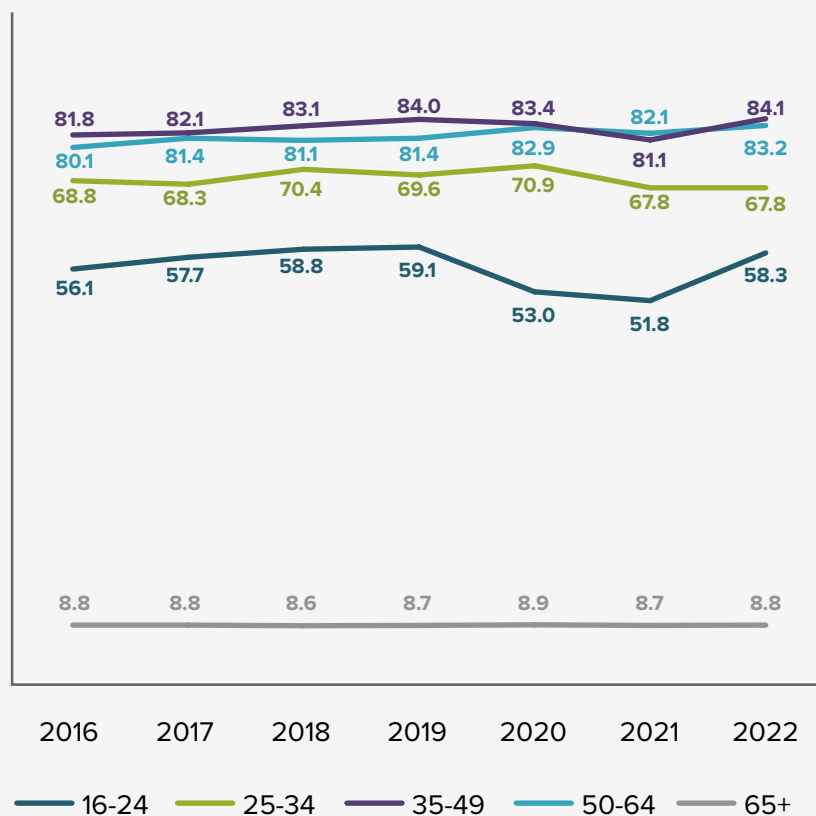
¹ SFC (2022). [HE students and qualifiers at Scottish institutions 2020-21](#)

² UK Government (2022). [Education and training statistics for the UK](#)

³ ES (2021). [An unequal crisis: the impact of the pandemic on the youth labour market](#)

⁴ Prince's Trust (2022). [Class of Covid Report 2022](#)

Figure 2.1: Scotland's employment rate by age group from 2016 to 2022 (%)



Source: Annual Population Survey, January to December datasets, ONS

Those aged 16 to 24 are less likely to be in employment, due to higher numbers in this age group being in education.

The **employment rate** for those aged 16 to 24 in Scotland in 2022 was **58%**, increasing by 6 percentage points from the previous year and higher than the UK as whole (53.7%). Young women are more likely to be employed in this age group than young men (61.2% compared to 54.8%).⁵

Complex intersections exist between age and other protected characteristics. Young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are more likely to be out of learning or work, than young White or Indian people in the UK.⁶ Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to be in low paid, insecure employment than their White peers, including higher likelihood of being on a zero-hour contract and an increased need to have two jobs.⁷ Young people in general are more likely to earn less than the Living Wage, resulting in financial insecurity.⁸

Youth unemployment can have several negative and long-term consequences. Young people who experience unemployment face higher risks of unemployment and lower wages over the long term and can struggle to progress in the labour market. Unemployment at an early age is also particularly harmful to young people's mental health.⁹

Scotland has an **ageing population** and extending working lives is widely seen as an economic necessity.¹⁰ The employment rate in Scotland for workers 50 to 64 years had been steadily increasing with time, from 64% in 2010 to 70% pre-pandemic (2019) but dropped to 68% in 2022.¹¹

⁵ Scottish Government (2022). [Labour market statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the UK](#)

⁶ UK Government (2021). [Young people not in employment, education or training](#)

⁷ Learning and Work Institute (2022). [Rapid evidence review: minority ethnic youth employment outcomes](#)

⁸ Scottish Government (2021). [Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2021](#)

⁹ Youth Futures Foundation (2020). [Young, vulnerable, and increasing – why we need to start worrying more about youth unemployment](#)

¹⁰ Scottish Government (2021). [A Scotland for the future: The opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population](#)

¹¹ ONS (2022) [Annual Population survey](#)

The UK has seen an increasing trend for people aged 50 and over to leave the labour market, becoming economically inactive throughout the pandemic (the only age group to do so). Reasons for this include greater numbers retiring, leaving the workforce to look after family, or due to sickness and ill health.¹²

People over 50 who are made redundant are less likely to be re-employed than younger workers and over 50s in general can face greater barriers to re-employment.¹³ Leaving work may have negative consequences, as research shows that work is generally good for health and wellbeing and rising poverty is a risk in this age group. Focus group participants in the UK aged 50-64 who had left work due to a health condition said they would have preferred to continue working, but felt they had no choice due to ageism, ableism and insufficient support from employers or the NHS. A third of older people who had left work due to health reasons said that flexible working hours would be the most important factor if they were to try and return to work.¹⁴

Older workers can face negative attitudes in the labour market from employers and colleagues. Older women may face the double disadvantage of age and gender with this potentially tripling for older women from minority ethnic groups.

The numbers aged **over 65** in employment in Scotland, remains steady at just over 8%. The most common reason for working past the age of 65 years was reported as “not ready to stop working”, by 37% of those over 65 who were economically active.¹⁵

The age profile of those running their own business is skewed towards older people, with the average age of self-employed workers in the UK currently at 48 years old. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2021/22 found that entrepreneurial education was weakest in Scotland across the UK. However, the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate for 18–29-year-olds increased in Scotland in 2021/22, in line with England and Wales at 9%, showing a significant rise in business start-ups amongst younger age groups in Scotland.¹⁶

Business Case



The business case for employing those aged over 55 is clear, with the potential gain to the UK economy predicted to be around £182 billion pounds if the UK matched the over 55 employment rates of New Zealand where 78.2% of over 55s are in employment.

A diverse age range of employees in the workplace is beneficial for both employers and employees. As organisations report challenges in finding suitably qualified new recruits, looking towards the aging workforce can help tackle the shortage of skilled workers.¹⁷

Including young people in the workforce also has various benefits such as: building the talent pipeline; improving the diversity of the workforce; and allowing existing employees a chance to mentor and train young people.¹⁸

¹² ONS (2022). [Movements out of work for those aged over 50 years since the start of the coronavirus pandemic](#)

¹³ Centre for Ageing Better (2022). [The state of ageing 2022](#)

¹⁴ Demos (2022). [Understanding early exiters. The case for a healthy ageing workforce strategy](#)

¹⁵ Scottish Government (2021). [Scotland's labour market: people, places and regions](#)

¹⁶ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022). [Scotland report 2021/2022](#)

¹⁷ Merkel, S. et al (2019). [Challenges and practices in promoting \(ageing\) employees working career in the health care sector – case studies from Germany, Finland and the UK](#)

¹⁸ CIPD (2021). [Youth employment in the UK 2021, Employing young people](#)

3. Care Experience

Key points

- Care experienced pupils consistently obtain fewer qualifications than their non care experienced peers and are more likely to leave school at the age of 16 (or younger).
- Care experienced students are underrepresented in higher education and face additional barriers to learning, including financial and housing problems.
- Care experienced individuals are more likely to be unemployed after leaving school, and be in low-paid, low-skilled and part-time roles.

School

Care experienced children have poorer educational outcomes, in comparison to their peers. Data highlights that looked after children's outcomes have improved over the last ten years, but there is still a significant gap compared to all pupils.

Care experienced school leavers are less likely to go into positive destinations than school leavers in general – 86% compared with 95% of all pupils. The lower proportion of care experienced children going into positive destinations may be due to them **leaving school at a younger age**. In 2020/21, **37%** of school leavers who were looked after within the year, departed school in (or before) S4, in comparison with **11%** of all school leavers.¹⁹

Care experienced children obtain **lower qualification** levels on average than all school leavers, partly explained by the lower school leaving age. At higher level in 2020/21, only **15%** of looked after school leavers obtained at least one qualification at level 6 or better, in comparison with 66% of all school leavers. The **exclusion rate** for looked after pupils, was more than six times that of all pupils in 2020/21. They also have lower attendance rates than their peers. For secondary school, the attendance rate for looked after young people was 83.4%, whereas the rate for all pupils was 89.3%.²⁰

Educational attainment varies across the types of accommodation in which care experienced children are living. School leavers in foster care perform better than those in other care settings. School leavers looked after 'at home with parents' have the lowest overall levels of attainment, in comparison to those in alternative placements.²¹

In 2019/20, 2.4% of all Foundation Apprentices identified as being care experienced.²²

Definitions of Care Experience



In line with good practice, SDS uses the term **care experienced** in reference to the young people we support who are, or have been, looked after. This includes those currently looked after, those who have been looked after at some point in their lives, and care leavers.²³

¹⁹ Scottish Government (2022). [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21](#)

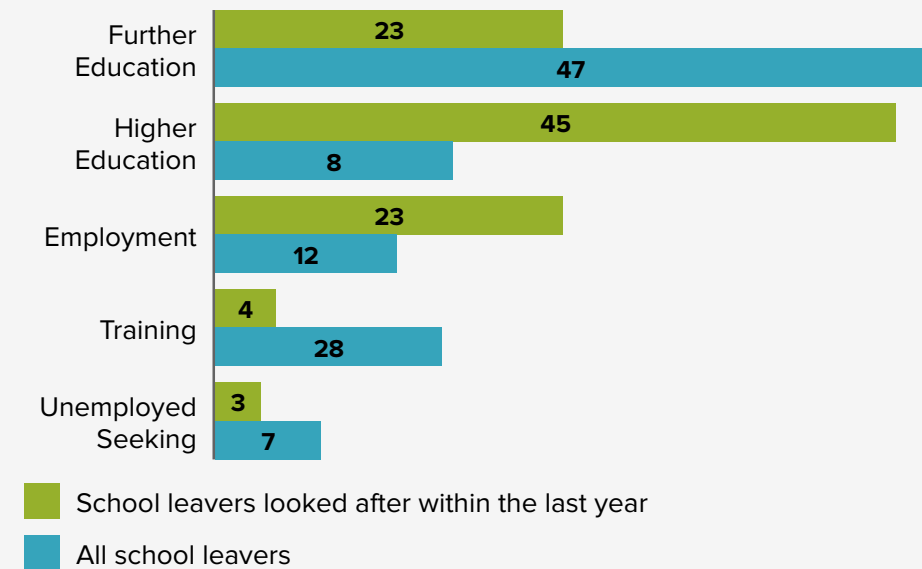
²⁰ As above

²¹ As above

²² SDS (2020). [Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan](#)

²³ SDS (2021). [Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024](#)

Figure 3.1: Initial destinations by care experience, 2020/21 (%)



Source: Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21

Further and Higher Education

Care experienced young people need to be financial independent as soon as possible. This means they often seek vocational qualifications. Evidence suggests their carers often do not encourage them to go to university and report low attainment expectations of them.²⁴

Nevertheless, the proportion of care experienced students across the college and university sector although small is increasing. At college, the percentage of care experienced entrants has increased from 8.7% in 2019/21, to 9.6% in 2020/21. At university, the number of

care experienced undergraduate full-time first-degree entrants has increased from 320 in 2018/19, to 370 in 2019/20.²⁵

At all levels, care experienced students have lower success rates. There is a gap of six percentage points for retention at university and a difference of 15.6 percentage points for successful attainment of full-time college courses.²⁶

Care experienced students are less likely to obtain a first or upper second degree and take longer to successfully complete their undergraduate courses.²⁷ They are less likely to be enrolled in STEM courses and are underrepresented in ‘prestigious’ universities. They are also less likely to secure graduate ranked employment, enter postgraduate education, and gain high skilled jobs.²⁸

Lived Experience

A study of teaching professionals, kinship and foster carers, residential workers and care experienced young people in Scotland, found care experienced pupils often experience difficulties and anxieties surrounding school.

Problems include poor behaviour and poor attendance; underachieving, due to lack of engagement in class; part-time timetables; issues surrounding friendships and a sense of belonging to the school community; and carers feeling the need to act as teachers (though feeling unable to do this).

There was also, a lack of adequate communication between school and home where carers did not have time to read school messages, or parents being impossible to reach. Schools also failed to acknowledge issues not ‘school related’.²⁹

²⁴ Harrison, N et al (2020). [Employment and further study outcomes for care-experienced graduates in the UK](#)

²⁵ Scottish Funding (2022). [HE Students and Qualifiers at Scottish Institutions 2020-21](#)

²⁶ Scottish Funding Council (2020). [SFC's National Ambition for Care-Experienced Students](#)

²⁷ UCAS (2022). [Next Steps: What is the experience of students from a care experience background in education?](#)

²⁸ As 24

²⁹ Mercierca, D et al. (2021). ['What about me?' Stories of the educational experiences of care-experienced children and young people in a Scottish local authority](#)

A survey carried out by CELCIS³⁰ of 500 care experienced young people in college and university in Scotland, highlighted the challenges care experienced students face:

- Issues accessing and managing financial support
- A lack of support with their college or university applications
- Problems getting accommodation
- Past trauma re-emerging
- Complicated family arrangements and caring roles
- Mental health and disability struggles
- Problems meeting deadlines and understanding course content
- Inadequate social support and social segregation
- The impact of complicated personal lives limiting their ability to access and stay on at college or university.

Labour Market

Once care experienced young adults leave education, there is a lack of evidence on their labour market outcomes. Routine data collected about the Scottish or UK population does not traditionally record whether adults are care experienced. In Scotland, 30% of care experienced school leavers were unemployed nine months after they left, in comparison to 5% of their non-care experienced peers.³¹

Care leavers are more likely to experience problems securing employment, as they often have poor support networks, mental ill-health, unstable living arrangements and may not be prepared for self-sufficient living. Institutional barriers such as, welfare systems and poor transport, also impact upon employment. Once they obtain a job, it is usually part-time, low-paid and low-skilled.³²

Business Case



Employers need to understand the barriers faced by care experienced people to adjust their recruitment practices, be more inclusive and gain the business benefits from having a diverse workforce. Adjustments could include offering structured work experience, training programmes, apprenticeships, and mentoring. Offering support during work placements can help develop skills, self-esteem, and career goals.³³

³⁰ O'Neill, L et al. (2019). 'Being a student with care experience is very daunting' Findings from a survey of care experienced students in Scottish colleges and universities

³¹ Kibbleworks (2020). Evaluation of Supportive Transitions Project for Young Care Leavers

³² Sanders, R (2021). ESS Outline Care experience and employment

³³ Sanders, R. (2021). Care experience and employment

4. Disability

Key points

- Boys, pupils from deprived areas, Gypsy/ Traveller pupils and care experienced children are most likely to be identified as having additional support needs (ASN).
- Pupils with ASN tend to have poorer educational attainment than those without.
- College is a key destination for disabled school leavers with disabled people underrepresented at university.
- Disabled people face multiple disadvantages in the labour market, including lower levels of employment, lower wages and negative attitudes in the workplace.
- Labour market outcomes vary according to the type of disability recorded. The employment rate for people with a learning disability for example is particularly low.
- The shift to greater prevalence of working from home during and post-pandemic has had a positive impact on disabled people and their working lives, enabling better management of their disability or health conditions and greater control and flexibility over working hours.

School

According to the 2021 Pupil Census, 33% of pupils across special schools and mainstream schools have a recorded additional support needs (ASN) (27.7% of all primary pupils and 38.2% of all secondary school pupils). Of those with ASN, 57% are male and 42% female. Almost half of pupils with recorded ASN, live in areas of Scotland classified as some of the most deprived (the four highest ranked areas using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).³⁴

The number of pupils identified with ASN increases every year. The data for 2021 is the first time that the increase has been lower than one percentage point. These increases are likely due to continued improvements in recording and the range of definitions of ASN broadening out.³⁵

Definitions of Disability and Additional Support Needs (ASN)



Disability relates to individuals of all ages and is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” Equality Act (2010).

Children and young people are considered to have Additional Support Needs (ASN) if, for any reason, they “require additional support, long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education.” Additional Support for Learning Act (2004; 2009).

³⁴ Scottish Government (2020). [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020](#)

³⁵ Scottish Government (2022). [Pupil census 2021 supplementary statistics](#)

Pupils with an ASN are almost five times more likely to be excluded from school than pupils without a recorded ASN, negatively impacting on future educational attainment and career opportunities.³⁶ Boys, pupils from deprived areas, Gypsy/ Traveller pupils and looked after children are most likely to be identified as having additional support needs.³⁷

The **Participation Measure**³⁸ in 2022 for 16-19 year olds identifying as disabled, was 88.7% compared to 92.5% of those identifying as not disabled. The participation rate for those identifying as disabled, has slightly decreased from 89% in 2020, remaining higher than all years prior to 2020. Of those identifying as disabled, 78% are in some form of education or training, 12% are employed, 7% unemployed and 3% of unconfirmed status. Figures for 2022 show employment participation levels for disabled young people are at their highest since the measure was introduced in 2016 (11.9%), although still lower compared to those young people not identified as disabled (17.8%). Disabled young people are more likely to be in the ‘unemployed not seeking’ status (5.1% compared to 1.8% for those not identifying as disabled).

Pupils with ASN tend to have poorer educational attainment, than those without ASN. For example, 47% of pupils with an ASN attained SCQF at level 6 or above, compared with 77% of those with no ASN.³⁹

Figures for Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) show that 25.3% of FA starts (SCQF L4/5) in 2020 self-identified as having an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty. The highest categories reported were learning disability (60%), social communication impairment (18.6%) and mental health (10.4%). FA starts for SCQF L6 saw a slight rise to 17.6% self-identifying as having an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty for 2020 compared to 2019.⁴⁰

³⁶ Scottish Government (2021). [Chapter 7: Exclusions. Summary statistics for schools in Scotland 2021](#)

³⁷ EHRC (2018). [Is Scotland fairer?](#)

³⁸ SDS (2022). [Annual participation measure for 16–19-year-olds in Scotland 2022](#)

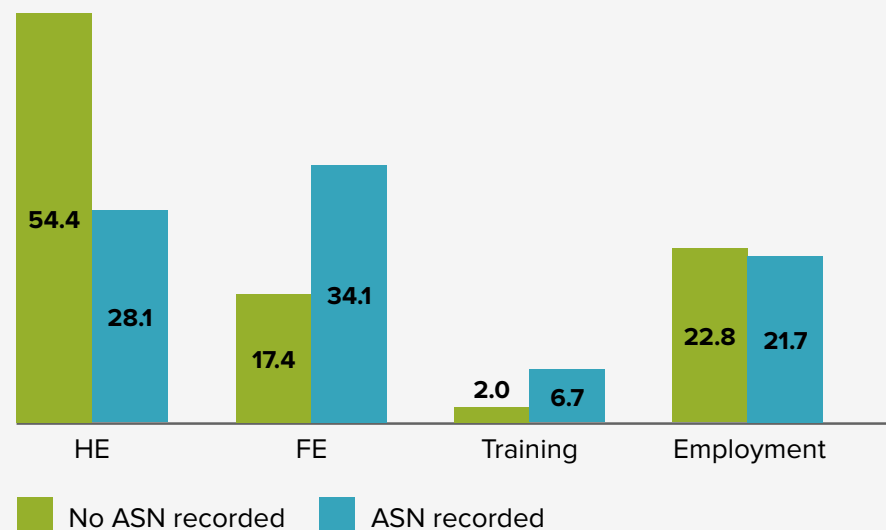
³⁹ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations](#)

⁴⁰ SDS (2021). [Foundation apprenticeships progress report](#)

⁴¹ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations](#)

School leavers from mainstream schools in 2020/21 with an additional support need are more likely to enter further education or training compared with leavers without additional support needs, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Initial destinations for school leavers with ASN, 2020/21 (%)



Source: Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations (supplementary tables, L3.1)

The highest rates of positive destinations for school leavers with additional support needs are for those with English as an additional language (95.5%), and dyslexia (94.9%). The poorest outcomes for positive destinations are for additional support need categories of interrupted learning (83.4%); social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties (88.7%) and those on the autistic spectrum (89.2%).⁴¹

Further and Higher Education

College is a key destination for disabled school leavers in Scotland, with figures from 2020/21 showing that 39% of disabled leavers move onto further education compared to 23% of non-disabled leavers.

Further education college subjects with the highest numbers of disabled students enrolled (2020/21) are: family care/personal development/personal care and appearance; healthcare/medicine/health and safety; and engineering.⁴² Completion rates for disabled students in FE are lower than those of non-disabled students (59.4% compared to 62%).⁴³

A quarter of disabled people in the UK aged 21 to 64 have a degree or equivalent as their highest qualification, compared with 42.7% of non-disabled people.⁴⁴ The percentage of non-disabled leavers transitioning into higher education in 2020/21 was 46%, almost double that of disabled leavers (24%).⁴⁵

Across UK universities in 2020/21, specific learning difficulties are the most shared condition (32.6%), followed by mental health conditions (29.4%) which have steadily increased in declared disabilities from 20.5% in 2016/17.⁴⁶

The top three subject areas studied by disabled students at Scottish universities in 2020/21 are: subjects allied to medicine; business and management; and social sciences. Completion rates for disabled and non-disabled **higher education** students in Scotland are almost the same. For full-time higher education students in 2020/21, 72.1% of disabled students completed their degree, compared to 72.9% of those without a declared disability.

⁴² SFC (2022). [Report on widening access 2020-21](#)

⁴³ As above

⁴⁴ ONS (2022). [Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2021](#)

⁴⁵ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations](#)

⁴⁶ Advance HE (2022). [Equality + higher education. Students statistical report 2022](#)

For disabled students completing an undergraduate degree in Scottish universities, a higher percentage were awarded lower degree classifications. In 2020/21, 83% of disabled students were awarded a first-class or upper second-class degree, compared to 86% of non-disabled students. 14% of disabled students were awarded lower second-class or third-class degrees, compared to 11% of non-disabled students.⁴⁷

Labour Market

Almost half of all adults in Scotland reported that they were living with a long-term condition in 2021 (47% compared to 33% in UK), with 34% of all adults reporting that they are disabled.⁴⁸ One in five of the UK working age population report having a disability.⁴⁹

Disabled people face multiple disadvantages in the labour market, including lower levels of employment, lower wages, fewer hours, precarious contracts and negative attitudes in the workplace. Attitudes towards disabled workers continues to place limitations on their position in the workplace, with attitudes towards those with mental health conditions at work (especially where these are more severe or less common), tending to be more negative than those towards people with physical disabilities.⁵⁰

The number of **Modern Apprenticeship** starters identifying as disabled in Q2 2022/23 was 14.7%, 2.5 percentage points higher than the same point the previous year.⁵¹

Disabled people have lower levels of employment than those without a declared disability:

⁴⁷ As 46

⁴⁸ Scottish Government (2022). [The Scottish health survey 2021](#)

⁴⁹ DWP (2022). Official statistics. [The employment of disabled people 2021](#)

⁵⁰ British Social Attitudes (2021). [Disabled people at work. Accepted as equals?](#)

⁵¹ SDS (2022). [Modern Apprenticeship statistics Q2, 2022/2023](#)

- The **employment rate** in Scotland in 2021 for those classed as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 was 50% compared to 81% for non-disabled people, giving an employment rate gap⁵² of 31 percentage points (slightly higher than UK-wide gap of 28 percentage points)
- The **disability employment gap** is lower for women (26 percentage points) than men (37 percentage points), lowest for those aged 16 to 24 and highest for those aged 35 to 49⁵³
- Strong regional differences exist in disability employment gaps. Inverclyde has one of the largest disability employment gaps in the UK at 47.7 percentage points with an 82.2% non-disabled employment rate versus 34.5% disabled employment rate.⁵⁴

Labour market outcomes vary according to the type of disability recorded. The employment rate for people with a learning disability is particularly low, estimated at 4.1% in employment for those adults with a learning disability known to local authorities in Scotland. Many of those with learning disabilities do not engage or are not known to disability services.⁵⁵

Employment rates decline with the number of health conditions reported. Less than a third of disabled people with five or more health conditions are in employment, whereas nearly two-thirds of people in the UK with one health condition are in employment.⁵⁶

In 2021 there was a marked increase in the percentage of disabled workers working full-time, but across the UK, disabled people are less likely to work full-time than non-disabled (67.3% versus 78.1%). Reasons for this increase are unclear but may be a combination

⁵² The disability employment gap is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people.

⁵³ Scottish Government (2022). [Scotland's labour market: People, places and regions-protected characteristics](#)

⁵⁴ DWP (2022). [Official statistics. The employment of disabled people 2021](#)

⁵⁵ Fraser of Allander Institute (2021). [Scotland's employment landscape for people with learning disabilities](#)

⁵⁶ As 54

of a greater number of workers reporting a disability, particularly an increase in mental health conditions being reported,⁵⁷ along with the impact of the pandemic on ways of working. Working from home during the pandemic was reported to have had a positive impact on disabled people and their working lives, enabling better management of their disability or health conditions and greater control and flexibility over working hours.⁵⁸

Disabled people are more likely to be self-employed (13.6% versus 12.7%) and equally likely as non-disabled people to work for a SME (small or medium sized employer).⁵⁹ 25% of small business owners are disabled or have a health condition, with disabled-owned small businesses contributing 8.6% of turnover of all UK businesses.⁶⁰

Disabled people tend to be paid less than non-disabled people and are generally overrepresented in lower paid positions. **In 2021, Scotland had the largest disability pay gap across the UK**, with median pay for disabled workers of £11.54 per hour compared to £14.16 per hour for non-disabled workers.⁶¹ For disabled people with degrees, the disability pay gap continues with disabled graduates from Scottish HEIs earning £2,900 less than those with no known disability when surveyed five years post-graduation.⁶²

It is suggested that the post-pandemic shift to hybrid working has the potential to enable disabled people to manage their health and wellbeing more easily and offers increasing possibilities of securing work, staying on and progressing in their careers. **Greater flexibility could be one way to reduce the disability employment gap**, if remote/hybrid working is well managed to prevent further inequalities emerging.⁶³

⁵⁷ As 54

⁵⁸ TUC (2021). [Disabled workers' access to flexible working as a reasonable adjustment](#)

⁵⁹ As 54

⁶⁰ FSB (2022). [Business without barriers: Supporting disabled people and those with health conditions in the workforce](#)

⁶¹ ONS (2022). [Disability pay gaps in the UK: 2021](#)

⁶² Scottish Government (2022). [Longitudinal education outcomes from universities: 2019/20 Scotland](#)

⁶³ Work Foundation (2022). [The changing workplace: Enabling disability-inclusive hybrid working](#)

5. Gender (Sex)

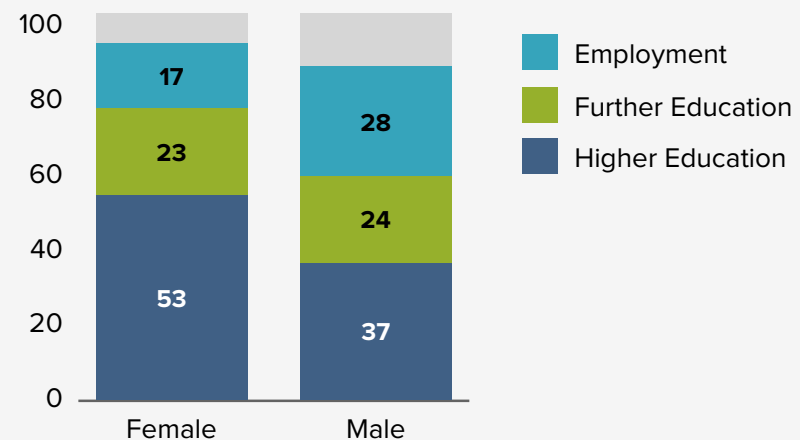
Key points

- Girls continue to outperform boys in qualification attainment and positive post school destinations, but subject choice demonstrates segregation from an early age.
- More young women than young men go into further and higher education.
- Subject choice continues to be gender imbalanced post-school impacting upon future career opportunities.
- Occupational segregation is a key feature of women's experience in the labour market which can lead to low pay and a lack of progression and promotion.
- Women are affected by low pay, precarious employment and the continuing gender pay gap.
- Women are underrepresented in entrepreneurship, yet women-led businesses perform slightly better than male-led or mixed-led businesses.

School

At school, girls continue to out-perform boy in terms of attainment and positive post school destinations. In 2022, young women (16-19 years) were more likely to be taking part in education, training, or employment than young men (93.2% compared to 91.6%) and particularly more likely to be in education (78.3%) compared to young men (68.2%).⁶⁴ Figure 5.1 compares destinations of young women and men after they leave school.⁶⁵

Figure 5.1: Post school destinations by gender, 2020/21 (%)



Source: Scottish Government (2022). Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations (supplementary tables- table L1.2)

⁶⁴ SDS (2022). Annual participation measure for 16-19 year olds in Scotland 2022.

⁶⁵ Scottish Government (2022). Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations.

Differences are evident in the subject choices made by girls and boys. Subject choice impacts on future educational and career opportunities available to both boys and girls and is associated with gender segregation in the labour market.⁶⁶ For example, the gender imbalance in the STEM sector, can partly be linked to the subject choices made at school. It is suggested that the key to addressing the future demand for STEM occupations like engineering, is encouraging young women to study STEM subjects and pursue engineering-related qualifications. Secondary school is acknowledged as a critical time for engaging girls with STEM subjects.⁶⁷

Girls have higher levels of attainment, at SCQF Level 4, 5 and 6 than boys and this gap increases at the higher SCQF levels.⁶⁸ Attainment for selected subjects across National 5, Higher and Advanced

Table 5.1: Attainment by subject choice at school by gender (2022)

	National 5		Higher		Advanced Higher	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
English	91%	85%	85%	77%	88%	81%
Physics	81%	72%	84%	76%	88%	79%
Computing Science	84%	78%	77%	72%	82%	79%
Chemistry	80%	80%	79%	78%	84%	81%
Biology	72%	72%	76%	77%	78%	72%
Mathematics	71%	70%	77%	74%	83%	75%

Source: SQA Attainment Statistics 2022

⁶⁶ Close the Gap. (2020). [A gender review of developing the young workforce.](#)
⁶⁷ Siani et al. (2020). [Gender and parental education as indicators of students' engagement with STEM subjects](#)
⁶⁸ Scottish Government (2021). [Summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations](#)
⁶⁹ SQA (2022). [Attainment statistics 2022](#)

Higher is outlined in Table 5.1.⁶⁹ Girls tend to score higher than boys across all subjects and levels. In STEM subjects, such as, physics and computing, where girls are underrepresented, their attainment is above that of boys.

UK research suggests that young women from Black and minority ethnic groups experience greater discrimination in the school system than young White women. For example, in England, Black Caribbean girls are twice as likely to be permanently excluded from school than White British girls, with this rising to three times as likely for mixed heritage girls.⁷⁰

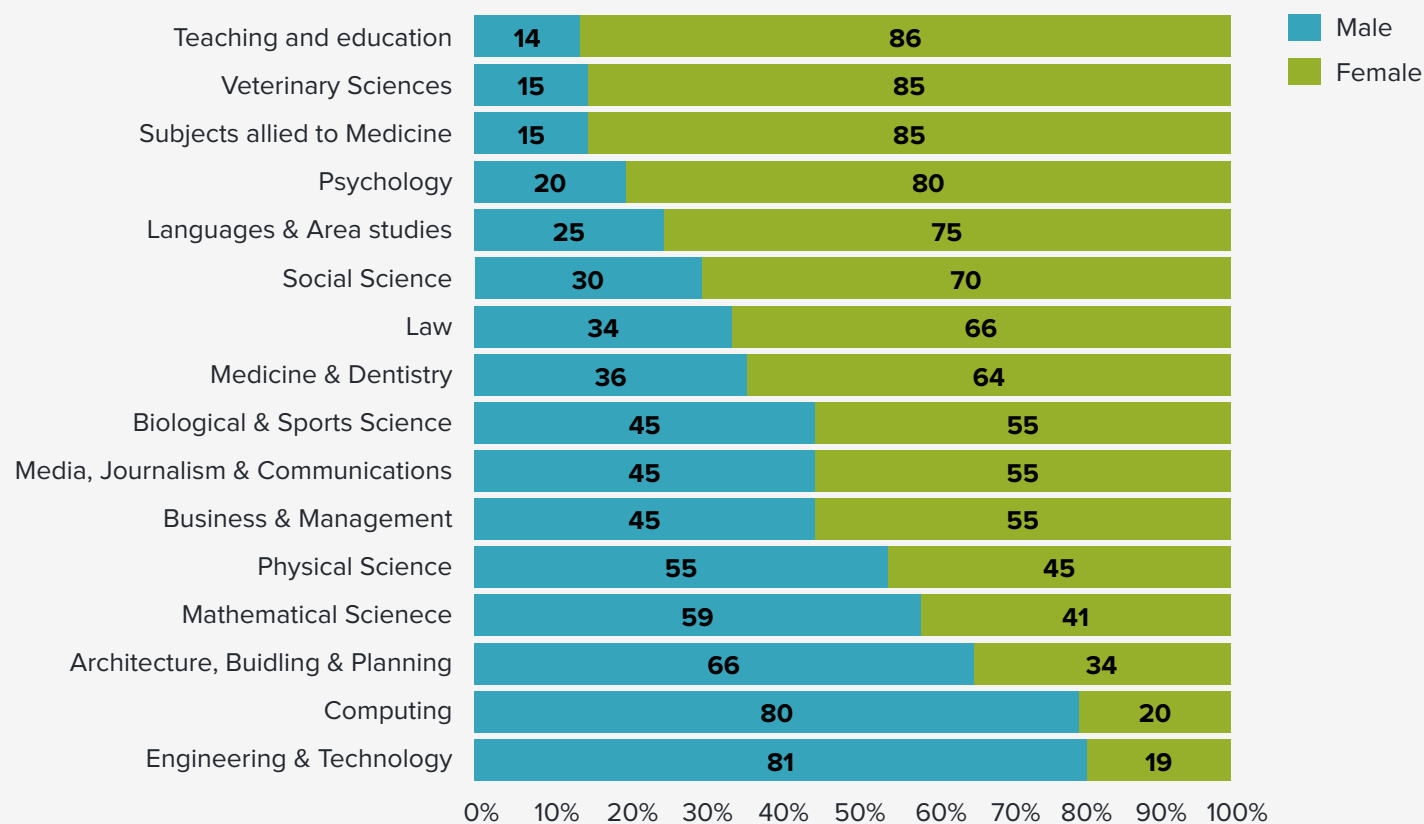
Foundation Apprenticeship uptake is relatively well balanced between male and female pupils, with young women making up 58% of the total starters in 2020.⁷¹ However, gender splits across the FA frameworks reflect the gender balance in subject choice at school. For example, girls are more likely to choose social services and healthcare FA frameworks, while boys are more likely to opt for engineering, IT and financial services.

Further and Higher Education

Young women continue into further and higher education in greater numbers than young men. In Scotland the gender split for students enrolling in FE in 2020-21 was 49% male and 51% female and 47% male and 53% female in HE.⁷² Women are also more likely to complete their studies than men in both FE and HE.⁷³ For students continuing to PhD level, UK data shows that in 2022 female postgraduate research students outnumber male students for the first time.⁷⁴

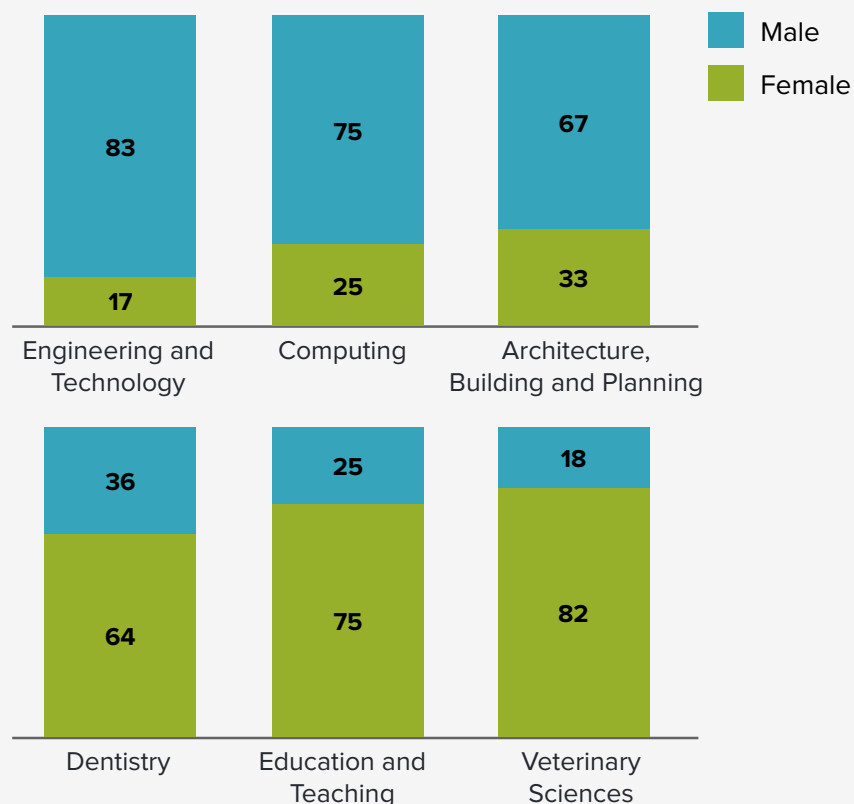
⁷⁰ UK Government (2022). [Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England](#)
⁷¹ SDS (2021). [Foundation apprenticeships progress report.](#)
⁷² SFC (2022). [College statistics 2020-21](#)
⁷³ SFC (2022). [Report on widening access 2020-21](#)
⁷⁴ Advance HE (2022). [Equality in higher education – Students statistical report 2022](#)

Figure 5.2: Entrants to Scottish universities by subject and gender, 2020/21 (%)



Source: SFC (2022) Higher Education students and qualifiers at Scottish institutions 2021-22

Figure 5.3: Subjects with greatest gender imbalance in Scottish HE and FE courses for 2020-21 entrants (%)



Source: SFC (2022) Higher Education students and qualifiers at Scottish institutions 2021-22

At both college and university there is continued gender imbalance by subject choice, which impacts on future labour market options and leads to occupational segregation, as shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ SFC (2022). [Higher Education students and qualifiers at Scottish institutions 2020-21](#)

⁷⁶ SDS (2022). [Modern Apprenticeship statistics Q2, 2022/2023](#)

⁷⁷ SAAB (2022). [Gender Commission report and recommendations](#)

⁷⁸ Close the Gap (2022). [Gender pay gap statistics](#).

⁷⁹ Scottish Government (2022). [Scotland's labour market: People, places and regions-protected characteristics](#).

⁸⁰ Scottish Government (2022). [Fair work action plan: becoming a leading fair work nation by 2025](#)

Labour Market

Women's experiences and participation in the labour market continues to differ from men's in terms of pay, progression, and conflicts between work and caring responsibilities.

Figures for **Modern Apprenticeships** (MA) continue to show that more men undertake MAs in Scotland, with Q2 2022/23 showing 38% female starters and 62% male.⁷⁶ The Scottish Apprenticeships Advisory Board Gender Commission acknowledges that women remain underrepresented in those apprenticeship frameworks most likely to give the greatest returns in terms of pay, employment opportunities and skills development.⁷⁷

Women are less likely to be in employment than men, with an employment rate in 2021 of 71%, compared to 76% for men. Women continue to make up the majority of part-time workers (75%) with 41% of all women in employment working part-time, compared to 13% of men.⁷⁸

Economic inactivity rates are higher for women (16 to 64 years), than men. Three in five women are classed as economically inactive and inactivity rates continue to rise from pre-pandemic levels, alongside increases in the inactivity rate for men as a long-term post-pandemic legacy. Reasons for inactivity differ between men and women, with more women stating they were looking after family/home than men, although the largest reason stated for both men and women is long-term sickness.⁷⁹

Occupational segregation of men and women in certain kinds of jobs and in different levels of employment remains a key labour market issue. Women tend to be disproportionately affected by occupational segregation, impacting on their potential pay and career progression. Women are also more likely than men to be on zero-hours contracts across the UK, adding to issues of precarity in employment.⁸⁰

Women are less likely to progress in the labour market and hold less than a third of the total positions of power in Scotland across political institutions, public sector, media and cultural bodies, and corporate world.⁸¹

In Scotland, women account for 4% of CEOs in top businesses; 36% of public body executives; 32% of university principals; 13% of senior police officers and 0% of CEOs of Scotland-based FTSE 100 and 250 companies. Research highlights that the underrepresentation of women, means that women's views and perspectives are therefore not being taken into account at higher levels.⁸²

There is a clear business case for increasing gender diversity at higher levels within organisations. Research suggests that companies in the top quarter for gender diversity on their executive teams were 25% more likely to report above-average profitability.⁸³

Women are underrepresented when it comes to entrepreneurship despite research showing that **women-led businesses perform slightly better than male-led or mixed-led businesses**. Scotland has a slightly lower percentage of women-led businesses (15.4% female-led versus 84.6% male-led) compared to the UK overall (16.8%).⁸⁴

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor for 2021/22 reported that three quarters of women classed as early-stage entrepreneurs said they started their own business 'to earn a living because jobs are scarce' compared to just over half of men, suggesting entrepreneurship is used as a way to earn money when excluded from the labour market.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Engender (2021). [Vision for a feminist recovery. Engender manifesto for the Scottish parliament election 2021](#)

⁸² Engender (2020). [Sex & power in Scotland 2020](#)

⁸³ Scottish Government (2022). [Fair work action plan: becoming a leading fair work nation by 2025](#)

⁸⁴ The Gender Index (2022). [Positive change for women in enterprise, driven by data](#)

⁸⁵ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022). [Scotland report 2021/2022](#)

Women are affected by low pay and the continuing gender pay gap, meaning they will earn significantly less than men over their entire careers:

- **The current gender pay gap in Scotland across all employment is 10.1%**. The gender pay gap for full-time employees in Scotland increased from 3% in 2021 to 3.7% in 2022, although this remains below the gap of 7.2% pre-pandemic and less than the gender pay gap across the whole of the UK of 14.9%
- Women employees in Scotland effectively work for 42 days a year for free due to the gender pay gap⁸⁶
- The median gross weekly earnings for women working full-time is £604.50 compared to £678.40 for men⁸⁷
- The gender pay gap is highest for older women aged 50-64⁸⁸
- Pay and employment gaps are wider for disabled women or minority ethnic **women with research suggesting that women with multiple inequalities face intersectional barriers that reduce progression and employment prospects**⁸⁹
- Despite making up 51% of all employees in Scotland, women account for 61% of workers earning below the real living wage.⁹⁰

Women's low pay reflects the interplay of a number complex factors including overrepresentation in low paid and low skilled sectors (the five C: catering, cleaning, cashiering, clerical and caring);⁹¹ underrepresentation in senior management and leadership roles;

⁸⁶ TUC (2022). [Gender pay gap analysis](#)

⁸⁷ Scottish Government (2022). [Annual survey of hours and earnings 2022](#)

⁸⁸ Scottish Government (2022). [Pay and career progression experiences of women aged over 50 in Scotland](#)

⁸⁹ Scottish Government (2021). [Gender pay gap action plan: annual report](#)

⁹⁰ As 83

⁹¹ As 83

overrepresentation in part time work; underrepresentation in higher paid STEM sectors; being more likely to take on caring responsibilities impacting on the type of work women can undertake; and being less likely to work overtime.

Regardless of whether women and men study at FE or HE, a clear pay gap exists after course completion (three years post-study):

- Men with FE qualifications from full time courses had median earnings £2,600 more than women with the same qualification
- Men with a HNC or HND qualification had median earnings £2,200 more than women with the same qualification.⁹²

A survey carried out by Equate on **intersectional discrimination in STEM**,⁹³ identified multiple discriminations facing women in these sectors and roles. Findings highlighted that women with caring responsibilities, BME women, LGBT, and disabled women felt less confident in reporting discrimination and felt less satisfied with their employers' efforts on inclusion.

Business Case



A McKinsey & Company report reaffirms the business case for gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.⁹⁴ **The higher the rate of diversity in an organisation, the more likely they are to outperform non-diverse companies.** Organisations that had over 30% women on executive teams were found to outperform those with less diverse executive teams. They also found a 48% differential in performance between the most and least gender diverse organisations. This competitive advantage presents a clear business case for diversity and inclusion at all levels in the workplace.

Methods to improve gender diversity in the workplace include: making sure managers have the learning opportunities to develop strategies to improve gender diversity; increasing networking opportunities that allow sharing of best practice between firms, developing an industry wide narrative on the benefits of increased gender diversity; producing educational material to engage girls from a young age; and developing a coherent vision for the future that includes gender diversity and equal opportunities.⁹⁵

⁹² Scottish Government (2022). [Education and skills impact framework – college provision: contextual summary report 2022](#)

⁹³ Equate (2020). Women in STEM. [An intersectional analysis of multiple discriminations](#)

⁹⁴ McKinsey & Company (2020) [Diversity wins: how inclusion matters](#)

⁹⁵ UK Research and Innovation (2021). [Equality, diversity and inclusion in UK foundation industries. Summary findings: gender](#)

6. Gender Reassignment

Key points

- Young trans people experience high levels of bullying and harassment at school and at higher levels than LGB+ young people, impacting upon schooling experiences.
- Trans students are more likely to continue to have negative experiences of education at further or higher education levels. Moving from school to college or university can be a difficult time for trans young people, due to reduced support networks.
- Trans people may experience specific barriers to finding and staying in work. Trans workers are more likely to experience workplace harassment and discrimination, than the wider LGB+ population.

Definitions of Transgender

Transgender and trans are used in this report as terms for those whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth. We recognise that individuals may use other terms and support everyone's right to choose these. Gender reassignment is the term used in the Equality Act 2010.



School

Trans young people experience high levels of bullying and harassment at school and at higher levels than LGB+ young people. A survey of transgender young people highlights that 82% of transgender young people have experienced bullying in school due to being LGBT, with 68% of those who had been bullied, saying it negatively impacted on their educational attainment. Transphobic bullying has been shown to directly impact on young trans people's educational experiences and opportunities, with 27% of those reporting transphobic bullying leaving education, compared to 9% of all LGBT young people.⁹⁶

Limited data is available on trans young people at school in Scotland and the UK in general, resulting in an evidence gap in relation to the experiences and attainment of trans young people at school.

Further and Higher Education

Trans students are more likely to continue to have negative experiences of education at further or higher education levels. Figures show a reduction in the number of individuals stating on college enrolment forms that their gender identity is not the same as that assigned at birth between 2019/20 and 2020/21, despite an overall increase in number of college enrolments.⁹⁷

Collecting data on trans status is currently voluntary for universities so there is an unclear picture relating to this protected characteristic amongst university students in the UK. From UK universities who shared the information, 0.6% of students declared having a trans

⁹⁶ LGBT Youth Scotland (2018). [Life in Scotland for LGBT young people](#)

⁹⁷ SFC (2022). [Report on widening access 2020-21](#)

status, with 2.2% of students refusing to provide information and 38.9% leaving this field blank. The highest percentage of students with a trans status were 21 years old and under (62%).⁹⁸

Moving from school to college or university can be a difficult time for trans young people, due to reduced support networks and less structure in FE and HE environments, leading to more potential for transphobic bullying. A Stonewall survey of LGBT students, found that trans students reported that they experienced challenges while transitioning at university and had a lack of support, often leading to them taking extended leave of absences or leaving university altogether.⁹⁹

Research looking at experiences of trans and non-binary students at universities in the UK identified two positive themes: universities as safe and supportive spaces and increased funding provided for trans/non-binary inclusion. Negative themes from the evidence assessment included: anxiety about using and navigating university spaces, especially around bathrooms; consequences of expressing their identity; lack of trans-education for peers; transphobic abuse; and use of 'deadnames' in lectures or on university systems.¹⁰⁰

The lack of research on trans young people's experiences at college and university is a significant evidence gap.

Labour Market

Evidence is limited on the experience of work for trans workers although some research suggests that trans workers experience distinct challenges at work which differ significantly from LGB+ workers' experiences.

Small scale research carried out by LGBT Health and Wellbeing,¹⁰¹ suggests that trans people may experience specific barriers when

both looking for and staying in work in Scotland, including:

- Feeling unable to apply to jobs because of fears of prejudice
- Application forms not including non-binary options
- Difficulty obtaining references that matched gender identity and name
- Lack of awareness or transphobia in interviews.

Once in work, lack of awareness and understanding of trans identities and difficulties around the process of transitioning at work were reported, although two thirds of respondents who had transitioned at work, felt generally positive about support from managers and colleagues.¹⁰²

Trans workers are more likely to experience harassment and discrimination than the wider LGB population, with **39%** reporting negative comments or conduct from colleagues and **6%** reporting being physically attacked in the workplace:¹⁰³

- **12%** of transgender respondents had been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the past year because they of their gender identity
- **21%** of trans people said that they would not report transphobic harassment or bullying in the workplace
- **31%** of non-binary and **18%** of transgender people said they did not feel comfortable wearing clothes that represented their gender identity at work
- **18%** of trans respondents reported not being called by the correct name and pronoun at work.

⁹⁸ Advance HE (2020). [Equality and higher education. Students statistical report 2020](#)

⁹⁹ Stonewall (2020). [Shut out. The experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work](#)

¹⁰⁰ Smith et al. (2022). [Transgender and non-binary students' experiences at UK universities: A rapid evidence assessment](#)

¹⁰¹ LGBT Health & Wellbeing (2021). [Trans people and work](#)

¹⁰² As above

¹⁰³ As 99

Lived Experience

(LGBT Youth Scotland, 2022)¹⁰⁴

Presented below are some quotes from participants taken from LGBT Youth Scotland about their experiences in the workplace and the recruitment process.

‘Mostly people have just respected me at work and treated me as just another colleague. On one occasion, a co-worker argued with a customer on my behalf to respect my gender, which was greatly appreciated.’

‘I go by my deadname and not my correct pronouns out of fear.’

‘[It’s] Dangerous to put they/them pronouns on a job application.’

‘My employment opportunities have been thwarted somewhat because when employers/workplaces are not clear about their LGBTI inclusion policies or don’t have them, I don’t feel safe to work there and my options are smaller. Or I don’t feel confident my interview will go well when they see a visibly queer person who uses “weird pronouns” (they/them) in my email signature. That puts me off applying to things that are not LGBTI-specific, and then that pool of work is very small.’

Survey research from the CIPD of 193 trans workers highlighted poor wellbeing at work, with **55%** of trans workers saying they had experienced conflict at work in the last 12 months; higher than heterosexual and LGB+ workers and that **26%** were not open about their gender identity at work.¹⁰⁵ Survey research similarly found reticence from trans people to be out at work, with 65% of trans people reporting that they hid their gender status or history at work. Trans workers also perceived more barriers to progression at work and at the recruitment and interview stages of the job search process.¹⁰⁶

Business Case



The benefits of employing and supporting trans employees are highlighted by Stonewall. For example, changing gender roles can require the use of a range of transferable skills including communication and negotiation, confidence to make difficult decisions, organisational skills and innovative approaches to problem solving. Supporting a trans employee demonstrates an organisation’s commitment to equality and diversity which can help attract and retain skilled workers. It also enhances the reputation of the organisation with trans customers, clients, and service users.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ LGBT Youth Scotland (2022). [Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People](#)

¹⁰⁵ CIPD (2021). [Inclusion at work: perspectives on LGBT+ working lives](#)

¹⁰⁶ Totaljobs (2021). [Trans employee experiences survey: Understanding the trans community in the workplace](#)

¹⁰⁷ Stonewall (2018). [LGBT in Britain. Work report](#)

7. Poverty

Key points

- Pupils from deprived areas regularly have lower levels of attainment than those from more affluent areas.
- Young people from deprived areas experience inequalities in leaver destination outcomes and are consistently underrepresented within higher education.
- Most individuals that are in poverty are within working households and are experiencing 'in-work' poverty.

School

Pupils from the most deprived areas consistently have lower levels of attainment, than those in the least deprived areas.¹¹¹ As pupils progress through the school system, the attainment gap widens and becomes more severe at SCQF Level 5 and above.¹¹² In 2020/21, the gap was 18.2 percentage points between pupils from the most and least deprived areas, achieving at least one or more passes at SCQF Level 5.¹¹³ At the end of secondary school, this gap equates to roughly four 'A' grades at Higher level.¹¹⁴ This means that positive leaver destination options are more restricted for those from deprived areas.¹¹⁵

Definitions of Poverty



There is no one agreed definition of poverty. The following definitions are commonly used.

- **Geography based** – poverty can be measured by geography. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranks Scottish postcodes between 1-10 to indicate how deprived the area is. This ranking is based on a range of factors, including average education levels of residents, crime levels, and housing quality. SIMD 1 = most deprived and SIMD 5 = least deprived.¹⁰⁸
- **Income** – income is widely used as an indicator for individual or household poverty. Households in the UK are classed as living in poverty if they are 60% below the median household income.¹⁰⁹
- **Occupation** – the job that an individual has can be categorised hierarchically. The 'NS-SEC' measurement fits occupations into a scale of occupational prestige, which also broadly captures levels of pay too.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Scottish Government (2020). [Scottish index of multiple deprivation 2020](#)

¹⁰⁹ Scottish Government (2022). [Poverty in Scotland: methodology](#)

¹¹⁰ ONS (2021). [The National Statistics Socio-economic classification \(NS-SEC\)](#)

¹¹¹ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, 2022](#)

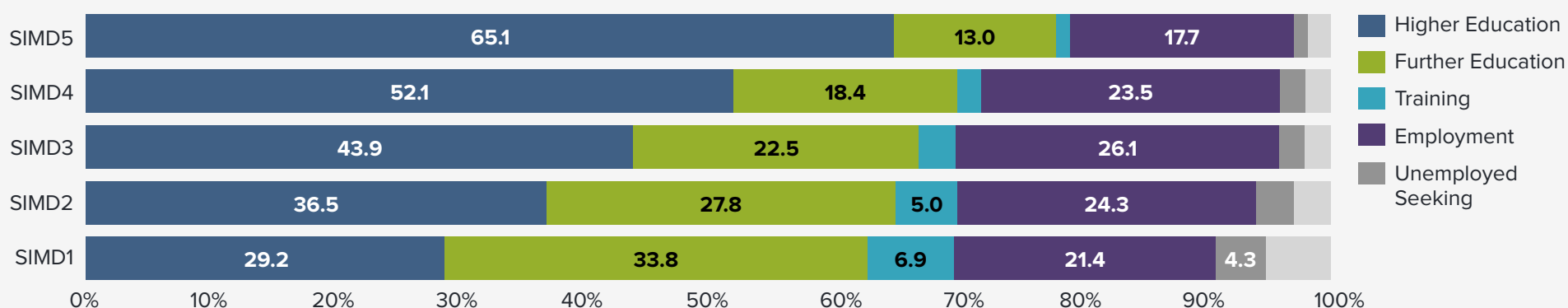
¹¹² McKinney, S.J et al. (2020). [Poverty and education in Scotland](#)

¹¹³ As 111

¹¹⁴ Mowat, J.G (2018). [Closing the attainment gap – a realistic proposition or an elusive pipe-dream?](#)

¹¹⁵ Mowat, J.G (2019). ['Closing the Gap': systems Leadership is no leadership at all without a moral compass - a Scottish perspective](#)

Figure 7.1: Initial school leaver destinations by SIMD, 2020/21 (%)



Source: Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, 2022.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to progress onto higher education, as shown in Figure 7.1. They are also more likely to experience mental health struggles; bullying and exclusion; have poorer attendance; and are less likely to feel part of their school’s community.¹¹⁶

Lived Experience

A study which aimed to understand how school processes impact the experiences and involvement of pupils from low income households, found they experience several barriers to attainment. Pupils disclosed worries around school uniform costs, social stigmas, financial barriers to learning, worries around school meals and missing out on school trips and extra-curricular activities.¹¹⁷

The Annual Participation Measure shows that in 2022:

- Those living in the most deprived areas are less likely to be participating in learning, training, and work (87.4%), compared to those living in the least deprived areas (96.7%)
- Those in the most deprived areas are less likely to be in education – 66% compared to 83.5% of those in the least deprived
- The participation gap between those living in the 20% most deprived areas and those in the 20% least deprived areas has narrowed between 2018 and 2022.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Mowat, J.G (2020). *Interrogating the relationship between poverty, attainment and mental health and wellbeing: the importance of social networks and support*

¹¹⁷ Naven, L et al. (2019). *The influence of poverty on children's school experiences: pupils' perspectives*

¹¹⁸ SDS (2022). *Annual Participation Measure 2022*

Disability and Poverty

Data from the Family Resources Survey shows that, between 2016/17 and 2018/19, almost a third of children with a disabled person in the household, were in relative poverty after housing costs. For families without a disabled member, the comparative figure was a fifth. A fifth of children in families with a disabled member were in severe poverty after housing costs compared to only 14% of children in families without a disabled member.¹¹⁹

Further and Higher Education

Poverty impacts on participation and attainment in further and higher education. Those from the most deprived areas are more likely to attend college. In 2020/21, 74.1% of full-time undergraduate college entrants came from 20% of the most deprived areas, while 16.7% of university full-time first-degree entrants were from 20% of the most deprived areas. The representation of those from most deprived areas at university has increased in recent years from 13.9% in 2015/16, to 16.9% in 2020/21.¹²⁰

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds face additional barriers when trying to enter higher education including:

- Low academic attainment and grade-based admissions¹²¹
- Worries about student costs, loans and debt¹²²
- Subject choices made at secondary school. For example, pupils who attend schools in disadvantaged areas have less National 5 and Higher courses available to them¹²³
- Poor aspirations and lack of confidence
- Lack of support and engagement from family - financially and academically.¹²⁴

At university, those from the most deprived areas are most likely to study subjects allied to medicine and computer science and least likely to study veterinary science; technology; physical sciences; and medicine and dentistry.¹²⁵ Students from deprived areas are less likely to progress into postgraduate study or gain a professional job after completing a PhD.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Scottish Government (2021). [National Performance Framework - disability perspective: analysis](#)

¹²⁰ SFC (2022). [Report on widening access 2020-21](#)

¹²¹ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, 2022](#)

¹²² Susu, E et al. (2018). [Addressing socioeconomic inequality in access to university education: an analysis of synergies and tension in Scottish policy](#)

¹²³ Shapira, M and Priestly, M (2020). [Do schools matter? An exploration of the determinants of lower secondary school subject choices under the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence](#)

¹²⁴ Mowat, J.G (2019). ['Closing the Gap': Systems Leadership is no leadership at all without moral compass - a Scottish perspective](#)

¹²⁵ As 120

¹²⁶ Scottish Government (2020). [Access to postgraduate study - representation and destinations: discussion paper](#)

Labour Market

Those living in the most deprived areas are less likely to be in employment. In 2018, the **employment rate** for the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland was **63%**, compared to **79%** for the least deprived. Over time, the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland have consistently had the lowest employment rates.¹²⁷

In-work poverty, where adults receive a wage but not enough to keep them out of poverty, has risen in the last two decades.¹²⁸ It should be noted that:

- People from higher income households are more inclined to request an increase in pay and a promotion, whereas people living in low-income households are more likely to seek additional employment, ask for increased hours or apply for a new role. This indicates people on low incomes are more likely to be in insecure employment¹²⁹
- In-work poverty is associated with low pay; part time work; self-employment; and temporary and insecure work. Low paid workers are more likely to have lower levels of qualifications; more likely to work part-time; less likely to have a permanent contract; tend to be younger; and more likely to be in elementary, sales and customer service, or caring, leisure and other service occupations
- Those in the hospitality and retail industries are most likely to experience in-work poverty
- Groups most likely to be in in-work poverty include women, ethnic minorities and young people

- The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened existing obstacles to work as a means out of poverty, making it more difficult for groups to progress in their careers. Three key issues limiting low-income families' choices in the labour market include: willingness to work increased hours but not being able to find suitable employment (underemployment); an inability to find inexpensive and flexible childcare; and poor transport.¹³⁰

Graduates from deprived areas continue to face inequalities in job outcomes. Evidence from the Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset shows that graduates from the 20% most deprived areas earn £3,000 less, than graduates from the 20% least deprived areas. Variations in earnings could be due to differences in the subjects they study or universities they attend.¹³¹

Business Case



Being informed about the background of employees can help to improve socio-economic diversity in the workplace as it can identify any gaps in access and progression which can then be targeted with interventions.

Employers can look at the financial barriers that may prevent prospective applicants from applying and can consider paying applicants' travel expenses to attend interviews, for example.

Employers should consider hidden barriers, such as, unpaid carers being unable to afford to pay for care costs to attend interviews. Clarity about the interview process, what to wear, and the level of formality, can help those from underrepresented backgrounds succeed in interviews.

Advertising positions openly and widely and tackling bias, both conscious and unconscious is key.

¹²⁷ Scottish Government (2020). [Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places, and Regions - Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2019](#)

¹²⁸ The Health Foundation (2021). [In-work poverty trends - The Health Foundation](#)

¹²⁹ JRF (2022). [Poverty in Scotland 2022](#)

¹³⁰ JRF (2021). [UK Poverty 2020/21](#)

¹³¹ Scottish Government (2022). [Longitudinal education outcomes from universities: 2019/20 Scotland](#)

8. Pregnancy and Maternity

Key points

- Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their school education, and this may have long-term impacts on their education and career opportunities.
- Student mothers at universities experience conflicting roles of being both a mother and student, leading to stress, guilt, and anxiety, along with financial difficulties.
- The motherhood pay penalty results in women earning 28% less than before having children.
- Good quality, convenient, reliable, and affordable childcare is key to facilitate mothers' re-entry and retention in the workforce.

School

Pregnancies in women aged under 20 in Scotland are at their lowest level since reporting began in 1994.¹³²

A strong correlation exists between deprivation and teenage pregnancy. Rates of pregnancy have reduced across all levels of deprivation in recent years, with rates in the most deprived areas falling more over time. However, young women living in areas of highest deprivation have pregnancy rates five times higher than those in the least deprived.¹³³

Evidence suggests teenage pregnancy can have a severe impact on the education of mothers attending school, by interrupting schooling and possibly hindering the return to school, with teenage mothers being less likely to finish their education.¹³⁴ Low educational attainment and school engagement are both risk factors and a consequence of teenage pregnancy. Many young mothers continue to be excluded from schools for a range of reasons, including discriminatory attitudes, lack of access to childcare and appropriate facilities in schools.¹³⁵

More evidence is needed on the wide-ranging impact of teenage pregnancy on school education.

¹³² Public Health Scotland (2022). [Teenage pregnancies. Year of conception ending 31 December 2020](#)

¹³³ As above

¹³⁴ Nuffield Trust (2022). [Teenage pregnancy](#)

¹³⁵ UNESCO (2020). [Early pregnancy and education in the UK](#)

Further and Higher Education

Young parents are likely to face additional challenges in the further and higher education system. Table 8.1 illustrates the comparatively low numbers of learners enrolled on Scottish college courses in 2019/20 and 2020/21 who share their status as ‘pregnant currently or in the last year’ (less than 1% for both 2019/20 and 2020/21). There has been a marked increase in the number of learners preferring not to share pregnancy status and reasons for this are unknown.

A 2014 literature review of evidence for student parents in HE suggests that student parents are more likely to experience financial difficulties or debt during their studies. The dual status of being a parent and a learner can lead to health and wellbeing issues for some student parents, including sleep deprivation and depression, along with stress and anxiety due to multiple and conflicting commitments, a fear of not meeting expectations (either as students or parents) and financial difficulties.

Table 8.1: Enrolments to college courses 160+ hours by pregnancy status¹³⁶

Pregnancy/Maternity Status	2019-20	2020-21
Not pregnant currently or in the last year	78,145	102,800
Prefer not to say	10,900	24,415
Pregnant currently or in the last year	960	1,220
Unknown	36,945	210
All	126,950	128,645

¹³⁶ SFC (2022). [Report on widening access](#)

¹³⁷ Moreau, M.P. (2014). [Toward the family-friendly university? Research evidence on student parents and implications for higher education policies](#)

¹³⁸ Government Equalities Office (2019). [Employment pathways and occupational change after childbirth](#)

Student mothers in particular report feelings of guilt for not fitting with either the stereotypical version of motherhood (investing large amounts of time and energy into children) or of the carefree student who is fully mobile and available for their studies.¹³⁷

Universities are not required to collect or report data on the number of students with dependent children which impacts on data availability.

Labour Market

Pregnancy can have a negative impact on labour market participation in terms of discrimination, loss of pay, loss of status and a lack of career progression. Women with children are more likely to experience significant pay penalties; have their career progression halted; withdraw from full-time work to care for children; stay at the same level of job for several years; and choose more flexible working patterns.¹³⁸

Motherhood impacts on the number of hours that some mothers can work, affecting their pay and income relative to non-mothers and men. A long-term pay penalty emerges from part-time working which is highly prevalent amongst mothers, on average earning about 30% less per hour than similarly educated fathers due to a lack of wage progression.¹³⁹ Research shows that in the first year after returning to work from maternity leave, UK women earn 28% less on average than before, primarily due to reducing working hours to fit around children, known as the **motherhood pay penalty**. The most important source of the gender pay gap is therefore suggested to be motherhood.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ IFS (2018). [Mothers suffer big long-term pay penalty from part-time working](#)

¹⁴⁰ Vagni & Breen (2021). [Earnings and income penalties for motherhood](#)

Having school-aged children and reliable childcare in place continues to help mothers in work. Almost half (45%) of non-working mothers in England said they would prefer to go out to work if they were able to arrange reliable childcare that was good quality, convenient and affordable.¹⁴¹

Growing up in Scotland (GUS) data shows that compared to mothers aged 25 and over, mothers aged under 20 are less likely to be employed (21% versus 83%), more likely to be in the lowest income brackets (72% versus 12%) and to live in the most deprived areas.¹⁴²

Working mothers under 25 are more likely to be in in-work poverty and more likely to be lone parents. Two in five mothers under 25 in paid work are in relative poverty, with average hourly pay for low-income households with a mother under 25 at £7.20 compared to £8.20 for all low-income families. The impact of the pandemic on employment for this group has hit hard and young mothers are more likely to have precarious employment with fluctuating incomes, making it harder to plan and arrange childcare which could improve job security and prospects.¹⁴³

Young women with dependent children are least likely to be in employment. Employment rates rise as the mother's age increases and as their children age. 54.3% of mothers aged 16 to 24 years are in employment rising to 78.7% of mothers aged 35 to 49 years.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ UK Government (2022). [Childcare and early years survey of parents](#)

¹⁴² Scottish Government (2014). [The experiences of mothers aged under 20: analysis of data from the Growing Up in Scotland survey](#)

¹⁴³ Scottish Government (2022). [Tackling child poverty delivery plan – focus report on households with mothers aged 25 or under](#)

Business Case



Retaining mothers in the workplace or facilitating their re-entry, is crucial for the UK economy. Supporting pregnant women and those on maternity leave benefits the organisation as it increases staff retention; creates better morale among employees and is part of the responsibility of employers to support staff.

Benefits that help and support mothers are increasingly being seen as good general business practice to support all employees with flexible working, to help them balance their work life commitments, regardless of having children.¹⁴⁵

Mothers are more likely to have flexible working arrangements compared to fathers (14.5% versus 12.3%), such as working flexible hours or term-time working.¹⁴⁶

No data is currently available on apprenticeships and pregnancy and maternity. This information is now being collected internally and will be available in the future.

¹⁴⁴ ONS (2021). [Families and the labour market, UK: 2021](#)

¹⁴⁵ Working Forward (2016). [Supporting pregnancy and maternity rights](#)

¹⁴⁶ As 144

9. Race

Key points

- Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds tend to have higher levels of attainment.
- Ethnic minority groups in Scotland have higher participation rates and progression to higher education than White groups.
- Outcomes for BAME students differ by ethnic background, with White British students having better outcomes in terms of degree attainment and potential future earnings.
- Despite high levels of attainment in education, ethnic minority individuals in Scotland do not experience the same labour market advantages as their White counterparts. Ethnic minority individuals are disproportionately more likely to work in low-paying sectors and less likely to hold managerial or senior positions in business. They are also more likely to be self-employed.

School

According to the Pupil Census 2021,¹⁴⁷ **82.6%** of pupils in Scotland were recorded as being White-Scottish or White-other British. The next largest proportions of ethnic backgrounds were White-Other (3.3%), White-Polish (2.4%), Asian Pakistani (2.1%) and mixed (1.6%).

The **Participation Measure** for 2022¹⁴⁸ for ethnic minority groups aged 16-19 is **95.5%**, compared to **92.2%** for those identified as

Definitions of Ethnicity



SDS recognises that using umbrella terms such as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME or BAME) can cause issues. The terms BAME or BME don't always include White ethnic minority groups. SDS further recognises that there are distinct and unique identities and different barriers facing different ethnic minority communities. These differences and challenges can be obscured when research aggregates all ethnic minority groups together under the terms BAME or BME. In this context, and more broadly, we remain committed to understanding and addressing discrimination and acknowledge that people may find the terms do not accurately describe their identity and we support everyone's right to define themselves.

A range of definitions of ethnicity are used in administrative data, surveys and research reports. In this document the terms ethnic minority, BAME, and BME are used – depending on the definition used in the source data or research.

White. Ethnic minority groups are more likely to participate in education at **87.9%**, compared to White groups at **74.9%**. Figures from the participation measure demonstrate the dominance of education as a post 16+ choice for those from Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; and Other ethnic groups.

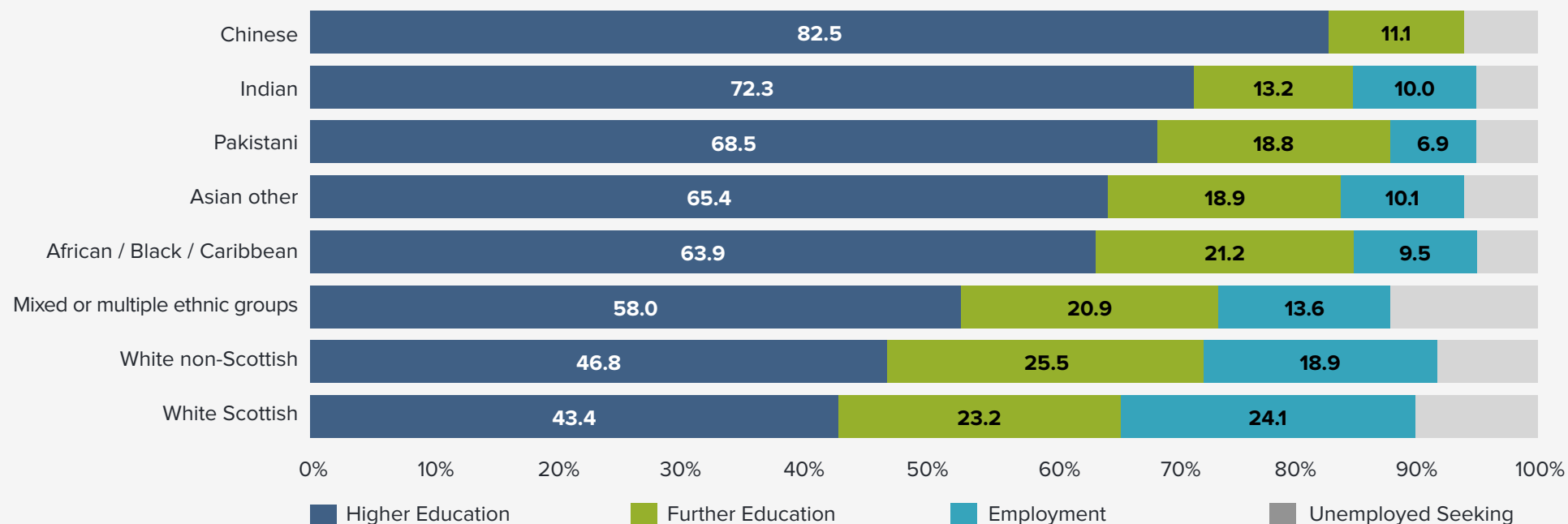
Ethnic minority groups are more likely to progress on to higher education than those from a White background, as shown in Figure 9.1.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Scottish Government (2022). [Pupil census 2021 supplementary statistics](#)

¹⁴⁸ SDS (2022). [Annual Participation Measure for 16 – 19 year olds in Scotland 2022](#)

¹⁴⁹ Scottish Government (2022). [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leavers Destinations](#)

Figure 9.1: Pupil destinations by ethnicity, 2020-21 (%)



Source: Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, 2022 (Categories do not add up to 100 in all case due to small sample sizes)

Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds tend to have higher levels of attainment. Pupil attainment by ethnicity shows that:

- Asian - Chinese, Asian – Other and Asian – Indian, are the highest performing groups in terms of the percentage of students with one or more SCQF Level 6 or better
- Not Disclosed/Not Known, All Other Categories and White – Scottish and White – non-Scottish respondents have the lowest levels of attainment

- Chinese pupils have the highest level of achievement across all ethnic groups, with 94.7% achieving one or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better and White Scottish having the lowest at 64.9%.¹⁵⁰

Gypsy/Travellers experience poor attainment and high levels of school exclusions.^{151/152} The EHRC¹⁵³ highlight that only 10.4% of Gypsy/ Traveller school leavers achieved five or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 over 2014/15 to 2015/16. Pupils from a Gypsy/Traveller background have a higher rate of exclusion, compared to other ethnic minority pupils. Data shows that cases for exclusion for Gypsy/ Traveller pupils is 25.8 per 1,000 pupils compared to 13.1 per 1,000 pupils for White Scottish pupils.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Scottish Government (2022). [National Statistics, Children, Education and Skills](#)

¹⁵¹ EHRC (2018). [Is Scotland Fairer?](#)

¹⁵² Khan, O (2020). [Runnymede Report, The Colour of Money. How racial inequalities obstruct a fair and resilient economy](#)

¹⁵³ As 151

¹⁵⁴ Scottish Government (2022), [School exclusion statistics](#)

Figures for **Foundation Apprenticeships** show that **6.4%** come from an ethnic minority background at level 6 and **2.4%** at level 4/5.¹⁵⁵

Further and Higher Education

At college, BME students accounted for **8%** of full-time HE students and **7.2%** of full time FE students and **10.6%** of first-degree students at university in 2020/21.¹⁵⁶

At college, the subjects with the highest proportion of BME students are Area Studies, Culture Studies and Languages and Literature, while at university it is Medicine and Dentistry.¹⁵⁷

Ethnic minority students have a higher uptake of **Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET)** subjects than those from White backgrounds.¹⁵⁸ However, disparities exist in the uptake of SET subjects across ethnic groups. In the UK, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi graduates are more likely than White British to study a STEM subject and Black Caribbean and Black African graduates are least likely.¹⁵⁹ Chinese and Asian Indian students are more likely to receive a first / 2:1 SET degree than other BAME students.¹⁶⁰

The UK Council for Graduate Education¹⁶¹ notes that BAME representation is a persistent problem at postgraduate research level. The proportion of BAME students enrolled in UK HE in 2021/2022, drops from **27.6%** at first degree undergraduate level, to **23.9%** at taught postgraduate and **19.9%** at research postgraduate level.¹⁶²

Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in Scotland are poor.

Those from a traveller background face bullying and discrimination at every level of the education system, including prejudice at college and university.¹⁶³

Degree attainment differs by ethnic background with **85.7%** of White British first degree students graduating with a first / 2:1, compared to **76.6%** of BAME students.¹⁶⁴ Among ethnic minority engineering and technology qualifiers in the UK, **73%** achieved a first or upper second degree in 2018/19, compared with **83%** of White qualifiers.¹⁶⁵

Having a university education impacts positively on potential future earnings for men and women from all ethnic backgrounds. Returns are highest for South Asian students and lowest for Black students.¹⁶⁶ Pakistani students have a high return but have the lowest earnings at 30 years old. These differences are thought to be due to university and subject choice. South Asian students gravitate towards subjects that provide a higher return, such as business, law, computing, pharmacology and subjects allied with medicine, compared to Black or White students. Male graduates from all ethnic minorities have lower returns than White male graduates.

BME students are less likely than White students to have spent time working in an area relevant to their courses before starting university. Final year BME students were less likely to have undertaken a placement and/or an internship, as part of their course.¹⁶⁷

There has been an increase in individuals from Black backgrounds going to university and obtaining a First or Upper Second-Class degree from 2015/16 to 2019/20, however, this does not appear to translate to better employment and labour market outcomes.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁵ SDS (2021). [Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report June 2021](#)

¹⁵⁶ SFC (2021). [Report on Widening Access 2020 – 2021](#)

¹⁵⁷ As above

¹⁵⁸ Advance HE (2022). [Equality + Higher Education Students Statistical Report 2022](#)

¹⁵⁹ Zwysen, W., and Longhi, S., (2016). [ISER Working Paper Series, Labour market disadvantages of ethnic minority British graduates: University choice, parental background or neighbourhood?](#)

¹⁶⁰ Advance HE (2022). [Equality + Higher Education Students Statistical Report 2022](#)

¹⁶¹ UK Council for Graduate Education (2020). [Access & Participation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities in UK Postgraduate Research – Policy Briefing](#)

¹⁶² As 158

¹⁶³ The Traveller Movement (2017). [Information and Support](#) Advance HE (2022). [Equality + Higher Education Students Statistical Report 2022](#)

¹⁶⁴ As 160

¹⁶⁵ Engineering UK (2020). [Educational Pathways into Engineering](#)

¹⁶⁶ Institute for Fiscal Studies, (2021). [The returns to undergraduate degree by socio-economic group and ethnicity.](#)

¹⁶⁷ Forson, C., Calveley, M., and Smith, P., (2015). University of Hertfordshire Business School, [Ethnic Minorities and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups in Engineering: A Research Report](#)

¹⁶⁸ Department of Education(2020). [Post 16 Education and Labour Market activities, pathways and outcomes \(LEO\).](#)

Research highlights that the UK's second-generation BAME groups are performing well in education, especially at degree level, despite being more likely to have been disadvantaged in childhood. For example, second-generation Indian, Bangladeshi, and Black Caribbean women from manual class origins are over 20 percentage points more likely to attain university level qualifications than their White British peers from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds; and Indian and Bangladeshi men are over 30 percentage points more likely to do so. Overall, over 50% of second-generation Indians, 35% of second-generation Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, but only 26% of their White majority comparators have university level qualifications.¹⁶⁹

Despite this, Pakistanis and Bangladeshi women have some of the lowest employment rates in Scotland and the UK. Overall, males and females from most BAME groups have lower employment rates, suggesting the employment gap is not eliminated by educational success.¹⁷⁰

Following graduation there are differences in outcomes:

- White Scottish graduates are more likely than BME graduates to be in full time employment¹⁷¹
- In the UK, Black students are more likely to be unemployed two and a half years after completing a degree¹⁷²
- BAME students (41.8%) are slightly less likely to be in full time employment after graduation, compared to their White counterparts (48.5%)¹⁷³

169 IFS (2021), [Social Mobility and Ethnicity](#)

170 As above

171 CRER (2020), [Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020. Analysis and Reflection on the impact of Covid-10.](#)

172 Khan, O (2020), [Runnymede Report, The Colour of Money. How racial inequalities obstruct a fair and resilient economy](#)

173 Advance HE (2022), [Equality + Higher Education Students Statistical Report 2022](#)

174 As above

- BAME students (8.1%) are more likely to be unemployed after graduation than White students (4.4%).¹⁷⁴

There is a significant crossover between ethnicity and social class in terms of disadvantage. Ethnic minority students are more likely to come from socially deprived communities. More than a quarter of ethnic minority students in universities come from the most deprived areas, compared with 14.9 per cent of White students.

Labour Market

The Scottish Government Race Equality Framework states that despite high attainment at school and high rates of entry into further and higher education after school, statistically, ethnic minority people are not receiving the labour market advantages which should be expected from their positive educational outcomes.

Research has highlighted that BAME young people are under-represented in post-16 work-based training such as Modern Apprenticeships. Some studies suggest more could be done to raise the esteem of apprenticeships in BAME communities, using role models and emphasising apprenticeships as a route into professions as well as trades. Data for Q2 2022/23 shows that 3.2% of MA starts self-identified being from a Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or Black; or Other ethnic group. This shows an increase of 0.5% from 2020 - 2021.

Ethnic minority people are less likely to be in employment. The 2021/22 employment rate for Scotland is 74.4%, while the rate for the BAME population is 65.4%.

175 Scottish Government (2020), [Fair Access to Higher Education: Progress and Challenges](#)

176 Scottish Government (2016), [Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016 to 2030](#)

177 EHRC (2018), [Is Scotland Fairer?](#)

178 IES (2013), [Report for union learn and the National Apprenticeship Service: Research into under-representation, by gender and ethnicity, in Apprenticeships IES Report 503](#)

179 SDS (2022), [Modern Apprenticeships Statistics, Quarter 2, 2022 - 2023](#)

Employment rates are lower across all ethnic groups and **especially for women. For example, the economic activity of Bangladeshi women is under 50%**¹⁸⁰ and for Black women it is under 40%.

Ethnic minority people are overrepresented in certain sectors.^{181/182} They are proportionately more likely to work in low paid sectors, such as, Accommodation and Food Services than the White population.¹⁸³ In addition, ethnic minority people are underrepresented in managerial and senior positions in business.¹⁸⁴

Ethnic minority people are more likely to be in low paid work and living in poverty due to lower wages, higher unemployment and higher levels of part time work. They are also more likely to be self-employed.^{185/186} Data from the UK Government shows that 23.2% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi individuals were self-employed.¹⁸⁷

In Scotland, in 2019, **the ethnicity pay gap was 10.3%**.¹⁸⁸ Again, there are differences by ethnic group. White British people, White Irish people and Indian people were more likely to work in high-pay occupations in 2016/17, while Black people and those in the other White group were more likely to work in low-pay occupations.¹⁸⁹

Results from the Scottish Household Survey¹⁹⁰ show ethnic minority people are more likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace. 17% of minority ethnic respondents said they had experienced discrimination in the last 12 months compared to 8% of White respondents.

Recruitment processes can also make it harder for some ethnic minority people to enter the workplace, as there may be an under-recognition among employers of ethnic minority employees' skills and experience, reducing their chances of employment or further progression when in work.¹⁹¹

Progression for ethnic minority people can be restricted if progression is through informal networks, if there is a lack of ethnic minority role models or mentors at higher levels within organisations who might provide support and advice, or if there is a gap between equality and diversity policies and practice in the workplace.¹⁹² Furthermore, Khan (2020)¹⁹³ highlights research that found that people with Asian or African sounding names, were less likely to get job interviews.

For Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, The Traveller Movement¹⁹⁴ reported that discrimination in employment manifested itself in several ways, including discrimination in recruitment and career progression, losing a job after revealing their identity, and hiding ethnicity.

Recent research published by Close the Gap,¹⁹⁵ highlights the complex intersection of inequalities faced by BME women in the labour market.

180 Fraser of Allander Institute (2020). [Economic Outcomes for Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland](#)

182 EHRC (2018). [Is Scotland Fairer?](#)

183 Khan, O (2020). [Runnymede Report, The Colour of Money. How racial inequalities obstruct a fair and resilient economy](#)

184 Fraser of Allander Institute (2020). [Economic Outcomes for Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland](#)

185 The McGregor-Smith Review (2017). [Race in the workplace.](#)

186 As 183

187 CRER (2020), [Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020. Analysis and Reflection on the impact of Covid-10.](#)

188 UK Govt (2022), [Self Employment](#)

189 ONS (2019), [Ethnic Pay Gaps](#)

190 Scottish Government (2019), [Scottish Household Survey 2018: Annual Report](#)

191 Joseph Rowntree Foundations (2013), [In-work Poverty, ethnicity and workplace cultures](#)

192 As above

193 As 183

194 The Traveller Movement (2017), [Information and Support](#)

195 Close The Gap (2019), [Still Not Visible, Research on Black and Minority Ethnic Women's Experiences of Employment in Scotland](#)

Their research highlights that many BME women face racial discrimination and bias in the labour market which negatively impacts on their outcomes. They found that BME women are more likely to face microaggressions from colleagues that include things such as being treated as less intelligent and stereotypical assumptions about the positions they hold. In addition, CRER¹⁹⁶ highlight that BME women in Scotland continue to face barriers in accessing the labour market, including racist and sexist attitudes and discrimination.

Research also shows that the intersection of ethnicity and disability is complex. Disabled individuals are less likely to be employed compared to their non-disabled counterparts. Indian individuals have the highest disability employment rate at 61.1%, with Pakistani individuals having the lowest at 44.1%. For White individuals, who have the highest non-disabled employment rate at 82.1%, the disability employment gap is the largest at 29.3%.¹⁹⁷

Business Case



Transparency is crucial to ensure more racially equal organisations. For this to happen, evidence suggests line managers should be trained in supporting the career development of diverse employees.¹⁹⁸ The quantifiable benefit of greater equality and diversity in the workplace is highlighted by the McGregor-Smith Review. The UK economy would potentially benefit by **an additional £24 billion a year** if BAME individuals were fully represented in the labour market, as BAME individuals are likely to be more qualified than their White counterparts but are promoted at a lower rate.¹⁹⁹

Definitions of Islamophobia



Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.²⁰⁰

Although linked to religion, Islamophobia is also aimed at those who are perceived to be Muslim regardless of their actual religion, further information on Islamophobia can be found on the Religion or Belief section.

Islamophobia is a form of racism in the sense that it is the result of the social construction of a group as a race and to which specificities and stereotypes are attributed, in this case real or perceived religious belonging being used as a proxy for race. Consequently, even those who choose not to practice Islam but who are perceived as Muslim – because of their ethnicity, migration background or the wearing of other religious symbols – are subjected to discrimination. Islamophobia has nothing to do with criticism of Islam.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ CRER (2020), *Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020. Analysis and Reflection on the impact of Covid-10.*

¹⁹⁷ DWP (2022). *The employment of disabled people 2021*

¹⁹⁸ CIPD (2021). *Race Inclusion Reports - Report 3 - Ensuring equality of career progression opportunities*

¹⁹⁹ The McGregor-Smith Review (2016). *Race in the workplace*

²⁰⁰ APPG (2018), *Islamophobia Defined. The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia*

²⁰¹ ENAR (2023), *Islamophobia*

10. Religion or Belief

Key points

- Limited data exists in relation to experience in the education sector.
- ‘No religion’ accounts for the highest proportion of students in higher education.
- Muslim workers are more likely to have lower wages and be unemployed and this is particularly the case for Muslim women.

School

Young Muslims encounter many barriers in the education system such as, stereotyping and having low expectations of them, lack of role models, and inadequate support for them in school.²⁰²

Limited evidence exists in relation to religion or belief at school. Information is available on denomination²⁰³ but no detailed information on the religion or belief of school pupils exists.

Further and Higher Education

Most students in HE in Scotland do not identify with any religion (56%). Christians are the second largest group (25%) followed by Muslim students at 3%.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Social Mobility Commission (2017), *The Social Mobility Challenges Faced by Young Muslims*

²⁰³ Scottish Government (2023). *Pupil census supplementary statistics*

²⁰⁴ HESA (2022). *Who's studying in HE?*

²⁰⁵ Islam, M. and Mercer-Mapstone, L. (2021). ‘University is a non-Muslim experience, you know? The experience is as good as it can be’: Satisfied settling in Muslim students’ experiences and implications for Muslim student voice. *Br. Educ. Res. J.*, 47: 1388-1415.

Academic research in the UK has found that university is seen to be a non-Muslim experience, due to obstacles in access and participation at university in the form of dietary requirements and religious prohibition as well as tensions around religious observations on campus, and religious discrimination and harassment. It has also been reported that **less than two thirds of Muslim students graduate with a 2:1 or 1st class degree**. Important inclusive provisions included access to prayer rooms, halal food on campus, Ramadan consideration during exams and hosting non-alcoholic social events.²⁰⁵

The main issues for Muslim students on campus are:²⁰⁶

- Observing religion on campus – especially space to pray, religious holidays such as Ramadan having a negative experience on their education and there is not enough support for them, and access to dietary requirements
- Academic success and inclusion – they found the overall environment unwelcoming, lack of intersectionality, and a pressure to conform
- Islamophobia – in terms of institutional, gendered, and hidden.

Degree classifications obtained by Scottish students in higher education by religion in 2021, shows that 53% of Jewish students obtained first class honours degrees compared to 17% of Muslim students.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Akel (2021), Institutionalised. *The rise of islamophobia in Higher Education*

²⁰⁷ HESA (2021). *What are HE students' progression rates and qualifications?*

Labour Market

Limited evidence is available on the relationship between employment and religion or belief. However, evidence does suggest that **Muslim workers** are at a disadvantage. For example:

- Muslims have significantly lower median earnings (£9.19) than those of no religion or Christians (both £11.39). The pay gap between Muslims and those of no religion was 19.3%²⁰⁸
- Unemployment rates for Muslims are more than twice that of the general population (**13%** compared to **5%**) and 41% are economically inactive, compared to 22% of the general population
- The disadvantage is greater still for Muslim women who represent 65% of economically inactive Muslims. It is suggested the reasons behind this include discrimination and islamophobia, stereotyping, pressure from traditional families, a lack of tailored advice around higher education choices, and insufficient role models across education and employment (see **EHRC, 2018**²⁰⁹ and **Women and Equalities Committee, 2016**)²¹⁰
- Academic research²¹¹ using the data from 2011 census also showed that Muslim women are greatly disadvantaged in the labour market in Britain and that this varies according to their household family situation as well as their ethnicity.

Labour Force Survey data highlights that Muslim women in the UK are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive.²¹² They also found that White-British Christian women had the highest employment levels at **68%**, compared to first generation Muslim Bangladeshi women at **15%**.

²⁰⁸ EHRC (2018). *Is Britain Fairer?*

²⁰⁹ As above

²¹⁰ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2016). *Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK*

²¹¹ Miaari, S, Khattab, N & Johnston, R (2019). 'Religion and ethnicity at work: a study of British Muslim women's labour market performance', *Quality and Quantity*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 19-47.

This research notes that although Muslim women face disadvantages within the labour market, this varies by their migration status and ethnic background as well as the intersectional identities of Muslim women and the stereotypes that are linked with them.

Muslim women face a triple penalty – they are women, from a BAME background, and Muslim. This impacts greatly on their labour market outcomes.²¹³ Young Muslims in the UK also felt that they must work 10 times as hard as their non-Muslim peers to get the same opportunities. Muslim women are more likely to be unemployed and 18% were “looking after home and family” compared to 6% of the overall population.²¹⁴

Some ways to make workplaces more inclusive can be to: hold information sessions around religion and religious holidays and beliefs; combat stereotypes by raising awareness in organisations; using an interfaith calendar; having access to a location for prayers; and cater to a wide variety of dietary needs.²¹⁵

No data is currently available on Modern Apprenticeships and Religion or Belief. This information is now being collected internally and will be available in the future.

²¹² Khattab, N., & Hussein, S. (2018). *Can Religious Affiliation Explain the Disadvantage of Muslim Women in the British Labour Market?* *Work, Employment and Society*, 32(6), 1011–1028.

²¹³ Home of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2016) *Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK: Second Report of session 2016-17*.

²¹⁴ Social Mobility Commission (2017), *Press Release, Young Muslims in the UK face enormous social mobility barriers*

11. Sexual Orientation

Key points

- Bullying based on sexual orientation negatively affects educational attainment and career plans of LGB+ students at school.
- College and university are generally considered to be more positive environments for LGB+ individuals compared to school, with lower incidences of bullying and harassment. However, there are still instances of negative experiences for some LGB+ individuals at college and university.
- LGB+ workers can face challenges in the workforce such as, experiences of anti-LGBT+ abuse and language, gendered workplaces that are not LGBT+ inclusive, and poor mental health support.

School

At school available evidence highlights the impact of bullying and the negative outcomes this has on future education and career plans.

Research by **LGBT Youth Scotland**,²¹⁶ reported that **50%** of bisexual and **70%** of gay and lesbian participants experienced homophobic bullying at school. This survey also found that **70%** of participants felt that homophobia/biphobia and transphobia had a negative impact on their educational experiences and **36%** reported a negative impact on their educational attainment. Only **10%** of respondents rated the experience of school as 'good' for LGBT pupils.

216 LGBT Youth Scotland (2022). [Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People](#)

217 Stonewall (2020). [Shut out](#): the experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work

218 As 216

UK research found that many LGBT+ young people encountered challenges in school which led to them being unable to engage in education. These included: homophobic and biphobic bullying, feelings of isolation and fears surrounding the exploration of their LGBT+ identity and coming out. Nearly all the LGBT+ young people interviewed for this research experienced difficulties when coming out. Many also mentioned that there was a lack of LGBT+ inclusion and inadequate LGBT+ support.²¹⁷

Further and Higher Education

College or university is seen by many LGB+ individuals as a more positive environment than school with incidences of bullying and harassment being much lower.²¹⁸

The experience of college or university is not always positive and bullying and harassment remains an issue for some. **Stonewall**²¹⁹ highlights that some LGBT+ young people felt that they had to go back into the closet when they started college, or they struggled with an uncomfortable new environment that was not inclusive of LGBT+ identities. The lack of structure led to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour to go unchecked. A university environment that was not LGBT+ inclusive was also described by participants as having a negative impact on their mental health, as well as their attendance and ability to finish their degrees.

Research has highlighted that many LGBT+ individuals fear for the future of the positive equality drives such as LGBT+ inclusive education, which had been installed pre-pandemic in schools and places of further and higher education.²²⁰

219 As 217

220 Taylor, (2021). [Covid-19 and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans \(LGBT+\) life in Scotland](#), The Scottish Parliament.

Labour Market

An evidence gap exists in relation to sexual orientation in work. However, survey and qualitative research do provide some insights.

Limited data is available about modern apprenticeships and sexual orientation. This information is now being collected internally and will be available in the future.

Stonewall²²¹ highlighted several challenges facing LGBT+ individuals at work including experiences of anti-LGBT+ abuse and language; gendered and non-LGBT+ inclusive workplaces; and poor mental health support at work. These issues were further compounded by limited job opportunities, which lead to unsatisfying work, and little progression within job roles.

LGBT Youth Scotland²²² reported that 22% of respondents to a survey carried out in 2022, had experienced verbal abuse at work or in training. 72% also reported that they felt low confidence/self-belief was a barrier to achieving their goals in the labour market, this has increased from 66% in 2017.

Research by **CIPD** highlights that LGB+ workers report higher levels of workplace conflict than heterosexual workers – **49%** compared with **29%**. Findings also highlighted that LGBT+ workers experience less job satisfaction and less psychological safety at work and are more likely to report that work has a negative impact on their health.²²³

Business case for diversity



A literature review carried out by CIPD found that satisfaction for LGBT+ employees was higher in their job and life in general when they perceived their working environment and colleagues to be supportive.²²⁴

Supportive environments help LGBT+ employees be more open about their identity. Having employee networks is a good way to provide engagement and networking opportunities for all LGBT+ individuals in an organisation to build a platform to allow for positive change to occur. However, CIPD also found that some people do not engage with such groups if they are unconvinced of the potential of the networks to have a meaningful impact at work, so employers need to ensure impact.

²²¹ Stonewall (2020). [Shut Out](#) The experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work.

²²² LGBT Youth Scotland (2022). [Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People](#)

²²³ CIPD (2021). [Inclusion at work: Perspectives on LGBT+ working lives](#)

²²⁴ As above

12. Criminal Justice Experienced

Key points

- Limited evidence is available for school and further and higher education and individuals who have experience of the criminal justice system.
- Research shows that education can play a key role in preventing the school exclusion to prison pipeline for vulnerable young people.
- Those with a criminal record face many challenges in returning to the labour market. Women and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system.
- Employers can have a negative perception of applicants with a criminal record.

Education

Early school exclusion is one of the strongest predictors of making the transition from the Children's Hearing System to the adult criminal justice system. Ending up in custody and school exclusion before age 12, increases the odds of imprisonment by age 22 by a factor of four.²²⁵

²²⁵ McAra, L. and McVie, S. (2010). *Youth crime and justice: key messages from the Edinburgh study of youth transitions and crime*.

²²⁶ Education Scotland and Scottish Prison Service (2021). *Supporting learners at risk of, or who are in conflict with the law*

²²⁷ Fitzgerald, M., O'Reilly (2014). 'Opening doors or closing them?: the impact of incarceration on the education and employability of ex-offenders in Ireland'

Education and adequate support are identified as key preventative measures in keeping children away from the criminal justice system. Research highlights that:²²⁶

- At HMYOI Polmont in 2016, a large proportion of young men under 21 had been in care at some point in their childhood and 75% had experienced traumatic bereavement
- Around 70% of children and young people entering the criminal justice system have speech and language difficulties
- Children with additional support needs are overrepresented at children's hearings.

Labour Market

Those with offending histories can face several barriers to employment and / or education. Pre-existing factors such as poor education, and limited skills and work experience are compounded by the fact that a prison record can severely inhibit ex-offenders acquiring meaningful and stable work post-release.²²⁷ Further barriers include:

- Lack of qualifications and work readiness
- Low levels of confidence, self-esteem, and histories of drug and alcohol dependency
- Challenges in opening a bank account due to a lack of suitable ID or proof of a stable address
- Insecure accommodation.²²⁸

²²⁸ Prison Reform Trust (2020). *Working it out: improving employment opportunities for women with criminal convictions*

When ex-offenders foresee that criminal records will be asked for, they may decide not to apply for a certain role, or even to exclude themselves from the labour market and education / training entirely.²²⁹ Ex-offenders from marginalised social backgrounds, tend to withdraw from job entry processes because of accumulated stigmas, such as, being a BAME ex-offender.

For **women**, the disclosure process has been shown to reduce women's confidence and discourage them from applying to roles they know they can do.²³⁰ Jobs which require enhanced criminal background checks are most likely to be held by women (such as health and social work, education). In addition, women in prison (**49%**) are twice as likely as men (**23%**) to be identified as suffering from anxiety and depression, which can make re-entry more challenging.²³¹ 4% of women compared to 11% of men were in employment six weeks after release from prison.²³² Furthermore, 12% of women in prison had problems reading, 10% had difficulty writing, and 21% with numbers.²³³

When looking at equality evidence with a criminal justice focus, there is a need to pay attention to intersectional data. A review of evidence on minority ethnic youth employment outcomes by **Youth Futures Foundation** (2022)²³⁴ found that:

- People from Black, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds are overrepresented within the criminal justice system
- Minority ethnic men and women are both disproportionately negatively impacted by the criminal justice system
- Black women and young Black men are more likely to face longer sentences and harsher measures within the system.

229 Kurtovic, E., and M. Rovira (2017) [Contrast between Spain and the Netherlands in the hidden obstacles to re-entry into the labour market due to a criminal record](#)

230 Prison Reform Trust (2020). [Working it out: improving employment opportunities for women with criminal convictions](#)

231 As 230

232 As 230

233 Scottish Prison Service (2018). [Women in Custody Prison Survey 2017](#)

A survey of 221 individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds in the UK by Unlock²³⁵ highlighted that **79%** of those surveyed said employment was one of the main difficulties they faced after being involved with the criminal justice system. Combining the difficulties faced entering or re-entering the labour market with a criminal record and ethnicity means that individuals from minority ethnic groups with a criminal record face a double disadvantage.

Working Chance²³⁶ found **50% of employers would not hire someone with a criminal record**. In addition, the criminal records of individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to last longer in comparison to White people, due to longer sentences. Women with criminal records are more likely to face employment barriers than men, with greater barriers again for women from minority ethnic backgrounds.²³⁷

234 Youth Futures Foundations (2022). [Rapid Evidence Review: minority ethnic youth employment outcomes](#)

235 Unlock (2019). [Double discrimination? The impact of criminal records on people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.](#)

236 Working Chance (2021). [Worst-case scenario. How racism in the criminal justice system harms women's chances of finding work.](#)

237 As above

13. Veterans

Key points

- Veterans often have poor attainment, leave school with limited qualifications and few go onto further or higher education.
- Labour market outcomes for veterans are poor and they are often in low-skilled jobs with limited long-term career prospects.
- Employment barriers to sustainable employment include, poor qualifications, mental ill-health, lack of support, inability to demonstrate transferable skills and negative employer perceptions.

Definitions of Veterans

Veterans are defined as any persons who have served for a minimum of one day in His Majesty's the Armed Forces or Merchant Mariners, who have seen duty in lawfully defined military operations.



Education

Many veterans have low levels of educational attainment and difficulties with reading, writing and numeracy. It is common for veterans to leave school early with minimal or no qualifications, to disengage from school and regard schooling as irrelevant to their chosen career in the military.²³⁹

Veterans from areas characterised by high levels of deprivation are particularly disadvantaged in terms of their educational abilities. Those recruited from more deprived areas are often exempt from meeting statutory minimum educational standards, as up to 50% of army recruits have literacy and numeracy skills below the standard expected of primary school leavers aged 11.²⁴⁰

Veterans often underestimate their academic abilities. Most view higher and further education as unobtainable, and do not consider further learning or training as an option.²⁴¹ In 2019/20, 36% of veterans were recorded as being in education, training or volunteering within six months of leaving the service.²⁴²

²³⁸ Scottish Government (2016). [The veterans community - employability, skills and learning](#)

²³⁹ Scullion et al. (2019). [Sanctions, Support and Service Leavers](#)

²⁴⁰ Royal British Legions (2016). [Deployment to employment, exploring the veteran employment gap in the UK](#)

²⁴¹ Scottish Veterans Commissioner (2020). [Scottish Veterans Commissioner Positive Futures Employment Skills and Learning 2020](#)

²⁴² Ministry of Defence (2021). [Career Transition Partnership Annual Statistics: UK Regular Service Personnel Employment](#)

Labour Market

Veterans are less likely to be in work in comparison to non-veterans and they face several obstacles to positive and sustainable labour market outcomes.²⁴³

When transitioning into civilian life, a central worry for veterans is how their lack of qualifications may hinder their job prospects.²⁴⁴ Veterans with no qualifications are evidently disadvantaged in comparison to those with more qualifications. In 2021, the unemployment rate for UK veterans was nearly double for those with no qualifications, in comparison to those with a General Certificate of Education (GCSE), A Level or equivalent.²⁴⁵

Other factors which limit veterans' abilities to undertake and maintain paid employment include, mental health and substance misuse issues.²⁴⁶ Problems surrounding alcohol and drug addictions are a prevalent barrier. Mental health conditions, such as, PTSD and depression gained whilst in service, also restricts their abilities to secure work.²⁴⁷ Physical health problems are also common for veterans, restricting their abilities to obtain work.²⁴⁸

Although most veterans secure work initially after leaving the Armed Forces, it is very common for them for them to experience issues sustaining employment. This is particularly common for those in lower-skilled jobs, such as those in manufacturing and services jobs. Evidence suggests that a large proportion of ex-service personnel are unfulfilled in their civilian jobs and few feel they have gained 'the right job' for their careers.²⁴⁹

243 Fisher, N et al. (2021). [Ex- Service Personnel - Longer Term Employment Outcomes](#)

244 Matthews-Smith, G et al. (2021). [You're in your own time now: understanding current experiences of transition to civilian life in Scotland](#)

245 As 243

246 Scullion, L.C et al. (2019). [Sanctions, Support & Service Leavers](#)

247 As 246

248 Phillips, R (2020). [The stigmatized hero, a review of opinion polls and surveys on perceptions of British veterans in UK society](#)

249 As 246

250 As 243

A recent study found that 42.5% of veterans feel that their most recent work has not matched their expectations, in terms of achieving their potential or offering long term career prospects.²⁵⁰

The Ministry of Defence's research data, states that 13% of UK service leavers were employed within 'professional occupations' within 6 months of leaving the forces.²⁵¹ In Scotland, more than half (57%) of veterans work in one of the following sectors: manufacturing, transport and storage, public administration and defence and health and social work.²⁵²

Few veterans consider starting their own business as their networks may be limited. It is suggested that networks to the business community should be widened, to allow veterans to connect with as many small and medium sized enterprises as possible, so they can employ or use them as mentors if trying to set up their own business.²⁵³

Veterans may have difficulties describing and demonstrating how their skills and qualifications are transferable to civilian work.²⁵⁴ Interviews are problematic as they persistently undersell themselves, in terms of their accomplishments, abilities and experience gained whilst in service.²⁵⁵

It has been highlighted that employers fail to recognise the skills, experience and qualifications veterans earn whilst in the military service, as they are not able to match these with civilian credentials.²⁵⁶ Most businesses do not consider veterans when making their recruitment policies.²⁵⁷

251 Ministry of Defence (2021). [Career Transition Partnership Annual Statistics: UK Regular Service Personnel Employment](#)

252 As 243

253 Scottish Veterans Commissioner (2020). [Scottish Veterans Commissioner Positive Futures Employment Skills and Learning 2020](#)

254 As 246

255 As 253

256 As 244

257 Recchia, C et al. (2018). [Veterans Work: Moving On](#)

Employers can subscribe negative stereotypes to veterans, labelling them as ‘mad, bad and sad damaged goods’.²⁵⁸ Veterans feel **negative employer perceptions** can be a barrier to gaining employment as employers have no background knowledge of the military or view it in a negative light.²⁵⁹

Female veterans are more likely to be economically inactive (18%), than males (7%). This is mostly due to them having family responsibilities.²⁶⁰ An additional financial barrier for female veterans to enter or re-enter the civilian workforce, is expensive childcare costs, particularly for those on poorer household incomes. They are more inclined to adapt their employment to match with their caring duties and work in part-time roles.²⁶¹ A recent study found that female veterans are much more likely to define their experience of securing the right job as ‘very difficult’, in comparison to males and discover that their earnings in the civilian labour market are less than they thought.²⁶² They are more likely than males to be in low paid and low skilled jobs than men. For instance, in caring, administrative and secretarial roles.²⁶³

UK Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic service leavers are noticeably less likely to be employed than White service leavers - 78% vs 87%. Reasons for their higher levels of unemployment in comparison to White service leavers include, that they are more inclined to report medical issues or be ‘awaiting visa/citizenship’.²⁶⁴

Veterans aged 50 years+ are more likely to experience long term economic inactivity (unemployed for a year or more) or be underemployed.²⁶⁵ Ex-service personnel aged 25-29 are considerably more likely to be in employment (90%), in comparison to those ages 50+ (17%).²⁶⁶ Reasons for economic inactivity include long-term ill health.²⁶⁷

258 As 240

259 As 243

260 Ministry of Defence (2021). [Career Transition Partnership Annual Statistics: UK Regular Service Personnel Employment](#)

261 Parry, E et al. (2020). [Female Service Leavers and Employment](#)

262 Godier-McBard, L et al. (2021). [We also served, the health and wellbeing of female veterans in the UK](#)

263 As 260

264 As 260

265 As 243

266 As 260

267 As 243

14. Young Carers

Key points

- The three main issues that affect young carers schooling are poor attendance, bullying and tiredness.
- Barriers to entering further and higher education include financial worries and caring responsibilities.
- Young carers are more likely to be unemployed and in 'low-skilled' jobs than their non-carer peers.

Definitions of Young Carers



A young carer is someone aged 18 and under who cares for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. Older young carers, age 16-25, are known as young adult carers and they may have different support needs to younger carers.

There are approximately 30,000 young carers in Scotland.²⁶⁸ Young carers are more likely to live in areas characterised by high levels of deprivation.²⁶⁹ They are consistently overrepresented in measurements associated with poverty and disadvantage, including, eligibility for free school meals, coming from areas characterised by high levels of deprivation and living in single-parent households.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Scottish Government (2017). [Young carers, review of research and data](#)

²⁶⁹ Scottish Government (2021). [Information on Carers - Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#)

²⁷⁰ Robison, O et al. (2020). [The health, wellbeing and future opportunities of young carers: a population approach](#)

²⁷¹ Treanor, M.C (2020). 'Adversity and poverty', in Treanor M.C, (ed.): [Child Poverty Aspiring to Survive](#)

²⁷² As 268

²⁷³ Vizard, P et al. (2019). [Child Poverty Amongst Young Carers in the UK - Prevalence and Trends](#)

School

Young carers have poorer outcomes than their peers and have lower satisfaction with their lives.²⁷¹ This could be the result of poor attendance, tiredness and bullying experienced at school.²⁷² Findings from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England, confirm that young carers have lower educational attainment at GSCE, in comparison to their peers.²⁷³

Young carers often find school challenging and report that teachers do not try to comprehend their caring situations or take an interest in them.²⁷⁴ The Carers Trust found that **40% of young carers in the UK feel they 'never' or often 'do not' have someone to talk to about being a young carer.** School staff may not always have the ability, appropriate training, or awareness to guide young carers.²⁷⁵

Some schools also fail to recognise that some of their pupils are young carers. Young carers sometimes choose to hide their caring role due to stigmas attached, especially if those they are caring for have alcohol or drug dependency issues.²⁷⁶

Young carers are more likely to have an emotional behaviour or learning disability.²⁷⁷ A study in Inverclyde found that young carers were one and a half times more likely to have dyslexia and more than twice as likely to have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), than their non-caring peers.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ As 271

²⁷⁵ Carers Trust (2022). [It's harder than anyone understands, the experiences and thoughts of young carers and young adult carers](#)

²⁷⁶ As 268

²⁷⁷ As 270

²⁷⁸ Robison, O (2018). [Young carers in Inverclyde](#)

For young carers of siblings, schools can allow them to have a break from their caring responsibilities. However, a challenge for many is that they then have an additional role within school and are taken out of the classroom to assist teachers, if their sibling is emotionally distressed.²⁷⁹

Further and Higher Education

Young carers can have lower aspirations in comparison to their non-carer peers.²⁸⁰ They are less likely to go on to further or higher education and their options are often restricted by their caring duties.²⁸¹

Young carers face several barriers to entering further and/or higher education. These include worries about the affordability and practicality of going onto university and the logistics of self-financing their studies.

Student young carers face additional pressures, such as, struggling with set timetables and increased deadlines. For some, balancing part-time work, caring and study is difficult. Time pressures can impact on student carers' lives and can lead to, tiredness, missed deadlines, lack of time for studying, lateness and absences.²⁸² The Carers Trust found that nearly half of the young adult carers they interviewed, "struggle to balance caring with school, college or university work".²⁸³

Student young carers are also more inclined to take on high risk debt, this could be due to poor or inappropriate guidance about finances and student debt. Most are accessing student support and social security benefits.²⁸⁴

279 Miller, E (2020). [Ask Me I'm Here Too! A research and evaluation project](#)

280 As 271

281 Robison, O et al. (2020). [The health, wellbeing and future opportunities of young carers: a population approach](#)

282 As 268

283 As 275

284 As 268

Young student carers often feel that universities have insufficient support available, and their caring roles and duties are not considered with marking and deadlines.²⁸⁵

Labour Market

For some young carers, their experiences mean they aspire to be in a caring profession. Also, many aim for high-paid jobs to help those they care for.²⁸⁶ However, young carers are more likely than their peers to not be in education, employment or training, between the ages of 16 and 19.²⁸⁷ Data from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England highlighted that those young carers in employment at the ages of 20 and 21 were more likely to be in lower skilled work, than their non-caring peers.²⁸⁸

Young carers often have poorer exam results at school, which can limit their employment prospects. Also, young carers may choose to pursue employment locally, rather than choose employment aligned with their goals and aspiration, due to their caring responsibilities.²⁸⁹ The Carers Trust found that nearly a third of those they interviewed, 'always' or 'usually' find it difficult to juggle caring with paid work.²⁹⁰

Employers' lack of flexibility around working hours and understanding of young carers' responsibilities can be a barrier for some – meaning they cannot commit to full-time employment and therefore must pursue part-time work. It is suggested that **flexible working patterns and greater awareness among employers are important to support young carers' progress in employment.**²⁹¹

285 As 275

286 McLean, C and Hay, N (2021). [Young, caring, and struggling to make ends meet](#)

287 As 268

288 As 281

289 As 268

290 As 275

291 As 268

Appendix 1. Data availability

This section outlines data availability across the protected characteristics. The lack of data on some protected characteristics is a major barrier to understanding their levels of participation and experience in the education system and labour market.

The table below outlines the availability of administrative and survey data presented in this review and shows those areas where there is a lack of data.

Table A1: Availability of administrative and social survey data across the protected characteristics

	Age	Disability	Care experience	Gender	Gender reassignment	Poverty	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual orientation
School pupils	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Subject choice school	✓			✓						
School attainment	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
School qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
College population	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Subject choice college	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
University population	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Subject choice university	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Apprenticeships	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Employment	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Unemployment	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Occupation	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Industry of employment	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	

Age

Data breakdown by age is widely available.

Care experience

Data on care experience young people is available at school, college and university level and for apprenticeships. However, small sample sizes restrict the level of analysis. There is a gap in evidence on the labour market experiences of care experienced people.

Disability

At the UK level, data is readily available on the employment rates and educational outcomes of disabled people from the Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey, and several other social surveys. Due to small sample sizes, there is less data at the Scottish level or for different groups of disabled people.

There is no single agreed objective measure of disability. Disability can be defined as those who are covered under the disability provision of the 2010 Equality Act, those on disability related benefits, and self-defined categorisations of disability as used in many social surveys.

The number of disabled people may be undercounted as individuals may choose not to disclose their disability. Furthermore, many people identified as having rights under the disability provisions of the Equality Act do not consider themselves to be disabled. Variations exist in when people are willing to disclose their condition. For example, students may be willing to disclose their disability while at college or university to receive additional support but choose not to disclose to a subsequent employer.

Gender

A wide range of data and evidence is available on gender from administrative data, social surveys and secondary research. However, there is often a lack of information on how gender interacts with other equality characteristics such as ethnicity or disability. Data availability may also be an issue where gender has not been considered in the analysis.

Gender reassignment

There is little data that provides an accurate picture of the transgender population in Scotland or the UK, including those who have a nonbinary gender identity.

Race

One of the key issues with understanding outcomes in relation to ethnic minority groups in Scotland is the lack of data. Small sample sizes mean that it not always possible to provide a detailed breakdown for different ethnic groups. Broad analyses that compare BME groups with that of the White Scottish / UK population very often conceal wide variations within groups.

It should be noted that ethnicity in survey data is self-reported and in some cases individuals may not be willing to disclose their ethnicity or feel that the available categories do not reflect their ethnicity.

Poverty

Data on poverty is widely available. However, there are variations in definitions of poverty as geographical, income and occupational measures are all commonly used.

Pregnancy and maternity

Data is not routinely collected in administrative data in relation to pregnancy and maternity leading to gaps in evidence.

Religion or Belief

The 2011 Census provides a useful source of information on religion or belief in Scotland. However, this is largely out of date and many other social surveys do not collect information on religion. Scotland's 2022 census results will provide useful data on religion and belief. Schools and colleges do not routinely collect information on religion.

Sexual Orientation

Data availability is one of the key issues in relation to reporting on evidence for sexual orientation. Sexual orientation has been included in all major equality legislation for the past decade; however, there is a lack of evidence in relation to employment and education. What evidence does exist tends to be qualitative or from small scale surveys. It should be noted that even when surveys collect data on sexual orientation numbers may not be an accurate reflection of the population due to reluctance to disclose sexual orientation. Scotland's 2022 census results will provide useful data on sexual orientation.

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