Skills Development Scotland

Modern Apprenticeship Statistics

Quarter 2, 2025/26 [1st April – 26th September]
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Contact: Rowena McConkey
Job Title: Performance Reporting and Statistics Manager
Email: rowena.mcconkey@sds.co.uk

Contact: Ellis Cunningham
Job Title: MI & Data Analyst
Email: ellis.cunningham@sds.co.uk

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Introduction

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

This report provides a summary of year to date, to the end of quarter 2, (1st April to 26th September 2025) statistics for MAs where there is a public funding contribution administered by SDS, on behalf of the Scottish Government. As of 1st April 2023, all Modern Apprenticeship progressions are included as new starts, please see our User Guide for more information. Further analysis can be found in the Supplementary Tables on the SDS website.

We welcome feedback on the report content and format. Please contact user_feedback@sds.co.uk with feedback or questions.

Economic Outlook

Labour market indicators across Scotland and the UK show a weaker position compared to last year. In the short term the labour market continues to soften with evidence that businesses are slightly reducing headcount. In July, the Federation for Small Businesses highlighted that concerns about the impact of higher employer National Insurance contributions and increases in the National Living Wage on the cost of employing staff had resulted in declining business confidence, with more than a quarter of small businesses (28.7%) expecting to contract, close or sell up over the next 12 months – the highest this figure has been since the pandemic.[1] With SMEs making up over 90% of apprentice employers, we have seen a slight dip in apprenticeship starts, which are 3.1% lower than the same period last year. [2]

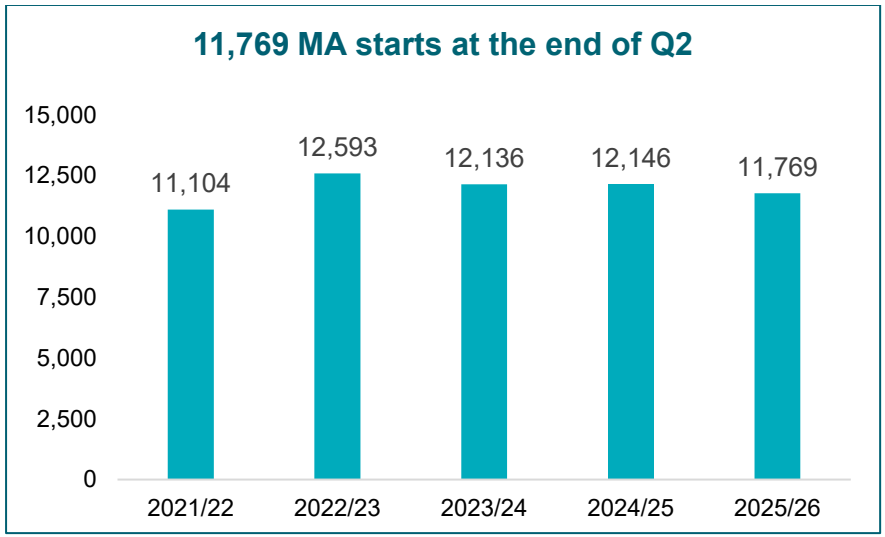
Long term projections for workforce demand continue to highlight the need to grow Scotland's workforce by 1.3 million workers in the next decade, driven by replacement demand as a result of an aging workforce.[3] Generational levels of investment, projected at up to £100bn in the Highlands and Islands alone, highlight the need for continued expansion of Scotland's future workforce, including via apprenticeship pathways, to meet the demands of the economy.[4]

[1] Federation of Small Businesses (July 2025)
[2] SDS: Profile of Modern Apprenticeship Employers (August 2024)
[3] SDS: Scotland's Labour Market Drivers Report (October 2025)
[4] Highlands and Islands Enterprise (May 2025)

Modern Apprenticeship Starts

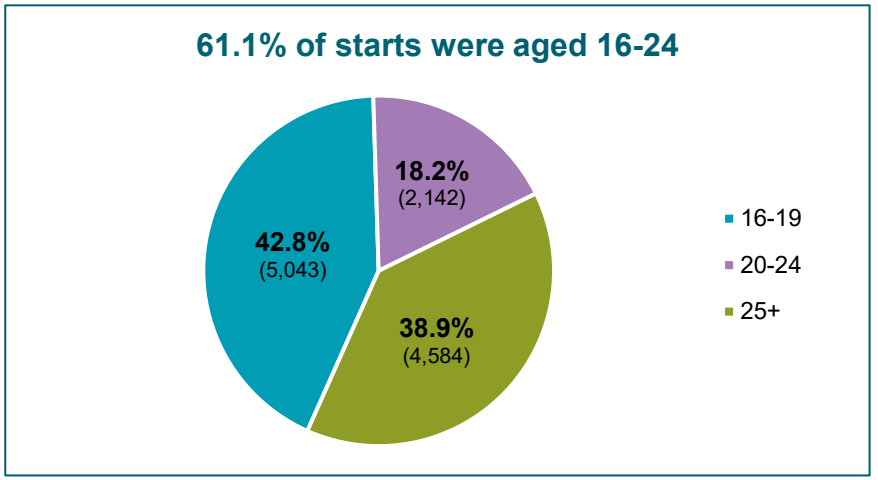
There were **11,769** Modern Apprenticeship starts at the end of Q2. This is 3.1% (-377) lower than the same point last year.

Figure 1: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts, Q2 2021/22 to Q2 2025/26



Starts by age

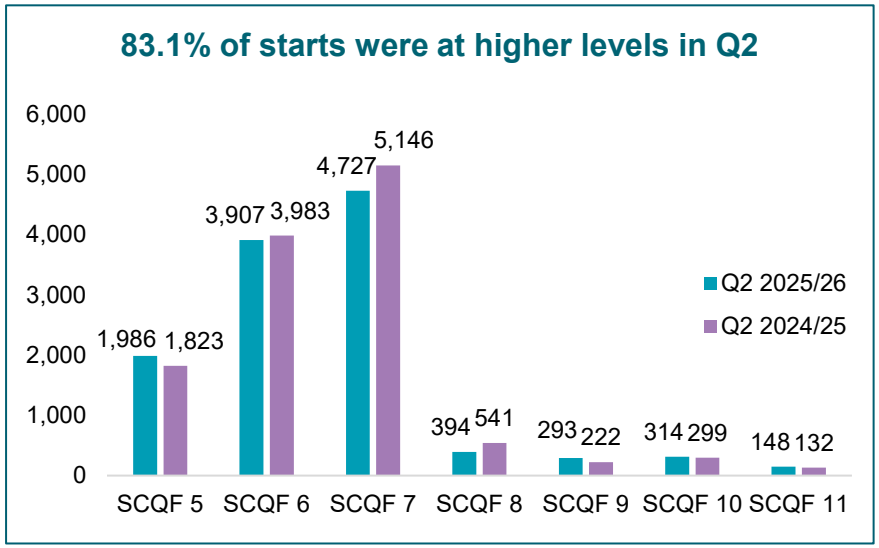
Figure 2: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by age group, Q2 2025/26



At the end of quarter 2, 61.1% (7,185) of MA starts were aged 16-24 and 38.9% were aged 25+. The proportion of 16-24 year olds was 0.1 pp lower than the same point last year.

Starts by level

Figure 3: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by SCQF level, Q2 2024/25 to Q2 2025/26

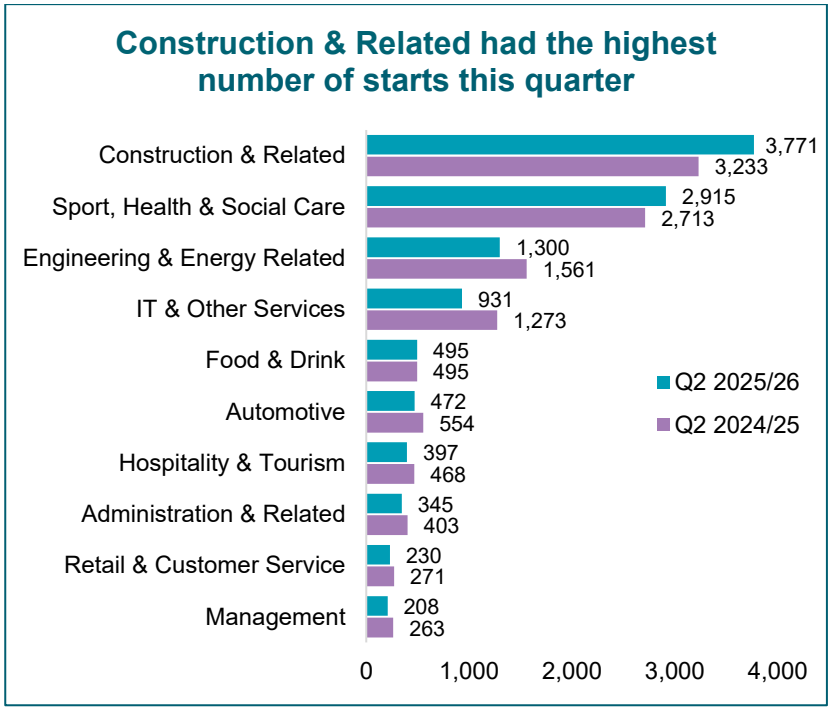


At 83.1%, the majority of starts were at SCQF level 6 or above at the end of quarter 2.

Starts by occupational grouping

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

Figure 4: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by occupational grouping, Q2 2024/25 to Q2 2025/26



At the end of Q2, Construction & Related had the highest number, and the greatest proportion of starts at 32.0%, 5.4 pp higher than last year. Accounting for 24.8% of starts, the Sport, Health and Social Care grouping had the second greatest proportion of starts, 2.4 pp higher than last year.

Starts by gender

At the end of quarter 2 there were **4,148** female starts and **7,529** male starts, accounting for 35.5% and 64.5% of all MA starts, respectively.[5]

Starts by disability

The proportion of starts self-identifying as disabled was **17.1%** at the end of quarter 2.

Starts by ethnicity

The proportion of starts self-identifying as an ethnic minority was **6.2%** at the end of quarter 2.

Starts by care experience

The proportion of MA starts self-identifying as care experienced was **2.6%** at the end of quarter 2.

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

[5] Female + male starts.

Modern Apprentices in Training

As at 26th September 2025, there were **38,902** Modern Apprentices in training, 0.8% higher than last year (+307)

Figures 5 and 6 show Modern Apprentices in training by age group and level, respectively, at the end of Q2 2025/26.

Figure 5: Modern Apprentices in training by age group, at Q2 2025/26

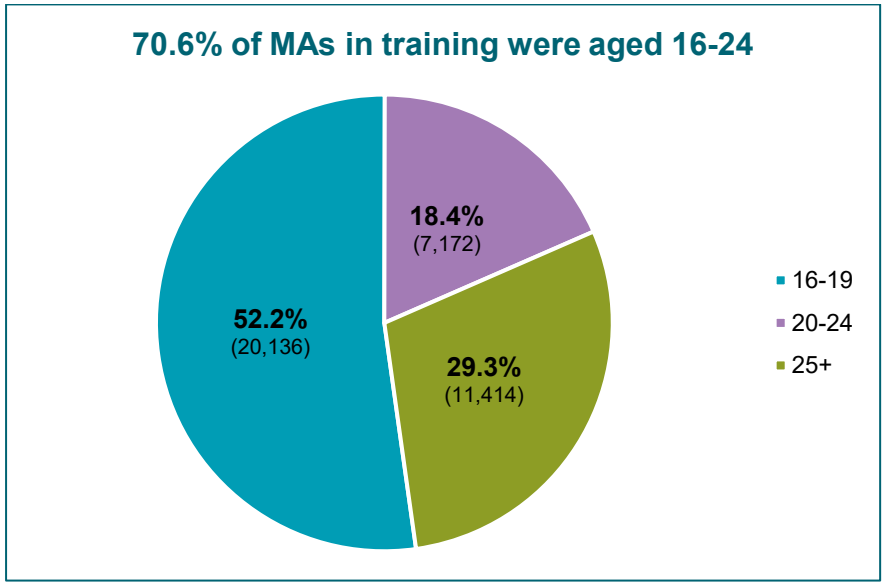
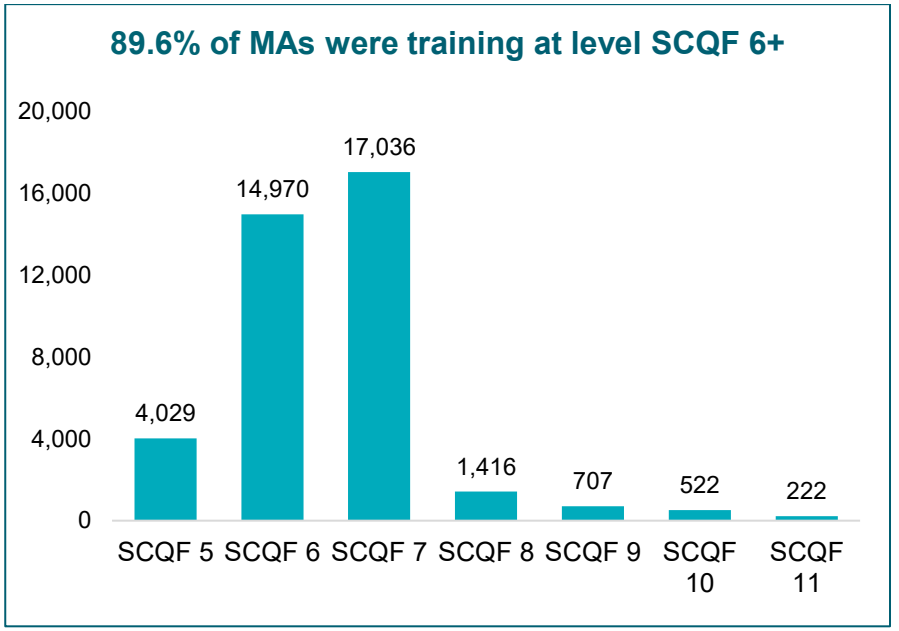


Figure 6: Modern Apprentices in training by level, at Q2 2025/26



Modern Apprenticeship Achievements

At the end of Q2 2025/26, the overall achievement rate was **79.4%**, with 9,553 of 12,029 leavers achieving their full Modern Apprenticeship award.

Figure 7: Modern Apprenticeship achievements by age group, Q2 2023/24 to Q2 2025/26

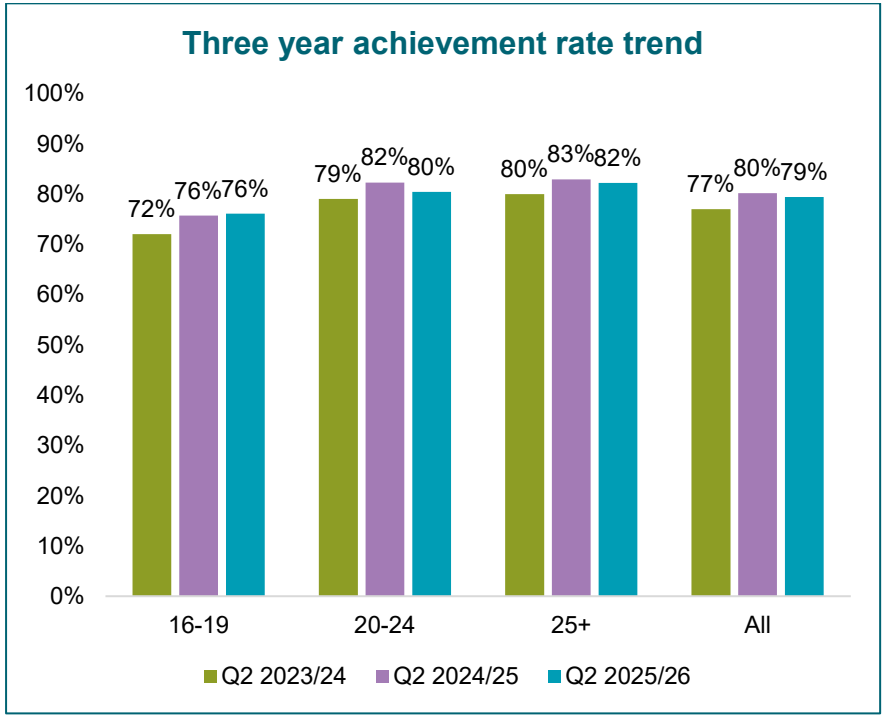


Figure 8: Modern Apprenticeship achievement rates by occupational grouping, Q2 2024/25 to Q2 2025/26

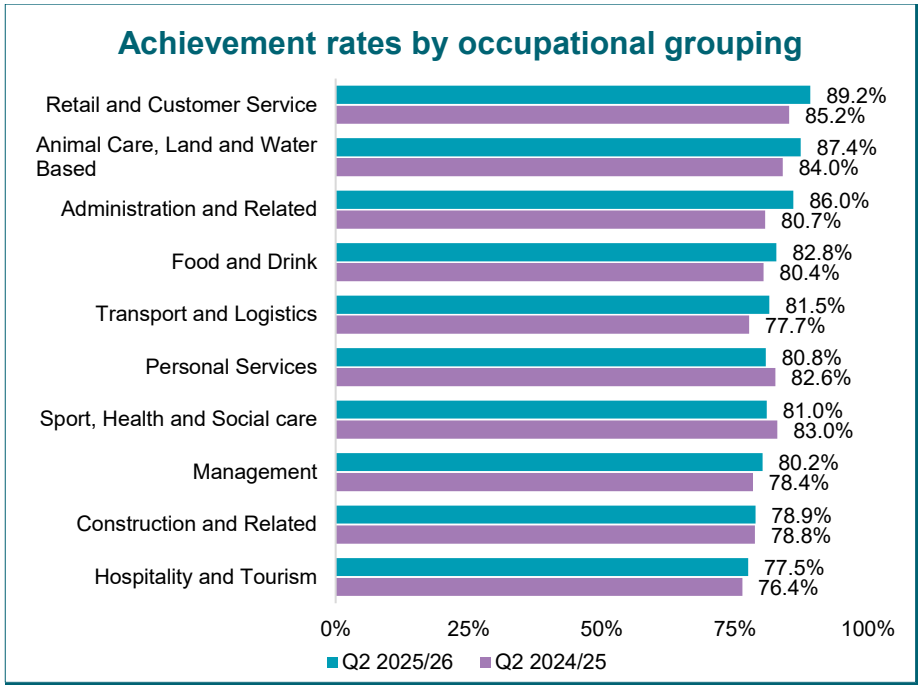


Figure 8 shows the top 10 achievement rates by occupational grouping (excluding those with fewer than 100 leavers).

Modern Apprenticeship Redundancies

In quarter 2 2025/26, 109 Modern Apprentices were made redundant, 11 more than last year, accounting for approximately 0.3% of total MAs in training. All redundant MAs are offered support through SDS' Career Information Advice and Guidance service. For those with outcome data, 89.9% moved into a positive destination, with 22 individuals continuing their Modern Apprenticeship with an alternative employer.

Further Information

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

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

Note to Readers

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

Gender

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

Age

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

Level

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

Frameworks

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

Starts

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

Calculations

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

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

Appendix A – SCQF Framework

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

[6] Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: The SCQF Interactive Framework