Skills Development Scotland

Modern Apprenticeship Statistics

Quarter 2, 2026/27 [1st April – 25th September]

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Making skills work for Scotland

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Introduction

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

This report provides a summary of quarter 2 (1st April to 25th September 2026) statistics for MAs where there is a public funding contribution administered by SDS, on behalf of the Scottish Government. 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 any feedback or questions.

Economic Outlook

Scotland's economy showed greater resilience in Q2 than expected with GDP growing by 0.8%, although the wider outlook remains subdued and uncertain.[1] Businesses continued to face cost pressures with 82% reporting rising costs.[2] Scotland's labour market showed signs of softening; the employment rate fell to 74.0% and economic inactivity rose to 22.6% in June to August relative to the previous quarter.[3] Young people continued to face particular challenges, with the youth unemployment rate estimated at 13.8%, up 2.1 pp on the same period last year.[4]

Against this backdrop, there were 11,573 Modern Apprenticeship starts at the end of quarter 2, 1.7% lower than the last year. MA start volumes are influenced by several factors which affect the phasing and recruitment of starts throughout the year.

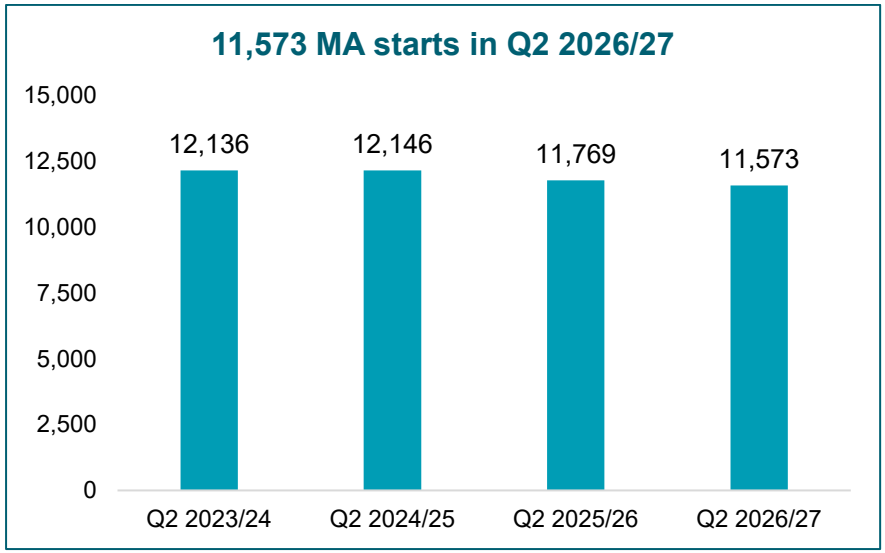
SDS will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to maximise the delivery of high-quality apprenticeships that grow the young workforce and support economic growth, in line with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

[1] Scottish Government (2026) GDP Quarterly National Accounts: 2026 Quarter 2 (April to June)
[2] FAI (2026) Scottish Business Monitor Q3
[3] ONS (2026) Labour Force Survey. Data for June to August 2025 and June to August 2026.
[4] ONS (2026) Labour Force Survey. Data for June to August 2025 and June to August 2026.

Modern Apprenticeship: Starts

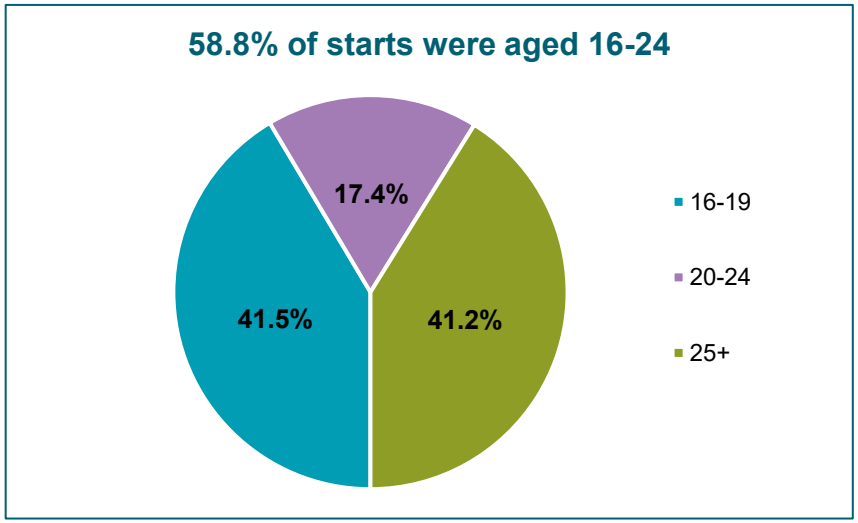
There were **11,573** Modern Apprenticeship starts in Q2, 1.7% (-196) lower than last year.

Figure 1: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts, Q2 2023/24 to Q2 2026/27



Starts by age

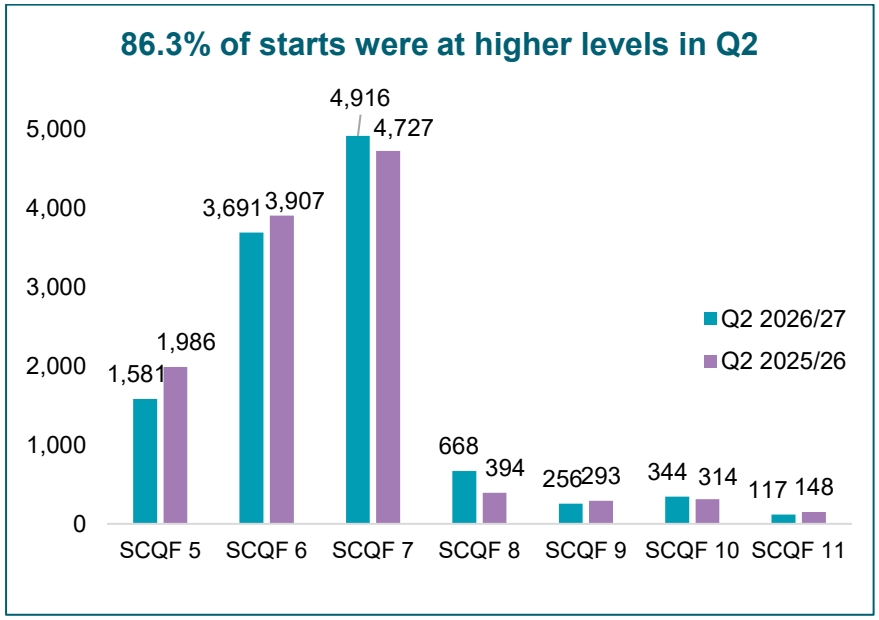
Figure 2: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by age group, Q2 2026/27



This quarter, 58.8% (6,808) of MA starts were aged 16-24 and 41.2% (4,765) were aged 25 or older.

Starts by level

Figure 3: Number of Modern Apprenticeship starts by SCQF level, Q2 2025/26 to Q2 2026/27

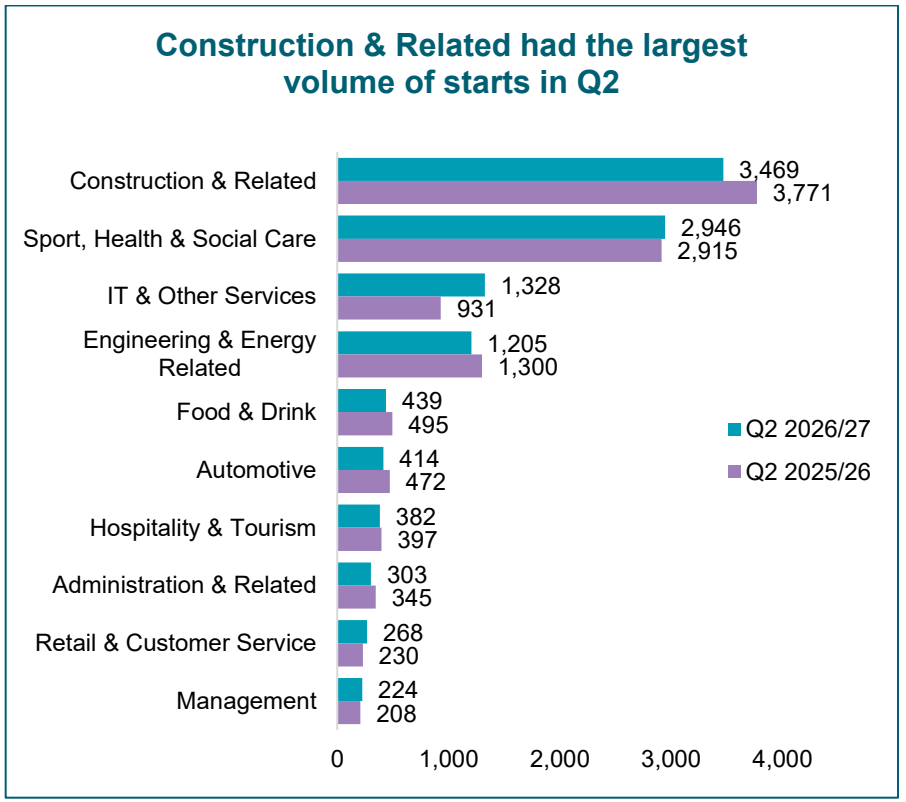


The majority of starts this quarter were at SCQF level 6 or higher (86.3%). There were 668 starts to SCQF level 8 at the end of Q2, an increase of 69.5% (+274) compared with last year. Almost all this increase was accounted for by the *Digital Technology Technical Apprenticeship* framework where starts more than doubled from 217 to 488 (+271).

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 2026/27



At the end of quarter 2, Construction & Related grouping had the highest number and greatest proportion of starts at 30.0%, 2.0 pp lower than last year.

Accounting for 25.5% of all starts Sport, Health & Social Care had the second largest proportion of starts. The majority of starts (96.4%) in this grouping were in Health and Social Care related frameworks.

The IT & Other Services grouping had the third highest number of starts this quarter and accounted for 11.5% of all starts.

Starts by sex

SDS previously reported on gender but now reports on sex in line with the relevant protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Starts by sex will be included in our year-end report.

Starts by disability[5]

The proportion of starts self-identifying as disabled was 16.9% in quarter 2.

Starts by ethnicity

The proportion of starts self-identifying as Mixed or Multiple; Asian; African; Caribbean or black; and Other ethnic group was 7.6% in quarter 2. When including ethnic group 'white other' the ethnicity rate is 11.6%.

Starts by care experience

The proportion of starts self-identifying as care experienced was 3.0% in quarter 2.

[5] Please note that MA equality splits fluctuate throughout the year for many reasons and are included for completeness each quarter. Given these fluctuations, comparisons with the same point last year should be treated with care.

Modern Apprenticeship: In Training

As at 25th September 2026, there were **38,382** Modern Apprentices in training.

Figures 5 and 6 show Modern Apprentices in training by age group and level, respectively, at Q2 2026/27.

Figure 5: Modern Apprentices in training by age group, at Q2 2026/27

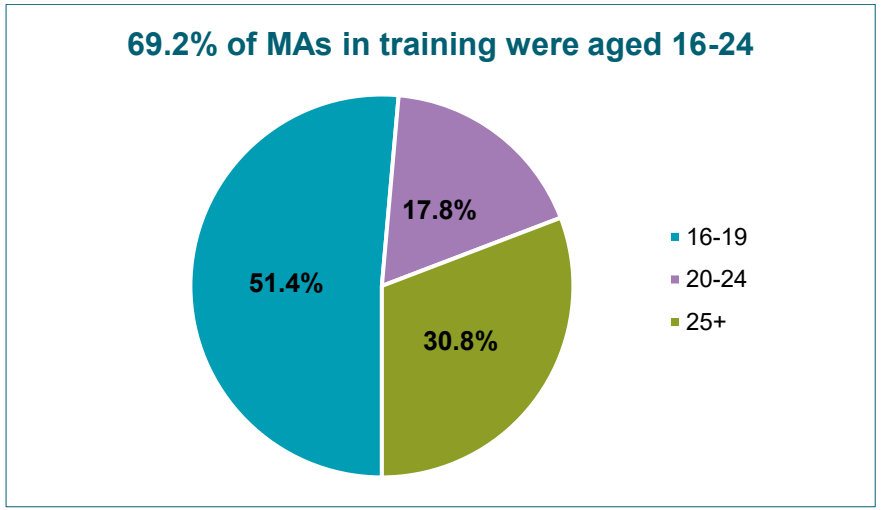


Figure 6: Modern Apprentices in training by level, at Q2 2026/27

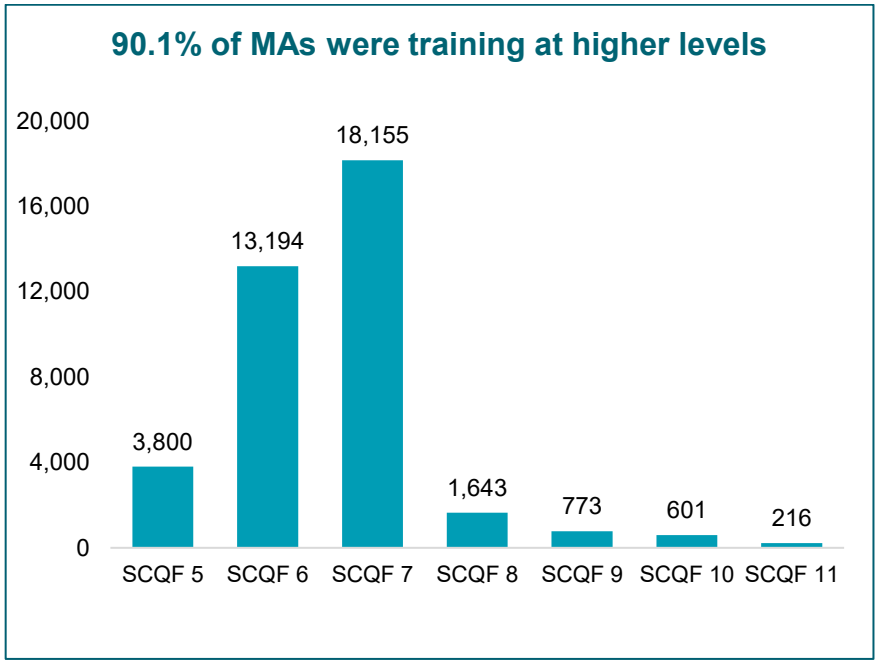


Figure 6 shows 3,800 (9.9%) apprentices were training at SCQF level 5 at the end of Q2. Almost half of those (49.4%) were aged 16-19, 19.6% were 20-24, and 31.0% were 25+. At SCQF levels 8-11, Modern Apprentices over the age of 25+ make up the majority of those in training. Further breakdowns are available in our Supplementary Tables.

Modern Apprenticeship: Achievements

In Q2 2026/27, the overall achievement rate was **81.4%**, with 10,193 of the 12,529 leavers achieving their full MA award.

Figure 7: Modern Apprenticeship achievements by age group, Q2 2024/25 to Q2 2026/27

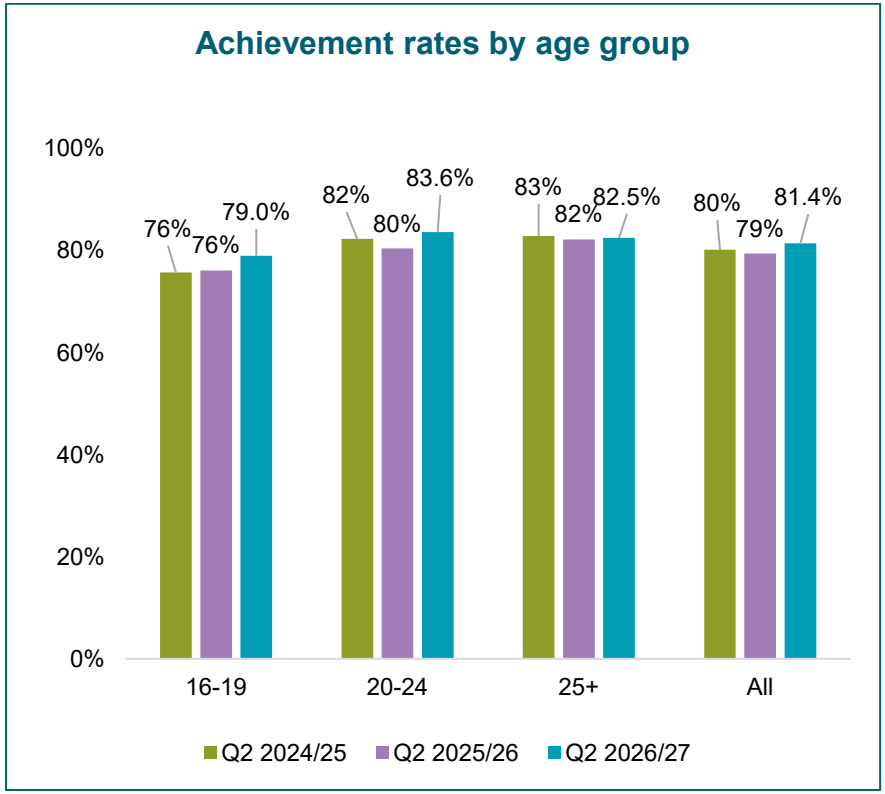


Figure 8: Modern Apprenticeship achievement rates by occupational grouping, Q2 2026/27

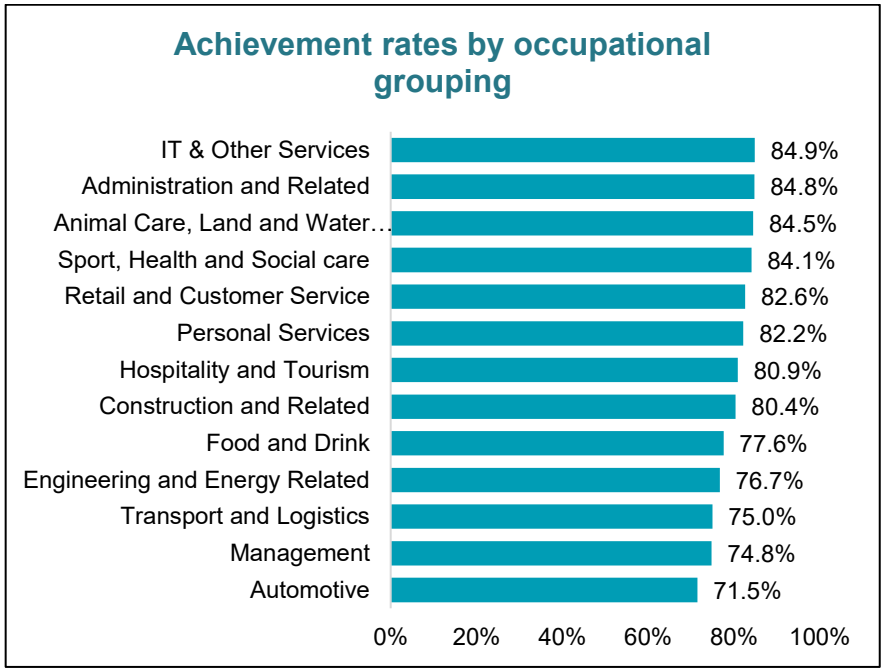


Figure 8 shows achievement rates by occupational grouping (excluding those with fewer than 100 leavers).

Modern Apprenticeship: Redundancies

In quarter 2 2026/27, 103 Modern Apprentices were made redundant. By the end of Q2, 16 individuals had secured an alternative employer to continue their MA, with the remainder in progress.

Further Information

This report provides analysis of publicly funded Modern Apprenticeship activity in the second quarter of the 2026/27 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.

Sex

SDS previously reported on gender but now reports on sex in line with the relevant protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Starts by sex are not available for trend purposes for new starts in Q1-3. Starts by sex will be included in our year-end report.

Age

As programme funding is linked to the age of apprentices, 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, in 2018/19 we carried out an exercise to align MA frameworks to SCQF levels (see Appendix A for context).

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.

Contact

Any comments or suggestions regarding the content of this report are welcome and can be emailed to user_feedback@sds.co.uk.

Appendix A – SCQF Framework[6]

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