Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy

2023

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CONTENT

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Apprenticeships
National Apprenticeship Week
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Apprenticeships are a critical part of the skills and talent development infrastructure in Cumbria. We can be proud of the many strengths of the apprenticeship system in Cumbria. Every year around 2,000 people complete apprenticeships across the county adding to the supply of skills focussed on our employers' needs.

Cumbria has one of the highest rates of entry into and participation in apprenticeships especially for those aged 16 to 20. This reflects our traditions in education and training, our industrial structure and the quality and esteem held for much of the provision for apprenticeships.

Our economy and labour market is facing considerable turbulence, profound changes and future challenges and opportunities, especially in terms of the fall in the workforce and changing skills needs, with a growing need for higher level skills. There is a critical role for apprenticeships in meeting these challenges and opportunities.

It is appropriate to have a fresh look at how the apprenticeship system is operating in Cumbria set against these labour market and skills challenges. Although there is much that is excellent about how apprenticeships operate in Cumbria, there is scope for change to improve the system.

Overall we are seeking to develop and refine the system to:

- Develop more quality apprenticeships in skill areas to meet the current and future needs of the economy
- Improve participation in apprenticeships overall
- Improve the preparedness of young people for apprenticeships
- Improve the delivery of apprenticeships

Although participation rates in apprenticeships are relatively high there are still a substantial minority of young people leaving full time study aged 18 or 19 into employment without structured training. There is therefore considerable scope to increase the numbers engaged in apprenticeships as well as still see increases in participation in higher education. The areas for future focus suggested in the strategy are:

Apprenticeships in Cumbria

Aim 1: Develop the workforce skills needed by Cumbria's economy and businesses in the future by creating high quality opportunities to develop, attract and retain skills in Cumbria

Aim 2: Contribute to enhancing diversity and social mobility.

OBJECTIVE 1: **Develop more quality apprenticeships in skill areas to meet the current and future needs of the economy**	**OBJECTIVE 3:** **Improving preparation for apprenticeships and readiness for work**
Action 1: Focus on developing more apprenticeships in hospitality-related skill areas working with existing stakeholders Action 2: Seek ways to enhance the level of provision and access to apprenticeships in ICT Action 3: Ensure that the provision of apprenticeship training on the ground in Cumbria is able to deliver the needs of the move to the green economy.	Action 7: Support those entering apprenticeships with readiness for work skills (working with schools and colleges) Action 8: Encourage and promote the Provider Access Legislation (PAL) as a route to school children and students considering apprenticeships
OBJECTIVE 2: **Improving participation levels in apprenticeships overall**	**OBJECTIVE 4:** **Improving the delivery of apprenticeships in Cumbria and so outcomes**
Action 4: Increase representation by gender of apprenticeships in some subject areas Action 5: Increase uptake of apprenticeships in older age groups Action 6: Enhance apprenticeships as a route to encourage greater social mobility and diversity in the workforce	Action 9: Provide better support for smaller businesses seeking to get involved in apprenticeships Action 10: Help more small businesses to access and to be able to deliver high quality apprenticeships across the county via collaboration Action 11: Involve our retiring workers in the apprenticeship programmes as mentors of trainers

2. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The development of apprenticeships has been a key plank of the national approach to skills development. Apprenticeships have been and are a particularly important component of skills development for young people in Cumbria. They are a key route to qualifications and an entry point in to careers.

Cumbria has historically and continues to have had one of the highest participation rates in apprenticeships the country, reflecting our economic structure, traditions and strong vocational training infrastructure.

The Cumbria Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) produced a Local Skills Report in early 2022. This highlighted the current and future skills challenges facing the economy findings.

We are in a period of very rapid economic and labour market change driven by the unfolding of Brexit, the response to the global pandemic, the war in Ukraine and cost of living crisis and rapid changes in technology. These changes have occurred against a long term backcloth of a declining workforce across Cumbria, creating particularly acute stresses and strains in the supply of skills.

This is why, now more than ever, developing and retaining strong skills in our economy, creating a workforce fit for the future through early careers and apprenticeships and growing our talent is essential.

The LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) has also highlighted the importance of apprenticeships, especially from an employers' perspective and the needs to improve employability skills.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many apprenticeships were disrupted and unable to operate as they would do normally for health and safety reasons. Now is a good time to take stock of the role of apprenticeships in the supply of skills in Cumbria and as a way of developing our talent.

This strategy is designed to assist businesses, providers and stakeholders with a local economic interest in skills and around labour supply.

The strategy has been developed by the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) and agreed with key stakeholder groups including the People, Employment and Skills Group (PESSG) and has been refined in light of a consultation event. The strategy builds on complementary documents such as the Local Skills Report 2022 and is intended to align with and the LSIP.

3. WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships have a long and noble history and tradition and have been a feature of learning and skills development in England since the Middle Ages and even earlier. They have evolved over time toward a more structured and qualifications based approach to learning. New levels of apprenticeships have been introduced and the previous age limit of 25 was withdrawn in the 2000s.

Apprenticeships are a model of learning that combine practical training in a job with study. In in England apprenticeships are available to anyone over the age of 16 not in full time education; although employers set different entry requirements depending on the sector and job. They take between one and six years to complete. As of September 2022 over 800 different apprenticeships were available.

The apprenticeship model relies on three parties working together as follows:

- **Apprentice** – an individual with a desire to work, learn and develop to national standards
- **Employer** – responsible for funding, supporting and upskilling the apprentice
- **Provider** – who works with the apprentice and employer to ensure scope and provision to support the apprenticeship.

It is crucial that all three of these stakeholders are interdependent and collaborative to ensure success and that the providers especially, respond to skills opportunities and challenges.

Apprenticeships have different levels which are equivalent to academic educational levels (as shown in Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Apprenticeships levels

Type	Level	Equivalent educational level
Advanced	3	A Level
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or Master's degree

Some apprenticeships may also provide individuals with additional qualifications such as a diploma.

There are several **minimum requirements** for any apprenticeships:

- They must last for at least 12 months (based on an apprentice working at least 30 hours per week, including time training away from the workplace)
- They must include off-the-job training (received by the apprentice during their normal working hours)[1]
- Employers must offer apprentices a contract of service
- Apprentices must be provided with training in English and maths if they do not hold a level 2 qualification in both subjects

1 As from 2022/23 this minimum amount is either 6 hours or more of their usual working hours on off-the job training, or at least 20% of their working time if this is less than 6 hours

- Apprentices have to take an independent (end-point) assessment at the end of their apprenticeship, which assesses the knowledge, skills and behaviours they have developed whilst in the apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships **are paid** - unlike the vast majority of higher and further education students[2]. Apprentices are paid for both their normal working hours and the time they spend training as part of their apprenticeship. Apprentices are entitled to the same employment rights as other employees, including holiday entitlement and parental leave.

All apprentices now work to national **standards**, which outline what an apprentice will be doing in a particular apprenticeship, and the skills that are required of them. Apprenticeship standards were introduced from September 2014 and now apply to all new starters[3].

Higher and degree apprenticeships are delivering the higher skills that are required for economic growth, for example Project Management, Accounting and Nuclear and Engineering. This is an important route to be encouraged as it is a way of retaining our workforce within Cumbria, rather than losing them in order to gain a higher-level qualification elsewhere through University, as an example. Whilst there is recognition that there will always be people leaving the county for different reasons, higher and degree level apprentice offerings in Cumbria could help to catch people before they leave. In order to assist with this, progression routes and opportunities should be clear and standardised where possible.

Entry requirements vary depending on the employer and the role. Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships, also known as intermediate and higher, generally do not require formal qualifications, however it is normally expected that a functional skills module will need to be taken as part of the apprenticeship if individuals do not have GCSEs in English and Maths.

2 Apprentices aged 16-18 are entitled to the apprentice minimum wage (currently £4.81 an hour). Apprentices aged 19 and over are also entitled to the apprentice minimum wage in the first year of their apprenticeship. After this, they are entitled to the relevant National Minimum Wage rate for their age group

3 They replaced the previous apprenticeships frameworks

4. NATIONAL CONTEXT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Funding

The UK government provides apprenticeship funding for employers, marking a significant commitment to getting more young people into employment. Apprenticeship programmes are important to the UK in ensuring a learning structure and valuable work experience opportunities are in place to help nurture skills and foster future leaders in business.

Introduced in April 2017 as part of the government's apprenticeship reforms, **the Apprenticeship Levy** is a tax on any UK employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million each year[1]. The Levy is required to fund apprenticeships, support business productivity and grow quality vocational training and employment. The Apprenticeship Levy is charged at 0.5% of the employer's annual pay bill.

Businesses can only use the levy funds in their account to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment for apprentices within their business. However, businesses do have the option to transfer up to 5% of their Levy funds to support apprenticeship training in other organisations.

The rules for apprenticeships started since 2022 are as follows:

- Each apprenticeship standard is associated with a **funding band.** The upper limit of this band[2] represents the maximum the government will contribute towards training and assessment costs of the apprenticeship.
- Employers and training providers negotiate a price for training and assessment.
- Apprenticeship levy funds are used to pay for the training and assessment for employers paying the levy (up to the upper limit of the funding band), if the costs of training are higher than the funding band this has to be met by the employer from outside the levy account
- Employers who do not pay the levy pay 5% of the cost of training and assessment with the government contributing the remaining 95% (up to the upper limit of the funding band)[3].

Note: the levy and government funding does not pay for the wage of the apprentice, this has to be met in full by the employer.

1 It raised £3.3 billion in 2022/23 across England
2 There are 30 different funding bands, with the upper limits of these bands ranging from £1,500 to £27,000
3 They can also use levy funds that have been transferred to them by a levy paying employer, although these will need to cover 100% of the training and assessment costs

National issues with the apprenticeship system

There has been considerable debate about how well the system works for employers and the wider economy (against a backcloth of reduction in starts since the levy was introduced)[4]. These include:

- The increase in the number of higher level starts has led to concerns about the cost and that professional development programmes are being rebadged as apprenticeships.
- The complexity and inflexibility of the levy is a concern of many employers
- The amount of funding for SMEs employers has been a constraint to access
- Nationally, the quality of some of the apprenticeship provision is poor and certainly poorer than classroom-based FE provision[5].
- The dropout rate from apprenticeships is high (roughly 50%) and many apprenticeships report concerns about quality as a reason for their drop out[6].
- In some cases, the lack of preparedness for work of apprentices who are entering the workplace is a concern.

These are concerns reported nationally most of them are likely to apply in Cumbria as well.

Recent policy developments relevant to apprenticeships

A regulation has been introduced which is called Provider Access Legislation, known as PAL. It specifies that schools must provide at least six encounters with approved providers of apprenticeships and technical education for all students, throughout the stages of secondary school. This is a key mechanism in helping learners understand apprenticeship and technical options, such as T-Levels and Higher Education.

T-Levels were introduced in September 2020 and will be fully rolled out by September 2023. They are intended to become one of the main choices for students after GCSEs alongside apprenticeships, A levels and some other qualifications not served by A levels or T levels. They provide full time study but with extended work placements. They may reduce the numbers accessing apprenticeships at the age of 16.

4 Sourced from a useful summary by the House of Commons Library: "Apprenticeships Policy in England", Andrew Powell, January 2023
5 https://apprenticeshipdata.co.uk/ofsted-provision-grades/
6 "No train, no gain An investigation into the quality of apprenticeships in England", EDSK, November 2022

5. LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS CONTEXT FOR CUMBRIA

Since 2018 Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and other key stakeholders to understand the skills dynamics at local and national levels. Cumbria LEP has convened the Cumbria Skills Advisory Panel which produced a Local Skills Report in January 2022 (LSR, 2022) that summarised the evidence base on skills for the county. Later that year Cumbria Chamber of Commerce developed a Local Skills Improvement Plan that drew on the employer perspective on skills.

Since early 2022 there have been some developments on the skills and labour market front in Cumbria, but the essential message, challenges and opportunities remain the same.

The principal issues are summarised in Table 5.1, these are drawn from the LSR and other work by Cumbria LEP.

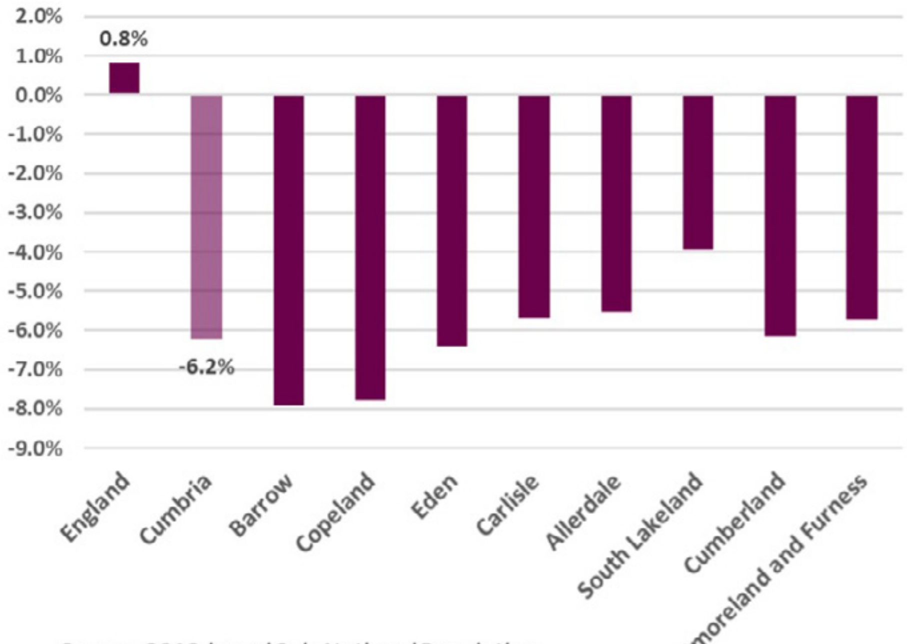
Table 5.1: Key Labour market and Skills Issues in Cumbria

Key issue	Explanation
Declining workforce…	For some time, a looming labour supply constraints on Cumbria's economy has been identified. This is due to the declining population of working age (see Figure 5.1); this is forecast to fall by 6% (17,000 over the next 10 years). The declines are expected to be particularly acute in Barrow and Copeland. The fall in WAP will, to some degree, be offset by potential rises in economic activity rates for those aged 55+, but not enough to offset the fall in population of working age. Prior to the pandemic, the challenge of potential future declines in the workforce in all parts of Cumbria was clear, but still some way off. As a result of changes driven by the pandemic, withdrawal of existing workers from the labour market[7] and the impacts of EU-Exit on migrant labour supply, these forecasted labour supply shortages became manifest in Cumbria in a very acute way starting in the second half of 2021.
...and current extreme shortages of workers	By the end of 2021 labour shortages had emerged across most of the economy, with the most acute current skills and labour gaps in hospitality, adult social care, health sector, logistics and manufacturing. As of early 2023, these labour shortages remain (although they may diminish during 2023 due to the looming economic recession).
Issue of low productivity across much of the economy	Labour productivity in Cumbria is, on average between 17% to 19% below the national average[8]. There is a major gap in most sectors. Low productivity is linked to below average wages across most parts of the economy. There is a very strong link between skills levels and wages and productivity.

7 Nationally there has been a very substantial fall in economic activity in those aged 55 and over as a result of Covid
8 2019 pre-pandemic data for GVA (smoothed) per hours worked and job filled respectively.

Table 5.1: Key Labour market and Skills Issues in Cumbria	
Key issue	**Explanation**
Need to develop and engage greater higher level skills in the workforce	Related to the above point about low productivity, across much of the Cumbrian economy, especially in private sector businesses and sectors, there are relatively low levels of workers with higher level skills in absolute and percentage terms. This is less true in public sector occupations and sectors. Overall, the level of residents of working age with NVQ level 4 or equivalent or higher qualifications in Cumbria is one of the lowest in the UK (about 20% below the national average[9])..
Meeting changing skills needs driven by shifts in the economy and the workforce	The LSR also identified changes in skills requirements within and across sectors that are and will emerge over the next decade including: • The need for enhanced digital skills across all ages and areas of the economy; • The need for new and enhanced skills in respect of clean energy, shifts in environmental land management and application of technology
Low wages, low skills and low labour market participation in some areas	The labour market and skills issues are not spread evenly across the county. There are stubborn pockets of lower labour market participation (i.e. higher levels of economic inactivity/worklessness) which are associated with lower skills and qualifications in parts of Cumbria (and educational performance). This is particularly the case in parts of Barrow, larger towns on the west coast and in Carlisle. There is also an issue with stubbornly high levels and rates of youth unemployment (18 to 24) compared to national rates in Barrow and some other parts of Cumbria
Youth Unemployment	Youth unemployment, particularly for Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale is high for ages 18-24.

Figure 5.1: Change in working age population, 2022 to 2032



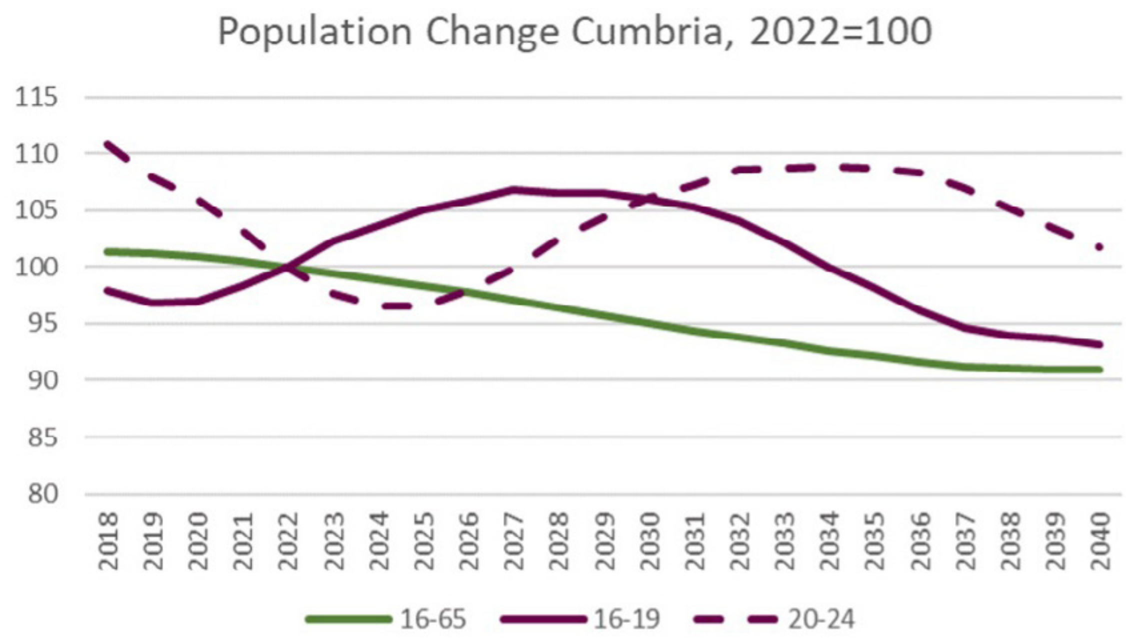
Source: 2018-based Sub-National Population Projections, ONS

9 Around 35% compared to 38% in the North West and 42% across Great Britain (average 209 to 2021 from the Annual Population Survey).

This backcloth is relevant for considering the future path of apprenticeships and their role in supporting the economy of Cumbria. There are three specific factors that are especially important to considering the future of apprenticeships: the change in the potential supply of younger people entering the labour market; the attractiveness of other routes post 16 or 18 (especially traditional higher education); and **retirement** by sector and occupation.

On the future supply of labour, within the overall steady decline in those of working age in Cumbria there are different movements in the numbers of young people of working age that are largely determined by historic demographic change. As Figure 5.2 shows, from 2022 onwards the number of young people aged 16 to 19 (the prime age at which people start apprenticeships in Cumbria) is actually expected to rise by 8% to peak in 2028 (by when it will be 21,700 or 1,600 above 2022 levels). However, after 2028, the number of young people in this age group will start to decline although numbers will continue to rise in the 20 to 24 year olds.

Figure 5.2: Population change by age



Source: ONS Sub-National projections 2018-based

Previous work carried out in 2020, which is in the process of being updated in 2023, identified that across Cumbria employers were looking to replace over 86,000 job roles over the 10-year period 2017 to 2027[10] (i.e. at a rate of 8,600 a year) as a result of people leaving the workforce (i.e. replacement demand for retirement and other causes). The following occupations were previously identified as having above average forecasts of replacement demand:

- Managers and directors
- Health professionals, plus health and social care associate professionals
- Teaching and educational professionals
- Business, media, and public service professionals
- Skilled agricultural and related trades
- Caring personal service occupations
- Leisure, travel, and related personal service occupations
- Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives.

Participation in **higher education** (aged 19) has an important impact on entries into apprenticeships. The progression rate in Cumbria has consistently lagged behind England (which would be expected given the high level of Apprenticeship rates). The rate in Cumbria increased from 33.7% in 2010/11 to 37.3% in 2020/21 but the gap to England has widened over the past decade (which has gone from 35.1% up to 44.4%). The progression rate was 96% of the England rate in 2010/11 but had fallen to 84% of the England rate by 2020/21. Over that period, the cohort aged 19 in Cumbria fell by 21.5% and the number of HE students fell by 13.3%.

10 Working Futures 2017-2027: Long-run labour market and skills projections for the UK

6. HOW APPRENTICESHIPS HAVE EVOLVED IN CUMBRIA AND HOW THEY ARE OPERATING

Appendix A provides a detailed analysis of the available data on apprenticeships in Cumbria and its local areas as well as putting this in national context. This section summarises the key points. The evidence base uses data[11] up to academic year 2021/22, as yet there is no data 2022/23 (the current year). The national levy was introduced in 2017/18 and due Covid apprenticeships in 2019/20 and 2020/21 were severely impacted and atypical. Therefore the comparisons made for changes over time are largely with 2020/21 and 2018/19.

The conclusions drawn from the data analysis are high level. There is a great deal of variation by different providers, subjects and level of apprenticeships. The full richness and complexity of this is not covered in full. In particular, there is a distinction between those apprenticeships that are very employer driven (eg Higher Level / Degree apprenticeships where employers are sponsoring existing or recruited staff) and the learners are seen as a "solution-based investment" and those where there is 12 months of employment and training where the learner may or may not be retained by the employer;

Overall entry and participation levels

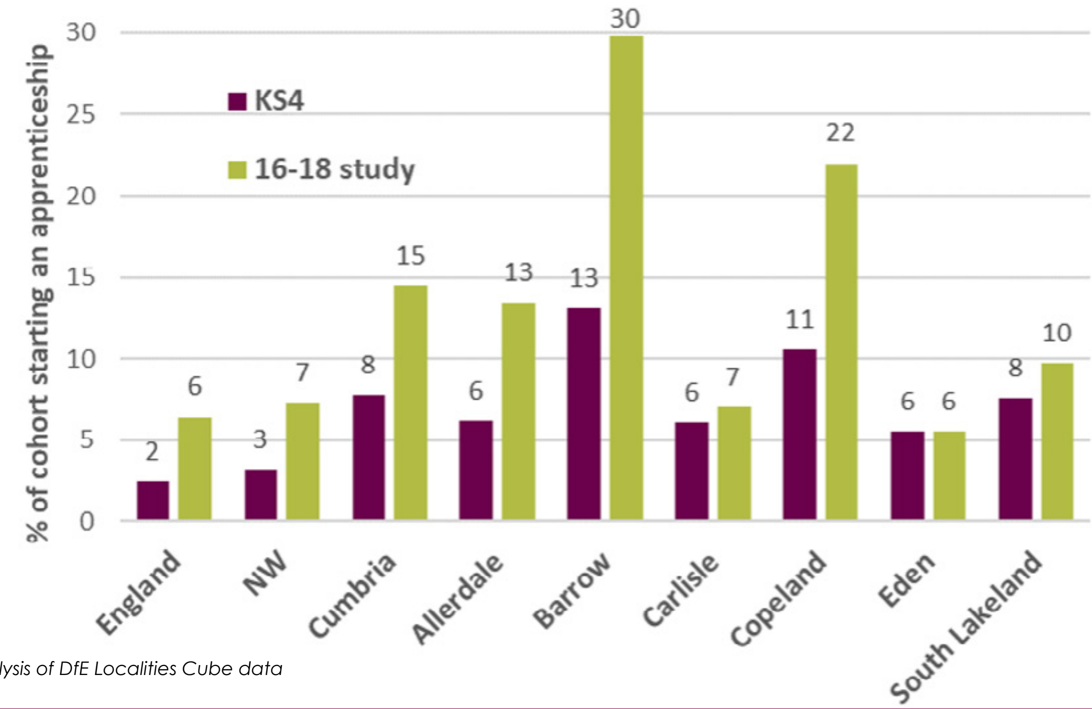
The most recent data relates to the 2021/22 academic year (August to July). In this year, there were 3,860 starts on apprenticeship programmes by Cumbrian residents and there were 9,755 active participants during the year (i.e. including those who started in earlier years). The number of starts has fallen by 11% compared to pre-pandemic levels (4,335 in 2018/19) in line with the national fall. The number of starts on apprenticeships is **well above the national rate;** depending on how it is measured it is 40% to 50% higher than the England average. The number of participants in apprenticeships is even higher than the England average (by 70% to 80%) reflecting that on average those starting in apprenticeships remain apprentices for longer than the England average.

Apprenticeships are a particularly **well established destination** for those leaving school age 16 (KS4) with the entry rate being 7.8% of that age compared to just 2.4% across England and 3.2% in the North West. For those who remain in full time education to aged 18 apprentices are also an important route with 14% choosing apprenticeships compared to 6.4% in England and 7.3% in the North West.

These above average entry and participation rates are shown in Figure 6.1. This shows that apprenticeships are a particularly important route in Cumbria for those aged 16 to 19 i.e. leaving secondary education. In fact, the rate of starts of those aged 25 to 65 in Cumbria is slightly lower than the national rate. However, this reflects the greater success of the apprenticeship system in attracting younger people aged 16 to 24 in Cumbria. It does suggest that there might be some room to increase rates of starts in those aged over 24 to reach national levels (about a 10% increase which would amount to around 120 across Cumbria).

11 The basic data is drawn from DfE Localities Datacube which is supplied to CLEP via Cumbria County Council under a data sharing agreement with the Department for Education

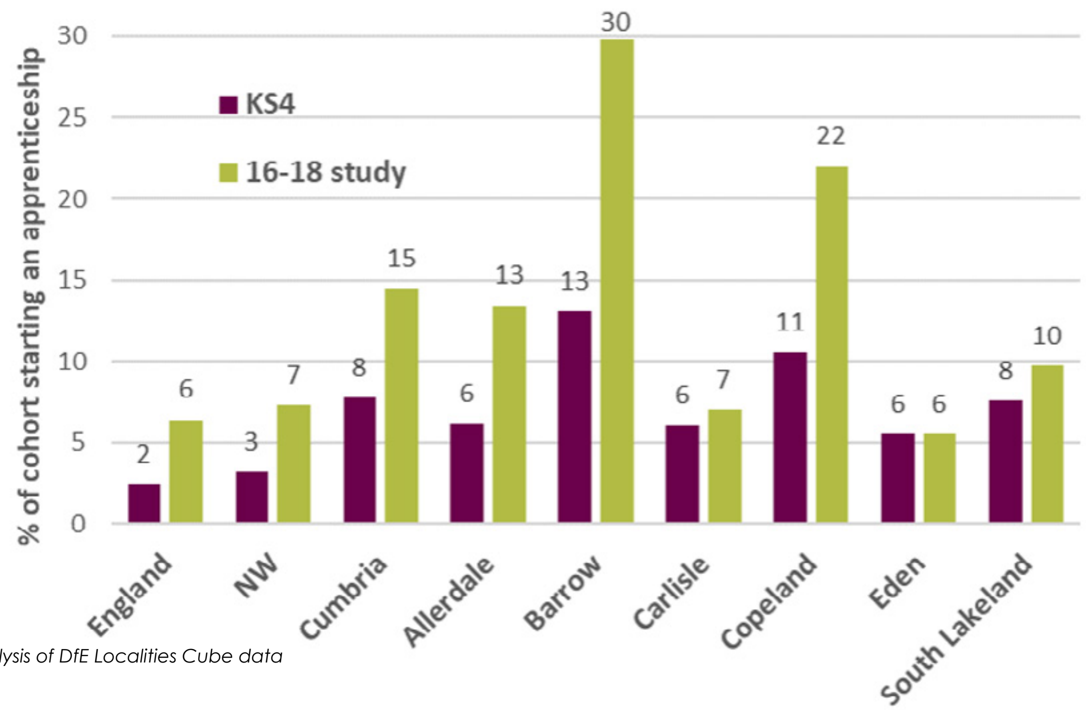
Figure 6.1: Rates of participation in apprenticeships, 2021/22 relative to England average



Source: analysis of DfE Localities Cube data

There are important variations across Cumbria in the rates of entry into apprenticeships with rates of entry being particularly high in Barrow and Copeland reflecting the importance of key employers in providing apprenticeships and the industrial traditions of these areas. However, all parts of Cumbria have above average rates of those leaving school at 16 going into apprenticeship and all areas bar Eden have above average rates of those post 16-18 education.

Figure 6.2: Rates of participation in apprenticeships, by area



Source: analysis of DfE Localities Cube data

In the consultation event it was pointed out that there are likely to be several reasons for this: first

This high "market share" and degree of interest in apprenticeships has long been a feature in Cumbria. Previous work has identified a number of reasons for this overall key role:

- The industrial structure of (parts) of Cumbria
- TA long tradition of apprenticeships and key role of major firms providing apprenticeships leading to well paid jobs (especially Sellafield and BAE Systems)
- TTherefore, increased awareness by young people and their parents of the route into work.

What sectors and skills areas

There are particular areas of strength in the number of apprenticeships in Cumbria. The vast majority of apprenticeships starts (around 90% overall) are in five broad areas:

- TEngineering & manufacturing, 980 starts (25%)
- TBusiness, finance and administration, 760 starts (20%)
- THealth, public services & care, 830 starts (21%)
- TBuilding and construction, 570 starts (15%)
- TRetail & hospitality and catering, 290 starts (8%).

These skills areas to a large degree map onto sectors. However many apprenticeships can take place across different sectors. This is especially true for "business finance and admin." The starts here are in accounting & Finance (140), administration (280) and business management (320). These apprenticeships, especially the latter two categories can **occur in any types of business** across sectors.

At a national level, these five groups account for a similar share (87%) however the distribution is very different. Cumbria stands out in having relative high shares of starts in manufacturing, engineering and construction (40% overall) compared to England (22%), whereas relative low shares in health and care, business & admin and retail/commercial (49% compared to 66% nationally).

The pattern of apprenticeships starts at a broad level map reasonably well onto the current industrial structure of the economy – with above average shares also starting in agriculture and animal care. However, this conclusions does not necessarily mean that the pattern of starts is a fine tuned to the precise needs of the economy in the future that it could be. This would require a more detailed assessment of the precise nature of apprenticeships being started and the occupations and sectors where future growth is forecast or where there is a need for replacement demand[12].

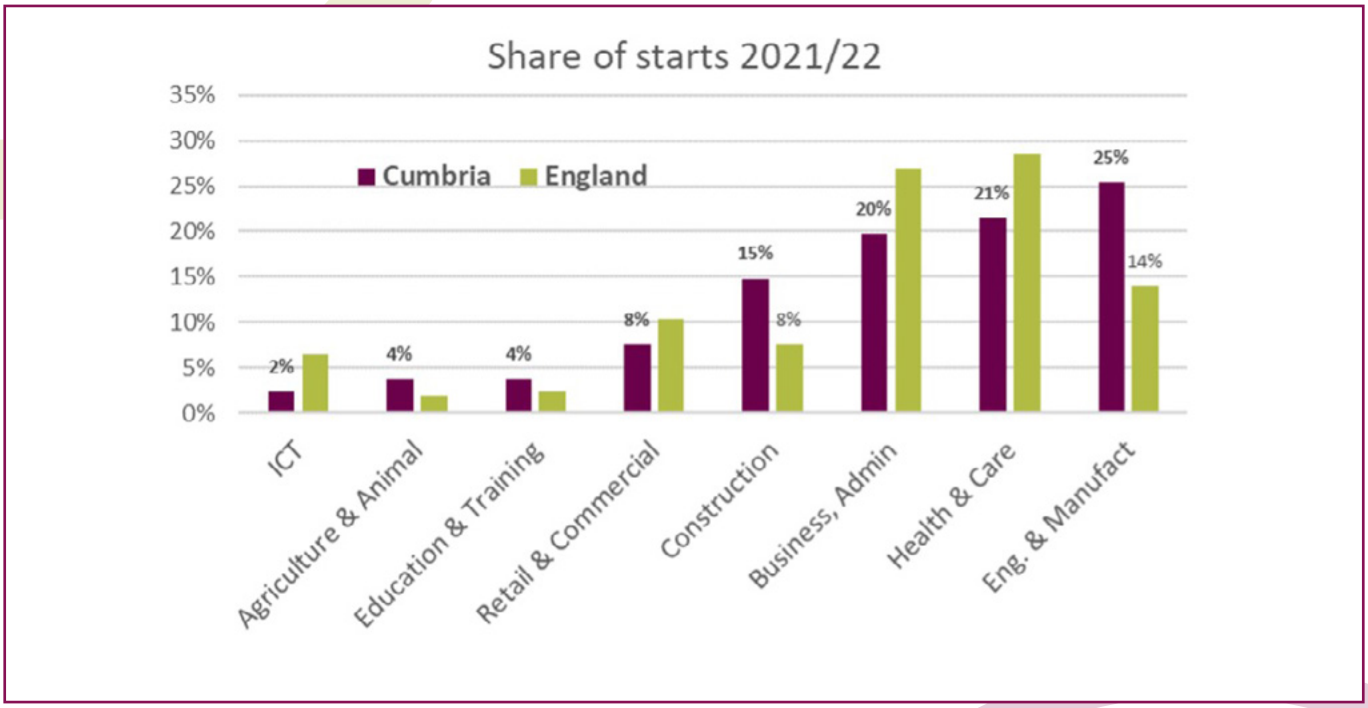
The area of Cumbria's economic specialism that is not well represented in apprenticeships is our visitor economy sector. Overall in 2021/22 there were 30 starts in "leisure tourism and travel" and a further 130 in "hospitality and catering", together overall just 4% of starts. In contrast around 17% of all Cumbria's jobs are in accommodation and food services and in arts, culture and leisure. Furthermore, the number of starts has been falling in this subject area by more than the overall decline in starts.

1 During 2023, CLEP expects to receive a local level assessment of future skills and occupational needs including replacement demand drawn from "The Skills Imperative 2035: Occupational Outlook – Long run employment prospects for the UK, Baseline Projections Working Paper 2a", Wilson et al, Institute for Employment Research,

the preponderance of SMEs in the sector with a lack of capacity, capability and, in some cases, ability to plan ahead; second the current relative lack of value of apprentice qualifications in finding a job (experience being more important); and third the strong focus for employers on "here and now" recruitment needs and roles to be filled (rather than the ability or interest in forward planning).

The share of starts in ICT subjects is also particularly low at just 2%. However, in this case this is reflective of the current economic structure of Cumbria (where the number of firms and share of employment in ICT is well below the national average) but is of serious concern given the importance of these skills for the future of Cumbria's economy.

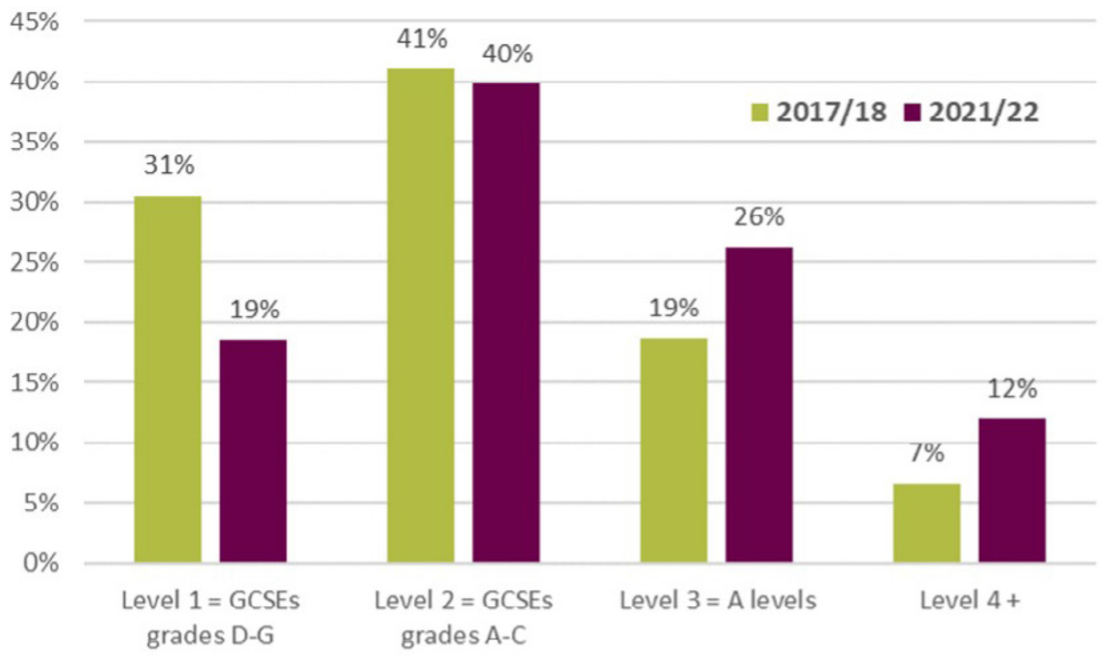
Figure 6.3: Starts in apprenticeships by broad subject area, 2021/22 relative to England average



Engagement in apprenticeships by prior attainment levels

It is possible to analyse starts by prior attainment level. In 2021/22 38% of all those starting apprenticeships in Cumbria had achieved the equivalent of A levels or higher qualifications, this had risen from just 26% in 2017/18 reflecting the growth in Advanced and Higher level apprenticeships. The number (and %) stating with just Level 1 qualifications had fallen by nearly 50% and the proportion from 31% to 19%. This shift can be interpreted in one of two ways: that it is becoming harder for those with lesser academic level of achievement to enter apprenticeships (who are more likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds); or that the "quality" of the intake has improved.

Figure 6.4: Starts by prior attainment, 2017/18 and 2021/22



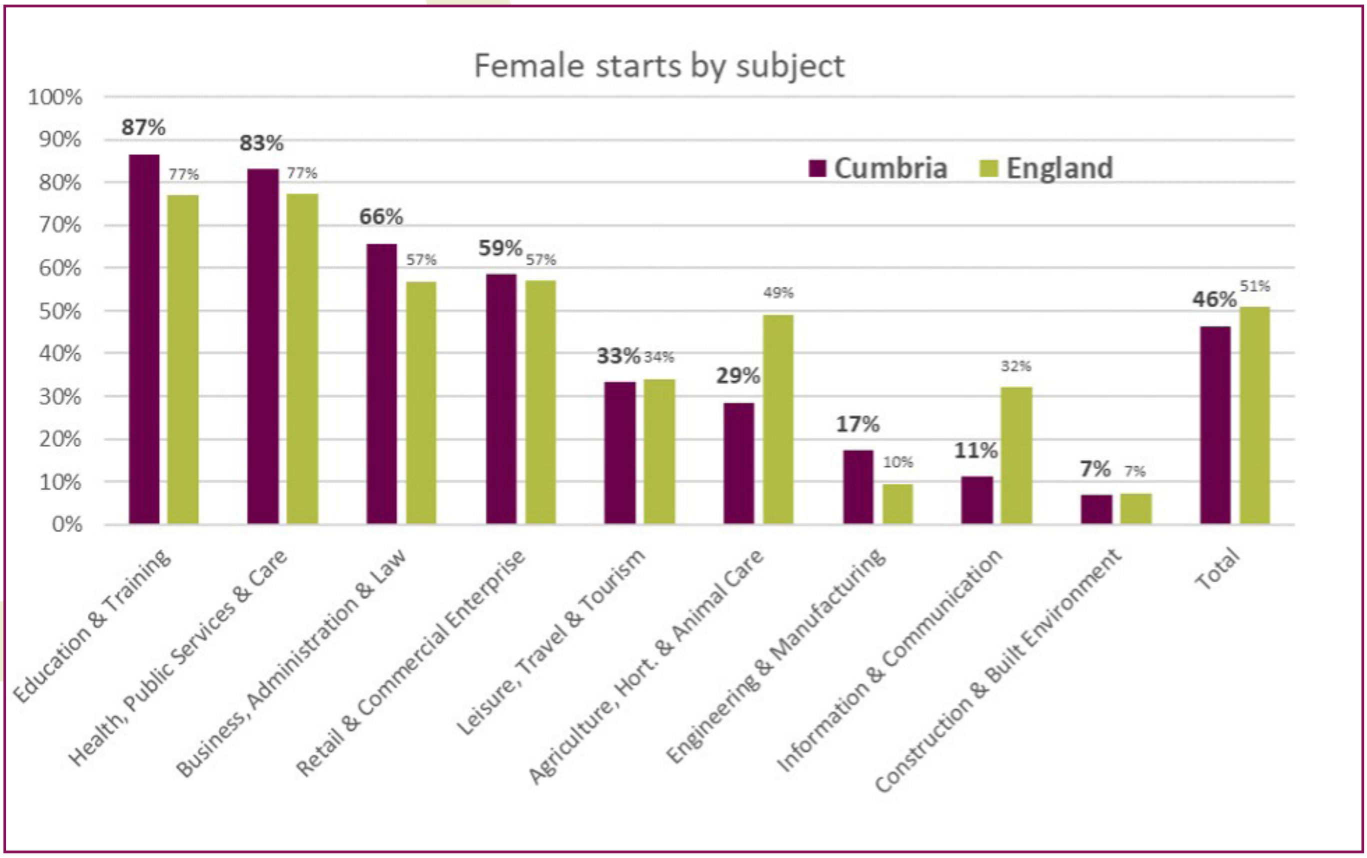
Source: analysis of DfE Localities Cube data

Engagement in apprenticeships by gender

At a national level there are slightly more women (51%), who start in apprenticeships than men (49%) however, this is reversed in Cumbria where males starts are 54% of the total. This indicates that, in relative terms, the apprenticeship route is slightly less popular for women than men in Cumbria. This is likely to reflect the traditional gender focus in the apprenticeships subjects that are most successful in Cumbria. Figure 6.5 shows the pattern of starts by gender. Generally, Cumbria follows the national picture which is for quite strong variations by subject area and gender. What is striking is that in most subjects in Cumbria the gender differences are more pronounced than nationally; a higher %age of starts in the more "female focussed subjects" (health, education training and business admin) and a low share of female starts in ICT, agriculture (more "male focussed subjects"). The exception is in engineering and manufacturing where the 17% of starts who are women is significantly higher than the 10% nationally. However, it is still the case that this subject area accounts for just 10% of all female starts compared to 40% for males starts in Cumbria.

These conclusions on gender representation by subject are clearly made at a broad brush level. There are examples of specific apprenticeships in construction or other sectors where the take up by women is equal or higher than for men (eg project management).

Figure 6.5: Gender by starts by broad subject, 2021/22



Participation by other characteristics

The evidence set out in Appendix A suggests that in Cumbria the patterns of starts follows the pattern of ethnicity in the county and also that the proportion of those starting an apprenticeships with a self-reported "learning difficulty, disability or health problem" at 13% is somewhat higher than the national average.

How successful are apprenticeships?

There is limited robust data on the **achievement** rate of apprenticeships (in terms of entry into good quality work or achievement of the qualifications) in Cumbria.

At a national level we know that in 2020/21 the overall achievement rate was 58% (down on 65% in 2018/19)[12]. An analysis of the data shows that apprenticeships tend to have very high pass rates for frameworks and standards for those who reach this stage. The key issues is the high dropout rate for apprenticeships (around 50% nationally).

We know in 2021/22 that there were 1,840 apprenticeships achievements in Cumbria and there were 3,630 recorded leavers. This represents a crude achievement or success rate of around 50%. This rate appears to be lower than the national rate stated above and also to have been falling over time (from 69% in 2017/18). There is some variation in this achievement rate by level, with the rate lowest for Level 2 apprenticeships.

12 https://apprenticeshipdata.co.uk/insights/

This finding is surprising given the well-established training infrastructure for apprenticeships, the tradition and experience and number of larger employers engaged with apprenticeships. We would have expected the completion rates would outperform the England picture. However, there are limitations in the data and it is not possible to make a direct comparison with the national picture. We do not know the variation by subject area or prior educational level of apprentices. It is also possible the many apprentices do not finish their apprenticeships for positive reason (getting a well-paid job with training, accessing higher education etc). In the consultation event it was pointed out that there are complex reasons for non-completion including in some area because a prior qualification is achieved before completion of the apprenticeships itself (so no incentive for the learner to continue as they have the necessary qualification) as well as leavers taking up well paid jobs during apprenticeships.

At a national level recent research[13] looked at reasons for non-completion based on research with learners. This work highlighted a range of factors (see Box 6.1). These findings are of course focussed on those apprentices who do not complete their apprenticeships. There is no reason to suppose that these findings do not in large part also apply to those apprentices who fail to complete in Cumbria.

Box 6.1: Reasons for leaving/non-completion of apprenticeships from national research

Preparation:
Often apprentices do not feel well informed about their programmes or their End Point Assessment prior to starting. Information provided tended to involve details such as the quantity and frequency of assessments or the number of days spent with the employer and training provider. However, there was a lack of detail about the training content.

Reasons for withdrawal:
The most common reasons were negative experience on the apprenticeship programme:

- Lack of support from the employer (37%)
- Poor course organisation/change to logistics (3 %)
- High workload (29%);
- Lack of support from their tutor (26%); and
- Poor-quality teaching (24%).
- Lack of support from both tutor and employer as a reason for withdrawal (13%)
- Around a quarter of respondents (27 %) said that they withdrew due to a loss of interest or motivation.

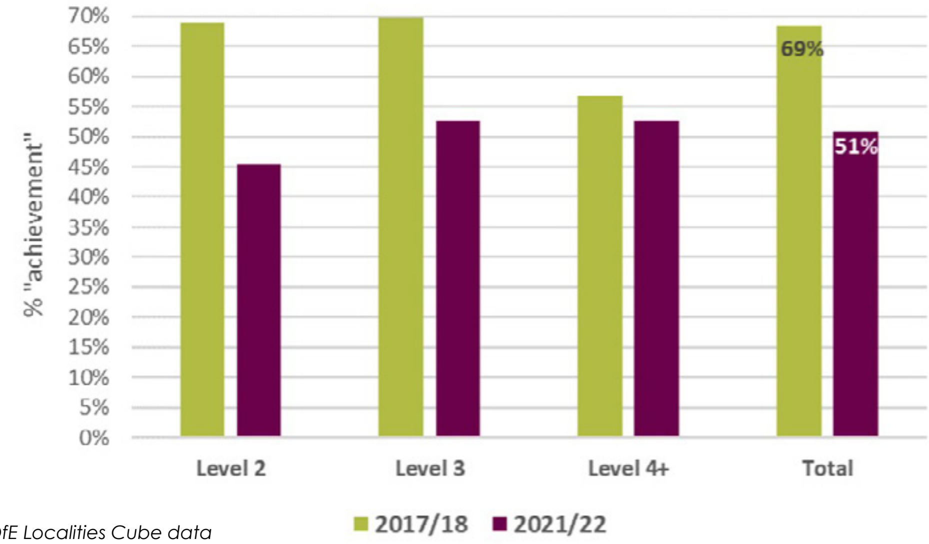
Reasons for withdrawal also vary significantly according to apprenticeship and demographic factors. The research concluded that a combination of either a lack of support from the training provider or employer (or both) is the driving factor for withdrawal.

Contributory factors:
The research suggested that a mismatch between expectations and the apprenticeship experience is a contributing factor to withdrawal. A lack of employer support, not being given adequate time off to study, not learning as many skills as expected and unexpected impacts of COVID-19 were cited as key areas where apprenticeships did not match expectations. Perceptions of the quality of training and support from training providers were highly polarised according to whether interview participants completed or withdrew from their apprenticeship.

13 Apprenticeship outcomes and destinations, St Martin's Group, October 2022. Based on an online survey completed by 2,427 apprentices across England in July and August 2022 and 38 follow-up interviews

The outcomes are higher than these averages for some kinds of apprenticeships. With Higher Level / Degree apprenticeships employers are sponsoring existing or recruited staff, to meet specific skills needs.

Figure 6.6: Cumbria apprenticeships achievement rates, 2017/18 and 2021/22



Source: analysis of DfE Localities Cube data

7. KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The key points from the analysis of apprenticeships data and consultations are:

1. Apprenticeships have and will continue to have a **very important role** in Cumbria in supplying skills needed by employers and the economy. Compared to most other parts of England they play a particularly important role especially in the Barrow and Copeland areas, but across the county; they are of course only one route by which these skills are developed.

2. In broad terms the pattern of apprenticeships by subject and sector appears to **fit well with the current and likely future skills needs of the economy at an overall Cumbria level.** It is however difficult to match precisely subject areas for apprenticeships and occupational/ sector labour supply needs, so this conclusion needs to be caveated. It is also the case that at local labour market area level the alignment may be less close.

3. There is, however, a notable lack of apprenticeship starts and participants in skills areas linked to the **visitor economy**, especially given its importance in Cumbria. There are a variety reasons for this, not least that many employers in the sector see apprenticeships as less relevant, that there are short term pressure to recruit and that SMEs dominate the sector.

4. Also the level of apprenticeships starts in **ICT subjects** is very low (2% compared to 6% nationally) - which is likely to reflect the lack of the presence of this sector in the Cumbrian economy at present but does not help the long term ambitions to transform the economy and enhance digital skills. The consultation highlighted that this is an area where providers would like to increase provision and there is interest from potential trainees but there are constraints in terms of the number of ICT firms and the skills within colleges to support training.

5. In the consultation the role of apprenticeships in respect of the future **green skills** needs of clean growth and clean energy was raised. There are no apprenticeships that are focussed per se on green skills and indeed green skills are hard to define (as often they reflect part of existing occupation skills requirements). However, it will be important to ensure that all apprenticeships, especially ones for instance in the building or motor trades, take into account the changing skills needs. There are possible capacity issues linked to training equipment and kit mentioned in the consultation that will have to be addressed. At a national level there are trailblazer areas (involving the green apprenticeship advisory panel and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) where work is underway to explore the implications of the green economy for a range of apprenticeship standards[14].

14 The implications of: heat pumps, Heat networks, Solar, Electricity networks and smart systems, offshore and onshore wind power, advanced nuclear power, farming and horticulture, forestry, environment and ecology, retrofit, electric vehicles and battery manufacture, and green finance and innovation

6. There are four areas where there is a prima facie opportunity to extend participation in apprenticeship:

   a. First, in terms of **gender**, the pattern in Cumbria is particularly skewed with relatively low participation of women in the more traditionally "male" subject areas and men in "female" subject areas. This means that, as part of increasing entries into apprenticeships, there should be scope to extend overall take-up by increasing in particle gender representation in those subject areas less well represented by each gender at present.

   b. Second, there are signs that those with poorer academic qualifications who may come from more **disadvantaged backgrounds** are becoming less able to access apprenticeships[15]. This in part reflects the strong competition to enter apprenticeships in the major employers and also the reduction

   c. Third, although participation in apprenticeships is high in the 16 to 19 year olds there is evidence that the rate of take up in **older adults** (25 plus) is lower than average in Cumbria (by around 10%). In part this is likely to reflect the success in terms of access in earlier ages, and in part the low rates of adult unemployment. It may also reflect a reluctance of older adults in Cumbria to engage in what is perceived as something designed for younger people. There are also financial barriers for older adults to enter many forms of apprenticeships, although for graduate apprenticeships sponsored by employers this is less of an issue.

   d. Fourth, a significant proportion of leavers from 16-18 study **enter employment** rather than apprenticeships or education (23% compared to 21% in England and 19% in the North West). The implication is that they may be doing a job with limited or no structured training. This is an opportunity to, if appropriate, try and extend the apprenticeship model which is not therefore in "competition" with accessing higher education.

7. The data suggests that, as with the national level, there is a serious issue in Cumbria in terms of many of those who start apprenticeships **not then completing them** (across all levels but particularly Level 2). The national research indicates that the reasons for this stems from deficiencies in some case with pre-entry advice and preparedness and then a combination of a lack of suitable support from the training provider and/or or employer. The consultation indicates that these reasons apply also in Cumbria and that there are particular challenges in the engagement and deliver of SME employers. There are of course many very successful, well-run apprenticeships with higher completions rates in Cumbria.

8. Discussions with consultees and at the consultation have highlighted the significant **barriers to many SMEs** in providing apprenticeships and so accessing apprentices. Given the preponderance of SMEs in many sectors of the Cumbria economy (outside manufacturing and engineering) this is a serious concern. These barriers are several:

   a. lack of capacity internally to support apprentices (where SMEs have no or very limited HR and training function);

   b. cost of engagement and employment of apprentices (even with the support available for SMEs);

   c. lack of understanding of the system and the range of opportunities and types of apprenticeships that may be suitable; and

   d. lack of capacity to support a 1 or more apprentices (for smaller firms where there may not be a whole full-time role to fill).

15 We have assumed that the level of educational qualification is a proxy for degree of disadvantage, but this may not always be true

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key issues and opportunities and the analysis of the data, there are some suggested strategic actions and objectives, which could be put in place as a county in order to address these. These should form the vision for the Apprenticeship Strategy in Cumbria which identifies where action could be taken to improve the system.

AIMS

The aims of the strategy are to:

Develop the workforce skills needed by Cumbria's economy and businesses in the future by creating high quality opportunities to develop, attract and retain skills in Cumbria

Contribute to enhancing diversity and social mobility.

OBJECTIVES

The proposed strategic objectives are:

1. Developing more quality apprenticeships in skill areas where they are under-represented to meet the current and future needs of the economy

Action 1: Focus on developing more apprenticeships in hospitality-related skill areas working with existing stakeholders

By the end of 2021 labour shortages had emerged across most of the economy, with hospitality one of the sectors with the most acute skills and labour gaps. There is already work underway across the sector to try and address skills shortages, including making greater use of apprenticeships. A collaborative approach across SMEs in the delivery of apprenticeships (see Action 10) and development of a level 4-6 apprenticeship are opportunities to increase participation levels.

Action 2: Seek ways to enhance the level of provision and access to apprenticeships in ICT

In 2020/21 there were just 90 starts in the ICT field, to bring this up to in line with national levels would require a tripling of provision and delivery (to around 270 to 300 per annum across Cumbria). The base of ICT firms is relatively small in Cumbria and there are issues with skills supply amongst trainers. This will need some creative solutions to find ways of enhancing the scale of the offer. A collaborative approach across SMEs and potentially with the ICT departments of larger firms would possible be one way of progressing this area.

Action 3: Ensure that the provision of apprenticeship training on the ground in can deliver the

needs of the move to the green economy

The standards are being developed and updated nationally. The challenge locally is to ensure the providers have the right skills and equipment/facilities to be able to deliver changes in the training required for the main apprenticeships affected. There is also a communication point about the role apprenticeships have and will have in helping deliver the green economy and clean growth in the future – to help attract young people.

2. Improving participation in apprenticeships overall

There is scope overall to increase the "market share" and number of apprenticeships by increasing the number of young people (and older adults) who take-up apprenticeships. This is even though Cumbria has a much higher entry rate for young people than most other areas. This is because: (a) the overall numbers of young people are rising over the next 5 to 8 years; (b) there is a substantial cohort who do not progress to education or apprenticeships; and (c) apprenticeships are somewhat underrepresented in over 25 year olds in Cumbria.

Action 4: Increase representation by gender of apprenticeships in some subject areas

There is a real opportunity to increase the gender participation in those apprenticeships subject areas that are heavily gender skewed. This provides an opportunity to increase numbers starting apprenticeships, especially in areas where there are long term skills needs in the economy (such as manufacturing and engineering). There are challenges in trying to achieve this as it relates to education subjects undertaken and attitudes amongst young people, their peers, employers and parents. The work on careers and work placements could help make such a change.

Action 5: Increase uptake of apprenticeships in older age groups

Although participation in apprenticeships is high by national standards amongst 16 to 19 year olds and 20 to 24 year olds, the rate of take up in older adults (25 plus) is below average in Cumbria. Work could be done to encourage apprenticeships for all ages as a way of re-skilling and retaining our workforce, including those who are not school leavers into apprenticeships.

Action 6: Enhance apprenticeships as a route to encourage greater social mobility and diversity in the workforce

Employers should be encouraged to consider apprenticeships as part of their social impact and diversity and inclusion strategies. Apprenticeships should be accessible to everyone who is eligible. Increasing the amount of Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships should contribute towards this and will provide a structured training programme and also attract those unemployed into the labour market.

Businesses should be open minded around this and should consider apprenticeships as a key part of social mobility. They can support employability and can enable individuals to gain skills in a non-academic context.

3. Preparedness for Apprenticeships

For many apprentices, an apprenticeship is the start of their career and their first role and because of this, it is important that they are as prepared as much as possible when starting their apprenticeship journey. This includes in the workplace and also in the training environment.

As part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan in 2022, employers from all sectors commented that some new entrants, which include apprentices, are not equipped with the skills required for the role or workplace and that training and development is required to build these skills. This could be done through training course interventions, coaching or mentoring. This upfront investment is likely to make apprenticeships work better for employers and the trainees (and so also contributing to improving outcomes).

Action 7: Support those entering apprenticeships with preparedness for work

Focus is therefore required to help future and current apprentice with this, with support, mentoring and insights from employers.

Action 8: Encourage and promote the Provider Access Legislation (PAL) as a route to school children and students considering apprenticeships

Ensure that schools are positively engaged and educated around the diverse range of apprenticeships in the county, focussing on county wide opportunities as well as those in their district.

4. Improving the delivery of apprenticeships in Cumbria and so outcomes

The level of dropout rates (ie non-completion) in Cumbria is a concern as it is nationally. This suggests that there are some systematic issues in the recruitment and then delivery of apprenticeship that needs careful attention. There is some evidence that, in spite of the well-established system in the county, that the dropout rate overall may be higher than nationally.

Action 9: Provide better support for smaller businesses seeking to get involved in apprenticeships

It is vital that the apprentice experience high quality placements which include meaningful and varied work. This is one reason for drop-out rates form apprenticeships. Some businesses may need help to prepare for apprentices joining their team and in creating a supportive environment and culture, where apprentices feel confident to ask questions and ask for help.

Action 10: Help more smaller businesses to access and to be able to deliver high quality apprenticeships across the county via collaboration

One important way of dealing with the challenges faced by individual SMEs in engaging with apprenticeships is via collaborative models. Collaboration between businesses where businesses could look to share apprenticeships as a way of enhancing the experience of the apprentice themselves and providing variety of opportunities, and also sharing resource across the sector as a way of supporting resource challenges and opportunities and ensuring apprentices are retained following the programme.

Consideration could also be given around using ATAs (Apprenticeship Training Agencies) to help recruit, employ and arrange training for apprentices on behalf of businesses and no registered employers. This would especially be of benefit to SMEs who do not have the luxury of allocated resource for these activities.

Action 11: Involve our retiring workers in the apprenticeship programmes as mentors of trainers

We have a declining working population and an increasing rate of retirees form the workforce. We should support efforts where possible for those retiring or leaving, to work with apprentices in order to transfer knowledge and skills, rather than losing it from the workplace completely. It is recommended that structure should be placed around this as a tool for many businesses to refer to, which could include a mentoring programme for retirees to attend, to enable them to upskill in mentoring should they require it. There is also scope to try and retain these skills in supporting training provision in colleges and elsewhere

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Overall this strategy outlines a route to achieve or improve the following:

- Develop more quality apprenticeships in skill areas to meet the current and future needs of the economy
- Improve participation in apprenticeships overall
- Improve the preparedness of young people for apprenticeships
- Improve the delivery of apprenticeships

Clear and specific actions will need to be identified with various stakeholders and partners involved to underpin the delivery of this strategy to form an action plan. This action plan will be monitored and supported by the Cumbria LEP via its People, Employment and Skills Group (PESSG).

APPENDIX A: DATA ANALYSIS

Apprenticeship Strategy Supporting Analysis

Local area Apprenticeship data have been extracted from the DfE Localities Datacube which is supplied to CLEP via Cumbria County Council under a data sharing agreement with the Department for Education. Data from the Localities Cube have been rounded for disclosure purposes and have been supplemented with data from the publicly accessible Explore Education Statistics Service (*https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/*). All local data relate to trainees with a resident address in Cumbria (their training may be delivered elsewhere). The Apprenticeship Levy was first introduced in 2017/18 and Apprenticeship activity in 2019/20 and 2020/21 was significantly impacted by the pandemic and therefore comparisons have been made between activity in 2018/19 and 2021/22.

2021/22 Key Facts

2021/22 Apprenticeship Data		
Apprentice Characteristics		**Providers & Provision**
3,860 starts by Cumbrian residents and **9,755 active participants** during the year (including those who started in earlier years)		**289 providers** started Apprentices in 2021/22 and **385 providers** had active participants during the year (including those who started in earlier years)
The number of starts recovered somewhat after declining in each of the previous 3 years (two of which were badly impacted by the pandemic) but levels remain lower than in 2018/19		77% of providers had fewer than 10 active participants during the year
40% of starters were aged 16-18 which means approximately 10% of the population in this age group started an Apprenticeship in 2021/22 and around 17% were actively involved in one		The top 10 providers accounted for 6 in 10 starts
33% of starters were aged 25+, these are often existing members of the workforce upskilling		9 of the top 10 providers are locally based
54% of starts were by males and 46% by females		5 of the top 10 providers of new starts were colleges/universities
Barrow residents accounted for 21% of starts, Allerdale and Carlisle residents accounted for 19% each, Copeland and South Lakeland residents 16% each and Eden residents 8%		**5 subject areas accounted for 90% of all starts** - engineering, & manufacturing technologies; health, public services & care; business, administration & law; construction, retail & commercial enterprise
Barrow had a disproportionately high share of starters relative to the area's population size (21% of starts v 14% of population)		**29% of starts were Intermediate Apprenticeships** (level 2); 45% of starts were Advanced (level 3); 27 of starts were Higher (including degree)

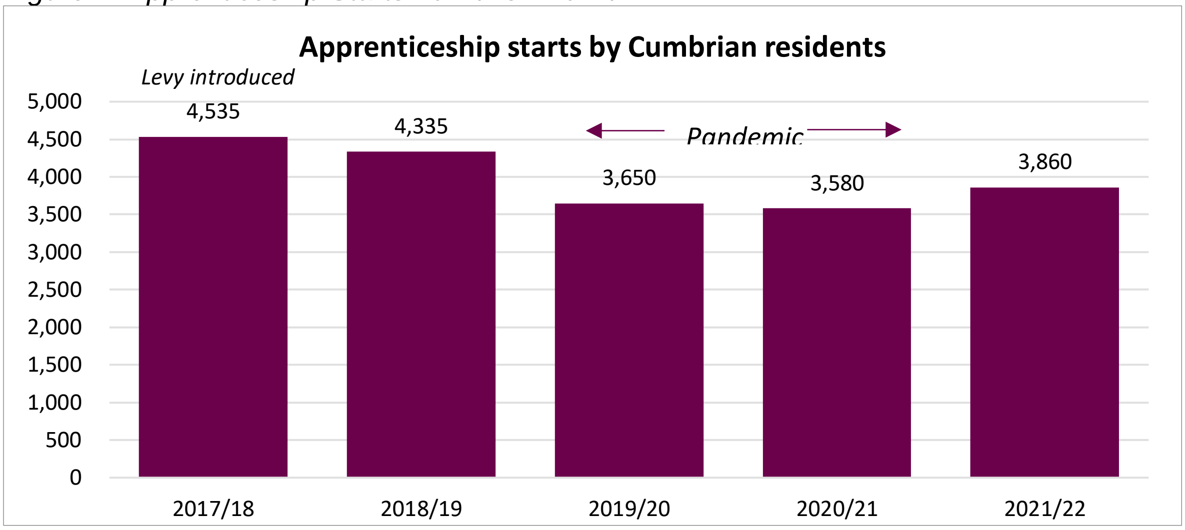
Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident).

1. Total Starts, Active Enrolments & Achievements

In 2021/22 academic year (Aug-July) there were 3,860 starts on Apprenticeship programmes by Cumbrian residents and there were 9,755 active participants during the year (ie including those who started in an earlier year).

Starts increased by 280 in 2021/22 from the previous year (+8%) but were 475 down on the level of starts in 2018/19 (-11%), the academic year before the pandemic. This decline is in line with the England average. The number of active enrolments on Apprenticeship programmes declined by 5% in Cumbria over the same period but was broadly stable nationally. The number of Apprenticeships achieved in 2021/22 in Cumbria fell by 32% from to 2018/19 compared to a fall of 26% nationally.

Figure 1: Apprenticeship Starts 2017/18 - 2021/22



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident).

Figure 2: Change in Apprenticeship Starts, Active Enrolments & Achievements

Apprenticeship Starts, Active Enrolments & Achievements				
	Cumbria			
	2018/19	2021/22	Change 2018/19-2021/22	
	No	No	No	%
Starts	4,335	3,860	-475	-11.0%
Active enrolments	10,250	9,755	-495	-4.8%
Achievements	2,700	1,840	-860	-31.9%
	England			
	2018/19	2021/22	Change 2018/19-2021/22	
	No	No	No	%
Starts	393,380	349,190	-44,190	-11.2%
Active enrolments	742,390	740,350	-2,040	-0.3%
Achievements	185,150	137,220	-47,930	-25.9%

Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) / DfE Explore Education Statistics

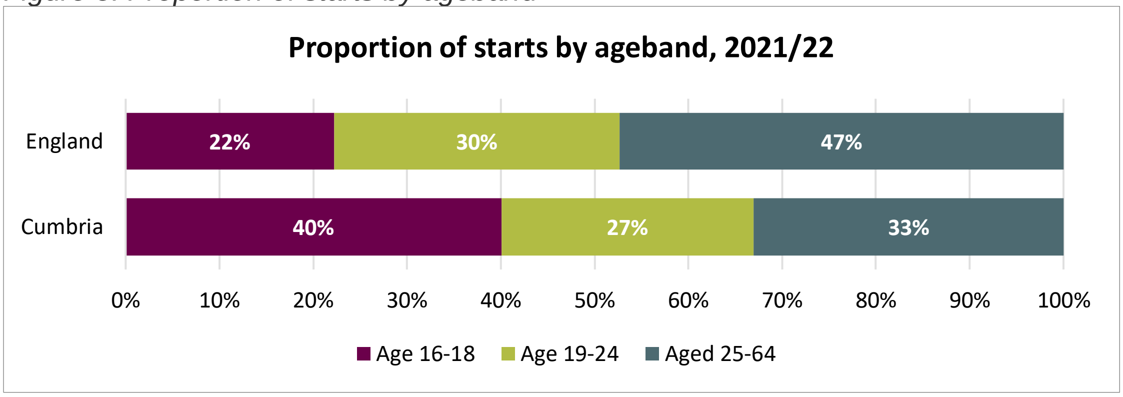
2. Apprentice Characteristics

Age & gender of Apprentices

Just over half of Apprentice starts were by males (54%) and just under half by females (46%). The highest proportion were aged 16-18 with this group accounting for 40% of all starts by Cumbrian residents. This is significantly different to nationally where only 22% of starts are by 16-18 year olds. The proportion of starts by those aged 19-24 is broadly similar in Cumbria to nationally but there are relatively fewer starts by those over 25 years (33% v 47%).

The age profile in Cumbria has remained consistent over the past 5 years but at national level there has been a reduction in the proportion of starts by young people (age 16-18 down from 28% of total starts to 22%) and a corresponding increase in the proportion of starts accounted for by over 25s (up from 41% of starts to 47%).

Figure 3: Proportion of starts by ageband



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) / DfE Explore Education Statistics

Total Apprenticeship starts have fallen by 11% since 2018/19 and this has affected all age groups. Starts by those aged 16-18 fell by 10%, starts by those aged 19-24 fell by 13% and starts by those aged 25-49 fell by 11%. The smallest percentage fall was for those aged 50-60 although this group accounts for only a very small number of starts.

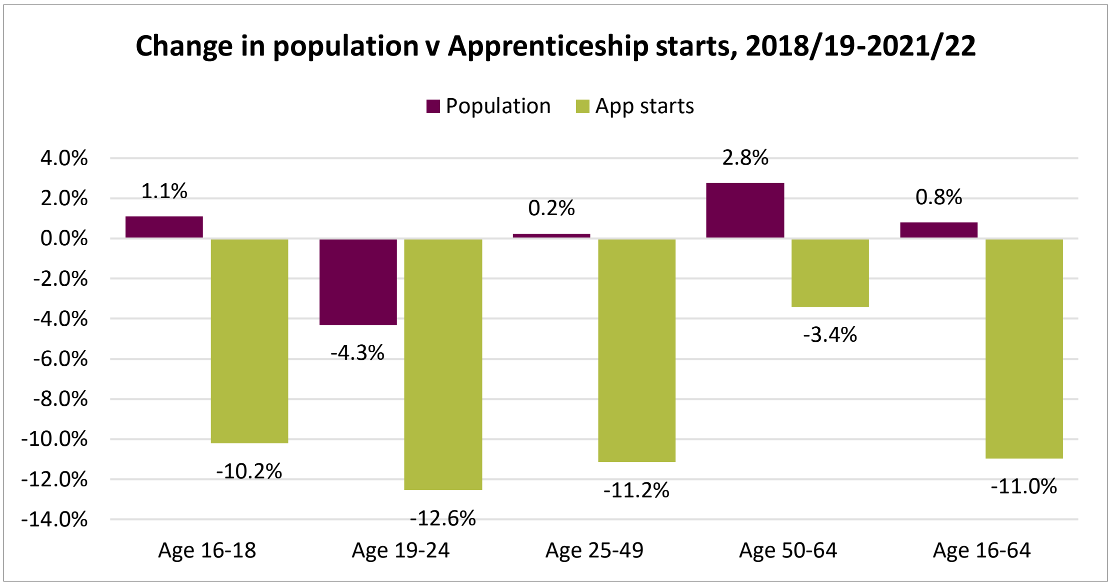
Figure 4: Change in population & starts by ageband

Population estimates by age				
	2018	2021	Change 2018-2021	
	No	No	No	%
16-18	15,456	15,625	169	1.1%
19-24	28,946	27,700	-1,246	-4.3%
25-49	140,356	140,688	332	0.2%
50-64	111,750	114,848	3,098	2.8%
16-64	**296,508**	**298,861**	**2,353**	**0.8%**
Apprenticeship starts by age				
	2018/19	2021/22	Change 2018/19-2021/22	
	No	No	No	%
16-18	1,720	1,550	-170	-10.2%
19-24	1,190	1,040	-150	-12.6%
25-49	1,310	1,160	-150	-11.2%
50-64	120	110	-10	-3.4%
16-64	**4,335**	**3,860**	**-475**	**-11.0%**

Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2021 / LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)
Note: 2018/19 population estimates have not yet been re-based following the 2021 Census but are likely to increase slightly as a result.

In all age groups, the fall in Apprenticeship starts was significantly higher than the change in the estimated population for the corresponding age group.

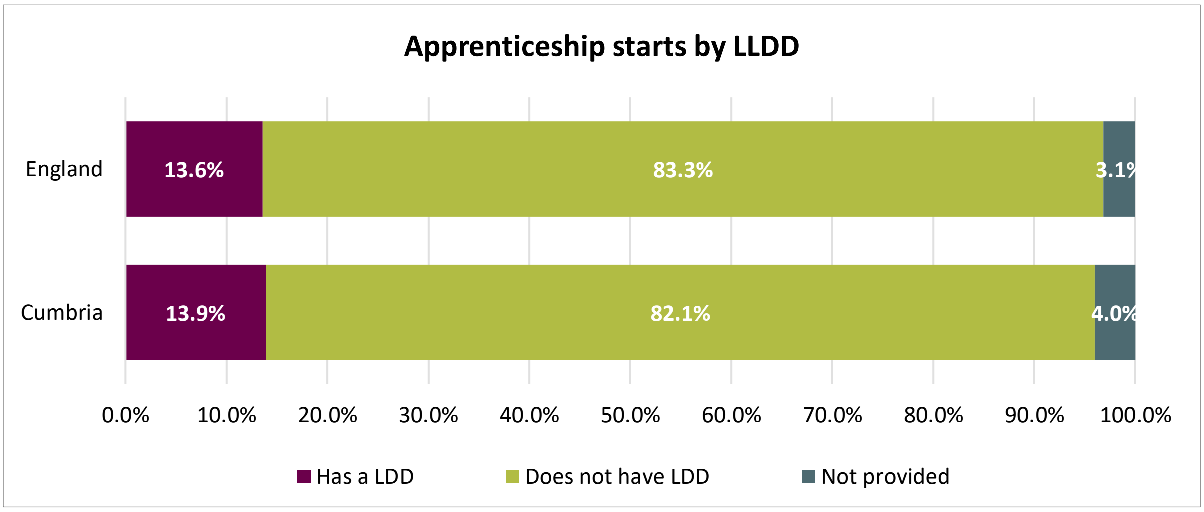
Figure 5: Change in population v Apprenticeship starts



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2021 / LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)
Note: 2018/19 population estimates have not yet been re-based following the 2021 Census but are likely to increase slightly as a result.

Learners are invited to report whether they consider themselves to have a learning difficulty, disability or health problem (LDD). The majority of Apprentices who started in 2021/22 reported that was not the case (82%) with the proportion being very similar in Cumbria to nationally (data on the same basis for the whole population is not available and therefore we cannot assess whether this is representative).

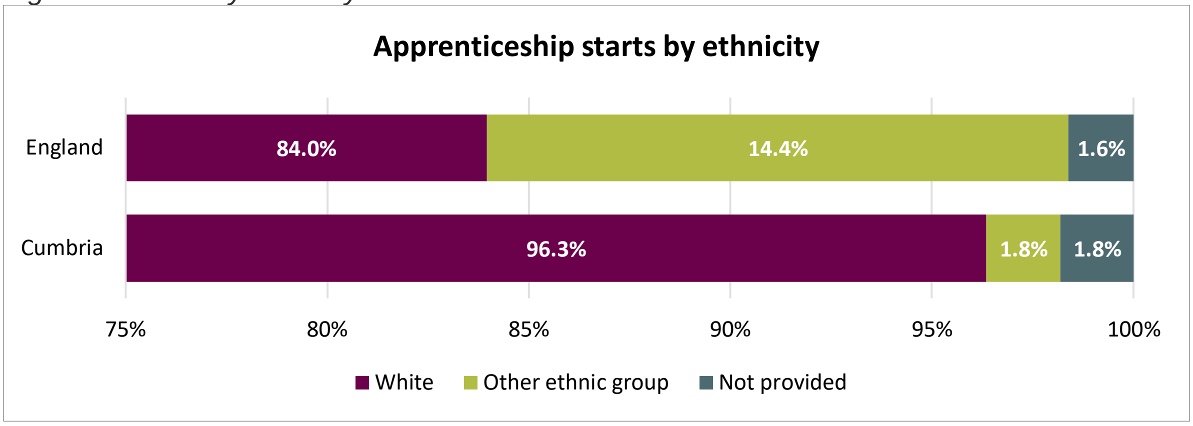
Figure 6: Starts by learning difficulty, disability, health problem



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) / DfE Explore Education Statistics

Learners are invited to report their ethnicity when starting an Apprenticeship and in Cumbria 96% said they were white with 2% from other ethnic groups and 2% not providing a response. The proportion of trainees from ethnic minorities in Cumbria is significantly lower than nationally which reflects the variation in the general population as a whole.

Figure 7: Starts by ethnicity

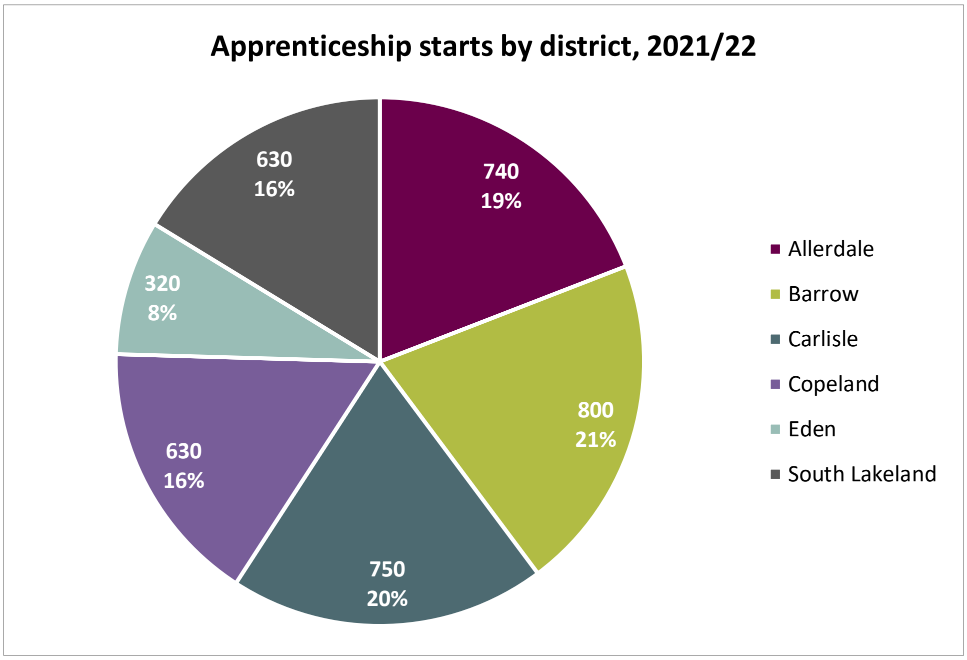


Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) / DfE Explore Education Statistics

Resident location

Barrow had the highest number of residents who started an Apprenticeship in 2021/22 with 800 starts followed by Carlisle (750) and Allerdale (740).

Figure 8: Starts by home location



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

This means that Barrow accounted for 21% of all starts in Cumbria although the area accounts for only 14% of the total population of Cumbria. Copeland also had a higher proportion of starts relative to the area's share of population. In contrast, both Eden and South Lakeland had a lower proportion of starts relative to their population share.

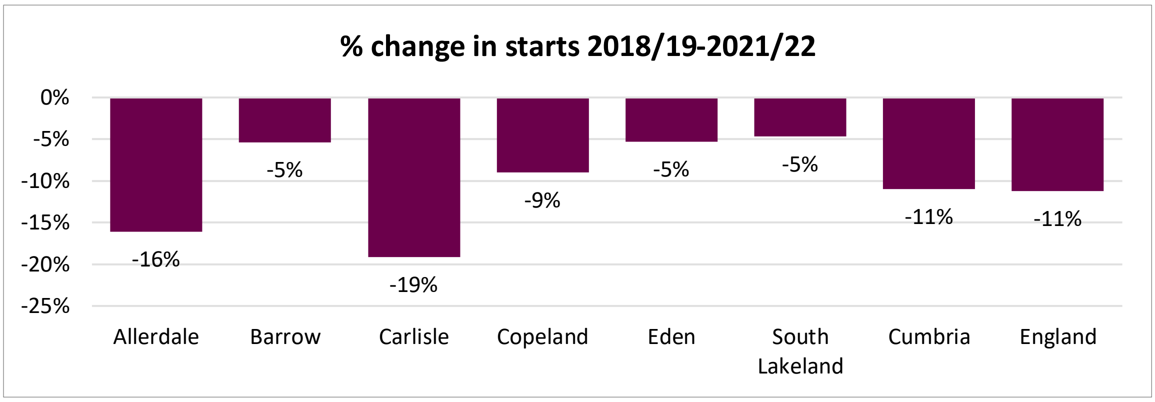
Figure 9: Starts & population 2021/22

Starts and Population 2021/22				
	Starts	**Starts as % Cumbria**	**Population**	**Population as % Cumbria**
Allerdale	740	19.2%	56,700	19.0%
Barrow	800	20.6%	41,290	13.8%
Carlisle	750	19.4%	67,470	22.6%
Copeland	630	16.2%	40,480	13.6%
Eden	320	8.3%	32,230	10.8%
South Lakeland	630	16.3%	60,340	20.2%
Cumbria	3,860	100.0%	298,510	100.0%

Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2021 / LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

Starts as a whole in Cumbria were 11% down on pre-pandemic levels but fell more than average in Carlisle (-19%) and in Allerdale (-16%). In contrast, starts fell by just 5% in Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and by 9% in Copeland.

Figure 10: % change in starts by district

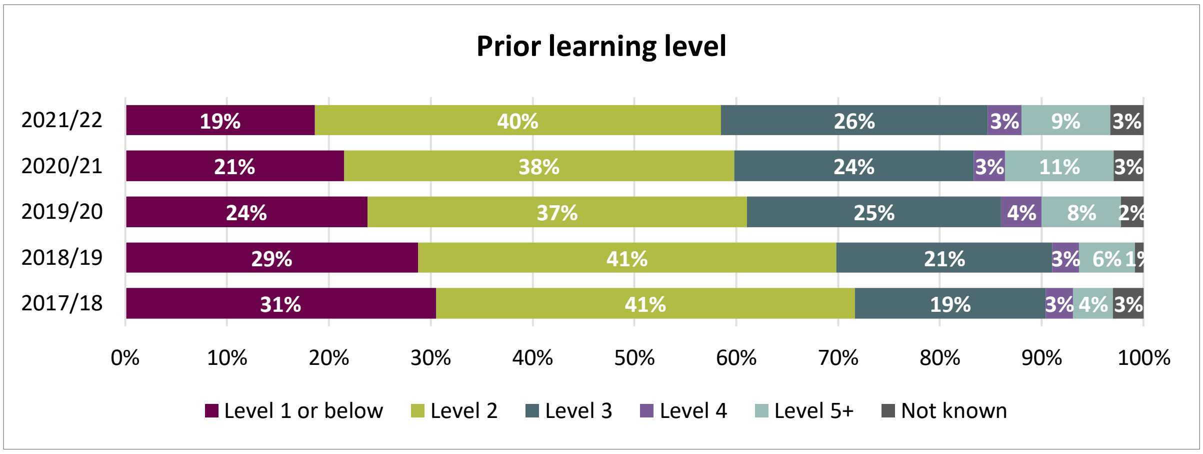


Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) / DfE Explore Education Statistics

Prior learning level

There has been a gradual change in the prior attainment level of those starting an Apprenticeship over the past 5 years with the proportion of starters who have low levels of prior learning falling and the proportion with pre-existing qualifications at level 3 or above gradually increasing from 25% of starts in 2017/18 to 38% of starts in 2021/22.

Figure 11: Prior attainment level of Apprentices



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

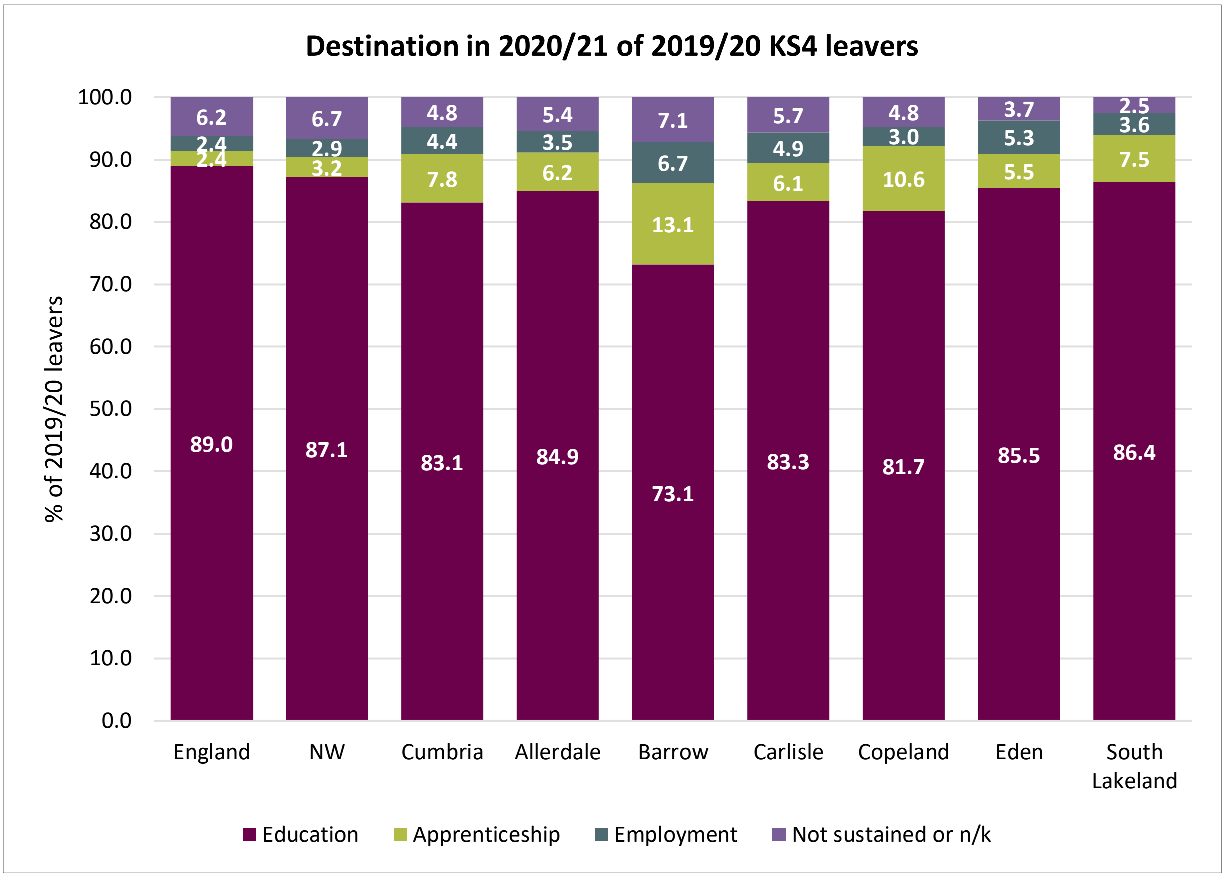
3. Apprenticeships as a destination for young people

Note: the data on progression in this section is only available up to 2020/21 and therefore doesn't include any post-pandemic data (this will not be released until autumn 2023).

Destinations following Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

In 2020/21 almost 8% of young people leaving Key Stage 4 were in an Apprenticeship the following year, more than treble the national average. This was particularly high in Barrow and Copeland where 13% and 11% respectively were in an Apprenticeship, despite the impact of the pandemic. In both these areas the proportion in employment was also higher than nationally and across all areas in Cumbria, the proportion remaining in education was lower than nationally.

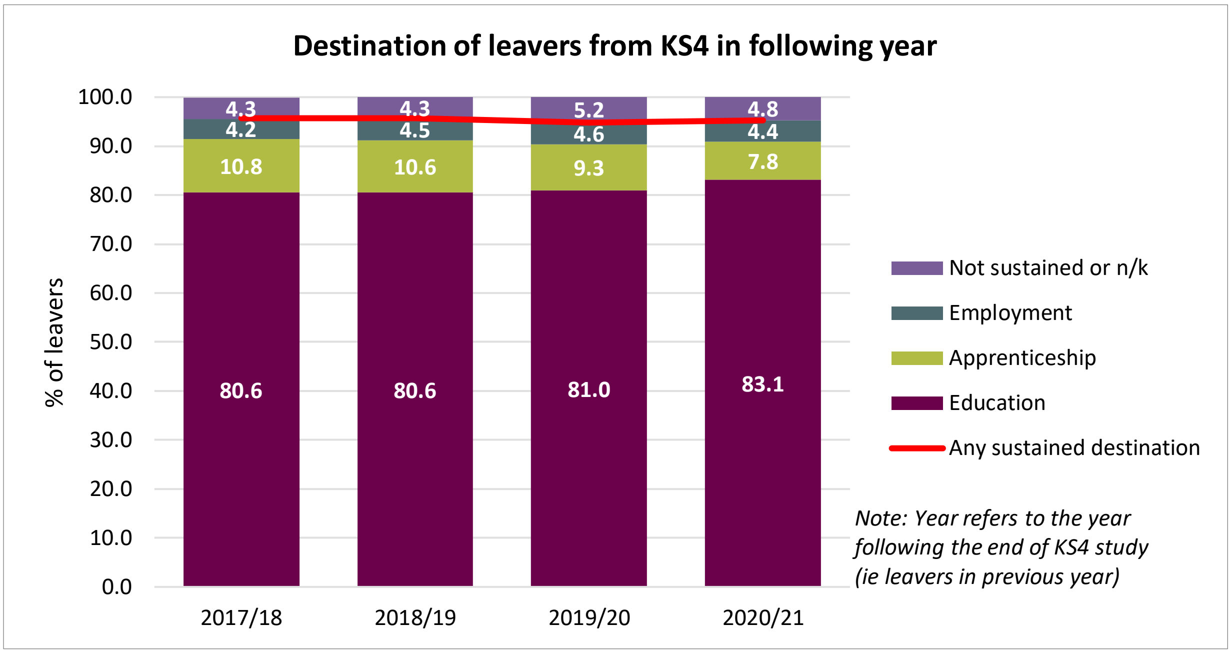
Figure 12: Destination of KS4 leavers in 2020/21



Source: DfE Key stage 4 destination measures 2020-2021, published Oct 2022

Over the last 4 years of data, the proportion of KS4 leavers in an Apprenticeship had fallen from 11% to 8% with a corresponding increase in the proportion remaining in education. However, the pandemic had an impact during this time and led to a reduction in vocational opportunities for young people. (Until 2021/22 data are released in autumn 2023 we cannot assess whether the trend is ongoing).

Figure 13: Destinations of KS4 leavers from 2017/18 to 2020/21

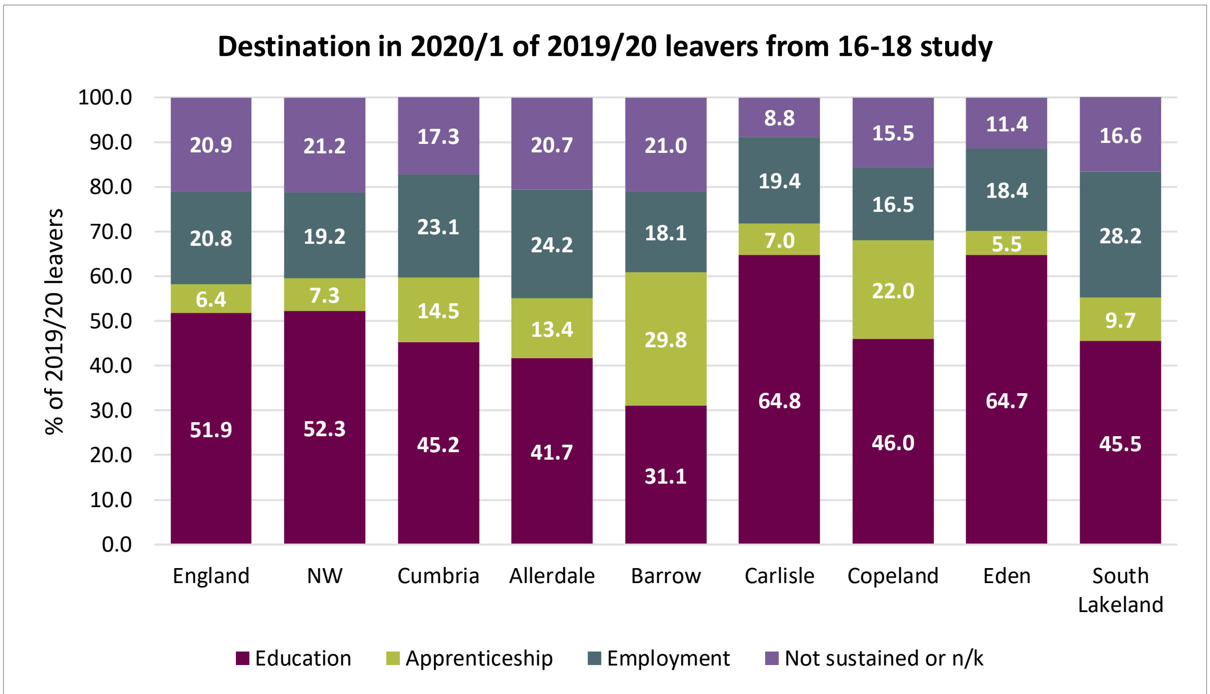


Source: DfE Key stage 4 destination measures 2020-2021, published Oct 2022

Destinations following Key Stage 5 (16-18 study)

As with KS4 leavers, there is a significant difference in the progression of KS5 leavers (ie those leaving compulsory 16-18 study) in Cumbria compared to nationally. In Cumbria almost 1 in 7 progressed into an Apprenticeship, more than double the national and regional averages. In Barrow, well over a quarter did so and in Copeland over a fifth did so. Only Eden had a lower Apprenticeship progression rate than nationally. Across Cumbria as a whole the proportion continuing into education was lower than nationally except in Carlisle and Eden where education progression rates were higher.

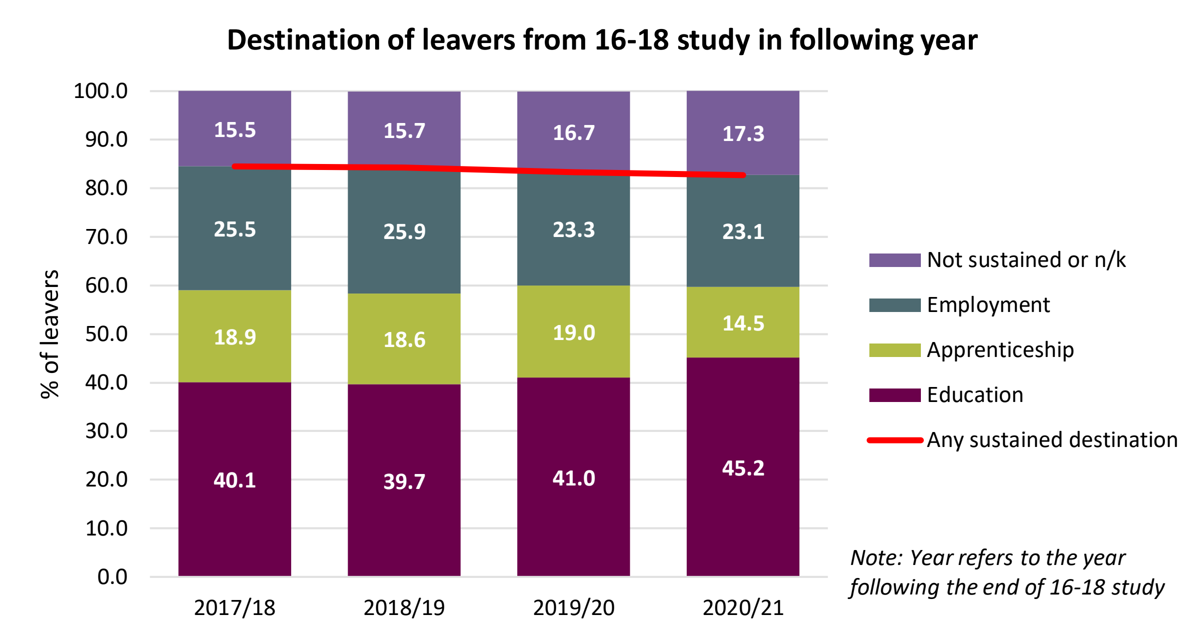
Figure 14: Destination of KS5 leavers in 2020/21



Source: DfE 16-18 destination measures 2020-2021, published Oct 2022

As with KS4 leavers, progression from KS5 into an Apprenticeship fell in 2020/21 and the proportion remaining in education increased, although this may be temporary pandemic effect.

Figure 15: Destinations of KS5 leavers from 2017/18 to 2020/21

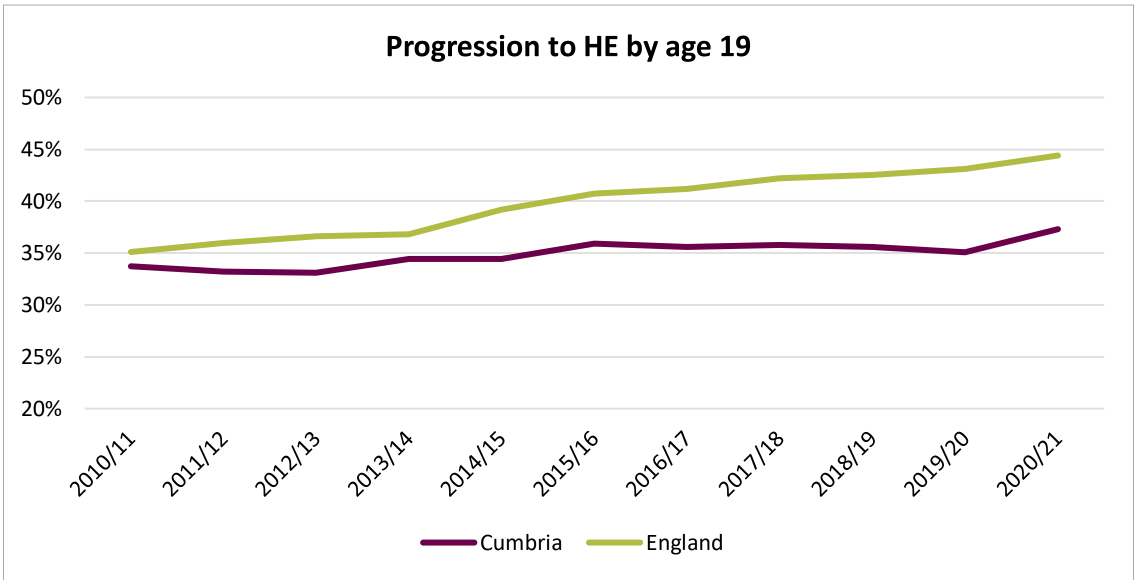


Source: DfE 16-18 destination measures 2020-2021, published Oct 2022

Progression to Higher Education by age 19

One of the explanations for a reduction in Apprenticeship starts is the increase in young people (from state funded schools) entering higher education. Data from DfE suggests that this is not a major contributing factor in Cumbria as the proportion of young people who have entered HE by the age of 19 has changed relatively little in recent years with the exception of an upturn in 2020/21 which was almost certainly influenced by the pandemic having reduced the range of options. Nationally however there has been a steady year on year increase in the proportion of young people having entered higher education by the age of 19.

Figure 16: Progression to higher education by age 19



Source: DfE Explore Education Statistics (widening participation in HE)

4. Providers and Provision

Providers

In 2021/22 Apprentices started with 289 different providers and in total, 385 providers had active participants during the year (including those who had started in earlier years). Three quarters of providers had fewer than 10 active participants and the top 10 providers (by volume) accounted for 6 out of 10 of all starts.

Gen2 and Lakes College West Cumbria accounted for the highest volume of starts (480 and 470 respectively) although both have seen a fall in volume since 20181/9 which exceeds the overall fall in starts. Kendal College and BAE Systems are the next two biggest providers for starts and both have seen an increase since 2018/19. Carlisle College has seen the biggest fall in starts out of the top 10 providers (down by 158, 44%).

Figure 17: Top 10 providers of starts 2021/2

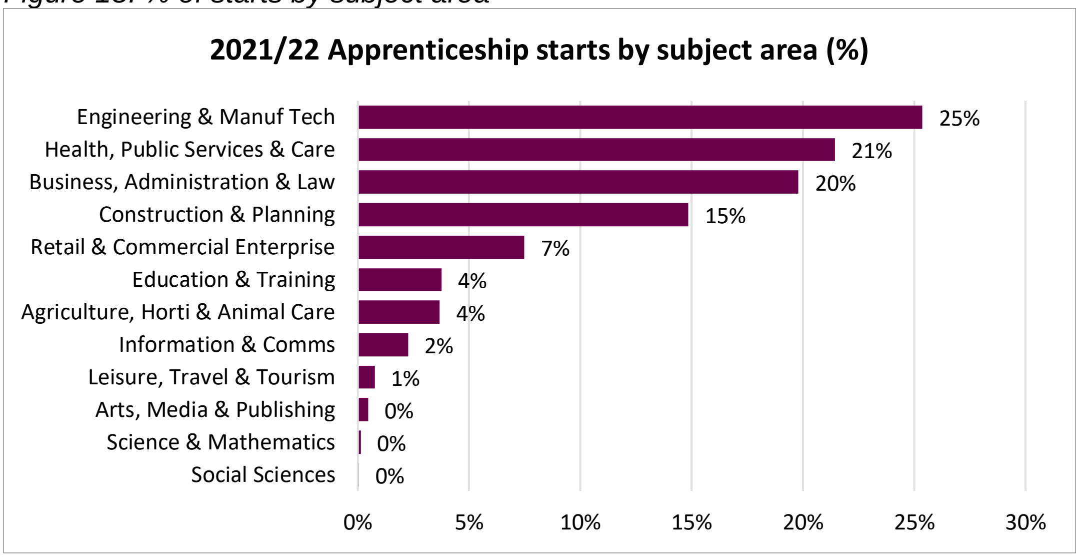
Top 10 Providers of Apprenticeship Starts 2021/22				
	Starts 2021/22		Change from 2018/19	
	No	%	No	%
Gen2 Engineering & Technology	480	12%	-86	-15%
Lakes College West Cumbria	470	12%	-79	-14%
Kendal College	310	8%	49	19%
BAE Systems	290	8%	49	20%
Furness College	220	6%	-34	-13%
NCG / Carlisle College	200	5%	-158	-44%
University of Cumbria	130	3%	91	233%
Lifetime Training Group	90	2%	-74	-45%
RWP Training	80	2%	-112	-58%
System People	80	2%	18	30%
All providers	3,860	100%	-475	-11.0%

Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

Subject of Apprenticeship starts and achievements

Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies was the sector subject area with the greatest volume of starts in 2021/22, account for 25% of total starts. This was followed by Health, Public Services & Care with 21% and Business, Administration & Law with 20%.

Figure 18: % of starts by subject area



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

There has been a substantial decrease in Apprenticeship starts for Business, Administration & Law since 2018/19 (down by 310, 29%) and also in Retail & Commercial Enterprise (down by 160, 36%). The more detailed data (shown in Appendix A) shows that it is the administration subjects that have fallen within the Business, Administration & Law subject area while starts on business management subjects have increased. Within Retail & Commercial Enterprise, there have been falls in all subject areas, particularly hospitality & catering (down 160, 42%) and service enterprises (down 130, 44%).

Figure 19: Starts by subject area

Starts by Subject Area 2018/19 & 2021/22				
	2018/19	2021/22	Change 2018/19-2021/22	
	No	No	No	%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	100	140	40	37.9%
Arts, Media & Publishing	10	20	10	200.0%
Business, Administration & Law	1,070	760	-310	-28.7%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	540	570	30	5.3%
Education & Training	130	150	20	9.8%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	1,020	980	-40	-4.2%
Health, Public Services & Care	850	830	-20	-2.2%
Information & Communication Technology	110	90	-20	-23.0%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	40	30	-10	-32.6%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	450	290	-160	-36.1%
Science & Mathematics	0	10	10	66.7%
Social Sciences	0	0	0	100.0%
Total	4,340	3,860	-480	-11.0%

Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

The reduction in Apprenticeship starts during the pandemic has had an impact on the number of achievements in 2021/22 with 32% fewer achievements than in 2018/19 (a fall of 860).

Figure 20: Achievements by subject area

Achievements by subject area 2018/19 & 2021/22				
	2018/19	2021/22	Change 2018/19-2021/22	
	No	No	No	%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	100	50	-50	-51.5%
Arts, Media & Publishing	0	0	0	50.0%
Business, Administration & Law	550	360	-190	-34.3%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	250	220	-30	-13.2%
Education & Training	90	100	10	8.9%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	850	520	-330	-38.2%
Health, Public Services & Care	450	410	-40	-8.5%
Information & Communication Technology	60	50	-10	-12.1%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	50	10	-40	-87.5%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	310	120	-190	-61.1%
Science & Mathematics	0	10	10	100.0%
Total	2,700	1,840	-860	-31.8%

Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

It is difficult to relate Apprenticeship subject areas to employment sectors as they do not use the same classification system and some subjects are cross cutting (particularly business administration). However, the significance of Apprenticeships in Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies, Health, Public Services & Care and Construction, Planning & the Built Environment in Cumbria is to be expected given the share of employment in Manufacturing (15%), health (13%) and construction (7%). However, it is clear that there are relatively fewer Apprenticeship starts in subjects relating to retail and hospitality than their share of employment in Cumbria – accommodation & food services and retail account for 22% of employment between them but only 8% of Apprenticeship starts are in Leisure, Travel & Tourism or Retail & Commercial Enterprise.

Figure 21: Employment by sector

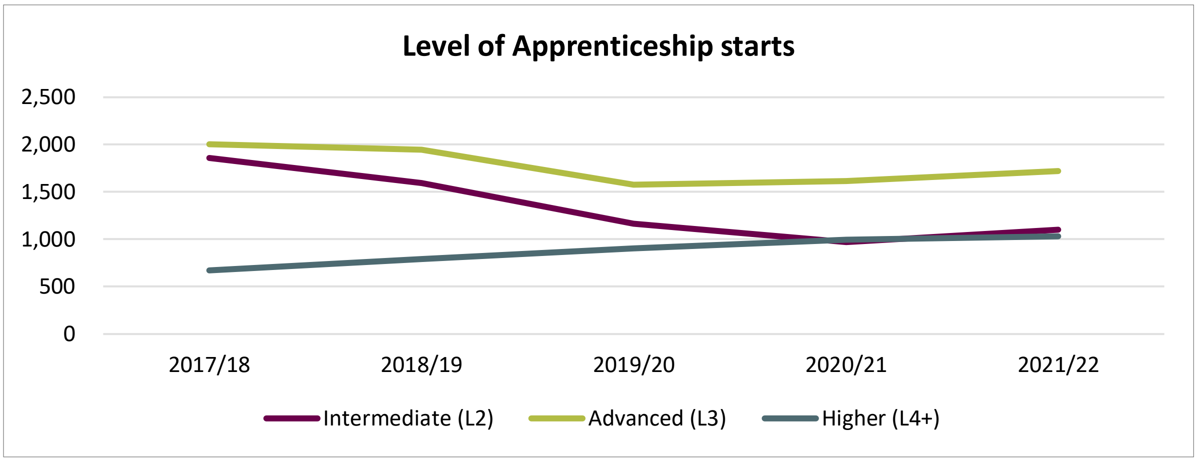
Employment 2021		
	No	**%**
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing	14,000	5.6
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities	2,500	1.0
3 : Manufacturing	36,000	14.5
4 : Construction	17,000	6.8
5 : Motor trades	5,000	2.0
6 : Wholesale	7,000	2.8
7 : Retail	24,000	9.6
8 : Transport & storage	12,000	4.8
9 : Accommodation & food services	31,000	12.4
10 : Information & communication	2,500	1.0
11 : Financial & insurance	3,000	1.2
12 : Property	4,000	1.6
13 : Professional, scientific & technical	14,000	5.6
14 : Business admin & support services	11,000	4.4
15 : Public administration	11,000	4.4
16 : Education	15,000	6.0
17 : Health	33,000	13.3
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	9,000	3.6
All sectors	249,000	100.0

Source: ONS Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) 2021

Level of Apprenticeship

The highest volume of starts in 2021/22 was for Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3) which accounted for 45% of all starts. Intermediate (Level 2) and Higher (Level 4+) starts accounted for 29% and 27% respectively. Over the past 5 years there has been a steady decline in Intermediate starts which has partially been offset by a steady increase in Higher starts. In 2021/22 there were 490 fewer starts at Intermediate level than in 2018/19 and 230 fewer at Advanced level but there were 240 more at Higher level.

Figure 22: Level of starts

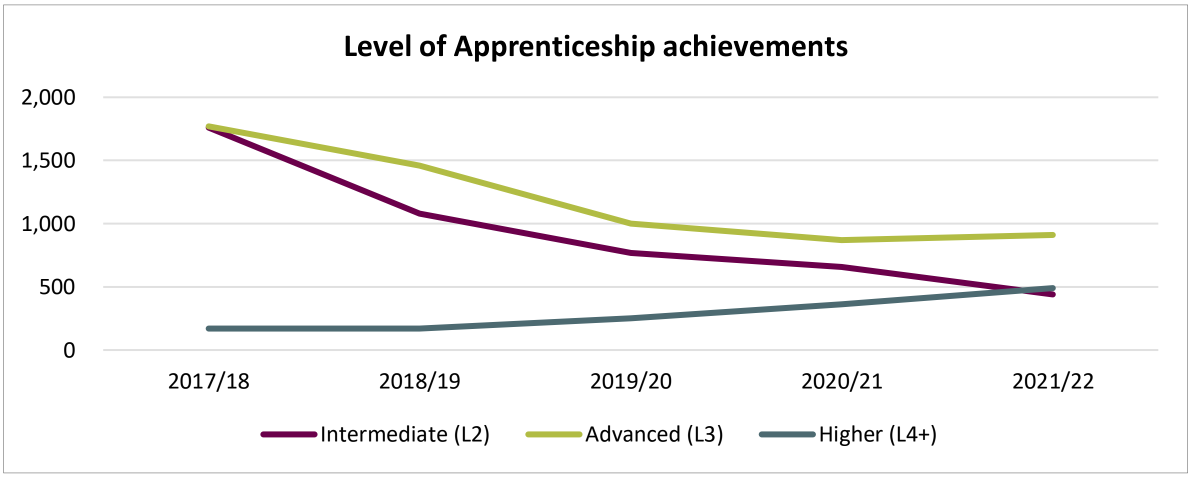


Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

This shift in the level of Apprenticeships is potentially significant in Cumbria because of the importance of Apprenticeships as a post Key Stage 4 and 5 destination as higher level Apprenticeships are more likely to be undertaken by adults. More than half of Intermediate starts in 2021/22 were by those aged 16-18 whereas more than half (56%) of Higher level starts were by those aged 25+.

A similar trend is evident in the level of Apprenticeship achievements over time with the volume of intermediate level achievements having fallen since 2017/18. Advanced level achievements fell more slowly over the past 3 years and there has been a gradual, albeit small, increase in Higher level achievements. It should be noted that the data for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will have been impacted by the pandemic as there were fewer starters and completions were delayed.

Figure 23: Level of achievements



Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident)

Figure 24: Starts by age and level

Apprenticeship Starts by Age and Level 2021/22				
Number of Starts				
	16-18	**19-24**	**25+**	**Total**
Intermediate (L2)	600	240	260	1,100
Advanced (L3)	820	460	450	1,720
Higher (L4+)	130	340	570	1,030
Total	1,550	1,040	1,280	3,860
% Starts within ageband by level				
	16-18	**19-24**	**25+**	**Total**
Intermediate (L2)	38.8%	23.3%	20.5%	28.6%
Advanced (L3)	53.0%	43.8%	35.2%	44.7%
Higher (L4+)	8.2%	32.9%	44.3%	26.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Starts within level by ageband				
	16-18	**19-24**	**25+**	**Total**
Intermediate (L2)	54.3%	21.9%	23.7%	100.0%
Advanced (L3)	47.6%	26.4%	26.0%	100.0%
Higher (L4+)	12.2%	33.0%	54.7%	100.0%
Total	40.1%	26.9%	33.1%	100.0%

Source: LEP Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident). Age on 31st August.

Figure 25: Apprenticeship starts & active enrolments by subject area, 2018/19 & 2021/22

Apprenticeship starts & participants by subject area						
	Starts			Participants		
Subject Area	**Number 2021/22**	**Change 2018/19-2021/22**		**Number 2021/22**	**Change 2018/19-2021/22**	
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	**140**	**40**	**37.9%**	**260**	**-30**	**-10.1%**
Agriculture	50	30	112.5%	90	-30	-23.8%
Animal Care & Veterinary Science	70	10	34.5%	130	20	20.8%
Environmental Conservation	10	10	500.0%	20	0	4.8%
Horticulture & Forestry	10	-10	-77.3%	20	-20	-60.5%
Arts, Media & Publishing	**20**	**10**	**200.0%**	**20**	**10**	**187.5%**
Crafts, Creative Arts & Design	10	10	450.0%	20	20	650.0%
Media & Communication	10	10	75.0%	10	0	33.3%
Business, Administration & Law	**760**	**-310**	**-28.7%**	**1,940**	**-360**	**-15.6%**
Accounting & Finance	140	-10	-5.3%	350	20	4.9%
Administration	280	-210	-42.1%	580	-520	-47.7%
Business Management	320	-100	-24.1%	980	150	18.0%
Law & Legal Services	10	10	400.0%	20	20	850.0%
Marketing & Sales	10	0	-10.0%	20	-10	-44.1%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	**570**	**30**	**5.3%**	**1,540**	**440**	**39.7%**
Building & Construction	570	30	5.3%	1,540	440	39.7%
Education & Training	**150**	**20**	**9.8%**	**320**	**80**	**34.0%**
Direct Learning Support	130	0	1.6%	280	50	23.6%
Teaching & Lecturing	20	10	220.0%	30	20	433.3%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	**980**	**-40**	**-4.2%**	**2,870**	**-270**	**-8.7%**
Engineering	590	120	27.1%	1700	450	36.2%
Manufacturing Technologies	220	-170	-43.2%	750	-710	-48.8%
Transportation Operations & Maintenance	170	0	-1.2%	430	-10	-2.7%
Health, Public Services & Care	**830**	**-20**	**-2.2%**	**1,950**	**70**	**3.5%**
Child Development & Well Being	170	-80	-30.6%	380	-170	-31.6%
Health & Social Care	400	-100	-19.6%	960	-210	-17.9%
Medicine & Dentistry	20	20	1600.0%	30	30	2500.0%
Nursing & Subjects & Vocations Allied to Medicine	170	120	222.2%	420	330	397.6%
Public Services	60	20	45.2%	170	90	103.7%
Information & Communication Technology	**90**	**-20**	**-23.0%**	**200**	**-30**	**-11.6%**
ICT for Users	10	0	-14.3%	10	-30	-63.9%
ICT Practitioners	80	-30	-23.6%	190	0	-1.6%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	**30**	**-10**	**-32.6%**	**50**	**-60**	**-50.5%**
Sport, Leisure & Recreation	20	-20	-44.4%	40	-60	-58.9%
Travel & Tourism	10	0	28.6%	10	0	16.7%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	**290**	**-160**	**-36.1%**	**580**	**-370**	**-38.3%**
Hospitality & Catering	130	-40	-25.6%	220	-160	-42.1%
Retailing & Wholesaling	60	-70	-52.0%	150	-50	-23.7%
Service Enterprises	80	-50	-43.6%	170	-130	-44.0%
Warehousing & Distribution	30	10	16.7%	40	-30	-33.3%
Science & Mathematics	**10**	**10**	**66.7%**	**20**	**10**	**63.6%**
Science	10	10	66.7%	20	10	63.6%
Total	**3,860**	**-480**	**-11.0%**	**9,760**	**-490**	**-4.8%**

Source: DfE Localities Cube (measuring residents in Cumbria)

Figure 26: Apprenticeship starts by subject area 2021/22 - Cumbria & England

Apprenticeship starts subject area 2021/22 – Cumbria & England	Cumbria		England	
	Starts	%	Starts	%
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	**140**	**3.7%**	**6,660**	**1.9%**
Agriculture	50	1.3%	1,430	0.4%
Animal Care & Veterinary Science	70	1.9%	3,530	1.0%
Environmental Conservation	10	0.3%	280	0.1%
Horticulture & Forestry	10	0.1%	1,410	0.4%
Arts, Media & Publishing	**20**	**0.5%**	**2,010**	**0.6%**
Crafts, Creative Arts & Design	10	0.3%	660	0.2%
Media & Communication	10	0.2%	1,300	0.4%
Publishing & Information Services			40	0.0%
Business, Administration & Law	**760**	**19.8%**	**93,890**	**26.9%**
Accounting & Finance	140	3.7%	22,920	6.6%
Administration	280	7.3%	25,640	7.3%
Business Management	320	8.3%	41,730	12.0%
Law & Legal Services	10	0.3%	1,220	0.3%
Marketing & Sales	10	0.2%	2,390	0.7%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	**570**	**14.8%**	**26,060**	**7.5%**
Architecture			180	0.1%
Building & Construction	570	14.8%	25,660	7.3%
Urban, Rural & Regional Planning			220	0.1%
Education & Training	**150**	**3.8%**	**8,310**	**2.4%**
Direct Learning Support	130	3.3%	4,220	1.2%
Teaching & Lecturing	20	0.4%	4,090	1.2%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	**980**	**25.4%**	**49,060**	**14.0%**
Engineering	590	15.3%	26,970	7.7%
Manufacturing Technologies	220	5.7%	6,930	2.0%
Transportation Operations & Maintenance	170	4.4%	15,160	4.3%
Health, Public Services & Care	**830**	**21.4%**	**99,790**	**28.6%**
Child Development & Well Being	170	4.5%	22,110	6.3%
Health & Social Care	400	10.4%	47,570	13.6%
Medicine & Dentistry	20	0.4%	2,210	0.6%
Nursing & Subjects & Vocations Allied to Medicine	170	4.5%	11,050	3.2%
Public Services	60	1.6%	16,860	4.8%
History, Philosophy & Theology			**10**	**0.0%**
Archaeology & Archaeological Sciences			10	0.0%
Information & Communication Technology	**90**	**2.3%**	**22,820**	**6.5%**
ICT for Users	10	0.2%	1,060	0.3%
ICT Practitioners	80	2.1%	21,750	6.2%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	**30**	**0.8%**	**4,090**	**1.2%**
Sport, Leisure & Recreation	20	0.5%	3,650	1.0%
Travel & Tourism	10	0.2%	440	0.1%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	**290**	**7.5%**	**35,890**	**10.3%**
Hospitality & Catering	130	3.2%	13,970	4.0%
Retailing & Wholesaling	60	1.6%	8,590	2.5%
Service Enterprises	80	1.9%	9,330	2.7%
Warehousing & Distribution	30	0.7%	4,000	1.1%
Science & Mathematics	**10**	**0.1%**	**370**	**0.1%**
Mathematics & Statistics			20	0.0%
Science	10	0.1%	350	0.1%
Social Sciences	**0**	**0.1%**	**240**	**0.1%**
Economics	0	0.1%	240	0.1%
Total	**3,860**	**100.0%**	**349,190**	**100.0%**

Source: DfE Localities Cube (measuring residents in Cumbria)

Figure 27: Apprenticeship starts by subject area & gender 20201/22

Apprenticeship starts by subject area & gender 2021/22						
	Starts			% within subject		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	**40**	**100**	**140**	**29.6%**	**70.4%**	**100.0%**
Agriculture	10	40	50	17.6%	82.4%	100.0%
Animal Care & Veterinary Science	30	40	70	41.9%	58.1%	100.0%
Environmental Conservation	0	10	10	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
Horticulture & Forestry	0	10	10	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Arts, Media & Publishing	**10**	**10**	**20**	**38.9%**	**61.1%**	**100.0%**
Crafts, Creative Arts & Design	0	10	10	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%
Media & Communication	10	0	10	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
Business, Administration & Law	**500**	**260**	**760**	**65.8%**	**34.2%**	**100.0%**
Accounting & Finance	90	60	140	59.4%	40.6%	100.0%
Administration	230	60	280	80.1%	19.9%	100.0%
Business Management	180	140	320	55.1%	44.9%	100.0%
Law & Legal Services	10	0	10	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Marketing & Sales	10	0	10	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	**40**	**540**	**570**	**6.6%**	**93.4%**	**100.0%**
Building & Construction	40	540	570	6.6%	93.4%	100.0%
Education & Training	130	20	150	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Direct Learning Support	120	10	130	93.0%	7.0%	100.0%
Teaching & Lecturing	10	10	20	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	**170**	**810**	**980**	**17.6%**	**82.4%**	**100.0%**
Engineering	120	480	590	19.6%	80.4%	100.0%
Manufacturing Technologies	40	180	220	18.6%	81.4%	100.0%
Transportation Operations & Maintenance	20	150	170	8.9%	91.1%	100.0%
Health, Public Services & Care	**690**	**130**	**830**	**83.8%**	**16.2%**	**100.0%**
Child Development & Well Being	170	10	170	96.5%	3.5%	100.0%
Health & Social Care	340	60	400	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
Medicine & Dentistry	10	0	20	82.4%	17.6%	100.0%
Nursing & Subjects & Vocations Allied to Medicine	150	30	170	85.6%	14.4%	100.0%
Public Services	20	40	60	39.3%	60.7%	100.0%
Information & Communication Technology	**10**	**70**	**90**	**14.9%**	**85.1%**	**100.0%**
ICT for Users	0	10	10	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ICT Practitioners	10	70	80	16.0%	84.0%	100.0%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	**10**	**20**	**30**	**48.3%**	**51.7%**	**100.0%**
Sport, Leisure & Recreation	10	20	20	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Travel & Tourism	10	0	10	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	**170**	**120**	**290**	**59.2%**	**40.8%**	**100.0%**
Hospitality & Catering	70	60	130	53.6%	46.4%	100.0%
Retailing & Wholesaling	30	30	60	47.5%	52.5%	100.0%
Service Enterprises	70	10	80	90.7%	9.3%	100.0%
Warehousing & Distribution	10	20	30	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Science & Mathematics	**0**	**0**	**10**	**40.0%**	**60.0%**	**100.0%**
Science	0	0	10	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Social Sciences	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Economics	0	0	0	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	**1,790**	**2,080**	**3,860**	**46.2%**	**53.8%**	**100.0%**

Source: DfE Localities Cube (measuring residents in Cumbria)