EngineeringUK
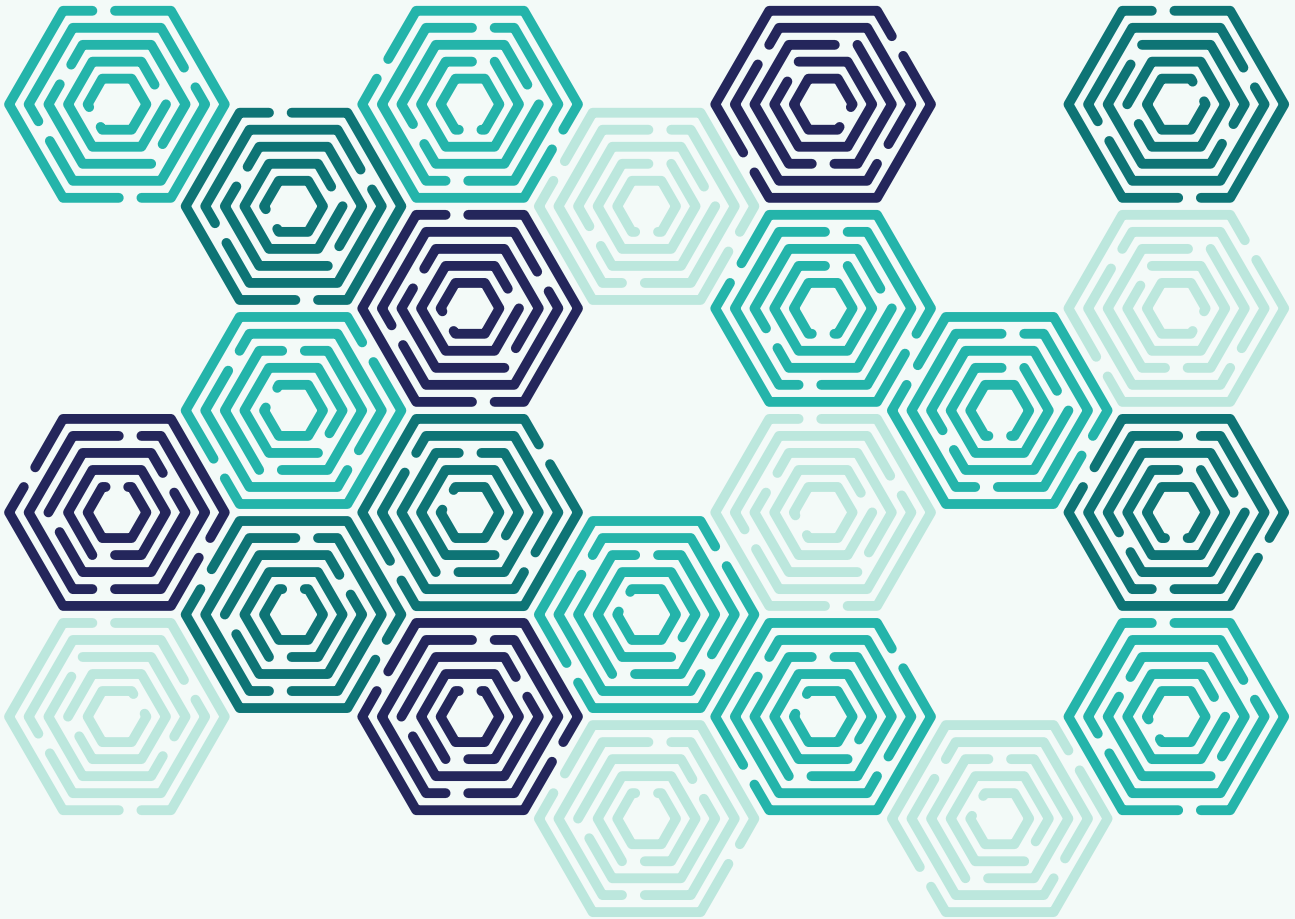## INSPIRING FUTURES TOGETHER

APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS INTO ENGINEERING

2023/24 annual data update

November 2024

engineeringuk.com

Contents

Introduction

In response to the Department for Education (DfE) releasing new full year (2023/24) apprenticeships data for England on 28 November 2024, EngineeringUK has run an analysis on the data related to the engineering and technology sector.

As expected prior to the full year release, apprenticeship starts remained broadly similar to 2022/23, with only a small increase (+0.7%) across all apprenticeships.

The increase is predominantly driven by higher (levels 4 and 5) and degree (levels 6 and 7) apprenticeships, which increased 9.1% and 7.1% respectively.

Engineering definition

There are 15 tier 1 sector subject areas (SSAs)[1], 3 of which are engineering and technology-related:

- Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
- Digital / Information and Communication Technology

There are more detailed SSAs at a tier 2 level, which provide more granular subject areas, but most data is published at the SSA T1 level to enable analysis by demographic and apprenticeship level data.

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[1] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/
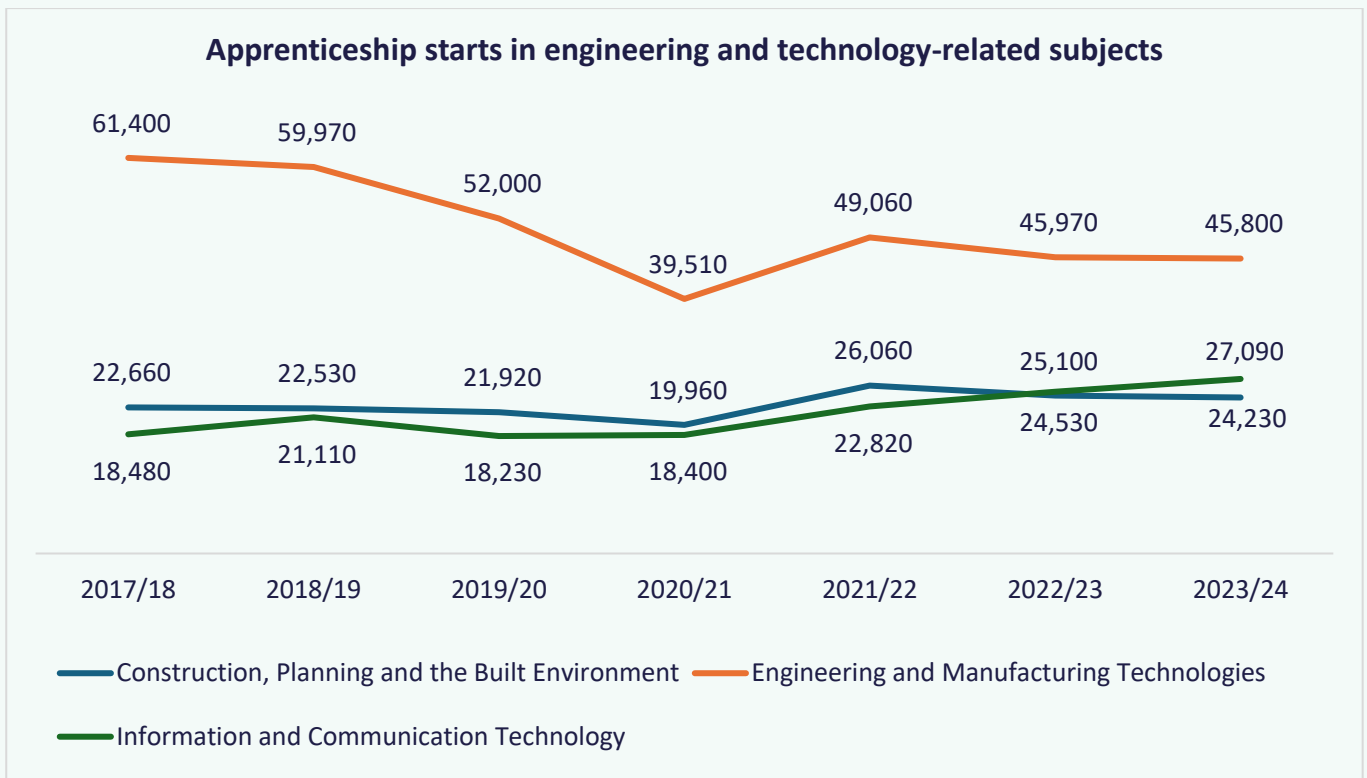
Headline findings

- 29% (97,120) of all apprenticeship starts were in engineering and technology-related subjects
- Engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts have increased by 1.6% since 2022/23, higher than the 0.7% increase across all-sector subject areas
- This increase is driven by 'Information and Communication Technology' which has seen an increase in starts (7.9%) between 2022/23 and 2023/24
- Female starts account for 17% of engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts (compared to 52% across all subject areas) increasing 13% since 2022/23 and 90% since 2017/18.
- Level 2 apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related apprenticeships have decreased by 8.7% between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Since 2017/18 starts at this level have decreased by 52%
- 14% of starts for engineering and technology-related apprenticeships in 2023/24 were by people from a UK minority ethnic background, up from 8% in 2017/18
- 36% of engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts were by people under 19 years of age; 31% were by people aged between 19 and 24; and 33% by people aged 25 or older

Findings

All apprenticeship starts

- There were 339,580 apprenticeships starts in 2023/24, which is up slightly (0.7%) on 2022/23 (337,140)
- 29% (97,120) of these starts were in engineering and technology-related subjects.
- Engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts have increased by 1.6% since 2022/23, higher than the 0.7% increase across all-sector subject areas.
- Engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts are still lower than they were before the pandemic - down 6.3% since 2018/19.
- Again, this represents a lower decline than across all sector subject areas, which are down 14% since 2018/19.
- 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' apprenticeship starts stabilised with a 0.4% reduction between 2023/24 after a 6% decline between 2021/22 and 2022/23. However, we still see a long-standing decline with a 25% drop in starts since 2017/18.
- 'Information and Communication Technology' is the only engineering and technology-related apprenticeship subject that has seen an increase in starts (7.9%) between 2022/23 and 2023/24. This increase is mainly occurring at levels 4 (17%) and 6 (20%).

- 'Construction, Planning and the Built Environment' has seen a slight decrease of 1.2% since 2022/23 however it remains 6.9% above 2017/18 levels.

Apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related subjects

| | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |

Construction, Planning and the Built Environment: 22,660 · 22,530 · 21,920 · 19,960 · 26,060 · 25,100 · 24,230

Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies: 61,400 · 59,970 · 52,000 · 39,510 · 49,060 · 45,970 · 45,800

Information and Communication Technology: 18,480 · 21,110 · 18,230 · 18,400 · 22,820 · 24,530 · 27,090
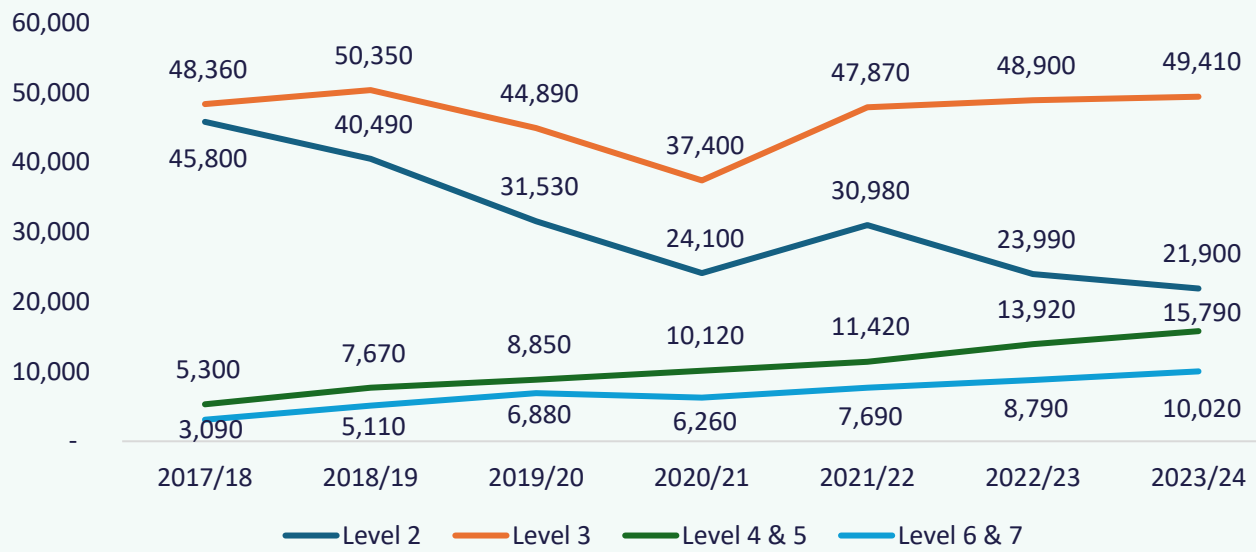
Apprenticeship starts by level

There has been a trend of declining starts in lower-level (Levels 2 and 3) apprenticeships and an increase in starts at higher levels (Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7). This trend has continued in 2023/24. This is true across the board, but is particularly exacerbated in engineering and technology-related starts at level 2.

- Level 2 apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related apprenticeships have decreased by 8.7% between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Since 2017/18 starts at this level have decreased by 52%.
- Level 6 apprenticeship starts in engineering related apprenticeships have increased by 16% between 2022/23 and 2023/24, and since 2017/18 starts at this level have increased by 72%.
- In 'Information and Communication Technology', fewer than 10 apprenticeships at level 2 were started in 2023/24.

Apprenticeships starts in engineering and technology- related subjects by apprenticeships level

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Level 2	45,800	40,490	31,530	24,100	30,980	23,990	21,900
Level 3	48,360	50,350	44,890	37,400	47,870	48,900	49,410
Level 4 & 5	5,300	7,670	8,850	10,120	11,420	13,920	15,790
Level 6 & 7	3,090	5,110	6,880	6,260	7,690	8,790	10,020

Apprenticeship starts by gender

- The proportion of female apprenticeship starts has been improving for engineering and technology-related subject areas, but remains below the average across all subject areas.

- Female starts account for 17% of engineering and technology-related apprenticeship starts, compared to 52% across all subject areas.

- Female starts in engineering and technology-related apprenticeships have increased 13% since 2022/23 and 90% since 2017/18.

- The increase in female participation in engineering-related apprenticeships is being mostly driven by 'Information and Communication Technology'. 36% of apprenticeship starts in this sector subject area were female, up from 18% in 2017/18. This compares to 10% for Construction, Planning and the Built Environment and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

- Female participation has increased the most at levels 4 and 5 where the numbers have increased by 30% between 2022/23 and 2023/24, and 480% between 2017/18 and 2023/24. There have also been large increases at level 6 and 7, with a 13% increase between 2022/23 and 2023/24. This increase is seen most clearly in Information and Communication Technology.

Female apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related subjects

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	4,470	4,740	4,580	4,170	4,660	4,360	4,700
Information and Communication Technology	3,400	4,190	4,150	5,660	7,330	8,350	9,860
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,060	1,450	1,730	1,490	1,930	2,260	2,420

— Construction, Planning and the Built Environment   — Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies

— Information and Communication Technology

Apprenticeship starts by ethnicity

- There has been a similar long-term trend of an increase in the percentage of apprenticeship starts by UK minority ethnic groups. 14% of starts for engineering and technology-related apprenticeships in 2023/24 were by people from a UK minority ethnic background, up from 8% in 2017/18.
- The overall proportion of apprenticeship starts by people from a UK minority ethnic background for all subjects is 16%, up from 11% in 2017/18.
- Similar to gender, this increase in engineering is being driven by ICT – 25% of starts were from UK minority ethnic groups, up from 17% in 2017/18.

Apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related subjects by UK minority ethnic people
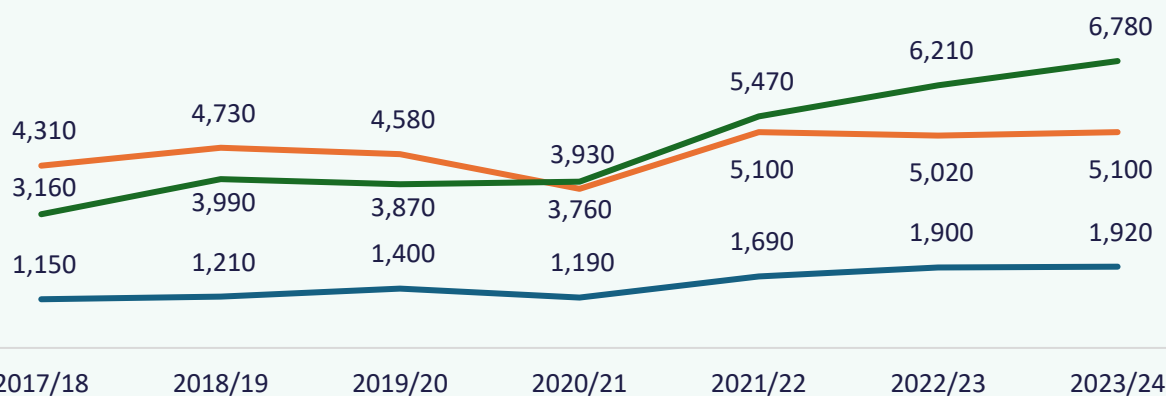
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	4,310	4,730	4,580	3,930	5,470	6,210	6,780
Information and Communication Technology	3,160	3,990	3,870	3,760	5,100	5,020	5,100
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,150	1,210	1,400	1,190	1,690	1,900	1,920

Legend:
— Construction, Planning and the Built Environment   — Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
— Information and Communication Technology

Apprenticeship starts by age

Lower-level apprenticeships are generally started by younger people. Level 2 apprenticeships are comparable to GCSE and level 3 are comparable to A level, T Level and Btecs. In order for someone to access a level 4 apprenticeship or above they would usually have needed to have gained a level 3 qualification, usually only possible by the age of 18. Degree-level apprenticeships (levels 6 and 7) are sometimes completed in place of an academic degree, but may also be offered by employers as CPD, training, and employee development for existing staff. These existing staff are often older.

- Nationally, 23% of all apprenticeship starts were by people under 19 years of age. In engineering and technology-related apprenticeships this was higher at 36%.
- 28% of all apprenticeship starts were by people aged between 19 and 24, this is lower than in engineering related apprenticeships where 31% were in this age group.
- Nationally, 48% of all apprenticeship starts were by people aged 25 or older in 2023/24, this is higher than in engineering related apprenticeships where 33% of starts were by people in this age group.
- Although engineering and technology-related apprenticeships have a higher proportion of younger people, this has been declining. In 2017/18 the proportion of engineering apprenticeship starts by people under 19 was 41%, this has dropped to 36% in 2023/24.
- The share of engineering related apprenticeship starts by people aged 25 or above has increased from 24% in 2017/18 to 32% in 2023/24. This is mainly driven by 'Information and Communication Technology' starts, where over 25s account for over two thirds of all starts 64%, up 10% for 2022/23.
- Information and Communication Technology starts for people aged 25 and above has increased by 27% between 2022/23 and 2023/2024. Starts by this age group have increased 219% between 2017/18 and 2023/24, by contrast starts by under 19s have dropped by nearly half (44%).

Apprenticeship starts in engineering and technology-related subjects by age group

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Under 19	41,540	39,800	33,760	26,010	33,960	34,670	35,060
19-24	36,740	37,200	32,710	28,020	34,390	31,990	31,560
25+	24,260	26,610	25,690	23,840	29,600	28,950	30,500