

## **BACKGROUND NOTES for leaver destinations**

Headline results and additional analysis are available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/PubDestinationLeavers>

### **1 Sources**

Information on publicly funded schools is provided to the Scottish Government by Skills Development Scotland.

Information from independent schools is collected directly from the schools. This information is now collected at pupil level and it appears to have resulted in an increase of those in the 'Not Known' category.

The data relate to the latest known destination of leavers as known at October 2009. For example, a school leaver who left in June 2009 and travelled for several months but who is known by Skills Development Scotland to have taken up employment prior to October will be counted under 'employment'.

### **2 Definitions**

A school leaver is classed as a young person of school leaving age who left school during or at the end of the school year, where the school year is taken to run from 1 August to 31 July.

In practice, many young people do not decide whether or not to leave school until after they have received the results of external examinations, have tried to get a job or achieve entry to further or higher education or training. For many pupils, therefore, it is only possible to identify later whether they have effectively left school by 31 July. There may also be slight differences in the way Skills Development Scotland count leavers who return to school for a short period after the summer break. Thus full comparability between education authorities cannot be assured.

The following categories for leaver destination are included.

Higher Education: - includes leavers following HND (Higher National Diploma) or HNC (Higher National Certificate) courses, degree courses, courses for the education and training of teachers and higher level courses for professional qualifications. It also includes programmes at a level higher than the standard of the New National Qualifications (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, the new Higher) which were introduced in 1999/00, Advanced Higher, introduced in 2001, Scottish Certificate of Sixth Year Studies, and the National Certificate of Education of England, Wales or Northern Ireland at Advanced Level. Leavers with a deferred, unconditional place in higher education have also been included in this category.

Further Education: - includes leavers undertaking education which is not higher education and who are no longer on a school roll.

Training: - includes leavers who are on a training course and in receipt of an allowance or grant, such as Skillseekers, but who are not employed. It should be noted that a large proportion of leavers entering employment may also be participants in training through the Skillseekers programme.

Employment: - includes those who consider employment to be their main activity, regardless of hours worked. This category also includes young people undertaking training in employment through Skillseekers.

Unemployed and seeking employment or training: - includes those who are registered with Skills Development Scotland and are known by them to be seeking employment or training. This is based on regular contact between Skills Development Scotland and the client. This does not refer to the definition of 'unemployed' used by the Benefits Agency to calculate published unemployment rates.

Unemployed and not seeking employment or training: - includes all those individuals who are not seeking employment or training for a range of reasons. The reasons may involve sickness, caring for children or the elderly, involvement in full time unpaid voluntary work or taking time out. It may also include school leavers who are employed and/or in education part time, if they consider that 'unemployed' this best characterises their situation.

NOTE: the above two categories are comparable to the single 'other known destination' category from publications prior to 2002/03.

Not Known: - includes all leavers whose destination is not known either to Skills Development Scotland or to the school attended.

### **3 Notes**

Many factors affect the destinations of leavers. Examples include the following points which should be noted when comparing figures for individual Education Authorities.

- Increasing numbers of school leavers are taking a 'year out' before continuing their education or entering employment. Apart from pupils with a deferred unconditional place for Higher Education, pupils taking a 'year out' are included in the 'other known destinations' category. Details on the number of such pupils may be obtained from individual schools.
- The destination of leavers from individual Education Authorities may depend partly on location. For example, in many rural and island areas, young people have to travel long distances or live away from home in order to take up courses in higher or further education.
- Economic factors may affect the availability of employment in the local area. A major construction project or the opening of an industrial enterprise may present many new opportunities. Equally, lack of local employment may encourage leavers towards further education or training.
- In certain areas, or particular years, the pattern of school leaver destinations may be affected by the implementation of Skillseekers, partnerships between education and business or special arrangements for entry to higher education.
- There may be a strong local tradition for pupils either to stay on at school or to leave school as early as possible, affecting the numbers who stay on long enough to gain the necessary entrance qualifications for higher education.
- Fluctuations in the figures from year to year are likely. For example, differences in the proportion of leavers proceeding to higher education may derive from the ability of pupils in a particular year group. Similarly, there may be short-term opportunities for employment in some localities. In Education Authorities with only a few leavers, a small change in the number of leavers in each destination category can make a big difference in percentage terms from year to year.