

Annual Participation Measure 2020-21

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to provide members with information on the most recent Annual Participation Measure published in August 2021, covering the period April 2020 – March 2021.
- 1.2 The Annual Participation Measure (APM) reports nationally on the economic and employment activity of the wider 16-19 year old cohort including those at school. The measure is used to inform policy, planning and service delivery and to determine the impact of the Opportunities for All commitment.
- 1.3 The APM was incorporated into the Scottish Government's National performance Framework from August 2017 as the source of the indicator, "increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work", replacing the School Leaver Destination Reports.
- 1.4 The previous measure, School Leaver Destination Reports collected data on young people in the senior phase of school (S4-S6) who left school during the school year and essentially offered a snapshot at the time of reporting (October/February). The APM takes account of all statuses for 16-19 year olds in Scotland over a full calendar year (1st April – 31st March).

Annual Participation Measure 2020

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is published in September each year and used to inform policy, planning and service delivery, and also to assess progress in the delivery of Opportunities for All, the Scottish Government's commitment to offer a place in learning or training to every 16 to 19-year-old in Scotland not already in employment, education or training.
- 2.2 The 2021 APM marks the seventh release of statistics detailing the participation of 16-19 year olds at a national and local authority level. The report takes account of the status for 16-19 year olds from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- 2.3 The statistics are produced using data collected by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and a range of partners, which is shared through the 16+ Data Hub.
- 2.4 The report is based on a cohort of 207,529 young people aged between 16 and 19, of whom 3,168 are from Argyll and Bute.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- 3.1 Note the publication of the 2021 Annual Participation Measure.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The APM is compiled from data collected from the 16+ Data Hub, a multi-partner secure data sharing gateway managed by Skills Development

Scotland (SDS). Data input is provided from Local Authorities, Colleges, Department of Work and Pensions, the Students Awards Agency Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. It is estimated that approximately 90% of young people in Scotland in the 16 to 19 age group are recorded on the system.

4.2 The participation status of each young person is identified by combining the number of days spent in each status between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020. Their overall headline classification (participating, not-participating or unknown) is then decided by the heading under which they have spent the most days over that year.

4.3 The classifications are defined as –

Participating – school pupil, higher education, further education, employment, modern apprenticeships, training and voluntary work.

Not Participating – unemployed and seeking employment or training, unemployed and not seeking employment or training.

Unconfirmed Status – information on individual not available for reporting. Some of these young people may be in employment but not in contact with partner agencies.

4.4 The 2021 APM headline figures confirm that 93.5% of 16-19 year olds in Argyll and Bute were participating in education, training or employment compared to 92.2% nationally. 3.2% were not participating, which is equal to the national figure for non-participation, and 3.3% have an unconfirmed status compared to 4.6% nationally. This drop in participation levels reflects the first national drop in participation since 2017. 27 of the 32 Scottish local authorities saw drops in participation rates.

4.5 Despite a fall of 0.6% (19 young people) in the number of young people participating in 2020-21, Argyll and Bute remains above or equal to the Scottish average in all three classifications. Argyll and Bute ranks 10th for participation rates out of all local authorities in Scotland.

	2015-2016 Argyll and Bute	2016-2017 Argyll and Bute	2017-2018 Argyll and Bute	2018-2019 Argyll and Bute	2019-2020 Argyll and Bute	2020-2021 Argyll and Bute	2020-2021 Scotland
Participating	94.2%	93%	94.2%	94.8%	94.1%	93.5% (-0.6%)	92.2% (+0.1)
Not Participating	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.2%	2.4%	3.2% (+0.8%)	3.2% (+0.4%)
Unconfirmed	2.7%	4.2%	3.1%	3.0%	3.5%	3.3% (-0.2%)	4.6% (-0.5%)

4.6 In 2020-21 there was a decrease in the number of young people in employment in Argyll and Bute to 21.9% from 22.6% in 2019-20. This figure was not matched by the increase in young people staying in education. Argyll and Bute has 21.9% of all 16-19 year olds in employment, a slight fall from 22.6% in 2019-20. Nationally, 15.5% of young people are in employment. Argyll and Bute has 70.6% of its young people in education, against a national figure of 74.8%.

4.7 Participation by Age:

- In 2021 in Argyll and Bute, participation was highest amongst 16 year olds (98.5%) and lowest amongst 19 year olds (88.2%).
- The participation rate in 2020 decreased in all age categories apart from 17 year olds, whose participation rate increased by 1.2%, a result of more young people staying in school for all or part of S6.

4.8 Equality Characteristics:

- In Argyll and Bute, females (94.4%) were slightly more likely to participate than males (92.7%). This also constitutes a 0.2% rise in female participation, contrasted with a 1.2% decrease in male participation. This difference is possibly due to the higher rate of females in education.
- Also in Argyll and Bute, participation rates for young people from the most deprived backgrounds were lower than those of less deprived young people – 90.6% the lowest SIMD group, and 95.0% for the second highest SIMD group, although the rate for the very highest group was 93.0%.

4.9 Geography:

- Nationally, between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the participation rate rose in 17 of the 32 local authorities and fell in 15.
- The reduction of 0.6% in those participating in Argyll and Bute has resulted in a drop from 9th in ranking of local authorities to 10th.
- In Argyll and Bute, participation rates were lowest in Cowal ward (88%) and highest in Kintyre and Islands ward (97.2%).
- Across Argyll and Bute, participation rates rose in four wards, fell in six wards and remained unchanged in one ward.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Annual Participation Measure provides data on the economic and employment activity of 16 to 19 year olds and enables local authorities to measure progress against the National Improvement Framework indicator - “increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work.”

5.2 There was a 0.6% (19 young people) drop in the percentage of young people from Argyll and Bute participating in education, training or employment in 2020-21. However, whilst there is no room for complacency, Argyll and Bute continues to perform above the national average in almost all categories.

5.3 Discussions have taken place with Skills Development Scotland to establish possible causes for the decrease in participation figures. However the

relatively small numbers involved make it difficult to pinpoint a single cause or pattern. The effect of the pandemic both on employment figures and the number of young people accessing further and higher education is a contributing factor.

- 5.4 Opportunities for All and Developing the Young Workforce activities assist young people with the transition from school into employment, education or training. The robust, current information provided by the Data Hub and Annual Participation Measure will continue to be used to identify potential issues and inform partners. This will enable partners to be proactive in providing more targeted and tailored intervention to support young people.
- 5.5 Key partner agencies, including secondary schools, Community Learning and Development (CLD), local colleges, Skills Development Scotland and the third sector, will continue to work together with Developing the Young Workforce and Opportunities for All groups to ensure that young people are supported to access and sustain positive destinations.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - This report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training Maximises Opportunities for All).
- 6.2 Financial – None.
- 6.3 Legal – None.
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - The Opportunities for All programme and Developing Scotland's Young Workforce recommendations actively seek to address inequalities in employment, training and education.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None
- 6.6 Climate Change – None
- 6.7 Risk – Failure to support young people into positive destinations will impact on the life chances of young people across the Local Authority area and may result in outward migration of young people.
- 6.8 Customer Service – This report provides elected members with an overview on Service performance.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Argyll and Bute APM Summary 2020-2021

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