

## Storyboard for Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2002/03 to 2017/18

**While there have been over half a million enrolments in the 16 years of the Strategy...**

Some 214,000 individuals have participated in Essential Skills to date, accounting for over 530,000 enrolments and almost 345,000 qualifications.

**...there has been a decrease in the annual number of enrolments in each of the past 7 years.**

Due to a combination of factors, including a dip in the 16-19 year old population (the main age group taking Essential Skills) and improvements in GCSE grades, annual enrolments have decreased for seven consecutive years, from a peak of 59,944 in 2010/11 to 31,388 in 2017/18.

**The annual number of qualifications issued has decreased for the fourth consecutive year.**

The annual number of qualifications issued reached a peak of 40,851 in 2013/14, before decreasing, at a faster rate than enrolments, to 18,395 in 2017/18. A refresh of Essential Skills curriculum standards is likely to have been an important factor in the two most recent academic years.

**The proportion of enrolments of males has increased for a third year in succession...**

Over the 16-year history of the Strategy, 53.4% of enrolments have been from male students. Since 2014/15, the proportion of male enrolments has been increasing slowly each year, reaching 55.2% in 2017/18.

**...while three in every five enrolments have been from those aged 16-19.**

Since the start of the Essential Skills Strategy, almost three-fifths (59.4%) of enrolments have been from those aged 16-19. Sixteen-year-olds alone have accounted for over a quarter (25.8%) of all enrolments.

**A majority of enrolments have been from the unemployed or economically inactive...**

In 2017/18, over three-fifths (62.3%) of enrolments were from those who were unemployed or economically inactive, compared with an average of 55.8% over the history of the Strategy.

**...and a higher proportion of enrolments are from the most deprived areas.**

Generally, the more deprived an area is, the higher the number of enrolments from those living in that area. Over the 16 years of the Strategy, over half of enrolments (51.6%) have been from the two most deprived quintiles. In 2017/18, the most deprived of the five quintiles accounted for 26.3% of enrolments, with the least deprived quintile accounting for 10.8%.

**The most popular subject choice has varied across age groups.**

From 2002/03 to 2017/18, Numeracy has been the most popular subject choice among those aged 16-19 (39.8%), while Literacy has been most popular among 20-44 year olds (44.1%). For those aged 45+, the most common subject studied has been ICT (38.6%).

**The majority of enrolments result in a qualification being issued...**

Almost two-thirds (65.6%) of Essential Skills enrolments result in a qualification being issued. For Numeracy enrolments, the equivalent success rate is 68.0%, while it is 67.6% for Literacy and 57.3% for ICT.

**...although fewer have been issued at Level 2 in recent years.**

The Essential Skills refresh is likely to have been an important factor in a recent decrease in the proportion of Level 2 qualifications issued, from 60.4% in 2015/16 to 47.6% in 2017/18, and a corresponding increase in the Entry Level share, from 11.8% to 20.5%.