



Analysis of Sussex Apprenticeship Starts Figures for Quarters 1 & 2 Combined (August 2017-January 2018)

This is an analysis of SCTP's latest apprenticeship starts spreadsheet which gives local Sussex data compiled from the [ESFA's Statistical First Release](#) that was issued just before Easter.

The sheet shows a column for the 2017-2018 local Q1 and 2 combined apprenticeship starts figures in yellow (August 2017 to January 2018) and then compares these to the combined Q1 and Q2 figures for the same period for 2016-17. The next two columns show the difference and the percentage change.

The drop in apprenticeship starts in Sussex at -24% is the same as the national figure with the South East faring a little better at -20%. Looking at the 3 LAs, Brighton and Hove still has the highest percentage drop at -27.3% but this has improved by 2.2 percentage points compared to Q1. West Sussex is still faring best at -21.7% with a 0.3% point improvement on Q1 while East Sussex slipped to -26.2% from -25.7% at Q1.

The districts and boroughs that are faring worse than these trends are Eastbourne -30.2%, Rother -33.3% and the parliamentary constituencies of Bexhill & Battle -31.6%, Mid Sussex -33.3% and Worthing West -32.4%.

The districts and boroughs that are faring better than average are Wealden -18.8%, Crawley -15.9% and Horsham -5.4% and the parliamentary constituencies of Crawley -15.9%, Horsham -6.5% and congratulations to the constituency of Arundel & South Downs for returning the only non-negative figure at 0% (i.e. same as last year).

In terms of significant shifts in performance from Q1 to Q1/Q2 combined the biggest improvements are in Hastings borough (11.4 percentage points better than Q1 alone), Crawley borough (up 9.1% points) – increases also reflected in the related constituencies. Also the Hove parliamentary constituency improved 9.9% points. The largest declines were in the parliamentary constituencies of Lewes -17% points, Mid Sussex -9.5% points and Bexhill & Battle -8.9% points.

These combined provisional Q1 and Q2 figures show the ongoing downward trend in apprenticeship starts which seems to be settling around 25% lower

than last year. There is still debate about what the underlying cause might be but most agree (even the Skills Minister) that this is due to the impact of the disruption to the system of the apprenticeship reforms. Potential aspects of the disruption are:

- Introduction of levy and non-levy funding systems with the latter involving employer 'co-investment'
- 20% off-the-job rule
- Introduction of End Point Assessment
- Move from frameworks to standards
- Lack of available new standards
- New subcontracting rules going live from 1st January making it difficult for good niche providers to continue to deliver
- The negative impact of the non-levy procurement round which has prevented some established apprenticeship providers from delivering to non-levy employers
- The whole system being in a state of change and far more complicated than it was!

Full DfE analysis of the national figures is [here](#).

Anne Milton has publicly stated that she expects apprenticeship starts to increase again when the new system has had time to bed in. We're hoping she's right but feedback from the front line is that some employers are walking away from apprenticeships and that reputational damage is being done as the new apprenticeship system is shown to be complicated and not as employer responsive as they were led to believe. On the plus side there is expansion in apprenticeships at higher levels but concerns about reductions in Level 2 provision and take up by 16-18 year olds.