

London Learner Survey 2024/25

Topical briefing note: Young learners June 2026

Insights
SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

This note is a topical briefing accompanying the overall report on the London Learner Survey (LLS) for the 2024/25 academic year. It focuses specifically on the ASF participation and outcomes of young learners aged 19-23, a group facing distinct labour market challenges. More information on the London Learner Survey can be accessed via the [London Datastore](#).

Summary

Background information:

- Young learners (19-23) made up 11 per cent of GLA-funded Adult Skills Fund (ASF) learners in 2024/25, with a strong presence in Adult Skills Core courses (86 per cent) and higher participation at Levels 1-3 compared to learners of all ages.
- Young learners were more likely to be from minority ethnic backgrounds (77 per cent), unemployed before learning (54 per cent), and less likely to be female (46 per cent) than the overall ASF population.
- Labour market conditions worsened during the London Learner Survey (LLS) outcome period, with youth unemployment in London rising sharply to 24.6 per cent in April 2026.

Outcomes:

- Young learners were more likely to experience economic benefits following their learning, but are less likely to partake in further learning compared to learners of all ages:
 - Around 10,000 young Londoners achieved a positive economic outcome (52 per cent among young ASF learners vs 44 per cent overall)
 - 33 per cent of those out of work moved into work (vs 23 per cent overall). This is equivalent to about 4,000 young Londoners.
 - More than 10,000 young Londoners progressed into further learning, equivalent to 56 per cent, and below the share of ASF learners across all ages (64 per cent).
- Social outcomes were very high (94 per cent), with 18,000 young learners reporting their course led to improvements in their social outcomes. There were strong gains in confidence and meeting new people, though slightly below the all-age average (95 per cent) and with lower volunteering rates and smaller increases in wellbeing.

1 Background information

1.1 ASF participation of young learners in 2024/25

In the academic year 2024/25, there were 22,590¹ GLA-funded ASF learners aged 19-23 in London which makes up 11 per cent of all ASF learners.² Young London learners were taking 47,720 enrolment with 86 per cent of them being Adult Skills Core aims and 14 per cent Tailored Learning aims. This represents a substantially higher proportion of Adult Skills Core participation than among ASF learners of all ages, where Adult Skills Core enrolments accounted for 65 per cent.

Compared to the average across GLA-funded learners of all ages, young learners were more concentrated at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Amongst 19-23-year-old learners participating in the ASF programmes in 2024/25:

- 46 per cent were female (compared to 69 per cent across all ages);
- 77 per cent were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background³ (compared to 62 per cent across all ages);
- 54 per cent were not in paid employment and looking for work (unemployed) before the learning (compared to 42 per cent across all ages);
- 18 per cent were not in employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (inactive) before the learning (compared to 21% across all ages);
- 17 per cent consider themselves to have an LLDD and/or a health problem (compared to 16 per cent across all ages).

1.2 Labour market conditions for young Londoners in 2024/25

The LLS measures changes in learners' economic circumstances five to seven months after course completion. This means for the 2024/25 academic year, outcomes are reported between April 2025 and January 2026. These results should be interpreted in the context of wider changes in London's labour market.

Over this period, labour market conditions for young Londoners deteriorated markedly.⁴ The unemployment rate for 16-24-year-olds rose by 7 percentage points to 25 per cent – the highest level observed since the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ Despite this rise in youth unemployment, the proportion of young Londoners not in employment, education or training (NEET) fell from 15 per cent in the final quarter of 2024 to 12 per cent in the final quarter of 2025, driven by increased participation in education and training.⁶

¹ Please note that not all learning aims fulfilled the survey eligibility criteria. Hence, participation numbers reported in this section might differ from totals discussed in the LLS findings section.

² All enrolment data is based on the Individualised Learner Record, academic year 2024/25 (August-July). The figures presented in this report include continuing learners, and those funded under FCFJ. Data can be accessed at: [GLA Adult Skills Fund](#).

³ This includes Mixed, Asian, Black and Other Ethnic Group learners.

⁴ Please also see GLA's recent blog on this topic: [Unemployment in key charts: Young Londoners hit hardest by labour market slowdown](#).

⁵ ONS, Regional labour market: estimates of unemployment by age, April 2026

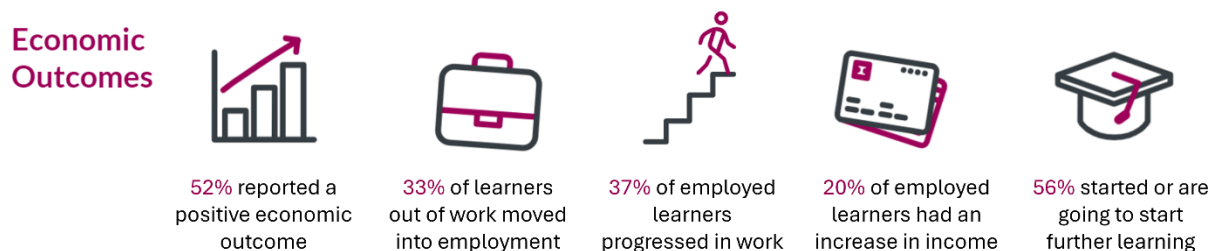
⁶ DfE, NEET age 16 to 24, Labour Force Survey, 2025. The NEET statistics have been badged by DfE as "official statistics in development" pending further review. Ongoing challenges with response rates related to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which this publication is based on mean these statistics should be interpreted with caution.

2 Economic outcomes

2.1 Overall economic outcomes for young learners

This section outlines the changes in young learners' economic outcomes, including changes in economic activity, progression in work and progression into further learning and compares them to the changes among ASF learners of all ages.⁷

Figure 1: Headline economic outcomes for young learners (19-23)



Following their course, nearly three quarters of learners aged 19-23 (74 per cent) were either in employment or had started, or were about to start, further learning, slightly below the overall rate of around four in five learners (79 per cent).

Despite this, young learners were more likely to experience economic benefits, with over half (52 per cent) achieving a positive economic outcome⁸ compared with 44 per cent overall. A third of young learners who were out of work (33 per cent) moved into employment, well above the average across all learners (23 per cent).

Those already in work progressed at a similar rate to the wider cohort (37 per cent versus 38 per cent), but young learners were more likely to see financial gains, with one in five (20 per cent) reporting an income increase, compared with 16 per cent overall.

Participation in further learning was lower among young learners, at 56 per cent, compared with 64 per cent overall. The difference in further learning is likely linked to the fact that young learners tend to do higher level courses and their motivations for learning.

However, comparisons with the overall share do not consider that younger learners are more likely to engage in Adult Skills Core which has marginally higher economic outcomes and a different participation profile than Tailored Learning.

2.2 Economic outcomes for young learners broken down by learner demographic

Young male learners were slightly more likely than young female learners to achieve positive economic outcomes, although this gap was smaller than among learners of all ages. Compared with the overall cohort, both young men and women performed better, with the relative improvement particularly strong for young women. For example, 33 per cent of young female learners moved into employment, compared with 20 per cent among female learners across all age groups. Participation in

⁷ All outcomes are based on the GLA, London Learner Survey 2024/25.

⁸ A positive economic outcome includes entering employment, moving to a permanent job, earning higher pay, progressing to higher-level (NVQ) training, or moving from inactivity into looking for work.

further learning was lower among young learners overall, with a larger gap for females, as 55 per cent of young female learners progressed into further learning compared with 65 per cent of female learners across all ages.

By ethnicity, outcomes differed notably from the overall pattern. Among 19-23-year-olds, White learners had the highest share of achieving positive economic outcomes (61 per cent), followed by Black (55 per cent) and Asian learners (47 per cent). This contrasts with the all-age cohort, where White learners had the lowest share (41 per cent), compared with 50 per cent for Black learners and 42 per cent for Asian learners.

Young learners with and without a reported health condition, disability or learning difficulty (LLDD) both had higher economic outcomes than ASF learners of all ages, but the improvement was more pronounced among those with an LLDD (50 per cent for young learners compared with 40 per cent across all ages). In addition, the gap in positive economic outcomes among learners with and without LLDD was smaller among younger learners than across the overall ASF cohort (3 percentage points for young learners vs 5 percentage points for learners across all ages).

3 Social outcomes

3.1 Overall social outcomes for young learners

This section outlines the changes in young learners' social outcomes, including changes in their wellbeing, confidence, as well as meeting new people and taking up volunteering and compares them to the changes among learners of all ages.

Figure 2: Headline social outcomes for young learners (19-23)



Social outcomes were high for young learners, with 94 per cent of learners aged 19-23 reporting a positive social outcome, only just below the overall average of 95 per cent. These outcomes highlight the wider benefits of learning beyond economic progression. Around three quarters of young learners (73 per cent) reported an improvement in wellbeing following their course, compared with 81 per cent overall, while almost nine in ten (89 per cent) said they felt more confident as a result, broadly in line with the average across all learners (90 per cent). Young learners were slightly more likely to report meeting new people (81 per cent compared with 79 per cent overall), supporting increased social connection, although they were less likely to go on to volunteer, with 42 per cent doing so compared with 48 per cent across all learners.

3.2 Social outcomes for young learners broken down by learner demographic

The share of positive social outcomes was similar for male and female learners aged 19-23, although some differences were evident across individual measures. Young female learners were more likely than young male learners to report improved wellbeing and increased confidence but were less likely to report meeting new people. This contrasts with the pattern seen across all ages, where female learners were more likely than males to report positive outcomes across all indicators.

By ethnicity, the share achieving a positive social outcome was broadly similar for young Black and Asian learners compared with their counterparts across all age groups. However, among White learners, this share was notably lower for young learners (89 per cent) than for learners overall (94 per cent), largely driven by smaller improvements in reported wellbeing.

Among those learners reporting an LLDD, young learners were less likely to achieve positive social outcomes than those across all ages (84 per cent vs 93 per cent), while young non-LLDD learners showed similar outcomes to the average. The gap was evident across all measures, but was largest for wellbeing, with only 65 per cent of young LLDD learners reporting improvement compared with 78 per cent overall.

4 Conclusion

The 22,590 GLA-funded ASF learners aged 19-23 represent a distinct group within the Adult Skills Fund, with a strong concentration in Adult Skills Core provision, higher participation at Levels 1-3, and a profile characterised by higher levels of unemployment before learning and greater ethnic diversity than the wider learner population.

Despite a markedly weaker labour market for young Londoners during the outcome period, they were more likely than the overall cohort to achieve positive economic outcomes, particularly in moving into employment and reporting income gains, although progression into further learning is less common.

Social outcomes of young ASF learners were high, especially in terms of confidence and social connection, though improvements in wellbeing and volunteering are more limited compared to ASF learners of all ages.

Young Londoners are benefiting from the Adult Skills Fund, and the evidence indicates measurable improvements in both economic and social outcomes. Taken together, the data suggests that the ASF is playing a substantial role in supporting their progression.