

# Further Education Sector Activity in Northern Ireland by Local Government District: 2016/17 to 2020/21



This statistical fact sheet presents a range of analysis regarding enrolments and students in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector covering academic years 2016/17 to 2020/21.

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# Further Education Sector Activity in Northern Ireland by Local Government District: 2016/17 to 2020/21

The analysis covers all enrolments, regulated enrolments, Higher Education enrolments as well as qualifications and performance (retention, achievement and success rates) in the FE Sector by Local Government District. In this edition of the fact sheet there is also analysis regarding students, those enrolled on regulated and higher education courses and the qualifications they have achieved. This is the fourth edition of this fact sheet and it is released annually. As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on this publication.

This fact sheet is designed to complement our main Further Education Sector Activity bulletin, which is available on the DfE web page:

[Further Education Sector Activity in FE Colleges in Northern Ireland 2020/21](#)

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Detailed Additional Tables covering the characteristics of those enrolling in FE Colleges and trends across a range of variables, including sex, age, mode of attendance, provision area, level of study, subject area, deprivation quintile and performance (retention, achievement and success rates) are available on the DfE web page:

[Further Education Sector Activity in Northern Ireland by Local Government District: 2016/17 to 2020/21](#)

**Table 1: All enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District and FE College in 2020/21**

Local Government District	FE College						Total
	Belfast Metropolitan	Northern Regional	North West Regional	South Eastern Regional	Southern Regional	South West	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2,289	3,001	29	558	59	49	5,985
Ards and North Down	1,500	90	30	7,101	51	38	8,810
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,182	50	27	1,420	9,657	414	12,750
Belfast	10,266	559	49	1,812	130	76	12,892
Causeway Coast and Glens	331	3,385	2,727	141	13	26	6,623
Derry City and Strabane	171	68	7,018	127	10	1,600	8,994
Fermanagh and Omagh	169	15	100	79	32	6,940	7,335
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2,200	70	25	4,022	218	35	6,570
Mid and East Antrim	1,229	3,776	38	297	32	63	5,435
Mid Ulster	433	1,681	184	171	407	5,585	8,461
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,002	44	29	4,048	6,106	40	11,269
Unknown*	208	30	1,263	175	246	486	2,408
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>20,980</b>	<b>12,769</b>	<b>11,519</b>	<b>19,951</b>	<b>16,961</b>	<b>15,352</b>	<b>97,532</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled student enrolments (72.5%, 1,745).

- In 2020/21, Belfast LGD had the highest proportion of the 97,532 enrolments, accounting for 13.2% (12,892), and Mid and East Antrim the lowest, with 5.6% (5,435).
- In all eleven LGDs, over half of student enrolments were at one particular college. However, this ranged from Antrim and Newtownabbey, where 50.1% of student enrolments were at Northern Regional College, to Fermanagh and Omagh, where 94.6% of student enrolments were at South West College.
- Around a third of enrolments from students residing in either Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD or Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD were at Belfast Metropolitan College (38.2% and 33.5% respectively).
- Notably, in North West Regional College, a relatively large number of enrolments did not have an associated postcode (1,263), accounted for mainly by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students (96.6%, 1,220).

**Table 2: All enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	9,586	9,131	8,679	7,819	5,985
Ards and North Down	14,262	12,890	12,949	11,981	8,810
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	19,721	22,262	19,084	17,764	12,750
Belfast	18,998	18,369	17,145	15,918	12,892
Causeway Coast and Glens	10,361	10,450	10,270	8,938	6,623
Derry City and Strabane	13,012	13,797	14,705	12,659	8,994
Fermanagh and Omagh	12,094	11,725	11,666	10,567	7,335
Lisburn and Castlereagh	11,011	11,112	10,493	9,001	6,570
Mid and East Antrim	8,404	8,599	7,975	7,341	5,435
Mid Ulster	14,238	13,971	14,176	11,612	8,461
Newry, Mourne and Down	17,853	19,312	17,158	15,646	11,269
Unknown*	3,548	3,892	3,702	3,108	2,408
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>153,088</b>	<b>155,510</b>	<b>148,002</b>	<b>132,354</b>	<b>97,532</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled student enrolments. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 70.6% in 2017/18 to 80.7% in 2018/19.)

- FE College enrolments have decreased by a net 36.3%, from 153,088 in 2016/17 to 97,532 in 2020/21; this includes a 26.3% fall on 2019/20 (132,354). Recent trends, including decreasing part-time enrolments and the number of 16-19 year-olds dipping to its lowest level since the 1950s, have been exacerbated by COVID-19 related factors.
- Since 2016/17, enrolments have decreased in net terms in each of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Mid Ulster (40.6%), from 14,238 in 2016/17 to 8,461 in 2020/21, while the smallest has been in Derry City and Strabane (30.9%), from 13,012 to 8,994.

**Table 3: Regulated enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	8,222	7,813	7,085	6,647	5,496
Ards and North Down	12,210	11,407	10,624	10,017	8,131
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	17,101	18,841	15,639	14,550	11,315
Belfast	17,258	16,256	15,126	14,245	11,524
Causeway Coast and Glens	9,327	9,429	9,137	7,982	6,134
Derry City and Strabane	9,728	10,229	10,286	8,887	7,608
Fermanagh and Omagh	8,829	8,314	8,251	7,150	6,139
Lisburn and Castlereagh	9,608	9,538	8,700	7,745	6,046
Mid and East Antrim	7,327	7,454	6,721	6,421	5,113
Mid Ulster	11,296	10,760	10,363	9,267	7,686
Newry, Mourne and Down	14,665	15,577	13,030	12,289	9,986
Unknown*	3,058	3,436	3,198	2,560	2,190
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>128,629</b>	<b>129,054</b>	<b>118,160</b>	<b>107,760</b>	<b>87,368</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled student enrolments. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 70.2% in 2017/18 to 82.3% in 2018/19.)

- Regulated enrolments at FE Colleges decreased by a net 32.1% between 2016/17 (128,629) and 2020/21 (87,368).
- Since 2016/17, regulated enrolments have decreased in net terms in each of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Lisburn and Castlereagh (37.1%), from 9,608 in 2016/17 to 6,046 in 2020/21.
- The smallest net percentage decrease has been in Derry City and Strabane (21.8%), from 9,728 in 2016/17 to 7,608 in 2020/21.

**Table 4: Higher Education enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	643	658	623	609	521
Ards and North Down	744	734	752	777	788
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,377	1,849	1,412	1,350	1,303
Belfast	1,475	1,417	1,333	1,319	1,250
Causeway Coast and Glens	672	699	598	595	594
Derry City and Strabane	1,138	1,115	963	841	988
Fermanagh and Omagh	932	966	1,026	913	845
Lisburn and Castlereagh	764	726	654	691	700
Mid and East Antrim	662	583	590	603	554
Mid Ulster	1,008	1,075	1,124	1,033	969
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,365	1,615	1,296	1,301	1,238
Unknown*	395	411	333	291	284
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>11,175</b>	<b>11,848</b>	<b>10,704</b>	<b>10,323</b>	<b>10,034</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled student enrolments. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 69.0% in 2020/21 to 82.9% in 2018/19.)

- Higher Education enrolments at FE Colleges decreased by a net 10.2% between 2016/17 (11,175) and 2020/21 (10,034).
- Since 2016/17, Higher Education enrolments have decreased in net terms in ten of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Antrim and Newtownabbey (19.0%), from 643 in 2016/17 to 521 in 2020/21.
- The sole net percentage increase has been in Ards and North Down (5.9%), from 744 in 2016/17 to 788 in 2020/21.

**Table 5: Number of qualifications achieved in the FE Sector by Local Government District and FE College in 2020/21**

Local Government District	FE College						Total
	Belfast Metropolitan	Northern Regional	North West Regional	South Eastern Regional	Southern Regional	South West	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1,395	1,607	19	280	39	18	<b>3,358</b>
Ards and North Down	905	49	15	4,632	36	6	<b>5,643</b>
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	674	26	9	846	5,354	195	<b>7,104</b>
Belfast	5,929	314	30	1,104	54	19	<b>7,450</b>
Causeway Coast and Glens	142	1,869	1,184	81	10	12	<b>3,298</b>
Derry City and Strabane	62	41	2,889	85	7	484	<b>3,568</b>
Fermanagh and Omagh	87	10	53	50	19	2,668	<b>2,887</b>
Lisburn and Castlereagh	1,337	43	10	2,513	139	16	<b>4,058</b>
Mid and East Antrim	741	2,075	24	173	17	23	<b>3,053</b>
Mid Ulster	252	904	72	105	207	2,430	<b>3,970</b>
Newry, Mourne and Down	521	18	15	2,294	3,527	20	<b>6,395</b>
Unknown*	114	13	606	97	149	236	<b>1,215</b>
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>12,159</b>	<b>6,969</b>	<b>4,926</b>	<b>12,260</b>	<b>9,558</b>	<b>6,127</b>	<b>51,999</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by qualifications gained by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students (69.3%, 842).

- In 2020/21, Belfast had the highest proportion of the 51,999 qualifications achieved, accounting for 14.3% (7,450), and Fermanagh and Omagh the lowest, with 5.6% (2,887).
- In ten of the eleven LGDs, over half of student qualifications achieved were at one particular college, with the largest concentration being in Fermanagh and Omagh, where 92.4% of qualifications were at South West College. However, in Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD, 47.9% of qualifications were at Northern Regional College.
- Many qualifications achieved by students residing in either Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD or Lisburn and Castlereagh LGD were undertaken at Belfast Metropolitan College (41.5% and 32.9% respectively).
- Notably, in North West Regional College, a relatively large number of qualifications awarded did not have an associated postcode (606), accounted for mainly by those gained by RoI domiciled students (97.4%, 590).



**Table 6: Number of qualifications achieved in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	5,041	4,794	4,268	3,886	3,358
Ards and North Down	8,748	8,195	7,479	6,980	5,643
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	11,449	12,723	10,322	9,268	7,104
Belfast	11,496	10,752	10,162	9,068	7,450
Causeway Coast and Glens	5,827	5,798	5,632	4,482	3,298
Derry City and Strabane	5,633	5,673	5,880	4,569	3,568
Fermanagh and Omagh	5,308	4,812	4,693	4,022	2,887
Lisburn and Castlereagh	6,599	6,549	6,043	5,301	4,058
Mid and East Antrim	4,402	4,480	3,780	3,628	3,053
Mid Ulster	6,745	6,512	5,845	5,033	3,970
Newry, Mourne and Down	9,854	10,408	8,526	7,911	6,395
Unknown*	1,913	2,074	1,949	1,511	1,215
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>83,015</b>	<b>82,770</b>	<b>74,579</b>	<b>65,659</b>	<b>51,999</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by qualifications gained by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 69.0% in 2017/18 to 80.7% in 2018/19.)

- The number of qualifications achieved at FE Colleges decreased by 37.4% between 2016/17 (83,015) and 2020/21 (51,999).
- Since 2016/17, the number of qualifications awarded has decreased in net terms in all eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Fermanagh and Omagh (45.6%), from 5,308 in 2016/17 to 2,887 in 2020/21.
- The smallest net percentage decrease has been in Mid and East Antrim (30.6%), from 4,402 in 2016/17 to 3,053 in 2020/21.

**Table 7: Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District in 2020/21**

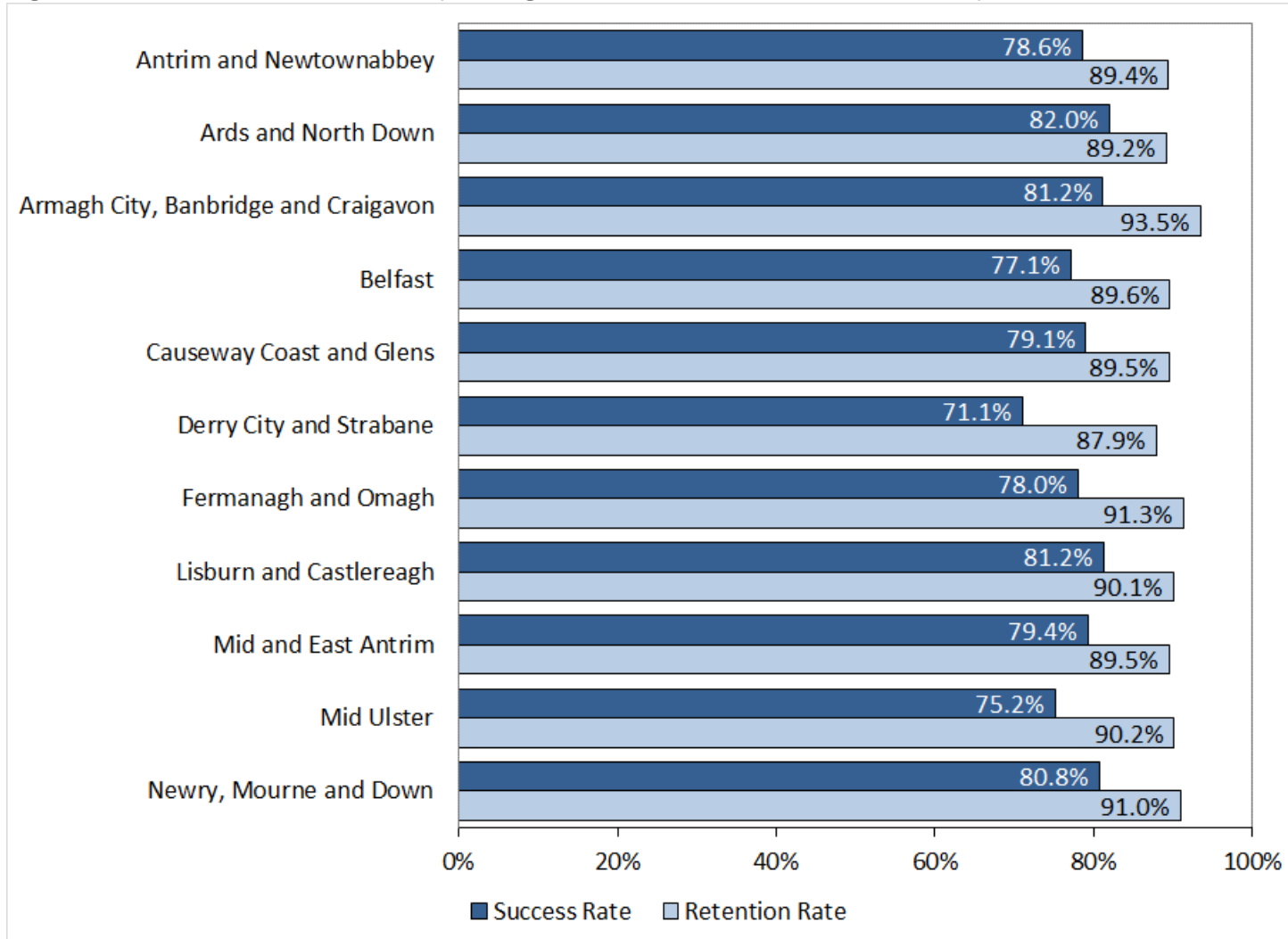
Local Government District	Final Year Enrolments	Final Year Completers	Retention Rate	Achievements	Achievement Rate	Success Rate
Antrim and Newtownabbey	4,272	3,821	89.4%	3,358	87.9%	78.6%
Ards and North Down	6,884	6,141	89.2%	5,643	91.9%	82.0%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	8,748	8,180	93.5%	7,104	86.8%	81.2%
Belfast	9,661	8,659	89.6%	7,450	86.0%	77.1%
Causeway Coast and Glens	4,171	3,733	89.5%	3,298	88.3%	79.1%
Derry City and Strabane	5,021	4,413	87.9%	3,568	80.9%	71.1%
Fermanagh and Omagh	3,699	3,377	91.3%	2,887	85.5%	78.0%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	4,995	4,501	90.1%	4,058	90.2%	81.2%
Mid and East Antrim	3,847	3,444	89.5%	3,053	88.6%	79.4%
Mid Ulster	5,282	4,763	90.2%	3,970	83.4%	75.2%
Newry, Mourne and Down	7,916	7,202	91.0%	6,395	88.8%	80.8%
Unknown*	1,541	1,384	89.8%	1,215	87.8%	78.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,037</b>	<b>59,618</b>	<b>90.3%</b>	<b>51,999</b>	<b>87.2%</b>	<b>78.7%</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled student enrolments [final year enrolments (71.2%), final year completers (70.1%) and qualifications achieved (69.3%)].

- The retention rate for the FE Sector was 90.3% in 2020/21, while those across the eleven LGDs ranged from 87.9% in Derry City and Strabane to 93.5% in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.
- While the success rate for the FE Sector was 78.7% in 2020/21, the success rates across the eleven LGDs ranged from 71.1% in Derry City and Strabane to 82.0% in Ards and North Down.
- In 2020/21, while retention rates were relatively similar across the eleven LGDs (a range of 5.6 percentage points), the success rate range was 10.9 percentage points.

**Figure 1: Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments in the FE Sector by Local Government District in 2020/21**



Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Please note approximately 2% of final year enrolments/completers/achievements have unknown postcodes, which are not labelled in the chart but included in Table 7.

**Table 8: All students enrolled in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	5,056	4,697	4,693	4,179	3,389
Ards and North Down	5,549	5,419	5,406	5,274	4,568
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	9,526	9,660	9,145	8,422	7,193
Belfast	9,949	9,403	9,220	8,783	7,237
Causeway Coast and Glens	6,158	5,743	5,594	5,225	4,229
Derry City and Strabane	8,632	8,513	9,068	8,065	5,865
Fermanagh and Omagh	7,287	6,909	6,673	6,532	4,268
Lisburn and Castlereagh	4,804	4,746	4,738	4,257	3,469
Mid and East Antrim	4,871	4,596	4,467	4,110	3,351
Mid Ulster	7,722	7,422	7,506	6,491	4,633
Newry, Mourne and Down	8,512	8,455	8,002	7,559	6,146
Unknown*	2,335	2,351	2,158	1,950	1,623
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>80,401</b>	<b>77,914</b>	<b>76,670</b>	<b>70,847</b>	<b>55,971</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 71.0% in 2016/17 to 79.4% in 2018/19.)

- The number of students enrolled at FE Colleges has decreased by 30.4%, from 80,401 in 2016/17 to 55,971 in 2020/21; this includes a 21.0% fall on 2019/20 (70,847). Recent trends, including a decreasing number of part-time students and the number of 16-19 year-olds dipping to its lowest level since the 1950s, have been exacerbated by COVID-19 related factors.
- Since 2016/17, student numbers have decreased in net terms in each of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Fermanagh and Omagh (41.4%), from 7,287 in 2016/17 to 4,268 in 2020/21, while the smallest has been in Ards and North Down (17.7%), from 5,549 to 4,568.

**Table 9: Students enrolled on regulated courses in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	4,200	3,881	3,710	3,459	3,150
Ards and North Down	4,942	4,822	4,682	4,611	4,238
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	8,329	8,004	7,650	7,205	6,610
Belfast	8,994	8,305	7,984	7,802	6,531
Causeway Coast and Glens	5,544	5,192	4,919	4,686	3,984
Derry City and Strabane	6,766	6,455	6,148	5,491	5,061
Fermanagh and Omagh	4,919	4,562	4,342	3,990	3,480
Lisburn and Castlereagh	4,310	4,199	4,090	3,763	3,204
Mid and East Antrim	4,158	3,897	3,669	3,494	3,183
Mid Ulster	6,002	5,663	5,472	4,930	4,278
Newry, Mourne and Down	7,163	6,880	6,514	6,141	5,600
Unknown*	2,017	2,066	1,877	1,613	1,489
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>67,344</b>	<b>63,926</b>	<b>61,057</b>	<b>57,185</b>	<b>50,808</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 71.7% in 2017/18 to 81.6% in 2018/19.)

- The number of students enrolled on regulated courses at FE Colleges has decreased by 24.6% between 2016/17 (67,344) and 2020/21 (50,808).
- Since 2016/17, student numbers on regulated courses has decreased in each of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest percentage decrease has been in Fermanagh and Omagh (29.3%), from 4,919 in 2016/17 to 3,480 in 2020/21.
- The smallest percentage decrease has been in Ards and North Down (14.2%), from 4,942 in 2016/17 to 4,238 in 2020/21.

**Table 10: Students enrolled on Higher Education courses in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	634	644	619	593	504
Ards and North Down	722	725	738	757	767
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,259	1,270	1,244	1,211	1,174
Belfast	1,437	1,387	1,297	1,279	1,203
Causeway Coast and Glens	664	678	592	579	567
Derry City and Strabane	1,114	1,050	917	819	956
Fermanagh and Omagh	902	888	853	846	801
Lisburn and Castlereagh	743	687	634	671	668
Mid and East Antrim	649	578	583	592	540
Mid Ulster	989	1,011	985	984	922
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,206	1,099	1,082	1,088	1,027
Unknown*	383	392	321	277	278
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>10,702</b>	<b>10,409</b>	<b>9,865</b>	<b>9,696</b>	<b>9,407</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 68.3% in 2020/21 to 83.3% in 2018/19.)

- The number of students enrolled on Higher Education courses at FE Colleges decreased by 12.1% between 2016/17 (10,702) and 2020/21 (9,407).
- Since 2016/17, student numbers on Higher Education courses have decreased in net terms in ten of the eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Antrim and Newtownabbey (20.5%), from 634 in 2016/17 to 504 in 2020/21.
- The sole net percentage increase has been in Ards and North Down (6.2%), from 722 in 2016/17 to 767 in 2020/21.

**Table 11: Students achieving regulated qualifications in the FE Sector by Local Government District (2016/17 to 2020/21)**

Local Government District	Academic Year				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2,927	2,772	2,597	2,343	2,177
Ards and North Down	3,935	3,806	3,662	3,498	3,216
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	6,291	6,348	5,779	5,207	4,509
Belfast	6,746	6,411	6,135	5,574	4,740
Causeway Coast and Glens	3,901	3,704	3,501	2,999	2,412
Derry City and Strabane	4,442	4,266	4,142	3,403	2,804
Fermanagh and Omagh	3,283	3,048	2,906	2,680	2,016
Lisburn and Castlereagh	3,269	3,275	3,200	2,864	2,420
Mid and East Antrim	2,834	2,739	2,428	2,327	2,150
Mid Ulster	4,002	3,834	3,583	3,165	2,655
Newry, Mourne and Down	5,371	5,411	4,909	4,442	3,935
Unknown*	1,403	1,414	1,261	1,075	890
<b>FE Sector Total</b>	<b>48,404</b>	<b>47,028</b>	<b>44,103</b>	<b>39,577</b>	<b>33,924</b>

Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by qualifications gained by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students. (Over the five year period, this ranged from 69.8% in 2017/18 to 79.5% in 2018/19.)

- The number of students achieving regulated qualifications at FE Colleges has decreased by 29.9% between 2016/17 (48,404) and 2020/21 (33,924).
- Since 2016/17, student numbers achieving regulated qualifications has decreased in net terms in all eleven LGDs.
- The largest net percentage decrease has been in Fermanagh and Omagh (38.6%), from 3,283 in 2016/17 to 2,016 in 2020/21.
- The smallest net percentage decrease has been in Ards and North Down (18.3%), from 3,935 in 2016/17 to 3,216 in 2020/21.

**Table 12: All students enrolled in the FE Sector and NI Population aged 16+ by Local Government District in 2020/21**

Local Government District	Students	% of NI FE sector students	Population aged 16+	% of NI population (aged 16+)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	3,389	6.1%	113,918	7.6%
Ards and North Down	4,568	8.2%	132,057	8.8%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	7,193	12.9%	168,360	11.2%
Belfast	7,237	12.9%	274,369	18.3%
Causeway Coast and Glens	4,229	7.6%	116,337	7.8%
Derry City and Strabane	5,865	10.5%	118,371	7.9%
Fermanagh and Omagh	4,268	7.6%	91,929	6.1%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	3,469	6.2%	116,887	7.8%
Mid and East Antrim	3,351	6.0%	112,616	7.5%
Mid Ulster	4,633	8.3%	114,153	7.6%
Newry, Mourne and Down	6,146	11.0%	140,697	9.4%
Unknown*	1,623	2.9%	0	n/a
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>55,971</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,499,694</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

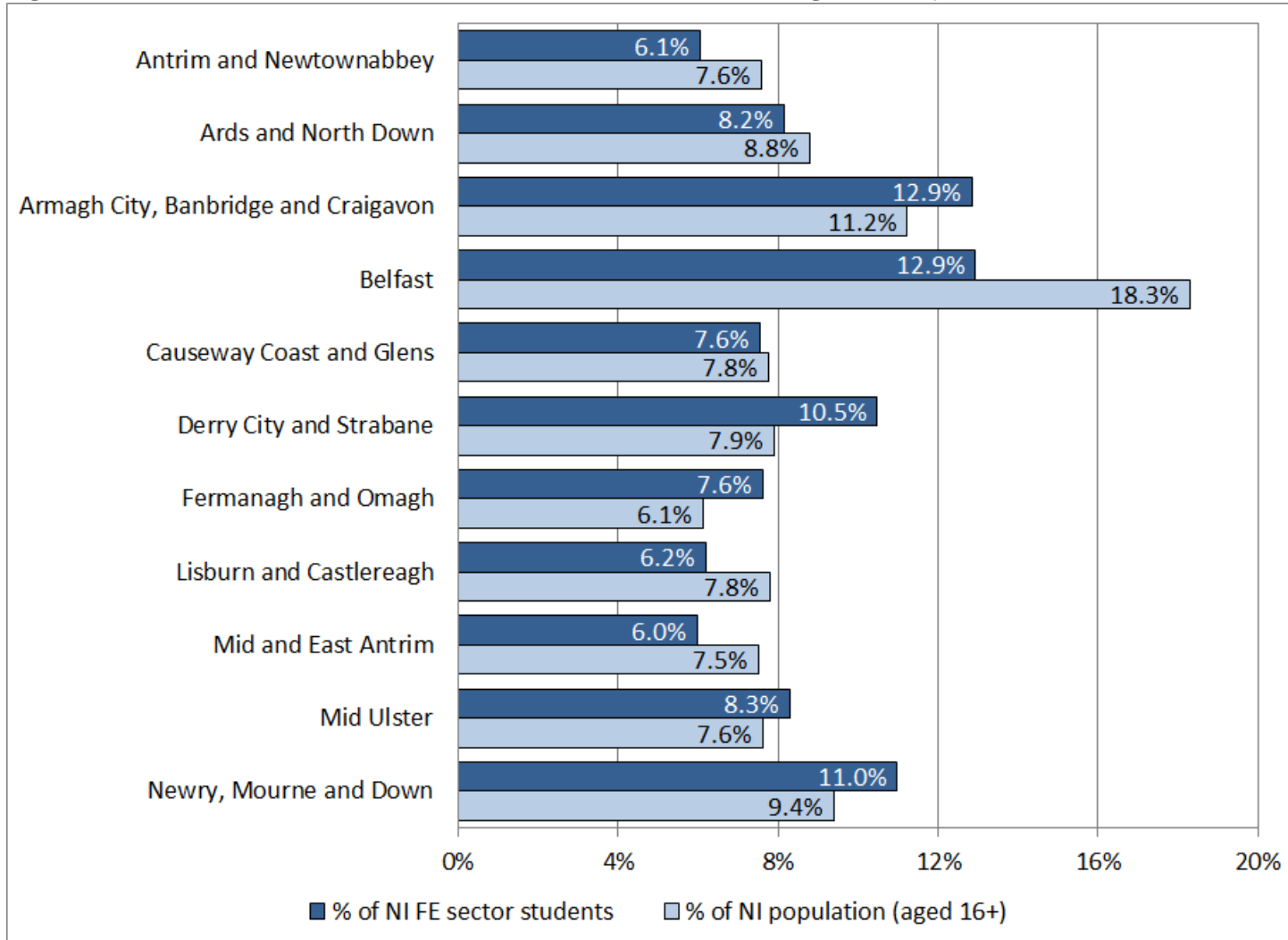
Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2020

Unknown\*: Postcodes with unassigned LGDs are mainly accounted for by Republic of Ireland (RoI) domiciled students (72.8%, 1,182).

- In 2020/21, almost a fifth (18.3%) of the NI population (aged 16 and over) lived in the Belfast LGD, whereas Belfast residents made up 12.9% (7,237) of the 55,971 students enrolled in the NI FE Sector.
- In contrast, while 7.9% of the NI population (aged 16 and over) lived in Derry City and Strabane, people living in this LGD accounted for 10.5% (5,865) of the 55,971 students enrolled in the NI FE Sector.
- When considering the LGD proportions of the NI population against the LGD proportions of students enrolled in the NI FE Sector, it should be noted there are no unknown postcodes for population, but there are 2.9% unknown postcodes with regards to FE Sector students. Of the 1,623 students with unknown postcodes in the FE Sector, 1,182 were RoI domiciled students, accounting for 2.1% of students within the sector.



**Figure 2: All students enrolled in the FE Sector and NI Population aged 16+ by Local Government District in 2020/21**



Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2020  
 Please note 2.9% of all students have unknown postcodes, which are not labelled in the chart but included in Table 12.

## Notes

1. Figures are correct as at 15th October 2021.
2. The Local Government District (LGD) is based on the postcode provided by the student at the time of enrolment.
3. The level of study indicates the nationally recognised qualification level of the course.
4. 'Regulated enrolments' consist of Higher Education courses ('Level 4 or above') and courses at 'Level 3 or below' that appear on either the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) or DfE's Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ).
5. Geographical data have been sourced from the Central Postcode Directory to assign LGDs to each enrolment. Approximately 2% of all enrolments are not assigned to LGDs due to invalid geo-referencing or non-Northern Ireland domiciled students.
6. Performance analysis is based on Final Year Enrolments and excludes transfers.
7. Withdrawals are included where there is an achieved outcome.
8. Enrolments of students in their final year of a course who have completed the course and subsequently achieve are regarded as final year achievements.
9. Retention rate is defined as the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students.
10. Achievement rate relates to the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.
11. Success rate (or overall measure of performance) is the percentage of final year regulated enrolments of students who complete and achieve a qualification.
12. Achievement and success rates are based on final year full and partial achievements.
13. The number of students enrolled at FE Colleges has been determined by a unique identifier for each academic year.
14. Tables for lower geographies, for example, Assembly Area, District Electoral Area and Ward are available from [NISRA's Neighbourhood Information Service \(NINIS\)](#) and [Open Data NI](#).

More Further Education Sector statistics are available from:-

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-economic-research/further-education-statistics>