

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 1 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**REPORT ON: FOLLOW-UP SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE**

**REPORT NO: 243-2025**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of the Scottish Government's Summary Statistics for Follow-Up Leaver Destinations, No.7: 2025 Edition, published 17 June 2025, in relation to Dundee's 2023/24 school leavers' post-school destinations.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children, Families and Communities Committee:
- Notes the contents of the report and,
  - Requests the Executive Director to provide a further update report on the achievement and attainment of our young people in the Senior Phase in academic session 2024/25 following the Insight (national benchmarking tool) update scheduled to take place late September 2025.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The [Scottish Government Summary Statistics for Follow-Up Leaver Destinations](#) looks at all school leavers who left publicly funded mainstream school in session 2023/24 and their outcomes approximately nine months after the end of the school year on the first Monday in April 2025. Dundee City had 1,430 school leavers in academic session 2023/24.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government groups the activities of school leavers into two categories: 'positive destinations' and 'other destinations'. School leavers are classified as being in a 'positive destination' if they are in higher or further education<sup>1</sup>, employment, training, voluntary work, or personal skills development. 'Other destinations' not classed as positive are unemployed (seeking or not seeking) or unknown.
- 4.3 The publication specifically warns: "The time series presented in this publication includes years where school leaver destinations are likely to have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The greatest impact is likely to have been seen in 2019/20. However, there may have been some ongoing impact on the destinations of some school leavers in subsequent years."
- 4.4 This report uses Dundee's local government benchmarking framework ([LGBF](#)) family group for comparison purposes. In addition to Dundee City, Family Group 4 includes: East Ayrshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Na h-Eileanan Siar, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. All local authorities in Family Group 4 except for Na h-Eileanan Siar are previous Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) challenge authorities.
- 4.5 It should be noted that the data in this report focusses solely on follow-up school leaver destinations. This sits alongside the wider Annual Participation Measure (APM) related work.

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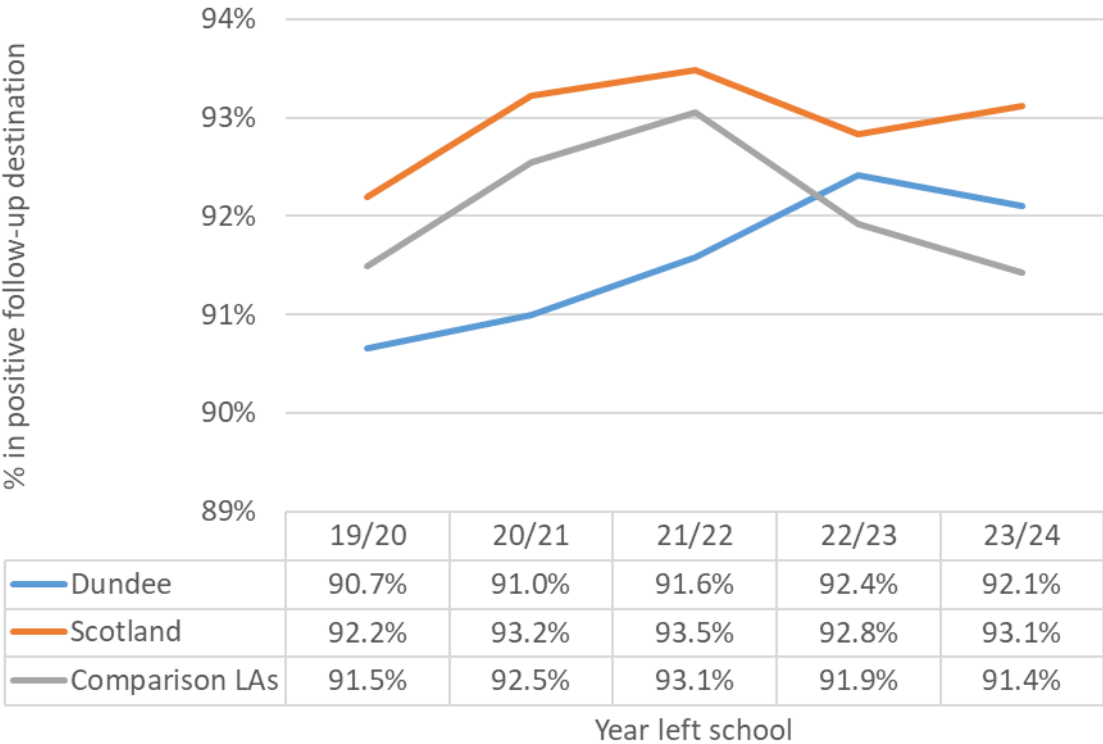
<sup>1</sup> Higher and Further Education are distinguished by the level of qualification studied, with Higher Education being SCQF Level 7 or above. It is not dependant on the institution attended. So, Higher Education does NOT equate to university.

4.6 As detailed in 'A Step Change in Positive Destinations for Young Dundonians', approved by City Governance Committee, Article IX of the minute of meeting of City Governance Committee of 22 April 2024 report (113-2024) refers.

- The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is the key tool used to assess Scotland's success in achieving positive post-school destinations for all young people aged 16-19. It is both an important measure of performance in education and our local economy, as well as of the City's ambition relating to fairness, inclusion, poverty, and productivity set out in the [Council Plan 2022-2027](#) and [City Plan 2022-2032](#).

**5.0 FOLLOW-UP SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS**

5.1 Chart 1 shows that there had been a general increase in the percentage of Dundee's school leavers in a 'follow-up' positive destination from 2019/20 to 2022/23. In April 2025, 92.1% of Dundee's 2023/24 school leavers were in a positive follow-up destination. This is a decrease of 0.3 percentage points (pp) from the previous year.



**Chart 1: Percentage of school leavers in follow-up positive destinations.**

- 5.2 Whilst Dundee's follow-up positive destination rate decreased by 0.3 pp in 2023/24, the average for comparison authorities in our LGBF family group saw a greater decrease of 0.5 pp. Dundee continues to show a higher follow-up positive destination rate than the rest of its family group.
- 5.3 In contrast to Dundee and its family group, Scotland saw a 0.3 pp increase in 2023/24 leavers in a follow-up positive destination.
- 5.4 Chart 2 shows the percentage of Dundee's school leavers by follow-up destination type over the last five years. The vast majority of leavers in follow-up positive destinations are in education, work, or training with only 1% or less in voluntary work or personal skills development.

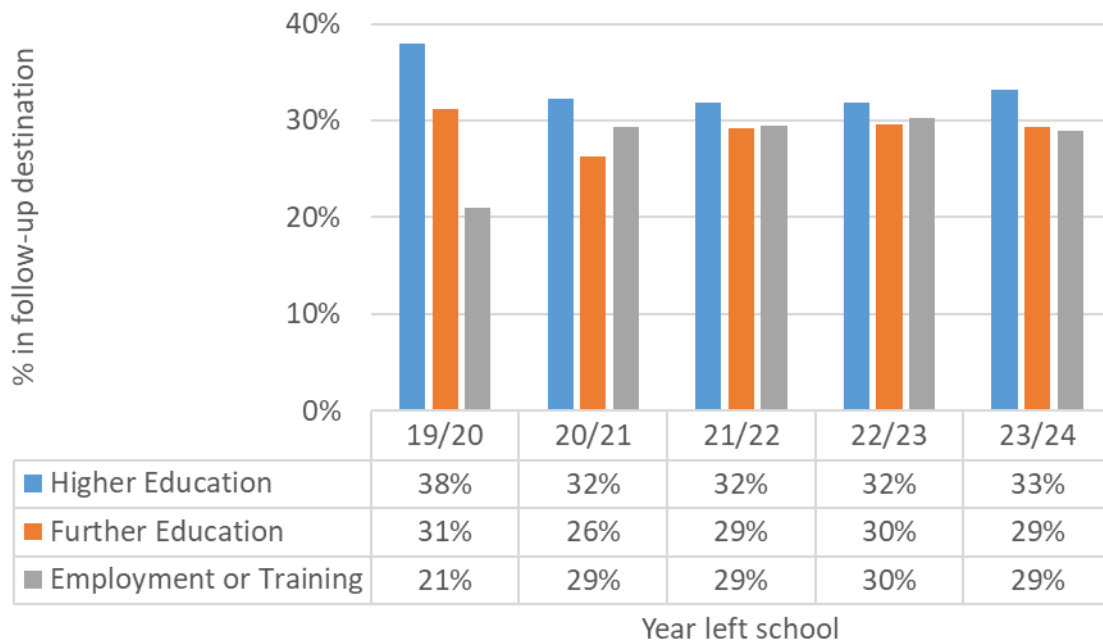
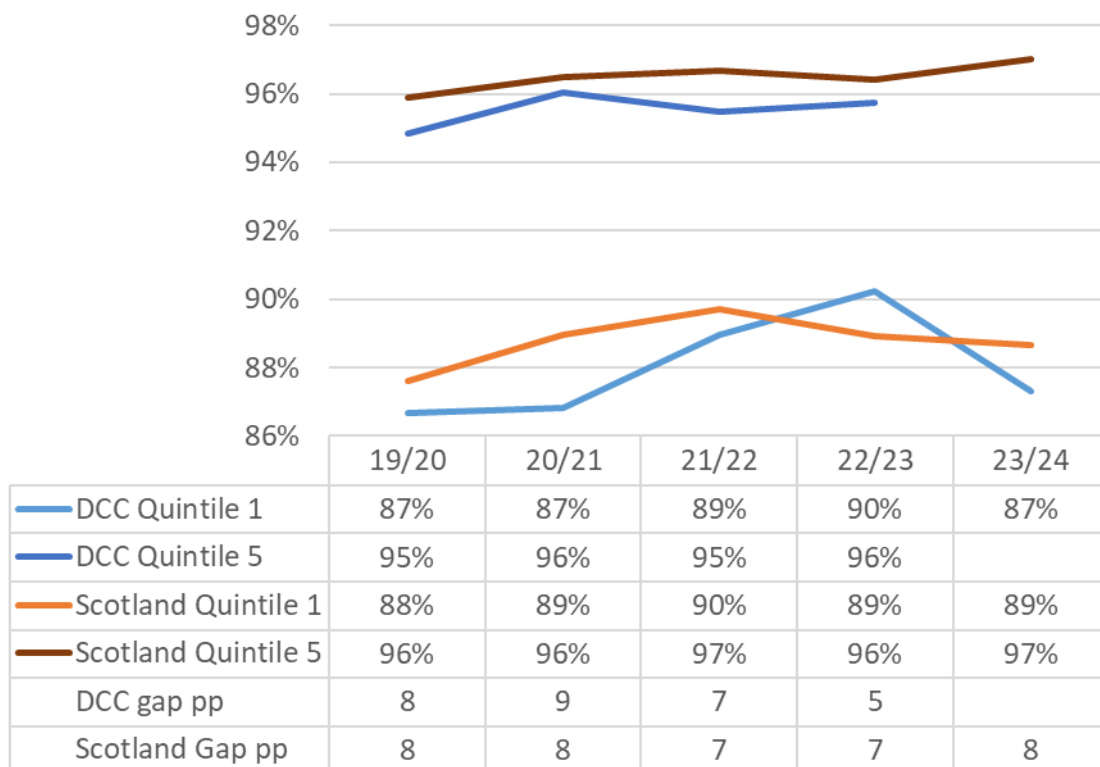


Chart 2: Percentage of Dundee school leavers by follow-up destination type.

- 5.5 Further information showing the change in percentage in school leavers in each destination type between the initial Skills Development Scotland (SDS) snapshot in October of the year they left school, and the follow-up snapshot in April the following year is included in Appendix 1.



\* Figures under charts may not sum due to rounding. Dundee Quintile 5 figures for 2023/24 were not published to protect against the risk of disclosing personal information.

Chart 3: Percentage of leavers in positive follow-up destinations for most and least deprived SIMD quintiles, Scotland, and Dundee

- 5.6 As Chart 3 shows, school leavers from the least deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile (SIMD quintile 5) are more likely to be in positive follow-up destinations than those from the most deprived quintile (SIMD quintile 1).
- 5.7 From 2019/20 to 2021/22 Dundee had a lower proportion of school leavers from SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) in positive follow-up destinations than the Scotland average. After exceeding the Scottish average in 2022/23, Dundee's SIMD quintile 1 has fallen back below Scotland.
- 5.8 The gap between SIMD quintiles 1 and 5 had been steady, and similar, in Scotland and Dundee at between 7 and 9 percentage points with an improvement shown in 2022/23. No figures for Dundee's SIMD Quintile 5 have been published for 2023/24: where less than 5 pupils make up any group, statistical publications suppress this data to protect against the risk of disclosing personal information. Dundee had 258 leavers in 2023/24 from SIMD quintile 5. We can infer that less than 5 were not in positive destinations, which would mean at least 98% were in positive destinations.

## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 As part of the *Every Dundee Learner Matters* collaborative improvement strategy, impactful practice around improving and sustaining positive post-school destinations will continue to be shared across all secondary schools. A seconded Depute Head Teacher, based within City Development, will continue to work directly with headteachers, deputies, college partners, and wider stakeholders to coordinate school-level improvement planning and delivery.
- 6.2 The improvement plan outlined in *A Step Change in Positive Destinations for Young Dundonians* (Report 113-2024), approved by City Governance Committee in April 2024, provides the framework for continued transformation in 2025/26. The plan focuses on improving participation, reducing dropouts, and strengthening partnership delivery. Key next steps include:
- 6.2.1 Co-designing improved data-sharing arrangements and transition support for young people moving from school to college, in partnership with college and SDS colleagues.
- 6.2.2 Developing and testing a combined school–college–work experience model for at-risk learners, aiming to reduce early college withdrawals and support sustained engagement.
- 6.2.3 Expanding targeted employability pathways and third sector support for pupils accessing Off-site provision, recognising the disproportionate risk of non-participation in this cohort.
- 6.2.4 Completing the rollout of the Positive Destinations Framework and embedding consistent partnership practice across all schools, with particular focus on tracking and supporting young people who have already left school and are not currently in a positive destination.

## **7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

## **8.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None.

AUDREY MAY  
Executive Director of Children and Families Service

7 August 2025

PAUL FLEMING  
Head of Education, Learning & Inclusion  
(Chief Education Officer)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|             |                                         |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>APM</b>  | Annual Participation Measure            |
| <b>LGBF</b> | Local Government Benchmarking Framework |
| <b>SDS</b>  | Skills Development Scotland             |
| <b>SIMD</b> | Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation  |
| <b>SQA</b>  | Scottish Qualifications Authority       |

## GLOSSARY

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Insight</b>           | <p>Insight is an online tool for benchmarking the senior phase. It is a professional tool available to secondary schools and local authorities to allow them to look at specific cohorts of learners and identify areas of success and where improvements can be made.</p> <p>Although Insight provides data on the attainment of a wide range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) awards from a range of providers, not all SCQF achievement awards are included.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>LGBF Family Group</b> | <p>To understand why variations in cost and performance are occurring, councils work together to 'drill-down' into the benchmarking data across service areas. This process has been organised around 'family groups' of councils so that we are comparing councils that are similar in terms of the type of population that they serve (e.g., relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area they cover (e.g., urban, semi-rural, rural). The point of comparing like with like is that this is more likely to lead to useful learning and improvement.</p> <p>Dundee is in Family Group 4 for Children, Social Work and Housing indicators. Councils are grouped by the type of population they serve, eg, level of deprivation and affluence.</p> |
| <b>School Leaver</b>     | <p>A school leaver is defined as a young person of school leaving age, who left school during or at the end of the school year. The leaver year is based on the dates of the Scottish Government's pupil census, details of which can be found in the Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland publication.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Senior Phase</b>      | <p>The senior phase curriculum, from S4 to S6 (from around ages 15 to 18), follows a young person's <a href="#">broad general education</a>, building firmly on the <a href="#">Experiences and Outcomes</a> they will have experienced and achieved to end of S3.</p> <p>It enables them to extend and deepen their learning and continue to develop skills for learning, life and work, through qualifications and also through a range of opportunities for personal development (for example work experience, volunteering, etc).</p> <p>It ultimately supports young people in moving onto the next stage – whether that is college, university, training or employment.</p>                                                                              |

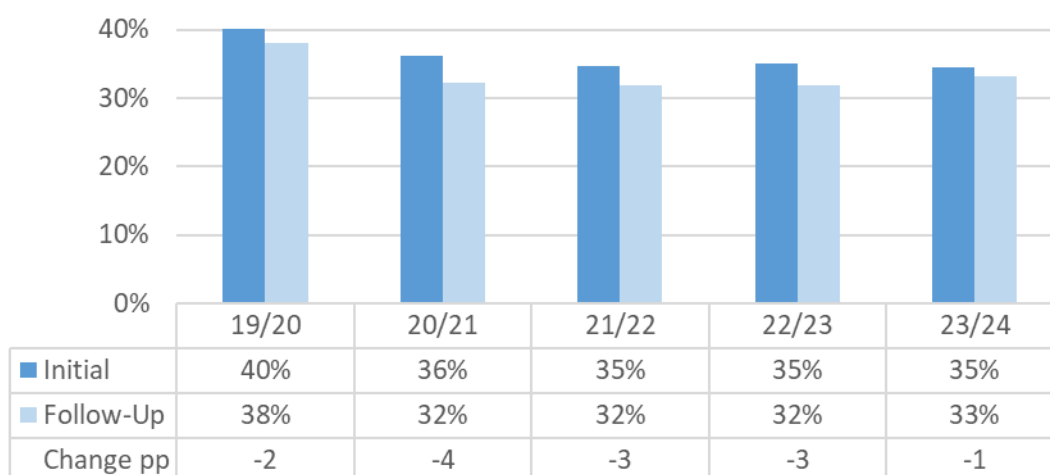
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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Participation Rates</b></p> <p><b>(Annual Participation Measure)</b></p> | <p>Skills Development Scotland (SDS) produce the Annual Participation Measure (APM) which complements school leaver destination statistics. Published every August, the APM captures the activity of all 16–19-year-olds across a complete year, including those who choose to stay on at school as well as those who have left school.</p> <p>The APM has been adopted as the metric for measuring success in relation to the young people's participation national indicator within the National Performance Framework. The indicator measures the percentage of young adults (16–19-year-olds) participating in education, training or employment.</p>                        |
| <p><b>Positive Destinations</b></p>                                            | <p>The school leaver positive destination data used in the publications is sourced from the 'Opportunities for All' shared dataset which is managed and hosted by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on behalf of partners.</p> <p>The initial destinations data (published in February) provides information on the outcomes for young people approximately three months after the end of the academic year (first Monday in October) while the follow-up data provides information on the outcomes for young people approximately nine months after the end of the academic year (first Monday in April). These collections should be seen as complementary to one another.</p> |



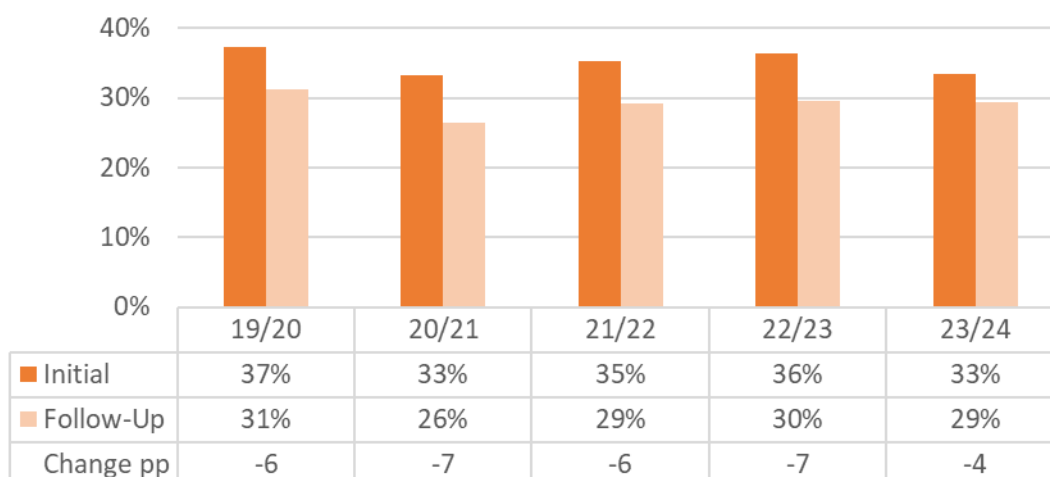
## APPENDIX 1 CHANGE BETWEEN INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP DESTINATIONS

Chart A1, A2 and A3 show the change in percentage in school leavers in each destination between the initial Skills Development Scotland (SDS) snapshot in October of the year they left school, and the follow-up snapshot in April the following year. There has consistently been a drop in the percentage of leavers in Higher Education, however 2023/24 shows the smallest decrease of the past five years. The drop-off in leavers at Further Education is larger but again shows the smallest drop off of the last five years in 2023/24. The increase in leavers in employment or training reflects this and may indicate where most leavers who move out of higher/further education proceed to.

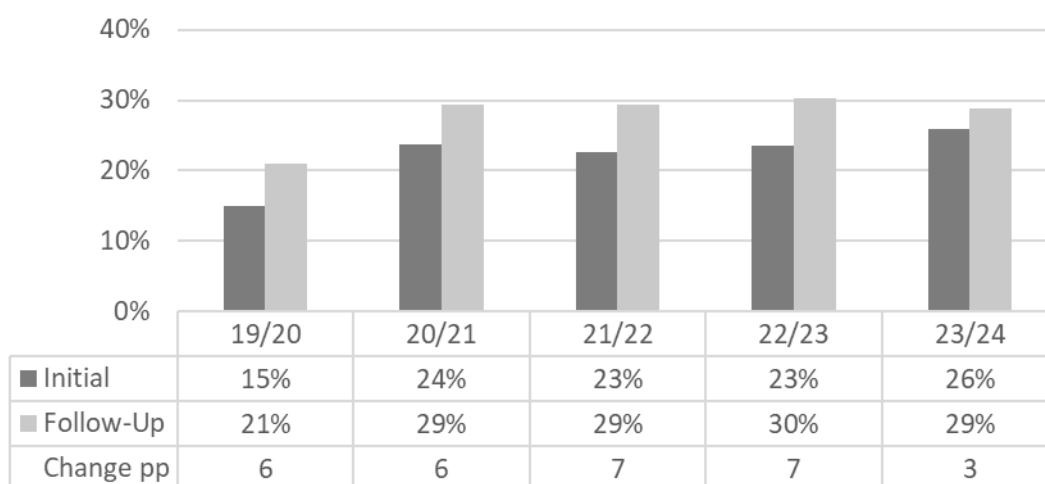
**Chart A1: Change between initial and follow-up destination - Higher Education**



**Chart A2: Change between initial and follow-up destination - Further Education**



**Chart A3: Change between initial and follow-up destination – Employment or Training**



\*Figures under charts may not sum due to rounding