INSTITUTE OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

IMI RESEARCH
July 2025

AUTOMOTIVE EDUCATION REPORT

Analysis of automotive qualifications and apprenticeships in the UK

Introduction

This report analyses the number of people who complete in automotive qualifications and start automotive apprenticeships in the UK. We use data from the regulatory bodies of the four nations:

- OfQual - The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation [England]
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority [Scotland]
- Qualifications Wales [Wales]
- CCEA Regulation[Northern Ireland]

These datasets give quarterly updates on certifications awarded for each qualification, with the latest data up to 2025 Q1 (January to March).

We align Scottish qualification levels with those in England and Wales for consistency.

For apprenticeship data, we refer to monthly reports from the Department of Education (DfE) in England on starts and achievement rates.

Executive summary

The latest data reveals a mixed but stabilising outlook for automotive education and skills.

In Q1 2025, awarding bodies issued 8,902 automotive certificates. This is similar to Q4 2024 and marks a 6% rise compared to the same quarter last year. This trend reflects stability across the wider vocational education sector. While certificate numbers have fallen by 5% over the long term, recent results suggest the sector may be entering a steadier phase.

Electric and hybrid vehicle training

Electric and hybrid vehicle (EV) qualifications remain the most common, although growth is slowing. Certifications rose by 6% from the previous quarter but remain 25% lower than a year ago. This points to growing pressure on training providers, despite rising demand for zero-emission vehicles and continued policy support. If the pace continues, the UK could face a shortfall of over 25,000 qualified EV technicians by 2035.

Adas training gaps

Training in advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) remains limited. Certification numbers dropped again this quarter, even as Level 2 autonomous features become more common in UK vehicles. Without faster progress, technician shortages may drive up repair costs, increase delays, and raise safety concerns.

Apprenticeship trends

Apprenticeship data also shows mixed results. Starts rose by just 1% year on year, and the overall trend remains flat. Current volumes are still 30% below pre-pandemic levels. Most of the growth is focused on specific areas. Light and heavy vehicle maintenance now account for over half of all starts. Heavy vehicle apprenticeships increased by 8%, likely due to sustained demand in logistics and public transport.

Falling participation in other pathways

Other apprenticeship routes are declining. Starts in lift truck and MET (Mechanical, Electrical, and Trim) roles each fell by more than 35%, raising concerns about future shortages in specialist repair services. Levy funding remains vital, especially for heavy vehicle training. This funding often supports older learners, which highlights a strategic focus on upskilling the current workforce rather than recruiting new talent.

Advanced apprenticeships and sector readiness

Advanced apprenticeships continue to attract younger learners and remain the most common entry point. However, the overall pace of growth is too slow to match rapid technological change. Without targeted investment and stronger incentives, the UK risks falling short of the skills it urgently needs.

Vocational qualification certifications

Automotive qualifications

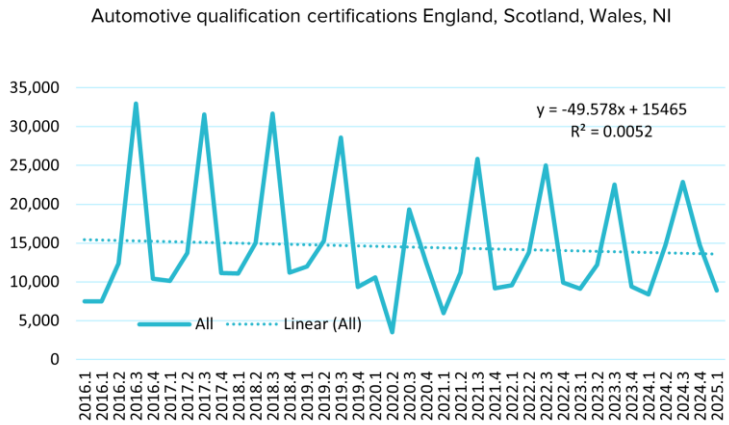
Automotive qualification certificates issued:

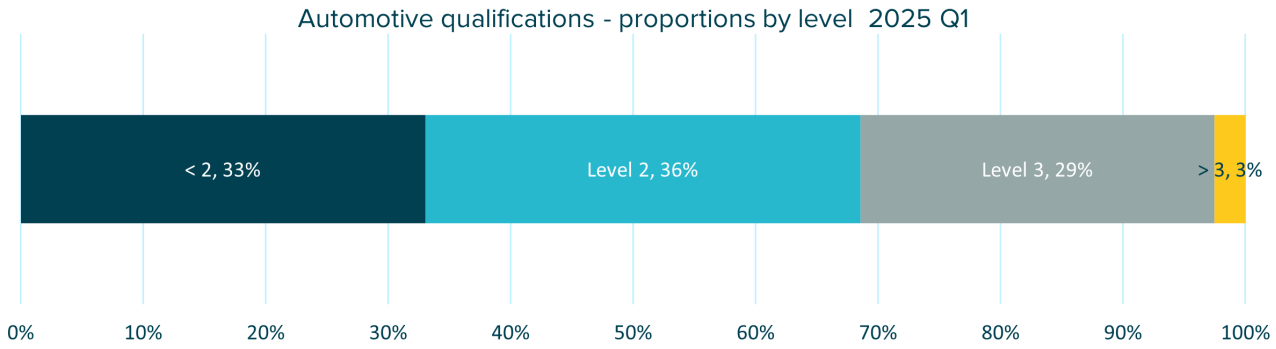
8,902

2025 Q1

In Q1 2025, awarding bodies issued 8,902 automotive certificates. This is close to the total in Q4 2024 and 6% higher than in the same quarter last year.

The pattern reflects trends in the wider vocational market, where results also remained close to last year. Although the long-term trend has declined by 5%, the recent figures suggest the automotive sector may be entering a period of greater stability.





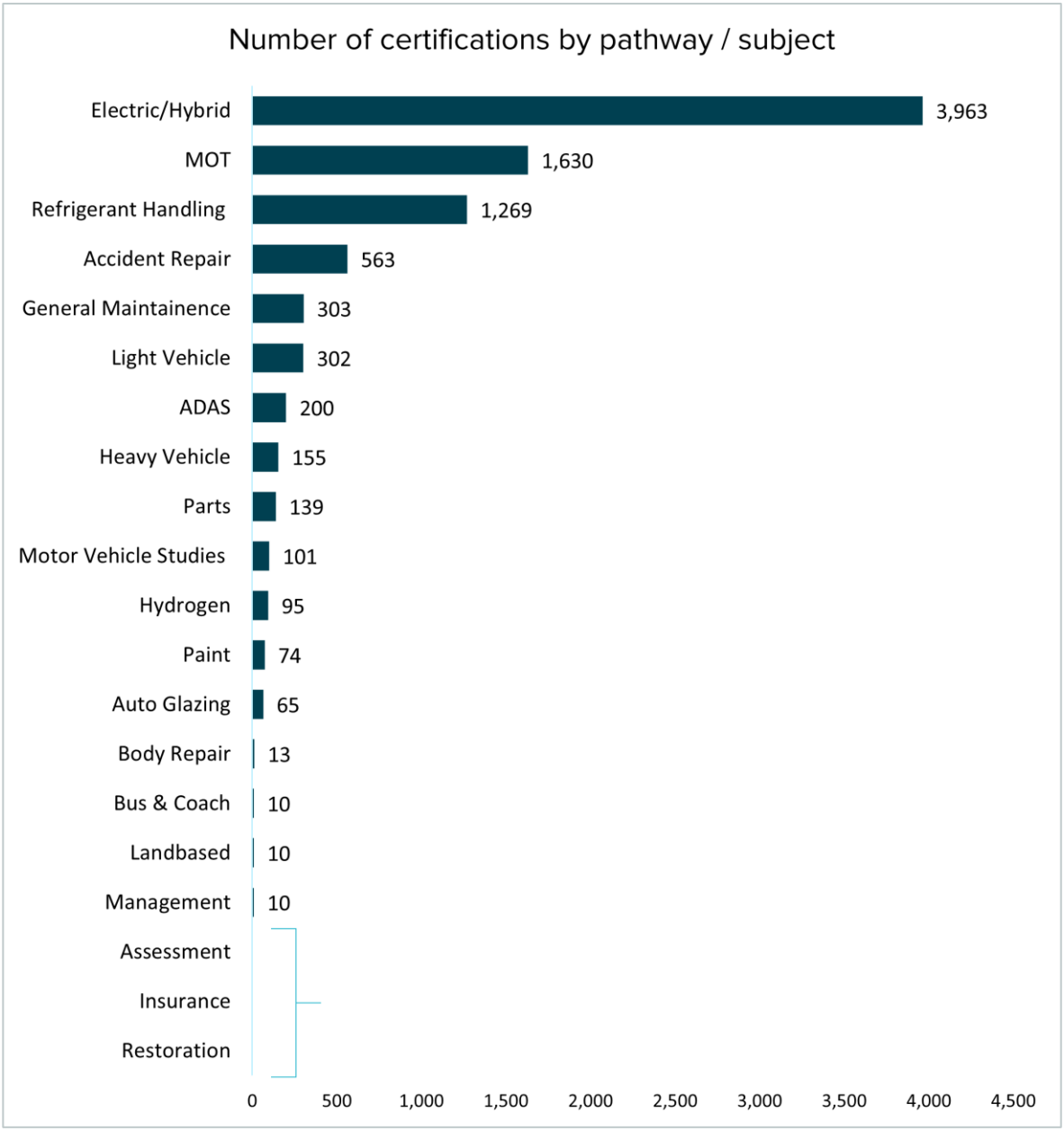
In Q1 2025, Level 3 made up 51% of automotive certificates, while Level 2 accounted for 28%.

Top ten automotive qualifications

Qualification title	No.	Level	Pathway
IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement	1,352	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 3 Award in Automotive Refrigerant Handling (EC842-2006) (VRQ)	1,262	Level 3	Refrigerant Handling
IMI Level 2 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Routine Maintenance Activities	704	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 1 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Awareness	604	Level 1	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 2 Award in MOT Testing (Classes 4 and 7)	570	Level 2	Electric/Hybrid
SEG Awards Level 2 Award In MOT Testing (Classes 4 and 7) (VRQ)	480	Level 2	MOT
IMI Level 4 Award in the Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/Hybrid Vehicles and Components	320	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 3 Award in Heavy Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement	312	Level 3	MOT
City & Guilds Level 3 Award in Component Removal and Replacement in Electric and Hybrid Vehicles	225	Level 4	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 3 Award in MOT Test Centre Management	215	Level 2	MOT

In Q1 2025, the most popular automotive qualification was the IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement, with 1,352 certificates (15%). The top ten qualifications made up 68% of all certificates, up 2% from the previous quarter. This points to a growing focus on a smaller set of qualifications, especially those linked to electric and hybrid vehicles, as the industry moves towards low-emission technologies.

Automotive qualification certifications – pathways / subject areas



Electric and hybrid vehicle qualifications made up 43% of certificates this quarter, down slightly from last quarter but still the largest category. General maintenance rose by 1% year on year, while light vehicle certifications fell by the same margin. MOT certifications climbed 42%, reaching their highest level in over a year and moving into second place, ahead of Refrigerant Handling.

Four Nation comparison

Nation	No. certificates issued 2024-Q4	% Chg last year	% of Level 3 and above	Top Qualification
England	7,805	5%	58%	IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement
NI	227	0%	66%	IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement
Scotland	760	73%	55%	Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Principles at SCQF Level 7
Wales	110	0%	45%	IMI Level 2 Award in MOT Testing (Classes 4 and 7)

England issued 88% of all automotive certificates in Q1 2025, a 5% increase year on year. Northern Ireland and Wales remained steady, while Scotland saw a 73% rise, recovering from a 25% drop in Q4 2024.

IMI TechSafe

Electric Vehicles

Technician forecasts - July 2025

66,788
qualified EV technicians in the UK

29%
of all technicians in the country are EV qualified

	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Technicians Required	110,645	122,788	139,684	150,667	163,989	175,116
Gap			2,271	9,615	18,308	25,435

Forecast gap between predicted number of technicians required to service and maintain Electric Vehicles and TechSafe EV Technicians

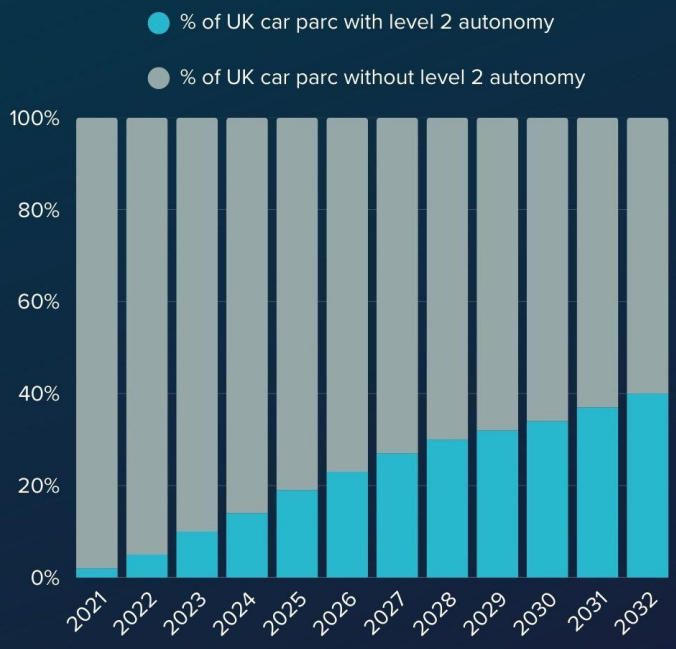
ADAS

Technician forecasts - July 2025

19%
of UK cars have some degree of level 2 autonomy

7,570
ADAS TechSafe eligible qualified

6%
of all technicians in the country are ADAS qualified



Proportion of UK car parc with level 2 autonomy

TechSafe EV

In Q1 2025, 2,999 technicians gained their EV certification, including those with eligible IMI accreditations. This was a 6% increase on the previous quarter but 25% lower than the same time last year.

The UK now has 66,788 qualified EV technicians. The IMI expects around 3,122 more certifications in Q2, bringing the total to 69,910. This would cover around 28% of the technician workforce and represent a 7% year-on-year increase.

IMI projections suggest the number will rise to 134,019 by 2033 and 155,811 by 2035. Even so, this would fall short of forecast demand by 9,615 in 2033 and 25,435 in 2035.

The gap is expected to widen most sharply in the lead-up to and just after the ZEV mandate deadline, making the next few years critical for expanding training capacity.

Without earlier and sustained growth, the sector risks a skills bottleneck just as EV adoption accelerates, potentially slowing servicing capacity and weakening consumer confidence.

TechSafe ADAS

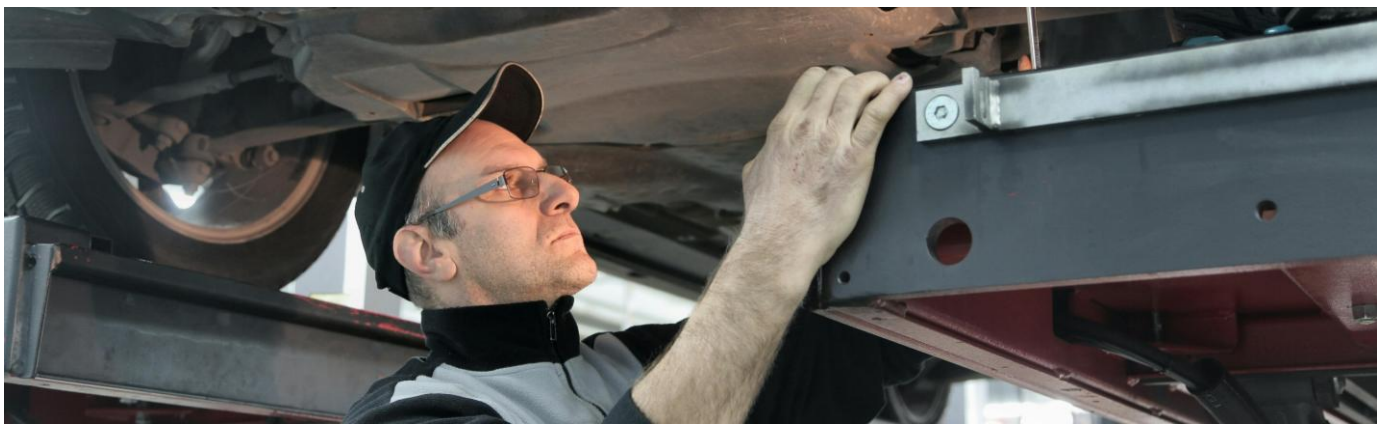
In Q1 2025, regulators issued 458 ADAS-related TechSafe certificates, bringing the UK total to 7,572 certified technicians.

This was a 5% increase on the same period last year. However, growth was uneven. Overall uptake remains low, and the number of new certifications fell 6% from the previous quarter, showing the training pipeline is still weak.

Unofficial IMI data shows a further slowdown in Q2 2025, with 572 new awards. The total remains at 7,572 certified technicians, just 6% of the UK workforce. Certification is not keeping up with the growing number of ADAS-equipped vehicles.

About 19% of UK cars now have Level 2 autonomy. This could rise to 40% by 2032. If so, the UK may need up to 96,870 trained technicians. At this rate, fewer than one in ten will be trained in time.

Without faster investment in training and clearer incentives, repair capacity may fall behind. This could raise costs and delays for drivers and put road safety and public trust in ADAS at risk.



Automotive apprenticeships – England

Apprenticeship Starts academic year 2024/25

Automotive apprenticeships starts first nine months 2024/5:

7,340

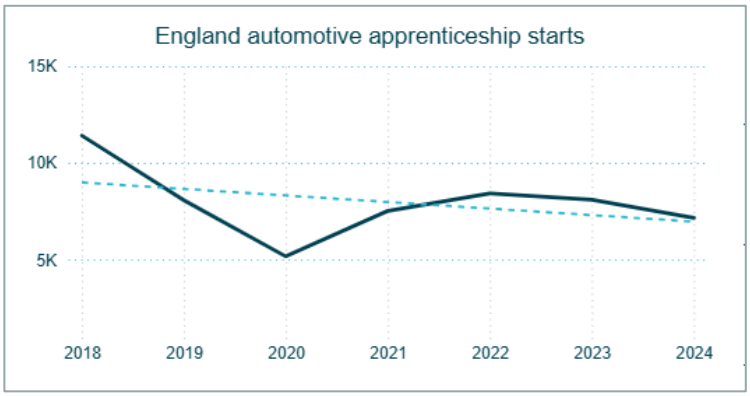
2024/5 to date

In the first three quarters of the 2024/25 academic year, there were 7,340 automotive apprenticeship starts.

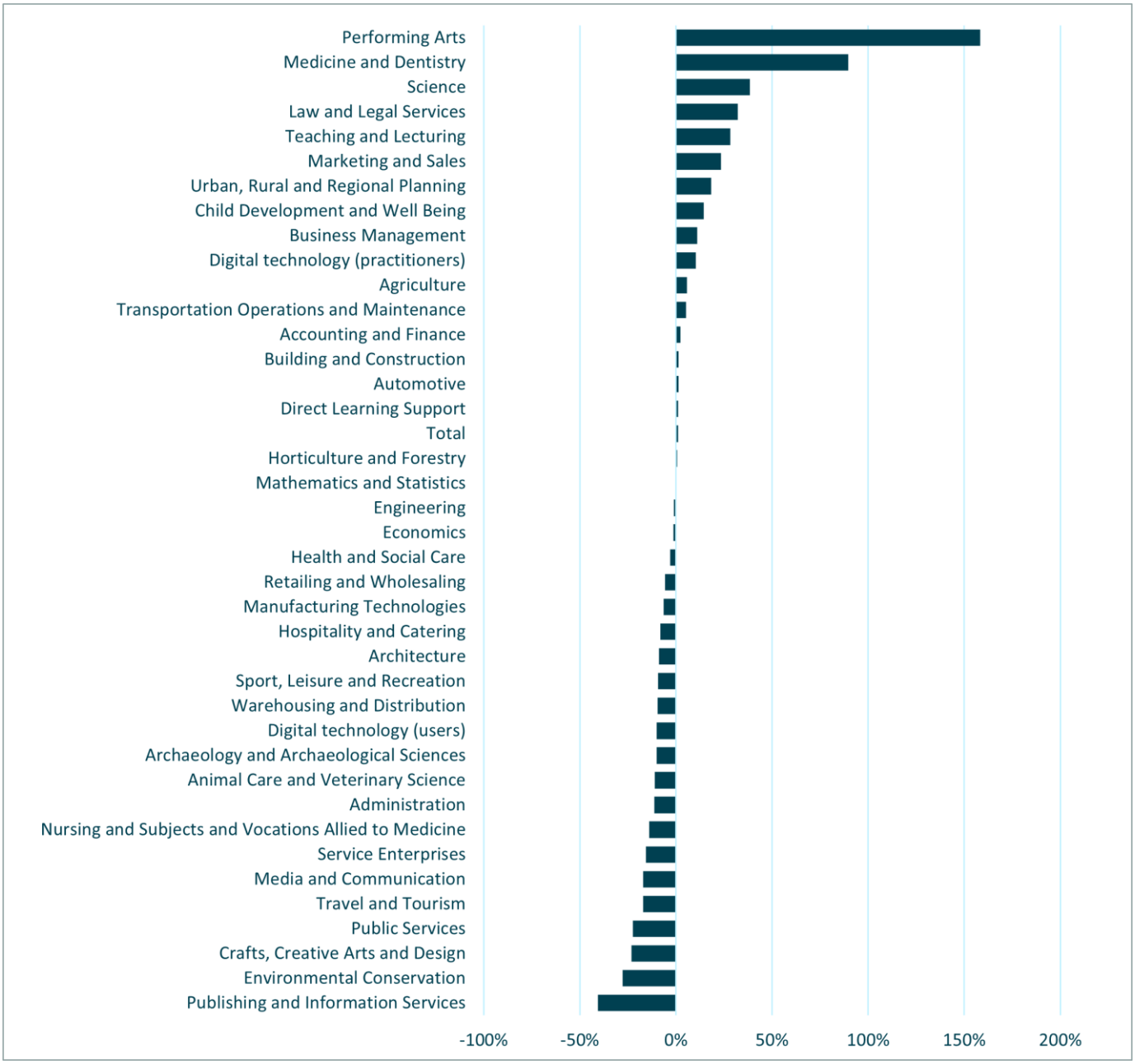
This figure is 1% higher than the previous year but 3% lower than in 2022/23.

Automotive apprenticeship starts are 30% below 2018/19 levels for the same period and have not recovered since the pandemic. On average, they are falling by 522 each year but account for just 2.57% of the overall drop across all sectors.

This suggests that although numbers are down, the decline is relatively modest compared to other sectors.



Comparison of apprenticeship subject areas



Automotive apprenticeships rose by 1% in the first nine months of the academic year, matching the overall increase across all sectors.

Automotive ranks 25th out of 41 subject areas for apprenticeship starts. In contrast, manufacturing technologies, which support much of the automotive sector, fell by 6%. This drop is concerning, given the industry's dependence on advanced manufacturing for production, parts, and new technologies.

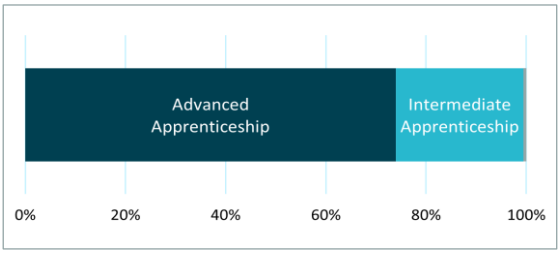
The data suggests that while automotive apprenticeships are stable, they are not growing quickly enough to meet future workforce needs. With just 1% growth, the sector risks falling behind as vehicle technology advances and other industries attract more young talent.

Apprenticeship starts level

Automotive apprenticeship starts first nine months 2024/5:

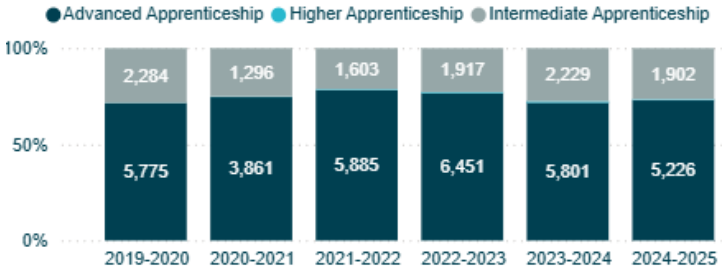
74%

Advanced apprenticeship



In the first nine months of 2024/25, 74% of automotive apprenticeships (5,403) were at advanced level, well above the 42% average across all sectors.

This is up 2% from 72% last year, while the share of intermediate-level starts is up 1%.



Apprenticeship starts age profile

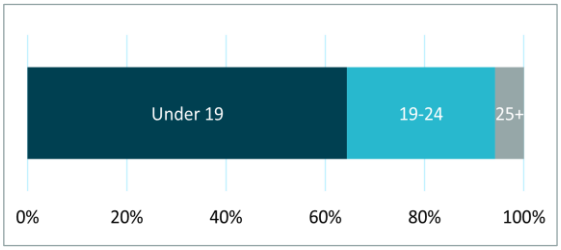
Automotive apprenticeship starts first nine months 2024/5:

64%

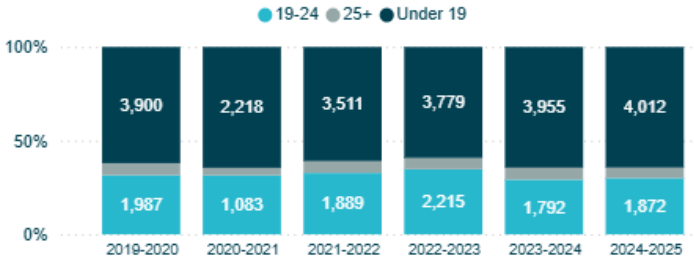
Under 19

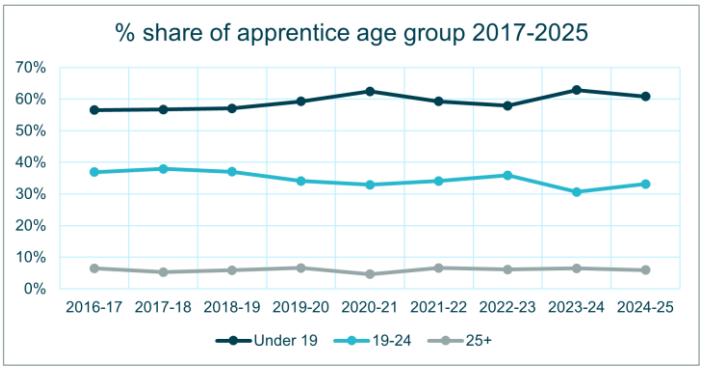
In 2024/25, 61% of automotive apprenticeship starters (4,467) were under 19, well above the all-sector average of 24%.

The proportion aged 19 to 24 rose by 2% from 2023/24 to reach 33%, although this is 3% lower than 2022/23.



Although there is a 2% increase in older apprentices, this follows a drop the previous year. Overall, the trend is stable, with under-19s consistently making up most new starters.





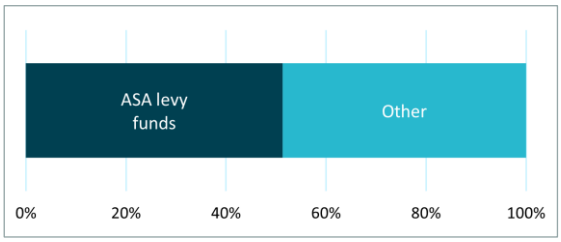
Apprenticeship starts funding

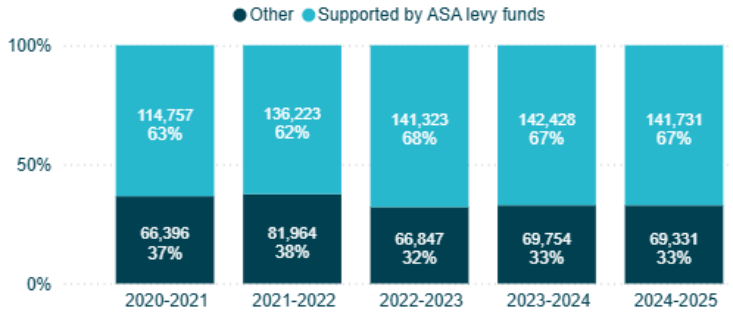
Automotive apprenticeship starts first nine months 2024/5:

51%

Levy-funded

In the first nine months of 2024/25, 55% of automotive apprenticeship starts were levy-funded. This is 1% higher last year but is 7% lower than in 2022/23. It also sits well below the 67% average across all apprenticeships.



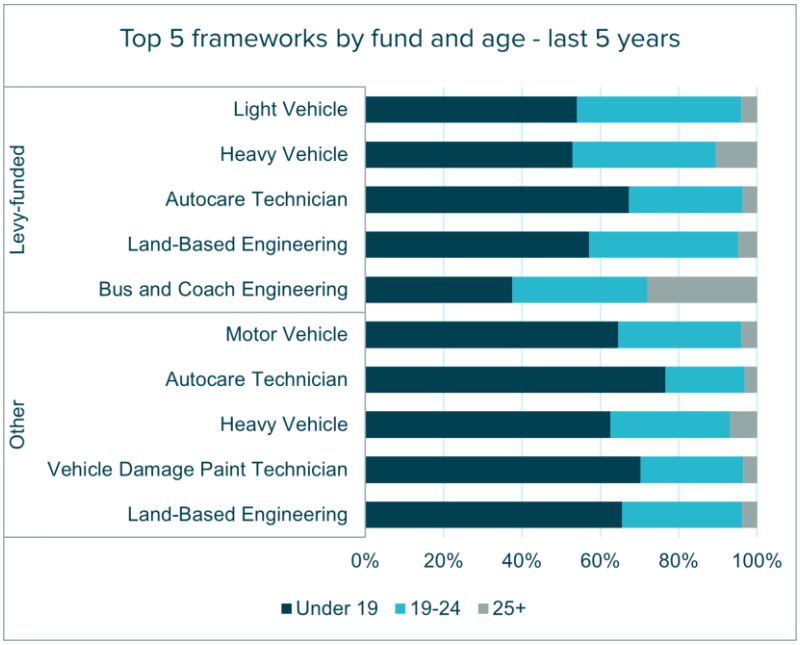


Automotive apprenticeships starts by pathway

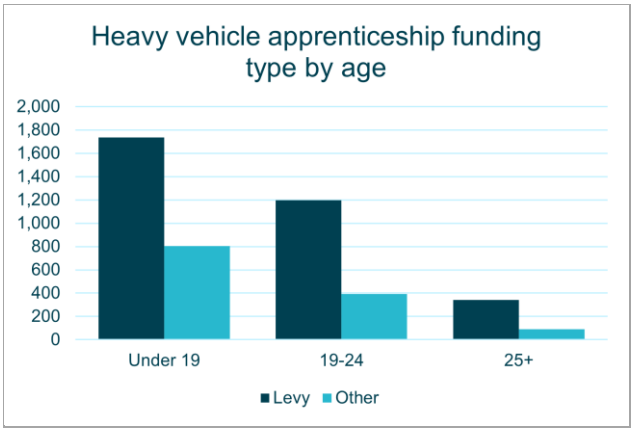
	2023/24	2024/25	% Change
Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician - Light Vehicle	2,684	2,836	6%
Autocare Technician	1,715	1,672	-3%
Heavy Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician	938	1,015	8%
Land-Based Service Engineering Technician	373	476	28%
Vehicle Damage Paint Technician	261	250	-4%
Bus and Coach Engineering Technician	217	234	8%
Land-Based Service Engineer	247	230	-7%
Vehicle Damage Panel Technician	177	177	0%
Lift Truck and Powered Access Engineering Technician	236	151	-36%
Vehicle Damage Mechanical, Electrical and Trim (MET) Technician	160	94	-41%
Accident Repair Technician	108	89	-18%
Motorcycle Technician (Repair and Maintenance)	59	58	-2%
Vehicle Damage Assessor	50	35	-30%
Automotive Glazing Technician	21	23	10%
Motor Finance Specialist	2		-100%
Total	**7,248**	**7,340**	**1%**

In the first nine months of 2024/25, 2,836 apprentices started the Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician pathway. This made it the most popular route, accounting for 39% of all automotive apprenticeship starts.

Heavy Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician starts rose by 8%, from 938 to 1,015. This pathway now makes up 14% of all automotive apprenticeships. The increase reflects steady demand from freight, logistics, and public transport sectors, though numbers stay well below those for light vehicle training.



Levy funding plays a key role in this growth. Over the last five years, 72% of apprentices on the heavy vehicle pathway were levy-funded, compared with 54% across all motor trade apprenticeships, a difference of 18%.



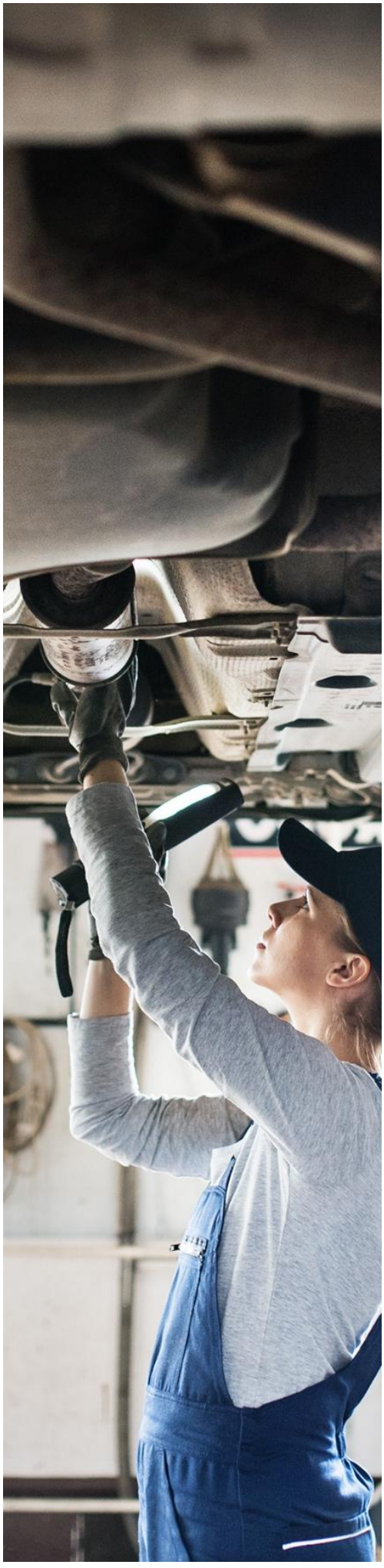
Levy funding in this pathway is particularly focused on older learners. Among apprentices aged 25 and over, 29% were levy-funded, compared with just 8% across all motor trades. In contrast, only 20% of apprentices under 19 had levy funding on this route, 34% below the average for that age group.

This age-based funding trend suggests a deliberate focus on upskilling existing staff or recruiting more mature new starters.

The Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician pathway recorded the largest increase, up 6% from the same period in 2023/24. It remains the most popular route, accounting for 39% of all automotive apprenticeship starts.

Meanwhile, Autocare Technician starts declined by a further 3% but still made up 23% of all automotive starts and remains the second most popular pathway.

The sharpest declines were in lift truck and MET technician pathways, falling by 36% and 41% respectively. Despite these declines, each pathway's overall share dropped by only 1% compared to the previous year.



Data sources

1. OfQual (England) – Vocational and other qualifications quarterly: January to March 2025.
2. SQA Accreditation (Scotland) – Quarterly Statistical Report, January to March 2025.
3. Qualifications Wales (Wales) – Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 2 2025.
4. CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) – Technical and Professional Qualifications Bulletin: Quarter 2 2025.
5. DfE (England) – Apprenticeships and Traineeships, data released 12 June 2025.

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