

AUTOMOTIVE EDUCATION REPORT

Analysis of automotive qualifications and apprenticeships in the UK



Introduction

This report analyses automotive qualification completions and apprenticeship starts across the UK. The analysis uses data from the regulatory bodies in the four nations:

- Ofqual in England¹
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority²
- Qualifications Wales³
- CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland⁴

These organisations publish quarterly statistics on qualification certificates. The most recent data covers the fourth quarter of 2025.

To allow comparison, Scottish qualification levels are aligned with those used in England and Wales.

For apprenticeships, the report uses monthly statistics from the Department for Education⁵ on apprenticeship starts in England.⁵

Key findings: Automotive skills supply

Automotive skills supply is still substantial, but growth is uneven. Certification activity fell in Q4, apprenticeship recruitment remained stable at a lower level, and the supply of EV and ADAS-qualified technicians continued to fall behind projected demand.

Five findings shape the outlook.

1. Certification activity fell in Q4

Awarding organisations issued 8,481 automotive certificates in Q4 2025. This was 67% fewer than in the previous quarter and 6% fewer than in Q4 2024.

Level 3 accounted for the largest share of the qualifications profile, at 61%. Heavy Vehicle and ADAS were the only pathways to grow in every quarter of 2025.

2. EV-qualified technician numbers are growing

The UK now has 74,734 EV-qualified technicians. In Q4, 2,792 technicians gained an EV certification, 6% more than in Q3 but 17% fewer than a year earlier.

IMI forecasts suggest demand will grow faster than technician supply. This could leave a shortfall of more than 43,000 EV-qualified technicians by 2035.

3. ADAS capability remains far below future need

The UK has 10,695 technicians with an ADAS TechSafe-eligible qualification. This represents around 3% of the technician workforce.

The sector may need more than 220,000 ADAS-qualified technicians by 2032. By 2035, the projected shortfall could exceed 190,000 technicians.

4. Automotive apprenticeships are losing ground

Employers recorded 7,424 automotive apprenticeship starts in the first three quarters of 2025/26.

Automotive ranked 12th out of 38 subjects by total starts, but 25th for year-on-year growth. Its share of all apprenticeship starts fell from 2.6% to 2.3% as other subject areas expanded.

5. The apprenticeship pipeline is changing

The proportion of apprentices aged under 19 fell from 61% to 57%. In contrast, starts among apprentices aged 19 and over increased by 7%.

Advanced apprenticeships are the main route, accounting for 71% of automotive starts. However, higher apprenticeships represented less than 1%, showing that progression beyond Level 3 is limited.

Recruitment also became more concentrated. Light Vehicle, Autocare, and Heavy Vehicle accounted for 81% of starts, up from 75% a year earlier. Heavy Vehicle starts grew by 35%, while several smaller and specialist standards contracted.

At the same time, demand for EV and ADAS skills continues to grow faster than technician supply.

Vocational Qualification Certificates

Automotive training volumes

Automotive qualification
certificates issued:

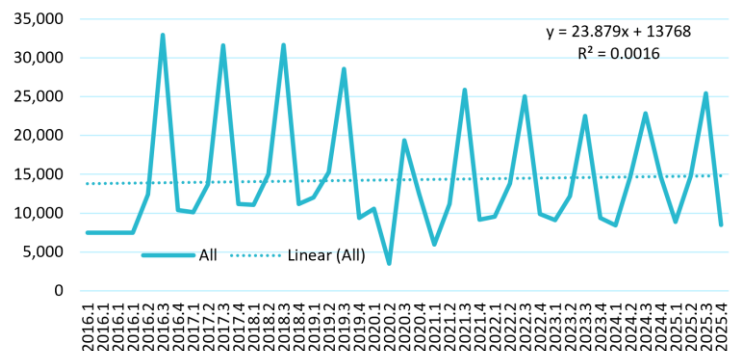
8,371

2025 Q4

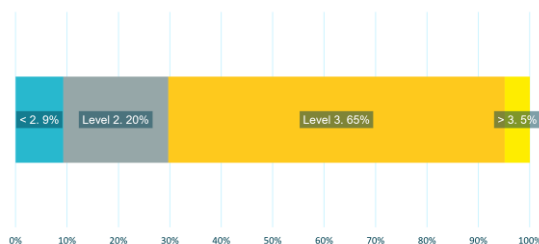
Automotive certification activity decreased in Q4 2025. Awarding organisations issued 8,371 certificates, 67% fewer than the 25,437 issued in the previous quarter and 6% fewer than in Q4 2024.

Across all sectors, certificate volumes fell by 1.2%. Automotive certificates declined more sharply than the wider qualifications

Automotive qualification certifications England, Scotland, Wales, NI



Automotive qualifications - proportions by level 2025 Q4



Level 3 was the largest part of the automotive qualifications profile. It accounted for 65% of automotive certificates in Q4 2025, while Level 2 accounted for 20%. Compared with Q4 2024, Level 3 certificate volumes rose by 4%, while Level 2 stayed the same. The latest movement is consistent with normal variation and does not yet show a long-term change.

Top ten automotive qualifications

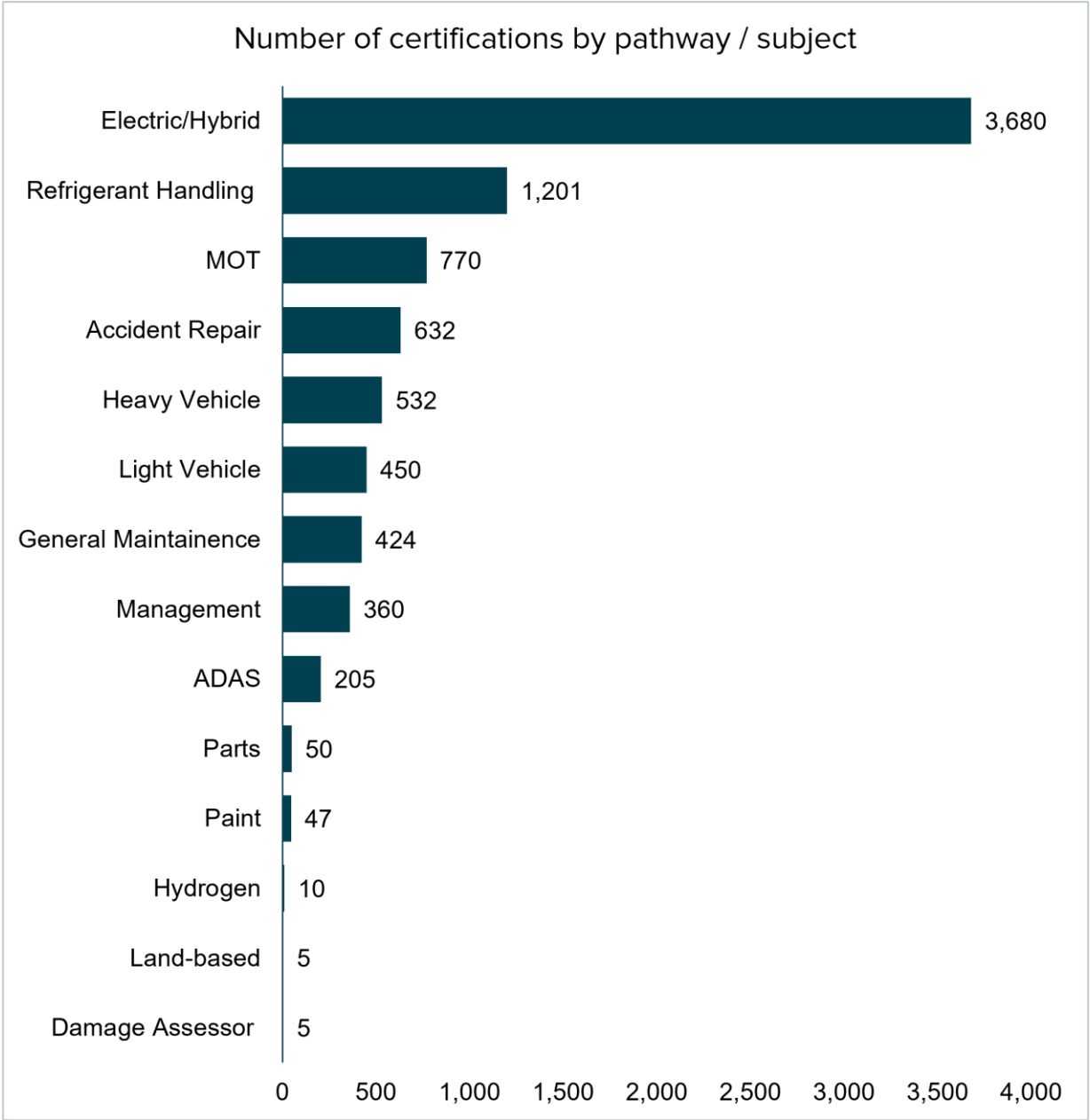
Qualification title	No.	Level	Pathway
IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement	958	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 3 Award in Automotive Refrigerant Handling (EC842-2006) (VRQ)	841	Level 3	Refrigerant Handling
IMI Level 3 Technical Specialist in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement (Award)	620	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 2 Award in MOT Testing (Classes 4 and 7)	385	Level 2	MOT
IMI Level 3 Technical Specialist in Automotive Refrigerant Handling (EC842-2006) (Award)	360	Level 3	Refrigerant Handling
IMI Level 1 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Awareness	356	Level 1	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 2 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Routine Maintenance Activities	330	Level 2	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 4 Award in the Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/Hybrid Vehicles and Components	308	Level 4	Electric/Hybrid
City & Guilds Level 3 Award in the Requirements for the Design and Installation of Domestic and Small Commercial Electric Vehicle Charging Installations	248	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
City & Guilds Level 3 Award in Component Removal and Replacement in Electric and Hybrid Vehicles	205	Level 3	Electric/Hybrid
IMI Level 3 Award in Heavy Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement	205	Level 3	Heavy Vehicle

The leading qualifications accounted for 58% of automotive certification activity in Q4 2025. Their combined share has fallen by percentage points since Q1, which suggests that activity is spreading across a wider range.

The IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement was the most popular qualification in Q4. Its 958 certificates represented 11% of all automotive certificates.

Electric and hybrid qualifications made up eight of the 11 leading qualifications in Q4, up from one in Q3. However, certificate volumes fell slightly from 3,826 to 3,680, so their greater prominence reflects sharper declines in light vehicle and general maintenance certificates rather than growth.

Automotive Qualification Pathways and Subject Areas



Electric and hybrid dominated Q4 2025, with 3,680 certificates. It accounted for 44% of pathway activity and recorded more certificates than the next three pathways combined. However, volumes stayed broadly stable throughout 2025, so its increased share reflects changes elsewhere rather than growth in electric and hybrid activity. Refrigerant handling is the second-largest pathway, despite falling by 28% from Q3.

The overall decline was driven mainly by light vehicle and general maintenance certificates, which both fell by 94% between Q3 and Q4. Their combined share of pathway activity fell from 71% to 10%. These sharp movements suggest that certification cycles influenced the quarterly results, rather than a sudden change in training demand.

Heavy vehicle and ADAS were the only pathways to grow in every quarter of 2025. Heavy vehicle certificates rose from 155 in Q1 to 532 in Q4, while ADAS increased from 74 to 205. Although volumes stay relatively small, both pathways show sustained growth.

Four-nation comparison

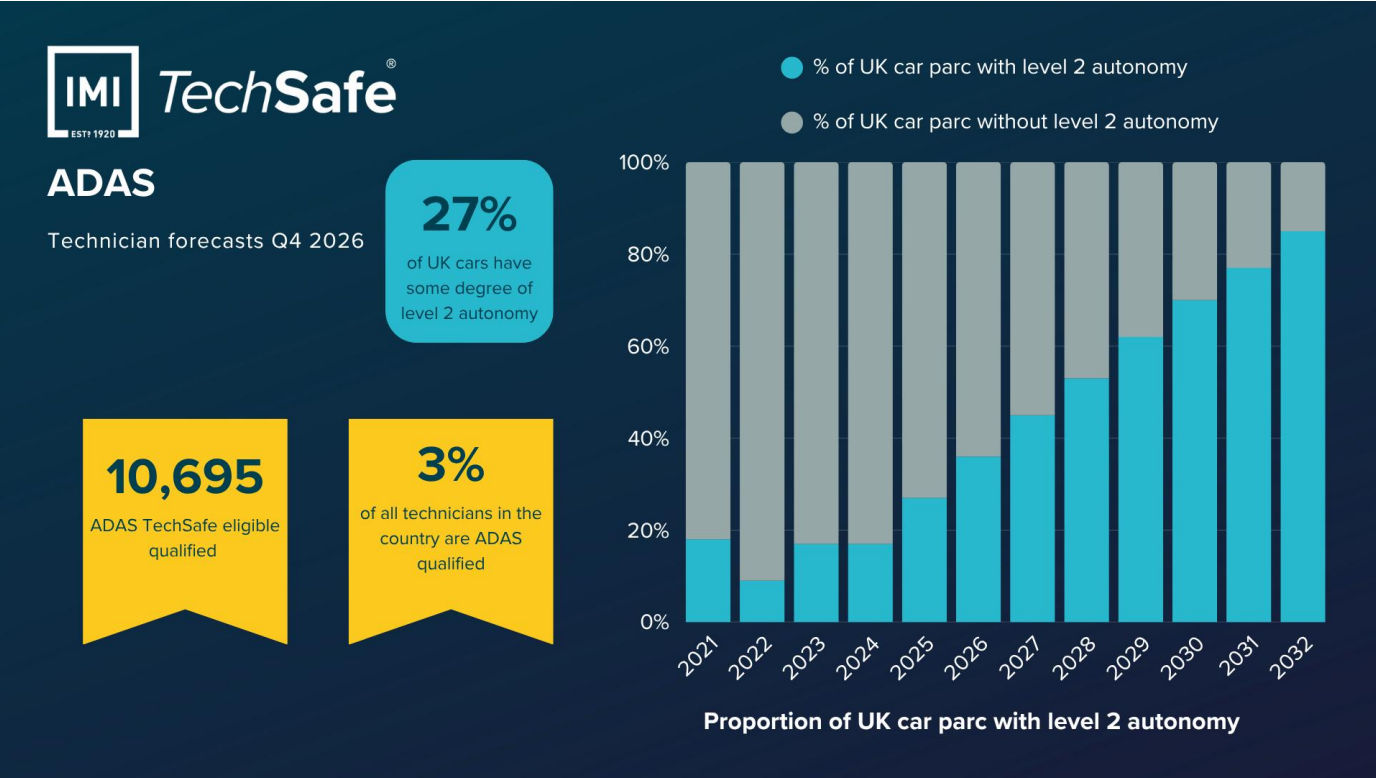
Nation	No. certificates issued 2025-Q4	% Chg last year	% of Level 3 and above	Top Qualification
England	7,320	-4%	69%	IMI Level 3 Technical Specialist in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement (Award)
NI	389	-70%	54%	IMI Level 1 Award in Automotive Maintenance
Scotland	507	13%	56%	Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Principles at SCQF Level 5
Wales	155	-35%	63%	IMI Level 2 Award in MOT Testing (Classes 4 and 7)

England accounted for 87% of certificates issued in Q4 2025. Its volume fell by 4% year on year, but it kept the highest proportion of certificates at Level 3 or above, at 69%. England’s most popular qualification also focused on advanced electric and hybrid vehicle repair.

Scotland was the only nation to record year-on-year growth, with certificate volumes rising by 13% to 507. Northern Ireland recorded the largest decline, at 70%, followed by Wales at 35%. However, the smaller volumes in these nations mean that changes in certification timing can have a considerable effect on quarterly comparisons.

Qualification profiles also differed. Level 3 and above accounted for 63% of certificates in Wales, compared with 56% in Scotland and 54% in Northern Ireland. The most popular qualifications outside England focused on light vehicle maintenance, MOT testing, or general automotive maintenance.





TechSafe EV

EV-qualified technician numbers continue to grow, but not fast enough to meet future demand.

In Q4 2025, 2,792 technicians gained an EV certification, including those with eligible IMI accreditations. This was 6% higher than Q3 and 8% above the forecast in Edition 16. However, certification volumes were 17% lower than in Q4 2024, showing that growth is uneven.

The UK now has 74,734 EV-qualified technicians, representing around 35% of the technician workforce. We expect approximately 2,394 more certifications in Q1 2026. If achieved, this would increase the total to around 77,128.

Demand for EV-qualified technicians could reach around 137,000 by 2032 and 193,000 by 2035. The qualified workforce is forecast to reach around 150,000 by 2035, leaving a shortfall of more than 43,000.

The next few years will be critical. Employers and training organisations need time to build workforce capacity before the ZEV mandate leads to faster growth in electric vehicle sales.

Without faster uptake in training, technician availability could become a constraint on the transition to electric vehicles.⁵

TechSafe ADAS

ADAS qualification growth is not keeping pace with future need.

The UK has 10,695 technicians with an ADAS TechSafe-eligible qualification. This represents around 3% of the technician workforce. Awarding bodies and eligible IMI accreditations added 2,021 ADAS-qualified technicians during 2025.

We expect around 2,421 technicians to gain ADAS certification during 2026. If achieved, this would increase the qualified workforce to 13,116 technicians.

At the same time, the number of vehicles with advanced driver assistance systems continues to grow. By 2032, around 32.4 million vehicles, equivalent to 85% of the UK car parc, could have some degree of Level 2 autonomy.

If certification continues at the forecast rate, the number of ADAS-qualified technicians could reach around 34,500 by 2032 and almost 50,000 by 2035.

Projected demand is much higher. The sector may need more than 220,000 ADAS-qualified technicians by 2032. By 2035, the projected shortfall could exceed 190,000 technicians.

The widening skills gap could leave the sector without enough qualified technicians to inspect, calibrate, maintain, and repair ADAS-equipped vehicles safely.⁶

ZEV Mandate review

The government opened a review of the ZEV Mandate in August 2026.⁷ It is considering changes to annual Zero Emission Vehicle sales targets and the flexibilities available to manufacturers. The commitments to end sales of new cars powered solely by petrol or diesel by 2030 and achieve fully Zero Emission sales by 2035 stay unchanged.

Any changes could affect how quickly EVs enter the UK vehicle parc and, in turn, when demand for EV-qualified technicians increases. Lower near-term targets may slow demand before 2030, but they could create a faster transition between 2030 and 2035.

The EV TechSafe forecast already shows that technician shortages could appear from 2033. Changes to the mandate may alter the timing of this pressure, but they do not reduce the need to increase training uptake.

Apprenticeship Recruitment in England

Apprenticeship Starts academic year 2025/26

Automotive apprenticeships starts
third quarter 2025/26:

1,128

2025/26

Employers recorded 1,128 automotive apprenticeship starts in Q3 of the 2025/26 academic year.

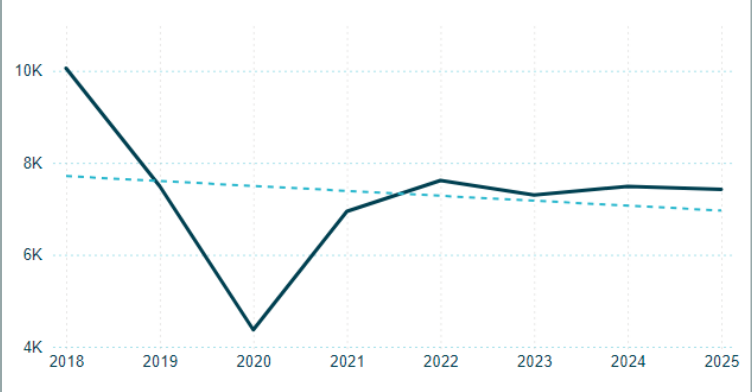
This was 20% lower than Q2, but 8% higher than the same quarter in 2024/25.

Across all sectors, apprenticeship starts fell by 2% year on year, so automotive performed better than the wider market during Q3.

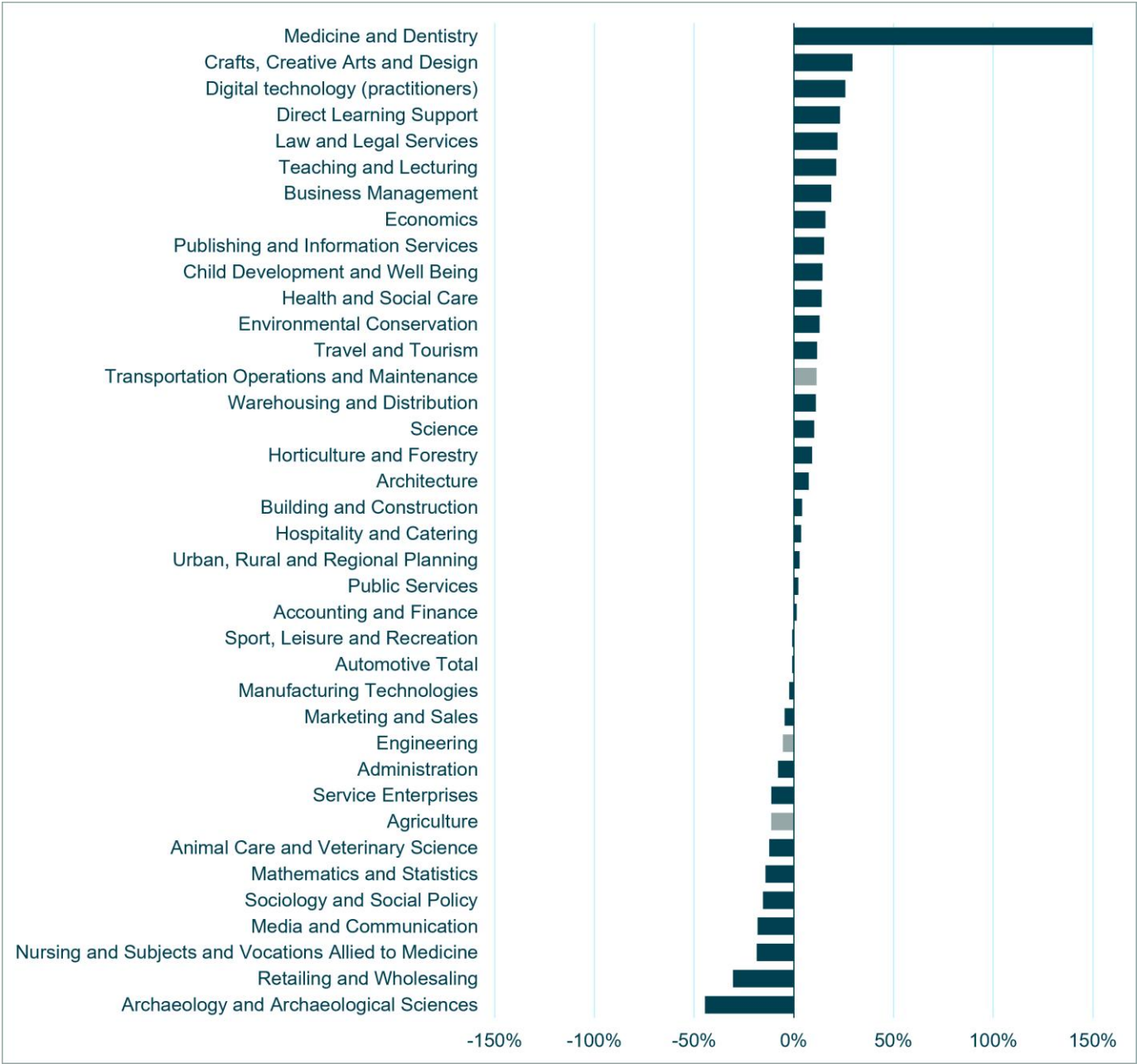
Across the first three quarters, employers started 7,424 automotive apprenticeships. This was 1% lower than the 7,488 starts recorded over the same period in 2024/25.

Recruitment across the first three quarters has stayed within a narrow range a narrow range of 7,301 to 7,616 starts since 2022/23. This shows that automotive apprenticeship recruitment has stabilised since the pandemic.

Q1-Q3 total England automotive apprenticeship starts



Comparison of Apprenticeship Subject Areas



Between Q1 and Q3 2025/26, automotive apprenticeship starts fell by 1% year on year. Across the 38 subject areas, total starts increased by 8%. Automotive performed below the wider apprenticeship market, despite its stronger result in Q3 alone.

Automotive ranked 25th out of 38 subjects for year-on-year growth, placing it just above the bottom third. However, it ranked 12th for the total number of starts, placing it within the top third by volume.

Performance across related subjects was mixed. Transportation Operations and Maintenance grew by 12%, while Engineering fell by 5% and Agriculture fell by 11%.

Automotive is the 12th-largest apprenticeship subject, but it has not shared in the wider market’s growth. Its share of starts fell from 2.6% to 2.3% year-on-year as other subject areas expanded. If this pattern continues, automotive’s share of apprenticeship starts will continue to decline even if recruitment stays stable.

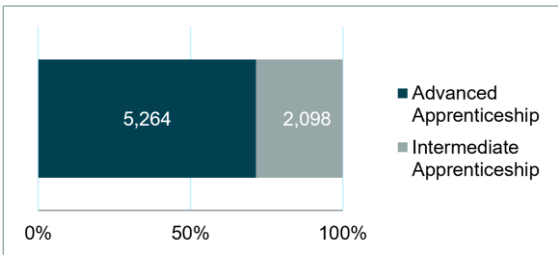
Apprenticeship level profile

Automotive apprenticeship starts
first three quarters 2025/26:

71%

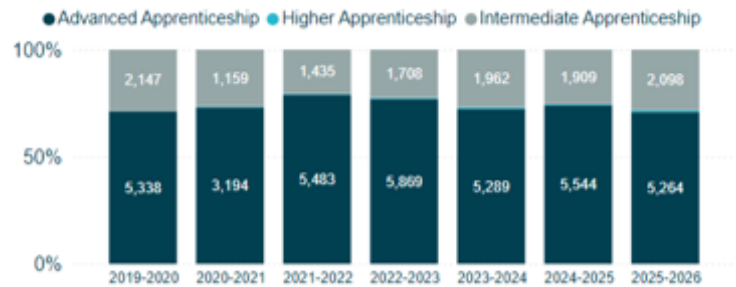
Advanced apprenticeship

In the first three quarters of 2025/26, 71% of automotive apprenticeship starts, or 5,264 starts, were at advanced level.



This represented 71% of automotive starts, compared with 42% across all sectors. The advanced share fell by three points, while the intermediate share rose by three points.

Automotive continues to rely heavily on Level 3 as its main apprenticeship route.



The latest results show some movement towards intermediate and higher apprenticeships, but progression beyond Level 3 is still limited.

Apprenticeship age profile

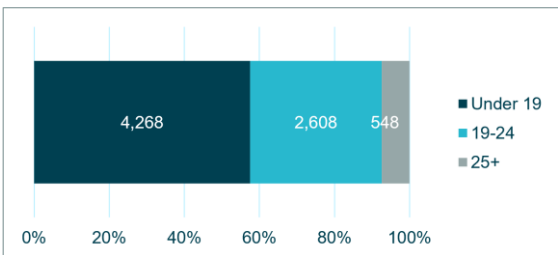
Automotive apprenticeship starts
first three quarters 2025/26:

57%

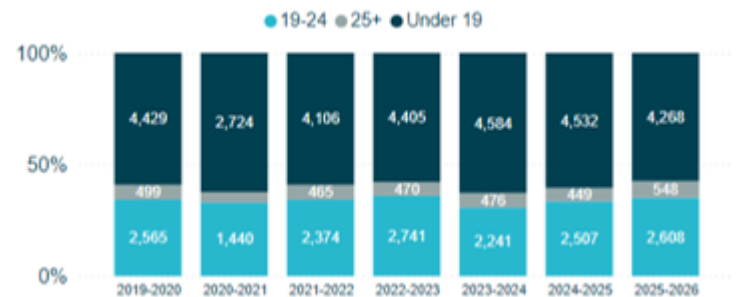
Under 19

57% of automotive apprenticeship starters were aged under 19. The proportion fell from 61% a year earlier and 63% in 2023/24.

The proportion aged 19 to 24 rose by two percentage points to 35%. The share aged 25 and over rose by one percentage point to 7%.” The number of starts rose by 22%.



Combined starts among apprentices aged 19 and over increased by 7%. This growth offset most of the decline among under-19s and kept the overall number of automotive starts broadly stable.



The age profile of automotive apprenticeships is therefore changing. Older apprentices now account for a larger share of recruitment, while the pipeline of apprentices entering before age 19 has weakened for two consecutive years.

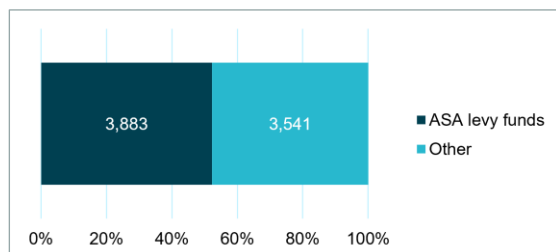
Apprenticeship funding profile

Automotive apprenticeship starts
first three quarters 2025/26:

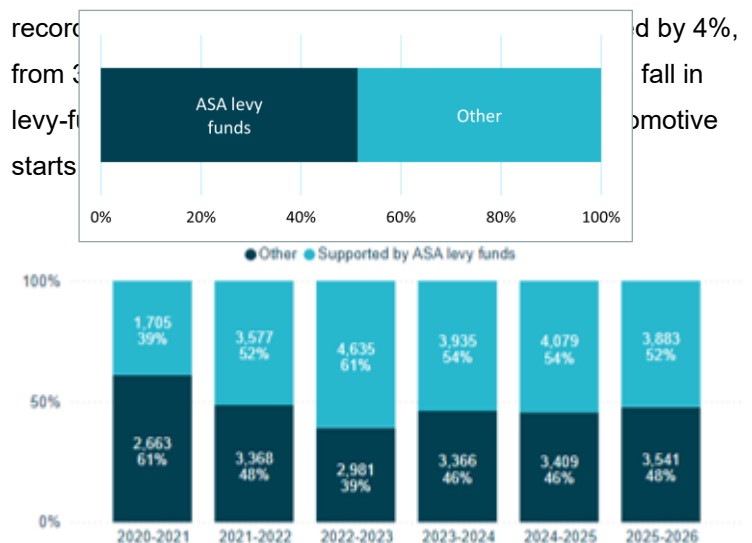
52%

Levy-funded

In the first three quarters of 2025/26, 52% of automotive apprenticeship starts were levy-funded. That was around two percentage points lower than in both 2024/25 and 2023/24, and 15 percentage points below the all-sector average of 67%.



Levy-funded starts fell by 5% year on year. In contrast, starts recorded from 2020/21 to 2024/25 were supported by 39% to 61% from levy-funded sources. In 2025/26, this fell to 52%, a 15 percentage point fall in automotive apprenticeship starts.



Levy-funded starts are within the range recorded since 2021/22. However, automotive continues to rely more heavily on non-levy funding arrangements than the wider apprenticeship market.

Automotive apprenticeship starts by standard

Apprenticeship Standard	Q1-Q3 2024/25	Q1-Q3 2025/26	% Change
Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician - Light Vehicle	2,891	2,753	-5%
Autocare Technician	1,682	1,845	10%
Heavy Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician	1,018	1,379	35%
Lift Truck and Powered Access Engineering Technician	149	261	75%
Land-Based Service Engineer	227	253	11%
Vehicle Damage Paint Technician	262	185	-29%
Bus and Coach Engineering Technician	236	156	-34%
Vehicle Damage Panel Technician	185	144	-22%
Land-Based Service Engineering Technician	465	100	-78%
Vehicle Damage Mechanical, Electrical and Trim (MET) Technician	100	89	-11%
Accident Repair Technician	91	67	-26%
Motorcycle Technician (Repair and Maintenance)	60	62	3%
Vehicle Damage Assessor	35	62	77%
Heritage Engineering Technician	64	42	-34%
Automotive Glazing Technician	23	26	13%
Total	7,488	7,424	-1%

Automotive apprenticeship starts first six months 2024/5: 51%

Levy-funded

In the first half of the 2024/25 academic year, 51% of automotive apprenticeship starts were levy-funded, unchanged from last year but down from 61% in 2022/23. This is far below the 65% average across all levy-funded apprenticeships.

Recruitment became more concentrated in the three largest standards. The Light Vehicle, Autocare, and Heavy Vehicle standards accounted for 81% of automotive apprenticeship starts in 2025/26, up from 75% a year earlier.

Light Vehicle is still the largest standard, with 2,753 starts, although this was 5% lower year on year. Autocare starts increased by 10% to a series high of 1,845. Heavy Vehicle recorded the strongest growth among the major standards, rising by 35% to a series high of 1,379. This increased its share of automotive starts from 14% to 19%.

Lift Truck and Powered Access Engineering Technician also grew strongly, with starts rising by 75% to 261. However, the standard is relatively small in overall volume.

Growth was not consistent across the wider sector. Bus and Coach starts fell by 34%. Paint, Panel, MET, and Accident Repair starts also fell, with their combined total decreasing by 24%.

Four in five automotive apprenticeship starts are now concentrated in just three standards, while several specialist routes continue to contract.

Land-Based Service Engineering Technician recorded the largest decline, with starts falling by 78%, from 465 to 100. The standard's funding band was reduced in May 2025, which likely contributed to the fall.⁸

The related Land-Based Service Engineer standard grew by 11%, which may indicate some movement between the two standards. However, their combined starts fell by 49%, showing an overall decline in the land-based pathway.

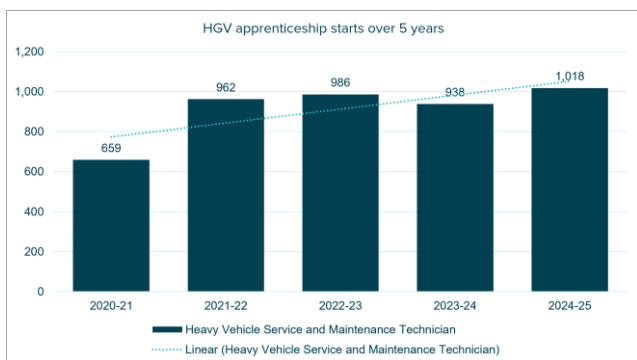
The stable overall total therefore masks a changing apprenticeship pipeline. Recruitment is expanding in Heavy Vehicle and Autocare, while several smaller and more specialist routes continue to contract.



Heavy vehicle

Heavy Vehicle recorded the strongest growth among the major standards. Starts rose by 35%, from 1,018 to a series high of 1,379.

This marked a clear change after four years in which starts were between 938 and 1,018. Heavy Vehicle now accounts for 19% of automotive starts, up from 14% a year earlier.



The standard also attracts an older age profile. Half of its starts were among apprentices aged 19 and over, compared with 43% across automotive. Apprentices aged 25 and over accounted for 14% of Heavy Vehicle starts, almost twice the automotive average of 7%.

Three-quarters of Heavy Vehicle starts used ASA levy funds. This compares with 52% across automotive and 67% across all sectors, showing that Heavy Vehicle recruitment relies more heavily on levy funding than most automotive apprenticeship activity.

Heavy Vehicle therefore stands out as a clear growth area within an otherwise stable automotive apprenticeship market. Its broader age profile shows that the standard attracts both younger and adult apprentices, while the high levy-funded share highlights the importance of levy routes to this part of the workforce pipeline.



T Levels

The latest provisional T Level results were published in August 2026, offering an updated picture of this emerging route into the technical workforce.⁹

Light and Electric Vehicles is one of five occupational specialisms within the Level 3 Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level. It is aligned with the Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician - Light Vehicle occupation.

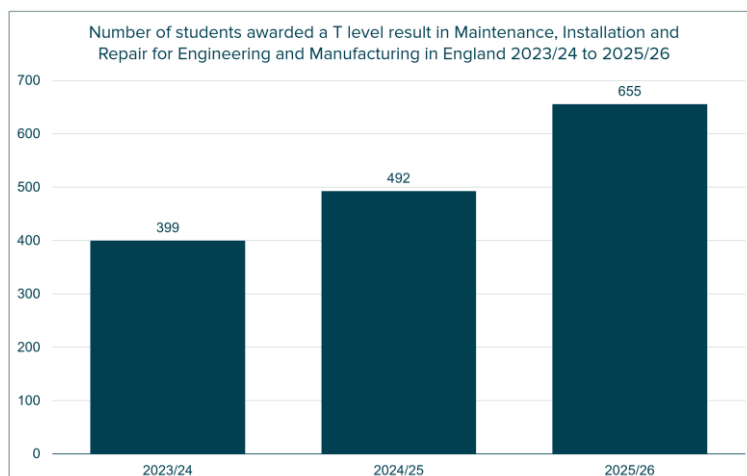
Starts

In 2025/26, 952 students started the wider Maintenance, Installation and Repair pathway in 2025/26. This was 10% more than the 868 who started in 2024/25 and slightly above the 8% growth recorded across all T Levels.¹⁰

The latest demographic breakdown covers 2024/25 and shows that 90% of entrants to the wider pathway were male, compared with 51% across all T Levels.

However, the published statistics combine all five occupational specialisms. They do not show how many students selected or completed Light and Electric Vehicles. The 952 entrants therefore represent the wider Maintenance, Installation and Repair pathway, not the automotive specialism alone.

This limits our ability to assess how much T Levels contribute to the automotive skills pipeline. As the route becomes more established, reporting learner numbers and results by occupational specialism will be essential for measuring participation, achievement, and progression into automotive work or further training.

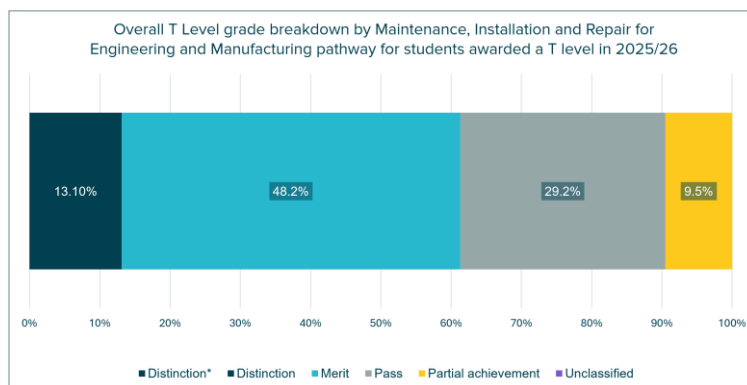


Results

As the T Level programme expanded, the number of students receiving a result across all pathways rose by 65%, from 11,909 in 2024/25 to 19,665 in 2025/26.⁹

The number receiving a result in Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing rose by 33%, meaning that it grew more slowly than the overall total.

Across all pathways, 92.6% of students achieved a Pass or above, and 68.9% achieved a Merit or above.



In Maintenance, Installation and Repair, 90.5% achieved a Pass or above, 2 percentage points below the figure across all T Levels. The pathway also had a different grade profile. The share receiving a Distinction or Merit was 8 points lower, while the share receiving a Pass was 5.5 points higher.

These results show growth in the wider pathway, with overall attainment close to the T Level average.

The 2025/26 results relate to students who started in 2024/25 and should not be compared with the 2025/26 new entrants.

Data Sources

1. Ofqual, *Vocational Qualifications Quarterly Certificates Dataset - 2012 to Present – England*. 11 June 2026.
2. CCEA Regulation, *Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly Bulletin: Quarter 4 (October to December) 2025*. 12 March 2026.
3. Scottish Qualifications Authority. *Quarterly Statistical Report: Q4 (October to December 2025)*. 2026.
4. Qualifications Wales. *Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly Statistics: Quarter 4*. 15 March 2026.
5. Institute for the Motor Industry. *EV TechSafe Technician Forecast - Q4 2025*, 10 June 2026.
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7. Department for Education, *Apprenticeships Academic year 2025/26*. 16 July 2026.
8. Department for Transport. *Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate Review*. 14 August 2026.
9. Skills England. *Land-Based Service Engineering Technician Standard. Version 1.2*. 14 July 2025
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