



EDUCATE  
VENTURES RESEARCH



# 10 Years of Ada: Impact Report 2026

Outcomes, earnings, and the return on public investment

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## 1. Executive summary

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills, opened in 2016 to move young people from groups under-represented in technology into digital careers, through a sixth form and an apprenticeship route built with employers. This report sets out where Ada's alumni are ten years on, how their earnings compare with the closest available benchmarks, whether those outcomes hold for the groups Ada was founded to serve, and what return the public investment in Ada has produced.

Ada holds outcome information of some kind for 89% of the 880 learners who have completed a programme. Headline figures use the 340 completers who told Ada directly, by survey or by telephone, what they are doing now. On socioeconomic background, gender, and disability, those respondents closely resemble completers as a whole. Just under half of completers grew up in the three most deprived deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and just over a quarter are women or of a minority gender. Around one in five told Ada they had been eligible for free school meals, but this self-reported figure is likely to understate the true share. Ada's own records show that up to a third of its learners were eligible at some point, and many alumni may not have known, or may not remember, whether they qualified earlier in their schooling.

### The headline finding

Nationally, professionals from working-class backgrounds are paid around 12% less than colleagues from more advantaged backgrounds doing the same kind of work. Among Ada alumni, no such gap is detectable.

Alumni from the most deprived areas reach the same pay levels as their peers from less deprived areas. 82.1% are at or above their local thriving level, against 83.0%, and 66.1% earn at least £42,000, the median salary for a working-age graduate in England, against 62.5%. Modelled as a continuous amount, the estimated pay difference is 0.4%, with a 95% confidence interval running from 12.5% below to 15.3% above.

However, we should note that background is measured here by the deprivation of the area an alumnus grew up in rather than by household circumstances, while the national comparator uses parental occupation, so the comparison is indicative rather than like-for-like. The household measure available, free school meal eligibility, is self-reported and probably understated, and it covers only 26 alumni with a salary record. That group is less likely than alumni overall to be at the thriving level (69.2% against 82.8%) and more likely to earn above £60,000 (38.5% against 31.4%), and it is too small either to confirm or to contradict the area-based result. The finding is also descriptive. It shows that the usual gap is not visible among Ada alumni, not definitively that Ada closed it.

## Where alumni are now

Of the 340 respondents, 87.6% are in education, employment or training. The survey offered no self-employment option, and counting alumni who described running a business or freelancing as employed, which is the national statistical convention, brings the figure to around 90%.

Just over half (56.5%) are in full-time work, a figure held down by age rather than by weak outcomes. Most alumni under 25 are still in higher education, while 87.5% of those aged 25 to 29 and 95.9% of those aged 30 and over are in employment.

## Earnings

Of the 169 alumni in full-time work who gave a classifiable salary, 82.8% earn at or above the level needed to thrive where they live, and seven earn below the local living wage. Just under two thirds (63.9%) earn at least £42,000, and 31.4% earn more than £60,000.

Set against matched benchmarks, the position is favourable. Among London-resident alumni aged 22 to 29, at least 62.8% earn more than the median full-time employee of the same age in London, where half of that population does so by definition. Their estimated median pay is £47,000, against a regional median of £39,463. Against computing graduates at the same career stage, with a London adjustment applied, Ada alumni are ahead for up to seven years after leaving.

## Outcomes across the groups Ada serves

Outcomes are similarly level by ethnicity. Black and Asian alumni are at or above the White alumni figure on the graduate benchmark (70.0% and 66.7%, against 61.2%), although both groups are small. Women are around four percentage points less likely than men to be at the thriving level and slightly more likely to earn above £60,000. The modelled pay difference by gender is 0.2%, with an interval spanning zero.

The largest gap in the data concerns disability. Alumni with a disability are 17.8 percentage points less likely to be in education, employment or training (72.9% against 90.7%), and less likely to be in full-time work. Those who reach full-time work earn much the same as other alumni at the same career stage; the apparent pay gap largely reflects the fact that alumni with a disability in this sample are around three years younger. The difficulty lies in reaching work, which points towards support at the transition into employment rather than towards the curriculum.

## Return on public investment

The return is estimated by comparing the pay of alumni in full-time work with that of full-time workers aged 22 to 29 in London and the North West, counting the extra income tax and National Insurance the difference generates over ten years, and setting both against public spending on Ada per completer.

On the most cautious of the four scenarios modelled, in which half of the pay advantage is attributed to Ada and capital grants are charged in full to the learners who have completed so far, each £1 of public money is

associated with £1.22 in extra earnings for alumni and 54p in extra tax and National Insurance. If all of the advantage is attributed to Ada and capital grants are spread over 20 years, the figures are £3.27 and £1.46. Government recovers its full outlay within ten years if at least 69% of the pay advantage is due to Ada, or 92% if capital grants are charged in full. These are estimates under stated assumptions, not a measured causal effect, and the share of the advantage genuinely due to Ada cannot be established from the data currently available.



## 2. Introduction

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills, opened in 2016 as England's first national college dedicated to digital skills. It was founded on a specific proposition: that a sixth form and an apprenticeship route, built with employers and deliberately recruiting from groups under-represented in technology, could move young people into digital careers that would otherwise have been closed to them.

Ahead of its tenth anniversary, Ada commissioned Educate Ventures Research (EVR) to analyse results from its latest round of alumni surveys. The brief had three parts. The first was to establish, from Ada's own records, where its alumni are now. The second was to estimate what return the public investment in Ada has produced. The third was to identify what the strongest outcomes have in common, so that the findings inform how Ada runs its programmes.

This report seeks to answer the first and second of those questions and offers what the data will support on the third. It is written by EVR as an independent third party, which means EVR is responsible for the interpretation as well as the analysis. Where the evidence does not support a claim, the report says so.

### 2.1 What this report can and cannot establish

The analysis carried out by EVR is descriptive. It establishes where Ada's alumni are and how their position compares with relevant benchmarks. It does not establish what Ada caused, because there is no comparison group of similar young people who did not attend Ada.

This is not a weakness peculiar to this study. Establishing causation would require individual-level linkage to HM Revenue and Customs earnings records through the Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset or the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service, together with a matched comparison cohort and a data sharing agreement. That route is open to Ada for future work, but the approvals alone run to many months and it sat outside the timescale of this study.

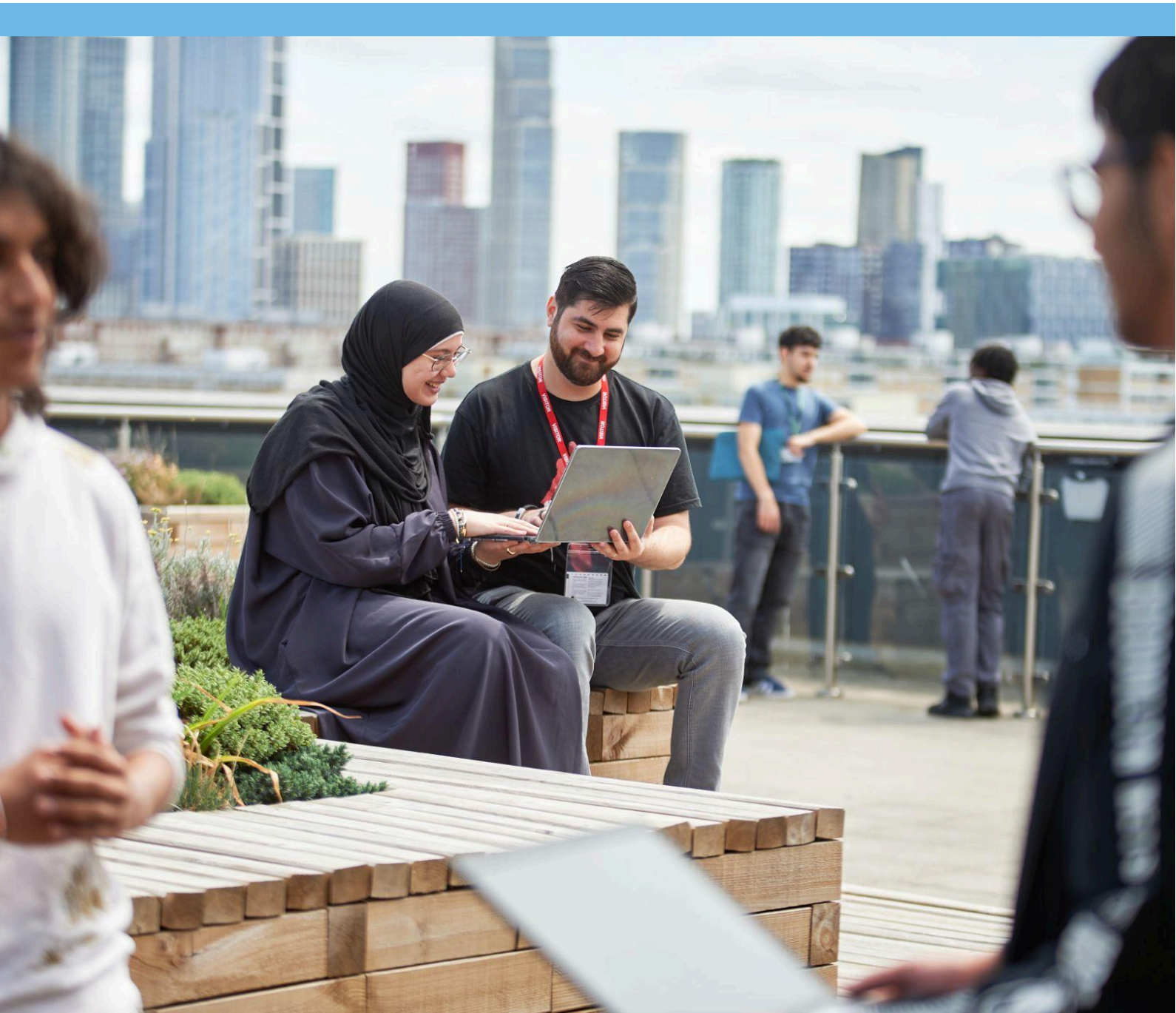
What the report does instead is set Ada's alumni against the closest available external comparators, matched on age, region, and time since leaving wherever the data allow, and state plainly how far each comparison falls short of like-for-like. A reader should come away knowing both what Ada's alumni have achieved and how confident they can be that the comparison is fair.

### 2.2 How to read this report

Section 3 describes the survey and the alumni population behind it. Section 4 sets out the method, the sources used, and the benchmarks considered and rejected as well as those adopted. Section 5 presents the analysis. Section 6 presents the return on investment. Section 7 concludes.

Throughout, comparisons against external benchmarks carry caveat codes in the final column of the relevant table. These are defined at Section 4.4 and used consistently, so that a reader can see at a glance how far any

given comparison departs from like-for-like. Counts are reported alongside percentages wherever a subgroup is small.



### 3. Background: the alumni survey and the population behind it

Ada holds information about its alumni in several places. Some comes from alumni directly, some was gathered by telephone, and some was researched from public profiles. The first task was to bring all of it into a single record, one row per person, to eliminate duplicates and to ensure every figure could be traced back to its source.

#### 3.1 The alumni population

Ada's master record contains 1,518 individual learners. Of these, 880 have completed at least one Ada programme, 172 withdrew, and the remainder are still studying or hold an identifier with no further information. The 880 completers are the population this report describes.

| Group                            | Learners | Treatment in this report                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Completed at least one programme | 880      | The population of interest. All outcome figures describe this group.                                         |
| Withdrew                         | 172      | Almost entirely absent from the outcome data. Treated as a limitation, not as a group with poor outcomes.    |
| Still studying                   | 480      | Excluded. No current destination to report.                                                                  |
| Identifier only                  | 6        | Excluded.                                                                                                    |
| Total master record              | 1,518    | The 172 withdrawn and 480 studying overlap with the 880 completers so the total count is 1,518 and not 1,538 |

*Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni master record, September 2026. The 880 completers figure differs from the 860 recorded with an overall status of Completed because some learners completed one programme and then continued with, or withdrew from, another.*

Ada recruits from a particular set of young people and this is reflected in the completer population. Just under half grew up in the three most deprived deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, around one in five self-report as ever eligible for free school meals, and around one in six has told the college they have a disability. Ada's own records put free school meal eligibility at around 33%. The difference may arise because many learners did not know whether they had been eligible earlier in their schooling, in which case the true figure is higher than one in five. Just over a quarter are women or of a minority gender, which is above the sector norm for technology provision.

| Characteristic                           | Completers | Direct respondents | Difference  |
|------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| From the three most deprived IMD deciles | 46.8%      | 42.6%              | -4.2 points |
| Ever eligible for free school meals      | 18.9%      | 23.5%              | +4.6 points |
| Women                                    | 25.8%      | 27.4%              | +1.6 points |

| Characteristic                       | Completers | Direct respondents | Difference  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Self-assessed as having a disability | 17.6%      | 20.6%              | +3.0 points |
| London campus                        | 87.3%      | 91.5%              | +4.2 points |
| Manchester campus                    | 12.7%      | 8.5%               | -4.2 points |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. Direct respondents are the 340 completers who answered the survey or the telephone campaign. Disability shares are calculated on completers with a disability status recorded.

As the table shows, on socioeconomic background, gender, and disability, the people who responded look much like the people who did not. The one clear imbalance is geographic: Manchester alumni are markedly less likely to have responded, and Section 5.9 returns to what follows from that.

### 3.2 The four sources of outcome information

| Source                      | People | How it is used                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alumni survey               | 178    | Alumni reported directly what they are doing and what they earn. Used in headline figures.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Telephone campaign          | 167    | Alumni answered the same questions by telephone, collected by J2 Research. Treated as equal in quality to the survey and used in headline figures.                                                                                                      |
| Recent apprentice graduates | 59     | Describes what people expected to do after graduating in February 2026, not what they are doing now. Held separately and excluded from all current outcome figures.                                                                                     |
| LinkedIn research           | 389    | Public profiles researched for alumni who could not be reached. Employment was inferred and salary estimated by an AI tool. Used only to test whether the headline figures would move if non-responders were included, never in the figures themselves. |

Source: Data supplied by Ada. Counts are unique student identifiers after deduplication.

EVR drew on the four sources shown in the table above, which together give information of some kind about 792 of the 1,518 learners on the master record, and about 89.9% of the 880 completers. Only one person appears in more than one of the direct sources, so there is very little double counting to resolve.

### 3.3 Who counts as an alumnus in the headline figures

Headline figures use the 340 people who completed at least one Ada programme and who told Ada directly, by survey or by telephone, what they are doing now.

There is one additional caveat related to age. Ada's master record holds age at entry, not current age. Deriving current age from age at entry and elapsed time gives a median of 25 for the direct-response sample, with fewer than half currently aged 24 or under. This matters for every comparison in this report. Ada's alumni are no longer the 16 to 24 year olds that most national youth statistics describe, and Section 4.5 explains why the report does not set the headline figure against a national youth benchmark.

## 4. Approach and methodology

The analysis followed four steps: building a single validated dataset, replicating Ada's published figures to confirm the rebuild was sound, extending the analysis to questions the 2024 work could not answer, and setting the results against external benchmarks. Each step is described below, together with the decisions taken and the reasons for them.

### 4.1 Building the dataset

The four outcome collections and the master record were joined on Ada's pseudonymised student identifier to produce one row per person. Survey responses take precedence over telephone records, which take precedence over anything inferred from LinkedIn. Leaving year and time since leaving use the sixth form or apprenticeship end date only where the matching programme status is recorded as completed; the general end date field is not used, because it is populated for withdrawals as well.

The survey sheet contained 186 rows for 178 individuals. Where the same person gave two different substantive salary answers, both were set to missing rather than choosing between them. Where one answer was substantive and the other was "prefer not to say", the substantive answer was retained.

The salary question offers bands rather than exact figures, and the bands differ depending on whether the respondent lives in London or elsewhere in the UK. The band boundaries map exactly onto the real living wage and the local thriving threshold for each area, which is convenient for threshold analysis and restrictive for anything requiring a point estimate. Where this report gives a median it is estimated by fitting a distribution to the banded data, and both the estimate and its confidence interval are reported.

### 4.2 Validation

Before any new analysis was run, the rebuild was tested against Ada's published 2024 figures and against the current dataset's own totals. The master record contains 1,518 rows and 1,518 unique identifiers. The survey and telephone campaign yield 345 unique current respondents, of whom five have not completed a programme, leaving the primary denominator of 340.

The current survey instrument has no option for self-employment, so alumni who had started a business, were freelancing, or described themselves as founders had to select "none of the above". A small number described exactly this in their free-text answers. Counting them as employed, which is how national statistics treat them, raises the education, employment or training figure and brings it into line with the 90% Ada published in 2024. Section 5.1 reports both.

### 4.3 Sources used

The table below lists every source behind a figure in this report, internal and external.

| Source                                                | Used for                                                                       | Period             | Note                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ada pseudonymised alumni data                         | All Ada outcome figures                                                        | 2026               | Six sheets: survey, telephone campaign, recent apprentice graduates, LinkedIn research, master record, menu |
| Ada 2024 alumni impact survey summary                 | Comparison with the published 2024 position                                    | 2024               | The published cross-section remains the authoritative 2024 figure                                           |
| ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings               | Earnings benchmarks by region and age                                          | 2025               | Weekly pay annualised at 52 weeks                                                                           |
| DfE Graduate Labour Market Outcomes (LEO)             | Computing graduate earnings and sustained employment by years after graduation | 2023/24            | UK-wide; adjusted for London where used                                                                     |
| DfE Further Education Outcomes                        | Apprenticeship earnings and sustained destinations                             | 2022/23            | Level 3; Level 6 comparator sought separately                                                               |
| DfE Graduate Labour Market Statistics                 | The £42,000 working-age graduate median benchmark                              | 2024               | A graduate pay benchmark, not a thriving wage                                                               |
| Real Living Wage Foundation                           | Local living and local thriving thresholds                                     | 2024/25            | Thriving defined as the real living wage plus 20%                                                           |
| ONS Labour Force Survey, via House of Commons Library | National youth education and employment context                                | April to June 2026 | Used as context only, not as a comparator for Ada figures                                                   |
| Social Mobility Foundation                            | National class pay gap comparison                                              | 2024, cited 2026   | Background measured by parental occupation, not by IMD or free school meals                                 |
| HM Treasury Green Book                                | Discount rate convention for the ROI model                                     | Current            | 3.5% real for the first thirty years                                                                        |

External comparisons in this report carry one or more of the following codes.

| Code | Meaning                                                                                             |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A    | Age basis differs between the Ada group and the benchmark group.                                    |
| B    | Base differs. The Ada figure is a rate among respondents; the benchmark is a whole-population rate. |
| G    | Geography not matched. The benchmark covers a wider or different area.                              |

| Code | Meaning                                                                                                                                              |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| M    | Measure defined differently. For example, sustained employment in DfE statistics is a less demanding test than full-time employment in Ada's survey. |
| Q    | Qualification level not matched.                                                                                                                     |
| S    | Small sample. Fewer than 30 Ada records, so the figure is indicative.                                                                                |
| T    | Time period differs.                                                                                                                                 |
| E    | Estimated from banded salary data rather than observed directly.                                                                                     |

#### 4.5 Benchmarks considered, and why some were not used

The findings are shown alongside Greater London, Greater Manchester, and national benchmarks, particularly for education and employment among 16 to 24 year olds. The national figure for 16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training stood at 13.0% in April to June 2026, which implies that 87.0% of that age group were in education, employment or training. Ada's headline figure is 87.6%. Placed side by side, those two numbers suggest Ada makes no difference at all. However, they are not measuring the same thing. The national figure is a whole-population rate dominated by 16 to 18 year olds who are in compulsory education or training and are therefore almost all counted as positive. Ada's figure is a rate among survey respondents who have finished a programme and whose median age is 25. The apparent similarity is an artefact of two incompatible measures.

The report therefore uses national youth statistics to describe the conditions Ada recruits into, and uses age-matched, region-matched, and qualification-matched benchmarks to assess how alumni are doing. The table below records what was considered.

| Benchmark family               | Decision             | Reasoning                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ONS ASHE, region by age        | Adopted              | Matches alumni on both region and age band. The strongest available comparison for earnings.                                                                   |
| DfE LEO, computing graduates   | Adopted              | Matches on time since leaving, which allows a fair comparison at equivalent career stages. UK-wide, so a London adjustment is applied and shown.               |
| DfE Further Education Outcomes | Adopted with caution | The published series is at Level 3, which is below Ada's apprenticeship level. A Level 6 comparator is used where available and the level mismatch is flagged. |
| Real Living Wage thresholds    | Adopted              | The basis of Ada's own salary bands and the right test of whether alumni can afford to live where they live.                                                   |
| DfE graduate median (£42,000)  | Adopted              | A single national figure that does not vary by region, which makes it a clean benchmark for graduate-level pay.                                                |

| Benchmark family                                              | Decision             | Reasoning                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social Mobility Foundation class pay gap                      | Adopted              | The best available comparator for Ada's social mobility claim. Background is measured differently, which is footnoted wherever the comparison appears.                   |
| ONS 16 to 24 NEET rate                                        | Context only         | Not comparable with Ada's figure on age or on base. Used in the introduction to describe the labour market, not in outcome tables.                                       |
| ONS regional NEET, Greater Manchester                         | Context only         | ONS added a notice in July 2026 stating that the dataset is indicative only and should not be used to draw substantive conclusions. Reported with that caution attached. |
| Centre for Social Justice                                     | Not used for figures | Not an official statistics producer. Where its NEET analysis informs the framing, the underlying numbers are taken from ONS and DfE.                                     |
| Individual linkage via LEO or the ONS Secure Research Service | Out of scope         | The only route to a causal estimate. Approvals run to many months. A route for future work.                                                                              |

Methodological precedents for the return on investment work were drawn from London Economics, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Lightcast, Pro Bono Economics, the Association of Colleges, and Social Value UK. Section 6 records which conventions were adopted.



## 5. Analysis

The measures below move from the broadest question, whether an alumnus is doing something, to the most specific, whether they are earning more than comparable people elsewhere and whether that holds across the groups Ada exists to serve.

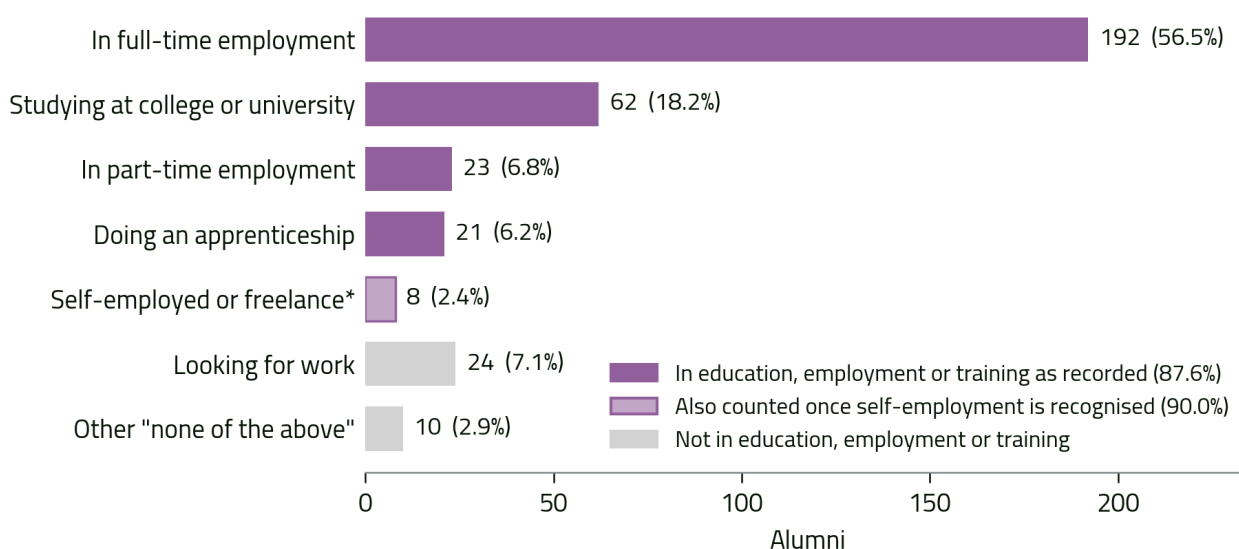
### 5.1 Education, employment or training

This is the standard measure used across further and higher education in England.

Of the 340 eligible respondents, 298, or 87.6%, are in education, employment or training. Ada's 2024 summary reported 90.0%. The two figures are close, but they are not a like-for-like comparison and the difference should not be read as a decline. The 2024 survey asked its questions differently and reached different people.

### Nearly nine in ten respondents are in education, employment or training

Current status of the 340 alumni who completed a programme and responded directly



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. \*Recorded as "none of the above" because the survey has no self-employment option; reclassified from free-text answers, in line with national statistical convention.

As Section 4.2 notes, the current instrument offers no self-employment option, and alumni running businesses or freelancing selected "none of the above". Counting those alumni as employed, which is the national statistical convention, brings the figure back in line with the 90% reported in 2024.

| Current status                    | Alumni | Share | Note |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|------|
| In full-time employment           | 192    | 56.5% |      |
| Studying at college or university | 62     | 18.2% |      |
| In part-time employment           | 23     | 6.8%  |      |
| Doing an apprenticeship           | 21     | 6.2%  |      |

| Current status    | Alumni | Share | Note                                                                     |
|-------------------|--------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Looking for work  | 24     | 7.1%  | Separated in the current instrument; combined with the row below in 2024 |
| None of the above | 18     | 5.3%  | Includes the self-employed alumni described above                        |
| Total             | 340    | 100%  |                                                                          |

Source: EVR analysis of direct survey and telephone responses, September 2026.

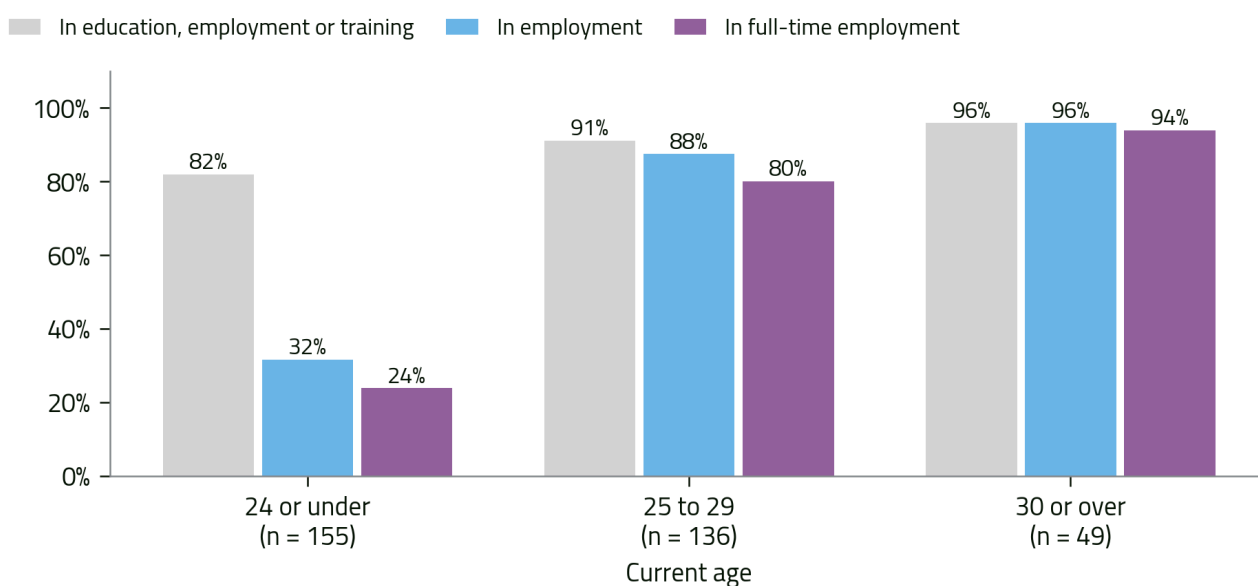
## 5.2 Full-time employment

Employment status alone says little about earning power, because part-time work, study, and full-time work are very different economic positions. This measure isolates alumni in full-time work and defines the group that can sensibly be asked about salary.

192 of 340 respondents, or 56.5%, are in full-time employment, against 57.1% reported in 2024. This is essentially unchanged. Including part-time work, 215 alumni, or 63.2%, are in employment of some kind.

### Employment climbs steeply with age, as most younger alumni are still studying

Share of respondents in each status, by current age



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Current age derived from age at entry and elapsed time since programme start. Caveat code B applies to external comparisons.

The headline figure is held down by the age profile of the sample rather than by weak outcomes. Splitting by current age makes this visible: among alumni currently under 25, only 31.6% are in employment, because most are still in higher education. Among those aged 25 to 29 the employment rate is 87.5%, and among those aged 30 and over it is 95.9%.

| Current age     | Alumni | In education, employment or training | In employment | In full-time employment |
|-----------------|--------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 24 or under     | 155    | 81.9%                                | 31.6%         | 23.9%                   |
| 25 to 29        | 136    | 91.2%                                | 87.5%         | 80.1%                   |
| 30 or over      | 49     | 95.9%                                | 95.9%         | 93.9%                   |
| All respondents | 340    | 87.6%                                | 63.2%         | 56.5%                   |

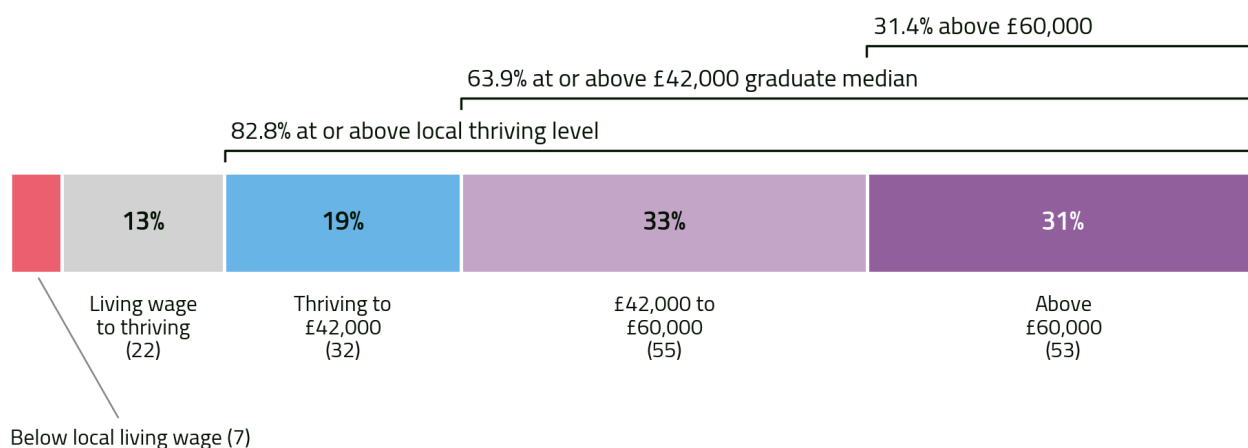
Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. Current age derived from age at entry and elapsed time since programme start. Caveat code B applies to any external comparison of these figures.

### 5.3 Earnings against local living and thriving thresholds

Ada's survey does not ask for an exact salary. It offers bands, and the bands differ between London and the rest of the UK because the cost of living differs. Two thresholds sit inside those bands: the local living wage, at which someone can meet the basic cost of living in their area, and the local thriving level, set 20% above it.

#### Four in five alumni in full-time work earn at or above their local thriving level

Salary position of the 169 alumni in full-time work with a classifiable salary



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Thresholds are the survey instrument's 2024/25 location-specific boundaries, derived from the real living wage.

Of the 192 alumni in full-time work, 184 answered the salary question and 169 gave an answer specific enough to classify. Fifteen preferred not to say.

| Salary position              | Alumni | Share | What this means                                     |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Below the local living wage  | 7      | 4.1%  | Not earning enough to meet basic local living costs |
| Between living and thriving  | 22     | 13.0% | Covering the basics without financial headroom      |
| Between thriving and £42,000 | 32     | 18.9% | Comfortably above the local thriving level          |

| Salary position    | Alumni | Share | What this means                                          |
|--------------------|--------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| £42,000 to £60,000 | 55     | 32.5% | At or above the median salary for a working-age graduate |
| Above £60,000      | 53     | 31.4% | Substantially above graduate median pay                  |
| Total classifiable | 169    | 100%  |                                                          |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. Thresholds are the survey instrument's 2024/25 location-specific boundaries, derived from the real living wage.

Read cumulatively, 140 of the 169 alumni in full-time work, or 82.8%, are at or above their local thriving level. Seven are below the local living wage.

One limitation should be recorded. The 2025/26 thriving thresholds are £31,473 outside London and £34,632 in London. Both fall inside the current survey's broad band running from the thriving level to £42,000, so the exact 2025/26 thriving share cannot be identified from these data. The correct statement would then be that it lies somewhere between 63.9% and 82.8%.

#### 5.4 Earnings against the graduate benchmark

The living and thriving thresholds establish whether alumni can afford their lives. They do not establish whether an Ada education competes with a university degree. For that the report uses £42,000, the median salary for a working-age graduate living in England. Unlike the living wage thresholds this does not vary by region, which makes it a clean single benchmark. It is a graduate pay benchmark and not a thriving wage, and the two should not be used interchangeably.

108 of the 169 alumni with a classifiable salary, or 63.9%, earn at least £42,000. Of those, roughly half earn more than £60,000. Put another way, 31.4% of all alumni in full-time work with a classifiable salary earn more than £60,000.

##### Why there is no single figure for the 2024 comparison

Ada's 2024 report used £38,500 as the graduate benchmark and reported 67.6% above it. That figure falls inside one of the current survey's salary bands, so the number of today's alumni above £38,500 cannot be identified exactly.

What can be said with certainty is that it lies between 63.9% and 82.8%.

#### 5.5 Earnings in context: how Ada alumni compare

This section covers regional and national context. The comparisons below are matched on region and age where the data allow, and each carries caveat codes.

### Against regional earnings for the same age group

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publishes median earnings by region and age band, which allows Ada alumni to be matched on both. Because Ada salary data are banded, the table reports the share who are definitely at or above the benchmark and the highest the share could possibly be. The benchmark column reads 50% in every row, because half of any population sits above its own median by definition.

| Ada group                               | n   | ASHE median<br>for this group | Definitely at<br>or above | Upper<br>bound | Benchmark<br>share<br>above | Caveats |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| London residence,<br>currently 22 to 29 | 94  | £39,463                       | 62.8%                     | 77.7%          | 50%                         | E       |
| London residence, all ages              | 126 | £39,463                       | 67.5%                     | 79.4%          | 50%                         | A, E    |
| Rest of UK, currently 22 to<br>29       | 28  | £33,706                       | 46.4%                     | 92.9%          | 50%                         | S, G, E |
| Rest of UK, all ages                    | 43  | £33,706                       | 53.5%                     | 93.0%          | 50%                         | A, G, E |

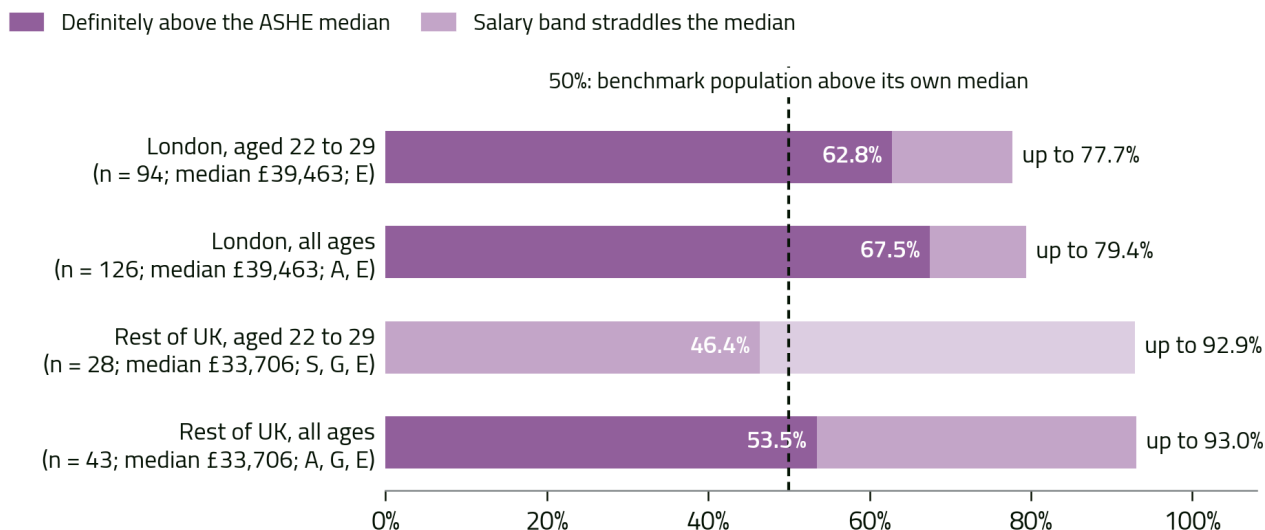
*Benchmark source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, region by age group, 2025, weekly pay annualised at 52 weeks.*

Among Ada alumni living in London and currently aged 22 to 29, at least 62.8% earn more than the median full-time employee of the same age in the same region, against 50% for that population as a whole. That lower bound holds without any assumption about where individuals sit inside their salary band. Outside London the position is less clear. There the band running from £29,500 to £42,000 straddles the regional benchmark, so the true share lies somewhere between 46% and 93%, and those rows are reported for completeness.



## At least 62.8% of London alumni aged 22 to 29 out-earn the regional median for their age

Share of alumni in full-time work above the ONS ASHE full-time median for their region and age group



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Benchmark: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2025, region by age, weekly pay annualised at 52 weeks. Rest of UK rows are faded: the 22 to 29 row has fewer than 30 records and both rows have wide bounds. Caveat codes shown in brackets.

### Estimated median earnings

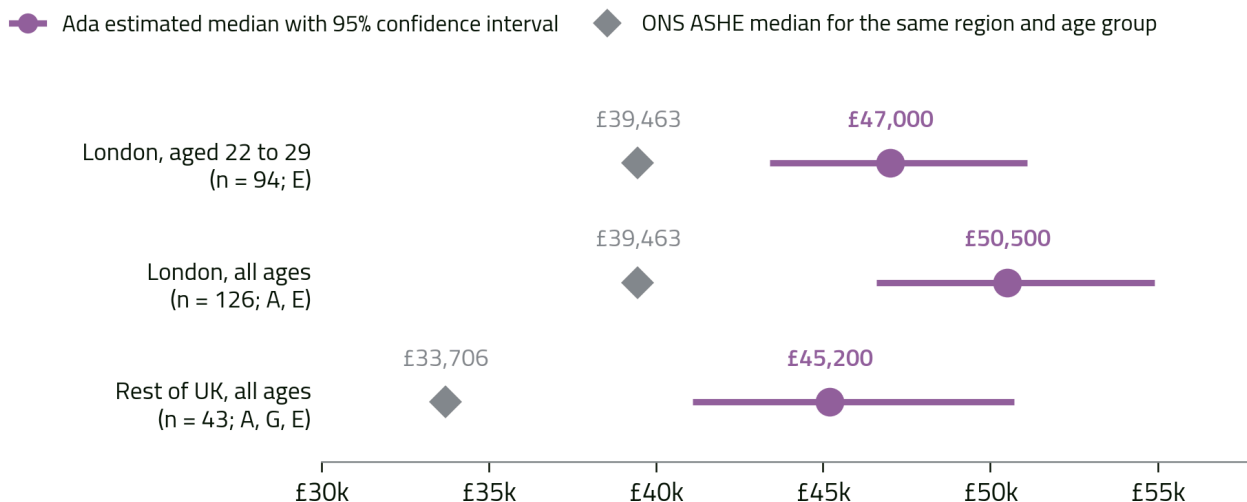
Fitting a distribution to the banded data gives a median that can be read directly against the ASHE medians. This rests on a distributional assumption and is presented as supporting evidence rather than as the primary claim.

| Ada group                            | n   | Estimated median | 95% confidence interval | Matched ASHE median | Caveats |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| All classifiable full-time           | 169 | £48,900          | £45,700 to £52,400      | Not matched         | A, G, E |
| London residence, currently 22 to 29 | 94  | £47,000          | £43,400 to £51,100      | £39,463             | E       |
| London residence, all ages           | 126 | £50,500          | £46,600 to £54,900      | £39,463             | A, E    |
| Rest of UK, all ages                 | 43  | £45,200          | £41,100 to £50,700      | £33,706             | A, G, E |

Method: interval-censored lognormal regression on log salary, bootstrapped confidence intervals across 600 replications.

## Estimated median pay sits above the regional benchmark in every group

Estimated median salary of alumni in full-time work against the matched ASHE median



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Method: interval-censored lognormal regression on banded salary, 600 bootstrap replications. Benchmark: ONS ASHE 2025. Caveat codes shown in brackets.

Among London-resident alumni currently aged 22 to 29, 62.8% earn at least £42,000 and 26.6% earn more than £60,000, so the median of that group falls inside the £42,000 to £60,000 band. The ASHE median for the same region and age group is £39,463. The Ada median sits above the regional benchmark however the figure is derived.

### Against computing graduates at the same career stage

The LEO series follows computing graduates at fixed intervals after graduation, which allows Ada alumni to be grouped by years since leaving and compared at the equivalent point. LEO covers the whole UK while three quarters of Ada's salary sample lives in London, so the table also shows the benchmark uplifted by the London earnings premium observed in ASHE for the 22 to 29 age group, which is 17%. The adjusted column is the fairer comparison.

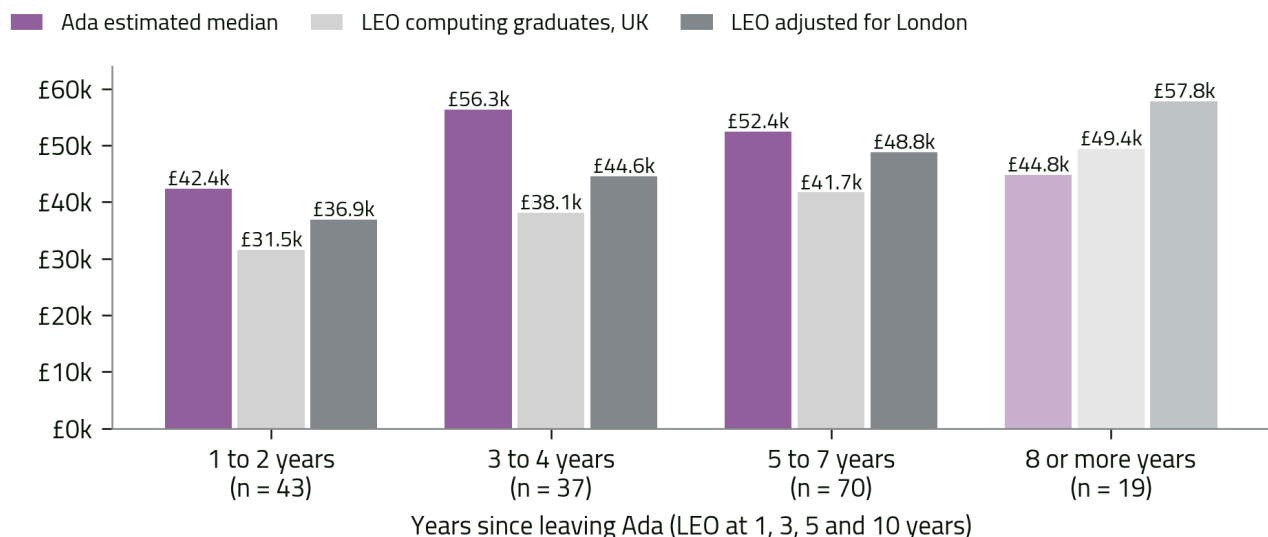
| Years since leaving | n  | Ada estimated median | Ada at or above £42,000 | LEO computing median (UK) | LEO adjusted for London | LEO sustained employment | Caveats |
|---------------------|----|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| 1 to 2              | 43 | £42,400              | 51.2%                   | £31,500 (1 yr)            | £36,900                 | 72.6%                    | Q, T    |
| 3 to 4              | 37 | £56,300              | 78.4%                   | £38,100 (3 yr)            | £44,600                 | 80.8%                    | Q, T    |
| 5 to 7              | 70 | £52,400              | 65.7%                   | £41,700 (5 yr)            | £48,800                 | 82.0%                    | Q, T    |
| 8 or more           | 19 | £44,800              | 57.9%                   | £49,400 (10 yr)           | £57,800                 | 82.4%                    | S, Q, T |

Benchmark source: DfE Graduate Labour Market Outcomes (LEO), 2023/24 release, computer science first degree. The London adjustment applies the ASHE 2025 London to UK ratio for full-time employees aged 22 to 29 and is illustrative rather than an official series.

Ada alumni are ahead of the unadjusted UK graduate benchmark at every duration except the longest. Once the London adjustment is applied the advantage narrows, and at eight or more years since leaving it reverses. That final row rests on only 19 people, so should be treated as indicative only.

## Ada alumni are ahead of computing graduates at the same career stage for the first seven years after leaving

Estimated median salary of alumni in full-time work against DfE LEO computer science graduates



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Benchmark: DfE Graduate Labour Market Outcomes (LEO) 2023/24. London adjustment uses the ASHE 2025 London to UK ratio (17%) and is illustrative. The final group is faded: 19 records. Caveat codes Q and T apply throughout; S applies to the final group.

However, these groups are not a cohort followed over time. Alumni who left eight years ago were recruited into a smaller and younger Ada, and they are different people from recent leavers. Differences across rows reflect both career progression and changes in who Ada recruits.

## 5.6 Comparing the sixth form and the apprenticeship

Ada runs two distinct programmes. Based on this, three groups can be separated: those who completed the sixth form only, those who completed an apprenticeship only, and the small number who completed both.

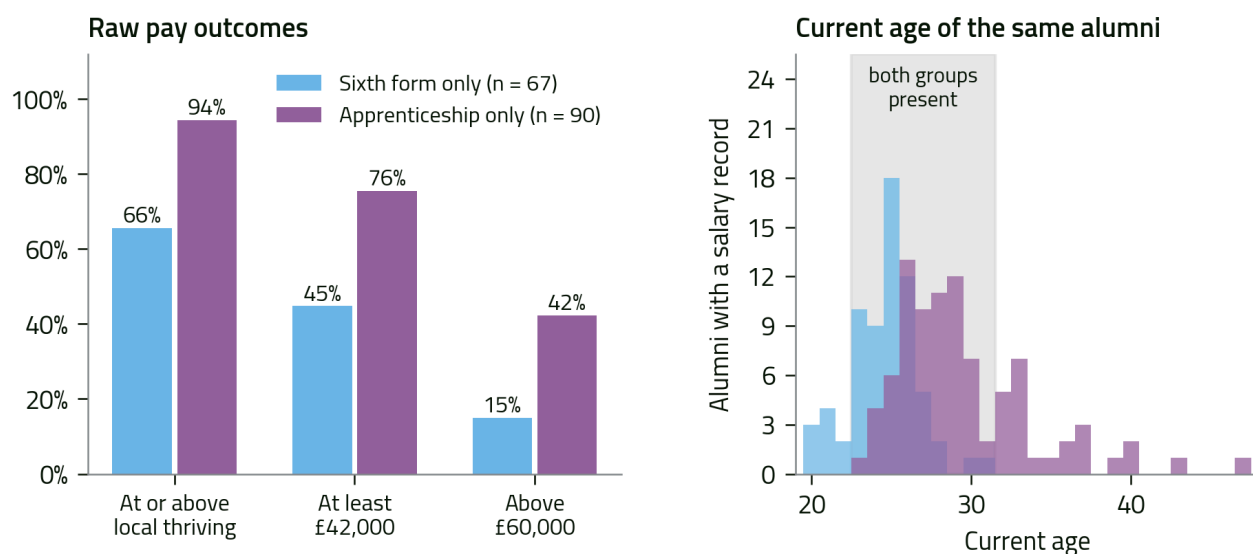
| Pathway             | Alumni | In education, employment or training | Salary records | At or above local thriving | At least £42,000 | Above £60,000 |
|---------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Sixth form only     | 216    | 82.4%                                | 67             | 65.7%                      | 44.8%            | 14.9%         |
| Apprenticeship only | 109    | 97.2%                                | 90             | 94.4%                      | 75.6%            | 42.2%         |
| Completed both      | 15     | 93.3%                                | 12             | 91.7%                      | 83.3%            | 41.7%         |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. The "completed both" row rests on 12 salary records and is descriptive only.

The gap looks large, and most of it is unlikely to be caused by the programme. Apprentices join Ada at a median age of 22 and sixth formers at 17, so the apprenticeship alumni in this table are around four years further into their careers. Restricting the comparison to the age range where the two groups actually overlap narrows the apprenticeship pay advantage from around 40% to around 7%, with estimated median salaries of £44,600 against £41,900. That smaller difference cannot be distinguished from zero. Nearly three fifths of the salary sample falls outside the overlapping range, so the narrower comparison rests on 70 alumni.

## Apprenticeship alumni earn more, but they are also further into their careers

Median current age is 25 for sixth form alumni with a salary record and 28 for apprenticeship alumni



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Alumni in full-time work with a classifiable salary. The 12 alumni who completed both programmes are excluded. Most sixth form alumni are still in higher education, so the sixth form group describes a small subset (31% of completers).

A second factor compounds the first. 82% of apprenticeship respondents appear in the salary sample against only 31% of sixth form respondents, because many sixth form alumni are still at university and have no salary to report. The sixth form column therefore describes a small and unusual subset of sixth form alumni rather than the group as a whole.

## 5.7 Outcomes across the groups Ada exists to serve

Ada was founded to widen access to technology careers. The measure that matters most is therefore not the average outcome but whether outcomes hold up for alumni from the backgrounds Ada set out to reach.

Socioeconomic background is measured in two ways: by the deprivation of the area alumni grew up in, using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and by self-reported eligibility for free school meals. Some subgroups are small, so counts are reported alongside percentages throughout.

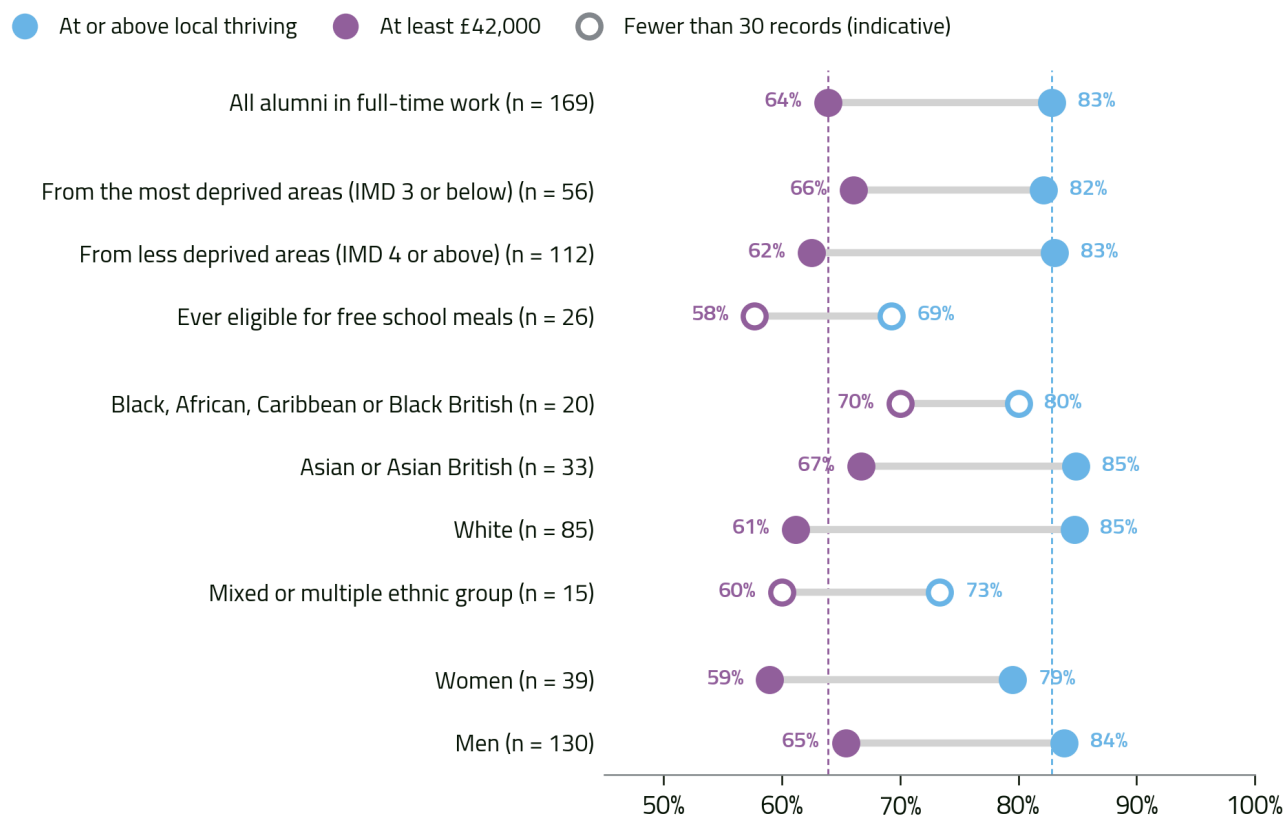
| Group                                         | Salary records | At or above local thriving | At least £42,000 | Above £60,000 | Below local living wage |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| All alumni in full-time work                  | 169            | 82.8%                      | 63.9%            | 31.4%         | 4.1%                    |
| From the most deprived areas (IMD 3 or below) | 56             | 82.1%                      | 66.1%            | 30.4%         | 1.8%                    |
| From less deprived areas (IMD 4 or above)     | 112            | 83.0%                      | 62.5%            | 31.2%         | 5.4%                    |
| Ever eligible for free school meals           | 26             | 69.2%                      | 57.7%            | 38.5%         | 7.7%                    |
| Black, African, Caribbean or Black British    | 20             | 80.0%                      | 70.0%            | 35.0%         | 5.0%                    |
| Asian or Asian British                        | 33             | 84.8%                      | 66.7%            | 36.4%         | 3.0%                    |
| White                                         | 85             | 84.7%                      | 61.2%            | 28.2%         | 1.2%                    |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic group                | 15             | 73.3%                      | 60.0%            | 33.3%         | 13.3%                   |
| Women                                         | 39             | 79.5%                      | 59.0%            | 33.3%         | 2.6%                    |
| Men                                           | 130            | 83.8%                      | 65.4%            | 30.8%         | 4.6%                    |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. The free school meals group contains 26 alumni with a classifiable salary and the mixed ethnic group 15, so those percentages are indicative rather than firm.



## Pay outcomes are broadly similar across the groups Ada serves

Share of alumni in full-time work at each salary threshold; dashed lines show the all-alumni figure



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Hollow markers show groups with fewer than 30 classifiable salary records, where differences of 10 to 15 points are within normal sampling variation.

Alumni from the most deprived areas reach the same pay levels as their more advantaged peers. On the graduate benchmark they are marginally ahead, and they are three times less likely to be earning below the local living wage. Outcomes by ethnicity are similarly level, with Black and Asian alumni at or above the White alumni figure at the graduate benchmark. The gender gap at the thriving level is around four percentage points, and it reverses at the top of the distribution, where women are slightly more likely than men to be earning above £60,000.

This holds when salary is modelled as a continuous amount rather than as bands. Coming from one of the most deprived areas is associated with a pay difference of 0.4%, with uncertainty running from 12.5% below to 15.3% above, so no difference is detectable in either direction.

| Characteristic               | Estimated pay difference | 95% confidence interval | External comparator                           |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| From the most deprived areas | +0.4%                    | -12.5% to +15.3%        | National class pay gap: 12%, or £6,287 a year |
| Female                       | +0.2%                    | -14.2% to +17.0%        | Not matched                                   |

| Characteristic                     | Estimated pay difference | 95% confidence interval | External comparator                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| London residence                   | +8.1%                    | -7.1% to +25.7%         | ASHE London premium, ages 22 to 29: 17% |
| Each additional year since leaving | +3.2%                    | 0.0% to +6.6%           | Not applicable                          |

*Method: interval-censored regression on log salary, n=169, controlling for deprivation, region, years since leaving, and gender. External comparator source: Social Mobility Foundation research on the class pay gap, 2024, as cited in its February 2026 evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee. The Foundation measures background by parental occupation while this analysis measures it by area deprivation, so the comparison is indicative (caveat codes M, B).*

### The headline social mobility finding

Nationally, professionals from working-class backgrounds are paid around 12% less than colleagues from more advantaged backgrounds doing the same kind of work. Within Ada's alumni, that gap is not detectable: the estimate is 0.4% and the confidence interval spans zero.

This is a social mobility finding in the strict sense. The outcome gap that normally opens up between advantaged and disadvantaged young people is not visible in Ada's alumni pay data. Background in this comparison is measured by area deprivation rather than household income, and the 26 alumni with free school meal eligibility and a salary record are too few to test the finding at household level.

## 5.8 Alumni with a disability

Around one in six Ada alumni who completed a programme have told the college they have a disability: 155 of the 880 completers. Their outcomes differ from other alumni in one respect and not in another.

| Measure                              | Alumni with a disability | Alumni with no disability | Gap         |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| In education, employment or training | 72.9%                    | 90.7%                     | 17.8 points |
| In full-time employment              | 40.0%                    | 51.8%                     | 11.8 points |
| Alumni in this comparison            | 70                       | 193                       |             |
| At or above local thriving           | 61.5%                    | 84.7%                     | 23.2 points |
| At least £42,000                     | 38.5%                    | 62.4%                     | 23.9 points |
| Salary records available             | 26                       | 85                        |             |

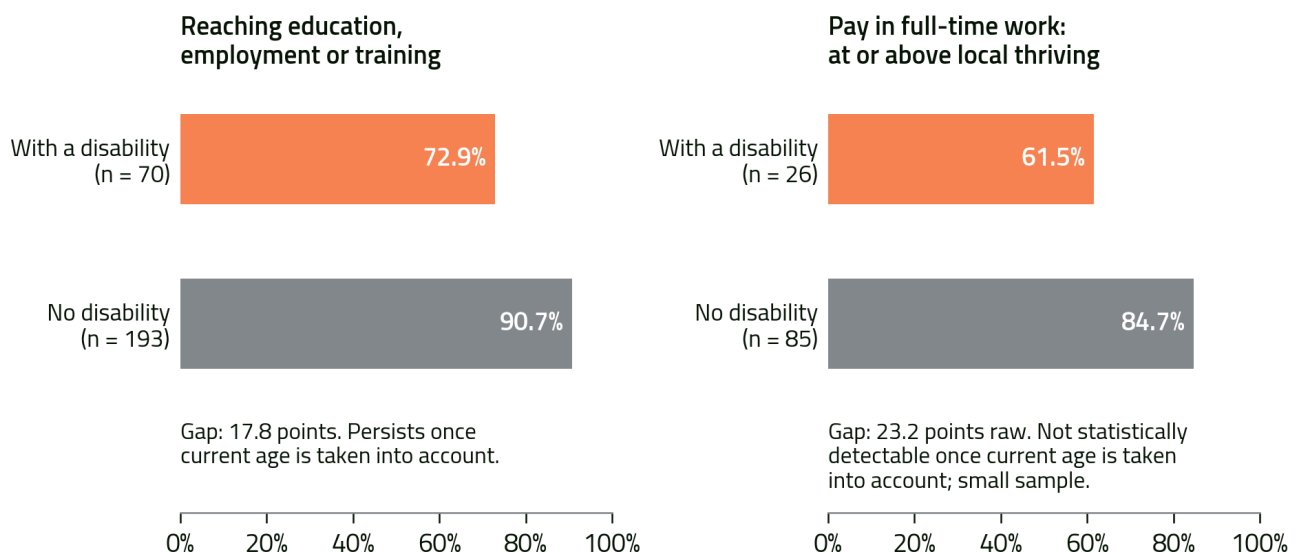
*Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. For 233 completers, mostly those who left between 2019 and 2022, disability was never recorded. That group is excluded from the comparison rather than treated as having no disability.*

The employment gap rests on 263 alumni, it is large, and nothing else observable explains it away. Alumni with a disability are markedly less likely to be in work or study of any kind, and less likely to be in full-time work when they are.

The pay gap is different. Alumni with a disability in this sample are around three years younger than those without, and once alumni at a similar career stage are compared the pay difference largely disappears: among alumni under 25, 53.8% of those with a disability are at or above their local thriving level against 57.9% of those without, on 13 and 19 records respectively. The pay figures in the table are therefore mostly a reflection of career stage rather than of a pay gap between alumni at the same career stage.

## The clearest disability gap is in reaching work or study, not in pay

Alumni with and without a self-assessed disability; excludes 77 respondents with no disability status recorded



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. The pay gap estimate is imprecise (26 records with a disability) and a gap cannot be ruled out.

Nor is the gap a product of who responded: alumni with a disability are slightly more likely than other alumni to appear in the outcome data.

Alumni with a disability who reach full-time work do about as well as anyone else. The difficulty is reaching full-time work in the first place. That points towards transition and employment support rather than anything about the curriculum or the pay alumni command.

## 5.9 London and Manchester

| Campus     | Direct respondents | Response coverage | Salary records | At or above local thriving | Median years since leaving |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| London     | 311                | 40.5%             | 144            | 83.3%                      | 4                          |
| Manchester | 29                 | 25.9%             | 25             | 80.0%                      | 2                          |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. Coverage is direct response as a share of campus completers.

Manchester respondents are much more recent leavers: a median of two years since leaving against four in London. The share earning above £60,000 is 4.0% in Manchester and 36.1% in London, but that gap is a difference in career stage rather than a difference in outcome, and it should not be seen as a campus effect.

## 5.10 What is known about the alumni who did not respond

LinkedIn research was used to look at non-responders, normally the hardest group to say anything about. Employment was inferred from public profiles and salary was estimated by an AI tool. They are good enough to test whether the headline figures would move if non-responders were included.

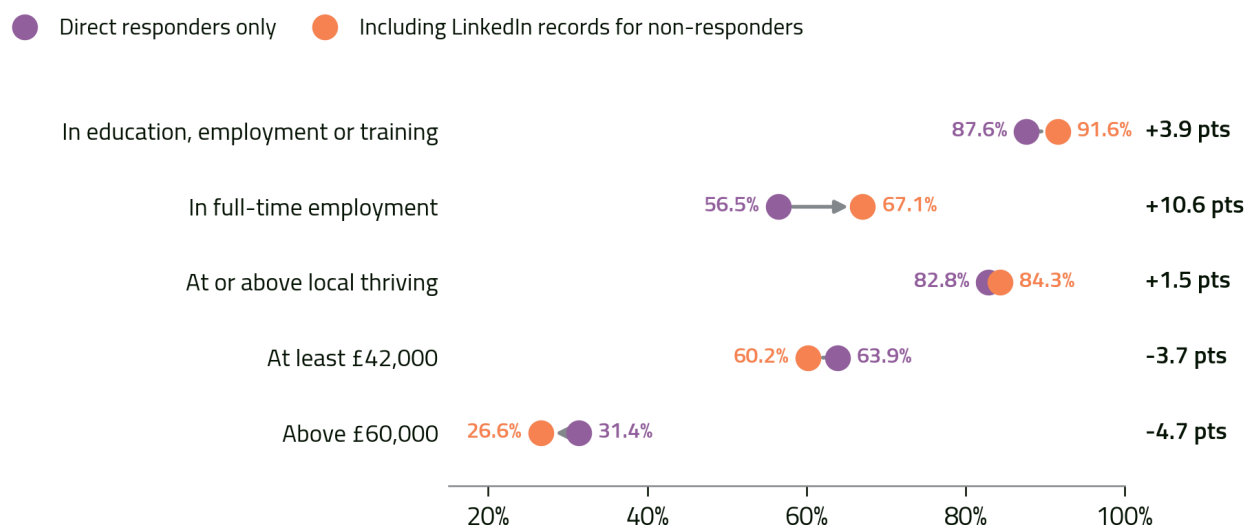
| Measure                              | Responders only | Including LinkedIn records | Change       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| In education, employment or training | 87.6%           | 91.6%                      | +4.0 points  |
| In full-time employment              | 56.5%           | 67.1%                      | +10.6 points |
| At or above local thriving           | 82.8%           | 84.3%                      | +1.5 points  |
| At least £42,000                     | 63.9%           | 60.2%                      | -3.7 points  |
| Above £60,000                        | 31.4%           | 26.6%                      | -4.8 points  |

Source: EVR analysis, September 2026. 170 additional current outcomes from usable LinkedIn records for alumni who completed at least one programme, of which 150 are classified as full-time employed with an estimated salary band.

The pattern is informative. The share of alumni above their local thriving level barely moves, which means that figure can be reported with high confidence. Higher salary figures fall when non-responders are added, which suggests that alumni who did not respond earn somewhat less on average than those who did.

## Adding non-responders barely moves the thriving share

Headline measures with and without LinkedIn-derived outcomes for alumni who did not respond



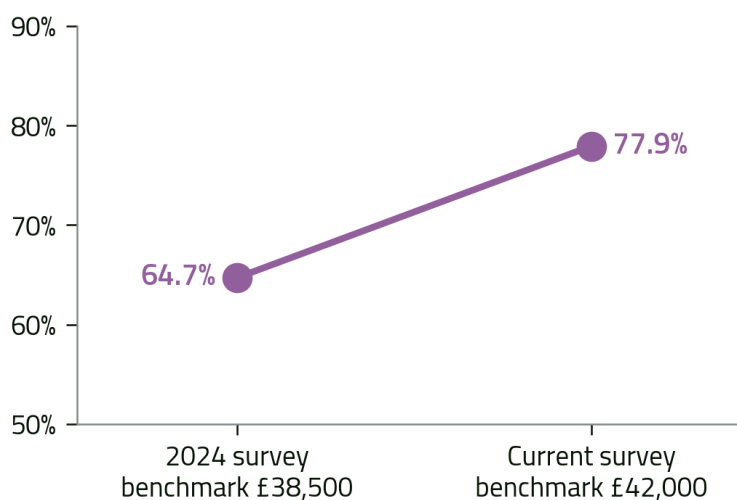
Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. LinkedIn employment is inferred from public profiles and salary bands are estimated by an AI tool, so these records are used as a sensitivity test only and never in headline figures.

### 5.11 Comparison with the 2024 survey

It is tempting to place the 2024 figures next to the current ones and describe the difference as progress or decline. The two surveys used different salary thresholds, asked about employment status differently, and reached different people. Ada's 2024 report used a £38,500 graduate benchmark against today's £42,000, so today's benchmark is harder to clear.

#### The same 68 alumni moved further above a tougher graduate benchmark

Share at or above the graduate benchmark in use at the time



Source: EVR analysis of Ada alumni data, September 2026. Within-person comparison; small and self-selected group.

One narrower comparison is available. 68 alumni answered the salary question in both 2024 and the current survey. Within that group, the share at or above the contemporaneous graduate benchmark rose from 64.7% to 77.9%, even though the benchmark itself became more demanding. This is a genuine within-person comparison, but it covers a small and self-selected group.

### 5.12 What the evidence shows and does not show

| What the evidence shows                                                                                                     | What it does not show                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Of Ada alumni in full-time work who reported their salary, 82.8% earn at or above the level needed to thrive in their area. | Ada raised alumni earnings by a given amount. Nothing in this dataset establishes a causal effect.                              |
| Among London-resident alumni aged 22 to 29, at least 62.8% earn more than the median employee of the same age and region.   | Ada alumni out-earn comparable young people generally. The claim holds for London and is not identified for the rest of the UK. |

| What the evidence shows                                                                                                                       | What it does not show                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alumni from the most deprived areas reach the same pay levels as their more advantaged peers, against a national class pay gap of around 12%. | Ada has eliminated the socioeconomic pay gap. The confidence interval spans zero in both directions.                                 |
| Alumni with a disability are less likely to be in work or study, by around 18 percentage points.                                              | Alumni with a disability earn less once in full-time work. That difference is explained by career stage.                             |
| Outcome information is held for 89% of alumni who completed a programme.                                                                      | These figures describe all Ada alumni. Alumni who withdrew are almost entirely absent.                                               |
| Apprenticeship alumni report higher salaries, and part of that difference survives adjustment for age.                                        | The apprenticeship produces substantially better outcomes than the sixth form. Age and career stage explain most of the raw gap.     |
| 87.6% of respondents are in education, employment or training, rising to around 90% once self-employed alumni are correctly counted.          | Ada alumni are more likely to be in education, employment or training than young people nationally. The measures are not comparable. |



## 6. Return on public investment

### 6.1 How we measured the return

We compared the salaries of Ada alumni in full-time work with the salaries of young full-time workers in London and the North West. We worked out how much extra income tax and National Insurance that difference brings in each year, and added it up over ten years. We then set this against the public money spent on Ada, per learner who completed a course, between 2016–17 and 2024–25.

The figures are estimates. They show what the return would be under clearly stated assumptions, which are set out below.

### 6.2 Key terms

| Term             | What it means                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public cost      | The money the government spent on Ada: yearly funding for teaching and apprenticeships, plus grants for buildings and equipment. Donations and other income are not included.                                                           |
| Completer        | A learner who finished a sixth form or apprenticeship programme at Ada.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Pay advantage    | How much more Ada alumni in full-time work earn each year than the comparison group.                                                                                                                                                    |
| Comparison group | Full-time workers aged 22 to 29 in London and the North West, from official government earnings figures (ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2025).                                                                                |
| Median           | The middle salary in the comparison group: half earn more and half earn less.                                                                                                                                                           |
| Economic return  | The extra money alumni earn before tax, for each £1 of public money spent. It shows the value to alumni and the wider economy.                                                                                                          |
| Fiscal return    | The extra income tax and National Insurance those earnings pay back to the government, for each £1 of public money spent. It is always smaller than the economic return.                                                                |
| Additionality    | The share of the pay advantage that is genuinely due to Ada, rather than something that would have happened anyway. People who choose Ada may already be strong at maths or highly motivated, and might have earned more elsewhere too. |
| Break-even       | The point at which the returns equal the public cost. A return above £1 for each £1 spent means the returns are greater than the cost.                                                                                                  |
| Horizon          | The number of years of pay advantage counted. Money in later years counts for slightly less than money today, following HM Treasury guidance.                                                                                           |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full-time share | The proportion of alumni in full-time work. Alumni still at college, at university or on an apprenticeship are left out of this figure, because they have not yet entered the full-time job market. |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### 6.3 Key decisions

| Decision                          | What we did                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Why                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Whole college, not year by year   | We calculated one return for all learners who have finished, rather than a separate return for each year group.                                                                                                                     | Funding is recorded by financial year, not by year group, and there are too few survey responses per year group to estimate salaries reliably.           |
| What counts as public money       | We included government funding for teaching and apprenticeships (£23.1 million from 2016–17 to 2024–25) and grants for buildings and equipment (£9.6 million). We left out donations, other income, and other grants and contracts. | Only public money belongs in a return on public investment. Other grants and contracts could not all be confirmed as public money, so they are excluded. |
| Building and equipment grants     | We show two versions: one spreads these grants over 20 years of use, and one charges them all to the learners who have finished so far.                                                                                             | Buildings and equipment will serve future learners too, so charging them all now overstates the cost. We show both so readers can see the difference.    |
| Learners who left early           | The cost of the 169 learners who left before finishing is included in the cost for the 752 who completed.                                                                                                                           | Money spent on learners who left early is still public money spent.                                                                                      |
| Who Ada alumni are compared with  | Young full-time workers aged 22 to 29 in London and the North West, weighted to match where Ada learners studied (81% London, 19% Manchester). We use the median salary.                                                            | This is the closest official comparison for Ada alumni by age and location.                                                                              |
| How alumni salaries are estimated | Alumni chose a salary band in the survey. We gave each band a typical value, and valued the top band (more than £60,000) at £75,000. Where an alumnus replied twice, we used their most recent answer.                              | The survey asked for bands, not exact salaries. £75,000 is in line with official figures for high-earning computing graduates.                           |

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who the pay advantage applies to | We applied it to the 74.7% of alumni in full-time work. Alumni in education or on an apprenticeship are left out. Alumni in part-time work or looking for work are counted as having no pay advantage. | Alumni in education or training have not yet entered the full-time job market. This assumes they will do as well as full-time workers once they do. |
| How long the pay advantage lasts | We counted 10 years, with no pay growth, and gave later years slightly less weight.                                                                                                                    | Ten years matches Ada's first decade. HM Treasury guidance sets how much less later years count.                                                    |
| Tax and National Insurance       | We used 2025/26 rates, including National Insurance paid by employers.                                                                                                                                 | These match the year of the salary figures. Employer National Insurance is money the government receives.                                           |
| Additionality                    | We show results for two cases: half of the pay advantage due to Ada (50%) and all of it (100%).                                                                                                        | The true share cannot be measured from Ada's data alone, so we show a middle case and an upper limit.                                               |

## 6.4 Key figures

The first table shows the figures that stay the same whatever share of the pay advantage is due to Ada. The second shows the returns if half, or all, of the advantage is due to Ada. Figures over ten years are in today's money and are rounded.

| Measure                                                           | Building grants spread over 20 years | Building grants all charged now                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public money for teaching and apprenticeships, 2016–17 to 2024–25 | £23.1 million                        | £23.1 million (only £16.7 million of the teaching and apprenticeship funding spent on learners who have finished) |
| Public grants for buildings and equipment, 2016–17 to 2024–25     | £9.6 million                         | £9.6 million                                                                                                      |
| Learners who completed (and learners who left early)              | 752 (169)                            | 752 (169)                                                                                                         |
| Public cost per learner who completed                             | £26,100                              | £35,000                                                                                                           |

|                                                                                         |         |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Estimated yearly salary of alumni in full-time work                                     | £51,800 | £51,800 |
| Median yearly salary of the comparison group                                            | £38,100 | £38,100 |
| Yearly pay advantage per alumnus in full-time work                                      | £13,700 | £13,700 |
| Yearly extra tax and National Insurance per alumnus in full-time work                   | £6,100  | £6,100  |
| Share of alumni in full-time work                                                       | 74.7%   | 74.7%   |
| Share of the pay advantage that must be due to Ada for extra earnings to cover the cost | 31%     | 41%     |
| Share that must be due to Ada for extra tax and National Insurance to cover the cost    | 69%     | 92%     |

| Over 10 years                                                | 50% due to Ada, grants spread | 50% due to Ada, grants all now | 100% due to Ada, grants spread | 100% due to Ada, grants all now |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Extra earnings for each £1 of public money                   | £1.63                         | £1.22                          | £3.27                          | £2.44                           |
| Extra tax and National Insurance for each £1 of public money | £0.73                         | £0.54                          | £1.46                          | £1.09                           |
| Extra tax and National Insurance per learner who completed   | £19,000                       | £19,000                        | £38,000                        | £38,000                         |
| Net gain or loss to government per learner who completed     | £7,100 loss                   | £16,000 loss                   | £11,900 gain                   | £3,000 gain                     |

|                                                              |                   |                    |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Extra earnings, all learners who completed                   | £32.1 million     | £32.1 million      | £64.2 million     | £64.2 million     |
| Extra tax and National Insurance, all learners who completed | £14.3 million     | £14.3 million      | £28.6 million     | £28.6 million     |
| Public cost, all learners who completed                      | £19.6 million     | £26.3 million      | £19.6 million     | £26.3 million     |
| Net gain or loss to government, all learners who completed   | £5.3 million loss | £12.0 million loss | £9.0 million gain | £2.3 million gain |

## 6.5 Reading the figures

If all of the pay advantage is due to Ada, both the extra earnings and the extra tax repay the public cost within ten years, whichever way building grants are counted. If half is due to Ada, the extra earnings still exceed the cost, but the extra tax repays about three-quarters of it at best.

The figures do not prove that Ada caused the higher earnings. They compare Ada alumni with other young workers, not with people who were similar in every way but did not attend Ada. Salaries are estimated from the bands alumni chose, and alumni who answered the survey may be doing better than those who did not.

In short, over ten years, each £1 of public money spent on Ada is linked to between £1.22 and £3.27 in extra earnings for its alumni, and between 54p and £1.46 in extra income tax and National Insurance. Where a result falls in that range depends on how much of the alumni's pay advantage is due to Ada, and on how building grants are counted.

The government recovers everything it has spent if at least 69% of the pay advantage is due to Ada. If all building grants to date are charged to the learners who have finished so far, that required share rises to 92%.

## 7. Conclusion

Ada set out ten years ago to move young people who would not otherwise have reached digital careers into them. The alumni data show that a substantial proportion of those who completed a programme are in well-paid technology work, that their earnings compare favourably with regional and age-matched benchmarks, and that the socioeconomic gap which normally opens up between advantaged and disadvantaged young people is not visible in their pay.

The strongest single finding is the one in Section 5.7. Nationally, professionals from working-class backgrounds earn around 12% less than colleagues from more advantaged backgrounds doing comparable work. Among Ada alumni that gap is not detectable. Alumni from the most deprived areas are marginally more likely than their peers to clear the graduate benchmark and three times less likely to be earning below the local living wage.

The earnings position is also favourable once it is measured fairly. Among London-resident alumni aged 22 to 29, at least 62.8% earn more than the median full-time employee of the same age in the same region, where half of that population does so by definition. Their estimated median pay is around £47,000 against a regional benchmark of £39,463. Against computing graduates at equivalent career stages, Ada alumni are ahead up to seven years after leaving, and the picture at eight or more years is less clear and rests on few people.

Alumni with a disability are around 18 percentage points less likely to be in education, employment or training, and this is the most substantial outcome gap in the dataset. It is not a pay gap: those who reach full-time work do about as well as anyone else. The difficulty is reaching full-time work, which points at transition support rather than at the curriculum. Separately, almost nothing is known about the 172 learners who withdrew.

