

SB 95/2011

20 October 2011

The Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults in Wales, 2010

This Statistical Bulletin presents key statistics on the highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, according to their age at the start of the academic year.

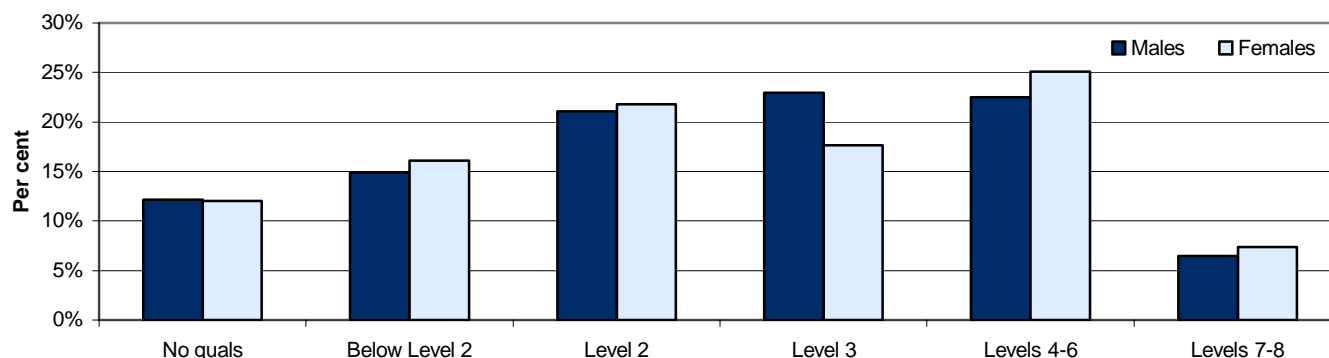
The statistics provided are taken from the Annual Population Survey (APS) for the year ending December 31st 2010. Further information on the APS can be found in the notes at the end of this bulletin.

Qualifications have been grouped into National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels. Further information on NQF levels can be found in the notes.

Key Results

- Overall, qualification levels in Wales have increased in 2010, continuing the general increase seen over the past decade. There was a 2 percentage point increase in the proportion of adults with level 2 or above and an increase of 1 percentage point for level 3 or above and level 4 or above.
- An estimated 12 per cent of working age adults in Wales had no qualifications, 2 percentage points lower than in 2009.
- 72 per cent of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications. The proportion holding level 4 qualifications or above was 31 per cent.
- 61 per cent of persons with no qualifications (who are not in full time education) are either ILO unemployed or economically inactive. This compares to 27 per cent across the population as a whole.
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults of working age without qualifications compared with England and Scotland. The gap between Wales and the rest of the UK has narrowed since 2001.

Chart 1. Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age, by gender, 2010



^a Working age adults in this bulletin refers to males aged 18-64 and females aged 18-59. See Note 2.

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Qualifications by age and gender

- 12 per cent of adults of working age have no qualifications. This is similar for males and females. (*Table 1 and Chart 1*).
- The proportion of adults with no qualifications increases with age. 9 per cent of 18-24 year olds have no qualifications compared with 18 per cent of 50-59 year olds (*Table 1*).
- 72 per cent of all adults of working age have a qualification at level 2 or above, whilst 31 per cent have a qualification at level 4 or above (*Table 1*).
- The 18-24, 25-34 and 35-49 age groups have similar achievement levels at level 2 or above for both genders. For 50-59 year olds, the proportion of males qualified to at least level 2 surpasses that of females (*Chart 2*).
- The proportion of females qualified to at least level 4 is slightly higher than that of males for all age groups except 50-59 year olds (*Chart 3*).
- A break down of those qualified to levels 4-6 into undergraduate degree qualifications and other level 4-6 qualifications^b shows the younger cohorts are more likely to have undergraduate degree qualifications than other level 4-6 qualifications. The difference is smaller in the older cohorts (*Chart 4*).

Qualifications by ethnicity^c

- 65 per cent of persons (who are not in full time education) from a non-white ethnic origin hold at least level 2 qualifications compared with 72 per cent from a white ethnic origin (*Chart 5*).
- However, persons from a non-white ethnic origin are more likely to hold degree-level qualifications than those from a white ethnic origin (41 per cent compared with 31 per cent) (*Chart 5*).

Chart 2. Proportion qualified to at least level 2, by age and gender, 2010

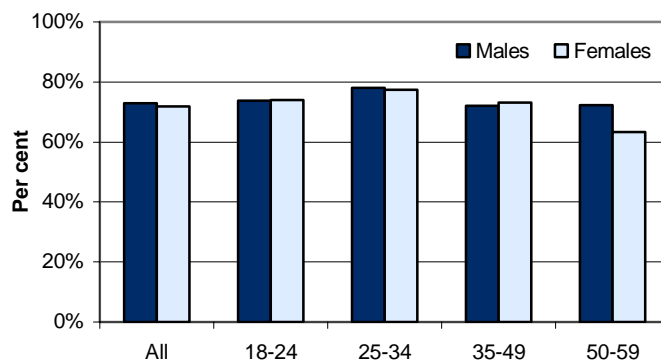


Chart 3. Proportion qualified to at least level 4, by age and gender, 2010

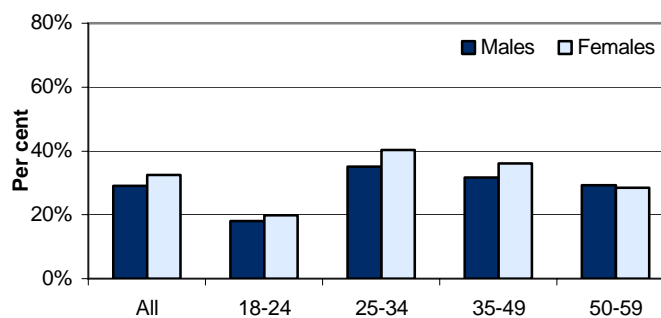


Chart 4. Proportion qualified to levels 4-6, by age and qualification, 2010^b

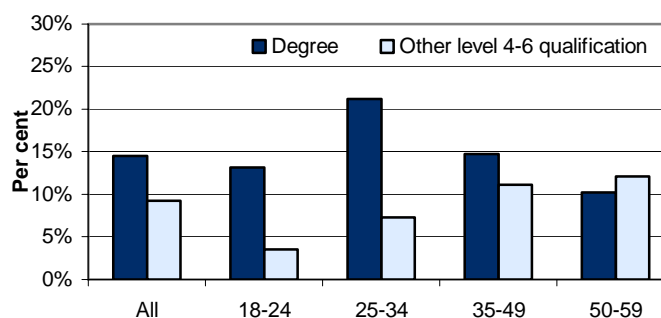
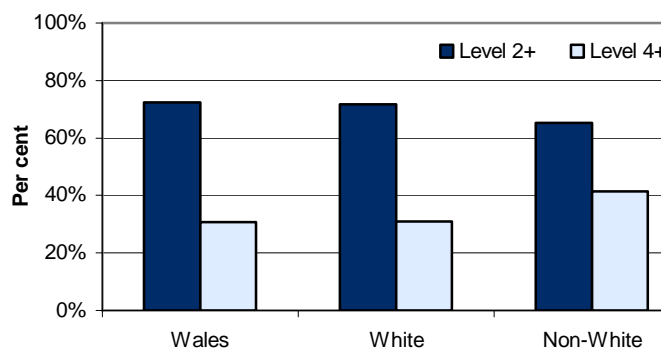


Chart 5. Proportion qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ethnicity, 2010^c



^b Undergraduate degrees include first degrees, foundation degrees and other degrees. See the Notes section for more details on qualification groupings.

^c Excludes those persons in full time education. See Key Quality Information.

Qualifications by disability

- Persons with a disability are more likely to hold no qualifications than non-disabled persons, and less likely to hold qualifications at level 2 or above (*Chart 6*).
- Since 2005, the gap between disabled and non-disabled persons holding no qualifications has narrowed slightly from 18 percentage points to 15 percentage points (*Chart 7*).
- Since 2005, the proportion of disabled and non-disabled persons qualified to at least level 2 has increased, but the gap has remained the same (*Chart 8*).
- Similarly, the proportion of disabled and non-disabled persons qualified to at least level 4 has increased, with the gap remaining the same (*Chart 9*).

Chart 6. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, by current disability status, 2010

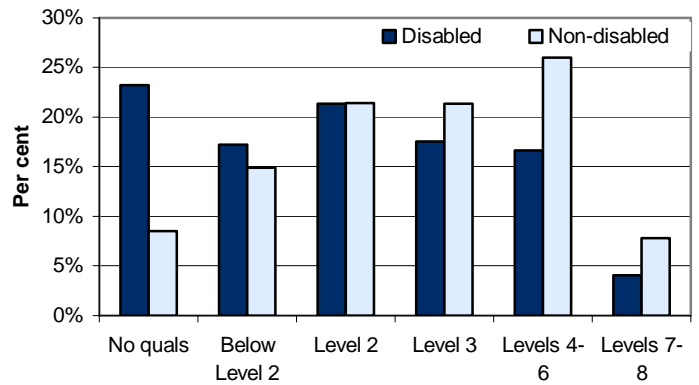


Chart 7. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by disability status, 2005-2010

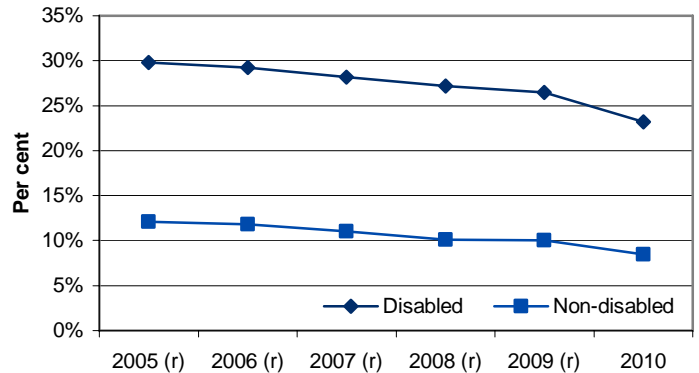


Chart 8. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by disability status, 2005-2010

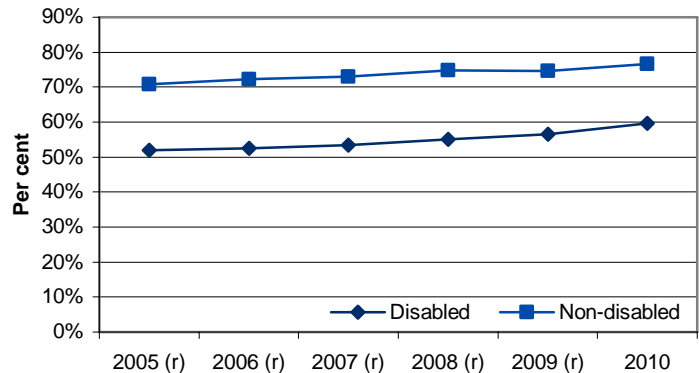
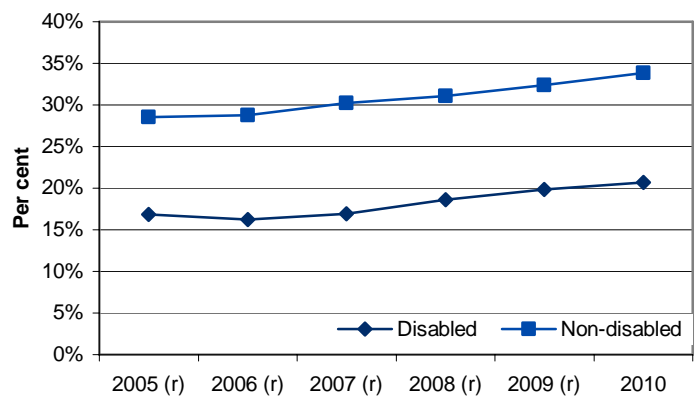


Chart 9. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 4, by disability status, 2005-2010



(r) Data for this year has been revised

Employment status by highest qualification

- The proportion of people in employment increases as the highest level of qualification increases. This is true for both males and females (*Chart 10*).
- 39 per cent of people with no qualifications (who are not in full-time education) are in employment compared with 90 per cent of people with qualifications at levels 7-8 (*not shown in charts*).
- 44 per cent of males with no qualifications are in employment compared with 34 per cent of females (*Chart 10*).
- A greater proportion of males with level 3 qualifications or below are in work than females. However, a slightly higher proportion of females with level 4 qualifications or above are in work than males (*Chart 10*).
- Generally, the difference between the percentage of males and females in employment decreases as the level of highest qualification increases (*Chart 10*).
- 39 per cent of adults in employment had no qualifications in 2010 compared with 50 per cent in 2001 (*Chart 11*).
- The change in employment rates between 2001 and 2010 is smaller for higher qualification levels (*Chart 11*).
- The higher the qualification level held, the more likely adults are to be employed full-time (*Chart 12*).

Participation in job-related training by qualification level held^e

- Participation in job related training increases as qualification levels increase (*Chart 13*).
- 18 per cent of adults of working age with degree level qualifications have undertaken some form of job related training. This compares with 9 per cent of persons holding qualifications lower than a degree, and 2 per cent of persons with no qualifications (*not shown in charts*).
- Females were more likely to have undertaken job related training than males at all levels of highest qualification. (*Chart 13*).

Chart 10. Percentage of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification and gender, 2010^d

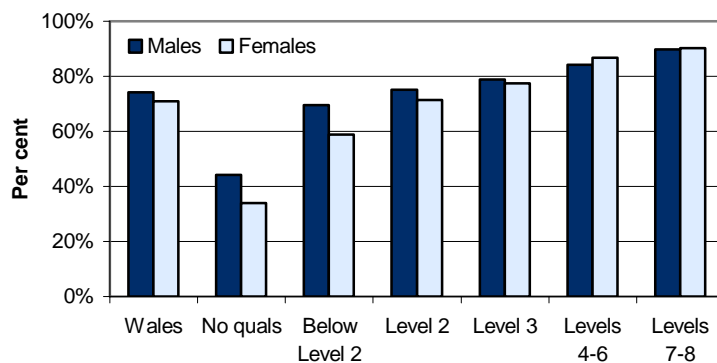


Chart 11. Percentage of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification, 2001-2010^d

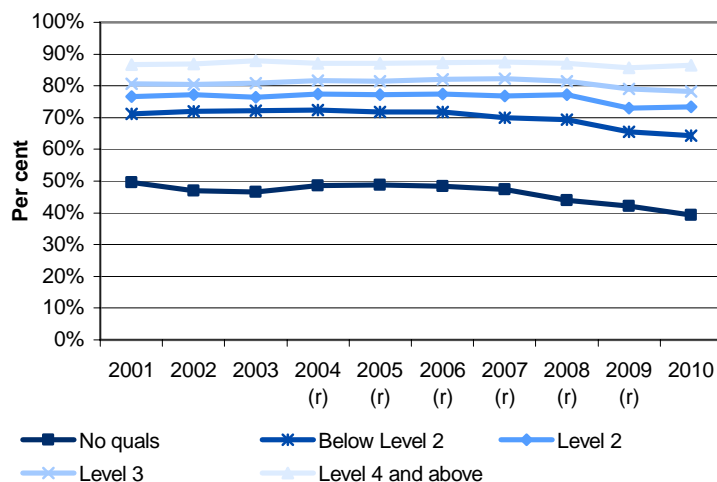


Chart 12. Employment status of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification, 2010^d

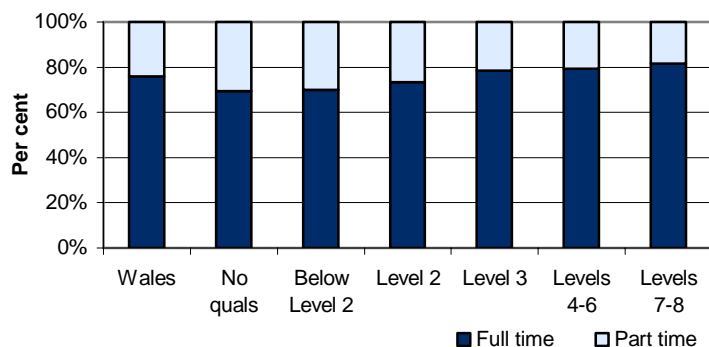
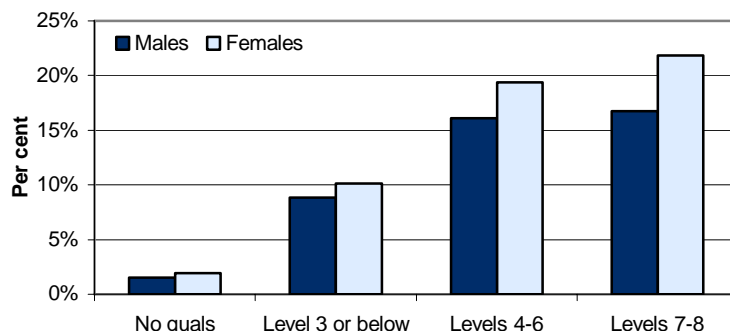


Chart 13. Proportion of working age adults having undertaken some job related training in last 4 weeks, by level of highest qualification, 2010



^d Excludes those persons in full time education.

^e Working age adults who had undertaken job-related training in the last four weeks. Excludes respondents still at school.

Income levels by highest qualification^f

- Income levels increase as the level of highest qualification increases (*Chart 14*).
- Employees in Wales with qualifications at levels 7-8 earn on average 74 per cent more a week than persons qualified to level 3 or below and 106 per cent more a week than persons with no qualifications (*not shown in charts*).
- The average gross weekly salary is higher for males than for females across all levels of qualifications held, with males earning 21 per cent more than females on average ^g (*Chart 14*).

Qualifications by main job

- 79 per cent of persons in employment are qualified to at least level 2 (*Chart 15*).
- Persons employed in professional occupations are more likely to be qualified to at least level 2 than those in other jobs. 97 per cent of persons in professional occupations are qualified at this level (*Chart 15*).
- Just under half of those in the Elementary Occupations category (e.g. farm workers, postal workers, catering assistants, cleaners, shelf fillers etc.) are **not** qualified to at least level 2 (*Chart 15*).
- 37 per cent of persons in employment are qualified to at least level 4 (*Chart 16*).
- 86 per cent of persons in professional occupations are qualified to at least level 4 compared with 8 per cent of those in both the Elementary Occupations and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives categories (*Chart 16*).
- Persons employed in professional occupations are almost twice as likely to be qualified to at least level 4 as managers and senior officials (86 per cent compared with 48 per cent) (*Chart 16*).

Chart 14. Average gross weekly salary of full-time employees, by gender and level of highest qualification, 2010

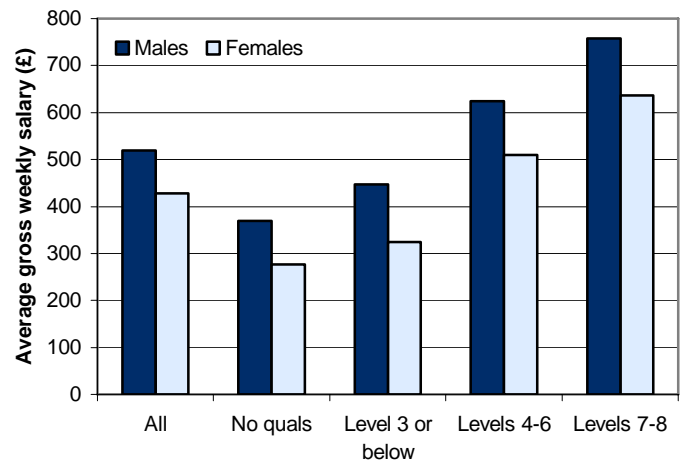


Chart 15. Proportion of working age adults in employment who are qualified to at least level 2, by main job, 2010^h

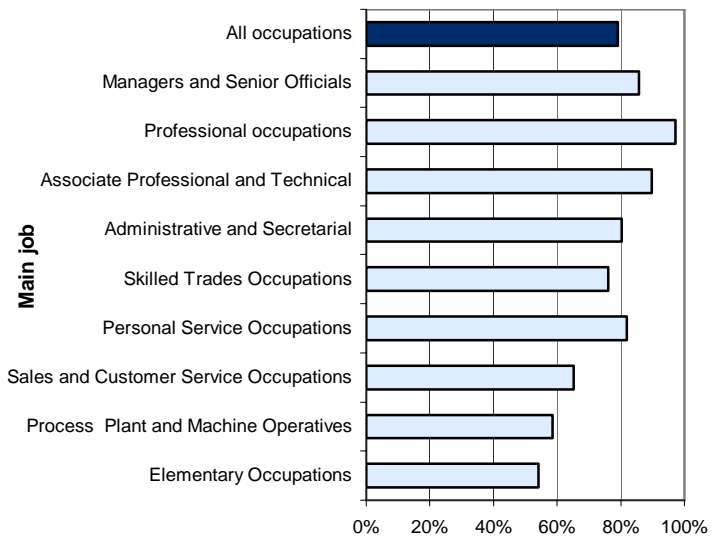
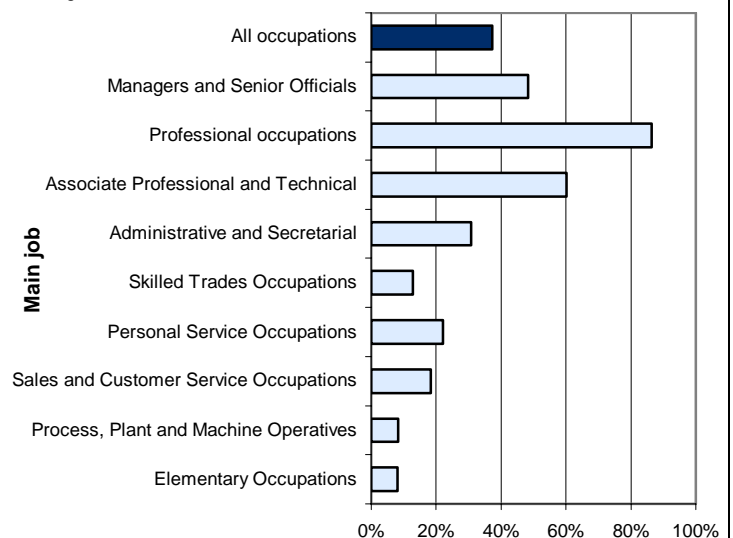


Chart 16. Proportion of working age adults in employment who are qualified to at least level 4, by main job, 2010^h



^f Income level figures in previous editions of this bulletin were found to be at a UK level. See Notes section for more information.

^g This is bigger than the headline gender pay gap measured using mean hourly earnings excluding overtime from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. This shows average female full-time earnings at 94 per cent of average full-time male earnings.

^h Excludes those persons in full-time education. Occupations graded according to Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2000. **5**

Qualifications by Welsh Language ability

- A greater proportion of Welsh speakers are qualified to level 3 or above than their non-Welsh speaking counterparts. In general, as the level of highest qualification increases, the percentage difference between Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers increases, with 40 per cent of Welsh speakers at level 4 or above (28 per cent for non-Welsh speakers) (Chart 17).
- Over 80 per cent of adults who can read, speak, understand or write Welsh have a highest qualification at level 2 or above, compared with the overall average of 72 per cent (Chart 18).
- Around 40 per cent of adults who can read, speak, understand or write Welsh hold a degree level qualification. This compares with the overall average of 31 per cent (Chart 18).

Qualifications by local authority

- Adults of working age in Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly are more likely to hold no qualifications than those in other parts of Wales. 18 per cent of adults in Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly do not have a qualification compared with 7 per cent in Ceredigion (Table 2).
- More than 60 per cent of people of working age are qualified to at least level 2 for every local authority in Wales (Chart 19).
- Ceredigion has the greatest proportion of people qualified to at least level 2, and along with Monmouthshire and Cardiff has one of the greatest proportions of adults qualified to at least degree level (Table 2).
- Qualification levels are lowest in the South Wales Valleys authorities (Table 2 and maps).

Chart 17. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, by whether or not respondents speak Welsh, 2010

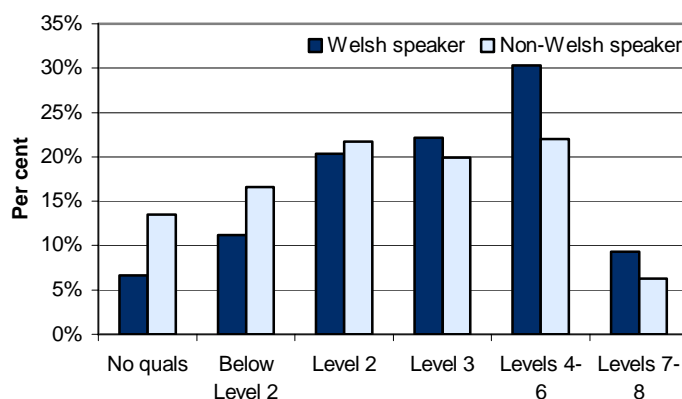


Chart 18. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ability in Welsh language, 2010

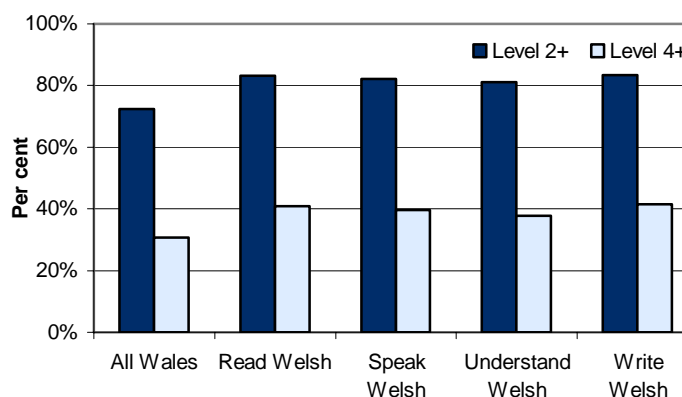
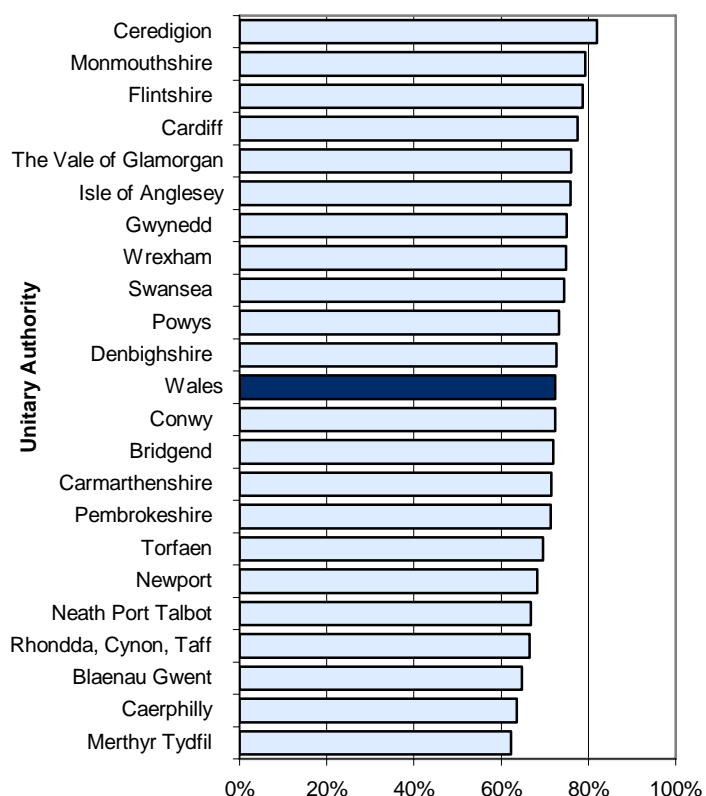


Chart 19. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by local authority, 2010



Qualifications over time

- Qualification levels overall have increased since 2001 (*Chart 20*).
- The proportion of working age adults with no qualifications has fallen every year since 2001, with an overall decrease of 9 percentage points over the last nine years (*Chart 20*).
- The proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2 and at least level 4 has risen every year since 2001 (*Chart 20*).

2005 and 2010 comparison

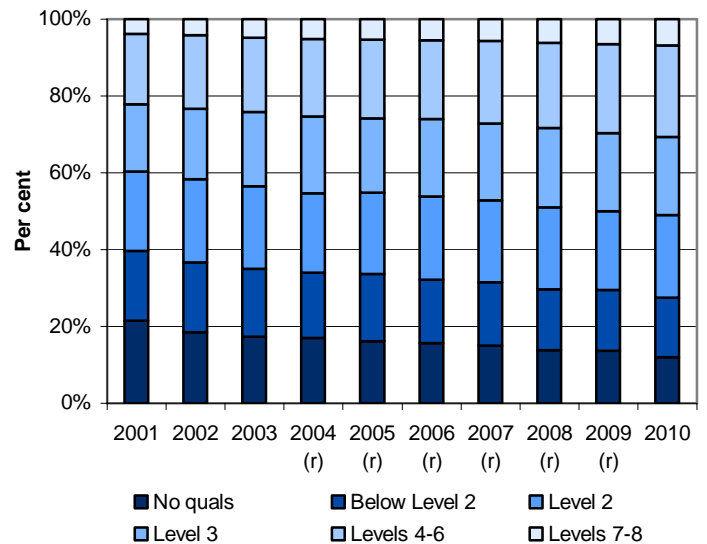
Level 2 or above

- The proportion of working age adults with a highest qualification of at least level 2 has decreased for 18-24 year olds but increased for all other age categories between 2005 and 2010 (*Chart 21*).
- Overall there was a 6 percentage point increase for working aged adults in Wales, with the largest increase seen in adults aged 50-59 (9 percentage points) (*Chart 21*).

Level 4 or above

- The proportion of working age adults with a degree level qualification has risen for all age categories between 2005 and 2010, except for 18-24 year olds which remained at 19 per cent (*Chart 22*).
- Overall there was a 5 percentage point increase for working aged adults in Wales, with the largest increase seen in adults aged 35-49 (8 percentage points) (*Chart 22*).

Chart 20. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2001-2010



(r) Data for this year have been revised

Chart 21. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by age group, 2005 and 2010

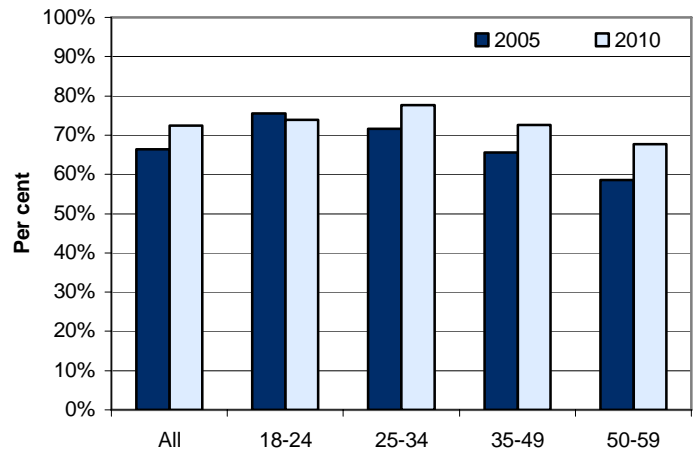
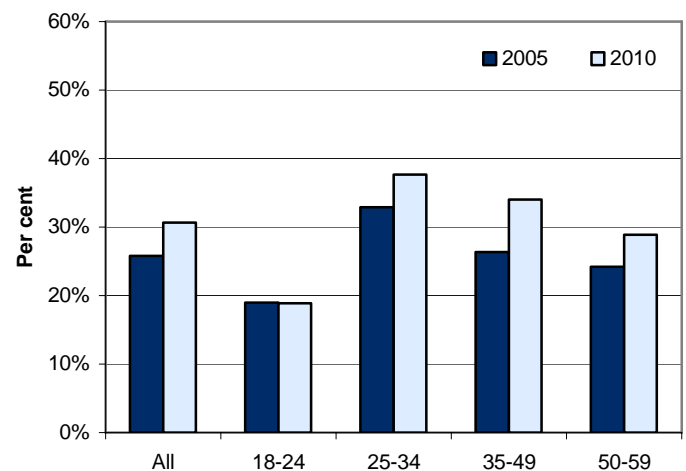


Chart 22. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 4, by age group, 2005 and 2010



UK comparisons

- In the UK as a whole, 10 per cent of adults of working age do not have a qualification (*Chart 23*).
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults of working age without qualifications than England and a similar proportion to Scotland (*Chart 23*).
- The proportion of adults qualified to at least level 2 in Wales is greater than Northern Ireland but lower than Scotland, England and the UK as a whole (*Chart 24*).
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults qualified to at least level 2 compared to most English regions (excluding North West, London, the South East and the South West) (*Chart 24*).
- The proportion of adults qualified to at least level 4 in Wales is greater than in Northern Ireland but lower than Scotland, England and the UK as a whole (*Table 3*).

UK comparisons over time

- Since 2001 there has been a gradual decrease in the proportion of adults with no qualifications in all parts of the UK (*Chart 25*).
- The gap between Wales and the UK has narrowed from 5 percentage points in 2001 to 2 percentage points in 2010 (*Chart 25*).
- Since 2001, the proportion of adults with at least level 2 qualifications has increased gradually in Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (*Chart 26*).
- Wales has seen the highest increase in proportion of adults with at least level 2 qualifications since 2001. This has resulted in the gap between Wales and the UK narrowing from 4 percentage points in 2001 to 1 percentage point in 2010 (*Chart 26*).

Chart 23. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by UK country and region, 2010

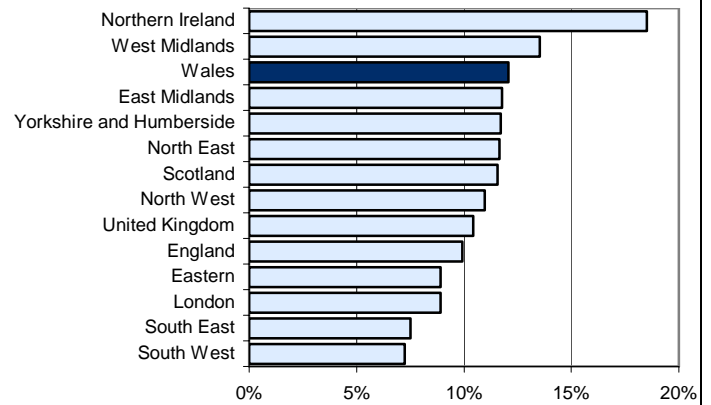


Chart 24. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by UK country and region, 2010

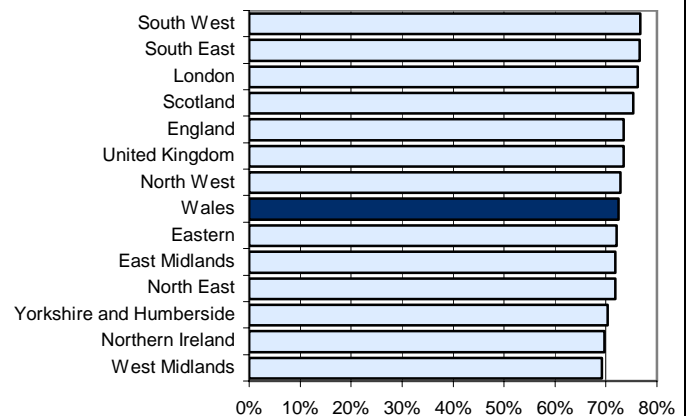


Chart 25. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by UK country, 2001-2010

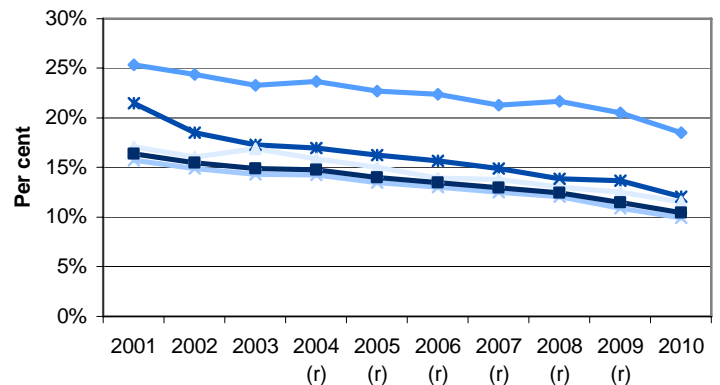
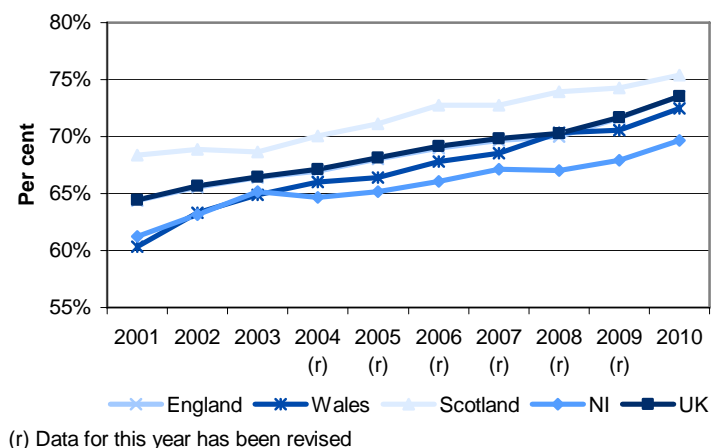


Chart 26. Proportion of working age adults with at least level 2 qualifications, by UK country, 2001-2010



(r) Data for this year has been revised

Table 1: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, 2010 (a)

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each NQF level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Levels 4-6	Level 4+
By gender							
Males	12	15	21	73	23	23	29
Females	12	16	22	72	18	25	32
Persons	12	15	21	72	20	24	31
By age							
18-24	9	17	23	74	32	17	19
25-34	8	14	20	78	20	29	38
35-49	11	17	22	73	17	26	34
50-59	18	15	21	68	18	22	29
60-64 (males only)	22	11	19	67	21	20	27
By ethnic origin (b)							
White	13	16	22	72	19	24	31
Non-white	16	19	14	65	10	28	41
By disability status							
Disabled	23	17	21	60	18	17	21
Not disabled	8	15	21	77	21	26	34
By economic activity and main job (b)							
In employment	7	14	22	79	20	28	37
of which:							
Managers & senior officials	4	10	18	86	19	39	48
Professional occupations	1	2	4	97	7	49	86
Associate professional & technical	2	8	14	90	15	52	60
Administrative & secretarial	4	16	28	80	21	26	31
Skilled Trades occupations	10	14	27	76	36	12	13
Personal Service occupations	6	12	31	82	29	19	22
Sales and Customer Service occupations	12	23	26	65	21	17	18
Process, plant & machine operatives	14	28	28	59	22	7	8
Elementary occupations	17	28	30	54	16	7	8
ILO unemployed or economically inactive	28	21	21	51	15	13	15

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

(a) Adult working age is defined as 18-64 for males and 18-59 for females.

(b) Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2000. Excludes persons in full-time education.

Data for 2001-2010 are available on the Assembly's interactive website StatsWales

Table 2: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, by Unitary Authority, 2010 (a)

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each NQF level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Levels 4-6	Level 4+
Isle of Anglesey	11	13	21	76	24	24	31
Gwynedd	12	13	21	75	23	23	31
Conwy	12	16	23	72	17	26	32
Denbighshire	12	15	24	73	20	24	28
Flintshire	8	14	25	79	23	25	31
Wrexham	9	16	27	75	21	23	27
Powys	10	17	22	73	19	25	32
Ceredigion	7	11	18	82	26	27	39
Pembrokeshire	14	15	21	71	24	22	27
Carmarthenshire	13	15	19	71	19	25	33
Swansea	13	12	19	75	25	22	30
Neath Port Talbot	14	19	25	67	20	19	23
Bridgend	11	17	21	72	22	24	29
The Vale of Glamorgan	9	15	20	76	21	25	35
Cardiff	10	13	18	78	17	30	43
Rhondda Cynon Taf	15	19	22	66	20	20	25
Merthyr Tydfil	18	19	24	62	18	17	21
Caerphilly	18	19	24	64	18	17	21
Blaenau Gwent	15	20	26	65	18	16	20
Torfaen	13	17	23	70	22	21	25
Monmouthshire	9	12	18	79	22	29	39
Newport	14	18	20	68	18	25	30
Wales	12	15	21	72	20	24	31

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

(a) Adult working age is defined as 18-64 for males and 18-59 for females.

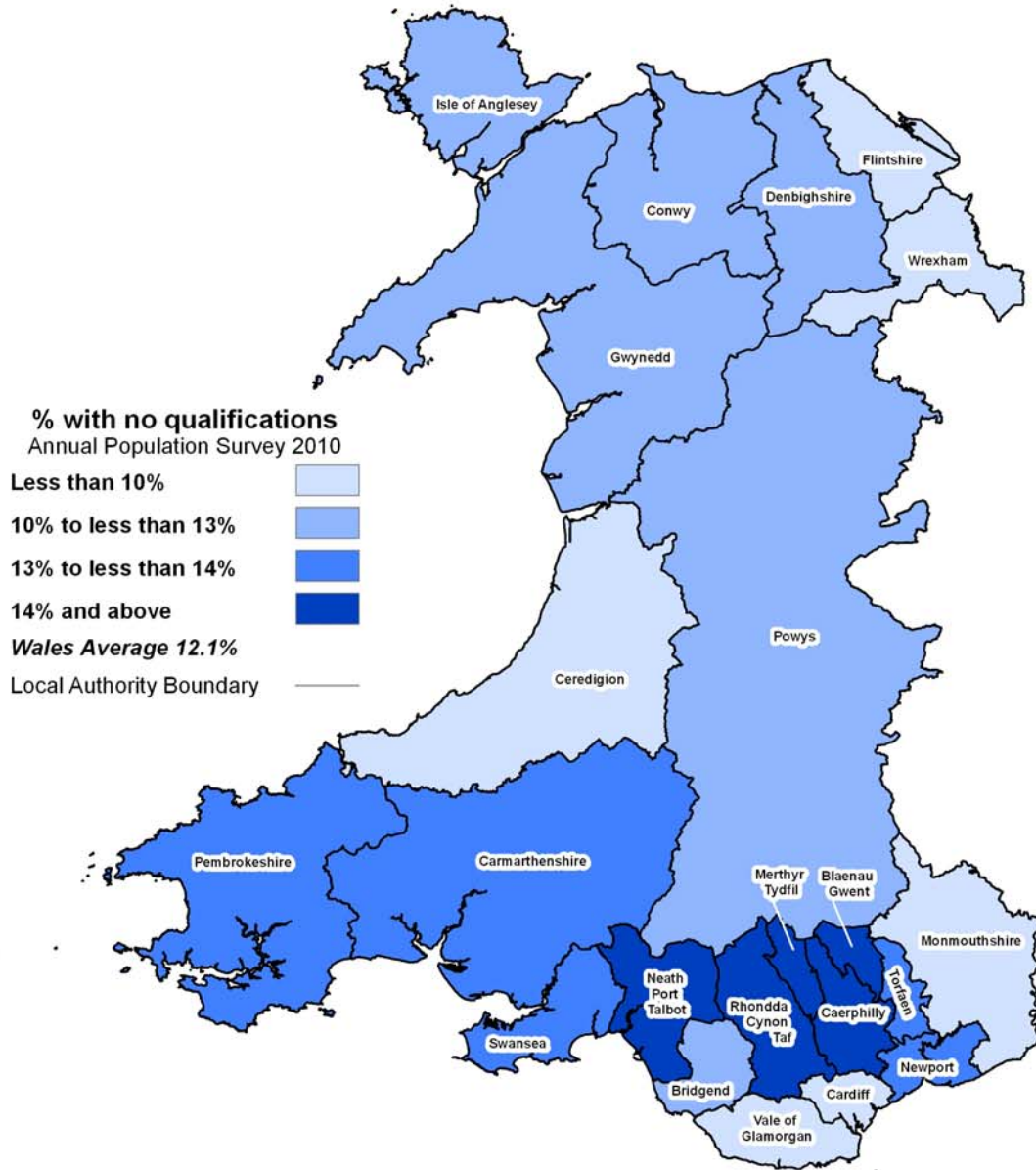
Table 3: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in the United Kingdom, 2010 (a)

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each NQF level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Levels 4-6	Level 4+
England	10	17	20	74	20	25	34
North East	12	17	22	72	22	22	28
North West	11	16	21	73	21	24	31
Yorkshire & Humberside	12	18	21	70	21	22	28
East Midlands	12	16	21	72	22	23	29
West Midlands	14	17	21	69	20	23	28
Eastern	9	19	22	72	20	23	31
London	9	15	16	76	15	32	45
South East	8	16	20	77	20	28	36
South West	7	16	21	77	21	26	34
Wales	12	15	21	72	20	24	31
Scotland	12	13	19	75	19	30	38
Northern Ireland	19	12	21	70	20	22	29
United Kingdom	10	16	20	74	20	26	34

Source: Annual Population Survey 2010

(a) Adult working age is defined as 18-64 for males and 18-59 for females.

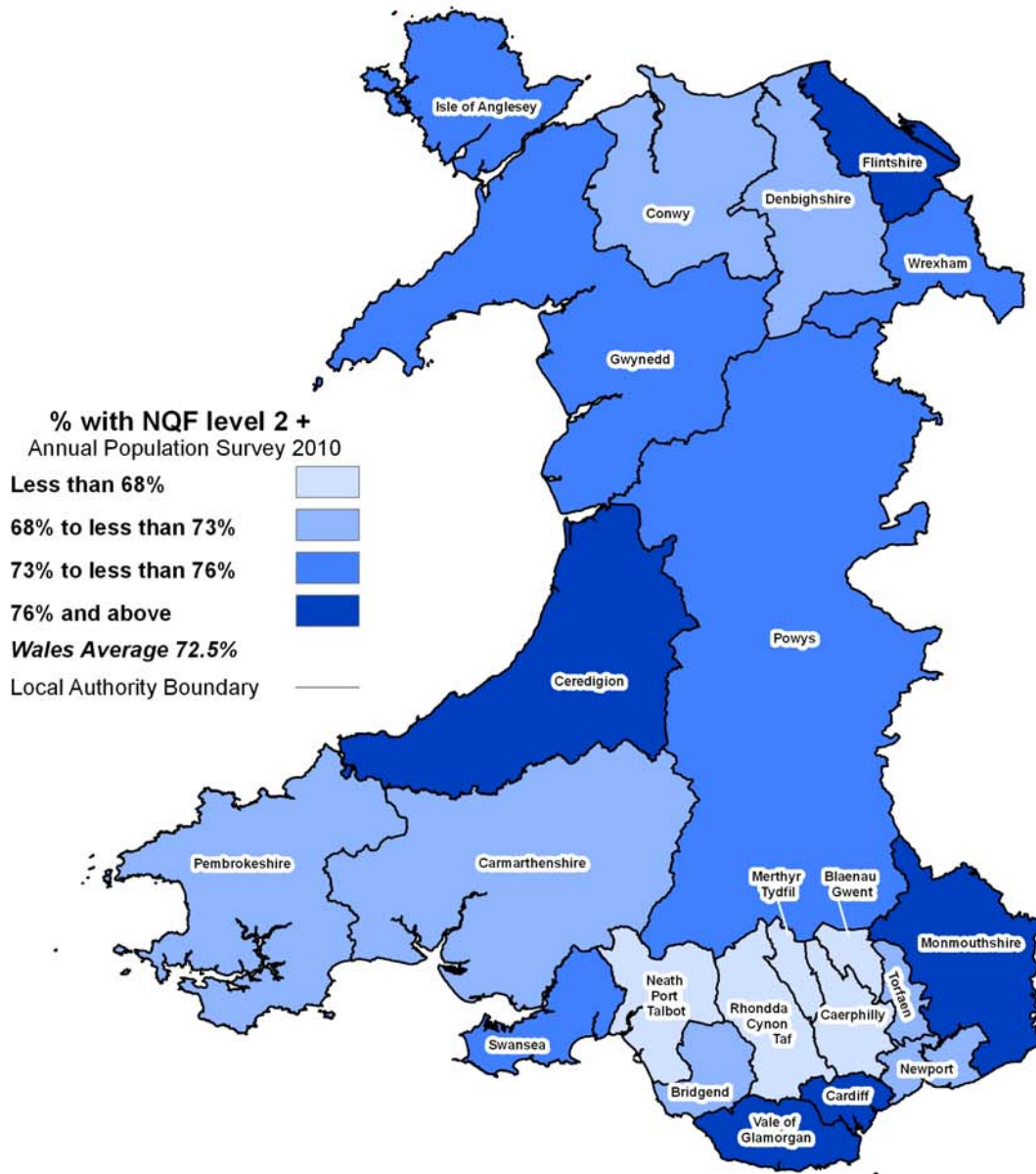
Percentage of adults of working age with no qualifications



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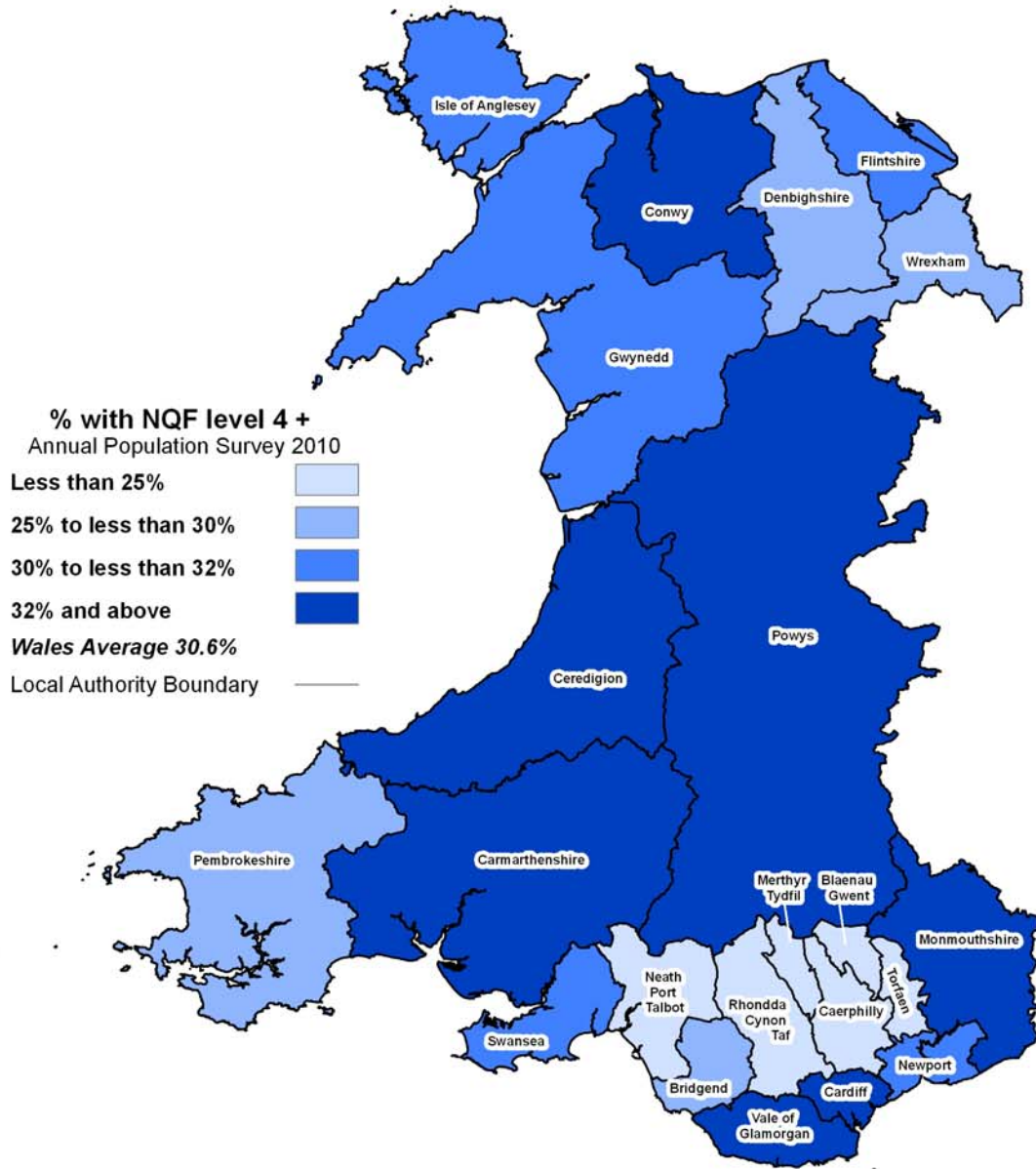
Percentage of adults of working age qualified to at least NQF level 2



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Percentage of adults of working age qualified to at least NQF level 4



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Notes

1. Policy/operational context

This Statistical Bulletin presents the annual snapshot of qualification levels of the working age population in Wales.

The statistics are used within the Welsh Government to monitor trends in qualification levels and specifically to measure progress against targets set out in *Learning Country: Vision into Action (2008)* and a proposed indicator within the *Child Poverty Strategy for Wales (2011)*.

Learning Country: Vision into Action included targets to increase the percentage of working age adults with a qualification equivalent to level 2 or above to 70 per cent, level 3 or above to 50 per cent and level 4 or above to 30 per cent by 2010. This Bulletin provides the 2010 update of the data, and indicates that all targets have been achieved.

The *Child Poverty Strategy for Wales* proposes to measure progress of the proportion of working age adults with no qualifications.

The statistics are measures included within the recently published *Programme for Government* in the context of Tackling Poverty.

2. Background to the Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey

The data presented in this Bulletin are based on the results of the Annual Population Survey for 2004-2010, and from the annual Local Labour Force Survey for Wales for 2001-2003, both of which were household surveys carried out by the Office for National Statistics.

From 2001, annual Local Labour Force Survey (LLFS) data collected in Wales were based on a significantly enhanced sample. This larger sample allowed for more detailed and more robust analysis, particularly for sub-Wales geographies.

Developments to the LLFS led to the Annual Population Survey (APS) which now provides annual datasets updated on a rolling quarterly basis from the Labour Force Survey. The data presented here are based on the year ending 31 December 2010 and were first published at the end of June 2011.

For years labelled 2001 to 2003, the actual periods covered are the 12 months running from March in the year given to February in the following year (e.g. 2001 = 1 March 2001 to 28 February 2002). Note therefore that there is a two-month overlap between the last period presented on the former March to February basis (2003), and the first period on the new basis (2004).

The annual LLFS/APS datasets are derived from a sample of approximately 23,000 people of working age across Wales, with a minimum of around 800 people of working age in most local authorities in Wales.

Data in this bulletin are presented for working age adults referring to males aged 18-64 and females aged 18-59, according to their age at the start of the academic year. This reflects state pension ages in the UK up until March 2010. Between April 2010 and March 2020 the state pension age for women will gradually increase from 60 to 65. The working age definition for data covering April 2010 onwards is therefore now 16-64, which will be reflected in future outputs. The change has not been made to this bulletin, in order to continue reporting on the definition used for the *Learning Country: Vision into Action (2008)* targets which complete this year.

3. Revisions

For this edition revisions have been made to previous published figures as follows:

The ONS has reweighted the APS data back to year end Q4 2004 using latest population estimates. Therefore estimates for 2004 to 2009 have been revised. The impact of these revisions is negligible.

4. Key Quality Information

As the data come from a survey, the results are sample-based estimates and are therefore subject to differing degrees of sampling variability, i.e. the true value for any measure lies in a differing range about the estimated value. This range or sampling variability increases as the detail in the data increases; for example local authority data are subject to higher variability than regional data.

Ethnicity

For the analysis of qualifications by ethnicity, persons in full-time education have been excluded. This change has been made to remove the impact of international students who attend higher education in Wales and thus inflate the proportion with Level 3 qualifications.

Income Levels

It was discovered that the 2007 ([SB 63/2008](#)), 2008 ([SB 61/2009](#)) and 2009 ([SB 87/2010](#)) editions of this bulletin contain income level figures calculated for the UK as a whole, rather than Wales. Therefore comparisons between this edition and these previous editions should not be made. The corrected data can be made available if required. Please use contact details shown at the front of this bulletin.

Proxy response

If the respondent is not available at the time of interview, questions may be answered by proxy through another member of the household. For information on highest qualifications, around two-thirds (68 per cent) of responses have been derived from a respondent's own answers. 21 per cent were obtained from a spouse or partner whilst 11 per cent were obtained from another proxy.

Section 11 of the LFS User Guide Volume 1 presents findings from a follow up study to test the accuracy of results from proxy respondents:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lfsug/labour-force-survey-user-guide/2009-update/vol-1---background-and-methodology.pdf>

The results for highest type of qualification held show nearly two thirds matching with significant net error from proxies understating qualifications. However there was wide variation in the standard of proxy response. This variation is both in terms of the relationship of the proxy to the subject (parents were much better than spouses or children) and also by the level and type of qualifications held. Reporting was much better for those subjects holding degrees (80 per cent matched) than for those holding lower or vocational qualifications (30 per cent matched).

Non-response

Information on highest qualification is derived from a number of questions in the survey. Overall, the highest qualification was unknown or unable to be derived for 1.1 per cent of respondents. These respondents have been excluded from the analysis in this Bulletin.

Allocation of qualifications with unknown levels

Whilst other questions in the survey are used to allocate qualifications to NQF levels as far as possibleⁱ, for some categories the respondents are distributed into levels using proportions that have been fixed for

ⁱ For instance the numbers of GCSEs held by a respondent are used to distribute persons whose highest qualification was a GCSE between levels 1 (less than 5 GCSEs) and 2 (5 or more).