

SB 111/2012

21 November 2012

## The Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults in Wales, 2011

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 31<sup>st</sup> 2011. Further information on the APS can be found in the notes at the end of this bulletin.

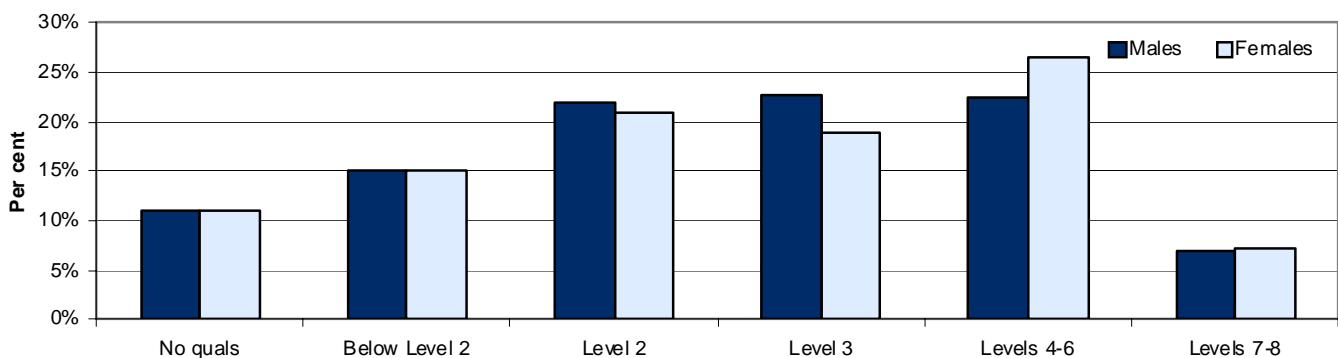
Qualifications have been grouped into National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels. Further information on NQF levels can be found in the notes.

Working age adults in this bulletin refers to males aged 18-64, and females aged 18-59.

### Key Results

- Overall, qualification levels in Wales have increased in 2011, continuing the general increase seen over the past decade. There was a 1.5 percentage point increase in the proportion of adults with level 2 or above and level 3 or above, and an increase of 1 percentage point for level 4 or above.
- An estimated 11 per cent of working age adults in Wales were reported as having no qualifications, 1 percentage point lower than in 2010.
- 74 per cent of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications. The proportion holding level 4 qualifications or above was 32 per cent.
- 59 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, 2011**



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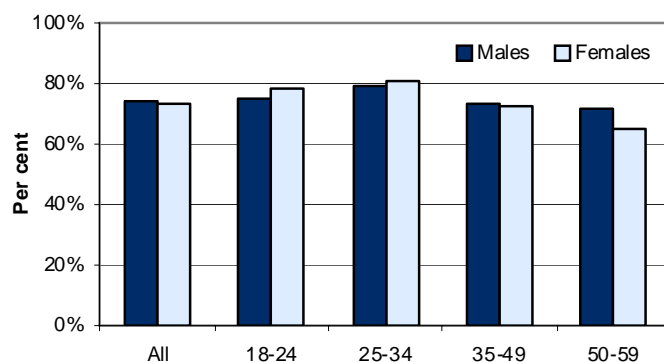
### Qualifications by age and gender

- 11 per cent of adults of working age were reported as having no qualifications. This is the same for males and females. (Table 1 and Chart 1).
- The proportion of adults with no qualifications increases with age. 7 per cent of 18-24 year olds were reported as having no qualifications compared with 17 per cent of 50-59 year olds (Table 1).
- 74 per cent of all adults of working age have a qualification at level 2 or above, whilst 32 per cent have a qualification at level 4 or above (Table 1).
- At the ages of 18-24 and 25-34 females have higher achievement at level 2 or above than males. For 35-49 and 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 higher than that of males for all age groups. (Chart 3).
- A break down of those qualified to levels 4-6 into undergraduate degree qualifications and other level 4-6 qualifications<sup>b</sup> 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).

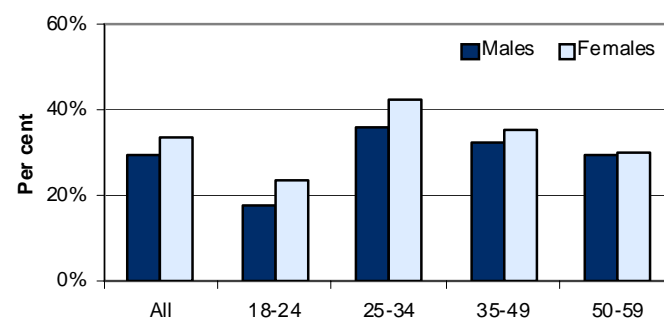
### Qualifications by ethnicity<sup>c</sup>

- 74 per cent of persons (who are not in full time education) from a non-white ethnic origin hold at least level 2 qualifications, the same as persons 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 (47 per cent compared with 31)(Chart 5).

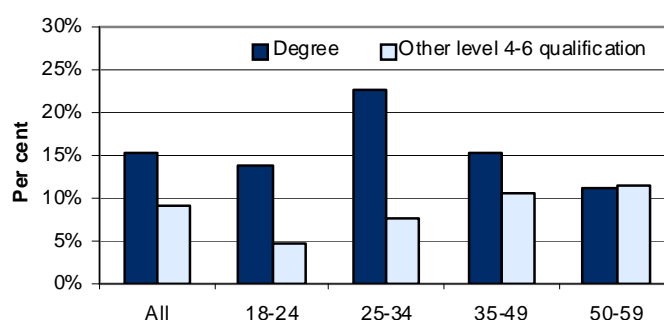
**Chart 2. Proportion qualified to at least level 2, by age and gender, 2011**



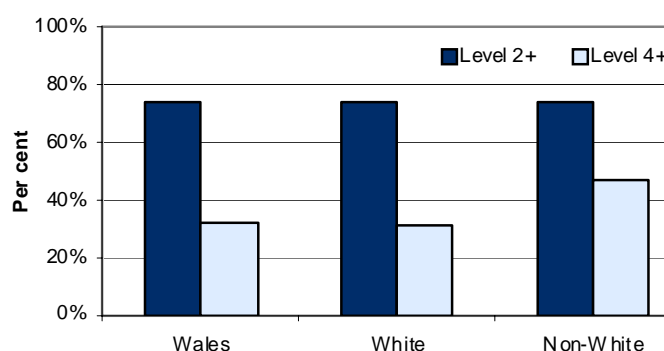
**Chart 3. Proportion qualified to at least level 4, by age and gender, 2011**



**Chart 4. Proportion qualified to levels 4-6, by age and qualification, 2011<sup>b</sup>**



**Chart 5. Proportion qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ethnicity, 2011<sup>c</sup>**



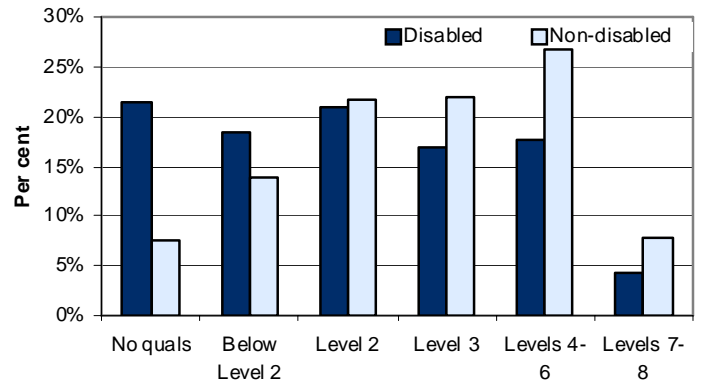
<sup>b</sup> Undergraduate degrees include first degrees, foundation degrees and other degrees. See the Notes section for more details on qualification groupings.

<sup>c</sup> Excludes those persons in full time education. See Key Quality Information.

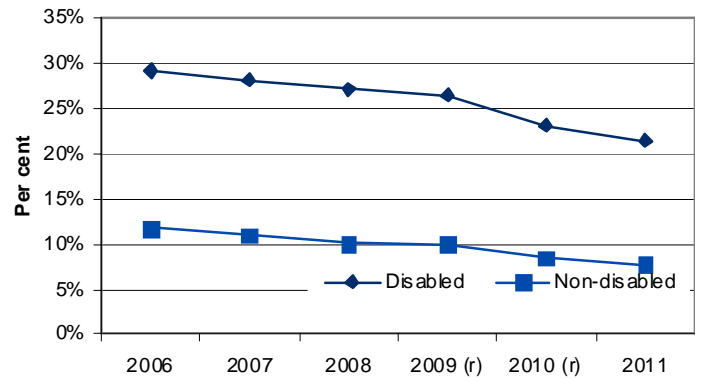
### Qualifications by disability

- Persons with a disability (DDA current disability and/or work-limiting 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 2006, the gap between disabled and non-disabled persons holding no qualifications has narrowed slightly from 17 percentage points to 14 percentage points (*Chart 7*).
- Since 2006, the proportion of disabled and non-disabled persons qualified to at least level 2 has increased, but the gap has decreased slightly. (*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*).

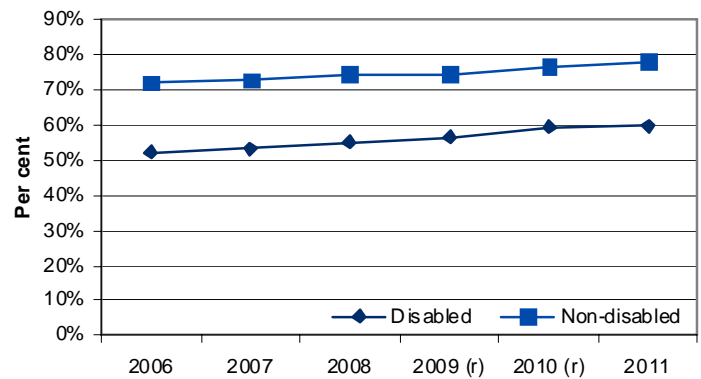
**Chart 6. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, by current disability status, 2011**



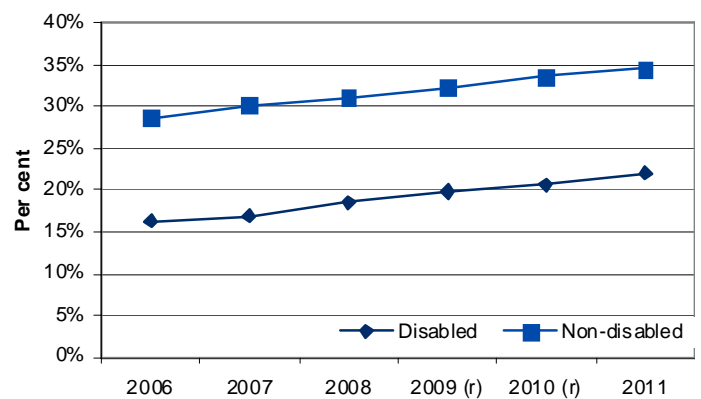
**Chart 7. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by disability status, 2006-2011**



**Chart 8. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by disability status, 2006-2011**



**Chart 9. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 4, by disability status, 2006-2011**



(r) Data for this year has been revised

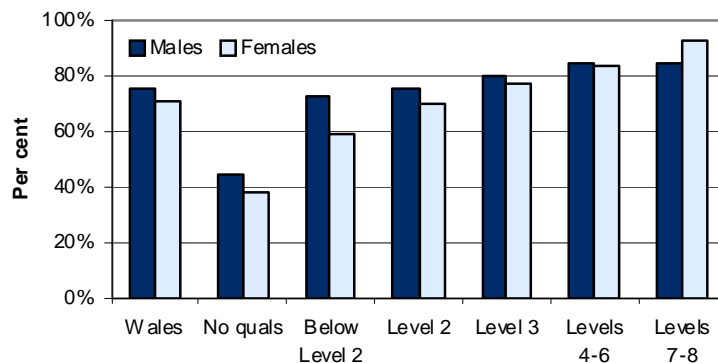
### Employment status by highest qualification

- The proportion of people in employment increases as the highest level of qualification increases. This is true for both males and females (*Chart 10*).
- 41 per cent of people with no qualifications (who are not in full-time education) are in employment compared with 89 per cent of people with qualifications at levels 7-8 (*not shown in charts*).
- 45 per cent of males with no qualifications are in employment compared with 38 per cent of females (*Chart 10*).
- A greater proportion of males with level 4-6 qualifications or below are in work than females. However, a higher proportion of females with level 7-8 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*).
- 41 per cent of adults with no qualifications in 2011 were in employment compared with 50 per cent in 2001 (*Chart 11*).
- The change in employment rates between 2001 and 2011 is smaller for higher qualification levels, suggesting the impact of the recession on employment rates has affected those with no or low qualifications most. (*Chart 11*).
- The higher the qualification level held, the more likely adults are to be employed full-time (*Chart 12*).

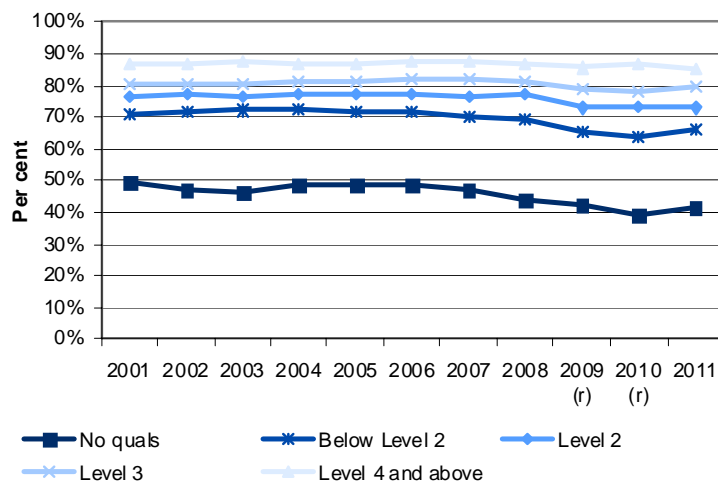
### Participation in job-related training by qualification level held<sup>e</sup>

- 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 10 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 generally more likely to have undertaken job related training than males at all levels of qualification (*Chart 13*).

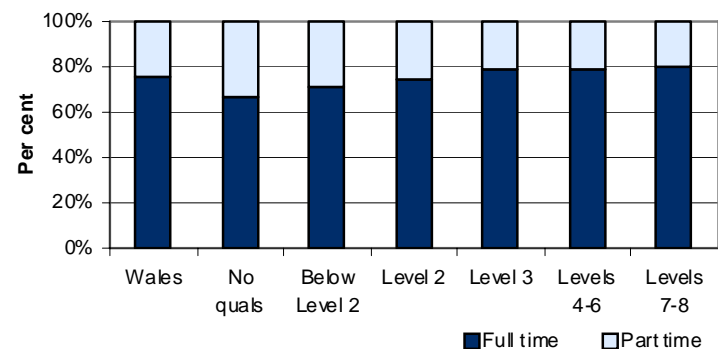
**Chart 10. Percentage of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification and gender, 2011<sup>d</sup>**



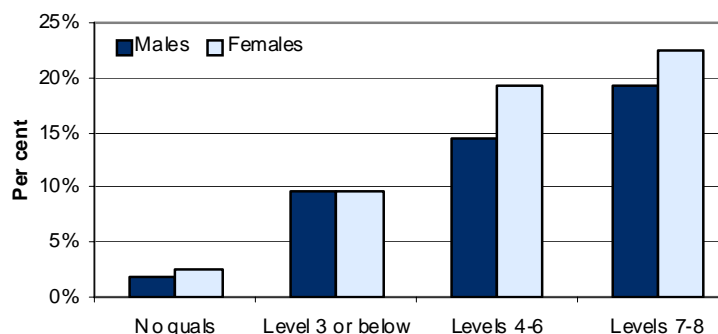
**Chart 11. Percentage of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification, 2001-2011<sup>d</sup>**



**Chart 12. Employment status of working age adults in employment, by level of highest qualification, 2011<sup>d</sup>**



**Chart 13. Proportion of working age adults having undertaken some job related training in last 4 weeks, by level of highest qualification, 2011**



<sup>d</sup> Excludes those persons in full time education.

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

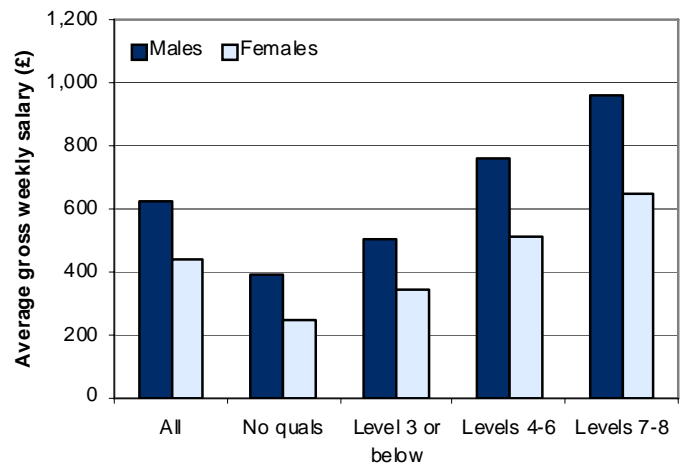
### Income levels by highest qualification<sup>f</sup>

- Income levels increase as the level of highest qualification increases (*Chart 14*).
- Employees in Wales with qualifications at levels 7-8 earn on average 89 per cent more a week than persons qualified to level 3 or below and 143 per cent more a week than persons with no qualifications (*not shown in charts*).
- The average (mean) gross weekly salary is higher for males than for females across all levels of qualifications held, with males earning 42 per cent more than females on average <sup>g</sup> (*Chart 14*).

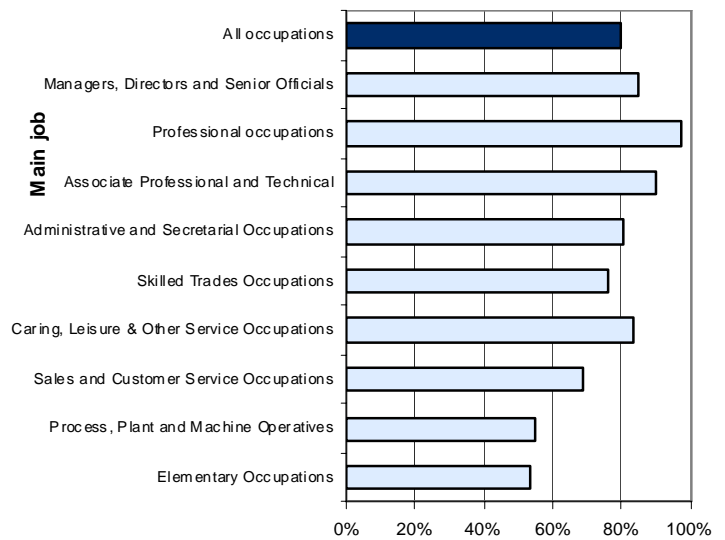
### Qualifications by main job

- 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. 98 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 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 46 per cent) (*Chart 16*).

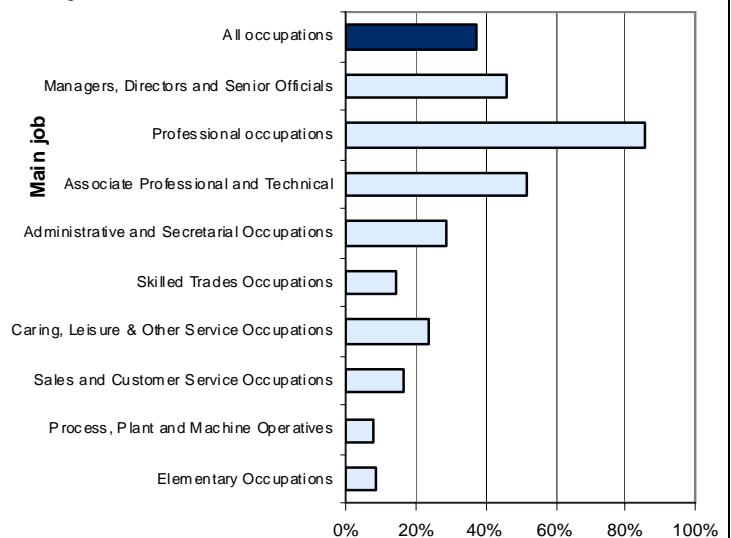
**Chart 14. Average gross weekly salary of full-time employees, by gender and level of highest qualification, 2011.**



**Chart 15. Proportion of working age adults in employment who are qualified to at least level 2, by main job, 2011<sup>h</sup>**



**Chart 16. Proportion of working age adults in employment who are qualified to at least level 4, by main job, 2011<sup>h</sup>**



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

<sup>g</sup> 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.

<sup>h</sup> Excludes those persons in full-time education. Occupations graded according to Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2010, and therefore not directly comparable with data from previous bulletins produced by SOC 2000.

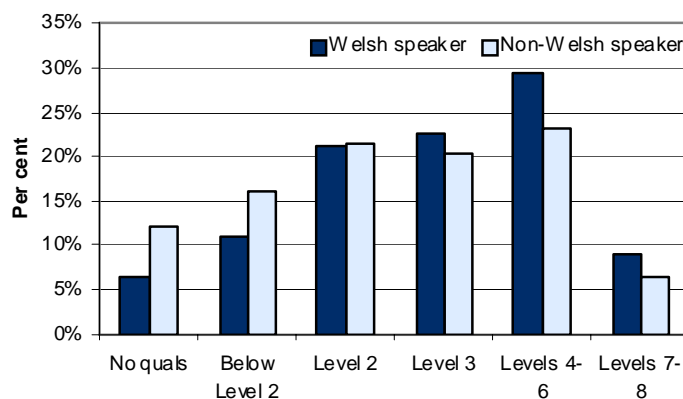
### Qualifications by Welsh Language ability

- 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 39 per cent of Welsh speakers at level 4 or above (30 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 74 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 32 per cent (Chart 18).

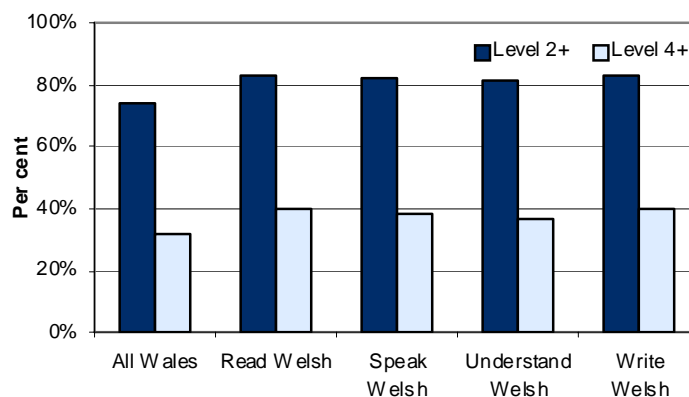
### Qualifications by local authority

- Adults of working age in Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly are more likely to hold no qualifications than those in other parts of Wales. 19 per cent of adults in Merthyr Tydfil and 16 per cent in Caerphilly do not have a qualification compared with 8 per cent in Monmouthshire, Cardiff, Ceredigion, Flintshire and the Vale of Glamorgan. (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, Monmouthshire, The Vale of Glamorgan, and Cardiff have the greatest proportion of people qualified to at least level 2. Cardiff, Monmouthshire and The Vale of Glamorgan have the greatest proportions of adults qualified to at least degree level (Table 2).
- Qualification levels are generally lowest in the South Wales Valleys authorities (Table 2 and maps).

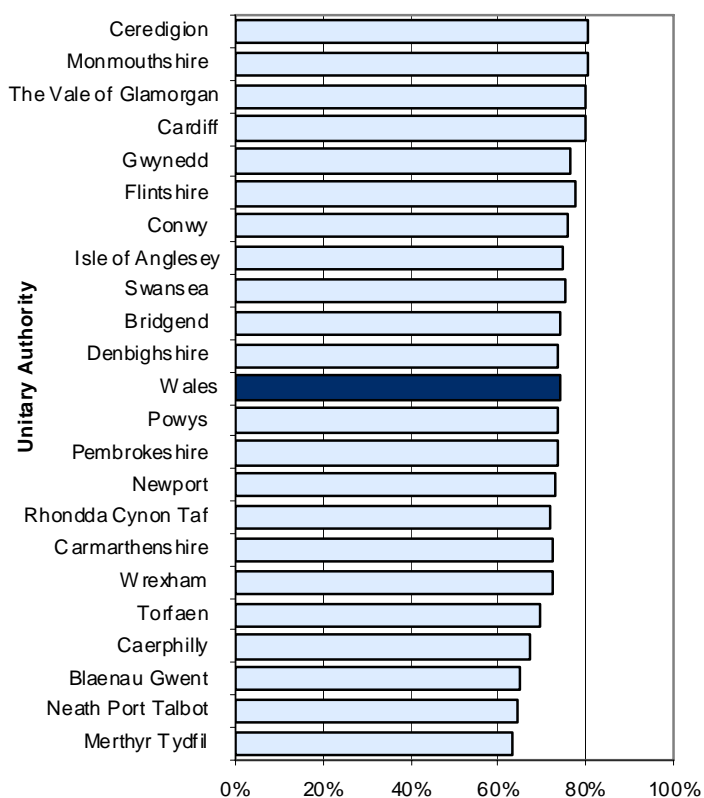
**Chart 17. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, by whether or not respondents speak Welsh, 2011**



**Chart 18. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ability in Welsh language, 2011**



**Chart 19. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by local authority, 2011**



## Qualifications over time

- Qualification levels overall have increased since 2001 (*Chart 20*).
- The proportion of working age adults reported as having no qualifications has fallen every year since 2001, with an overall decrease of 10 percentage points over the last ten 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*).

## 2006 and 2011 comparison

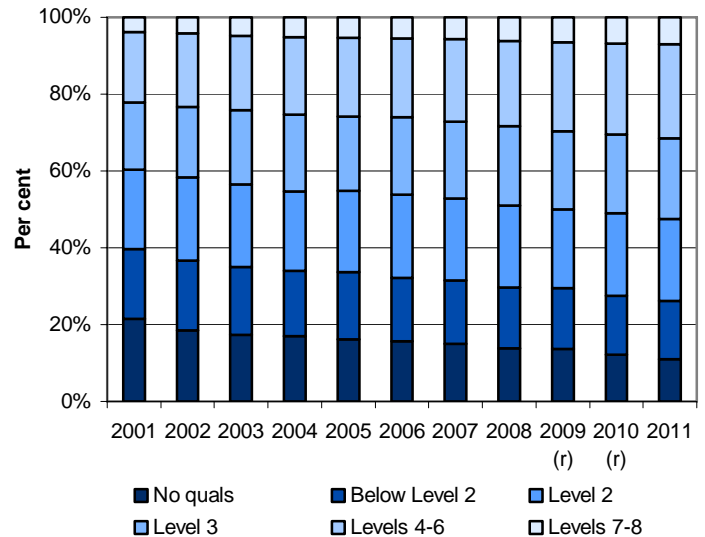
### Level 2 or above

- The proportion of working age adults with a highest qualification of at least level 2 has increased for all age categories between 2006 and 2011 (*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 (8 percentage points) (*Chart 21*).

### Level 4 or above

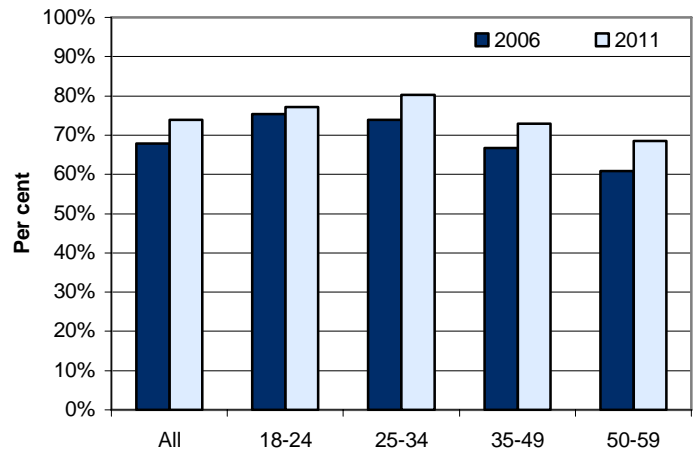
- The proportion of working age adults with a degree level qualification has risen for all age categories between 2006 and 2011 (*Chart 22*).
- Overall there was a 6 percentage point increase for working aged adults in Wales, with the largest increase (7 percentage points) seen in adults aged 25-34 (*Chart 22*).

**Chart 20. Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2001-2011**

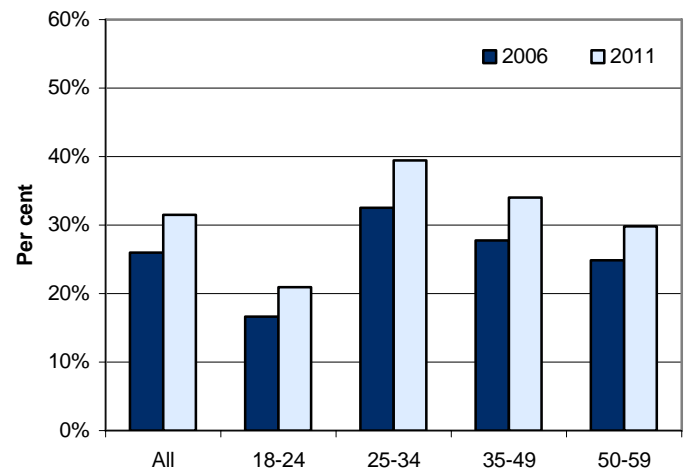


(r) Data for this year have been revised

**Chart 21. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by age group, 2006 and 2011**



**Chart 22. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 4, by age group, 2006 and 2011**



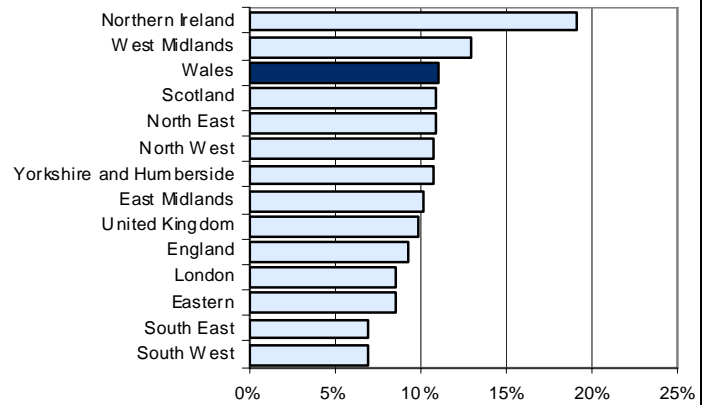
## UK comparisons

- In the UK as a whole, 10 per cent of adults of working age are reported as not having a qualification (*Chart 23*).
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults of working age reported as without qualifications than England and the same proportion as Scotland and the English regions of North East, North West and Yorkshire and Humberside. (*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 similar proportion of adults qualified to at least level 2 to a number of English regions (North East, North West, East Midlands and Eastern) (*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*).

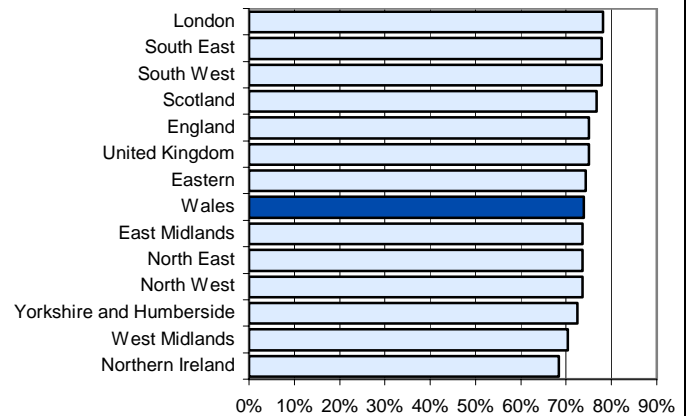
## UK comparisons over time

- Since 2001 there has been a gradual decrease in the proportion of adults reported as having no qualifications in all parts of the UK. (*Chart 25*).
- The gap between Wales and the UK in the proportion of adults reported with no qualifications has narrowed from 6 percentage points in 2001 to 1 percentage point in 2011 (*Chart 25*).
- Since 2001, the proportion of adults with at least level 2 qualifications has increased gradually in Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Data shows a decrease in the last year for Northern Ireland, but there are larger confidence intervals around the series for Northern Ireland given the smaller sample size. (*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 2011 (*Chart 26*).

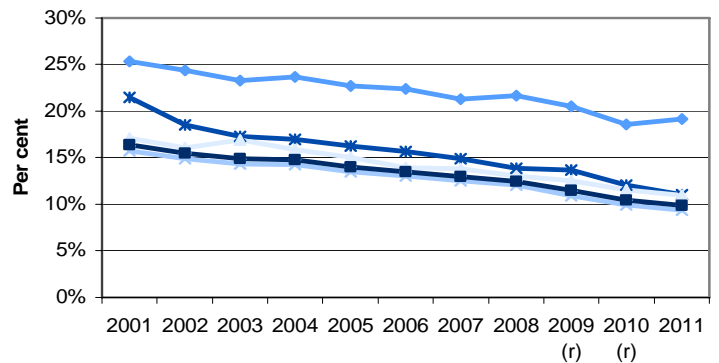
**Chart 23. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by UK country and region, 2011**



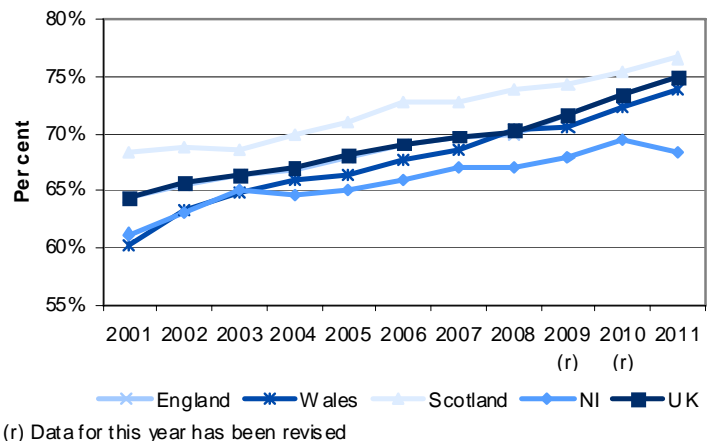
**Chart 24. Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2, by UK country and region, 2011**



**Chart 25. Proportion of working age adults with no qualifications, by UK country, 2001-2011**



**Chart 26. Proportion of working age adults with at least level 2 qualifications, by UK country, 2001-2011**



(r) Data for this year has been revised



**Table 1: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, 2011 (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+
<b>By gender</b>							
Males	11	15	22	<b>74</b>	23	23	<b>29</b>
Females	11	15	21	<b>74</b>	19	27	<b>34</b>
Persons	11	15	21	<b>74</b>	21	25	<b>32</b>
<b>By age</b>							
18-24	7	16	22	<b>77</b>	34	19	<b>21</b>
25-34	8	12	20	<b>80</b>	21	30	<b>39</b>
35-49	10	17	22	<b>73</b>	17	26	<b>34</b>
50-59	17	15	22	<b>69</b>	17	23	<b>30</b>
60-64 (males only)	20	12	22	<b>69</b>	21	18	<b>26</b>
<b>By ethnic origin (b)</b>							
White	11	15	22	<b>74</b>	21	24	<b>31</b>
Non-white	12	14	13	<b>74</b>	14	39	<b>47</b>
<b>By disability status</b>							
Disabled	21	19	21	<b>60</b>	17	18	<b>22</b>
Not disabled	8	14	22	<b>78</b>	22	27	<b>35</b>
<b>By economic activity and main job (b)</b>							
In employment	7	14	22	<b>79</b>	20	28	<b>37</b>
of which:							
Managers, Directors & senior officials	5	9	19	<b>85</b>	20	36	<b>46</b>
Professional occupations	0	2	5	<b>98</b>	7	56	<b>86</b>
Associate professional & technical	2	8	19	<b>90</b>	19	42	<b>52</b>
Administrative & secretarial	4	16	29	<b>80</b>	23	25	<b>29</b>
Skilled Trades occupations	8	16	27	<b>76</b>	35	13	<b>14</b>
Caring, Leisure & other service occupati	4	12	27	<b>83</b>	32	22	<b>24</b>
Sales and Customer Service occupations	11	20	29	<b>68</b>	22	15	<b>17</b>
Process, plant & machine operatives	13	31	31	<b>55</b>	16	7	<b>8</b>
Elementary occupations	19	27	28	<b>54</b>	17	8	<b>9</b>
ILO unemployed or economically inactive	26	20	22	<b>55</b>	14	15	<b>18</b>

Source: Annual Population Survey 2011

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

(b) Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2010, therefore not directly comparable with data for previous years on a SOC2000 basis.

Excludes persons in full-time education.

Data for 2001-2011 are available on the Welsh Government interactive website [StatsWales](http://StatsWales)

**Table 2: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, by local authority, 2011 (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	12	14	26	<b>75</b>	20	23	<b>29</b>
Gwynedd	10	13	25	<b>77</b>	20	25	<b>31</b>
Conwy	11	13	25	<b>76</b>	19	24	<b>32</b>
Denbighshire	9	18	25	<b>74</b>	20	23	<b>29</b>
Flintshire	8	15	23	<b>77</b>	23	24	<b>31</b>
Wrexham	12	16	21	<b>72</b>	20	25	<b>31</b>
Powys	9	17	20	<b>73</b>	20	27	<b>34</b>
Ceredigion	8	11	18	<b>80</b>	27	26	<b>35</b>
Pembrokeshire	12	15	24	<b>73</b>	25	20	<b>25</b>
Carmarthenshire	13	15	20	<b>72</b>	19	25	<b>33</b>
Swansea	12	13	19	<b>75</b>	24	25	<b>33</b>
Neath Port Talbot	14	22	22	<b>64</b>	20	19	<b>22</b>
Bridgend	9	17	21	<b>74</b>	22	25	<b>30</b>
The Vale of Glamorgan	8	12	19	<b>80</b>	22	29	<b>38</b>
Cardiff	8	12	17	<b>80</b>	20	31	<b>42</b>
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13	15	24	<b>72</b>	19	22	<b>28</b>
Merthyr Tydfil	19	18	23	<b>63</b>	17	19	<b>22</b>
Caerphilly	16	17	24	<b>67</b>	20	18	<b>23</b>
Blaenau Gwent	14	21	27	<b>65</b>	20	15	<b>18</b>
Torfaen	12	19	25	<b>69</b>	20	20	<b>24</b>
Monmouthshire	8	12	20	<b>80</b>	20	28	<b>39</b>
Newport	11	16	19	<b>73</b>	20	27	<b>33</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>

Source: Annual Population Survey 2011

(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, 2011 (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	9	16	20	<b>75</b>	20	27	<b>35</b>
North East	11	15	23	<b>74</b>	22	23	<b>28</b>
North West	11	16	22	<b>74</b>	21	24	<b>31</b>
Yorkshire & Humberside	11	17	22	<b>72</b>	21	23	<b>30</b>
East Midlands	10	16	21	<b>74</b>	22	24	<b>31</b>
West Midlands	13	17	22	<b>70</b>	20	23	<b>29</b>
Eastern	8	17	22	<b>74</b>	21	24	<b>31</b>
London	9	13	14	<b>78</b>	15	37	<b>49</b>
South East	7	15	18	<b>78</b>	21	30	<b>39</b>
South West	7	15	21	<b>78</b>	21	28	<b>35</b>
Wales	11	15	21	<b>74</b>	21	25	<b>32</b>
Scotland	11	12	18	<b>77</b>	18	33	<b>40</b>
Northern Ireland	19	12	22	<b>68</b>	19	21	<b>28</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: Annual Population Survey 2011

(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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Cartographics ML/57/12.13 (Nov 2012)

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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Cartographics ML/57/12.13 (Nov 2012)

## 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 are included within the *Programme for Government* indicator set in the context of Tackling Poverty.

*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. All targets were achieved.

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

### 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 2004-2011, 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 2011 and were first published at the end of June 2012.

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. In time this bulletin will reflect this new definition but has been left unchanged currently in order to maintain a historical back series. (Estimates on the new basis would only be available from 2008 onwards).

### 3. Revisions

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

The ONS has reweighted the APS data for 2009 and 2010, therefore estimates for these years 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/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html>

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 less than 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 possible<sup>1</sup>, for some categories the respondents are distributed into levels using proportions that have been fixed for many years. This is currently true for 'Other' qualifications, Trade Apprenticeships, Scottish CSYS qualifications and SCE Highers or equivalent. These qualifications account for 10.8 per cent of responses, mainly consisting of Trade Apprenticeships (4.5 per cent) and 'Other' qualifications (6.3 per cent). 'Other' qualifications are apportioned across NQF levels Below Level 2, Level 2 and Level 3 in the ratio 55:35:10; Trade apprenticeships are apportioned across Level 2 and Level 3 in the ratio 50:50 and Scottish CSYS qualifications are apportioned across Level 2 and Level 3 in the ratio 33:67. This is a long standing calculation based on detailed analysis of qualifications from the General Household Survey. SCE Highers are apportioned across Level 2 and Level 3 in the ratio 37:63 based on data from previous years. The aim had been to reconsider these ratios for this analysis of the 2011 data, however this has not been possible and will therefore be reviewed in the future.

## Coherence

The figures may differ to those published from statistical publications by other government departments due to a slight difference in source and/or methodologies for deriving levels of qualifications. Also other tables may be based on all persons of working age (16-64) whilst this Bulletin is restricted to those aged 18-59/64 (*adults* of working age).

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills have developed an enhanced method of producing qualification estimates from the Labour Force Survey, including the use of administrative records to improve the quality of the attainment data recorded on the LFS and imputation of qualification levels for those with unknown qualifications. Details can be found on the Data Service website here <http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/methodology/>

Data derived from the decennial Census of Population on highest qualifications tend to underestimate the levels of qualifications held, due in part to a different mode of carrying out the survey (self-reported compared with interview based) and a simplified question. However these data can be used for producing small-area analysis or detailed cross-tabulations that may not be possible due to the sample sizes involved in the LLFS/APS. Data for 2011 on qualifications will begin to be published by the Office for National Statistics in December 2012 (local authority data) and will be available through this link <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html>

## Changes to LFS qualification questions

Significant changes were made to the LFS Education section in January 2011 after a full Education and Training review had been completed in partnership between ONS and BIS. The aim of the review and re-design of the education section was to improve the collection of education data and update the questions to reflect recent changes to the UK education landscape. This included extending the list of qualifications to reflect the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and new questions to allow more accurate classification of foreign or other qualifications into levels.

## 5. Qualifications used in the Labour Force Survey and their National Qualification Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (NQF EWNI) levels <sup>2</sup>

Below is a list of the qualifications specifically included in the Labour Force Survey questionnaire and provides details of the NQF EWNI level to which they have been assigned for the purposes of statistical analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> Please note the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework has different levels



Data have previously been presented as NVQ equivalencies. The NQF EWNI has nine levels; Entry Level followed by Level 1 to Level 8. In Wales the NQF EWNI forms part of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales; a meta framework which also includes all Higher Level learning within the University Sector and Quality Assured Lifelong Learning.

Further information about the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales can be found [here](#).

### **NQF Levels 7-8 (previously NVQ level 5 or equivalent)**

Higher degree  
NVQ level 5  
Level 8 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 8 Certificate <sup>3</sup>  
Level 7 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 7 Certificate <sup>3</sup>  
Level 8 Award <sup>3</sup>

### **NQF Levels 4-6 (previously NVQ level 4 or equivalent)**

First degree/Foundation degree  
Other degree  
NVQ level 4  
Level 6 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 6 Certificate <sup>3</sup>  
Level 7 Award <sup>3</sup>  
Diploma in higher education  
Level 5 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 5 Certificate <sup>3</sup>  
Level 6 Award <sup>3</sup>  
HNC, HND, BTEC higher etc.  
Teaching (further, secondary and primary education, foundation stage<sup>1</sup> and level not stated)  
Nursing etc.  
RSA higher diploma  
Other higher education qualification below degree level  
Level 4 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 4 Certificate <sup>3</sup>

### **NQF Level 3 (previously NVQ level 3 or equivalent)**

Level 5 award <sup>3</sup>  
NVQ level 3  
Advanced/Progression (14-19) Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Level 3 Diploma <sup>3</sup>  
Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate<sup>1</sup>  
International Baccalaureate<sup>1</sup>  
GNVQ/GSVQ Advanced  
2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels or equivalent  
RSA advanced diploma  
OND, ONC, BTEC, SCOTVEC national etc.  
City and Guilds advanced craft/Part 1  
Scottish 6 Year Certificate/CSYS (67%)  
3 or more SCE higher or equivalent  
Access to HE qualifications<sup>1</sup>  
Trade apprenticeship (50%)  
Other qualifications (10%)

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<sup>1</sup> These qualifications were added to the list included on the LFS questionnaire in either 2004 or 2005. This will slightly improve the estimates, as they may previously have been incorporated in "Other qualifications" or left out altogether by a respondent. 17

Level 3 Certificate <sup>3</sup>

**NQF Level 2 (previously NVQ level 2 or equivalent)**

Level 4 Award <sup>3</sup>

NVQ level 2

Intermediate Welsh Baccalaureate<sup>1</sup>

1 A level, or 2/3 AS levels, or equivalent

Trade apprenticeship (50%)

GNVQ/GSVQ intermediate

RSA diploma

City and Guilds craft/Part 2

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma

Higher (14-19) Diploma <sup>3</sup>

Level 2 Diploma <sup>3</sup>

5+ O levels, GCSE grade A\*-C, CSE grade 1 or equivalent

Scottish 6 Year Certificate CSYS (33%)

1 or 2 SCE higher or equivalent

Other qualifications (35%)

Level 2 Certificate <sup>3</sup>

Level 3 Award <sup>3</sup>

**Below NQF Level 2 (previously NVQ level 1 or equivalent)**

NVQ level 1

Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate<sup>2</sup>

GNVQ, GSVQ foundation level

Foundation (14-19) diploma <sup>3</sup>

Level 1 Diploma <sup>3</sup>

Up to 4 O levels, GCSE grade A\*-C, CSE grade 1 or equivalent

GCSE below grade C, CSE below grade 1

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general certificate

SCOTVEC modules

RSA other

City and Guilds foundation/part 1

Level 1 Certificate

Level 2 Award

YT, YTP certificate

Key skills qualification<sup>1</sup>

Basic skills qualification<sup>1</sup>

Entry level qualification<sup>1</sup>

Entry level Diploma <sup>3</sup>

Entry level Certificate <sup>3</sup>

Level 1 Award <sup>3</sup>

Entry level award

Other qualifications (55%)

The percentages in brackets denote that a qualification is split across levels when calculating the number of persons with that qualification. This is done for those qualifications where the LFS does not collect sufficient information to allow a more accurate breakdown of the qualification.

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<sup>2</sup> This qualification was added to the list included on the LFS questionnaire in 2008

<sup>3</sup> This qualification was added to the list included on the LFS questionnaire in 2011