

# Progression into Higher Education among Somerset learners



Leading learning and skills

15 September 2005

## Key Points

- The **number of Somerset learners** (i.e. previous school/ college based in Somerset) progressing onto HE programmes has **gradually increased** over the last three years from 2,577 to 2,700.
- Approximately 82% of all Somerset applicants are successful in their application to UCAS, whilst a fifth of applicants (18%) were not successfully accepted through UCAS onto HE programmes. These figures are consistent across time. **Comparing the acceptance rates in Somerset for the independent, FE and sixth form schools sectors with those calculated for other available local authority areas, FE colleges in Somerset appear to have a much higher acceptance rate.** Acceptance rates in the independent and sixth form school sectors in Somerset are lower compared to other LSC areas.
- The largest proportion of accepted applicants were resident in South Somerset district, followed by Mendip and Taunton Deane districts. **Mendip shows a consistent growth in the number of successful applicants over the three year period.**
- According to HEFCE (2005) the current progression rate in Somerset is approximately 31% for 18-19 year olds. The figures in this report show that the progression rate varies across wards, but some wards have up to 50% progression rate.
- There are roughly equal numbers of male and female applicants progressing onto HE across the three-year period (Table 4) although **the number of female 'progressors' is marginally but consistently higher. However, the number of males accepted onto HE programmes increased gradually over the three year period.** Furthermore, male applicants are *marginally* more likely than female applicants to succeed in converting their applications to accepted offers. Taken together, this information indicates that the HE participation rate among males in Somerset is gradually improving to a similar level to that of females – contrary to their poorer performance in compulsory and further education.
- **Applicants in the 17-19 age group appear to be more successful in their applications (84% progression) compared to older age groups.**
- **A large proportion of accepted applicants were from the more professional socio-economic backgrounds.** Over 60% of students fall into the highest three socio-economic bands, particularly the higher managerial/ professional and the lower managerial/ professional occupational groups.
- Given the government agenda to increase participation in HE, particularly targeting those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, growth in participation among the lower socio-economic classes might be expected. The current analysis does not appear to show any noticeable trends associated with specific socio-economic classes – although it may be worthwhile to monitor this data over the next few years as the impact of the government's agenda may need some time to take effect.

- Approximately 10-11% of all successful applicants come from the sixth form school sector. The number of students progressing to HE associated with the independent sector is approximately 20%. **The FE sector (which includes LSC-funded colleges and sixth form colleges) generates approximately 40-46% of all UCAS applicants in the county.**
- Somerset has observed a gradual growth in numbers progressing on to HE over the three year period, particularly between 2003 and 2004. **Richard Huish College is associated with a slightly higher rate of success in converting student applications to accepted offers compared to other post-16 establishments.**
- Several Previous Educational Establishments (PEEs) exhibited considerable growth in numbers over the three year period. The majority of the previous educational establishments experiencing growth are located in Mendip.
- **Approximately 89% of those studying for A-levels in Somerset go on to study HE.** This figure remains fairly static over the three year period.
- The number of students with BTEC HND/ HNC qualifications applying to UCAS has fallen although the number of students with BTEC NC/ND qualifications has grown slightly. The number of students with access qualifications have fallen during the three-year period.
- Approximately **93% of successful applicants go on to study a degree course and 7% study an HND (or equivalent) course.**
- There has been a **consistent and gradual increase in the number of UCAS Tariff points achieved by Somerset students over the three years reflecting improved performance at FE level.**
- The subjects studied by the **highest proportion of Somerset students** are: **Biological sciences; Business administration studies; Creative arts and design.**
- The **least popular subjects include: Non-European languages, European languages, literature and related studies, Technologies, and Architecture, building and planning.**
- The relatively low **number of students studying foreign languages (particularly non-European languages) reflects a national trend** although this may be a concern given the recent significant economic growth in countries such as China and Asia as well as the positive impact of the internet on international trade and export activity.
- The number of students taking **construction-specific provision** at HE level (i.e. architecture, building and planning subjects) is low and remains relatively static over the three-year period. It may be useful to **track participation associated with architecture, building and planning subjects over the next few years to determine whether there is any increase in participation, responding to the demand for more graduates currently being expressed by the construction industry.**
- There is a **gradual but consistent fall in the number of people in Somerset applying for engineering-based subjects**, from 5.5% of all applicants in 2002 to 4.7% in 2004. This may be important to monitor given that engineering is another priority sector for Somerset.

- The **majority of Somerset applicants are going on to study higher education at an institution that is relatively local**. Institutions from the South West (both universities and colleges) and Wales attract over 50% of Somerset applicants. Furthermore, it is only in these areas that a gradual but consistent growth in numbers is observed over the three year period. Approximately two thirds of all applicants choose to study at an institution less than 100 miles from home. Taken together, this data indicates that **students are increasingly choosing to study closer to home**.
- Overall, the figures show that **a large proportion of accepted applicants were from more professional socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, students from higher socio-economic classes are more likely to travel further afield** to study higher education (i.e. outside of the South West). Meanwhile, students from the lower socio-economic classes are more likely to remain in the South West and travel less far to their chosen HE institution.
- More Somerset students choose to study **Education, Mathematical and computer sciences** or **Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects** within the region rather than outside of the region. Relatively high numbers of students also study **Business and administration studies** and **creative arts and design** within the South West region.
- Subjects that students appear more likely to leave the region to study include **Medicine and dentistry, Non-European languages and related studies, Linguistics, classics and related studies**, and **Historical and philosophical studies. Physical sciences, Engineering** and **Law** are also among those subjects that Somerset applicants seem to be more likely to study further away from home.
- The independent sector generates the highest proportion of **Medicine and dentistry** applicants, **Engineering** applicants, **Social sciences** applicants and **Linguistics, classics and related studies** applicants compared with other PEE sectors. A very small proportion of students in the independent sector go on to apply for **Mass communications and documentation**-related HE subjects (0.3%). Similarly, relatively low numbers of students in the independent sector go on to study **Education** at HE (0.9%) whereas the FE college sector generates a relatively high proportion of students who apply to study **Education**.
- A high proportion of students within the sixth form school (7.4%) and sixth form college (6.7%) sectors go on to apply for **Physical sciences**-related subjects, relative to other PEE sectors (the FE college sector has a relatively low proportion of its students go on to study physical sciences-based subjects – 3.7%).
- The FE college sector has the highest proportion of **Mathematical and computer science** applicants (9.2%) compared to other sectors.
- The FE college sector in Somerset has a considerably higher proportion of students applying for **Creative arts and design** HE programmes (21.8%) compared to all other sectors – much of this will be at Somerset College of Arts and Technology. In terms of growth, programmes related to creative arts and design appear to be increasingly popular, the proportion of applicants growing from 12.5% in 2002 to 13.9% by 2004.
- Information stored by **UCAS does not allow insight into the pattern of progression for those taking the work-based learning route**. Currently, UCAS record details of prior achievement for specific qualifications including Access qualifications, GNVQs, BTEC/HND/HNCs, BTEC NC/HD and foundation qualifications<sup>1</sup>. However, **apprenticeships, NVQs and other WBL qualifications are not coded specifically**. The LSC need to lobby for more data specific to WBL qualifications to be coded on UCAS applications.

# Contents

Introduction.....	5
Key Findings.....	5
Participation by geography.....	5
Demographic profile of applicants.....	17
Previous educational Establishment.....	22
Prior achievement.....	27
Higher Education choices.....	29
Issues for consideration.....	38
Appendices.....	40

## Introduction

- 1 This report has been prepared by the Learning and Skills Council Somerset to review local trends in progression to higher education (HE) across the various education sectors (independent schools, FE colleges, school sixth forms) and to establish baseline activity which will inform the local LSC annual planning process.
- 2 The data used in the analyses has been supplied by UCAS<sup>1</sup> and enabled analysis of progression activity across three consecutive years (2002, 2003, and 2004) for:
  - a *Somerset learners* (i.e. those who studied at a further education establishment in Somerset but may or may not have lived in Somerset); and
  - b *Somerset residents* (i.e. those who lived in Somerset whilst studying at a further education establishment which may or may not be in Somerset).

For the purposes of this report, Somerset learners and Somerset residents will be referred to collectively as *Somerset applicants*.
- 3 Specific objectives of this project were to:
  - a identify the number and characteristics of Somerset applicants who progress to HE (i.e. accepted UCAS applicants) and comment on trends over time;
  - b compare the profiles of accepted and not accepted UCAS applicants;
  - c review HE progression by geography (i.e. by ward and by district);
  - d identify what Somerset applicants are going on to study in Higher Education (i.e. course type and subject);
  - e establish where applicants choose to study HE (i.e. which region).

## Key Findings

### Participation by geography

- 4 The number of Somerset UCAS applicants (all ages), that were accepted onto HE programmes over three consecutive years (2002, 2003, 2004) is displayed in Table 1. The figures show that the number of Somerset *learners* (i.e. previous school/ college was based in Somerset) progressing onto HE programmes has increased over the three years from 2,577 to 2,700. The number of applicants living in Somerset but whose previous school/ college was located outside of the county has fluctuated over the same period, with no specific trend.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for more details of the UCAS dataset.

Table 1: Total number of Somerset applicants accepted through UCAS onto an HE programme, by year 2002-2004 (broken down by residents and learners)

Location of previous school/ college	Year			Total
	2002	2003	2004	
In Somerset (Somerset Learners)	2577	2611	2700	7888
Outside of Somerset (Somerset Residents)	349	303	367	1019
Not coded	430	410	386	1226
Total	3356	3324	3453	10133

- 5 Comparing the number of accepted and not accepted applicants (Table 2) shows that approximately **82% of all Somerset applicants were successful** in their application to UCAS, **whilst a fifth of applicants (18%) were not** successfully accepted through UCAS onto HE programmes. These figures are consistent across time.

Table 2: Total number and proportion of accepted and not accepted Somerset HE applicants (2002-2004)

	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Accepted							
Yes	3356	82.5	3324	81.7	3453	82.2	10133
No	712	17.5	747	18.3	748	17.8	2207
Total	4068	100	4071	100	4201	100	12340

- 6 The **largest proportion** of accepted applicants were resident in **South Somerset district, followed by Mendip and Taunton Deane districts** (Table 3). West Somerset district has the lowest number of accepted applicants, which is not unexpected given its relatively low population. Looking at trends over the three years, it is interesting to note that only **Mendip shows a consistent growth in the number of successful applicants over the three years. The remaining four districts** have numbers that fluctuate over this time period. The growth associated with Mendip is likely to be associated with the observed expansion of various post-16 educational establishments ('Previous Educational Establishments') in the district over recent years.

Table 3: Number of people progressing onto university based on their home district (accepted only)

Year	Home District						Total
	Taunton Deane	South Somerset	Mendip	Sedgemoor	West Somerset	Other District	
2002	622	758	587	576	167	646	3356
2003	611	772	618	538	144	641	3324
2004	667	731	698	601	147	609	3453
Total	1900	2261	1903	1715	458	1896	10133

- 7 Figures 1-3 show the *proportion* of 17-19 year olds within a given ward in Somerset that were accepted through UCAS on to HE programmes. That is, based on the ward population (Census 2001) for this age band, the percentage of young people accepted onto HE programmes<sup>2</sup>. According to HEFCE (2005) the current progression rate in Somerset is approximately 31% for 18-19 year olds. The figures below show that the progression rate varies across wards, but some wards have **up to 50% progression rate** (Figure 2, 2003). Looking at ward participation across the three years, there are some broad trends in progression. In particular, certain wards are associated with consistently **high progression rate** including wards around the **southern part of Taunton Deane** and **several wards in Mendip** and in the **northern parts of Sedgemoor** district. **Participation is lowest** in wards in **West Somerset**, **parts of Sedgemoor** and **certain wards within the main urban centres**.
- 8 Figures 4-6 and 7-9 show the *number* of 20-24 year olds and 25+ year olds over a three year period who were accepted onto HE programmes as a proportion of the ward population for these age bands. Whilst figures are much lower than the younger age band, looking at the patterns in progression activity among the 20-24 year olds reveals that progression to HE is highest in Taunton Deane and parts of Sedgemoor (including Bridgwater) but relatively low in West Somerset, much of Mendip and the Chard area of South Somerset. Participation among the 25+ age band is also relatively low but participation is most concentrated around the main towns.

<sup>2</sup> These figures will be an underestimate as the ward population includes all 17-19 year olds, whereas the majority of the applicants will be 18-19 year olds.

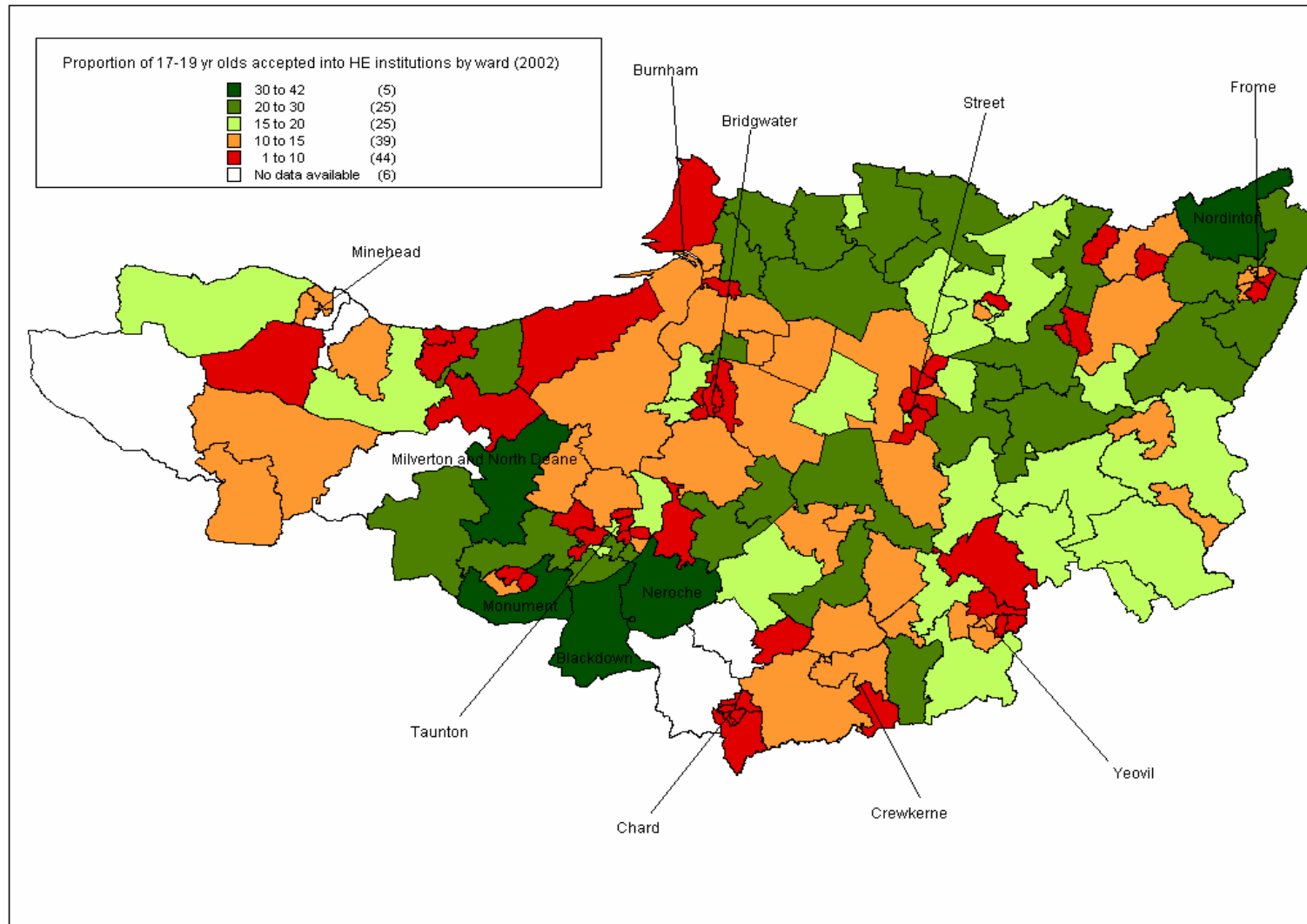


Figure 1: Proportion of 17-19 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2002)



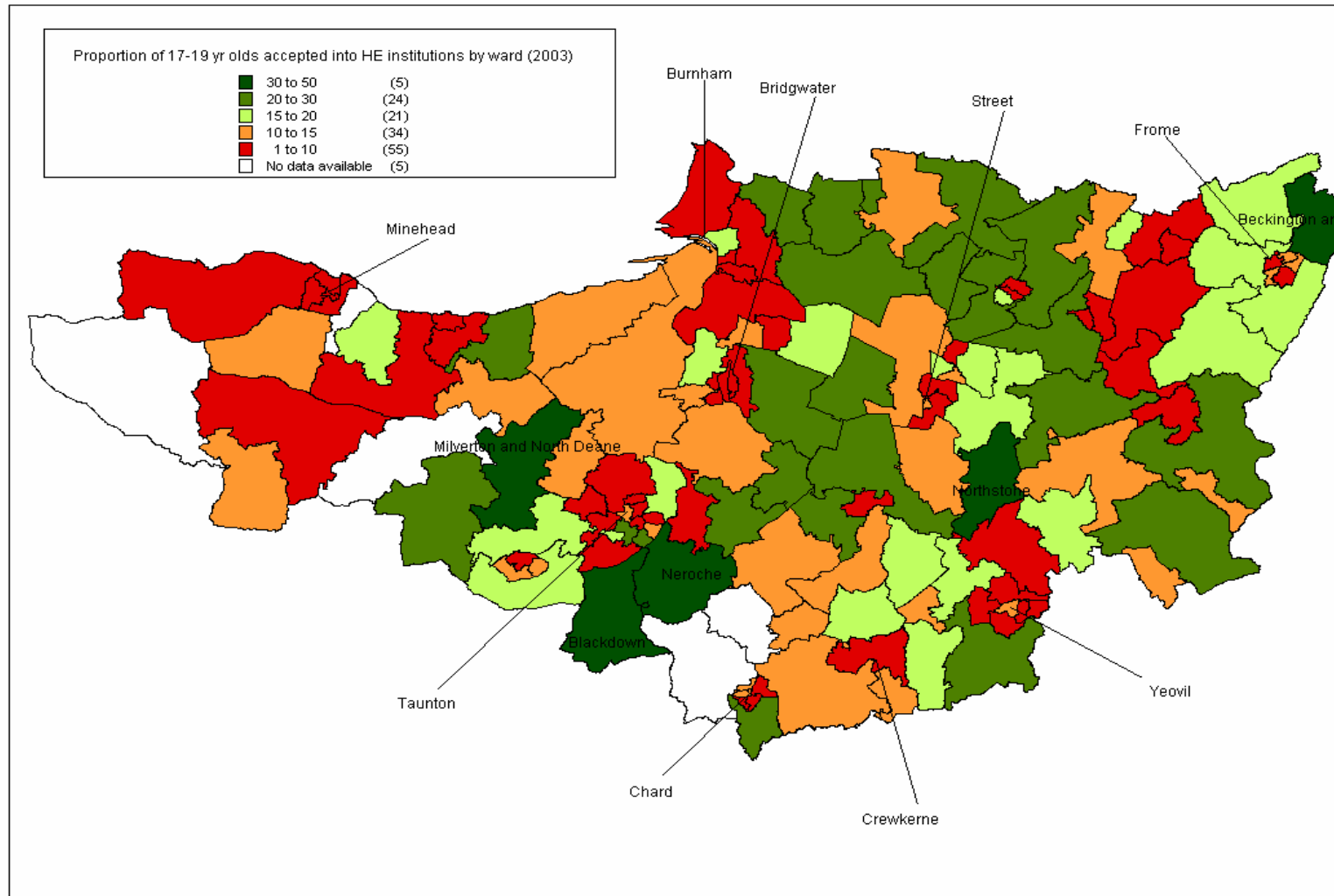


Figure 2: Proportion of 17-19 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2003)

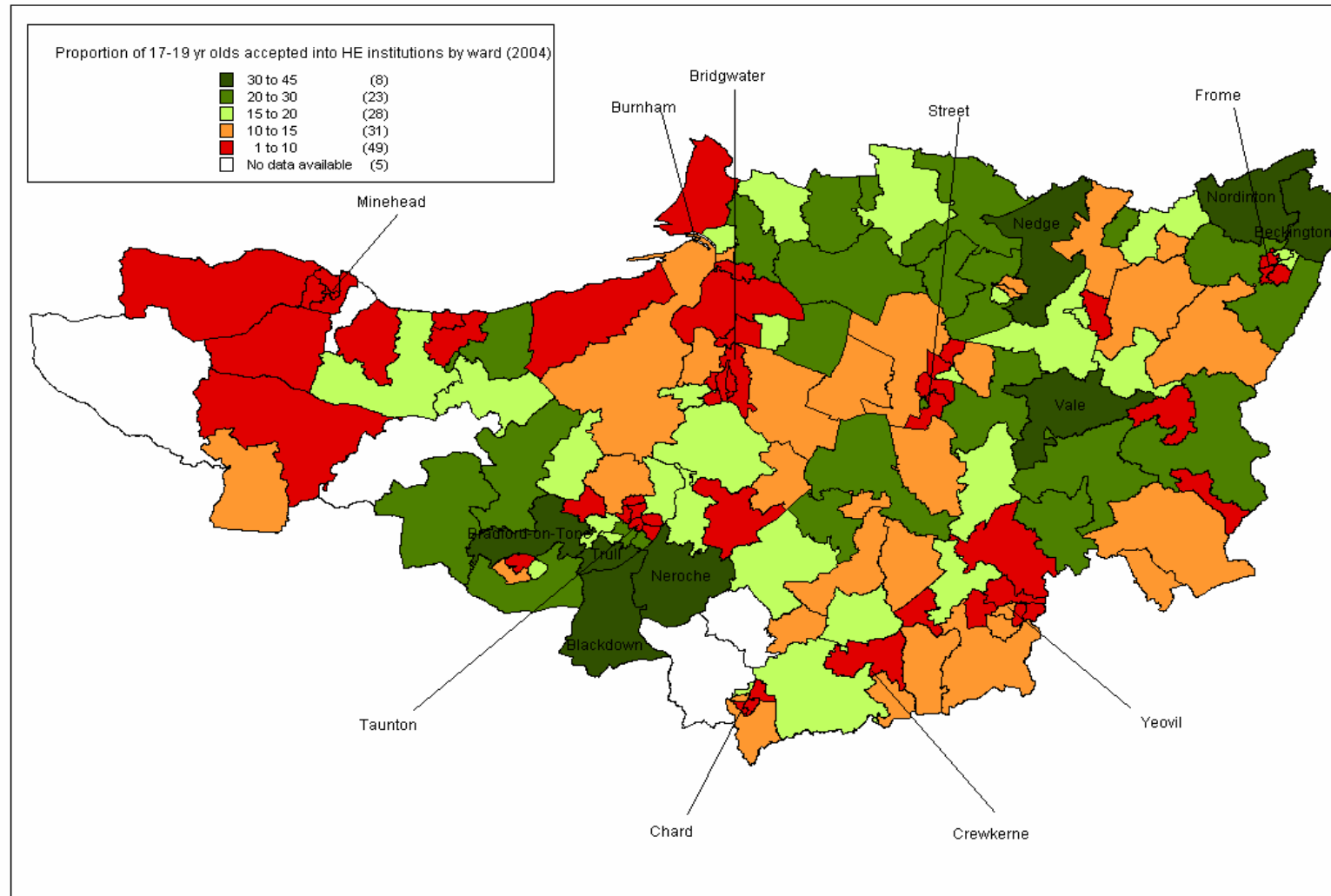


Figure 3: Proportion of 17-19 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2004)

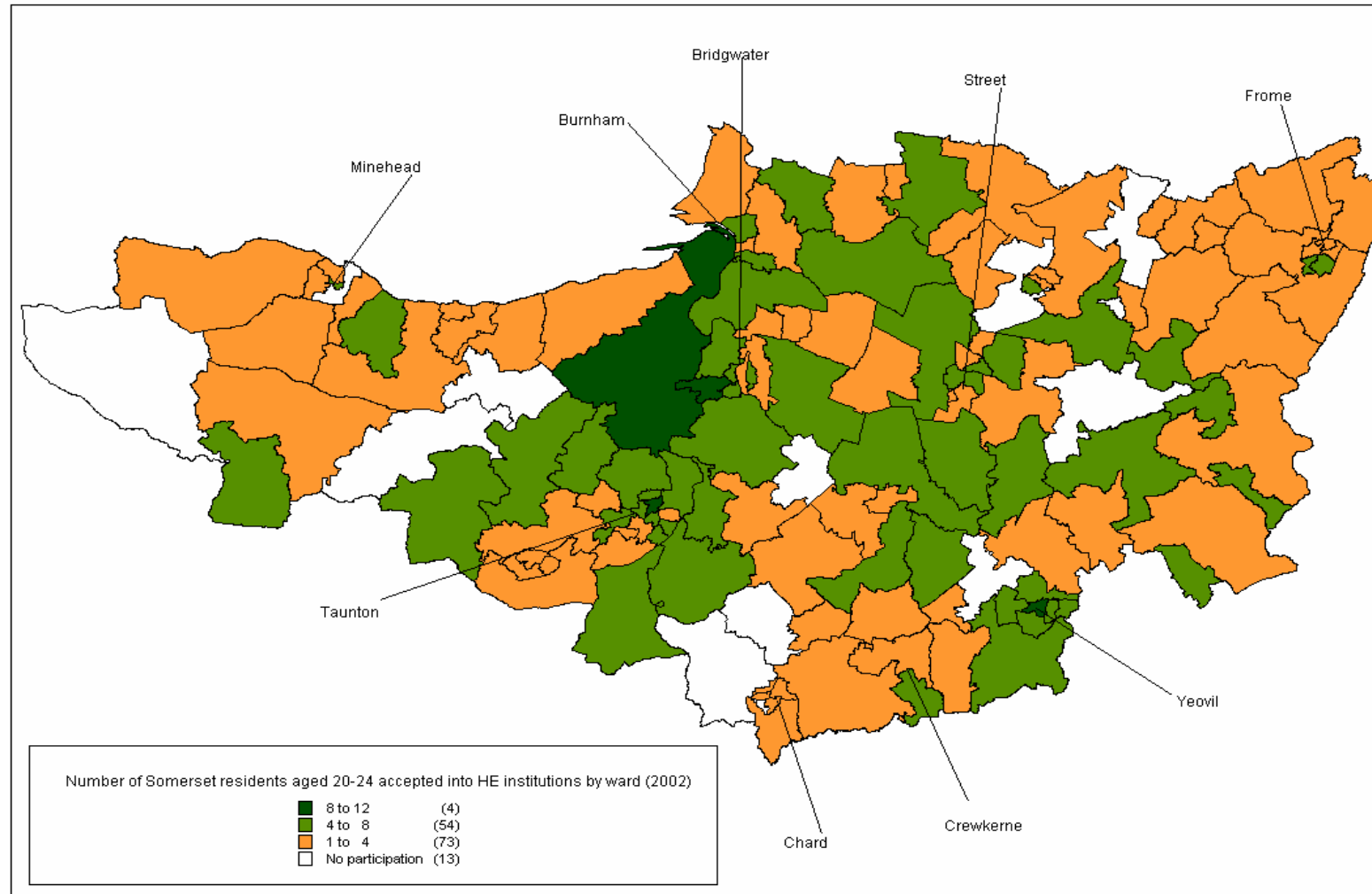


Figure 4: Number of 20-24 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2002)

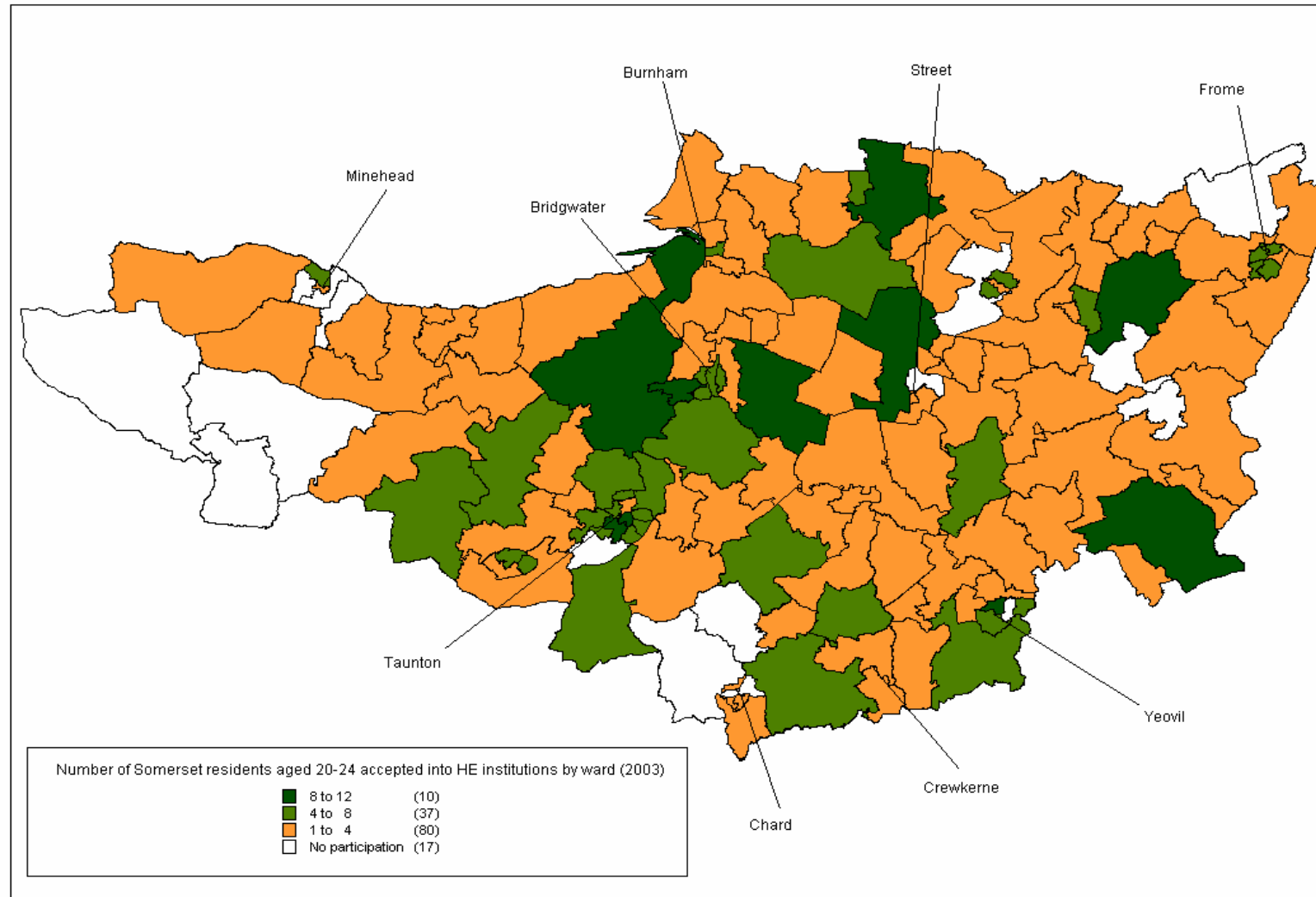


Figure 5: Number of 20-24 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2003)

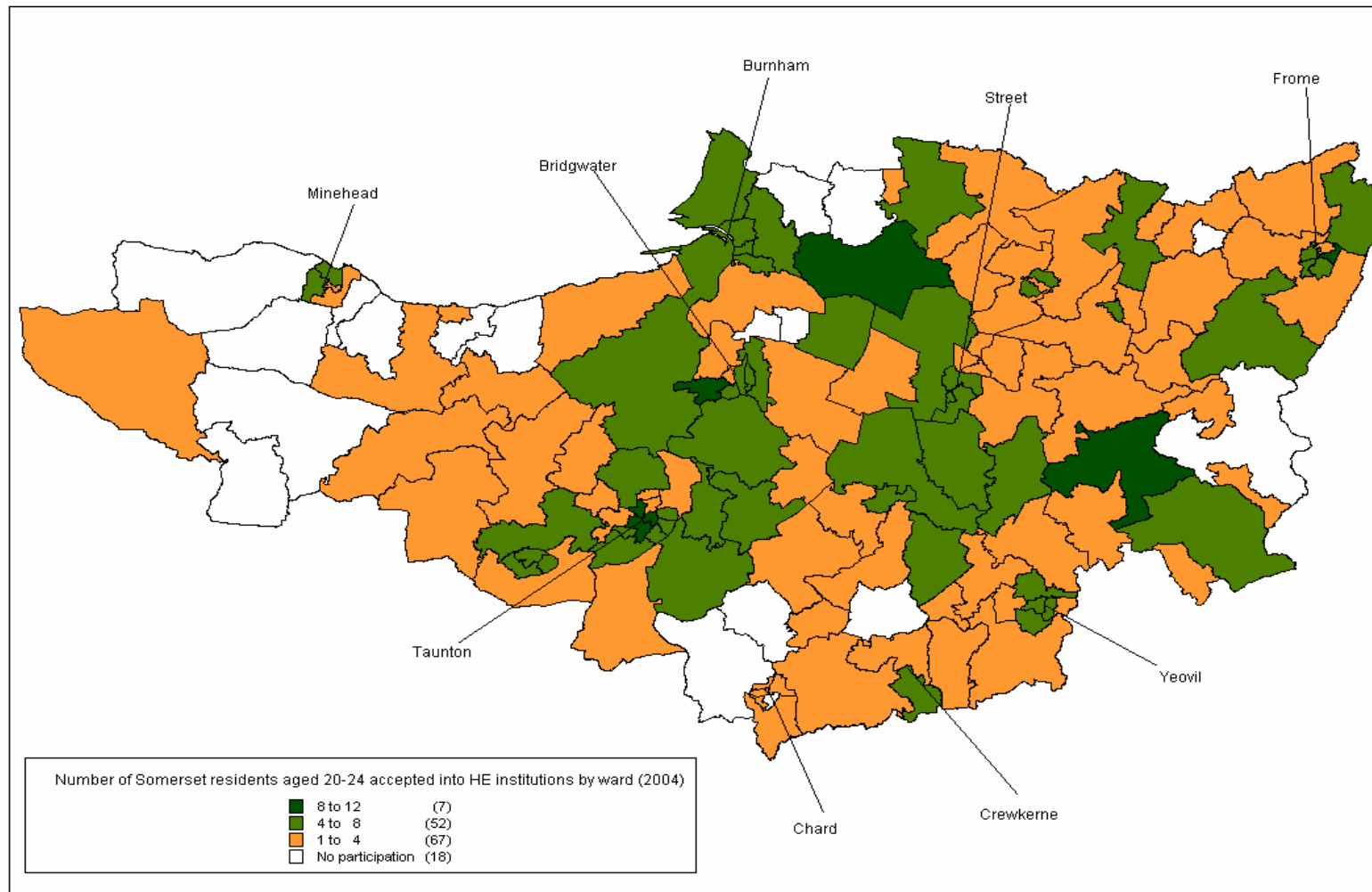


Figure 6: Number of 20-24 year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2004)

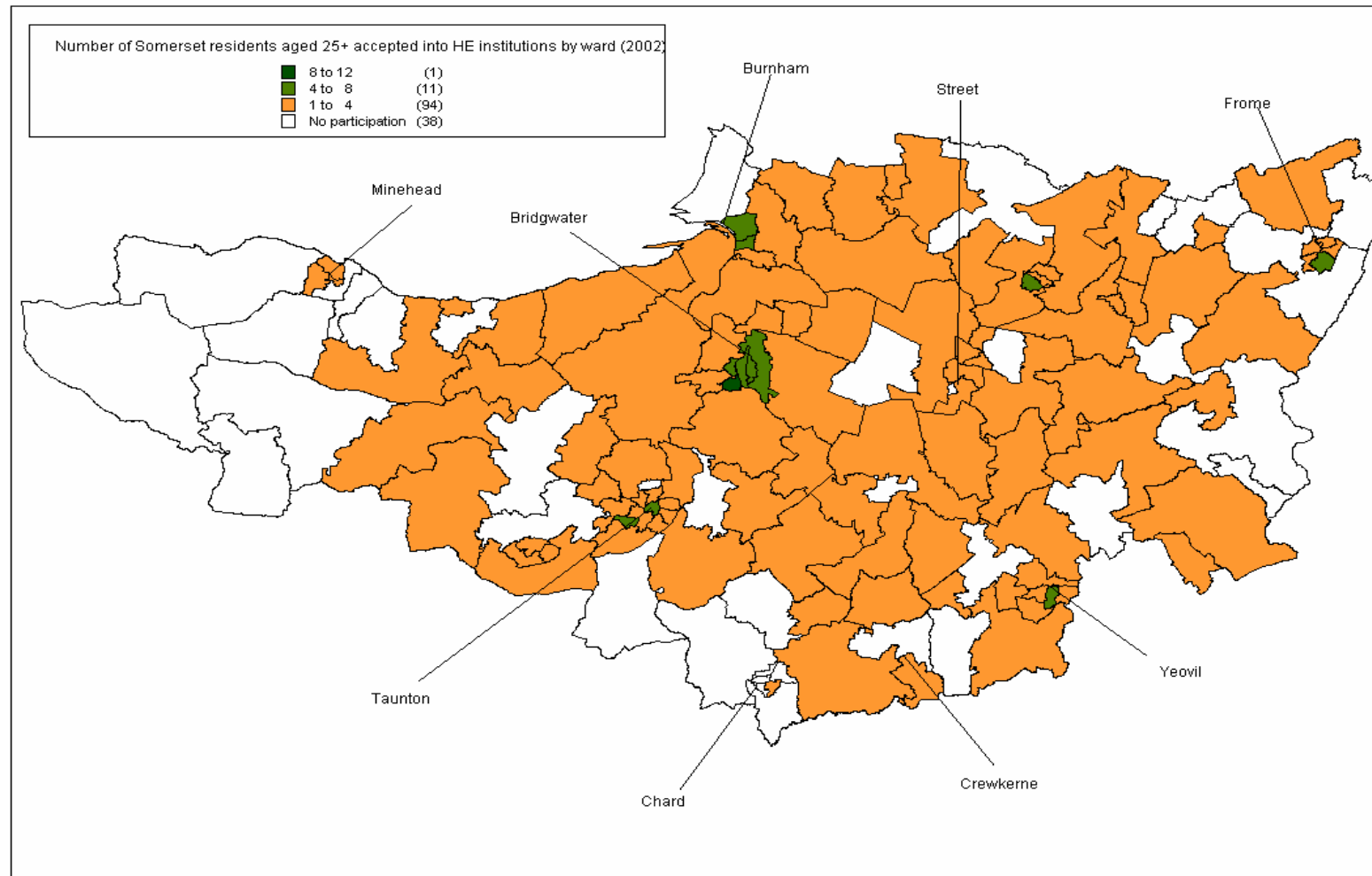


Figure 7: Number of 25+ year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2002)

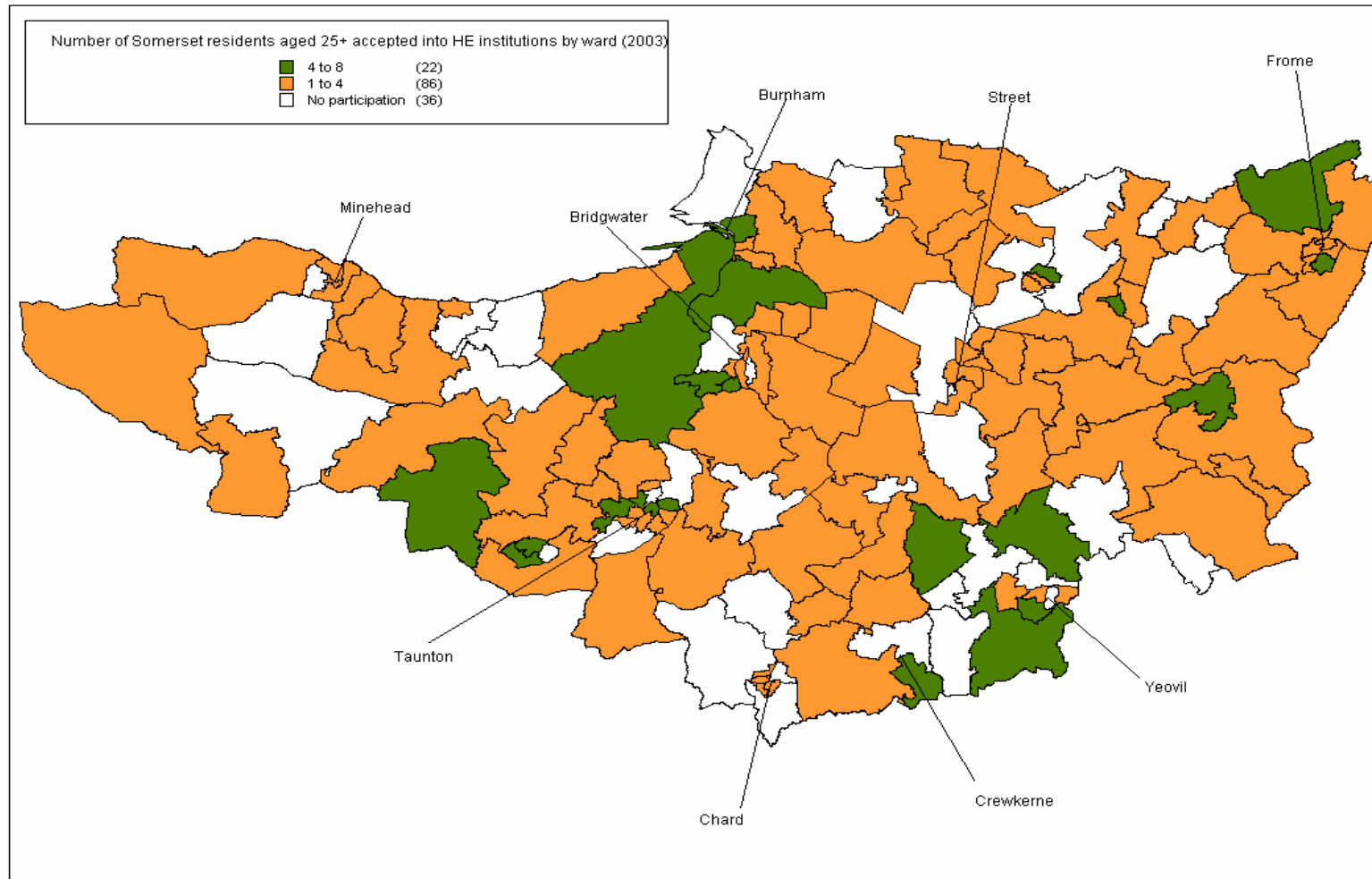


Figure 8: Number of 25+ year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2003)

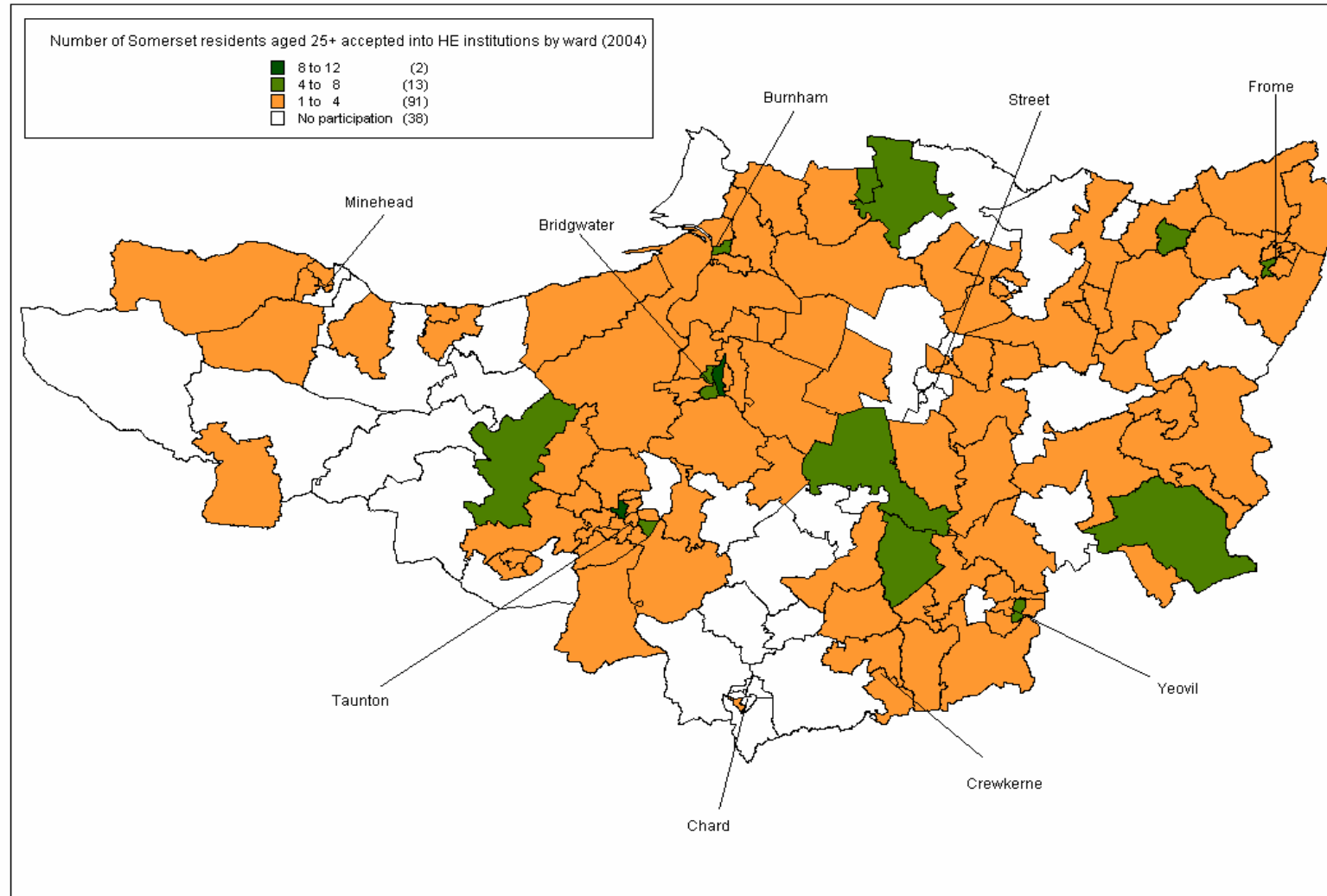


Figure 9: Number of 25+ year olds accepted into HE institutions by ward (2004)



## Demographic profile of applicants

- 9 In terms of the demographic profile of applicants, there were roughly equal numbers of male and female applicants progressing onto HE across the three-year period (Table 4) although the number of female 'progressors' is marginally but consistently higher. The number of males accepted onto HE programmes increased gradually over the three year period, whereas the number of female applicants fluctuated.
- 10 There appears to be **little difference between males and females** in terms of the proportion that were successful/ not successful in their applications (Table 5) **although the data shows that male applicants to HE programmes are marginally more likely than female applicants to succeed in converting their applications to accepted offers**. Taken together, Tables 4 and 5 may indicate that the HE participation rate among **males in Somerset is gradually improving to a level that is similar to females** – contrary to their poorer performance in compulsory and further education.

Table 4: The gender profile of accepted Somerset applicants across a three-year period (2002-2004)

Year	Female		Male		Total
	N	%	N	%	
2002	1746	52.0	1610	48.0	3356
2003	1699	51.1	1625	48.9	3324
2004	1762	51.0	1691	49.0	3453
Total	5207	51.4	4926	48.6	10133

Table 5: Mean acceptance rate of male and female Somerset applicants (2002-2004 combined)

Applicants	Gender				Total
	Female		Male		
	N	%	N	%	
Accepted	5207	81.3	4926	83.0	10133
Not Accepted	1196	18.7	1011	17.0	2207
Total	6403	100.0	5937	100.0	12340

- 11 Tables 6 and 7 show the age profile of UCAS applicants in Somerset and indicates that the largest proportion of applicants are 18 or 19 years old (over 75% of total accepted applicants). The proportion of applicants in this age band remains relatively unchanged over the three year period (2002-2004). Applicants in this age group also appear to be **more successful in their applications (84% progression) compared to the 20-24 age group (80%) and the 25+ age group (71%)**.

Table 6: The age profile of accepted Somerset applicants across a three-year period (2002-2004)

Age	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Under 18	26	0.8	12	0.4	17	0.5	55
18	1680	50.1	1681	50.6	1785	51.7	5146
19	866	25.8	870	26.2	868	25.1	2604
20	250	7.4	246	7.4	289	8.4	785
21	103	3.1	127	3.8	123	3.6	353
22	91	2.7	50	1.5	50	1.4	191
23	60	1.8	50	1.5	36	1.0	146
24	26	0.8	27	0.8	30	0.9	83
25-29	87	2.6	72	2.2	90	2.6	249
30-39	107	3.2	118	3.5	93	2.7	318
40 and over	60	1.8	71	2.1	72	2.1	203
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133

Table 7: Mean acceptance rate of UCAS applicants in Somerset (2002-2004 combined) broken down by age band

Applicants	Age bandings						Total
	17-19 yr olds		20-24 yr olds		25+ yr olds		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Accepted	7805	83.6	1558	80.1	249	71.3	9612
Not Accepted	1529	16.4	388	19.9	100	28.7	2017
Total	9334	100.0	1946	100.0	349	100.0	11629*

\*711 data on age missing

- 12 Details of the ethnic background of applicants are displayed in Table 8. Numbers for some ethnic groups are low and therefore it is difficult to make firm judgements about progression rates. However, looking at the number of successful applications for the three years combined, the data indicates that the different ethnic groups vary slightly in terms of their acceptance rate onto HE programmes. The data tentatively indicates that Asian and mixed race applicants are associated with slightly lower than average acceptance rates. The average acceptance rate is approximately 82%.

Table 8: The ethnic profile\* of accepted and not accepted Somerset applicants\* across a three-year period (2002-2004)

Year	Ethnicity														
	White			Black			Asian			Mixed race			All Applicants		
	% Accepted	% Not accepted	Total N	% Accepted	% Not accepted	Total N	% Accepted	% Not accepted	Total N	% Accepted	% Not accepted	Total N	% Accepted	% Not accepted	Total N
2002	82.6	17.4	2943	100.0	0.0	3	80.6	19.4	31	89.2	10.8	37	82.7	17.3	3225
2003	81.5	18.5	2948	84.6	15.4	13	82.9	17.1	35	62.1	37.9	29	81.4	18.6	3246
2004	83.3	16.7	3106	85.7	14.3	7	75.0	25.0	24	83.9	16.1	31	83.1	16.9	3358
Total	82.5	<b>17.5</b>	8997	87.0	<b>13.0</b>	23	80.0	<b>20.0</b>	90	79.4	<b>20.6</b>	97	82.4	<b>17.6</b>	9829

\* care should be taken when making judgements where there are low numbers

\*\* UK residents only

- 13 Table 9 displays the socio-economic status of Somerset applicants who were successful in their applications between the years 2002-2004. Overall, the figures show that **a large proportion of accepted applicants were from more professional socio-economic backgrounds**. Over 60% of students fall into the highest three socio-economic bands, particularly the higher managerial/ professional and the lower managerial/ professional occupational groups. Table 9 also shows the location of the accepting HE institution against socio-economic status and reveals quite clearly that **students from higher socio-economic classes are more likely to travel further afield to study higher education (i.e. outside of the South West)**. Meanwhile, students from the lower socio-economic classes are more likely to remain in the South West and travel less far to their chosen HE institution.

Table 9: Socio-economic class of accepted Somerset applicants, against the location of the accepting HE institution.

Socio-economic Class <sup>3</sup>	Location of Accepting Institution					
	South West		Outside of the South West		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher managerial and professional occupations	658	15.5	1417	24.0	2075	20.5
Lower managerial and professional occupations	1023	24.1	1864	31.6	2887	28.5
Intermediate occupations	516	12.2	713	12.1	1229	12.1
Small employers and own account workers	355	8.4	427	7.2	782	7.7
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	174	4.1	204	3.5	378	3.7
Semi-routine occupations	494	11.7	460	7.8	954	9.4
Routine occupations	191	4.5	170	2.9	361	3.6
Unknown	827	19.5	640	10.9	1467	14.5
Total	4238	100.0	5895	100.0	10133	100.0

- 14 Table 11 shows the changes in the socio-economic profile of applicants across the three years (2002-2004) and allows growth in progression rates among specific classes to be observed. Given the government agenda to increase participation in HE, particularly targeting those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, **growth in participation among the lower socio-economic classes might be expected**. Figure 6 presents the data pictorially. There **does not appear to be any noticeable trends associated with specific socio-economic classes** – although it may be worthwhile to monitor this data over the next few years as the impact of the government's agenda may need some time to take effect.

<sup>3</sup> UCAS assigns Socio-economic status based on an applicant's parental occupation (or the occupation of the person contributing the highest income to the household if the applicant is aged 21 years or over)

Table 10: Socio-economic class of accepted applicants over three years (2002-2004)

Socio-economic Class	Year					
	2002		2003		2004	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher managerial and professional occupations	753	22.4	625	18.8	697	20.2
Lower managerial and professional occupations	922	27.5	971	29.2	994	28.8
Intermediate occupations	428	12.8	376	11.3	425	12.3
Small employers and own account workers	243	7.2	260	7.8	279	8.1
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	128	3.8	137	4.1	113	3.3
Semi-routine occupations	293	8.7	327	9.8	334	9.7
Routine occupations	121	3.6	121	3.6	119	3.4
Unknown	468	13.9	507	15.3	492	14.2
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0

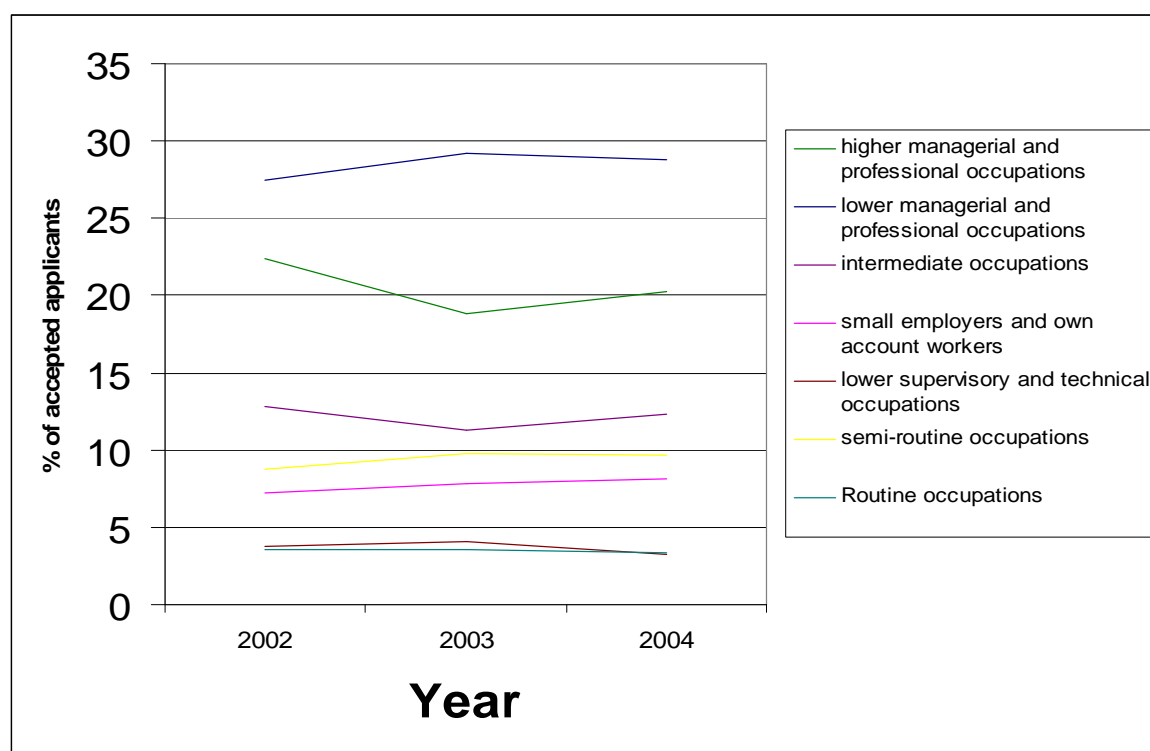


Figure 6: Socio-economic class of accepted applicants over three years (2002-2004)

- 15 When comparing the socio-economic class of accepted and not accepted applicants, **no significant differences emerge from the data (Table 11) although there are some small trends.** Among those who were accepted, the three highest socio-economic classes represent 61%. (and the lower socio-economic classes represent 17%). Among those who were not accepted, 58% were from the three highest socio-economic classes and 19% were among the three lowest socio-economic classes.

Table 11: Socio-economic class of accepted and not accepted Somerset applicants

Socio-economic Class	All Years			
	Accepted		Not Accepted	
	N	%	N	%
Higher managerial and professional occupations	2075	20.5	386	17.5
Lower managerial and professional occupations	2887	28.5	661	30.0
Intermediate occupations	1229	12.1	229	10.4
Small employers and own account workers	782	7.7	182	8.2
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	378	3.7	109	4.9
Semi-routine occupations	954	9.4	227	10.3
Routine occupations	361	3.6	82	3.7
Unknown	1467	14.5	331	15.0
Total	10133	100.0	2207	100.0

## Previous educational Establishment

- 16 In terms of the previous educational establishment (PEE) attended by Somerset applicants, **UCAS is only able to code the last known institution**. Therefore, **where students attended a school until 16 and then transferred to a college or school sixth form, it is not possible to analyse progression activity associated with the secondary school** (i.e. to determine how successful a secondary school is at encouraging their pupils to progress). It may be worthwhile for the LSC and local authorities to lobby for this kind of information to be collected by UCAS in the future so that more detailed analyses can be carried out.
- 17 Table 12 shows the number and proportions of accepted applicants associated with previous educational establishment (PEE) sectors. The figures show that over a three year period the number and proportion of applicants associated with the **sixth form school sector** has fluctuated. On average, approximately **10-11%** of all successful applicants come from this sector. Approximately **20%** of all successful applicants come from the **independent schools sector**. Over the three-year period, this sector showed small but gradual growth in the number of students progressing to HE.
- 18 The LSC-funded FE college sector is the most significant sector, generating approx 40-45% of all UCAS applicants. This sector is made up of FE colleges and sixth form colleges. Among the FE colleges, there was a slight increase in progression between the years 2002-2003 from 31% to 33% then the proportion of applicants fell slightly in 2004 down to 30%. **The sixth form college sector is associated with the most growth in HE progression (2002-2004)**. This sector which generates approximately 12-13% of all UCAS applicants in Somerset has observed a gradual but consistent growth in numbers over the three year period, particularly between 2003 and 2004. The significant contribution of the FE college sector towards HE participation

should be recognised by continued investment in initiatives which support the progression of young people into FE and then on to HE.

Table 12: The number and proportion of accepted Somerset applicants associated with each Previous Educational Establishment (PEE) sector

Previous Educational Establishment Sector	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Sixth form school	349	10.4	332	10.0	391	11.3	1072
Independent	685	20.4	688	20.7	706	20.4	2079
Other maintained	58	1.7	52	1.6	58	1.7	168
FE Sector	1424	42.4	1502	45.2	1494	43.3	4420
<i>FE college</i>	<i>1023</i>	<i>30.5</i>	<i>1100</i>	<i>33.1</i>	<i>1017</i>	<i>29.5</i>	<i>3140</i>
<i>Sixth form college</i>	<i>401</i>	<i>11.9</i>	<i>402</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>477</i>	<i>13.8</i>	<i>1280</i>
Not known/ no data	491	14.6	447	13.4	437	12.7	1375
NA/ Other LEA	349	10.4	303	9.1	367	10.6	1019
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133

- 18 Table 13a shows the proportion of accepted and not accepted applicants by PEE sector. It appears that the main sectors<sup>4</sup> (sixth form school, FE college, independent and sixth form college) show fairly similar proportions of successful applicants, although the **sixth form college sector is associated with a slightly higher rate of success among applicants**. Over the three year period, the rate of acceptance varies across all sectors but no consistent trends emerge. Comparing these acceptance rates with analyses available for local authority areas in the region<sup>5</sup> (e.g. Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire) (Table 13b), the sixth form school sector in Somerset has a slightly lower acceptance rate<sup>6</sup> compared to other districts with the exception of Bristol. The independent sector in Somerset also has a lower acceptance rate compared to other local authority areas. Meanwhile, the FE sector in Somerset has a considerably better acceptance rate compared to the other local authority areas.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Other maintained' category has particularly low numbers so it is difficult to make any firm judgements.

<sup>5</sup> West of England LSC completed similar analyses of UCAS data on its four Local Authority areas.

<sup>6</sup> Using the academic year 2003 for comparative analyses.

Table 13a: Proportion of accepted and not accepted Somerset applicants by PEE sector

Previous Educational Establishment Sector	2002		2003		2004	
	Total No. Applicants	% Accepted	Total No. Applicants	% Accepted	Total No. Applicants	% Accepted
Sixth form school	420	83.1	416	79.8	451	86.7
Independent	846	81.0	825	83.4	875	80.7
Other maintained	67	86.6	59	88.1	65	89.2
FE Sector	1706	85.2	1819	83.3	1792	84.6
<i>FE college</i>	<i>1255</i>	<i>81.5</i>	<i>1345</i>	<i>81.8</i>	<i>1248</i>	<i>81.5</i>
<i>Sixth form college</i>	<i>451</i>	<i>88.9</i>	<i>474</i>	<i>84.8</i>	<i>544</i>	<i>87.7</i>
Not known/ no data	608	80.8	574	77.9	573	76.3
NA/ Other LEA	421	82.9	378	80.2	445	82.5
Total	4068	82.5	4071	81.7	4201	82.2

Table 13b: Proportion of accepted and not accepted applicants by PEE sector – Local Authority comparisons (2003 only)

Previous Educational Establishment Sector	Bristol	Bath & North Somerset	South Gloucestershire	North Somerset	Somerset
Sixth form school	76.7	90.2	84.9	87.9	79.8
Independent	87.9	85.47	-	92.3	83.4
<i>FE college</i>	<i>77.19</i>	<i>78.3</i>	<i>71.7</i>	<i>72.2</i>	<i>81.8</i>
<i>Sixth form college</i>	<i>85.3</i>	-	-	-	<i>84.8</i>
Total	83.07	86.43	82.76	84.3	81.7

- 19 Looking more closely at the **acceptance rates associated with individual institutions**, Table 14 shows the proportion of applicants who were accepted onto HE programmes by PEE (mean scores over a three year period). Among the independent schools, **Queens College and Wellington School are associated with the highest ‘acceptance’ rate for applicants whilst Millfield, Kings School and Wells Cathedral School have lower rates of acceptance**. Looking at the eight state sixth form schools, the rate of success in applying to UCAS is fairly equal across all schools, although **Sexey’s School stands out as having a particularly high proportion of successful applicants and King Alfred’s School a slightly lower proportion than the other schools. Richard Huish Sixth Form College** also stands out among the FE colleges as having a higher than average acceptance rate among UCAS applicants.
- 20 Table 12 also reveals an **estimate of progression rate for PEE**. That is, out of a single cohort, approximately how many progress onto higher education. This estimate is achieved by calculating the number of accepted applicants as a proportion of the estimated cohort size (using the DfES A-level examination entries as a proxy). **The proportion of students within a given cohort that progress onto HE varies across PEE**. The estimated figures indicate that **Queens College have a particularly high rate of progression among their year 13 cohort (92.5%), alongside Wellington School**



**(88.6%) and Kings College (87.8%).** The **state sixth form** schools tend to be associated with slightly lower progression rates, with **Sexey's School (71.2%) and Kings of Wessex School (69.2%)** having among the highest progression rates.

Table 14: HE progression by PEE name (number of students and as a % of cohort)

Previous Educational Establishment	2002-2004 combined				
	No. Accepted	Total applied	Est. Cohort Size <sup>7</sup>	% accepted of all those applied	% accepted of total yr cohort
<b>Independent sector</b>					
Queens College	53.7	61.0	58.3	88.3	92.5
Kings College	70.3	84.7	80.7	83.6	87.8
Millfield School	220.7	284.0	282.3	77.8	78.1
Wellington School	88.7	100.0	99.3	88.3	88.6
Kings School	60.0	76.3	78.0	78.6	77.4
Wells Cathedral School	54.3	69.7	89.7	78.0	60.5
Downside School	39.0	46.3	46.7	83.9	83.7
Taunton School	60.3	70.7	90.0	85.3	66.9
Bruton School for Girls	41.3	48.7	50.0	85.0	82.7
<b>Sixth form school sector</b>					
West Somerset Community College	45.7	56.3	79.3	80.2	57.7
Sexey's	56.0	63.7	79.0	88.0	71.2
Blue School	68.0	81.0	102.3	83.9	67.1
Frome Community College	76.3	88.7	138.0	85.8	55.1
Wadham School	37.7	45.0	65.3	85.6	57.4
Kings of Wessex Upper School	88.3	106.0	127.7	83.3	69.2
King Alfred's	18.0	22.3	37.0	75.8	46.3
Holyrood School	23.3	29.7	64.7	78.0	36.2
<b>FE college sector</b>					
Bridgwater College	335.7	408.0	*	82.2	*
Richard Huish Sixth Form College	426.7	489.7	*	87.1	*
Yeovil College	229.7	281.7	*	81.3	*
SCAT	202.0	258.0	*	78.2	*
Strode College	260.7	312.3	*	83.4	*

\* not applicable. Colleges tend to have lower number of A-level students and a higher proportion of vocational programmes so A-level examinations entries cannot be used as a proxy for cohort size.

- 21 The relative growth in the number of accepted HE 'progressors' across the various PEEs between 2002-2004 can be seen in Table 15. The results indicate that **several PEEs exhibited considerable growth in numbers over the three year period**, noticeably Millfield, Wellington and Wells

<sup>7</sup> Cohort size was estimated using the number of individuals entered for GCE/ VCE exams on the DfES national performance tables

Cathedral schools within the independent sector, and Blue School, Holyrood and Frome Community College within the state school sector. In terms of actual student numbers, Bridgwater, Strode and Richard Huish colleges observed the largest increases in growth over the same period – due to the larger cohort sizes. Interestingly, **several of the educational establishments experiencing growth are located in Mendip**. In paragraph 6 of this report, it was noted that considerable and consistent growth in HE participation was associated with Mendip (compared to the other four districts). The data below gives an indication of which schools in the district contributed most to this growth.

Table 15: Percentage change in numbers of successful applicants in terms of successful applicants progressing from PEE to HE with 2002 as a baseline

Previous Educational Establishment	2002	2003	2004	2003 % change from 2002 baseline	2004 % change from 2002 baseline
	No. Accepted	No. Accepted	No. Accepted		
<b>Independent sector</b>					
Queens College	55	49	57	-10.91	3.64
Kings College	70	78	63	11.43	-10
Millfield School*	207	212	243	2.42	17.39
Wellington School	78	111	77	42.31	-1.28
Kings School	66	60	54	-9.09	-18.18
Wells Cathedral School*	50	53	60	6	20
Downside School	45	31	41	-31.11	-8.89
Taunton School	68	52	61	-23.53	-10.29
Bruton School for Girls	44	39	41	-11.36	-6.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>697</b>		
<b>Sixth form school sector</b>					
West Somerset Community College	56	31	50	-44.64	-10.71
Sexey's	58	52	58	-10.34	0
Blue School*	60	68	76	13.33	26.67
Frome Community College*	65	73	91	12.31	40
Wadham School	42	41	30	-2.38	-28.57
Kings of Wessex Upper School	87	84	94	-3.45	8.05
King Alfreds	23	7	24	-69.57	4.35
Holyrood School	16	28	26	75	62.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>449</b>		
<b>FE college sector</b>					
Bridgwater College	297	340	370	14.48	24.58
Richard Huish Sixth Form College	401	402	477	0.25	18.95
Yeovil College	233	268	188	15.02	-19.31
SCAT	223	196	187	-12.11	-16.14
Strode College*	235	275	272	17.02	15.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>1389</b>	<b>1481</b>	<b>1494</b>		
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>2479</b>	<b>2550</b>	<b>2640</b>		

\* PEEs located in Mendip

## Prior achievement

- 22 UCAS record various details about the FE qualifications held by applicants. In particular, UCAS code whether or not an applicant holds a GCE/VCE level 3 qualification (A-level or equivalent). Selecting only those individuals applying to UCAS with A-levels, it is possible to calculate a rough estimate of HE progression rate if these A-level students are calculated as a proportion of all students entered for A-level examinations in the same year<sup>8</sup>. Table 16 presents these estimates for the three years. The figures show that **approximately 89% of those studying for A-levels in Somerset go on to study HE. This figure remains fairly static over the three year period.**

Table 16: Proportion of A-level students who were accepted onto an HE programme (2002-2004) as a proportion of the estimated cohort size

Year	No. of individuals with GCE/VCE level 3 qualifications accepted on HE programme	Estimated* total size of cohort	% progression into HE**
2002	2662	2961	89.9
2003	2701	3055	88.4
2004	2789	3114	89.6
Total	8152	9130	89.3

\* i.e. those entered for A-levels within the same year.

\*\* note that the % rate may be overestimated because the cohort size is likely to include pupils entered for exams in a given year and may exclude older students applying for HE who did not do exams the summer before. However, this is offset slightly by those who chose to not apply to UCAS and began a gap year.

- 23 Unfortunately, information stored by **UCAS does not allow much of an insight into the pattern of progression for those taking the work-based learning route.** Currently, UCAS record details of prior achievement for specific qualifications including Access qualifications, GNVQs, BTEC/HND/HNCs, BTEC NC/HD and foundation qualifications<sup>9</sup>. However, **apprenticeships, NVQs and other WBL qualifications are not coded specifically.** Instead, they are coded as 'Other qualifications' along with all other types of previous qualifications. According to UCAS, they are currently developing an online UCAS application form where it may be possible for future years to record more specific WBL data. Until this data becomes available, only limited analysis can be done in terms of identifying patterns in participation associated with non-traditional pathways into HE. Table 17 shows the number of students accepted onto HE programmes who had previous vocational or non-traditional qualifications. The data shows that over the three year period the number of students with GNVQs progressing onto HE has gradually fallen. **The number of students with BTEC HND/ HNC qualifications has also fallen** although the number of students with BTEC NC/ND qualifications has grown slightly. **Foundation qualifications have increased in number. Access qualifications have fallen.**

<sup>8</sup> Cohort size was estimated using the number of individuals entered for GCE/ VCE exams on the DfES national performance tables

<sup>9</sup> Foundation qualifications are largely art foundation courses.

Table 17: Proportion of students with 'non-traditional' qualifications who were accepted onto an HE programme (2002-2004)

Year	Access Qualification		GNVQ		BTEC HND or HNC		BTEC NC/ND		Foundation Qualification		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2002	108	3.2	78	2.3	104	3.1	326	9.7	152	4.5	3356
2003	91	2.7	45	1.4	74	2.2	320	9.6	149	4.5	3324
2004	85	2.5	15	0.4	86	2.5	373	10.8	181	5.2	3453

\*\* note that of the access students, only an average of 13 per year also have A-Levels. About half the GNVQ students have GCE or VCE Level 3 qualifications too. Most BTEC HND applicants don't have A-Levels/ AS Levels. Foundation students – most have an A-Level or AS Level. About 30% taking BTEC NC/ND have an A-Level or AS Level.

- 24 Applicants are assigned points or a 'Tariff' by UCAS according to the previous qualifications they achieved and to what standard. This points system is banded and the points achieved by successful applicants in Somerset over the three-year period can be seen in Table 18. The **figures indicate a consistent and gradual increase in the number of points achieved by Somerset students over the three years reflecting improved performance at FE level.** Table 19 shows the Tariff scores associated with successful and unsuccessful applicants and reveals that **those who were not accepted onto HE programmes were more likely to have achieved a lower tariff score during their further education.**

Table 18: Tariff score or 'points' associated with successful Somerset applicants (2002-2004), as assigned by UCAS

Tariff Band	Year							
	2002		2003		2004		All Years	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-79	148	4.4	107	3.2	156	4.5	411	4.1
80-119	121	3.6	81	2.4	79	2.3	281	2.8
120-179	229	6.8	203	6.1	231	6.7	663	6.5
180-239	401	11.9	375	11.3	375	10.9	1151	11.4
240-299	451	13.4	509	15.3	525	15.2	1485	14.7
300-359	501	14.9	498	15.0	566	16.4	1565	15.4
360-419	415	12.4	425	12.8	472	13.7	1312	12.9
420-479	235	7.0	263	7.9	291	8.4	789	7.8
480-539	137	4.1	128	3.9	135	3.9	400	3.9
None/ not known	718	21.4	735	22.1	623	18.0	2076	20.5
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133	100.0

Table 19: Banded Tariff score associated with accepted and not accepted Somerset applicants (2002-2004), as assigned by UCAS

Tariff Band	Accepted		Not Accepted	
	N	%	N	%
1-79	411	4.1	120	5.4
80-119	281	2.8	110	5.0
120-179	663	6.5	236	10.7
180-239	1151	11.4	292	13.2
240-299	1485	14.7	305	13.8
300-359	1565	15.4	270	12.2
360-419	1312	12.9	178	8.1
420-479	789	7.8	112	5.1
480-539	400	3.9	56	2.5
None/ not known	2076	20.5	528	23.9
Total	10133	100.0	2207	100.0

## Higher Education choices

25 The majority of Somerset applicants accepted onto HE programmes between 2002-2004 studied degree courses (Table 20). Approximately **93% of applicants go on to study a degree course and 7% study an HND (or equivalent) course**. These proportions have remained fairly consistent between the years 2002 and 2004, although a slight increase in the proportion (and number) of degree courses was observed between 2002 and 2003 with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of HND courses.

Table 20: Types of HE course studied by 'progressors'

Degree Type	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
degree	3068	91.4	3125	94.0	3247	94.0	9440
HND	288	8.6	199	6.0	206	6.0	693
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133

26 In terms of the types of subjects studied by Somerset UCAS applicants, Table 21 and Figure 7 show that the subjects studied by the highest proportion of Somerset students are:

- Biological sciences
- Business administration studies
- Creative arts and design

The least popular subjects include:

- Non-European languages
- European languages, literature and related studies
- Combined sciences (or social sciences)
- Technologies
- Architecture, building and planning

- 27 The relatively **low number of students studying foreign languages** (particularly non-European languages) reflects a national trend although **this may be a concern given the recent significant economic growth in countries such as China and Asia as well as the increasingly positive impact of the internet on international trade and export activity**. An audit into language skills capacity in the South West<sup>10</sup> back in 2002 identified the need among employers for a broader spread of language skills (i.e. beyond the main European languages such as Spanish, German, French and Italian). The report highlighted the *‘growing mismatch between language skill provision in the region and the languages of the target markets of South West companies, which are increasingly outside Western Europe’*. Three years later and the mismatch remains an issue<sup>11</sup> whilst the demand has increased considerably (due to the unprecedented growth in Asia and China). Interestingly, the report also indicated that language graduates, whilst highly employable, are leaving the region to find work. Meanwhile, native speaker resources are often untapped due to employability issues – native speakers of other languages often lack adequate skills in English.
- 28 The **low number of students pursuing HE qualifications related to the construction-sector** is also of interest, given that it is a priority sector for Somerset and there is growing demand for graduates in the industry within the county. The number of students taking sector-specific provision at HE level (i.e. architecture, building and planning subjects) is low and remains relatively static over the three-year period. **It may be useful to track participation over the next few years to determine whether there is any increase in participation, responding to the demand currently being expressed by the industry.**
- 29 Looking at the trends over the three year period, it appears that certain subjects are becoming more or less popular over time. In particular, Table 21 suggests there is a **gradual but consistent fall in the number of people in Somerset applying for engineering-based subjects**, from 5.5% of all applicants in 2002 to 4.7% in 2004. This may be important to monitor given that engineering is another key sector for Somerset. In terms of growth, programmes related to **creative arts and design appear to be increasingly popular, the proportion of applicants growing from 12.5% in 2002 to 13.9% by 2004.**

---

<sup>10</sup> Language Skills Capacity Audit 2002, South West of England Development Agency.

<sup>11</sup> As an example, the Sector Skills Council for the engineering sector (SEMTEA), highlighted languages as an important issue for the industry in their recent South West RDA Action Plan.

Table 21: Subject Areas studied by successful applicants

Subject Area	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Medicine and dentistry	74	2.2	54	1.6	60	1.7	188
Subjects allied to medicine	147	4.4	135	4.1	163	4.7	445
Biological sciences	300	<b>8.9</b>	327	<b>9.8</b>	332	<b>9.6</b>	959
Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects	74	2.2	71	2.1	74	2.1	219
Physical sciences	175	5.2	146	4.4	176	5.1	497
Mathematical and computer sciences	210	6.3	215	6.5	218	6.3	643
Engineering	184	5.5	173	5.2	163	4.7	520
Technologies	36	1.1	28	0.8	37	1.1	101
Architecture, building and planning	54	1.6	52	1.6	60	1.7	166
Social studies	189	5.6	230	6.9	193	5.6	612
Law	104	3.1	137	4.1	98	2.8	339
Business and admin studies	389	<b>11.6</b>	382	<b>11.5</b>	391	<b>11.3</b>	1162
Mass communications and documentation	69	2.1	57	1.7	79	2.3	205
Linguistics, classics and related studies	94	2.8	104	3.1	70	2.0	268
European languages, literature and related studies	42	1.3	43	1.3	39	1.1	124
Non-European languages and related studies	25	0.7	16	0.5	19	0.6	60
Historical and philosophical studies	147	4.4	132	4.0	156	4.5	435
Creative arts and design	418	<b>12.5</b>	442	<b>13.3</b>	479	<b>13.9</b>	1339
Education	107	3.2	93	2.8	131	3.8	331
Combined sciences	59	1.8	43	1.3	49	1.4	151
Combined social sciences	39	1.2	24	0.7	39	1.1	102
Combined arts	123	3.7	133	4.0	135	3.9	391
Sciences combined with social sciences or arts	148	4.4	173	5.2	158	4.6	479
Social sciences combined with arts	104	3.1	87	2.6	112	3.2	303
General, other combined and unknown	45	1.3	27	0.8	22	0.6	94
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133

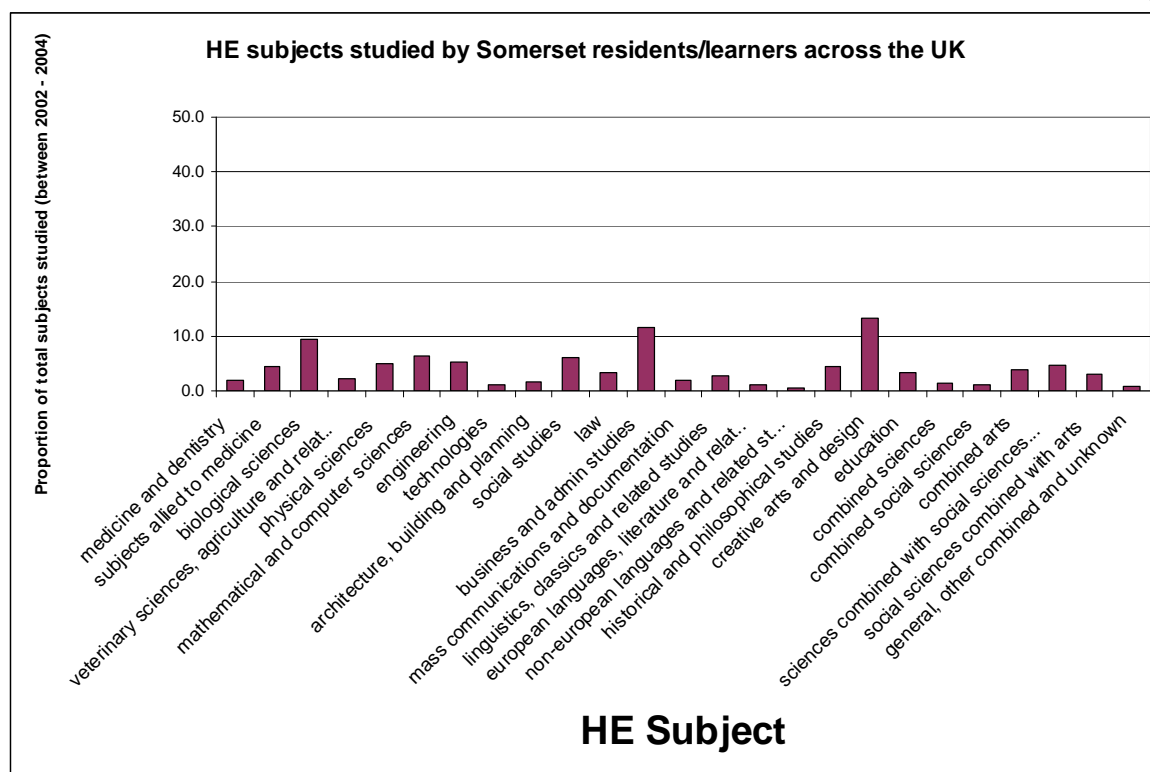


Figure 7: Subject Areas studied by successful applicants

- 30 The majority of Somerset applicants are going on to studying higher education at an institution that is relatively local. Institutions from the **South West (includes both universities and colleges) and Wales attract over 50% of Somerset applicants** (Table 22). Furthermore, **it is only in these areas that a gradual but consistent growth in numbers is observed over the three year period**. This is interesting in light of the increase in fees currently affecting higher education provision and raises the issue of whether the increases in fees and costs of accommodation and travel are causing students to reduce costs by living at (or closer to) home. The point made earlier about students from lower socio-economic backgrounds choosing to study closer to home further illustrates this point.
- 31 Of those students going on to study in the South West region, about three quarters are studying at universities, and a quarter are studying at a college delivering HE qualifications<sup>12</sup>. Table 23 also shows that **older applicants (20-24 and 25+ year olds) are more likely to study locally compared to the younger age group (17-19 year olds), specifically at South West colleges and universities**. Table 24 also shows that **approximately two thirds of all applicants choose to study at an institution less than 100 miles from home**. Taken together, this data indicates that students are increasingly choosing to study closer to home.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 2 for details of which institutions fall into the South West colleges and South West university sub-groups.



Table 22: The region in which Somerset applicants are going on to study HE

Region	Year						Total
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
North East	68	2.0	71	2.1	56	1.6	195
North West	112	3.3	108	3.2	109	3.2	329
Yorks & Humber	129	3.8	150	4.5	132	3.8	411
Merseyside	37	1.1	37	1.1	19	0.6	93
East Midlands	187	5.6	168	5.1	181	5.2	536
West Midlands	181	5.4	168	5.1	211	6.1	560
Eastern	78	2.3	92	2.8	64	1.9	234
Greater London	293	8.7	237	7.1	257	7.4	787
South East	495	14.7	475	14.3	488	14.1	1458
Wales	359	10.7	359	10.8	411	11.9	1129
Scotland	45	1.3	62	1.9	56	1.6	163
South West University	1020	30.4	1046	31.5	1093	31.7	3159
South West College	352	10.5	351	10.6	376	10.9	1079
Total	3356	100.0	3324	100.0	3453	100.0	10133

Table 23: Region of accepting institution by age bandings

Region	Age bandings						Total
	17-19 yr olds		20-24 yr olds		25+		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
North East	175	2.2	19	1.2	1	0.4	195
North West	295	3.8	26	1.7	5	2.0	326
Yorks & Humber	352	4.5	51	3.3	3	1.2	406
Merseyside	69	0.9	20	1.3	2	0.8	91
East Midlands	463	5.9	65	4.2	5	2.0	533
West Midlands	486	6.2	66	4.2	3	1.2	555
Eastern	207	2.7	22	1.4	2	0.8	231
Greater London	622	8.0	136	8.7	17	6.8	775
South East	1228	15.7	205	13.2	14	5.6	1447
Wales	967	12.4	131	8.4	19	7.6	1117
Scotland	142	1.8	16	1.0	4	1.6	162
South West Uni group	2162	27.7	553	35.5	119	47.8	2834
South West College group	637	8.2	248	15.9	55	22.1	940
Total	7805	100.0	1558	100.0	249	100.0	9612

Table 24: Average distance travelled by successful Somerset applicants<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Excludes 'Not Knowns' and those not registered as a UK resident.

Distance Travelled	Year						Total N
	2002		2003		2004		
	N	% of cohort	N	% of cohort	N	% of cohort	
0-24.99 miles	390	14.6	383	14.5	444	15.9	1217
25-49.99 miles	621	23.3	680	25.7	710	25.5	2011
50-74.99 miles	387	14.5	391	14.8	407	14.6	1185
75-99.99 miles	363	13.6	308	11.7	353	12.7	1024
100-124.99 miles	298	11.2	294	11.1	306	11.0	898
125-149.99 miles	235	8.8	198	7.5	212	7.6	645
150-174.99 miles	169	6.3	149	5.6	147	5.3	465
over 175 miles	203	7.6	239	9.0	210	7.5	652
Total	2666	100.0	2642	100.0	2789	100.0	8097

32 Table 25 shows the subjects chosen by Somerset applicants cross referenced by the location of the accepting HE institution. It appears that some subjects are more likely to be studied inside of the South West region, compared to others. For instance, more Somerset students choose to study **Education, Mathematical and computer sciences** or **Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects** within the region than outside of the region. Relatively high numbers of students also study **Business and administration studies** and **creative arts and design** within the South West region. Subjects that students appear more likely to leave the region to study include **Medicine and dentistry, Non-European languages and related studies, Linguistics, classics and related studies,** and **Historical and philosophical studies. Physical sciences, Engineering** and **Law** are also among those subjects that Somerset applicants seem to be more likely to study further away from home.

Table 25: Subjects chosen by Somerset applicants, and location of accepting institution

Subject	Region of Accepting Institution				Total
	South West		Outside of the South West		
	N	%	N	%	
Medicine and dentistry	31	16.5	157	83.5	188
Subjects allied to medicine	179	40.2	266	59.8	445
Biological sciences	387	40.4	572	59.6	959
Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects	126	57.5	93	42.5	219
Physical sciences	149	30.0	348	70.0	497
Mathematical and computer sciences	395	61.4	248	38.6	643
Engineering	155	29.8	365	70.2	520
Technologies	47	46.5	54	53.5	101
Architecture, building and planning	69	41.6	97	58.4	166
Social studies	256	41.8	356	58.2	612
Law	105	31.0	234	69.0	339
Business and admin studies	576	49.6	586	50.4	1162
Mass communications and documentation	66	32.2	139	67.8	205
Linguistics, classics and related studies	57	21.3	211	78.7	268
European languages, literature and related studies	40	32.3	84	67.7	124
Non-European languages and related studies	2	3.3	58	96.7	60
Historical and philosophical studies	101	23.2	334	76.8	435
Creative arts and design	658	49.1	681	50.9	1339
Education	236	71.3	95	28.7	331
Combined sciences	61	40.4	90	59.6	151
Combined social sciences	22	21.6	80	78.4	102
Combined arts	173	44.2	218	55.8	391
Sciences combined with social sciences or arts	231	48.2	248	51.8	479
Social sciences combined with arts	92	30.4	211	69.6	303
General, other combined and unknown	24	25.5	70	74.5	94
Total	4238	41.8	5895	58.2	10133

33 Finally, Table 26 shows the HE subjects chosen by Somerset applicants, cross referenced by the Previous Educational Establishment sector. A number of observations can be made:

- As a proportion of all applications within each PEE sector, the independent sector is associated with a higher proportion of its students applying for **medicine and dentistry subjects** (3.6%) compared to other PEE sectors, followed by the sixth form college sector (2.4%).
- All education sectors have similar (high) proportions of their students applying for **biological science**-based subjects (between 9% and 13%) and **business and administration**-based subjects (between 10% and 15%).

- A high proportion of students within the comprehensive (7.4%) and sixth form college (6.7%) sectors go on to apply for **physical sciences**-related subjects, relative to other PEE sectors (the FE college sector has a relatively low proportion of its students go on to study physical sciences-based subjects – 3.7%).
- The FE college sector has the highest proportion of **mathematical and computer science** applicants (9.2%) compared to other sectors.
- The independent sector generates the highest proportion of **engineering** applicants, **social sciences** applicants and **linguistics, classics and related studies** applicants compared with other PEE sectors.
- A very small proportion of students in the independent sector go on to apply for **mass communications and documentation**-related HE subjects (0.3%).
- Similarly, relatively low numbers of students in the independent sector go on to study **education** at HE (0.9%) whereas the FE college sector generates a relatively high proportion of students who apply to study education.
- The FE college sector has a considerably higher proportion of students applying for **creative arts and design** HE programmes (21.8%) compared to all other sectors – likely to be linked to Somerset College of Arts and Technology.

Table 26: Accepted Subjects by PEE sector

Subject	Comprehensive		Further/ Higher Education		Independent		Other maintained		sixth form college	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
medicine and dentistry	10	0.9	13	0.4	75	3.6	7	4.2	31	2.4
subjects allied to medicine	34	3.2	104	3.3	85	4.1	5	3.0	62	4.8
biological sciences	135	<b>12.6</b>	290	<b>9.2</b>	197	<b>9.5</b>	14	8.3	148	<b>11.6</b>
veterinary sciences, agriculture and related sciences	18	1.7	58	1.8	25	1.2	6	3.6	27	2.1
physical sciences	79	7.4	115	3.7	110	5.3	16	<b>9.5</b>	86	6.7
mathematical and computer sciences	81	7.6	288	<b>9.2</b>	82	3.9	12	7.1	68	5.3
engineering	56	5.2	138	4.4	154	7.4	8	4.8	52	4.1
technologies	3	0.3	42	1.3	19	0.9	0	0.0	14	1.1
architecture, building and planning	26	2.4	38	1.2	48	2.3	4	2.4	12	0.9
social sciences	54	5.0	150	4.8	174	8.4	13	7.7	76	5.9
law	37	3.5	112	3.6	64	3.1	5	3.0	61	4.8
business and admin studies	124	<b>11.6</b>	318	<b>10.1</b>	307	<b>14.8</b>	25	<b>14.9</b>	130	<b>10.2</b>
mass communications and documentation	26	2.4	76	2.4	7	0.3	5	3.0	47	3.7
linguistics, classics and related studies	27	2.5	55	1.8	81	3.9	4	2.4	46	3.6
European languages, literature and related subjects	11	1.0	17	0.5	44	2.1	0	0.0	25	2.0
non-European languages and related subjects	13	1.2	7	0.2	14	0.7	1	0.6	10	0.8
historical and philosophical studies	49	4.6	94	3.0	136	6.5	6	3.6	65	5.1
creative arts and design	78	7.3	686	<b>21.8</b>	99	4.8	8	4.8	69	5.4
education	37	3.5	152	4.8	19	0.9	2	1.2	54	4.2
combined sciences	25	2.3	39	1.2	39	1.9	2	1.2	14	1.1
combined social sciences	6	0.6	26	0.8	29	1.4	4	2.4	18	1.4
combined arts	50	4.7	99	3.2	60	2.9	5	3.0	63	4.9
sciences combined with social sciences or arts	45	4.2	140	4.5	101	4.9	7	4.2	50	3.9
social sciences combined with arts	40	3.7	69	2.2	79	3.8	6	3.6	42	3.3
general, other combined and unknown	8	0.7	14	0.4	31	1.5	3	1.8	10	0.8
Total	1072	100.0	3140	100.0	2079	100.0	168	100.0	1280	100.0

## Issues for consideration

- 34 The analyses included in this report provide some useful baseline figures which may be incorporated into the LSC planning process. The findings also raise several issues for consideration:
- a) Participation in HE varies across wards, with pockets of low participation in certain areas of the county. What can schools, colleges and partner organisations do to target these wards and improve progression rates?
  - b) Younger applicants tend to be more likely than older applicants to succeed in converting their applications to accepted offers through UCAS. Why is this? What more can providers do to assist older applicants in converting their application into an accepted offer?
  - c) Accepted applicants are more likely to be from the higher socio-economic groups – should this kind of information be monitored in the future to determine whether the trends change in response to the recent government agenda to get more young people from poorer backgrounds in HE? Is there more that providers and partner organisations can do to help increase participation?
  - d) The sixth form college sector showed marked growth in HE progression over the three-year period, and is also associated with a slightly higher rate of success in terms of converting applications into accepted offers. Can this best practice be shared?
  - e) The number of students with BTEC ND/HC qualifications applying for HE has increased, particularly between 2003-2004. Is this evidence that the WBL route into HE is beginning to open out? Can the LSC lobby for more data specific to WBL qualifications to be coded on UCAS applications?
  - f) The number of people applying to UCAS with ‘access qualifications’ has fallen – should this be monitored? And does this reflect a drop in the number of mature applicants using this route into HE?
  - g) Relative to other subjects that applicants are choosing to study at HE, languages seem to be less popular – and participation has remained low over the period 2002-2004. Of those students applying for language-related HE subjects, they are more likely to be studying outside of the South West region. Given the increasing impact of countries such as China and India on the global economy, and growth in export markets facilitated by the internet, does more need to be done to encourage young people locally to pursue language-based HE programmes and to make provision more local?
  - h) There is currently a demand for more graduates to enter the construction industry. Applications for sector-specific HE programmes (i.e. architecture, building and planning) are low relative to other subjects and have remained so for three years. Do employers in the construction industry require graduates with sector-specific HE qualifications? Does it meet their requirements? Is there more that can be done to encourage local people to apply for architecture, building and planning-related HE programmes?

i) There is a gradual but consistent fall in the number of people in Somerset applying for engineering-based subjects. Furthermore, Somerset applicants are more likely to travel outside of the South West to study engineering HE programmes. A high proportion of engineering applicants also come from the independent PEE sector. Given that engineering is a priority sector for Somerset, is there more that can be done to encourage applications for engineering-related programmes, especially from the state PEE sector? And is there more that can be done to make provision available more locally, given that applicants are increasingly choosing to study closer to home?

## Your Response

We are interested in your views on the above report and, in particular, the questions posed under issues for consideration.

If you would like to comment or have any other queries, please contact Dr Heather Samways via email: [Heather.samways@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Heather.samways@lsc.gov.uk)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Supporting Information

### UCAS

UCAS processes all applications to full-time and sandwich degrees, Higher National Diploma (HND) and some Higher National Certificate (HNC) programmes at UK universities (excluding the Open University), most colleges of HE, some Further Education (FE) colleges with HE provision and most colleges of art and design. UCAS does not process applications to part-time or post-graduate degrees. The data does include students who were accepted through the clearing process. In 2004, the proportion of accepted applicants who were accepted through clearing was 9.2%; 7.1% had originally applied through the main scheme, and 2.1% were direct clearing accepts.

### Applicants

The number of applicants to degree or HND programmes through the UCAS scheme.

### Accepted Applicants

The number of applicants to degree or HND programmes that were accepted through the UCAS scheme.

### Year of entry

UCAS counts applicants in the year in which they apply, irrespective of the year in which they intend to start the course.

### Age

Calculated as an applicant's age at 30 September of year of entry.

### Previous Educational Establishment

The type of previous educational institution attend by applicants (maintained schools, independent schools, FE colleges, Sixth form colleges and other establishments).

### Ethnicity

Applicants are asked to record their ethnic origin on their application form. Provision of this data is not obligatory.



### **Socio-economic status**

UCAS assigns socio-economic status based on an applicant's parental occupation, or their own occupation if they are aged 21 or above, and uses a simplified version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, since UCAS does not collect employment status or size of organisation from applicants.

### **The UCAS Tariff and average point score**

The UCAS Tariff was introduced for 2002 entry. The Tariff establishes agreed equivalence between different types of qualifications and reports achievement for entry to higher education in a numerical format. This allows comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.

Qualifications included in the Tariff include:

- GCE A Level
- GCE AS Level
- VCE A Level
- VCE AS Level
- VCE Double Award
- SQA Higher
- SQA Advanced Higher
- SQA Intermediate
- Key Skills

### **Distance Travelled**

Distance travelled is calculated from the (straight line) distance between the accepted applicant's home postcode and the postcode of the registry of the university or college at which he or she was accepted.

## Appendix 2 - A break down of South West sub-groups included in the regional analysis

South West University Group
University of the West of England, Bristol
Bath Spa University College
University of Plymouth
Bournemouth University
University of Exeter
University of Bristol
University of Bath
The University of Gloucestershire
City of Bristol College
St Loye's School of Health Studies

South West College Group
Somerset College of Arts and Technology
Bridgwater College
Falmouth College of Arts <sup>14</sup>
The College of St Mark and St John
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth
Weston College
Wiltshire College
Royal Agricultural College
Peninsula Medical School
Strode College
Cornwall College
Dartington College of Arts
Exeter College
Salisbury College
Plymouth College of Art and Design
Swindon College
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology
South Devon College
Weymouth College

---

<sup>14</sup> Falmouth College of Arts has since been given University status.

**Creator** Dr Heather Samways  
**Job title** Research Manager  
**Email** heather.samways@lsc.gov.uk  
**Phone** 01823 226011  
**Date created** 11 October 2005  
**Document ref.** G:\00Fileplan\Policy and infrastructure\Research\Learner  
Rsch\HE related projects\som-  
progressionintohighereducationamongsomersetlearners-  
report-15sep2005.doc  
**LSC office** Learning and Skills Council Somerset  
East Reach House East Reach Taunton TA1 3EN  
T 0845 019 4161 F 01823 256174 www.lsc.gov.uk/