

SDR 63/2014

16 April 2014

Levels of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2013

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

The statistics provided are taken from the Annual Population Survey (APS) for the year ending December 31st 2013. Further information on the APS can be found in the notes.

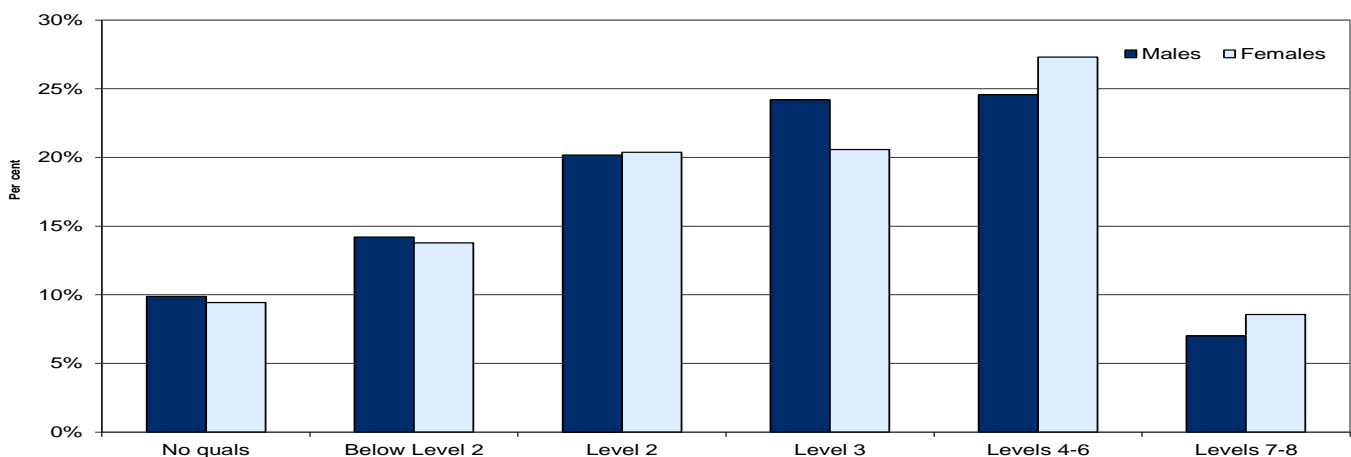
Qualifications have been grouped into National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels. Further information on NQF levels can be found in the notes.

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

Key Results

- Overall, qualification levels in Wales increased in 2013, continuing the trend observed in the series since 2001.
 - An estimated 10 per cent of working age adults in Wales reported having no qualifications, compared to 11 per cent in 2012.
 - 76 per cent of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications compared with 75 per cent in 2012.
 - 56 per cent of working age adults in Wales were qualified to the level 3 threshold compared with 54 per cent in 2012.
 - The proportion holding degree-level qualifications (NQF level 4 or above) was 34 per cent compared with 33 per cent in 2012.

Chart 1. Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age, by gender, 2013



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Level of Highest Qualification held, by characteristic

Gender

- Males are slightly more likely to hold no qualifications, or qualifications below level 2 than females, and less likely to hold qualifications at or above level 4.

Age

- 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 14 per cent of 50-59 year olds.

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 or above levels 2, 3 and 4.

Ethnicity

- 74 per cent of persons (who are not in full time education) from a non-white ethnic origin hold at least level 2 qualifications, compared to 75 per cent of persons from a white ethnic origin. Persons from a non-white ethnic origin (48 per cent) are more likely to hold degree-level qualifications than those from a white ethnic origin (34 per cent).

Welsh language

- Higher qualification levels are reported amongst Welsh speakers than their non-Welsh speaking counterparts.

Area

- In general, qualification levels were highest in Monmouthshire, The Vale of Glamorgan, and Cardiff, and lowest in the South Wales valleys authorities.
- In general, qualification levels in Wales were lower than in England, Scotland and the UK as a whole, but higher than in Northern Ireland.
- Compared with the English regions, the proportions at level 2 and above, and level 4 and above in Wales are above those in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands and West Midlands. Whilst the proportion reporting no qualifications in Wales is below West Midlands and North West.

Employment status

- 24 per cent of those who are either ILO unemployed or economically inactive reported having no qualifications. This compares to 6 per cent for those in employment.

Occupation

- 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.

Table 1: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, 2013 (a)

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each NQF level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Levels 4-6	Level 4+
By gender							
Males	10	14	20	76	24	25	32
Females	9	14	20	77	21	27	36
Persons	10	14	20	76	22	26	34
By age							
18-24	7	13	20	80	39	18	21
25-34	7	12	20	81	22	30	39
35-49	9	16	20	76	18	29	38
50-59	14	14	22	72	18	24	31
60-64 (males only)	16	12	19	72	22	22	30
By ethnic origin							
White	10	15	21	75	20	26	34
Non-white	12	14	12	74	14	38	48
By disability status (b)							
Disabled	20	17	21	64	18	19	24
Not disabled	7	13	20	80	23	28	36
By Welsh language ability							
Welsh speaker	6	10	19	84	24	31	41
Non Welsh speaker	11	15	21	74	22	24	31
By economic activity and main job (c)							
In employment	6	13	20	81	22	30	39
of which:							
Managers, Directors & senior officials	3	10	19	87	20	36	47
Professional occupations	0	2	3	98	6	56	88
Associate professional & technical	2	6	18	92	20	45	55
Administrative & secretarial	3	15	26	82	24	28	31
Skilled Trades occupations	7	15	25	78	37	14	15
Caring, Leisure & other service occupati	4	12	24	84	36	22	25
Sales and Customer Service occupations	9	19	29	72	24	18	20
Process, plant & machine operatives	13	30	31	58	18	8	9
Elementary occupations	18	28	26	54	18	10	11
ILO unemployed or economically inactive	24	19	22	57	15	15	20

Source: Annual Population Survey 2013

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

(b) Those who have reported DDA (current disability) and/or work limiting disability.

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

Excludes persons in full-time education.

Table 2: Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, by local authority, 2013 (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	10	13	19	76	23	27	35
Gwynedd	9	11	24	80	19	28	37
Conwy	7	12	22	80	22	27	36
Denbighshire	9	13	24	78	22	27	33
Flintshire	6	16	23	78	23	27	33
Wrexham	9	15	21	76	24	24	31
Powys	8	12	21	79	24	28	35
Ceredigion	8	10	19	82	30	23	33
Pembrokeshire	11	11	20	78	23	28	35
Carmarthenshire	11	13	21	76	24	23	31
Swansea	10	13	19	78	24	27	35
Neath Port Talbot	11	18	22	71	20	25	29
Bridgend	12	16	18	72	22	25	32
The Vale of Glamorgan	7	12	18	81	20	29	43
Cardiff	7	12	17	81	23	30	41
Rhondda Cynon Taf	14	17	20	69	21	21	28
Merthyr Tydfil	14	17	21	70	21	23	28
Caerphilly	11	16	21	73	24	22	28
Blaenau Gwent	15	20	28	65	20	15	18
Torfaen	13	17	21	70	23	21	26
Monmouthshire	5	11	18	84	21	34	45
Newport	9	15	19	76	22	28	35
Wales	10	14	20	76	22	26	34

Source: Annual Population Survey 2013

(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, 2013 (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	8	14	19	77	20	29	38
North East	9	15	22	75	23	24	30
North West	10	15	21	75	21	26	33
Yorkshire & Humberside	9	16	21	75	21	25	32
East Midlands	9	16	20	75	22	25	32
West Midlands	13	15	20	72	21	25	31
Eastern	7	15	22	77	20	28	36
London	7	12	13	81	15	39	52
South East	6	13	19	81	21	32	41
South West	6	14	20	80	23	28	36
Wales	10	14	20	76	22	26	34
Scotland	10	12	18	78	18	34	43
Northern Ireland	16	13	21	71	20	23	30
United Kingdom	9	14	19	77	20	29	38

Source: Annual Population Survey 2013

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

Notes

In previous years publication of this data has been through a Statistical Headline followed by a more detailed Statistical Bulletin of commentary and charts later in the year. In line with our plans set out in the consultation earlier this year "Proposals concerning the publication of official statistics" we have developed the headline into this Statistical Release, and intend to produce the detailed bulletin on an occasional basis rather than annually. As such there will be no further bulletin of this 2013 data.

However, all underlying data are available through our statswales website at :-

<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Lifelong-Learning/Qualification-Levels>

1. Policy/operational context

This Statistical Release 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 and the *Tackling Poverty Action Plan*.

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

The data presented in this Release are based on the results of the Annual Population Survey for 2013. Data from the Annual Population Survey, a household survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics is available from 2004, and prior to this comparable data are available from the annual Local Labour Force Survey for Wales for 2001-2003.

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 2013.

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 release 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 release 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 there have been no revisions to previously published figures.

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.

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 2 per cent of respondents. These respondents have been excluded from the analysis in this release.

Allocation of qualifications with unknown levels

Whilst other questions in the survey are used to allocate qualifications to NQF levels as far as possible¹, 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 2013 data, in line with work taking place across other GSS departments, however this methodology work has not yet been completed and therefore we will incorporate as soon as this is finalised.

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 release 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://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140107201041/http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/Statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/methodology/>

Data is also available from the Census of Population on highest qualification levels. The 2011 census indicated that one in four of the population of Wales aged 16 and over (26 per cent, 651,000) reported having no recognised qualifications and just under one in four of the population of Wales aged 16 and over (24 per cent, 614,000) reported having a qualification at level 4 (degree level) or above. The difference between the level of qualifications reported through the Census and the APS data in this release is in part explained by the wider age range of the Census data. That is both including 16/17 year olds who may not yet have completed their education, and the older age groups. Additional factors to consider are the APS asks more detailed questions about qualifications than the Census. In addition the APS is an interviewer-administered survey whereas the Census is self-completed. Therefore the interviewer can probe the respondent with further questions to try to establish whether details have been recalled correctly. However, the APS is a sample survey whereas the Census is a more comprehensive count. Similar issues applied to the 2001 Census.

The biggest benefit of the Census data is to be able to analyse within local authority, down to community level, and in cross tabulations with small subgroups of the population not possible through the APS.

¹ 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).

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 ²

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.

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 ³
Level 8 Certificate ³
Level 7 Diploma ³
Level 7 Certificate ³
Level 8 Award ³

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

First degree/Foundation degree
Other degree
NVQ level 4
Level 6 Diploma ³
Level 6 Certificate ³
Level 7 Award ³
Diploma in higher education
Level 5 Diploma ³
Level 5 Certificate ³
Level 6 Award ³
HNC, HND, BTEC higher etc.
Teaching (further, secondary and primary education, foundation stage¹ and level not stated)
Nursing etc.
RSA higher diploma
Other higher education qualification below degree level
Level 4 Diploma ³
Level 4 Certificate ³

² Please note the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework has different levels

NQF Level 3 (previously NVQ level 3 or equivalent)

Level 5 award³
NVQ level 3
Advanced/Progression (14-19) Diploma³
Level 3 Diploma³
Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate¹
International Baccalaureate¹
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 qualifications¹
Trade apprenticeship (50%)
Other qualifications (10%)
Level 3 Certificate³

NQF Level 2 (previously NVQ level 2 or equivalent)

Level 4 Award³
NVQ level 2
Intermediate Welsh Baccalaureate¹
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) Diploma³
Level 2 Diploma³
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 Certificate³
Level 3 Award³

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

NVQ level 1
Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate²
GNVQ, GSVQ foundation level
Foundation (14-19) diploma³
Level 1 Diploma³
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

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

² This qualification was added to the list included on the LFS questionnaire in 2008

³ This qualification was added to the list included on the LFS questionnaire in 2011

City and Guilds foundation/part 1
Level 1 Certificate
Level 2 Award
YT, YTP certificate
Key skills qualification¹
Basic skills qualification¹
Entry level qualification¹
Entry level Diploma ³
Entry level Certificate ³
Level 1 Award ³
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