

Information, Advice and Guidance Services for Adults – A Quarterly Progress Report April–July 2003



Learning+Skills Council

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Introduction

1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has responsibility in England for the development of coherent information, advice and guidance services (IAG) for adults. The importance placed on IAG services for adults is underlined in the Government's national Skills Strategy (*21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential*, Cm 5810), which states that 'high quality and easily accessible information, advice and guidance has an important role in helping people to understand the opportunities and support available' (4.33) and acknowledges that 'a lot more needs to be done to improve the quality, consistency and visibility of provision we will work with the LSC and Ufi/**learn**direct to define the range of IAG services which adults should be entitled to expect, and the standards to which those services should be delivered' (4.37).

2 During the financial year 2002-03, the LSC invested £23.5 million in the provision of information and advice services for adults through its network of local LSCs. Delivery of IAG services is co-ordinated on a local basis by designated IAG Partnerships comprising a variety of experienced providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The aim of the services is to provide free, independent and impartial advice and information to adults about learning and work opportunities available in local areas, and how best to access them. All adults of working age (whether in work, education or not) can access these services.

3 This is the first of a series of quarterly reports focusing on the performance of the IAG programme. This report focuses on delivery during April – July 2003, a roll-over period from the previous contracting year due to the introduction of an academic contracting cycle. During this interim period the LSC contracted with 55 IAG Partnerships to deliver 483,333 information and 166,667 advice sessions on learning and work.

Progress to date

Introduction

4 This section of the report summarises the findings from an analysis of management information received during April – July 2003. The data is presented as percentages of the total management information received. The findings are presented under the following sub-headings:

Gender

Age

Long term health problems

Ethnicity

Qualifications

Economic status.

Achievements for the period 1 April 2003 – 31 July 2003

5 The achievements for this period are as follows:

Sessions	Profile	Actual	% of profile
Information	483,333	771,102	159
Advice	166,667	135,969	81

6 Effective referral mechanisms within IAG Partnerships are essential to ensure the client receives the most beneficial support for their individual circumstances. During the interim period a total of 97,138 referrals to other local provision were made.

Clients referred to:	
Basic skills providers	4,670
Further education providers	24,988
Higher education institutions	7,525
Voluntary and community sector providers	8,573
Jobcentre Plus provision	5,809
Work based learning providers	5,963
Other referrals	39,610
Total referrals made	97,138

7 Given that adults who are yet to achieve a Level 2 qualification are a national priority group, it is concerning that referral figures relating to basic skills provision are so low. It is hoped that the recently published Learning Resources Pack for Frontline Staff Providing IAG and the associated Trainers Guide will raise awareness of IAG deliverers of the Skills for Life agenda, encourage staff to ensure they know what provision is available and increase associated client referral.

8 It should be noted that client characteristic data was only presented for 131,408 adults and it is on this figure that the following information is analysed.

9 Whilst the actual number of advice sessions is below profile, this is a significant improvement on the 2002-2003 actual. For the same period, IAG Partnerships delivered 69,865 advice sessions, which equates to a 51% improvement on last year.

10 Three IAG Partnerships not only met their nationally allocated target but exceeded it. These are: Lancashire, with 9,275 advice sessions against a target of 4,743; North Yorkshire, with 4,519 advice sessions against a target of 2,591; and Derbyshire with 4,780 advice sessions against a target of 3,260.

11 During 2002–2003, IAG Partnerships were tasked with delivering services to ensure access was given to clients from particular target groups, based on the client need analysis for the local LSC area. It was expected that services would be targeted in the main at those people considered to be most disadvantaged including:

National priority groups:

- > people aiming to improve their skill levels to NVQ 2 or NVQ 3 standard or equivalent;
- > people aiming to enter or who will be leaving higher education; and
- > people with basic literacy, numeracy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs.

Local priority groups:

- > people in employment;
- > people with learning difficulties;
- > people with disabilities;

- > people with low or outdated skills;
- > older people over 50, especially the unemployed or people at risk of becoming unemployed;
- > labour market returners;
- > offenders and ex-offenders;
- > lone parents;
- > people in areas of high unemployment or social deprivation; and
- > people in remote rural areas or other areas with poor public transport.

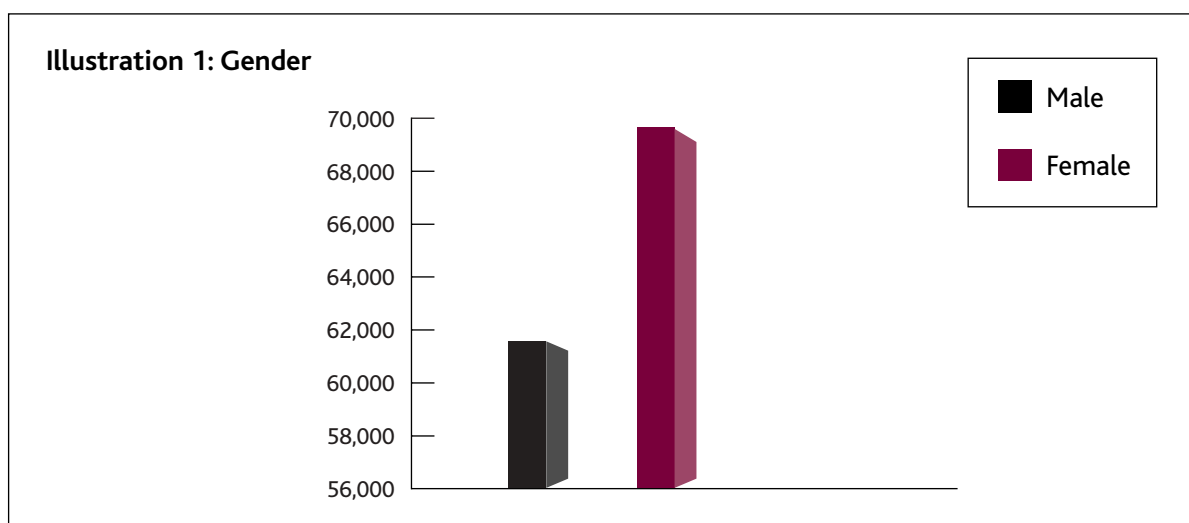
Client characteristics

12 This sub-section provides an overview of the personal characteristics of adults receiving advice services.

Gender

13 The gender composition of adults accessing advice services was as follows.

Table 1		% Total
Males	61,778	47
Females	69,630	53

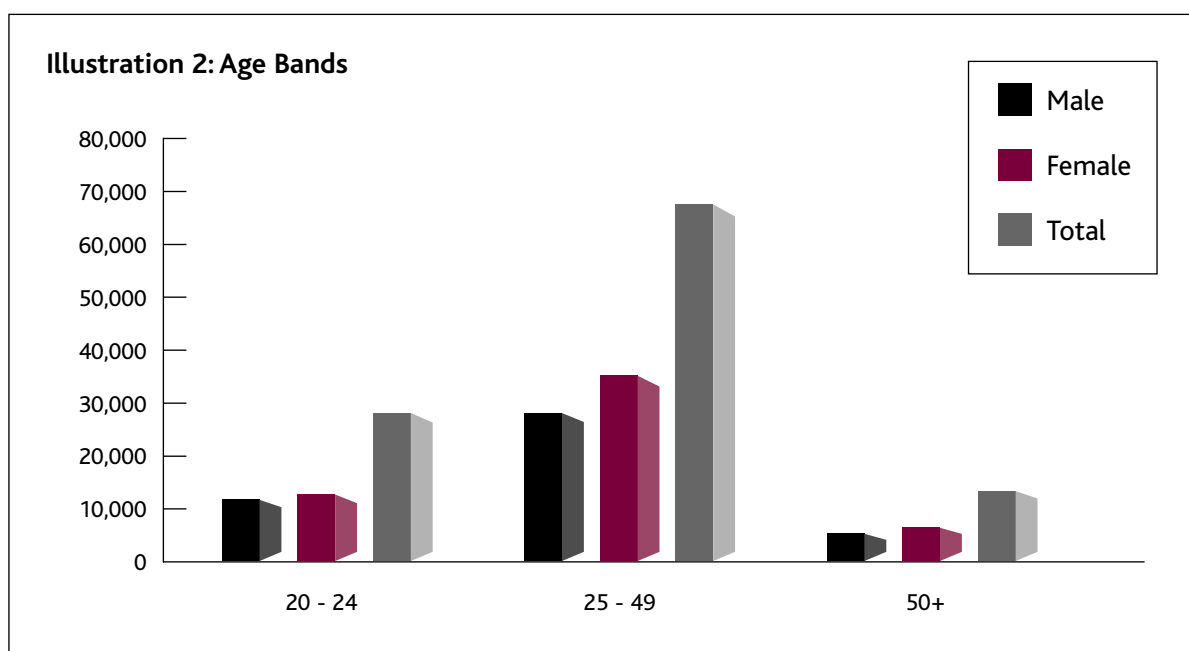


14 The 2001 Census found that of the 49,138,831 people in England, 48.6% were male and 51.4% were female. The survey sample therefore accords reasonably well with the national picture.

Age

15 The age profile of the clients seen is shown in the table below.

Table 2	Male	Female	Total
20 – 24	17,698	18,072	35,770
25 – 49	35,944	43,173	79,117
50+	9,799	10,275	20,074
Totals	61,752	69,579	131,331

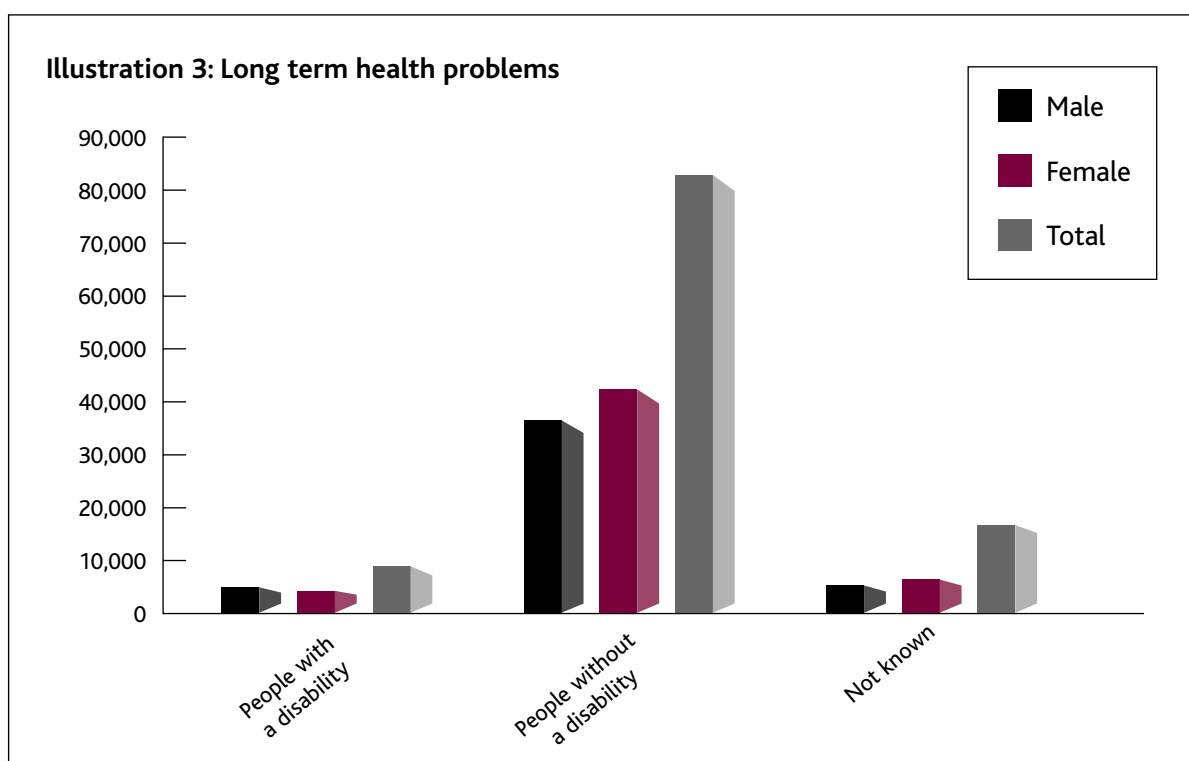


16 The client cohort contains higher proportions of people under the age of 50 compared with the population of England as a whole. This is not surprising, however, given the targeting of information and advice services on people who are of working age, including those engaged in learning or employment.

Long term health problems

17 2001 Census data reveals that 17.96% of the total population of England have a limiting long term illness. This compares with 11% of the people accessing advice services.

Table 3	% Total	% Males	% Females
Yes	11	54	46
No	74	46	54
Not Stated	15	43	57



Ethnicity

18 A detailed breakdown of the ethnic origin of adults accessing advice services is shown in the table below:

Table 4	% Total	% Males	% Females
Asian/British – Bangladeshi	.8	55	45
Asian/British – Indian	3	43	57
Asian/British – Pakistani	2	49	51
Asian/British Other	1	54	46
Black/British – African	2	52	48
Black/British – Caribbean	2	46	54
Black/British – Other	.6	47	53
Chinese	.6	38	62
Mixed - White and Asian	.2	52	48
Mixed - White and Black African	.3	48	52
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	.5	47	53
Mixed - Other	5	40	60
White - British	69	47	53
White - Irish	.8	45	55
White - Other	3	40	60
Other	2	57	43
Not stated	7.2	41	59

19 A broad comparison of the main ethnic groupings in the client cohort and the population in England is shown in the table

below. This shows that the sample includes relatively high proportions of non-white users of advice and information services.

Table 5: Ethnicity: Adults seen compared with the population of England

Table 5	% Adults seen	% England population*
Asian	7	4.6
Black	4.6	2.3
Mixed	6	1.3
White	72.8	90.9
Other	2	0.9
Not Stated	7.6	-
* Census 2001, ONS (Total Population England)		

Qualifications

20 The qualification levels of adults seen during the April – July period are shown in the table below. Annex One sets out the definitions and typology employed in the survey with regard to the stated levels.

Table 6: Qualification level at present

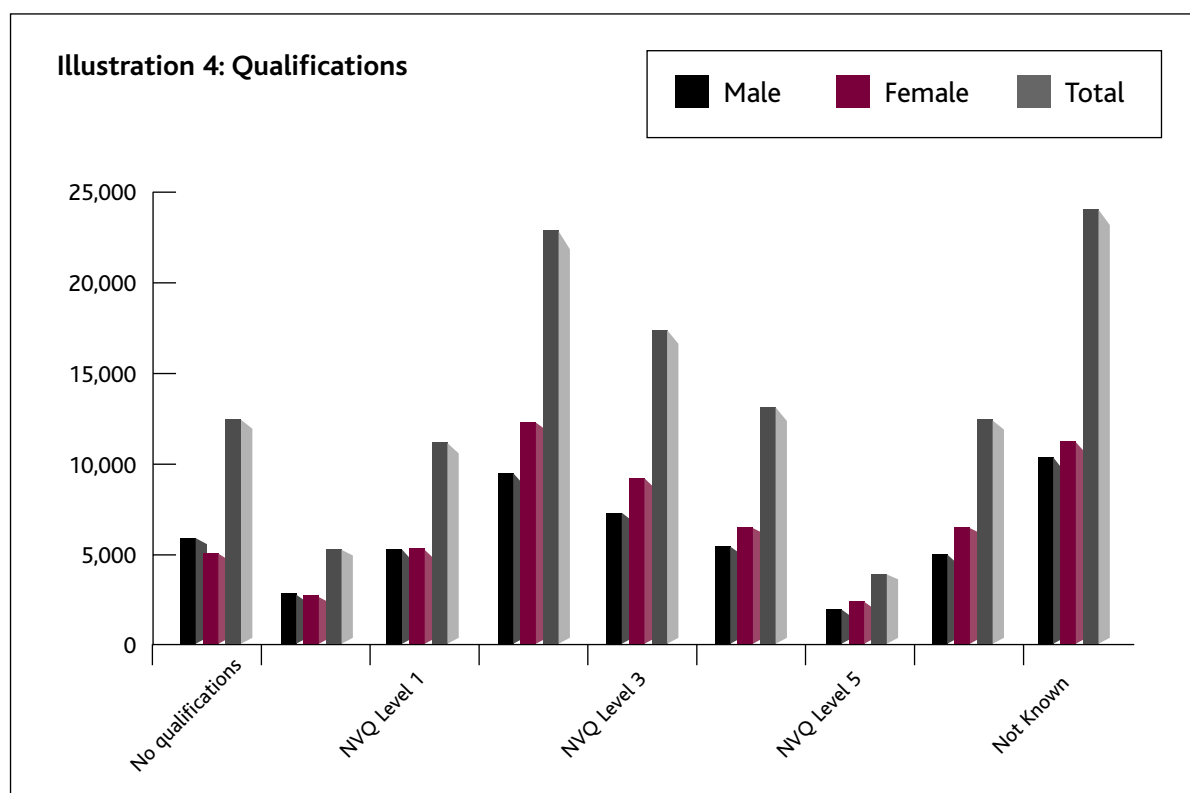
Table 6	% Total	% Males	% Females
No Qualifications	10	53	47
Below Level 1	4	52	48
Level 1	9	49	51
Level 2	18	44	56
Level 3	13	46	54
Level 4	10	44	56
Level 5	3	44	56
Not Stated	33	46	54

21 A broad comparison of the qualification levels of the client cohort and the population (England) as a whole is shown in the next table. Data on qualifications held was available for 104,996 clients, or 79% of the total, leaving a worryingly high 26,412 clients, or 21% of the total, with no qualification recorded. The biggest single number of qualifications held were NVQ2, at 24,963, or 19% of total.

22 No qualifications were held by 14,025 clients, or 11%, and 14,702, also around 11%, held 'other' qualifications. A broad comparison of the qualification levels of the client cohort and the population (England) shows a fairly mixed profile, with the most discernable difference being the relatively low proportions of people interviewed with no qualifications.

Table 7: Qualification levels: Clients seen compared with the population of England

Table 7	% Total	% England Population*
No qualifications	14	28.9
Level 1	9	16.6
Level 2	18	19.4
Level 3	13	8.3
Level 4	10	19.9
Level 5	3	6.9
Not Stated	33	-
* Census 2001, ONS (Total Population England)		



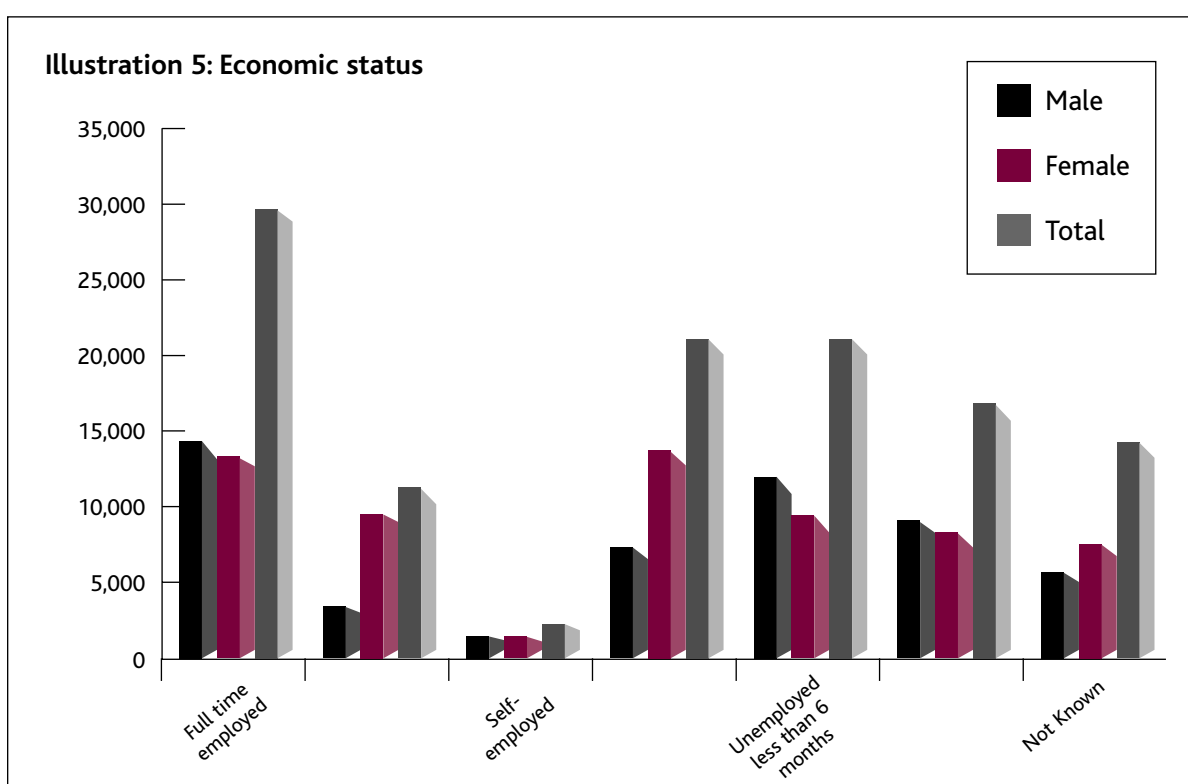
Economic status

23 The economic status of adults seen by IAG Partnerships is set out in the table below by gender. The total number of clients seen in employment was 49,645; of these, 65% were employed full-time, 29% part-time employed and 6% were self-employed. Of those out of work or unemployed, a total of 70,074, 39%

were non-employed, 33% had been unemployed for less than six months and 28% had been unemployed for more than six months. The levels of clients seen who have been unemployed for more than six months are a cause for concern. This is a priority client group for Jobcentre Plus and the additionality of services provided by IAG Partnerships must therefore be questioned.

Table 8: Economic status at present

Table 8	% Total	% Males	% Females
Full Time Employed	24	49	51
Part Time Employed	11	31	69
Self Employed	2	51	49
Non-Employed	20	38	62
Unemployed less than 6 months	17	60	40
Unemployed over 6 months	14	54	46
Not Known	12	41	59



Conclusions

24 In order to measure the impact of the IAG services funded by the LSC and to ensure value for money, a more comprehensive and robust set of data is required. Collecting management information on the client characteristics for those people in receipt of advice services is a start and enables baseline data to be established for longer-term evaluation and impact measurement to take place.

25 IAG Partnership co-ordinators must urgently note the following areas of concern and take suitable actions to address them immediately. These are:

26 Lack Of Client Characteristic Data - Client characteristic data was presented for 96% of clients seen, IAG services are offered free of charge to adults aged 20 and over with no upper age limit. The lack of data for 4% of clients seen raises issues regarding service eligibility and/or data collection and recording methods which must be immediately addressed.

27 Low Referral Volumes – Many clients who access IAG services will be better supported by another provider. Effective referral systems are essential to enable clients to access the services most appropriate for them. Given that adults yet to achieve a Level 2 qualification are a national priority group, it is concerning that referral figures relating to basic skills provision are so low. It is hoped that the recently published Learning Resources Pack for Frontline Staff Providing IAG and the associated Trainers Guide will raise awareness among IAG deliverers of the Skills for Life agenda, encourage staff to ensure they know what provision is available and increase associated client referral.

28 Under-achievement Of Delivery Profile - It is a requirement for the LSC, nationally and locally, and for IAG Partnerships and individual providers, to have a clear picture of the performance of the IAG initiative. The recent DfES research study *Client Needs for Coherent Information, Advice and Guidance Services on Learning and Work* (Research Report 479, published October 2003) specified that potential clients are motivated by an identified need for IAG support. Analysis of planned IAG Partnership activities to encourage local adults to access IAG services indicates a range of innovative service delivery models which will contribute to target achievement.

29 Management information collection has always been considered a fundamental element of good practice in information, advice and guidance to facilitate the evaluation and development of the service. Despite the concerns noted above, the collection and analysis of robust management information is becoming an embedded part of the IAG Partnership management process – the 51% increase in service delivery from the same period the previous year is testimony to this.

Annex One: Glossary of qualification levels

NVQ Level	Academic qualification equivalent	Vocational qualification equivalent
Level 0	Word power and number power	
Level 1	GCSE or O Level grades D to G (or fewer than 5 at grades A to C) CSE below grade 1 1 AS Level	BEC General Certificate BEC Diploma BTEC First Certificate City & Guilds Operative Awards CPVE Year 1 (Technician) GNVQ Foundation LCCI Elementary or First Level NVQ Level 1 PEI Elementary or First Level RSA Elementary or First Level RSA Vocational Certificate
Level 2	GCSE or O Level (5 or more at grades A to C) CSE grade 1 1 A Level 2 or 3 AS Levels	BEC General Certificate with Credit BEC Diploma with Credit BTEC First Diploma City & Guilds Higher Operative or Craft GNVQ Intermediate LCCI Certificate (Second Level) NVQ Level 2 PEI Stage 2 Pitman's Intermediate Level 2 Diploma Certificate RSA Diploma
Level 3	2 or more A Levels 4 or more AS Levels	BEC National ONC or OND BTEC National ONC or OND City & Guilds Advanced Craft GNVQ Advanced LCCI Diploma (Third Level) NVQ Level 3 Pitman's Level 3 Advanced Higher Certificate RSA Stage 3 Advanced Diploma TEC Certificate or Diploma Access to Higher Education Courses ESOL and Foreign Languages Advanced Awards

NVQ Level	Academic qualification equivalent	Vocational qualification equivalent
Level 4	Teaching qualifications (Including PGCE)	BEC National HNC or HND BTEC National HNC or HND Higher Education Certificate
	First degree	Higher Education Diploma LCCI Advanced Level NVQ Level 4 Nursing (SRN) RSA Advanced Certificate RSA Higher Diploma
Level 5	Higher degree	Continuing Education Diploma NVQ Level 5 Other high-level professional qualifications

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