



Department  
for Education

# **Post-16 education: highest level of achievement by age 25**

**England**

**May 2018**

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## About this report

This report presents experimental estimates describing different routes taken through post-16 education in England. The research focuses on a cohort of individuals who undertook GCSEs in 2004/05; it follows the cohort through post-16 learning and into the labour market using the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) Study. Educational achievement is measured at age 15 (GCSEs) and by ages 18, 23 and 25, and labour market outcomes are observed in the 2016-17 tax year.

## Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [jay.khamis@education.gov.uk](mailto:jay.khamis@education.gov.uk)

## Summary of findings

**There is a clear difference in the education outcomes of the cohort based on performance in GCSE examinations at age 15.**

- Students who achieved 5 good GCSEs and an academic level 3 tended to go on to achieve level 6 or higher by age 25; those who did not achieve 5 GCSEs typically reached level 3 at best.
- Just 8 per cent of those without 5 GCSEs achieved level 4 or higher by age 25, while 75 per cent for those with 5 GCSEs and an academic level 3 achieved a level 6 or higher (Figures 1 and 2 and Tables 1a and 1b).

**Higher levels of education by age 23 are associated with better labour market outcomes.**

- This is true for students with bottom, middle and top attainment in GCSE examinations at age 15. The difference in outcomes between level 6 and lower levels is greatest for those in the top GCSE attainment group.
- Earnings and labour market outcomes for students at level 4 and 5 are positive in comparison to level 3, and, for middle GCSE attainment students, similar to those for level 6 (Figure 5 and Tables 2 and 3).

**The number of students who achieved level 4 or level 5 as their highest qualification is very small compared to the numbers who achieved level 3 and level 6.**

- Just 4 per cent of the cohort achieved their highest qualification at level 4 or level 5, compared with 26 per cent for level 3 and 27 per cent for level 6 (Figure 1 and Tables 1a and 1b).

**The distributions of GCSE examination point scores are similar for students who reach level 3 and students who reach level 4 and 5 by age 25.**

- The distribution of scores for level 4 and 5 students also overlaps with the lower end of the distribution for students who reach level 6. The volumes of students in the three groups is greatest where the overlap in point scores is also greatest.

## Introduction

This report presents experimental statistics describing different pathways through post-16 education in England. It shows flows of individuals progressing to their highest level of learning by age 25, based on achievement at GCSEs (age 15) and by age 18. The report links level of achievement to earnings and employment outcomes in the 2016-17 tax year.

The aims of the research are to:

1. Describe the pathways individuals take through post-16 education.
2. Identify pathways to level 4 and 5 learning.
3. Describe students' earnings for different pathways.

The research follows students through post-16 learning and into the labour market using the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) Study. The privacy statement explaining how personal data in this project is shared and used is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-education-outcomes-study-how-we-use-and-share-data>

The LEO study links information about individuals, including:

- Personal characteristics such as age, sex and ethnicity.
- Education, including schools, further education colleges and higher education institution attended, courses taken, and qualifications achieved.
- Benefits claimed.
- Employment and income.

The analysis included in this report is exploratory. We will continue to develop the underlying data and so the methods, measures and results presented here are likely to change over time.

## Coverage

The statistics in this report cover a cohort of students who:

1. Were academic age 15 in the 2004/05 academic year.
2. Undertook GCSEs in the 2004/05 academic year.
3. Were in either state or private education, are recorded in the Young Persons' Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD), and are matched to the LEO study.

The analysis follows the same cohort of students over time between 2004/05 and 2014/15 to produce the estimates. There are 623,300 individuals in the cohort after matching to the LEO study – 97 per cent of the identified cohort in the YPMAD.

The statistics showing GCSE attainment and attainment by age 18 include the full cohort of students and are based on information in the YPMAD. Statistics showing achievement by age 23 and 25 are also based on the full cohort of students; however, these are based on Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data (further education learning) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record data (higher education learning) as well as the YPMAD.

The YPMAD matches several data sources together at an individual level, using personal identifiers such as name, date of birth, gender and home postcode where available. The sources include:

- Pupil level School Census database containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in state schools, collected by DfE.
- Awarding Organisation data including that collected as part of the School and College Performance Tables exercise, and separately from awarding organisations as part of the Vocational Qualifications Database up until 2010/11.
- Individualised Learner Record (ILR) database covering participation and qualifications obtained in Further Education (FE) and Work-based Learning (WBL), collected by the FE Data Service from learning providers.

Earnings estimates in this report include only those students in the cohort who were in sustained employment in the 2016-17 financial year (410,300 individuals).

The median earnings estimates are based on information recorded through Pay As You Earn (PAYE), which is used to collect income tax and national insurance by HMRC. Income recorded through the self-assessment tax system is not included in this report.

## Measures

Six measures are included in the report to describe the level of education achieved at different ages, GCSE attainment score, and earnings and employment in the 2016-17 financial year:

### **1. Highest level of achievement by age 23 or 25**

This combines YPMAD, ILR and HESA data to show the highest qualification level individuals achieved by either age 23 or 25. It does not account for whether achievements at level 2 and level 3 are “full” level qualifications (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at level 2 or 2 A-Levels at level 3).

## 2. GCSE attainment point score

The measure divides the cohort into three equally sized groups of low, middle and high GCSE attainment depending on their GCSE point score. The bottom third have a point score below 272, the middle third have a point score between 272 and 349 and the top third have a point score of 350 or higher. GCSE grades in 2004/05 relate to points in the following way:

GCSE grade	Points
A*	58
A	52
B	46
C	40
D	34
E	28
F	22
G	16
X	0

## 3. Attainment at age 15 and age 18

Describes whether individuals have achieved 5 GCSEs A\*-C at age 15, and whether individuals are qualified to full level 3, full level 2 or below level 2 by age 18. A further breakdown for students aged 18 shows whether the individuals undertook academic or other qualifications when achieving a level 2 or level 3. Academic qualifications here include only A-Levels, GCSEs and International Baccalaureate, while other is used as a catchall term for all other qualifications.

## 4. Median earnings in the 2016-17 tax year (age 26)

The measure uses HMRC PAYE data to show the median earnings of those in sustained employment during the tax year. The PAYE data does not include information on hours worked, meaning there is no distinction between individuals working full and part time.

## 5. Sustained employment in the 2016-17 tax year (age 26)

Individuals employed for at least one day in at least 5 of the 6 months between October 2016 and March 2017.

## 6. On benefits in the 2016-17 tax year (age 26)

Individuals who claimed Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance (work related activity group) for at least one day in the tax year.

The levels of education used to categorise the cohort are:

- **Below level 2** – education below GCSE level
- **Level 2** – equivalent to GCSEs
- **Level 3** – equivalent to A-Levels
- **Level 4 and 5** – sub-degree higher level education
- **Level 6** – degree level higher education
- **Level 7+** – post-graduate level higher education

The analysis groups level 4 and level 5 learning into a single category due to the small number of students at these levels.

**Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.** For example, the cohort in this report undertook GCSEs in 2004/05 and were age 15 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004.

Achievement at age 23 and 25 does not include information on the grade achieved by students, meaning that there is no differentiation between individuals who achieve a GCSE at grade A and those who achieve at grade D; both will count as an achievement of a level 2 qualification.

## Pathways through post-16 education

Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 1a and Table 1b present data showing the flows of students in the cohort over time and between three measures of educational achievement. The first measure is a summary of achievement in GCSEs at age 15, where achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C is equivalent to achieving a full level 2. The second summarises achievement in post-16 education by age 18, showing achievement of a full level 3 (equivalent to 2 A-Levels), full level 2 or below level 2, and whether the qualifications were academic or other. The third shows the highest level qualification a student has achieved by age 25. Taken together, the measures summarise pathways through post-16 education up to age 25. The latest information on attainment up to level 3 is published in the [level 2 and 3 attainment by young people](#) National Statistics release.

### Sankey charts: reading Figures 2 and 5

The rectangles (nodes) show the proportion of the cohort that fall into each of the categories at each point in time. The taller the rectangles, the greater the number of people within a category. The routes, or links, between nodes show the proportion of students who move between the categories at each point in time. The thicker the link, the greater the number of people transferring between categories.

## Headline findings

**There is a clear difference in the education outcomes of the cohort based on performance in GCSE examinations.** Students who achieved 5 good GCSEs and an academic level 3 tended to go on to achieve level 6 or higher by age 25; those who did not achieve 5 GCSEs typically reached level 3 at best. Just 8 per cent of those without 5 GCSEs achieved level 4 or higher by age 25, while 75 per cent for those with 5 GCSEs and an academic level 3 achieved a level 6 or higher.

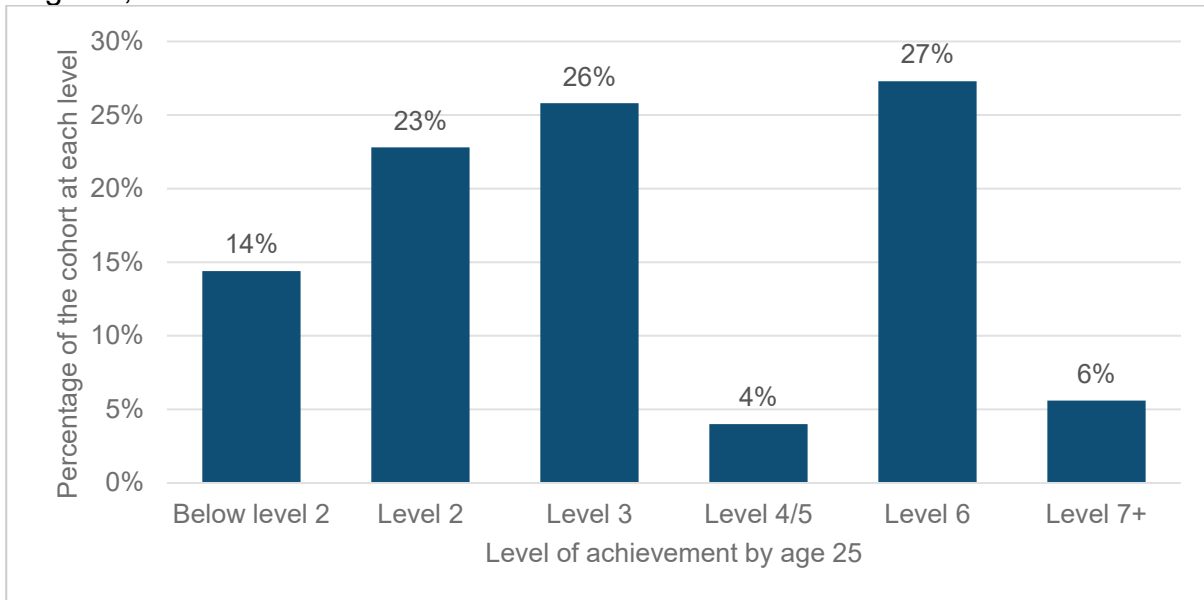
**The number of students who achieved level 4 or level 5 as their highest qualification is very small compared to the number who achieved level 3 and level 6.** Just 4 per cent of the cohort achieved their highest qualification at level 4 or level 5, compared with 26 per cent for level 3 and 27 per cent for level 6.

**The pathways into level 4 and level 5 qualifications are more diverse than for other higher level learning.** 24 per cent of those at level 4 or level 5 achieved fewer than 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C and 38 per cent achieved a non-academic level 3 by age 18. Conversely, just 9 per cent of those reaching level 6 achieved fewer than 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C, and 79 per cent achieved 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C and an academic level 3 by age 18. For those who achieved a level 7 or higher, this increases to 89 per cent.



**There are large flows of students who follow similar pathways up to age 18, but end up far apart by age 25.** 35 per cent of the cohort achieved good GCSEs at age 15 and an academic level 3 qualification by age 18. However, of these, 21 percent remain at level 3 by age 25, while 75 per cent reach level 6 or higher.

**Figure 1: Highest level achieved by age 25**  
England, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

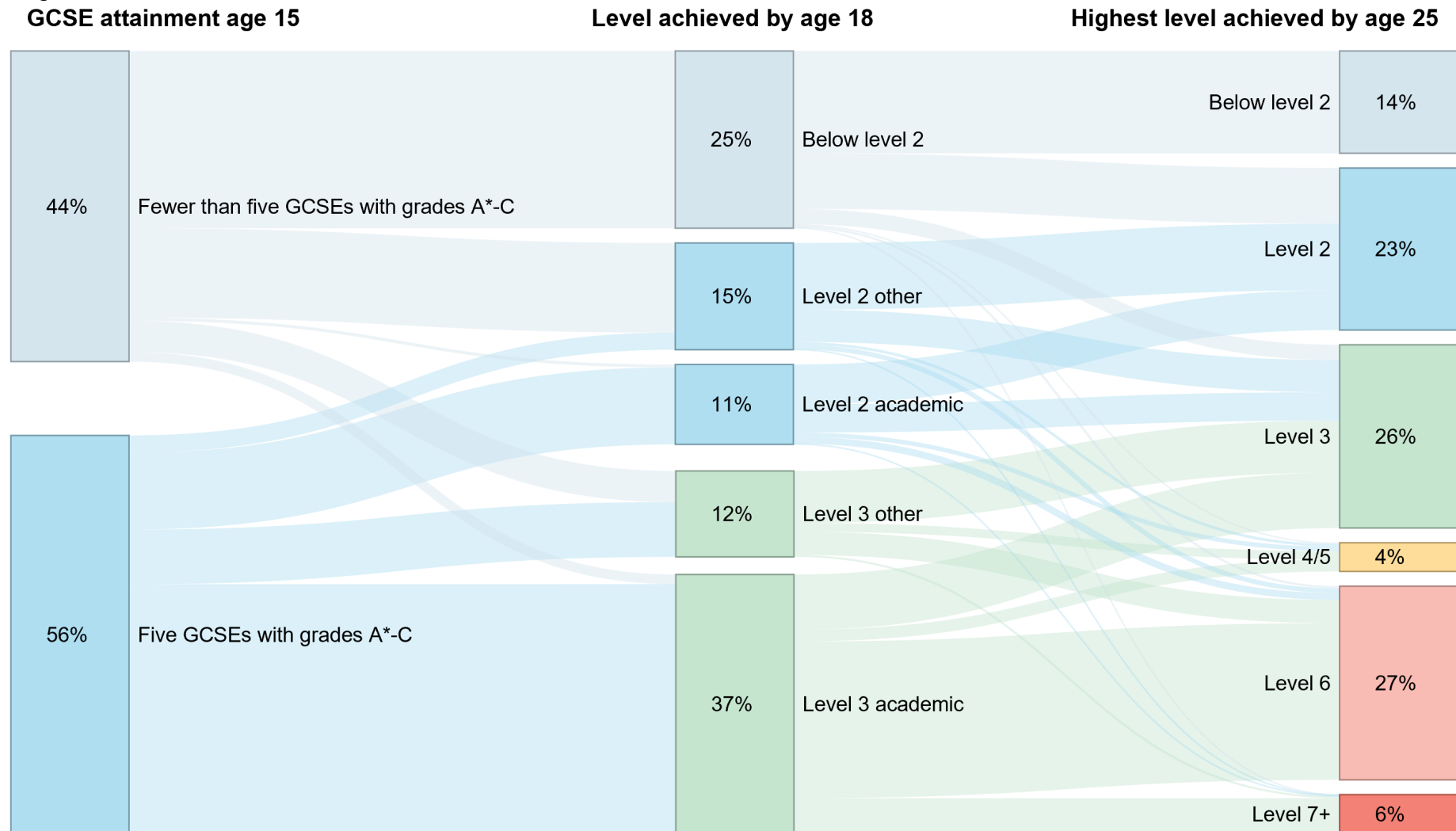
1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.

## GCSE point scores

Figures 3a and 3b show the distribution of GCSE point scores for individuals at level 3, levels 4 and 5, and level 6 by age 25. Figure 3a shows that students who achieve a higher level by age 25 tend to have a higher GCSE point score. There is overlap between the three groups – particularly between level 3 and level 4 and 5, and between level 4 and 5 and the lower end of level 6. The level 4 and 5 group has a more compact distribution than either level 3 or level 6.

Figure 3b shows that the largest group of individuals at these levels have a GCSE point score between 320 and 359, which is where the degree of overlap between the distributions is largest.

**Figure 2: Routes through post-16 education: highest level achieved by age 25**  
 England, 2004/05 to 2014/15, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.
2. The chart shows the cohort of 623,300 individuals who undertook GCSEs in 2004/05 and are included in the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) study.
3. Academic qualifications include only A-Levels, GCSEs and International Baccalaureate while other is a catchall term for all other qualifications not considered academic.

**Table 1a: Prior attainment and highest level achieved by age 25**

England, 2004/05 to 2014/15, cohort undertaking GCSEs in 2004/05

GCSE attainment age 15	Attainment by age 18	Highest level achieved by age 25						Total
		Below level 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5	Level 6	Level 7+	
Fewer than 5 GCSEs with grades A*-C		<b>89,900</b>	<b>98,700</b>	<b>61,500</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>15,100</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>272,900</b>
	<i>Below level 2</i>	89,900	48,900	13,400	1,100	2,000	400	155,800
	<i>Level 2 academic</i>	-	1,000	1,000	200	400	-	2,600
	<i>Level 2 other</i>	-	48,700	24,300	2,000	3,400	300	78,700
	<i>Level 3 academic</i>	-	-	3,400	600	3,900	500	8,500
	<i>Level 3 other</i>	-	-	19,500	2,300	5,400	300	27,400
5 GCSEs with grades A*-C		-	<b>43,800</b>	<b>99,400</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>155,100</b>	<b>33,100</b>	<b>350,400</b>
	<i>Level 2 academic</i>	-	33,900	23,900	3,600	5,600	600	67,600
	<i>Level 2 other</i>	-	9,900	4,000	400	600	100	15,100
	<i>Level 3 academic</i>	-	-	45,200	9,600	133,800	31,100	219,600
	<i>Level 3 other</i>	-	-	26,300	5,400	15,100	1,400	48,100
<b>Total</b>		<b>89,900</b>	<b>142,400</b>	<b>161,000</b>	<b>25,100</b>	<b>170,200</b>	<b>34,700</b>	<b>623,300</b>

**Table 1b: Prior attainment and highest level achieved by age 25 – percentages**

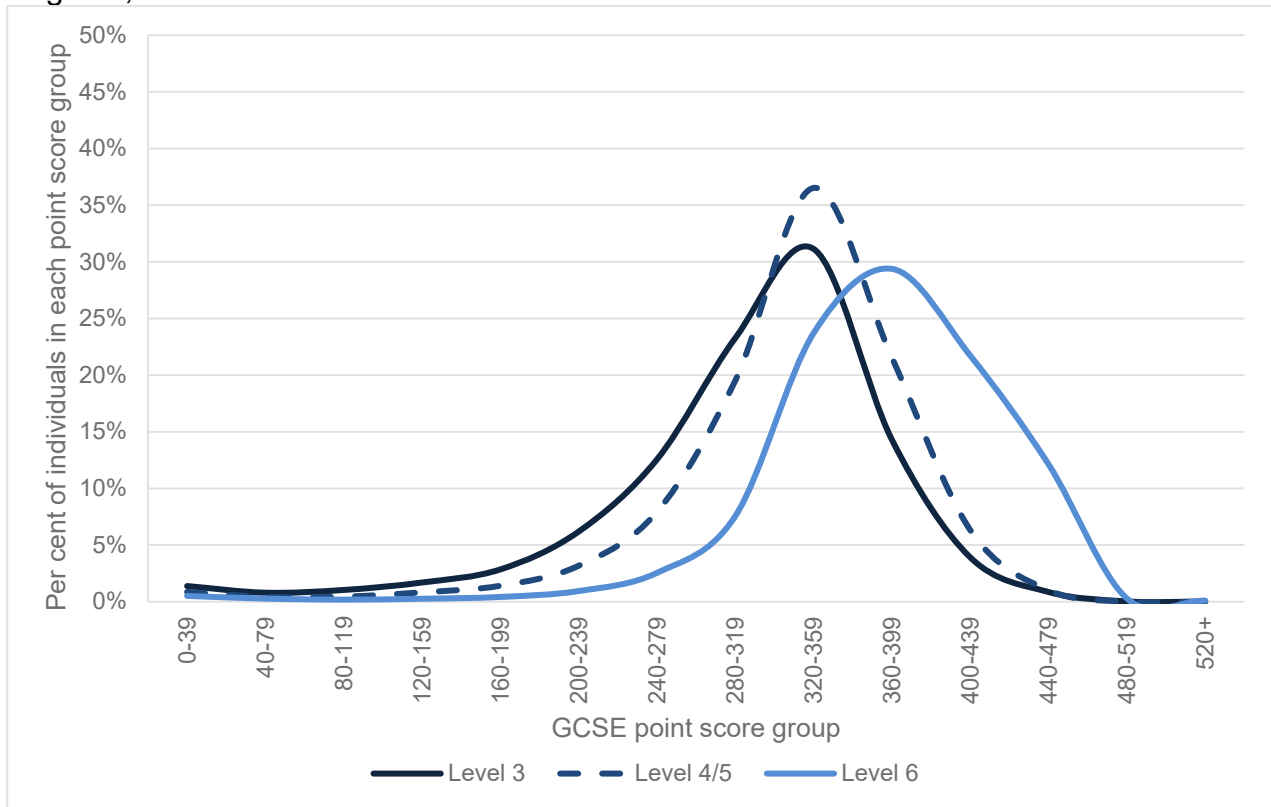
England, 2004/05 to 2014/15, cohort undertaking GCSEs in 2004/05

GCSE attainment age 15	Attainment by age 18	Highest level achieved by age 25						Total
		Below level 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5	Level 6	Level 7+	
Fewer than 5 GCSEs with grades A*-C		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>69.3%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>
	<i>Below level 2</i>	100.0%	34.4%	8.3%	4.3%	1.2%	1.2%	25.0%
	<i>Level 2 academic</i>	-	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	*	-	*
	<i>Level 2 other</i>	-	34.2%	15.1%	7.8%	2.0%	0.9%	12.6%
	<i>Level 3 academic</i>	-	-	2.1%	2.6%	2.3%	1.6%	1.4%
	<i>Level 3 other</i>	-	-	12.1%	9.0%	3.2%	0.9%	4.4%
5 GCSEs with grades A*-C		-	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>91.1%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>56.2%</b>
	<i>Level 2 academic</i>	-	23.8%	14.9%	14.3%	3.3%	1.8%	10.8%
	<i>Level 2 other</i>	-	7.0%	2.5%	1.6%	*	*	2.4%
	<i>Level 3 academic</i>	-	-	28.1%	38.4%	78.6%	89.4%	35.2%
	<i>Level 3 other</i>	-	-	16.4%	21.3%	8.8%	4.0%	7.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

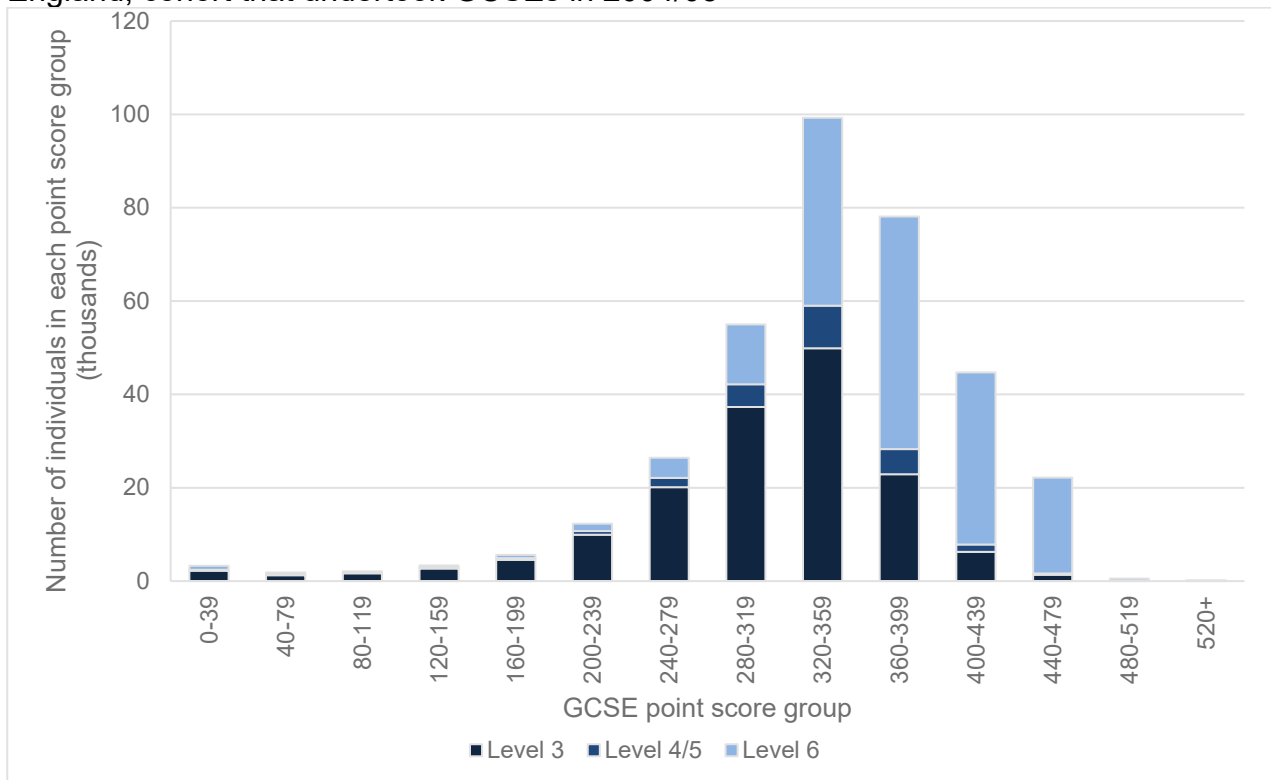
Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.
2. The chart shows the cohort of 623,300 individuals who undertook GCSEs in 2004/05 and are included in the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) study.
3. Academic qualifications include only A-Levels, GCSEs and International Baccalaureate while other is a catchall term for all other qualifications not considered academic.

**Figure 3a: Proportion of individuals by GCSE point score and level of achievement**  
 England, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



**Figure 3b: Volume of individuals by GCSE point score and level of achievement**  
 England, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Level of achievement shows highest level achieved by age 25 and age is based on academic age.

## Earnings estimates

This section presents data on median annualised earnings and employment outcomes in the 2016-17 tax year associated with different highest levels of achievement. The estimates focus on level achieved by age 23 and GCSE examination results. It is important to note that this analysis is experimental; for comprehensive statistics on outcomes and earnings, which are calculated differently to the estimates in this report, see the statistical releases on [graduate outcomes](#) and [further education outcome based success measures](#).

Level achieved by academic age 23 is used here to ensure there is sufficient time for students to enter the labour market before earnings are observed. By the time the cohort are academic age 23, the majority of those who will achieve a level 6 by age 25 have already done so. Movements toward higher qualifications are much smaller in the years after this age, as shown in Figure 4. The results show outcomes for achievement by age 23; it is not possible to generalise these findings to those achieving at a later age as the profile of individuals is likely to be different.

A common approach to estimating labour market outcomes associated with qualifications is to base the estimate on a specific number of years after the point of achievement. However, given that this analysis concerns a single cohort of students who finish education at different ages, this approach is problematic. Individuals at level 3 by age 23 will likely be much younger at their point of achievement than those who reach level 6. To account for the differences in age when comparing different qualification levels, the analysis observes earnings and employment outcomes at age 26 for all individuals in the cohort (in the 2016-17 tax year).

The estimates included in this report only account for age, level of study and GCSE attainment. There is a need to be very careful interpreting the numbers, as there is a large amount of unexplained variation in the data. Some examples of other important factors are:

- Time spent in employment since achieving highest qualification
- Additional qualifications gained after age 23, but before observing earnings
- Sector/occupation of work
- Grade achieved in qualifications attained
- Region of England
- Gender
- Individual motivation

In addition, these estimates only describe earnings at a single point in time. Earnings tend to increase over time, and the earnings associated with different levels of education and GCSE attainment could have different rates of increase. For example, median earnings for individuals with middle GCSE attainment at level 4 and 5 and level 6 look similar in the data but may diverge over time.

The numbers here do not attempt to describe or control for these factors; they show a descriptive picture of median earnings against GCSE attainment and level achieved by age 23. Further analysis is required to establish causality between level of education and earnings.

## Headline findings

The data in Table 2, Table 3 and Figure 5 suggest that higher levels of education by age 23 and better GCSE examination results at age 15 are associated with better labour market outcomes.

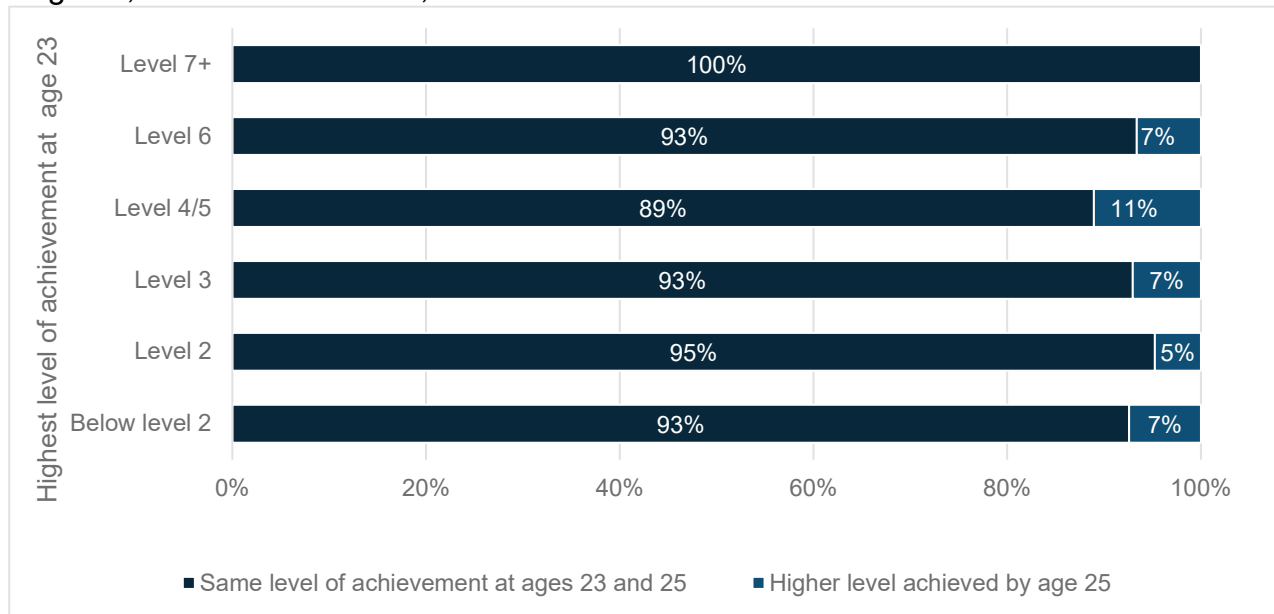
A higher level of education is associated with higher median earnings in each of the GCSE attainment groups. However, the increase in earnings associated with achieving a level 6 is greater for those with high GCSE scores. For those with middle GCSE attainment, median earnings for a level 6 achievement are £22,500; £2,900 higher than for level 3. For those with high GCSE attainment, median earnings for a level 6 achievement are £27,900, £5,900 more than for level 3. For each GCSE attainment group, individuals at level 6 are more likely to be in sustained employment and less likely to claim benefits than those at level 3.

Despite the low take up of level 4 or level 5 learning, the outcomes observed for students qualified to level 4 or level 5 by age 23 are positive. Earnings and employment outcomes for this group show:

- Those at level 4 or level 5 by age 23 have higher median earnings than those at level 3. For those with middle GCSE attainment, level 4 and 5 earnings are £21,900 (£2,300 higher than level 3); for those with high GCSE attainment, level 4 and 5 earnings are £24,200 (£2,100 higher than level 3).
- Individuals at level 4 and 5 by age 25 also have better employment prospects than those at level 3. For those with middle GCSE attainment, the level 4 and 5 sustained employment rate is 78 per cent, 4 ppts higher than level 3. For those with high GCSE attainment the rate is 79 per cent, 5 ppts higher than level 3.
- For those with middle GCSE attainment, median earnings for the level 4 or level 5 group are similar to the level 6 group; the level 4 or 5 group have median earnings of £21,900 compared to £22,500 for level 6.

It is important to note that given the small numbers achieving level 4 and level 5 qualifications, it is difficult to interpret comparisons with other levels. The analysis provides a useful description of differences in earnings but the courses on offer at level 4 and 5 may not be exactly comparable to the wide range of level 6 and level 3 learning available.

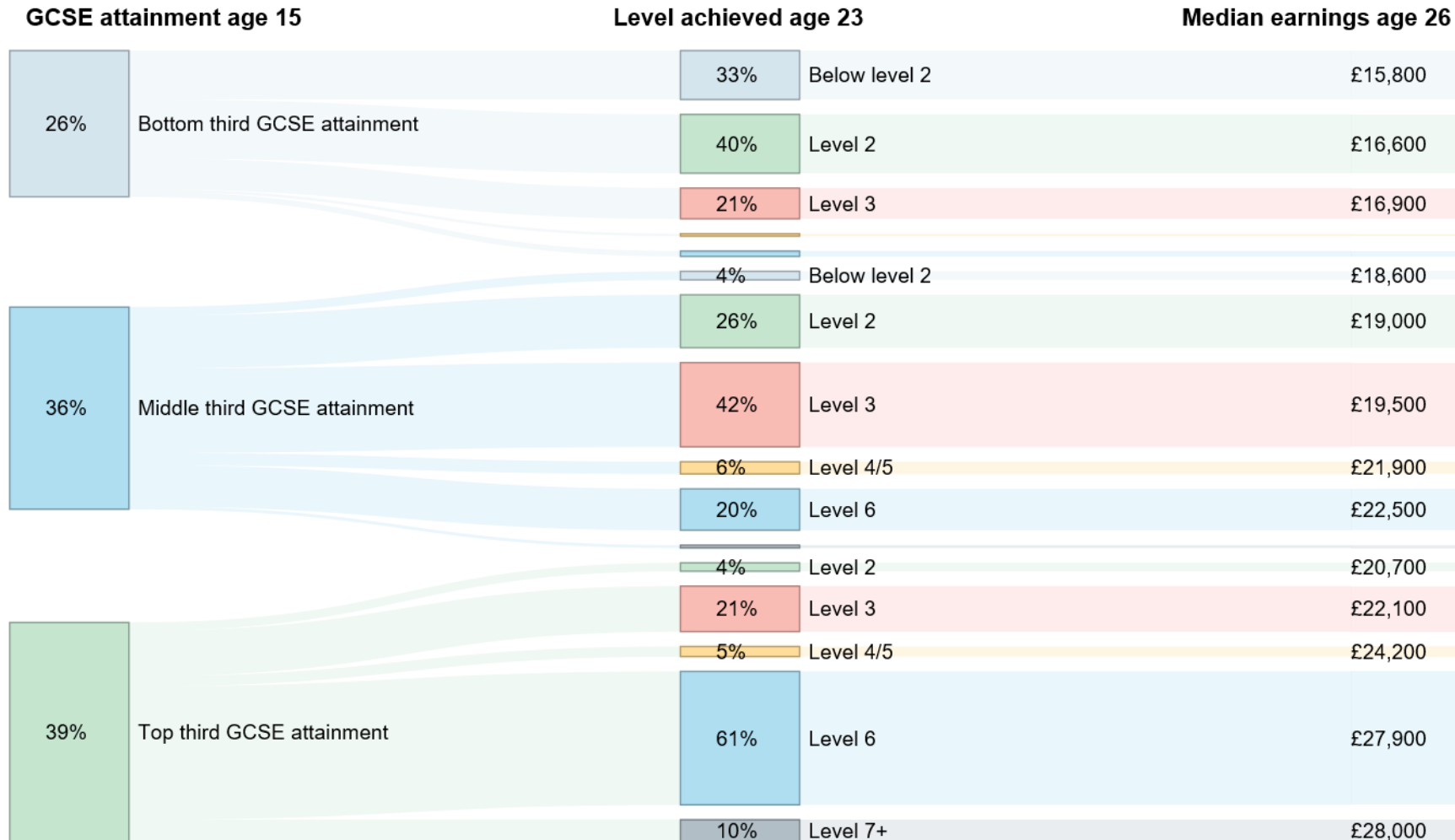
**Figure 4: Changes in level of achievement between ages 23 and 25**  
 England, 2003/04 to 2013/14, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.

**Figure 5: Median earnings by level achieved at age 23 and GCSE attainment score: cohort in sustained employment**  
 England, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05



Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.
2. This chart includes the 410,300 individuals in the cohort who were in sustained employment in the 2016-17 tax year.
3. GCSE attainment group splits the cohort into thirds based on GCSE point scores assigned to grades. The bottom third have a point score below 272, the middle third have a point score of between 272 and 349 and the top third have a point score of 350 or higher.



**Table 2: Median earnings by GCSE attainment at 15 and level achieved by age 23**  
 England, cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05

GCSE attainment group	Level achieved age 23	Median	Lower quartile	Upper quartile	Earnings cohort	Total cohort
Bottom third GCSE attainment						
	<i>Below level 2</i>	£15,800	£9,200	£21,500	34,100	83,200
	<i>Level 2</i>	£16,600	£10,500	£22,600	42,100	74,200
	<i>Level 3</i>	£16,900	£11,000	£23,500	22,200	34,400
	<i>Level 4/5</i>	£18,000	£12,500	£24,600	1,800	2,600
	<i>Level 6</i>	£19,500	£13,900	£26,300	3,900	5,800
	<i>Level 7+</i>	£19,800	£11,800	£28,500	300	600
Middle third GCSE attainment						
	<i>Below level 2</i>	£18,600	£11,700	£25,100	6,100	10,200
	<i>Level 2</i>	£19,000	£12,500	£25,900	38,100	57,700
	<i>Level 3</i>	£19,500	£13,600	£26,700	61,300	84,800
	<i>Level 4/5</i>	£21,900	£15,600	£29,600	8,900	11,600
	<i>Level 6</i>	£22,500	£16,500	£29,100	30,200	39,000
	<i>Level 7+</i>	£24,200	£17,900	£29,800	2,000	2,600
Top third GCSE attainment						
	<i>Below level 2</i>	-	-	-	-	-
	<i>Level 2</i>	£20,700	£13,300	£28,700	5,900	9,200
	<i>Level 3</i>	£22,100	£15,300	£30,200	33,100	46,300
	<i>Level 4/5</i>	£24,200	£17,000	£32,300	7,300	9,500
	<i>Level 6</i>	£27,900	£20,500	£37,200	97,300	125,200
	<i>Level 7+</i>	£28,000	£22,200	£34,200	15,500	19,600

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.
2. Earnings estimates include the 410,300 individuals in the cohort who were in sustained employment in the 2016-17 tax year.
3. The table excludes individuals without a GCSE attainment point score.
4. GCSE attainment group splits the cohort into thirds based on GCSE point scores assigned to grades. The bottom third have a point score below 272, the middle third have a point score of between 272 and 349 and the top third have a point score of 350 or higher.

**Table 3: Earnings and labour market outcomes by GCSE attainment and highest level achieved by age 23**

Cohort that undertook GCSEs in 2004/05, outcomes and earnings measured at age 26 in 2016-17 tax year

GCSE attainment	Level achieved age 23	Total cohort	Sustained employment	On benefits	Sustained employment (%)	On benefits (%)
Bottom third GCSE attainment	Below level 2	83,200	36,400	10,100	43.7%	12.1%
	Level 2	74,200	43,800	6,700	59.1%	9.0%
	Level 3	34,400	22,900	1,700	66.5%	5.1%
	Level 4/5	2,600	1,800	200	70.0%	6.3%
	Level 6	5,800	4,000	300	69.0%	4.9%
	Level 7+	600	300	-	59.9%	-
Middle third GCSE attainment	Below level 2	10,200	6,400	500	62.7%	5.0%
	Level 2	57,700	39,400	2,400	68.3%	4.1%
	Level 3	84,800	62,800	2,200	74.1%	2.6%
	Level 4/5	11,600	9,100	300	78.0%	2.4%
	Level 6	39,000	30,800	800	79.0%	2.1%
	Level 7+	2,600	2,100	100	79.4%	2.0%
Top third GCSE attainment	Below level 2	-	-	-	-	-
	Level 2	9,200	6,200	300	66.8%	2.8%
	Level 3	46,300	33,900	800	73.3%	1.7%
	Level 4/5	9,500	7,500	200	78.5%	1.8%
	Level 6	125,200	99,400	1,300	79.4%	1.0%
	Level 7+	19,600	15,900	100	81.3%	0.7%

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study.

1. Age is based on academic age, which is age at the start of the academic year, 31 August.
2. The table shows the cohort of individuals who undertook GCSEs in 2004/05. Earnings estimates include the 410,300 individuals in the cohort who were in sustained employment in the 2016-17 tax year.
3. The table excludes individuals without a GCSE attainment point score.
4. Sustained employment includes individuals employed for at least one day in 5 out of the 6 months between October 2016 and March 2017.
5. Benefits includes individuals who claimed Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance (work related activity group) for at least one day in the tax year.

## Related publications

- [Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils: 2016](#). Data on key stage 4 (KS4) and key stage 5 (KS5) students going into education, employment and training destinations.
- [Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2016](#). Latest information on the attainment of 19 year olds from 2004 to 2016
- [Further education outcome-based success measures: 2014 to 2015](#). Statistics showing the destination outcomes of learners completing further education training between 2014 and 2015 using longitudinal education outcomes data.
- [Graduate outcomes \(LEO\): 2015 to 2016](#). Employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates broken down by subject studied and graduate characteristics.
- [Graduate outcomes for all subjects by university](#). Employment and earnings of higher education graduates broken down by graduate characteristic, subject studied and university attended.
- [Graduate outcomes, by degree subject and university](#). Employment and earnings of higher education graduates broken down by graduate characteristic, subject studied and university attended.
- [The earnings differentials associated with vocational education and training](#). Research analysing the economic benefits to an individual from achieving further education qualifications.
- [Further education qualifications in maths and English: returns and benefits](#). Research analysing the economic benefits associated with further education qualifications in maths and English.
- [Further education: comparing labour market economic benefits from qualifications gained](#). Estimates the economic benefits to an individual from achieving further education qualifications.
- [Further education: impact of skills and training on the unemployed](#). This research estimates the economic benefits to unemployed individuals from achieving further education qualifications.
- [Longitudinal education outcomes study: how we use and share data](#). How the government shares and uses personal data as part of the 'Longitudinal education outcomes study'.

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