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LEVEL 2 AND 3 ATTAINMENT BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENGLAND MEASURED USING MATCHED ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: ATTAINMENT BY AGE 19 IN 2010 (PROVISIONAL)

INTRODUCTION

This SFR reports on the proportion of young people who attain Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by the age of 19.

Attainment is measured by matching together several administrative datasets containing information on qualifications achieved by young people. Estimates reported in this SFR include achievements in and up to the end of 2009/2010 and show attainment to Level 2 and Level 3 by individual age for ten different cohorts: people who were or will be aged 19 in each year between 2004 and 2013.

This SFR updates and replaces figures published in March 2010 in SFR 06/2010.

The SFR includes national figures for overall attainment by age, and attainment at 19 by qualification type, institution type, gender, and by whether the young person was in receipt of free school meals in year 11 - a key proxy for deprivation.

Additional tables published with the SFR show attainment by other characteristics, and attainment by local authority and region.

KEY POINTS

LEVEL 2 ATTAINMENT (Table 1)

In 2010, 81.5 per cent of people aged 19 were qualified to at least Level 2, an increase of 2.4 percentage points on those people aged 19 in 2009.

The proportion of people aged 19 qualified to at least Level 2 has risen by 14.7 percentage points since 2004.

LEVEL 3 ATTAINMENT (Table 2)

In 2010, 54.2 per cent of people aged 19 were qualified to Level 3, an increase of 2.5 percentage points on those people aged 19 in 2009. This is the largest annual increase since 2005.

The proportion of people aged 19 qualified to Level 3 has risen by 12.0 percentage points since 2004.

LATEST OUTTURNS BY AGE AND COHORT

Tables 1 and 2 below show the proportion of young people in each cohort qualified to Level 2+ and Level 3.

Table 1: Proportion of young people qualified to Level 2 or higher, by age and cohort

	16*	17	18	19	20	21	Population**
19 in 2004	49.6%	56.6%	62.5%	66.8%	69.5%	71.3%	614,564
19 in 2005	50.5%	58.5%	64.9%	69.2%	71.7%	73.4%	618,397
19 in 2006	52.3%	60.1%	67.0%	71.3%	73.8%	75.7%	631,893
19 in 2007	53.1%	61.8%	69.5%	73.8%	76.4%	78.3%	652,184
19 in 2008	55.5%	64.5%	72.3%	76.7%	79.2%	81.0%	645,403
19 in 2009	57.7%	66.8%	74.9%	79.1%	81.5%		656,208
19 in 2010	59.1%	68.6%	77.3%	81.5%			662,469
19 in 2011	61.3%	71.1%	80.0%				658,522
19 in 2012	64.3%	74.0%					637,210
19 in 2013	67.5%						636,776

Table 2: Proportion of young people qualified to Level 3, by age and cohort

	16*	17	18	19	20	21	Population**
19 in 2004	0.1%	11.8%	36.4%	42.2%	45.0%	46.7%	614,564
19 in 2005	0.1%	15.1%	39.1%	45.6%	48.5%	50.1%	618,397
19 in 2006	0.1%	15.2%	40.3%	47.0%	49.9%	51.7%	631,893
19 in 2007	0.1%	15.8%	41.4%	48.3%	51.7%	53.6%	652,184
19 in 2008	0.1%	16.0%	42.2%	49.9%	53.2%	55.3%	645,403
19 in 2009	0.1%	17.2%	43.5%	51.6%	55.3%		656,208
19 in 2010	0.1%	17.0%	45.0%	54.2%			662,469
19 in 2011	0.1%	17.5%	47.7%				658,522
19 in 2012	0.1%	18.3%					637,210
19 in 2013	0.1%						636,776

*Estimates at age 16 differ from other published figures on the attainment of pupils aged 15 in schools and colleges because there are differences in the methodologies used in calculating the numerators and denominators.

**The population is the size of the cohort at academic age 14, taken from the January termly count for the relevant year. For example, the 19 in 2010 population (people aged 18 on 31 August 2009) is the number of pupils aged 14 on 31 August 2005, see Table A1 for further explanation.

QUALIFICATION TYPE

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the qualification types by which young people achieve Level 2 between 16 and 19, for those aged 19 in 2004 -2010.

The proportion of young people reaching Level 2 or higher by age 16 and the proportion of the cohort reaching Level 2 between 16 and 19 have both increased year on year between 2004 and 2010.

The proportion of 16 to 19 year olds achieving Level 2 via Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQs) has risen each year, from 1.0 per cent in 2004 to 10.0 per cent in 2010. VRQs are the most common way of reaching Level 2 post-16. In 2010, 45 per cent of all young people who gained Level 2 between 16 and 19 did so through VRQs.

The proportion of 19 year olds achieving Level 2 post-16 via Apprenticeships remained unchanged between 2009 and 2010, having fallen slightly over the previous two years.

Table 4 shows the proportion of people at age 19 in 2004-2010 qualified to Level 3, by the qualification type they achieved to reach that level.

The proportion achieving Level 3 through A/AS levels increased by 0.3 percentage points between 2009 and 2010; this is the second year-on-year increase following falls each year between 2004 and 2008. Whilst A-Levels remain by far the most common qualification type for 19 year olds to reach Level 3, they account for a decreasing proportion of overall attainment at 19. In 2004, they accounted for 92 per cent of all Level 3 attainment at 19, but by 2010 they only accounted for 70 per cent.

The proportion of 19 year olds reaching Level 3 via VRQs has increased by 10.9 percentage points since 2004, standing at 13.0 per cent in 2010 – up 1.8 percentage points since last year. VRQs account for around a quarter (24 per cent) of all Level 3 at 19 attainment.

Attainment of Level 3 at 19 through Advanced Apprenticeships has risen annually since 2007, albeit by only 0.1 percentage points per year.

INSTITUTION TYPE

Table 5 and table 6 show breakdowns of the institution type attended when young people achieve Level 2 and Level 3 respectively, between 16 and 19.

At Level 2, there has been relatively little change in the breakdown of attainment of Level 2 by institution type between 2009 and 2010, with the exception of attainment through FE colleges, which rose from 11.6 per cent in 2009 to 12.5 per cent in 2010. FE colleges account for over half of all Level 2 attainment between 16 and 19.

At Level 3, there were increases between 2009 and 2010 in attainment through all the main institution types. The largest increase was in attainment in FE colleges, which rose by 1.3 percentage points, from 14.2 per cent in 2009 to 15.5 per cent in 2010. However, maintained schools were still the most common institution type through which Level 3 was achieved. 21.9 per cent of young people attained Level 3 in maintained schools, with a further 0.7 per cent doing so in CTCs and academies.

GENDER

Table 7 shows the proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to at least Level 2, and to Level 3, by gender.

A higher proportion of females attain Level 2 or higher by age 19 than males. 85.0 per cent of females attained at least Level 2 by age 19 in 2010, in comparison to 78.2 per cent of males. The attainment gap between males and females in attainment of Level 2 at 19 has been falling each year, from 10.2 per cent in 2004 to 6.8 per cent in 2010.

In 2010, 59.8 per cent of females attained Level 3 by 19, in comparison to 48.8 per cent of males. However, the gap between males and females closed by 0.5 percentage points between 2009 and 2010, having otherwise increased since 2004.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM)

Table 8 shows the proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to at least Level 2, and to Level 3, by whether they were in receipt of free school meals in year 11.

In 2010 61.0 per cent of young people who had been in receipt of free school meals in year 11 had achieved Level 2 by age 19, compared to 81.3 per cent of those who had not. Between 2005 and 2010 the gap in attainment of Level 2 at 19 between those in receipt of free school meals and their peers closed by 8.0 percentage points, from 28.3 per cent in 2005 to 20.2 per cent in 2010.

In 2010, the Level 3 attainment of young people who had been in receipt of free school meals in year 11

was 24.2 percentage points lower than those not in receipt of free school meals. The gap in attainment of Level 3 at 19 between those in receipt of free school meals and their peers closed by 2.2 percentage points between 2005 and 2010.

Table 3: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 2 or higher, by qualification type at which Level 2 was achieved and cohort

Young people aged:	Proportion achieving Level 2 by 16; All qualifications	Achieved post-16, Qualification Type:							Total Population with a Level 2 by age 19	Proportion achieving a Level 2 by age 19	Population
		5 GCSEs	Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 2	VRQ Level 2	GNVQs or a combination of GNVQs and GCSEs	Level 3 Qualifications	Combination of qualifications			
19 in 2004	49.6%	1.5%	3.0%	4.2%	1.0%	3.5%	3.7%	0.3%	410,338	66.8%	614,564
19 in 2005	50.5%	1.4%	3.7%	3.5%	3.0%	3.2%	3.8%	0.3%	428,132	69.2%	618,397
19 in 2006	52.3%	1.4%	4.1%	3.0%	4.3%	2.5%	3.4%	0.2%	450,566	71.3%	631,893
19 in 2007	53.1%	1.5%	4.4%	3.2%	6.3%	1.9%	3.2%	0.2%	481,192	73.8%	652,184
19 in 2008	55.5%	1.4%	4.2%	3.3%	7.8%	1.2%	3.1%	0.2%	494,750	76.7%	645,403
19 in 2009	57.7%	1.5%	4.0%	3.3%	9.0%	0.5%	2.9%	0.1%	518,812	79.1%	656,208
19 in 2010	59.1%	1.4%	4.0%	3.5%	10.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.1%	539,980	81.5%	662,469

Table 4: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 3, by qualification type at which Level 3 was achieved and cohort

Young people aged:	Qualification Type:					Total Population with a Level 3 by age 19*	Proportion achieving a Level 3 by age 19	Population
	AS, A-Levels, AVCEs or Advanced GNVQs	Advanced Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 3	VRQ Level 3	International Baccalaureate			
19 in 2004	38.6%	0.5%	0.9%	2.2%	0.0%	259,317	42.2%	614,564
19 in 2005	38.5%	0.7%	0.9%	5.6%	0.0%	282,279	45.6%	618,397
19 in 2006	38.1%	1.0%	1.0%	6.8%	0.2%	297,019	47.0%	631,893
19 in 2007	37.6%	1.0%	1.1%	8.3%	0.3%	315,222	48.3%	652,184
19 in 2008	37.0%	1.1%	1.3%	10.3%	0.3%	322,355	49.9%	645,403
19 in 2009	37.5%	1.2%	1.3%	11.2%	0.3%	338,745	51.6%	656,208
19 in 2010	37.8%	1.3%	1.5%	13.0%	0.4%	358,848	54.2%	662,469

*Includes a very small number of individuals achieving via a combination of qualifications.

Table 5: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 2 or higher, by institution type attended when Level 2 achieved and cohort

Young people aged:	Achieved by 16: proportion achieving level 2 by 16:all institutions	Achieved post-16, Institution Type:							Total Population with a Level 2 by age 19	Proportion achieving a Level 2 by age 19	Population
		Maintained School	Independent School	Sixth Form College	Other FE	Work Based Learning	Other**	CTCs /Academies			
19 in 2004	49.6%	3.2%	0.6%	1.3%	6.9%	4.3%	0.9%	0.0%	410,338	66.8%	614,564
19 in 2005	50.5%	3.2%	0.5%	1.3%	8.3%	4.4%	1.0%	0.0%	428,132	69.2%	618,397
19 in 2006	52.3%	2.9%	0.5%	1.3%	8.8%	4.4%	1.0%	0.0%	450,566	71.3%	631,893
19 in 2007	53.1%	3.0%	0.5%	1.4%	10.2%	4.4%	1.1%	0.1%	481,192	73.8%	652,184
19 in 2008	55.5%	2.9%	0.5%	1.3%	11.0%	4.1%	1.2%	0.1%	494,750	76.7%	645,403
19 in 2009	57.7%	2.9%	0.5%	1.3%	11.6%	4.0%	1.0%	0.1%	518,812	79.1%	656,208
19 in 2010	59.1%	3.1%	0.5%	1.3%	12.5%	3.9%	0.9%	0.1%	539,980	81.5%	662,469

** Includes those institution types which do not fall into the main institution categories such as higher education institutes, charitable/voluntary organisations and other local authority services and organisations.

Table 6: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 3, by institution type attended when Level 3 was achieved and cohort

Young people aged:	Institution Type:							Total Population with a Level 3 by age 19	Proportion achieving a Level 3 by age 19	Population
	Maintained School	Independent School	Sixth Form College	Other FE	Work Based Learning	Other**	CTCs /Academies			
19 in 2004	19.6%	5.3%	7.2%	8.5%	0.9%	0.4%	0.2%	259,317	42.2%	614,564
19 in 2005	20.3%	5.3%	7.4%	10.8%	1.1%	0.5%	0.3%	282,279	45.6%	618,397
19 in 2006	20.6%	5.2%	7.6%	11.5%	1.2%	0.6%	0.3%	297,019	47.0%	631,893
19 in 2007	20.8%	5.2%	7.8%	12.4%	1.1%	0.6%	0.3%	315,222	48.3%	652,184
19 in 2008	21.0%	5.3%	8.0%	13.4%	1.2%	0.7%	0.3%	322,355	49.9%	645,403
19 in 2009	21.6%	5.3%	8.2%	14.2%	1.4%	0.5%	0.4%	338,745	51.6%	656,208
19 in 2010	21.9%	5.4%	8.6%	15.5%	1.6%	0.5%	0.7%	358,848	54.2%	662,469

** Includes those institution types which do not fall into the main institution categories such as higher education institutes, charitable/voluntary organisations and other local authority services and organisations.

Table 7: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 2 or higher and to Level 3, by gender and cohort

	Level 2+ at 19			Level 3 at 19		
	Males	Females	gap	Males	Females	gap
19 in 2004	61.8%	72.0%	10.2%	37.7%	46.8%	9.1%
19 in 2005	64.4%	74.3%	9.9%	41.0%	50.6%	9.6%
19 in 2006	66.5%	76.3%	9.8%	42.0%	52.3%	10.3%
19 in 2007	69.2%	78.5%	9.3%	43.0%	53.9%	10.9%
19 in 2008	72.3%	81.2%	8.9%	44.4%	55.7%	11.4%
19 in 2009	75.3%	83.0%	7.7%	46.0%	57.5%	11.5%
19 in 2010	78.2%	85.0%	6.8%	48.8%	59.8%	10.9%

Table 8: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to Level 2 or higher and to Level 3, by whether in receipt of free school meals (FSM) in year 11 and cohort

	Level 2+ at 19			Level 3 at 19		
	Not FSM	FSM	gap	Not FSM	FSM	gap
19 in 2005	71.1%	42.8%	28.3%	46.3%	19.9%	26.4%
19 in 2006	72.7%	45.2%	27.5%	47.2%	21.0%	26.3%
19 in 2007	74.8%	49.0%	25.8%	48.4%	22.7%	25.6%
19 in 2008	77.2%	53.5%	23.7%	49.7%	24.5%	25.1%
19 in 2009	79.2%	57.2%	22.0%	51.2%	26.7%	24.6%
19 in 2010	81.3%	61.0%	20.2%	53.6%	29.4%	24.2%

NOTES TO EDITORS

BACKGROUND

1. Estimates reported in this SFR are derived from matched administrative data. The first publication of figures from this methodology was in February 2005. The matched data methodology was introduced on the recommendation of a National Statistics Quality Review¹.

METHODOLOGY

2. Several data sources are matched together at an individual level, using personal identifiers such as name, date of birth, gender and home postcode where available:
 - Pupil level Schools Census database containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in maintained schools, collected by DFE.
 - Awarding Body data collected as part of the Achievement and Attainment Tables exercise.
 - National Information System for Vocational Qualifications (NISVQ) database containing information on people's vocational achievements at all institutions, collected from awarding bodies.
 - 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.
3. Achievement records from Awarding Body data, NISVQ and ILR are used to calculate the numerators. Results are only published at an aggregate level to protect the confidentiality of individuals.
4. The 19 in 2010 cohort is the group of pupils aged 19 by the end of the 2009/10 academic year (ie aged 19 on 31/08/2010) as outlined in Table A1 below.

Table A1. Outline of the relationship between academic year, academic age and year group, for the 19 in 2010 cohort.

Academic year	Academic age (years)	Year group	Age by end of academic year
2005/06	14	10	15
2006/07	15	11	16
2007/08	16	12	17
2008/09	17	13	18

QUALIFICATIONS COUNTED

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at Level 2+:

- 1 short GCSE at grade A* to C equals 10%
- 1 full GCSE at grade A* to C equals 20%
- 1 Double Award GCSE (including VGCSEs) at grade A* to C equals 40%
- 1 part 1 intermediate GNVQ equals 40%
- 1 full intermediate GNVQ equals 80%
- 1 AS level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 50%

¹ The final report is available at www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/quality_review/education.asp

- 1 A/A2 level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 100%
- 1 Advanced GNVQ pass equals 100%
- 1 Advanced Pilot 6 unit GNVQ equals 100%
- 1 NVQ pass at Level 2 or higher equals 100%
- 1 'full' VRQ² pass at Level 2 or higher equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%
- 1 Apprenticeship pass equals 100%
- 1 Advanced Extension Award equals 5%
- 1 free standing maths qualification at Level 3 equals 10%
- 1 Key Skills pass at Level 3 equals 20%
- 1 "Approved" iGCSE in 2009/10 counts 20%
- 1 Pre-U Principal Subject counts 80%
- 1 Pre-U Short Course Subject counts 40%

5. Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at Level 3:

- 1 AS level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 25%
- 1 A/A2 level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 50%
- 1 Advanced GNVQ pass equals 100%
- 1 NVQ pass at Level 3 or higher equals 100%
- 1 'full' VRQ² pass at Level 3 or higher equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%
- 1 Advanced Apprenticeship pass equals 100%
- 1 Pre-U Principal Subject counts 50%
- 1 Pre-U Short Course Subject counts 25%
- 1 Advanced Pilot 6 unit GNVQ equals 50%
- 1 Advanced Extension Award equals 5%
- 1 Free Standing Maths Qualification at Level 3 equals 10%
- 1 Key Skills pass at Level 3 equals 15%

6. Combinations of qualifications at different levels are allowed where their parts add up to 100 per cent for that level. For example a candidate with 3 full GCSEs at grades A* to C (20% each) and 1 AS level (50%) would be deemed to have attained a Level 2 (60% + 50% = 110%).

7. GCSEs and GNVQs are subject to discounting, as are AS and A/A2 levels. For example, say a learner gains 1 short GCSE (10%) in 2000 and 1 full GCSE (20%) in the same subject in 2001. Correct discounting means the person has 10% of a full Level 2 in 2000 and then 20% in 2001 as the short GCSE is replaced by the full one.

8. In tables 3 and 4 people are assigned to qualification types in the following order:

- Level 2: 5 GCSEs; Apprenticeships; NVQ; VRQ; GNVQs or a combination of GNVQs and GCSEs; Level 3 Qualifications; Combination of qualifications.
- Level 3: AS, A-Levels, AVCEs or Advanced GNVQs; Advanced Apprenticeship; NVQ; VRQ; International Baccalaureate.

REVISIONS TO PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED FIGURES

9. This SFR reports revised figures compared to last year. The main causes of revisions are:

- **Re-matching between data sources.** Each year the data is re-matched and this can alter the

² A complete list of 'full' VRQ qualification codes used in the measure is available on request.

Level 2 and Level 3 attainment figures slightly (either increasing or decreasing them).

Previously there may have been a small number of cases where there was double-counting for the same person (i.e. two records for the same person when there should have been one), or where one record should have been identified two people in the matched data.

- **Additional VRQs counted.** Analysis of awarding body data showed that historically some young people were achieving VRQ Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications that were being reported in the main awarding body data but not through the NISVQ collection or the ILR, and consequently their achievement had not been counted in previous years. The specification was changed so that these awards are now counted. In addition, the list of VRQs counted was updated this year to include several accredited qualifications that had not been counted in previous years. The net impact of these changes was to increase historical estimates of Level 2 at 19 by up to 0.4 percentage points, and of Level 3 at 19 by up to 0.3 percentage points.

NUMERATOR ADJUSTMENTS

10. The National Statistics Quality Review recommended that an adjustment is applied to the Level 2+ numerator to avoid double counting caused by migration (see section 3 of the Quality Review report for more information). Throughout the historical series people that have been recorded as having reached Level 3 but without having any Level 2 achievements were excluded from the Level 2+ numerator as they were assumed to be inward migrants i.e. people who were not in school at age 14. They are included in the Level 3 numerator. Last year this methodology was refined slightly, and the historical series updated as a result. The adjustment is now only applied to those who enter the data post-16 (ie after year 11), and it is now applied to those reaching Level 2 through any Level 3 qualifications (not just a full Level 3) in the first year that they enter the data. So for example someone appearing in the data for the first time after year 11 who reaches Level 2 through the achievement of two AS levels has their Level 2 discounted.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

SFR 06/2010 – Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2009 (Provisional)

SFR 01/2011 – GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2009/10 (Revised)

SFR 02/2011 – GCE/Applied GCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results in England, 2009/10 (Revised)

USER CONSULTATION

11. The Department for Education aims to make its statistics relevant and useful. The User Consultation page of the DfE Research and Statistics Gateway details a number of ways in which users can provide feedback on our statistical products. This can be accessed here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/usercons.shtml>