

**SFR 06/2007**

**27 February 2007**

**Coverage: England**

**Theme: Education and Training**

**Issued by**  
Department for Education  
and Skills  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

**Telephone:**  
**Press Office**  
020 7925 6789  
**Public Enquiries**  
0870 000 2288

**Statistician**  
Laurie Thompson  
0114 259 3955

**Email**  
[info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

**Internet**  
[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/  
rsgateway/DB/SFR/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **LEVEL 2 AND 3 ATTAINMENT BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENGLAND MEASURED USING MATCHED ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: ATTAINMENT BY AGE 19 IN 2006 (PROVISIONAL)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This SFR reports progress against the Department's PSA target to "increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least level 2 by three percentage points between 2004 and 2006, and a further two percentage points between 2006 and 2008, and increase the proportion of young people who achieve level 3."
2. The PSA target 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 2005/06 and show attainment to level 2 and 3 by individual age for six different cohorts: people who were or will be aged 19 in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.
3. This SFR updates and replaces figures published in February 2006 in SFR 06/2006.

### **KEY POINTS**

#### **LEVEL 2 ATTAINMENT (Table 1)**

4. 71.4 percent of people aged 19 in 2006 were qualified to at least level 2.
5. The level 2 PSA baseline for the first part of the target has been revised downwards – this SFR shows that 66.3 percent of people aged 19 in 2004 were qualified to at least level 2, down from the 66.8 percent reported last year. Therefore the 2006 target has also been revised downwards, to 69.3 percent from 69.8 percent.
6. The first part of the target has been exceeded – There has been a 5.1 percentage point increase in attainment of people aged 19 between 2004 and 2006.
7. The baseline for the second part of the target is set at 71.4 percent and the 2008 target is 73.4 percent of people aged 19 to be qualified to at least level 2.

#### **LEVEL 3 ATTAINMENT (Table 2)**

8. 46.8 percent of people aged 19 in 2006 were qualified to level 3, an increase of 1.2 percentage points on those people aged 19 in 2005.
9. 41.2 percent of people who will be 19 in 2007 have already reached level 3 by age 18 – higher than figures for 18 year olds

in the previous three years.

## LATEST OUTTURNS BY COHORT AND AGE

10. 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**

Young people aged:	Age						Population**
	16*	17	18	19	20	21	
19 in 2004	49.2%	56.1%	62.0%	66.3%	69.1%	71.1%	614,560
19 in 2005	50.3%	58.5%	64.9%	69.3%	72.0%	-	618,400
19 in 2006	52.2%	60.1%	67.1%	71.4%	-	-	631,890
19 in 2007	53.0%	62.2%	70.4%	-	-	-	652,180
19 in 2008	55.5%	64.9%	-	-	-	-	645,400
19 in 2009	57.2%	-	-	-	-	-	656,210

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

Young people aged:	Age						Population**
	16*	17	18	19	20	21	
19 in 2004	0.1%	11.8%	36.3%	42.1%	44.8%	46.3%	614,560
19 in 2005	0.1%	15.0%	39.1%	45.6%	48.4%	-	618,400
19 in 2006	0.1%	15.2%	40.2%	46.8%	-	-	631,890
19 in 2007	0.1%	15.8%	41.2%	-	-	-	652,180
19 in 2008	0.1%	16.0%	-	-	-	-	645,400
19 in 2009	0.1%	-	-	-	-	-	656,210

\*Estimates at age 16 differ from other published figures on the attainment of pupils aged 15 in schools and colleges because different denominators are used, there are differences in qualifications counted and matching means the numerators are not quite the same.

\*\*The population is the size of the cohort at academic age 14, taken from the Annual Schools Census count for the relevant year. For example, the 19 in 2006 population (people aged 18 on 31 August 2005) is the number of pupils aged 14 on 31 August 2001.

11. Approximately 438,000 19 year olds were needed to reach level 2+ by 2006 to meet the first part of the PSA target. The target was surpassed with about 451,000 19 year olds in 2006 qualified to level 2 or higher.
12. Approximately 474,000 19 year olds need to have reached level 2+ by 2008 to meet the second part of the PSA target. Based on achievements by this age group to age 17 (table 1) another 55,000 people need to reach this level to be sure of meeting the target; by comparison around 71,000 people reached level 2+ between the ages of 17 and 19 in the 19 in 2006 cohort.
13. The proportions of people at all ages reaching levels 2 and 3 have increased with every cohort.

## **QUALIFICATION TYPE BREAKDOWN**

14. 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, 2005 and 2006.
15. The proportions of 19 year olds reaching level 2 or higher by age 16 and between 16 and 19 have both increased year on year between 2004 and 2006.
16. The proportions of 16 to 19 year olds achieving via VRQs and Apprenticeships have risen each year. VRQs have taken over from NVQs as the most common way of reaching level 2 post-16.
17. Table 4 shows the proportion of people at age 19 in 2004, 2005 and 2006 qualified to level 3 by the qualification type they achieved to reach that level.
18. A-Levels remain by far the most common qualification type for 19 year olds to reach level 3 despite falling by 0.5 percentage points between 2004 and 2006. The proportion reaching level 3 via VRQs in the population has increased by 4.7 percentage points in this time.

## **INSTITUTION TYPE BREAKDOWN**

19. Table 5 shows the a breakdown of the institution types at which young people achieve level 2 between 16 and 19, for those aged 19 in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
20. The proportions of people reaching level 2 post-16 at FE institutions, Work Based Learning institutions and sixth form colleges have increased between those aged 19 in 2004 and 2006. The proportion achieving level 2 post-16 in maintained schools has fallen.
21. Table 6 shows the proportion of people at age 19 in 2004, 2005 and 2006 qualified to level 3 by the institution type at which they reached that level.
22. The proportions of 19 year olds reaching level 3 have increased at FE institutions, Work Based Learning institutions and sixth form colleges. The proportion reaching level 3 through schools has remained broadly unchanged.

## **REGIONAL BREAKDOWN**

23. Tables 7 and 8 show the proportion of people aged 19 in 2004, 2005 and 2006 qualified to at least level 2 and level 3 by government office region. Regional tables broken down by age for all cohorts are provided as web based additional information, published alongside this SFR.
24. Every region has improved each year the proportions reaching level 2 or higher and level 3. The difference between the best and worst performing regions at level 2 has fallen very slightly from 8.2% in 2004 to 7.8% in 2006.
25. Figures at local LSC and local authority level are available from the LSC's website<sup>1</sup>. Maps of attainment by local authority will be available as additional information on the website following the SFR.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Providers/Data/Statistics/learner/>

**Table 3: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to level 2 or higher, by cohort showing qualification type by which Level 2 was achieved for those achieving post-16**

Young people aged:	Achieved by 16: Proportion achieving Level 2 by 16; All qualifications	Achieved post-16, Qualification Type:						Total Population with Level 2 by age 19**	Proportion achieving Level 2 by age 19	
		5 GCSEs	GNVQs or a combination of GNVQs and GCSEs	Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 2	VRQ Level 2	Level 3 Qualifications			Combination of qualifications
19 in 2004	49.2%	1.4%	3.3%	3.0%	4.1%	1.0%	3.6%	0.7%	407,000	66.3%
19 in 2005	50.3%	1.3%	3.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.0%	3.8%	0.6%	428,000	69.3%
19 in 2006	52.2%	1.3%	2.5%	3.8%	3.1%	4.5%	3.4%	0.6%	451,000	71.4%

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

Young people aged:	Qualification Type: AS, A-Levels, AVCEs or Advanced GNVQs	Achieved post-16, Institution Type:				Total Population with Level 3 by age 19**	Proportion achieving Level 3 by age 19
		Advanced Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 3	VRQ Level 3	Combination of qualifications		
19 in 2004	37.1%	0.5%	0.9%	2.3%	1.3%	259,000	42.1%
19 in 2005	37.1%	0.5%	0.9%	5.8%	1.3%	282,000	45.6%
19 in 2006	36.6%	0.6%	1.0%	7.0%	1.5%	296,000	46.8%

**Table 5: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to level 2 or higher, by cohort showing institution type where Level 2 was achieved for those achieving post-16**

Young people aged:	Achieved by 16: Proportion achieving Level 2 by 16; All institutions	Achieved post-16, Institution Type:						Total Population with Level 2 by age 19**	Proportion achieving Level 2 by age 19
		Maintained School	Independent School	Sixth Form College	Other FE	Work Based Learning	Other***		
19 in 2004	49.2%	3.1%	0.6%	1.2%	7.3%	3.6%	1.3%	407,000	66.3%
19 in 2005	50.3%	2.6%	0.6%	1.4%	8.7%	4.3%	1.2%	428,000	69.3%
19 in 2006	52.2%	2.3%	0.5%	1.5%	9.3%	4.2%	1.3%	451,000	71.4%

\*\*\* 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 where Level 3 was achieved and cohort**

Young people aged:	Achieved post-16, Institution Type:						Total Population with Level 3 by age 19**	Proportion achieving Level 3 by age 19
	Maintained School	Independent School	Sixth Form College	Other FE	Work Based Learning	Other***		
19 in 2004	18.5%	5.4%	6.9%	9.8%	1.1%	0.3%	259,000	42.1%
19 in 2005	18.3%	5.4%	7.4%	12.4%	1.3%	0.8%	282,000	45.6%
19 in 2006	18.7%	5.3%	7.6%	13.0%	1.5%	0.7%	296,000	46.8%

**Table 7: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to level 2 or higher, by region and cohort**

Young people aged:	ENGLAND	Region:								
		North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	Greater London	South East	South West
19 in 2004	<b>66.3%</b>	64.4%	63.9%	63.6%	63.3%	63.6%	68.9%	64.6%	71.5%	70.1%
19 in 2005	<b>69.3%</b>	67.0%	67.3%	66.1%	67.0%	67.3%	71.4%	67.7%	74.0%	72.9%
19 in 2006	<b>71.4%</b>	69.2%	70.2%	67.7%	68.8%	69.6%	72.6%	71.3%	75.5%	74.5%

**Table 8: Proportion of 19 year olds in England qualified to level 3, by region and cohort**

Young people aged:	ENGLAND	Region:								
		North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	Greater London	South East	South West
19 in 2004	<b>42.1%</b>	35.8%	38.6%	38.0%	38.9%	39.4%	45.7%	43.1%	48.9%	44.6%
19 in 2005	<b>45.6%</b>	39.4%	42.3%	41.0%	43.0%	43.2%	48.3%	45.9%	52.8%	48.8%
19 in 2006	<b>46.8%</b>	40.0%	43.1%	41.8%	44.1%	44.5%	49.0%	48.6%	54.1%	49.5%

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### BACKGROUND

26. Estimates reported in this SFR are derived from matched administrative data. The first publication of figures from this methodology was in February 2005, when a provisional PSA baseline was established.
27. Previously attainment by young people was monitored on an annual basis using the Autumn Labour Force Survey (LFS). In February 2005 the LFS was used to report the outturn to the Spending Review 2002 target (see SFR06/2005) and should no longer be used to measure performance against the PSA target.
28. The matched data methodology was introduced on the recommendation of a National Statistics Quality Review<sup>2</sup>. Advance warning of the switch was made in SFR 48/2004 in December 2004. This SFR also explained some of the key benefits of the measure and its differences from the LFS.

### METHODOLOGY

29. 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 DfES.
  - 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 by DfES 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 LSC from learning providers.
30. 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.

### QUALIFICATIONS COUNTED

31. Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at level 2+:
  - 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 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%

---

<sup>2</sup> The final report is available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/methods\\_quality/quality\\_review/education.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/quality_review/education.asp)

- 1 AS level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 50%
- 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' VRQ<sup>3</sup> pass at level 2 or higher equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%

32. Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at level 3:

- 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%
- 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 Pilot 6 unit GNVQ equals 100%
- 1 Advanced GNVQ pass equals 100%
- 1 NVQ pass at level 3 or higher equals 100%
- 1 'full' VRQ<sup>2</sup> pass at level 3 or higher equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%

33. Combinations of qualifications at different levels are allowed where their parts add up to 100 percent 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%).

34. 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.

## REVISIONS TO PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED FIGURES

35. This SFR reports revised and lower figures for the 19 in 2004 cohort compared to last year. The main causes of revisions are:

- **More up-to-date 2004/05 data.** Final Awarding body data and FE ILR data for 2004/05 has been used in this year's estimates; last year's estimates were based on provisional data.
- **Better matching between data sources** has reduced the amount of double-counting, meaning the level 2+ and level 3 numerators have fallen as some people and their achievements are no longer incorrectly being counted more than once.
- **Improved source data quality.** 0.35 percentage points of the 0.5 percentage baseline revision is due to correcting previous miscoding of some WBL provision as full level 2 achievements.

---

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of 'full' VRQ qualification codes used in the measure is available on request.

## **NUMERATOR ADJUSTMENTS**

36. Increases in the proportions of young people reaching level 2+ or level 3 can come from more people reaching those levels or from population decreases e.g. if there is more outward migration. A key adjustment is made to the level 2+ numerator to account for this problem – people that have been recorded as having reached level 3 but without having any level 2 achievements or learning are excluded from the level 2+ numerator as they are assumed to be inward migrants i.e. people who were not in school at age 14. They are included in the level 3 numerator. For further information see section 3 of the Quality Review report.

## **MATCHING ACCURACY AND DATA COVERAGE**

37. The level of matching between data sources is very high, helped in part by the amount of overlaps in the data sources e.g. both NISVQ and ILR contain data on NVQ and VRQ achievements. However, the matching process is not perfect – we estimate that errors may overstate the total number gaining a level 2 or higher qualification by  $\pm 0.1$  percentage points.

38. For the 19 in 2006 cohort there was a 4.3 percentage point increase in attainment from age 18 to age 19 i.e. people who gained qualifications in 2005/06. Some of this increase can be attributed to:

- Newly collected data – such as NISVQ, which in 2005/06 collected data from 13 awarding bodies that had never previously submitted information.
- New qualifications – such as the growth in the number of VRQs.

39. Our assessment suggests there has been a very small impact from both factors:

- On the first factor, we know that 0.9 percentage points of the increase between ages 18 and 19 comes from people with NISVQ qualifications only in 2005/06, but of these hardly anyone gained a qualification offered by one of the 13 awarding bodies that returned data to NISVQ for the first time in 2005/06.
- On the second factor, we know that 0.9 percentage points of the increase between ages 18 and 19 comes from people who gained full VRQs in 2005/06, but of these very few gained VRQs that were new in 2005/06.

## **RELATED PUBLICATIONS**

**SFR 06/2006** – Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2005 (Provisional)

**SFR 01/2007** – GCSE and Equivalent Examination Results in England 2005/06 (Revised)

**SFR 05/2007** – Vocational Qualifications in the UK: 2005/06