

SB 9/2006

14th February 2006

Coverage

Wales

Theme

Education and Training

THE LEVELS OF HIGHEST QUALIFICATION HELD BY WORKING AGE ADULTS IN WALES, 2004

This Statistical Bulletin presents key statistics on the highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales^a. It provides further detail on the information presented in SB 59/2005 "[Progress towards meeting the Lifelong Learning targets in Wales](#)" including analysis by age, income and occupation.

The statistics provided are taken from the Welsh Local Labour Force Survey for 2004, or earlier where relevant.

Details on qualifications and their approximate NVQ 'level' equivalents are shown in Annex 1.

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Assembly for Wales

Cyhoeddwyd gan
Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Ystadegol
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Parc Cathays
Caerdydd CF10 3NQ

Ffôn
Swyddfa'r Wasg: 029 2089 8099
Ymholiadau
Cyhoeddus: 029 2082 5050

Issued by
Statistical Directorate
National Assembly for Wales
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Telephone
Press Office: 029 2089 8099
Public Enquiries: 029 2082 5050

Statistical Directorate Contact:
Jenny Humphreys 029 2082 5378
Post16Ed.stats@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

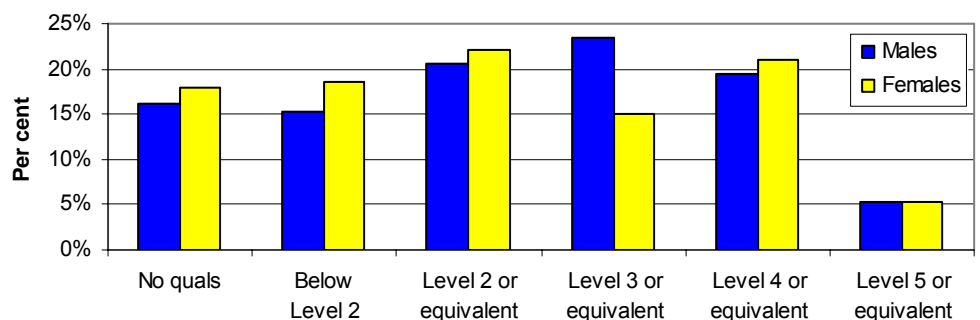
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Next Update:
October 2006 (exact date will
appear on [Due Out Soon](#) page)

Key Results

- 66 per cent of all adults of working age have a qualification at level 2 or above, with 26 per cent at level 4 or above. 17 per cent of the working age population have no qualifications.
- A higher proportion of females are qualified up to level 2 and no higher, whilst a higher proportion of males are qualified to level 3 or above. More females have no qualifications.
- A greater proportion of Welsh speakers are qualified to levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 than their non-Welsh speaking counterparts.
- 51 per cent of persons with no qualifications (who are not in full-time education) are either ILO unemployed or economically inactive. This compares to 25 per cent across the population as a whole.
- A greater proportion of males are in employment than females for all qualification groups.
- Income increases with the level of qualification held. Employees with an NVQ level 5 earn on average 73 per cent more a week than employees qualified to level 3 or below.
- The average gross weekly salary is higher for males than for females across all levels of qualifications held, with males earning 25 per cent more than females on average.
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults of working age without qualifications compared with England and Scotland.
- Qualification levels have overall increased since 2001.

Chart 1. Highest level of qualification held by adults of working age by gender, 2004



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

Qualifications by age and gender

- 17 per cent of adults of working age have no qualifications (*Table 1*).
- 16 per cent of males of working age have no qualifications compared with 18 per cent of females (*Chart 1*).
- The proportion of adults with no qualifications increases with age. 10 per cent of 18-24 year olds have no qualification compared with 26 per cent of 50-59 year olds (*Table 1*).
- 66 per cent of all adults of working age have a qualification at or equivalent to NVQ level 2 or above, whilst 26 per cent have a qualification at or equivalent to level 4 or above (*Table 1*).
- The highest qualification of females is more likely to be either a lower level qualification or degree level. In contrast the highest qualification for nearly a quarter of males is at level 3 (*Chart 1*).
- Although at the age of 18-24 females have higher achievement levels at NVQ level 2 or above than males, for all other age groups the proportion of males qualified to at least level 2 surpasses that of females (*Chart 2*).
- In contrast, 50-59 year olds aside, the proportion of females qualified to at least NVQ level 4 is slightly higher than that of males for all age groups. (*Chart 3*).

Qualifications by Welsh Language ability ^b

- A greater proportion of Welsh Speakers are qualified to levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 than their non-Welsh speaking counterparts. In general, as the levels of qualifications increase the percentage difference between Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers increases, with the proportion of Welsh Speakers gaining level 4 qualifications over 30 per cent greater than for non-Welsh speakers (*Chart 4*).
- Over three quarters of people who can Read, Speak, Understand or Write Welsh have a highest qualification at level 2 or above, compared with the Welsh average of just over 65 per cent (*Chart 5*).
- At degree-level, around a third of people who can Read, Speak, Understand or Write Welsh hold a level 4 or above qualification. This compares with just over a quarter on average in Wales (*Chart 5*).

Chart 2. Proportion qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent, by age and gender, 2004

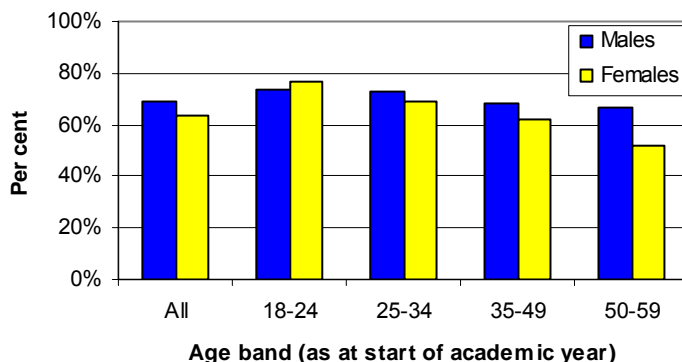


Chart 3. Proportion qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent, by age and gender, 2004

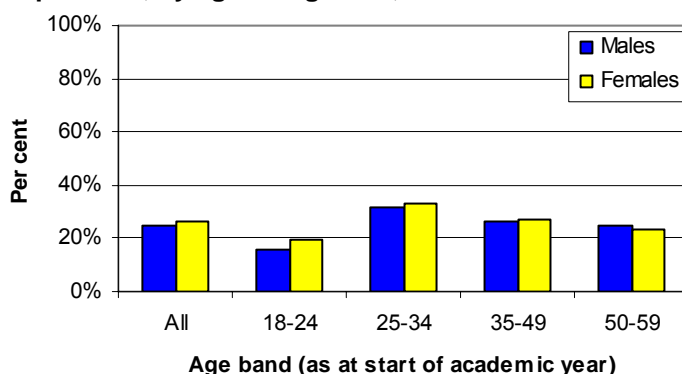


Chart 4. Highest level of qualification held by adults of working age, by whether or not respondents speak Welsh, 2004

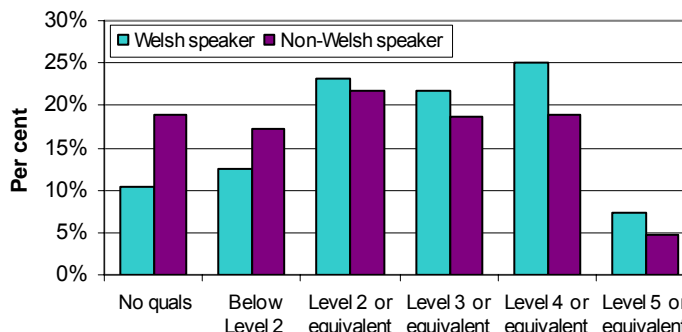
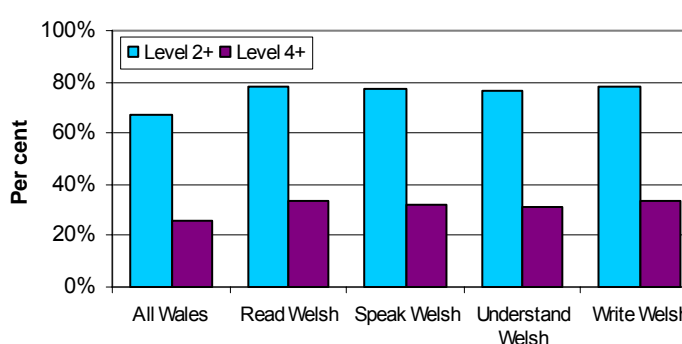


Chart 5. Proportion qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ability in Welsh language, 2004



^b A slightly different methodology has been used and does not correct a small inaccuracy in one of the LFS questions, which has been overcome elsewhere in the bulletin. The difference at an all Wales level is just over 0.5 percentage points. However, the information in charts 4 and 5 are presented on a comparable basis to each other.

Qualifications by ethnicity

- Compared with the Welsh average (66 per cent), a lower proportion of persons from non-white ethnic origins (58 per cent), are qualified to at least NVQ level 2 (*Chart 6*).
- Compared with the Welsh average (26 per cent), a higher proportion of persons from non-white ethnic origins (29 per cent), are qualified to at least level 4 (*Chart 6*).

Employment status by highest qualification

- The proportion of people in employment increases as the highest level of qualification increases. This is true for both males and females (*Charts 7 and 8*).
- 49 per cent of people with no qualifications (who are not in full-time education) are in employment compared with 89 per cent of people with qualifications at level 5 (*Chart 7*).
- 55 per cent of males with no qualifications are in employment compared with 42 per cent of females (*Chart 8*).
- A greater proportion of males are in work than females for all qualification groups. (*Chart 8*).
- The difference between the percentage of males and females in employment decreases as the level of highest qualification increases (*Chart 8*).
- Adults in work holding a level 3 qualification or above are more likely to be employed full-time than those holding a level 2 qualification or below (*Chart 9*).

Chart 6. Proportion qualified to at least level 2 or at least level 4, by ethnicity, 2004

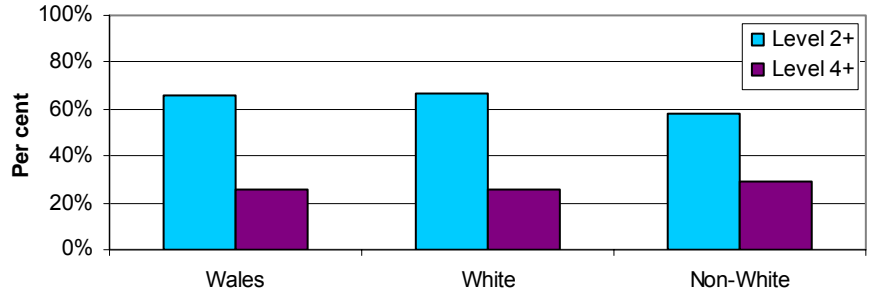


Chart 7. Percentage employed by highest level of qualification obtained, 2004^c

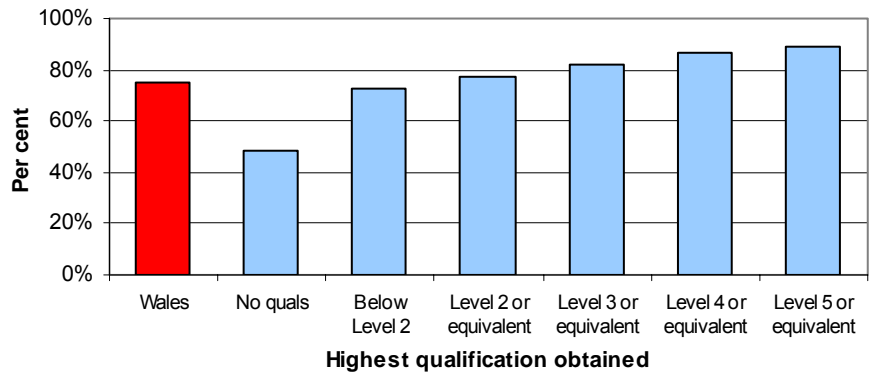


Chart 8. Percentage employed by highest level of qualification obtained, by gender, 2004^c

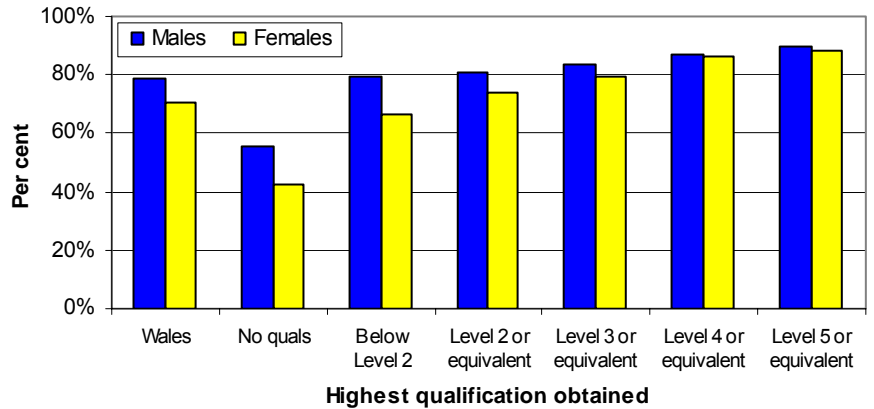
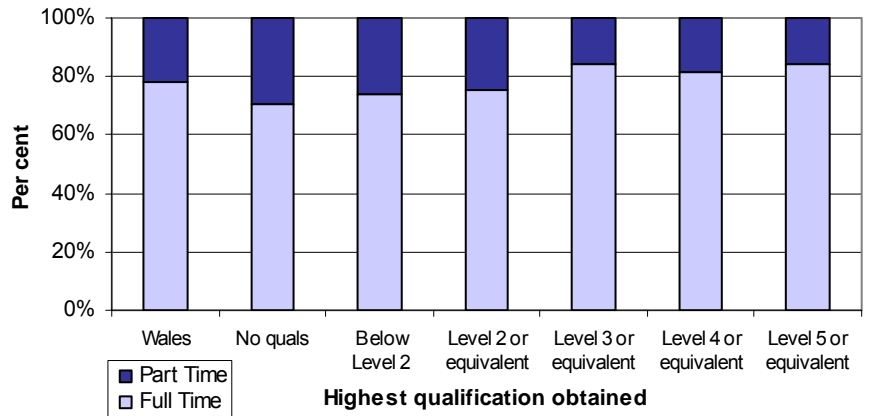


Chart 9. Employment status of those persons in employment, by highest level of qualification obtained, 2004



^c Excludes those persons in full-time education.

Income levels by highest qualification

- Income levels increase as the level of qualifications increase (*Chart 10*).
- Employees in Wales with an NVQ level 5 or equivalent earn on average 73 per cent more a week than persons qualified to NVQ level 3 or below and more than double the amount earned by persons with no qualifications (*not shown in charts*).
- The average gross weekly salary is higher for males than for females across all levels of qualifications held, with males earning 25 per cent more than females on average^d (*Chart 10*).

Qualifications by main job

- 72 per cent of persons in employment are qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent (*Chart 11*).
- Persons employed in professional occupations are more likely to be qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent than those in other jobs. 97 per cent of persons in professional occupations are qualified at this level (*Chart 11*).
- Elementary Occupations and Process and Plant Machine Operatives are the only two occupation categories in which over half the persons employed are **not** qualified to at least NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (*Chart 11*).
- 30 per cent of persons in employment are qualified to at least NVQ Level 4 or equivalent (*Chart 12*).
- 86 per cent of persons in professional occupations are qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent compared with only 5 per cent of process, plant and machine operatives (*Chart 12*).
- Persons employed in professional occupations are more than twice as likely to be qualified to at least NVQ level 4 as managers and senior officials (86 per cent compared with 40 per cent) (*Chart 12*).

Chart 10. Average gross weekly salary of full-time employees by gender and highest qualification obtained, 2004

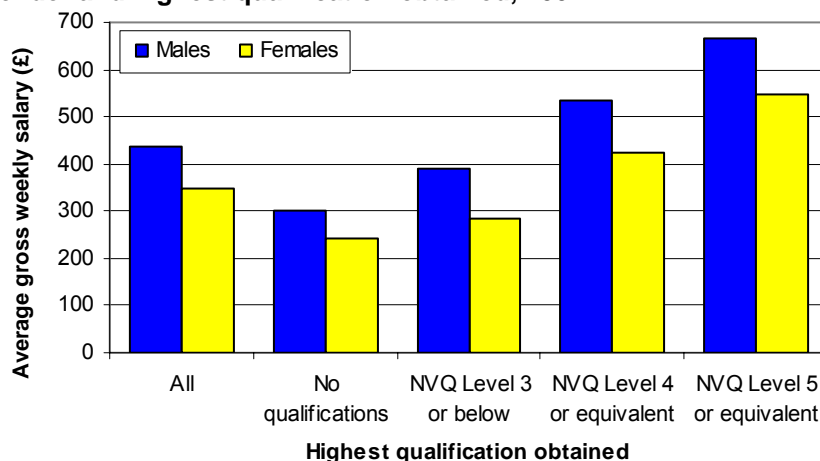


Chart 11. Proportion of persons in employment who are qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent, by main job^e, 2004

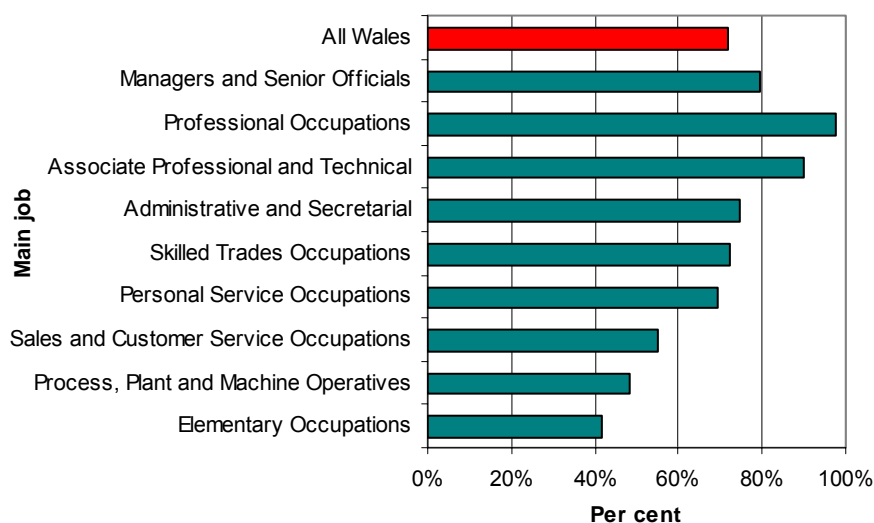
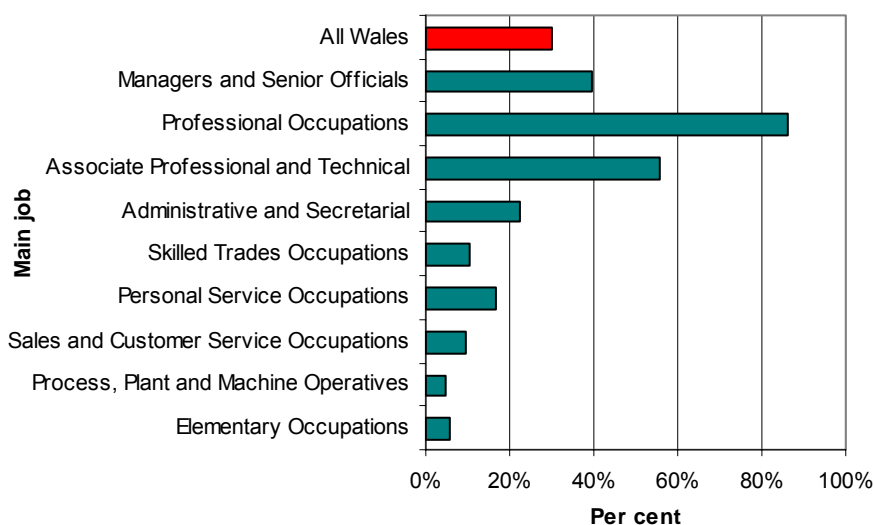


Chart 12. Proportion of persons in employment who are qualified to at least NVQ 4 or equivalent, by main job^e, 2004



^d This is bigger than the headline gender pay gap measured using hourly earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. This shows average female earnings at 88 per cent of average male earnings.

^e Excludes those persons in full time education. Occupations graded according to Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2000.

Qualifications by Unitary Authority

- Adults of working age in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil are more likely to have no qualifications than those in other parts of Wales. 26 per cent of people in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil do not have a qualification compared with 10 per cent in Ceredigion (*Table 2*).
- More than half of all of people of working age are qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent for every Welsh Unitary Authority (*Chart 13*).
- Whilst Ceredigion has the greatest proportion of people qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent, Cardiff has the greatest proportion of people qualified to at least degree level (*Table 2*).
- Qualification levels are lowest in the South Wales Valleys authorities (*Table 2*).

Qualifications by country and region

- In the UK, 15 per cent of adults of working age do not have a qualification (*Table 3*).
- Wales has a higher proportion of adults of working age without qualifications compared with England and Scotland (*Table 3*).
- Wales has a similar proportion of adults qualified to at least NVQ level 2 to English regions (excluding London and the South) (*Chart 14*).
- The proportion of adults qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent in Wales is greater than Northern Ireland but lower than Scotland, England and the UK as a whole (*Chart 15*).
- The proportion of adults qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent in Wales is greater than in Northern Ireland but lower than Scotland, England and the UK as a whole (*Chart 15*).

Chart 13. Proportion of adults of working age qualified to at least level 2, by Unitary Authority, 2004

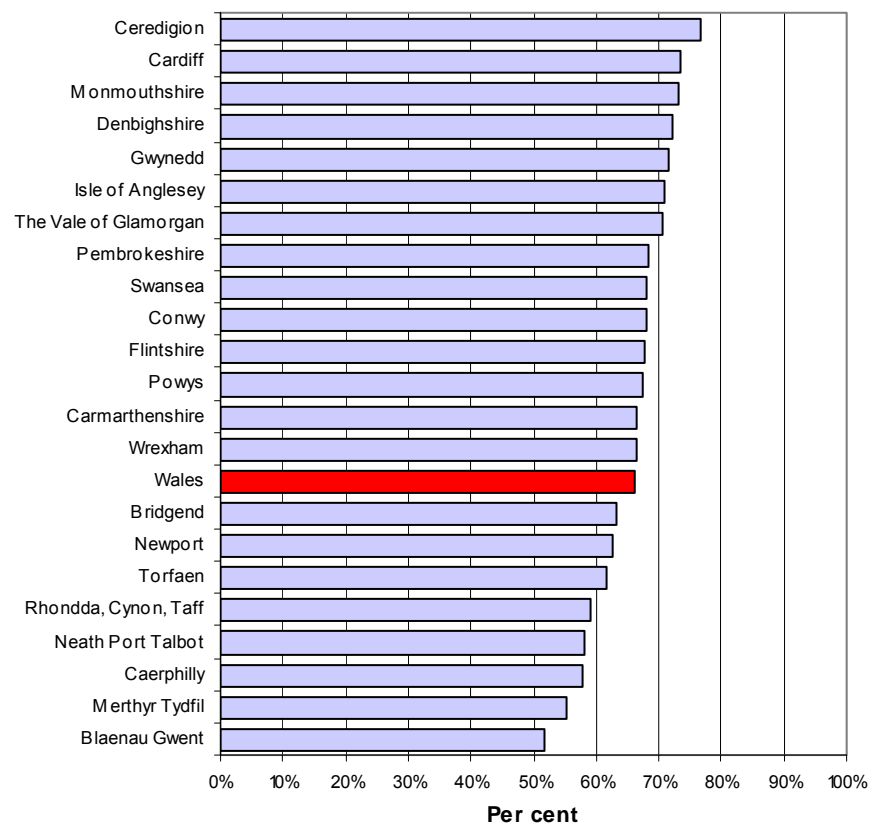


Chart 14. Proportion of adults of working age qualified to at least level 2, by Government Office Region, 2004

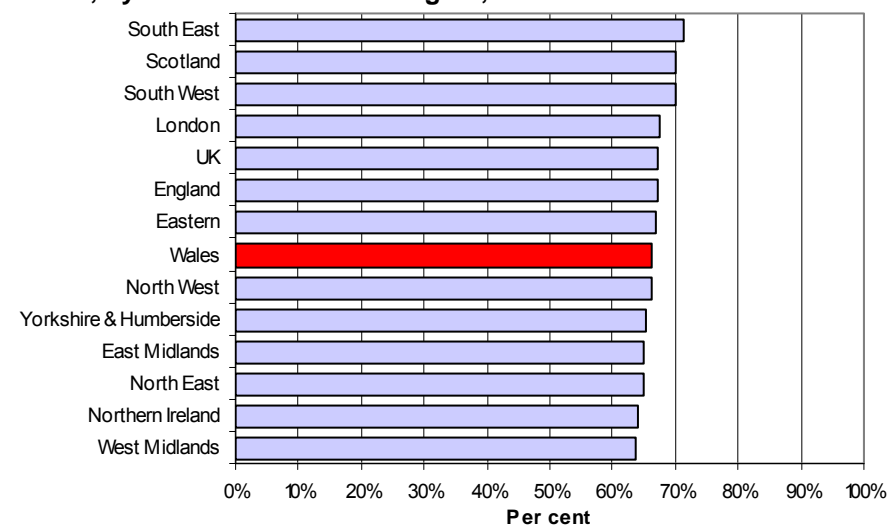
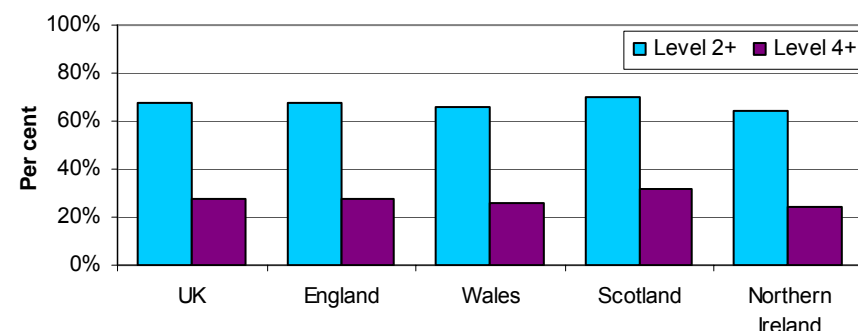


Chart 15. Proportion of adults of working age qualified to at least level 2 and level 4, by UK country, 2004



Qualifications over time

- Qualification levels have overall increased since 2001 (*Chart 16*).
- The proportion of working age adults with no qualifications has fallen every year since 2001, with an overall decrease of 5 percentage points over the last three years (*Chart 16*).
- The proportion of working age adults qualified to at least level 2 and at least level 4 has risen every year since 2001 (*Chart 16*).

2001 and 2004 comparison ^f

NVQ level 2 or equivalent

- The proportion of working age adults with a highest qualification of at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent has risen for all age categories between 2001 and 2004 (*Chart 17*).
- Overall there was a 6 percentage point increase for working aged adults in Wales, with the largest increase seen in adults aged 25-34 (8 percentage points) (*Chart 17*).

NVQ level 4 or equivalent

- The proportion of working age adults with a highest qualification of at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent has risen for all age categories between 2001 and 2004 (*Chart 18*).
- Overall there was a 3 percentage point increase for working aged adults in Wales, with the largest increase seen in adults aged 25-34 (6 percentage points) (*Chart 18*).

Chart 16. Highest level of qualification held by adults of working age since 2001

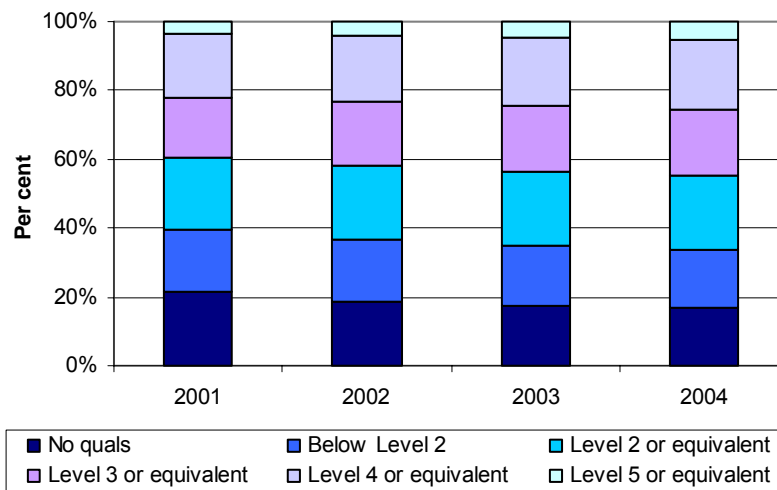


Chart 17. Proportion qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent, by age, 2001 and 2004

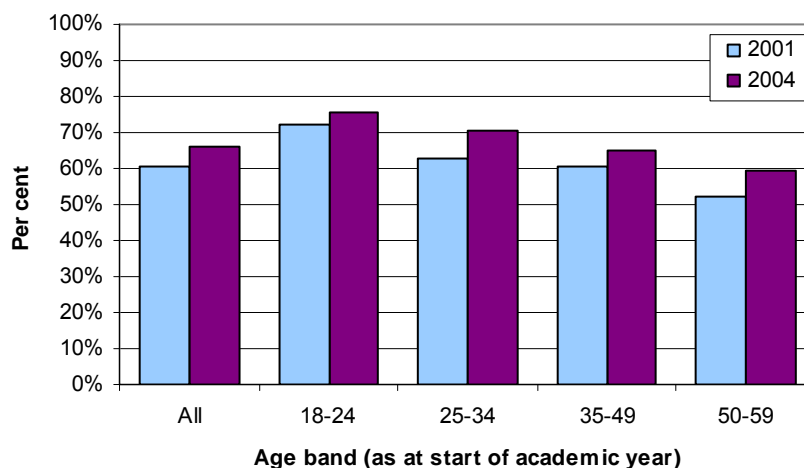
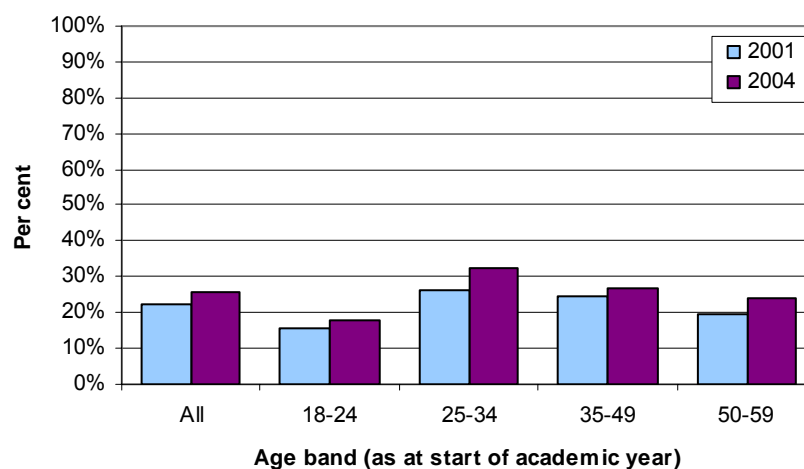


Chart 18. Proportion qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent, by age 2001 and 2004



^f In 2001 the LFS sample size was "boosted" in Wales with the number of households sampled increased fourfold. Comparisons with data prior to 2001, shown in the Statistical Bulletin series "Progress Towards Meeting the Lifelong Learning Targets in Wales", should be treated with caution.

Table 1. Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, 2004 (a)

Percentage

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4+
By gender							
Males	16	15	21	69	23	20	25
Females	18	19	22	64	15	21	26
Persons	17	17	21	66	19	20	26
By age							
18-24	10	15	24	75	34	16	18
25-34	11	18	20	71	18	25	32
35-49	16	19	22	65	16	21	27
50-59	26	15	20	59	16	19	24
60-64 (males only)	31	11	20	58	19	15	19
By ethnic origin							
White	17	17	21	66	19	20	25
Non-white	21	21	17	58	12	19	29
By economic activity and main job (b)							
In employment	12	17	22	72	19	24	30
of which:							
Managers & senior officials	8	13	19	80	21	32	40
Professional occupations	1	2	5	97	7	53	86
Associate professional & technical	2	8	17	90	17	49	56
Administrative & secretarial	5	20	32	75	20	20	22
Skilled Trades occupations	13	15	25	72	37	10	10
Personal Service Occupations	11	19	30	69	22	16	17
Sales and Customer Service occupations	18	27	29	55	16	9	10
Process, plant & machine operatives	22	30	27	48	17	5	5
Elementary occupations	32	26	23	42	12	5	6
ILO unemployed or economically inactive	36	19	20	45	12	11	13

Source: Welsh Local Labour Force Survey 2004

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

(b) Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2000.

Data for 2001-2004 are available on the Assembly's interactive site StatsWales, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk>

Data on qualification levels can be found by following the links to the folder, 'Post-16 Education and Training', then 'Lifelong Learning', and finally 'Qualification Levels'.

Table 2. Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in Wales, by Unitary Authority, 2004 (a)*Percentage*

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4+
Isle of Anglesey	15	14	25	71	21	20	25
Gwynedd	15	14	24	72	22	20	25
Conwy	16	16	26	68	18	19	24
Denbighshire	15	12	23	72	20	24	29
Flintshire	14	19	22	68	22	20	23
Wrexham	17	16	24	66	20	20	23
Powys	16	16	22	67	19	21	27
Ceredigion	10	13	23	77	23	24	31
Pembrokeshire	15	17	24	68	20	20	25
Carmarthenshire	19	15	23	67	19	20	25
Swansea	16	15	18	68	24	21	26
Neath Port Talbot	22	20	21	58	18	16	19
Bridgend	19	18	21	63	19	20	24
The Vale of Glamorgan	12	18	20	71	18	25	33
Cardiff	12	14	17	74	20	26	38
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	20	20	21	59	17	17	21
Merthyr Tydfil	26	19	21	55	18	15	17
Caerphilly	22	20	22	58	17	16	19
Blaenau Gwent	26	22	24	52	15	11	13
Torfaen	21	17	23	62	17	18	21
Monmouthshire	12	15	21	73	19	25	33
Newport	18	19	20	63	17	20	25
Wales	17	17	21	66	19	20	26

Source: Welsh Local Labour Force Survey 2004

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

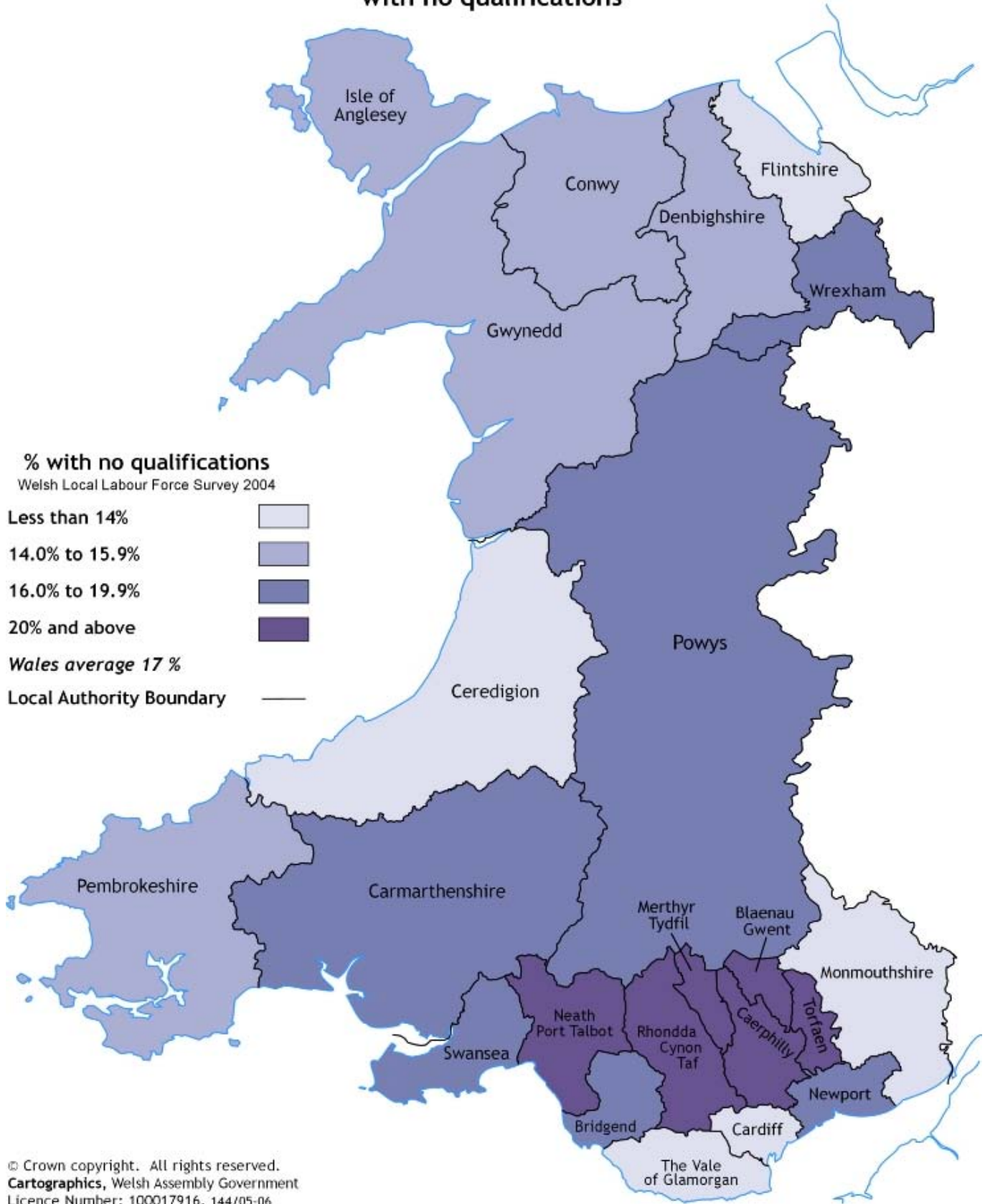
Table 3. Level of highest qualification held by adults of working age in United Kingdom, 2004 (a)*Percentage*

	Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each level						
	No qualifications	Below Level 2	Level 2	Level 2+	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4+
England	14	19	20	67	19	22	28
North East	16	19	22	65	20	19	23
North West	17	17	21	66	20	21	25
Yorkshire & Humberside	15	20	20	65	21	20	24
East Midlands	16	19	20	65	20	20	25
West Midlands	18	18	20	64	19	20	24
Eastern	13	20	22	67	19	21	26
London	14	18	18	68	16	25	34
South East	10	19	20	71	20	25	31
South West	10	21	22	70	21	22	28
Wales	17	17	21	66	19	20	26
Scotland	16	14	18	70	20	27	32
Northern Ireland	24	12	21	64	18	20	25
United Kingdom	15	18	20	67	19	22	28

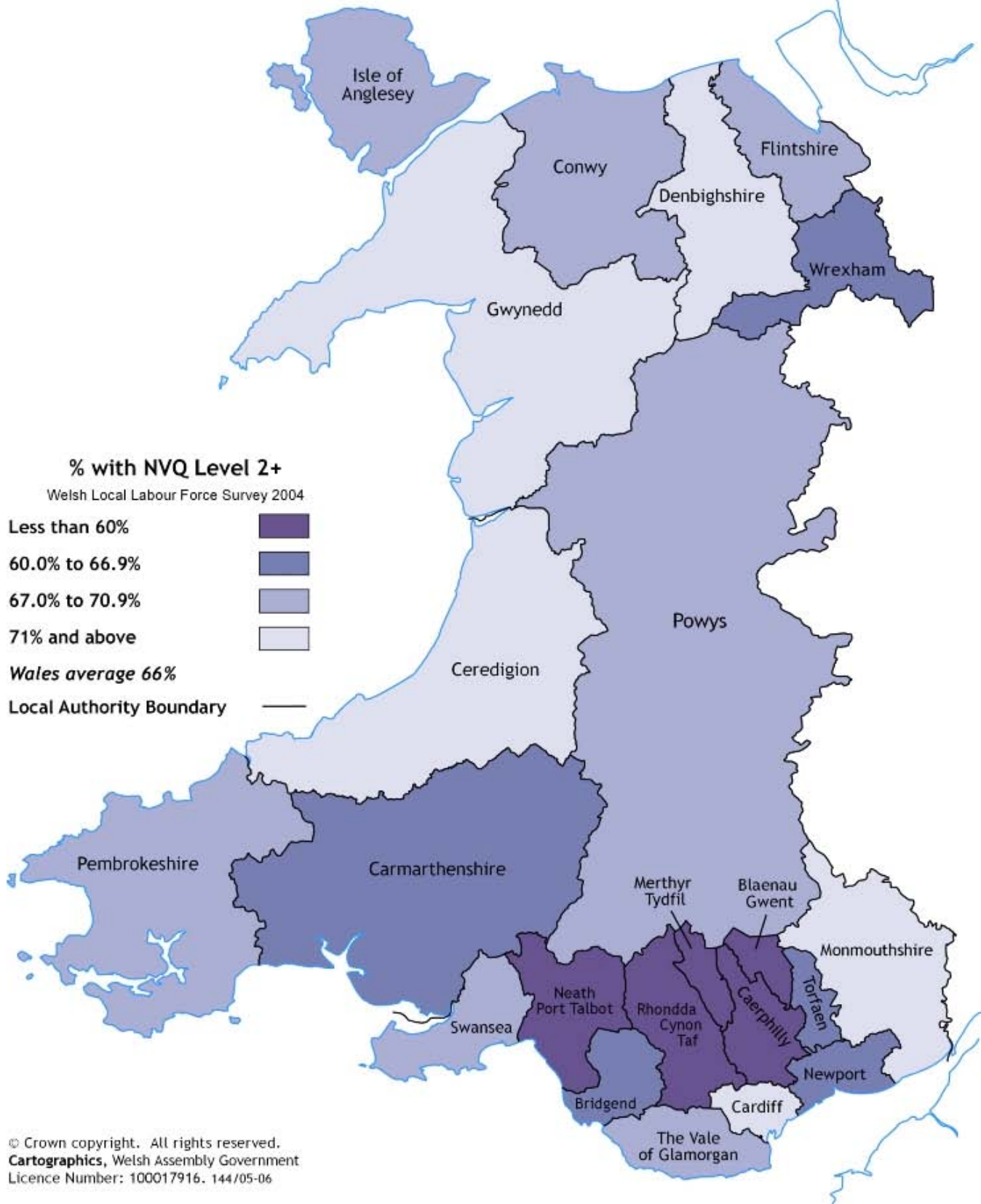
Source: Annual Local Labour Force Survey 2004

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

Percentage of adults of working age with no qualifications



Percentage of adults of working age qualified to at least NVQ Level 2 or equivalent



Annex 1: Qualifications used in the Labour Force Survey and their approximate NVQ 'Level' equivalents

NVQ Level 5

Higher degree

NVQ Level 4

First degree, Other degree

Diploma in HE

HNC, HND, BTEC etc. higher

Teaching (further, secondary and primary education, foundation stage¹ and level not stated)

Nursing etc.

RSA higher diploma

Other higher education qualification below degree level

NVQ Level 3

GNVQ Advanced

2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels or equivalent

RSA advanced diploma

OND, ONC, BTEC etc. national

City and Guilds advanced craft

Scottish CSYS (67%)

3 or more SCE higher or equivalent

Access qualification¹

Trade apprenticeship (50%)

Other qualifications (10%)

NVQ Level 2

1 A level, or 2/3 AS levels, or equivalent

Trade apprenticeship (50%)

GNVQ intermediate

RSA diploma

City and Guilds craft

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma

5+ O levels, GCSE grade A*-C, CSE grade 1 or equivalent

Scottish CSYS (33%)

1 or 2 SCE higher or equivalent

Other qualifications (35%)

Below NVQ Level 2

Up to 4 O levels, GCSE grade A*-C, CSE grade 1 or equivalent

GCSE grade D-G, CSE grade 2-6 or equivalent

1 AS level

GNVQ, GSVQ foundation

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general certificate, SCOTVEC modules

RSA other

City and Guilds other

YT, YTP certificate

Key skills qualification¹

Basic skills qualification¹

Entry level qualification¹

Other qualifications (55%)

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

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.