

Medr statistics

Quality and Methodology: Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Achievement, August 2024 to July 2025

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Summary: Quality and methodology information on the production of the statistics contained in the Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Achievement statistical release.

Theme: Further education, sixth forms

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), Post-16 data collection, Welsh Examinations Database (WED)

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Data Sources

Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

Contains data on further education, work based learning and adult learning. It's collected on a 'rolling' basis throughout the year with regular statistical freezes. It is the official source of statistics on learners in further education institutions (colleges) in Wales.

All data for further education institutions comes from [LLWR](#).

Post-16 Data Collection

Every October, all maintained schools with sixth forms and middle schools with pupils in years 12, 13 and/or 14, are required to report all learning programmes and activities undertaken by pupils in the previous academic year.

Welsh Examinations Database (WED)

Contains data on examination entries and outcomes collected from a number of awarding organisations.

For schools, learner data is from the Post-16 Data Collection, and qualification attainment data is taken by matching learners to WED.

Rounding

All figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Numbers less than 5 are suppressed. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Percentages based on a denominator of less than 23 are suppressed.

Differences between values are calculated using unrounded values, so there may be small discrepancies when compared with the rounded figures.

Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability and Coherence.

Relevance

The measures set out in this publication are used:

- by Medr to monitor providers' performance;
- by Estyn, to inform inspection judgements on standards; and
- by providers themselves, as a management tool to measure their own performance and benchmark themselves against sector averages, as part of their self-assessment cycles.

The measures are also used both within and outside Medr to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the main users are:

- officials in Medr;
- Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers and officials in the Welsh Government;
- Members of the Senedd and researchers in the Senedd;
- other government departments;
- local authorities and regional education consortia;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- schools and further education institutions;
- citizens, private companies, and the media.

Accuracy

The figures in this release reflect the final position for the academic year in the release.

A standard reconciliation cycle was undertaken for colleges to improve the quality of the data collection.

There are known data quality issues with the vocational measures in school sixth forms. The success rate of vocational programmes in school sixth forms was 16% in 2024/25, and it has been low in previous years. The courses started and completed are recorded by schools in the Post-16 Data Collection, and are then matched onto grade outcomes in the Welsh Examination Database which contains data from examining bodies. There are many instances where courses in the Post-16 Data Collection can't be matched to the Welsh Examination Database, and vice versa. In the past, schools have been contacted about individual extreme cases, and a variety of causes have been identified. In one case, a school recorded learners under an old course code which had been replaced by a new type of course. Some causes are not data quality issues - another school was enrolling learners on courses that they were unlikely to complete but that the school believed would still benefit the learner. School sixth forms make up less than 1% of vocational programmes taken, and the overall impact on the measures is minimal. If schools were excluded from the measures, the overall vocational programme success rate would be unchanged in 2024/25.

Table 1: Early dropouts by measure, and academic year, 2023/24 and 2024/25

Measure	2023/24	2024/25
General education programmes	3%	3%
Vocational education programmes	9%	8%
Advanced skills baccalaureate wales programmes	-	8%

Data can be found in Table 1.1, Table 2.1, and Table 3.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Learners who drop out of a programme without completing it within the first 8 weeks, are excluded from the main measures, but are reported separately. The early dropout rate for vocational programmes was slightly higher than the early dropout rate for general education programmes.

The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales was awarded for the first time in summer 2025 and outcomes are only available for 2024/25.

Timeliness and punctuality

The data in this release refers to the 2024/25 academic year ending in July / August 2025. The LLWR data goes through a reconciliation process from August to December after the academic year is finished. A final 'freeze' of LLWR data was taken in December 2025. The Post-16 Data Collection was finalised in January 2026.

Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics section of the Medr website](#).

The release is published as an accessible format PDF (PDF/A), alongside a spreadsheet available in an open data format (ODS). Both the release and the spreadsheet follow accessibility guidelines.

Comparability and coherence

Due to the changes in how grades were awarded in 2020 and 2021, and the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic, the Welsh Government did not produce its usual performance measures for schools or post-16 learning in 2019/20 or 2020/21. Instead, special reports were produced on [Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). Those statistics are calculated using different methodologies and cannot be compared with this report. For example, the general education measures are calculated on a one-year basis.

2021/22 was a transitional year for learners. Learners were given a wider choice of questions, and Qualifications Wales set a policy that results should be broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Some support remained in place for learners who sat exams in 2022/23. This support was in the form of advance information and a supportive approach to grading.

Qualifications Wales set a policy that results at a national level should be broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22 outcomes.

For the 2023/24 academic year, Qualifications Wales set a policy that, at a subject level, would have prevented results from being well below pre-pandemic levels. However, it was not necessary to implement that policy in practice. This is explained in more detail in the [Reflections on performance standards in the journey back to pre-pandemic arrangements](#) report published by Qualifications Wales.

In 2024/25 the statistical protection was removed marking the complete return to pre-pandemic awarding approaches.

This context around how examinations and assessments were affected by the pandemic, and arrangements put in place in subsequent years, should be kept in mind when comparing outcomes over time.

We do not advise comparing statistics on the 2016/17 academic year with later years, because several providers were excluded in this first year due to data quality issues. The data quality has improved since, and all post-16 providers have been included for 2017/18 and 2018/19. These two years can be compared, as the changes in methodology have been minor.

The underlying cohort and methodology of the achievement consistent measures are different to previous performance measures, and they cannot be compared.

Independent Living Skills were excluded in the measures from entry level vocational programmes from 2018/19. Creative Solution programmes were excluded before 2018/19.

Outcomes for courses undertaken as part of Personal Learning Account (PLA) programmes are included in the 2024/25 release for the first time this year, as signalled in the [programme specification](#). Outcomes for full time level 4 vocational learning programmes are also included for the first time now that there are sufficient cohort sizes for reporting.

There were some methodological changes between the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and 2025 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, as explained by the Welsh Government's [WIMD 2025 results report](#). However, due to the relatively small amount of change in WIMD at an overall level, the analysis by deprivation in this report remains broadly comparable between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The Welsh Government Examination Results statistical release has statistics on A level outcomes for 17 year olds in schools. These are not comparable with these achievement measures because:

- the examination results are one-year measures, whereas the achievement measures are a two-year measure looking at the progression of learners from their AS programme
- the examination results report on 17 year olds, whereas the achievement measures report on learners on all ages in post-16 education
- the examination results only report on schools, whereas the achievement measures report on learners at schools and further education institutions.

The Learner outcome measures for work based learning and adult learning previously contained statistics on learner outcomes for further education in further education institutions. The statistics are not comparable with the achievement measures, but they provide a time series on previous learner outcomes at further education institution. The Department for Education publish [A level and other 16 to 18 results](#) outcomes for schools, as well as [16 to 18 destinations measures](#) which covers the destinations into employment and learning, earnings and the progression of learners.

General education programmes

Full-time learners enrolled on AS level learning programmes in the previous academic year are the base cohort for the general education programmes measures. The learners who complete their AS programmes are then matched to learners starting an A2 programme in the next academic year.

The learner's achievement over the full two-years is taken for calculating whether the learner achieved three A levels (or equivalents) at particular grades.

The achievement measures include only those qualifications approved or designated for use in Wales. An examination is discounted when a learner achieves a higher grade or a higher level qualification in the same subject group. If a qualification is discounted, then it does not count towards the statistics published in this release. Qualifications of comparable size and value to A level are counted towards the general education achievement measure. This includes BTEC subsidiary diplomas and the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, for example.

Vocational programmes

The base cohort for vocational programmes is full-time learners on vocational programmes that ended in the current academic year. This is to account for the range of lengths of vocational programmes.

Providers report which qualifications in a learner's programme are considered to be main qualifications. This can be different depending on the learner. The measure only includes Access to Higher Education qualifications and qualifications approved or designated for use in Wales.

The success rate is then calculated as the number of main qualifications achieved, divided by the number of main qualifications undertaken. A learner can have multiple main qualifications in one programme. The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales is included.

Learners not included in the analysis

Learners on apprenticeships and learners taking adult learning provided directly by local authorities are not included in the measures. They are included in the [Learner outcomes measures for work based learning and adult](#) learning report.

Learners on Junior Apprenticeships, Independent Living Skills programmes, Innovation programmes and those who died during their learning are also not included in the measures.

Level 3 Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales

The base cohort is learners starting a Level 3 Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales in the previous academic year. The learners are then matched to another record for the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales recorded in the current academic year.

Protected characteristics

The release includes statistics on gender/sex, age, and the deprivation of a learner's home neighbourhood (LSOA) according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, the learner's ethnic background, Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility and Special Education Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision. The accompanying spreadsheet also contains information on the impairments of learners in colleges.

Gender and sex are not collected consistently across the data sources used for this release.

The Lifelong Learning Wales Record, which collects data from colleges, records the gender of the learner. The learner indicates the gender that should be recorded and has the option to record themselves as not associating with a binary gender identity of female or male.

The Post-16 Data Collection, which collects data from sixth forms, records the sex of the learner as recognised in law. This data item was collected as 'gender' prior to 2023/24 but with the same binary categories of female and male, and a small number of pupils may have had their gender identity recorded. Updated guidance was issued alongside the change to the variable name in 2023/24.

These two data sources are combined in this analysis to provide a full picture of general education, vocational and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales outcomes between females and males. The approach to combining the data was discussed and agreed with the equalities policy team in the Welsh Government. Users should note the differences in the variables collected when interpreting the analysis.

For learners in school sixth forms, the ethnic background information was sourced from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

A learner was categorised as being "Ever eligible for Free School Meals" if they were eligible for Free School Meals at any point in secondary school. A learner is included in the "Ever SEN/ALN provision" category if they received SEN/ALN provision at any point during secondary school in Wales. Information on Free School Meal eligibility and, SEN/ALN provision is calculated by matching learners back to their secondary school Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) record via the Matched Education Dataset.

This means the status of learners who were not educated in Wales is unknown. Additionally, for some learners who moved to Wales during secondary school, there will be less information. Some learners will be unable to be matched to their PLASC record even if the PLASC record exists.

Information on impairments was only available in the Lifelong Learning Wales Record and could not be produced for sixth form learners. Data on whether learners received

SEN/ALN provision during secondary school was included in the accompanying tables for the first time this year in order to provide a consistent measure across sixth form and college learners.

Learners undertaking multiple learning programme with the same provider

Where a learner undertakes more than one general education or vocational programme with the same provider during an academic year, the most recent learning programme undertaken is counted in the performance measures (for example changing from a four AS level programme to a three AS level programme). If a learner took a vocational and a general education programme in the same year, then that learner will show up in each measure unless it was a valid transfer.

Transfers

From 2022/23, learners who enrol on a learning programme and then transfer to another programme are not included in the measures for their first programme if:

- the programme they transferred to could be identified
- and was in the same academic year
- the programme was full time or work-based learning
- and the learner transferred to a programme of any level within the first 8 weeks, or they transferred after the first 8 weeks to the same or higher level programme
- if the transfer was to another provider it must take place within 21 days

In previous years, transfers to other providers were treated as non-completions. Transfers within providers were counted as non-completions if the transfer was to a different level, or between general and vocational education.

From 2023/24, a similar method to 2022/23 has also been applied to course transfers. Transfers are treated as a neutral outcome and are not included in the measures if:

- The course is listed as a transfer (LA31 = '4')
- It's part of a programme that met the programme transfer rules
- Or the learner has another course which did not end in a transfer:
 - a. At the same provider
 - b. Which began after the last activity ended
 - i. Or within 7 days before the end, as long as that is still after the start date
 - c. Which started within 21 days after the original activity ended
 - i. Or within 126 days (18 weeks) if the transfer was to the same reference code in the following academic year
 - d. Which was the same level or higher
 - i. Unless the transfer happened within the first 8 weeks of the original activity
 - ii. A2 to AS transfers are not allowed
 - iii. Qualification levels are based on the [Qualifications in Wales](#) dataset if available, LA22 if not. If the new activity doesn't have a defined level, the old activity must also not have a defined level

- iv. For multi-level courses, the most generous interpretation is taken (lowest level for the original activity, the highest level for the new activity)
 - e. And if the original activity was assessable, the new activity must also be assessable
 - i. Unless the transfer happened within the first 8 week of the original activity
 - f. And if the original activity was a “main” or “core” activity (LA47 = ‘05’ or ‘04’) the new activity must also be a main activity.
 - i. Unless the transfer happened within the first 8 week of the original activity
- If an A level course was transferred in the second year, it is only a neutral outcome for the 2-year measures (A2 completion and grade outcomes). It would count as a non-continuation from AS to A2.
 - Course transfers would also be treated as neutral in the success rate calculation for the vocational programme measures if they meet the above rules. Previously all course transfers were treated as neutral in the programme success rate.
 - If a learner has been recorded as taking the same activity multiple times in a year at a provider, the activity with the latest end date will be taken. The earlier versions of the activity will be removed from the measures, whether or not they were listed as transfers.
 - Transfers from multiple activities to a single activity is permitted and will be monitored closely.
 - Course transfers that are treated as neutral outcomes will be monitored, in the same way as programme transfers.

The 2021/22 statistics in this release do not use the new transfer methodology and the 2022/23 course statistics do not include the new course transfer methodology.

Future work

Although these statistics are no longer labelled as experimental / in development, we will continue to improve the measures. There are known data quality issues around how school sixth form vocational data is recorded (see [Accuracy](#) section).

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Feedback can be provided by email to statistics@medr.cymru. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Further details

This release is available at: medr.cymru

Background information on post-16 consistent measures is available from the [Hwb](#) website.

For the glossary, please refer to the main report.

Other statistical outputs using the LLWR underlying the release

- [Further education, apprenticeships and community learning, August 2024 to July 2025](#) was published by Medr on 26 February 2026. Data for August 2025 to July 2026 will be published in March 2027.
- [Learner outcome measures for apprenticeships, August 2023 to July 2024](#) was published by Medr on 12 March 2025. Data for August 2024 to July 2025 will be published on 18 March 2026.
- The series [Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Learner destinations, August 2021 to July 2023](#) forms part of the suite of consistent performance measures, of which this release is also a part.
- [Apprenticeship learning programme started](#) was published by Medr on 19 February 2026. Data for November 2025 to January 2026 will be published in May 2026.
- [Progression from Year 11 to tertiary education, August 2017 to January 2025](#) was published by Medr on 25 February 2025. Data for August 2023 to November 2025 will be published on 26 March 2026.

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