Medr statistics

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

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Summary: **Outcomes for general education, vocational education and the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales in sixth forms and colleges.**

Theme: Further education, sixth forms

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

Contents

Note

This report covers outcomes for general education and vocational education in sixth forms and colleges. It looks at the progression across all the qualifications a learner took as part of their programme, as well as the grade outcomes.

Statistics on apprentices and adult community learning are in the [Learner outcomes measures for apprenticeships and adult community learning](#) report.

This report highlights some of messages in the data. The accompanying tables include the full breakdowns for all measures by all the characteristics in this article, and also by provider type, local authority, impairments (for colleges), Welsh language and whether learners received Special Educational Needs or Additional Learning Needs provision in secondary school.

Inclusion of additional learning programme types

Outcomes for courses undertaken as part of Personal Learning Account (PLA) programmes are included in this 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.

Main points

Outcomes for general education are broadly in line with 2023/24 figures, while vocational outcomes have increased

Figure 1.1: Summary of achievement measures by academic year, August 2023 to July 2025
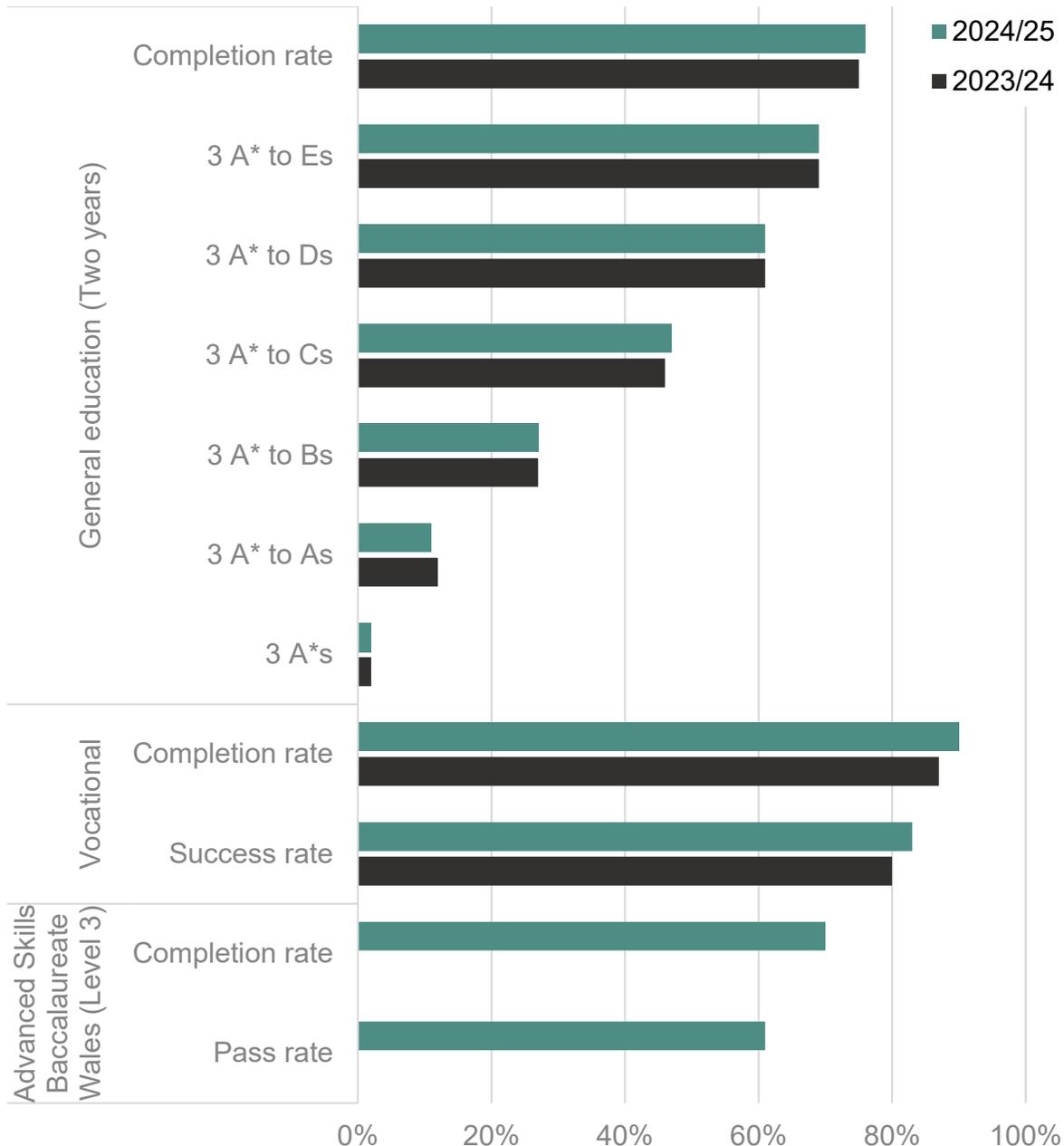
Description: 76% of A level learners completed their two-year programme in the 2024/25 academic year. 90% of vocational learners completed their programme. 70% of Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales learners completed the qualification.

[Note 1] The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales is a two-year qualification that was introduced in September 2023 and awarded for the first time in summer 2025. Outcomes are only available for 2024/25.

General education (A levels)

- Grade outcomes remain higher than pre-pandemic levels, but there was a decrease in the proprtion of learners achieving at least three As compared to 2023/24.
- There was a small increase in AS level and A Level completion and a small decrease in the proportion of learners who went onto their second year of A levels in 2024/25.
- Females had better outcomes than males in general education programmes, apart from learners achieving three A*s.
- 52% of female AS learners went on to achieve at least three Cs at A level, compared to 40% of male learners.
- 48% of 16 year old AS learners went on to achieve at least three Cs at A level, compared to 24% of older learners.
- Learners from deprived backgrounds were less likely to complete their A levels and less likely to get high grades if they did.
- Learners from Other ethnic groups were more likely to achieve at least three A Levels in 2024/25. Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups was the only ethnic group to see an increase in achieving at least three As compared to 2023/24.

Vocational education

- Vocational outcomes at all programme levels improved in 2024/25, except for Entry Level which has declined.
- Levels 1 to 3 vocational outcomes are now at or above pre-pandemic figures.
- Success rates for courses undertaken as part of Personal Learning Account programmes vary by subject sector area, from 97% in Retail and Commercial Enterprise to 47% in Information and Communication Technology.
- There was a small increase in learners who did not complete their programme due to 'Gone into employment' and 'Financial reasons' in 2024/25.
- Vocational learners linked to experiences of deprivation had lower outcomes than those who were not, but the relationship was less strong than in general education.

Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales

- Learners studying general education programmes had higher Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales outcomes than learners studying vocational programmes.

General education (A levels)

These measures cover full time learners who started studying a programme of three or more AS levels (or equivalents) in their first year, and how many went on to achieve at least three A levels (or equivalents) by the end of their second year.

Exams were cancelled in the summer of 2019/20, and 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In 2019/20 A level learners received the best of centre assessed or standardised grades. In 2020/21, they received centre determined grades. In both those years, grade outcomes tended to be higher than before the pandemic.

2021/22 was a transitionary 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.

Outcomes for A levels remain higher than before the pandemic

Figure 2.1: General education two-year achievement measures at A level by academic year, 2017/18 to 2024/25
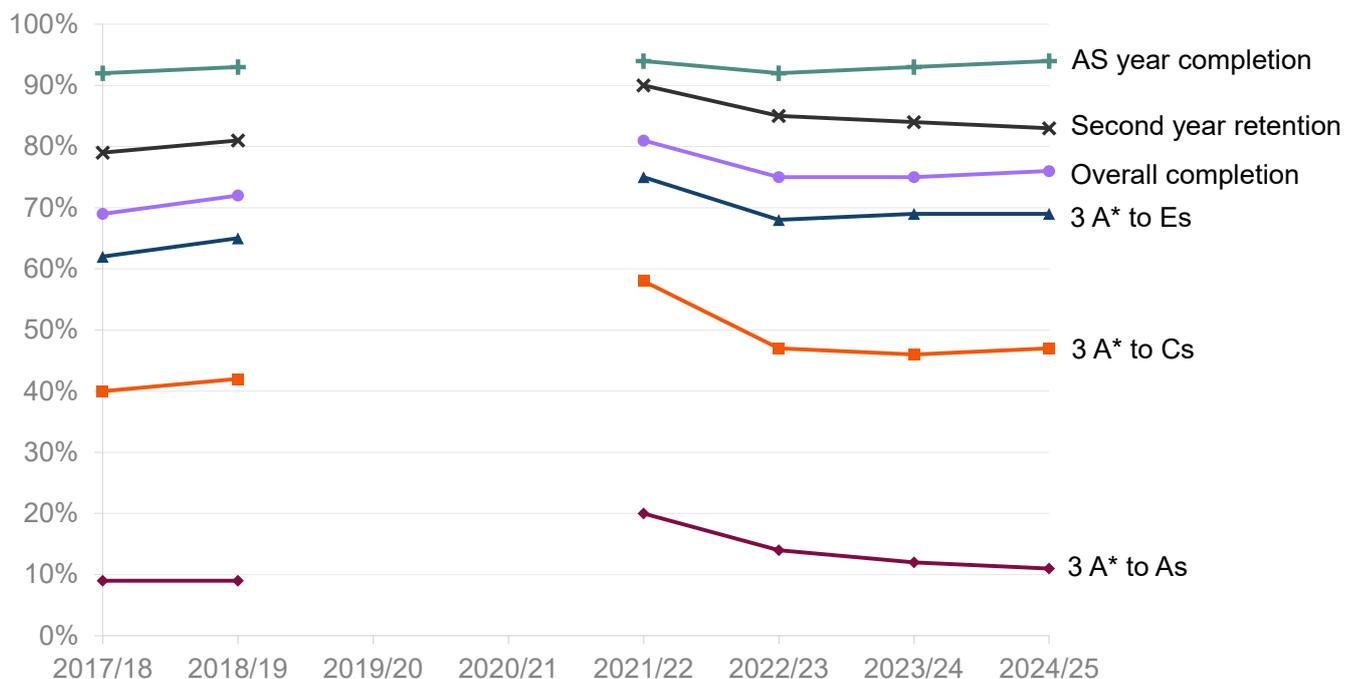
Description: The proportion of learners completing their AS and A levels has increased in 2024/25, whereas second year retention has dropped.

[Note 1] Measures were not produced for 2019/20 or 2020/21.
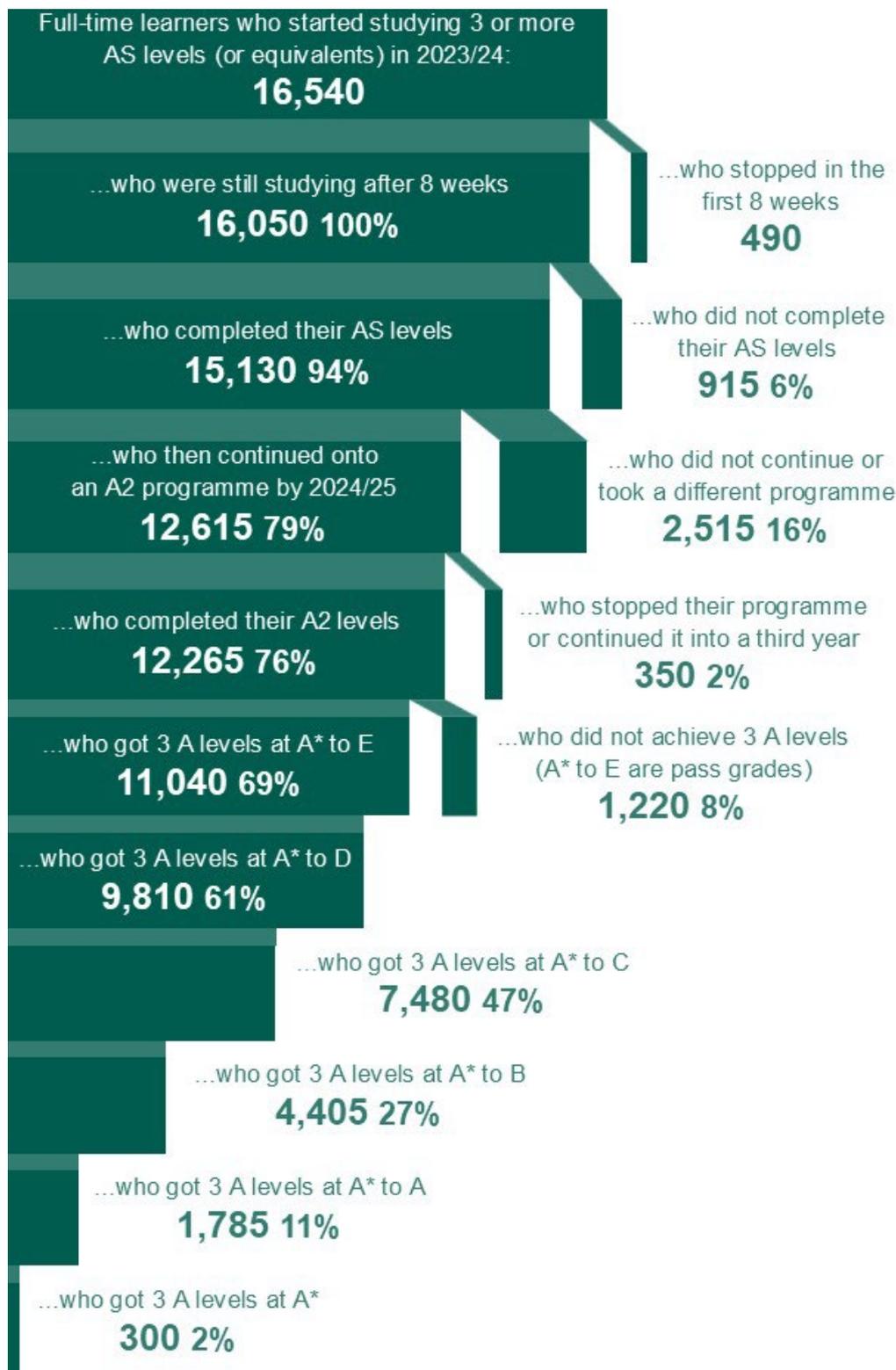
Data in Table 1.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

The change in grades achieved by learners has varied in 2024/25. 69% of learners achieved at least three Es, unchanged from the previous year. The proportion of learners achieving at least three Cs increased to 47% from 46% in the previous year, whereas the proportion of learners achieving at least three As has decreased to 11% from 12%. Grade outcomes remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Of the AS learners studying at 8 weeks, 6% did not complete their AS levels and 16% did but did not go onto the second year

Figure 2.2: Two-year achievement measures for general education (A level) programmes

Percentages in this figure are expressed as the percentage of AS learners at 8 weeks

Full-time learners who started studying 3 or more AS levels (or equivalents) in 2023/24: **16,540**

...who were still studying after 8 weeks **16,050 100%**

...who stopped in the first 8 weeks **490**

...who completed their AS levels **15,130 94%**

...who did not complete their AS levels **915 6%**

...who then continued onto an A2 programme by 2024/25 **12,615 79%**

...who did not continue or took a different programme **2,515 16%**

...who completed their A2 levels **12,265 76%**

...who stopped their programme or continued it into a third year **350 2%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* to E **11,040 69%**

...who did not achieve 3 A levels (A* to E are pass grades) **1,220 8%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* to D **9,810 61%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* to C **7,480 47%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* to B **4,405 27%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* to A **1,785 11%**

...who got 3 A levels at A* **300 2%**

Description: The flow diagram shows the learner journey for full-time A level learners, starting in 2023/24 and completing their A levels in 2024/25.

Data in Table 1.2 of the accompanying spreadsheet

STEM subjects tended to have a higher proportion of A level learners achieving at least an A

Figure 2.3: A level course outcomes for the 15 most taken A levels by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) status, academic year 2024/25
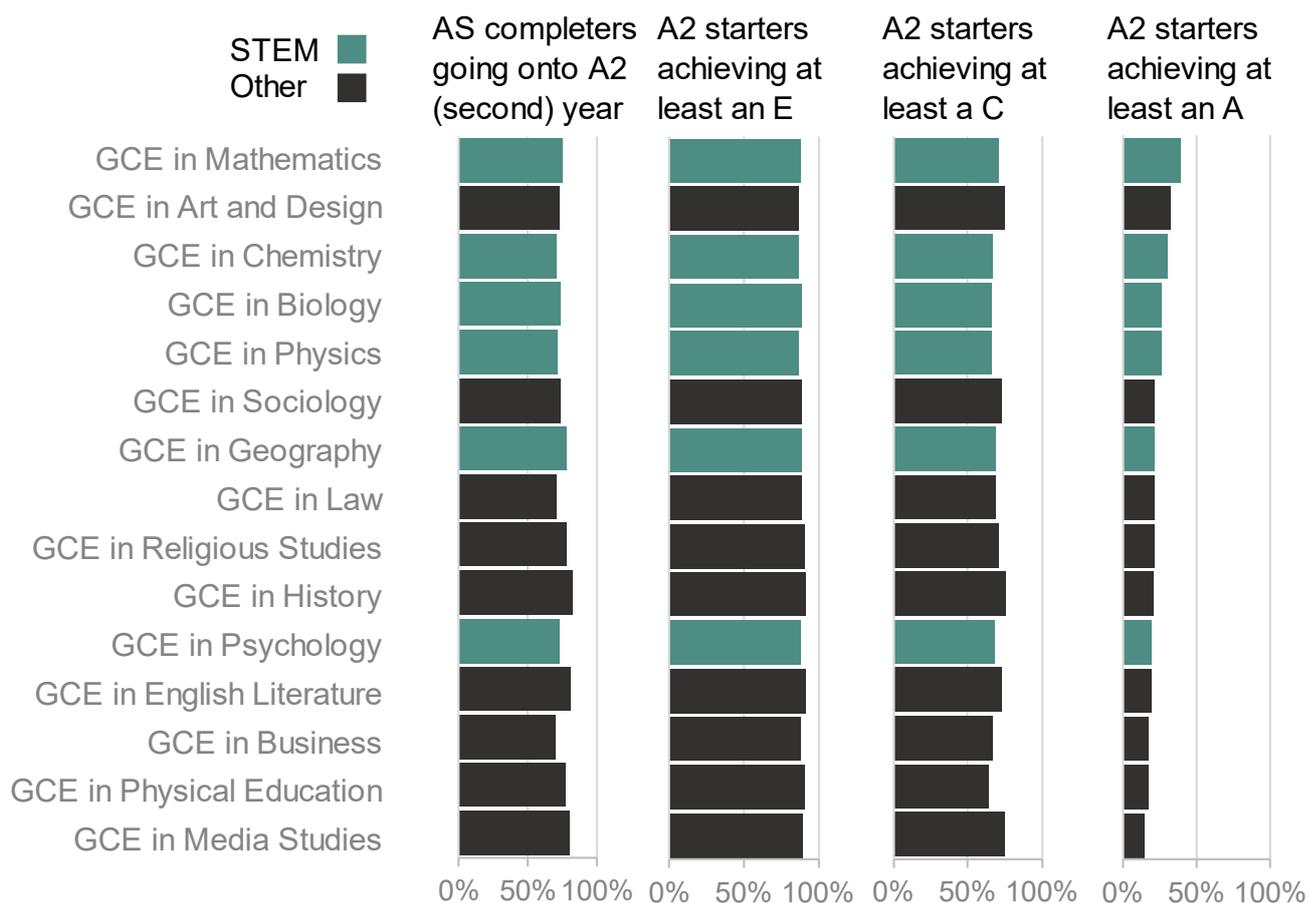
Description: Amongst the 15 most taken A levels, the 5 with the highest proportion of learners achieving an A or A* at A level were predominantly STEM subjects, with Art and Design being the exception with the second-highest proportion.

[Note 1] The broad definition of STEM has been used here which is defined as sector subject areas: 2: Science and Mathematics, 4: Engineering and Manufacturing technologies, 5: Construction, planning and the built environment, 1.1: Medicine and dentistry, 2.2: Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine, 6.2: ICT practitioners, and 11.1: Geography.

Data in Table 4.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Almost 4 in 10 learners who started the second year of their Maths A level went on to get an A or A*. Nearly 2 in 10 Business and Physical Education A level learners achieved an A or A*, and even fewer learners in Media Studies.

Over 8 in 10 learners who completed History AS continued onto History A level in their second year, similar to English Literature. These subjects, along with Art and Design and Media Studies, had a high percentage of learners achieving at least a C.

Different subjects may attract different types of learner, for example from different backgrounds or with different levels of prior achievement.

Vocational programmes

These measures cover full time learners studying programmes with mainly vocational qualifications, in a particular sector or subject area. They do not include apprenticeships.

Vocational qualifications have different lengths, so the vocational measures only look at achievement over one year. Success for vocational programmes is measured as the percentage of main qualifications studied that were successful.

In 2019/20 and 2020/21, some assessments were cancelled and replaced with alternatives such as teacher assessed grades, others were adapted, and some were delayed. Outcomes in these years were generally lower, except for level 3 programmes (equivalent to A level).

In 2021/22 assessments went ahead, but awarding bodies were able to make adaptations to examinations and assessments, to help mitigate the disruption of the pandemic on learning. Outcomes for all programmes, including level 3 programmes, were below pre-pandemic levels.

In 2022/23, vocational qualifications that were Wales specific were expected to take into account the approach taken with GCSEs and A levels. However Ofqual, in England, supported a return to 2018/19 assessments, which affected Welsh learners taking vocational qualifications available in both England and Wales.

2023/24 saw a return to pre-pandemic arrangements. As described in the general education section of this report, 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.

Subsequently, for Wales specific qualifications, 2024/25 marked the complete return to pre-pandemic awarding approaches. In general, the return to pre-pandemic arrangements and standards for these qualifications was quicker than for general education.

Entry level completion and success rates have declined in 2024/25

Figure 3.1: Completion and success rates for vocational programmes by programme level and academic year, 2018/19 to 2024/25
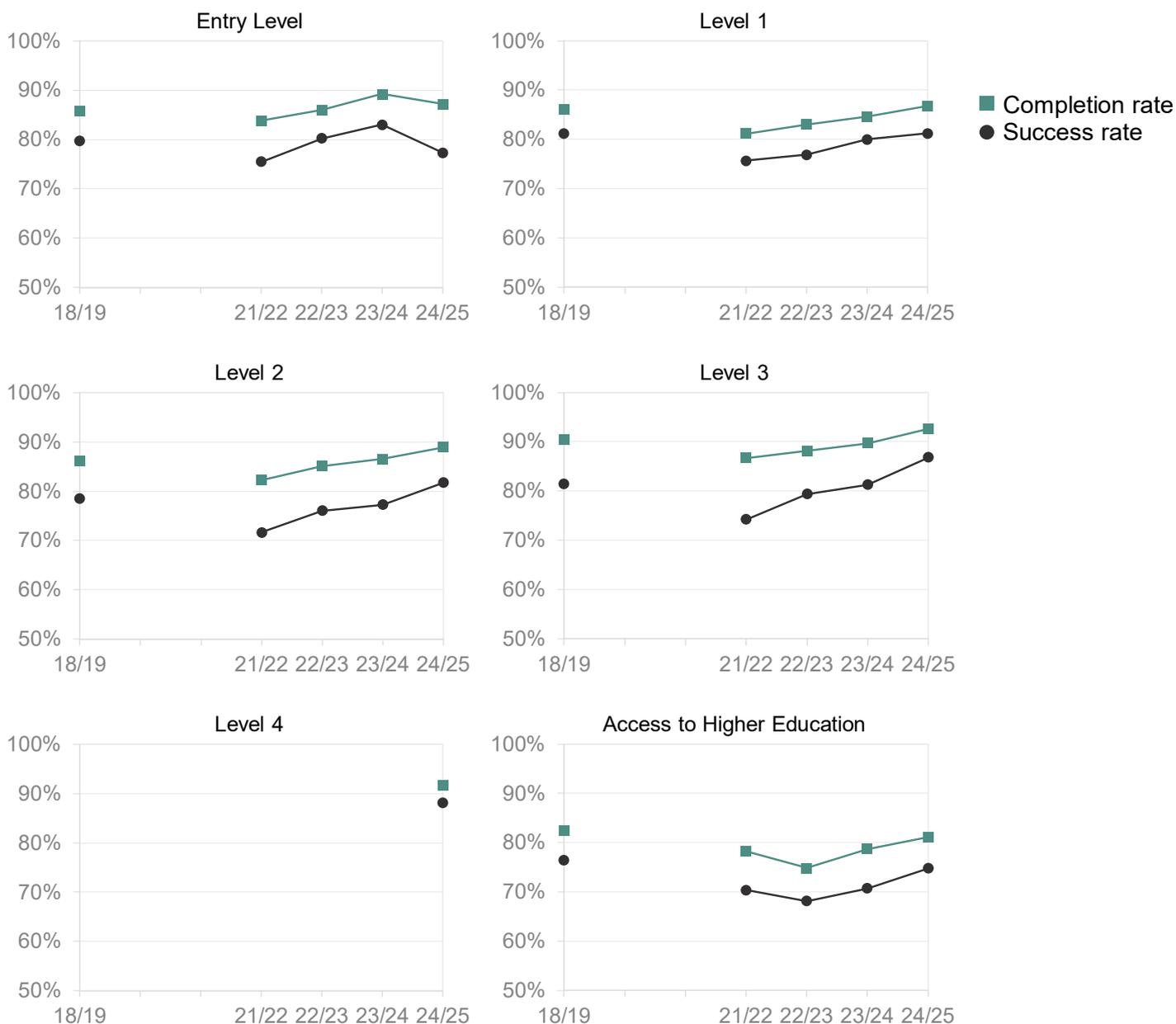
Description: Completion and success rates across all levels of vocational programmes rose in 2024/25, except for entry level which has declined.

[Note 1] Measures were not produced for 2019/20 or 2020/21.
[Note 2] From 2024/25, level 4 vocational programmes have been included in the measures.

Data in Table 2.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

The increasing completion and success rates is a continuation of the trend observed since 2021/22 at levels 1 to 3, and since 2022/23 for Access to Higher Education programmes. At levels 1 to 3, vocational outcomes are now at or above pre-pandemic figures.

Entry level outcomes in 2024/25 have decreased, with completion and success rates falling by two percentage points and six percentage points respectively, compared to the previous year. The majority of entry level programmes are English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes at entry level 1 to entry level 3, or Foundation Learning at entry level 3. All of these programmes saw completion and success rates fall between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

In 2024/25, there was an increase in the number of learners enrolled at 8 weeks at all levels, with level 1 and 2 showing the largest increase of nine percentage points and fourteen percentage points respectively, compared with the previous year.

The success rate and completion rate for level 4 was 88% and 92% repectively in 2024/25.

Access to Higher Education programmes saw an increase in completion and success rates compared to 2023/24, following a drop in 2022/23. Access to Higher Education programmes are designed to prepare people without traditional qualifications for study at university.
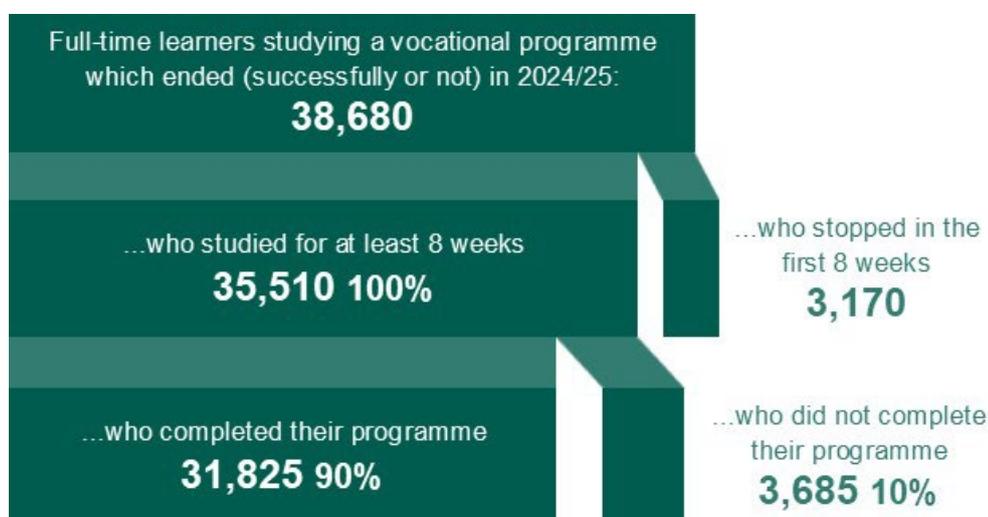
Similar to the last 3 years, around 7 in 10 starters in Access to Higher Education programmes were in Health, Public Services and Care.

Compared to 2023/24, all sector subject areas (SSAs) saw completion and success rates increase or remain the same. Within the Preparation for Life and Work SSA, however, the success rate for English for Speakers of Other Languages programmes decreased by five percentage points.

The proportion of learners completing their vocational programme has increased by three percentage points compared to 2023/24
Figure 3.2: Completion measures for vocational programmes, academic year 2024/25

Percentages in this figure are expressed as the percentage of vocational learners at 8 weeks

Full-time learners studying a vocational programme which ended (successfully or not) in 2024/25: 38,680

...who studied for at least 8 weeks 35,510 100%

...who stopped in the first 8 weeks 3,170

...who completed their programme 31,825 90%

...who did not complete their programme 3,685 10%

Description: The flow chart shows the progression of vocational learners through their programme. Approximately 1 in 13 learners left their vocational programme within their first 8 weeks, this is down from 1 in 11 last year.

Data in Table 2.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

The success rate of main qualifications taken by learners in vocational programmes has increased in 2024/25

Figure 3.3: Success rate of main qualifications taken by learners in vocational programmes, academic year 2024/25
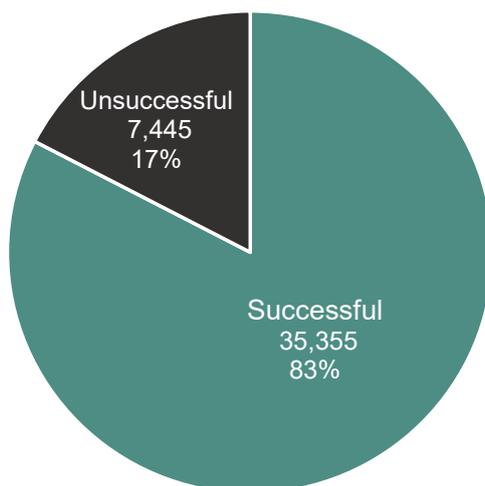

Description: 83% of the main qualifications taken as part of full time vocational programmes successfully achieved. This is three percentage points higher than in 2023/24.

Data in Table 2.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Reasons for programmes ending without completing are broadly in line with 2023/24

Figure 3.4: Reason for ending non-completed vocational programmes at colleges by academic year, 2023/24 to 2024/25
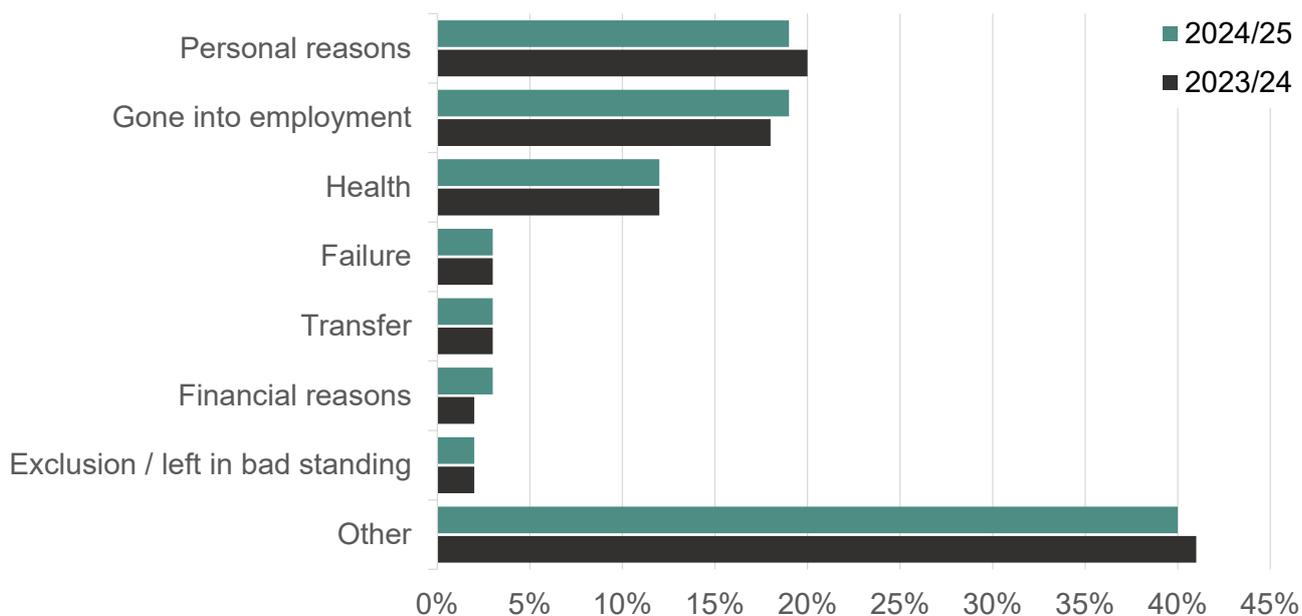
Percentage of programmes ended without completing (excluding early dropouts)

Description: 'Gone into employment' and 'Financial reasons' has risen in proportion as a cause for non-completion, both by one percentage point compared to 2023/24.

Data in Table 2.15 of the accompanying spreadsheet

In 2024/25, 'Personal reasons' and 'Other' have decreased in proportion as a reason for non-completion, both falling by one percentage point compared to 2023/24. The proportion of 'Health', 'Failure', 'Transfer' and 'Exclusion/ left in bad standing' has remained the same as 2023/24, as a reason for non-completion.

As per last year, the largest reasons for not completing were still recorded as 'Personal reasons', 'Gone into employment' and 'Other'.
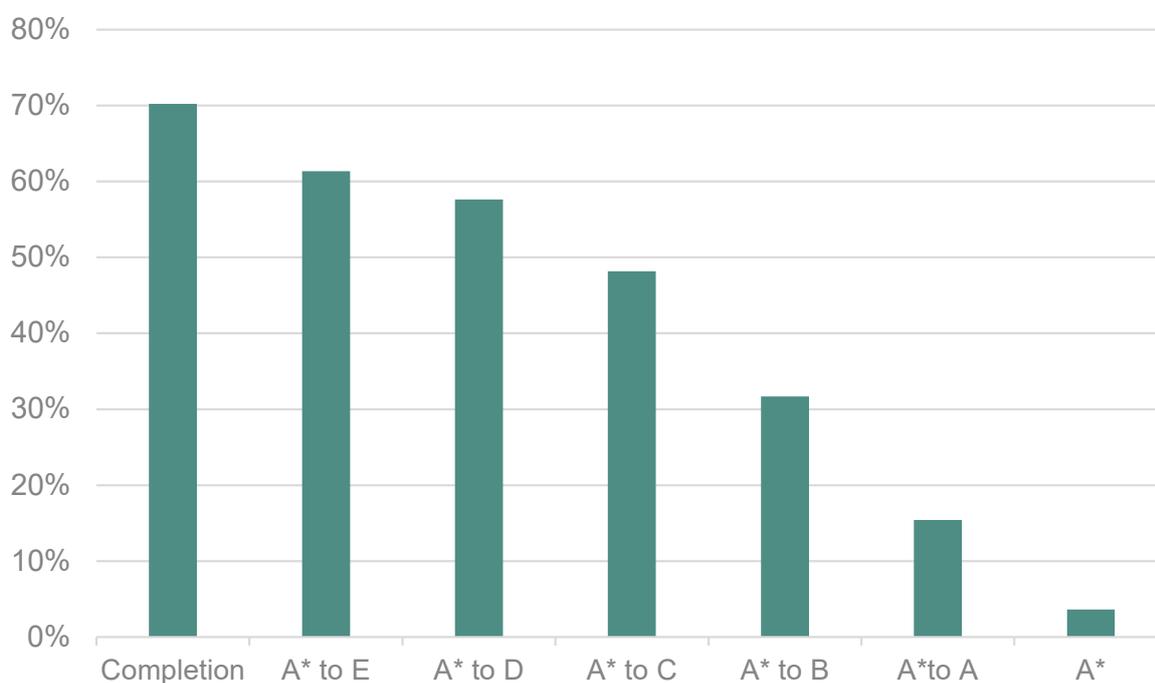
Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales

The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (ASBW) is a Wales-only qualification, introduced in September 2023 and awarded for the first time in summer 2025. It is a standalone qualification that can be taken alongside other general and vocational qualifications, and aims to develop skills useful for education and employment.

The new qualification has replaced the previous Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate, with the final award of the qualification in summer 2024. Analysis and outcomes relating to the previous Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate are available in previous editions of this release.

This report focuses on the two-year level 3 Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales. Full specification and guidance can be found on the WJEC website.

70% of learners completed the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales in 2024/25
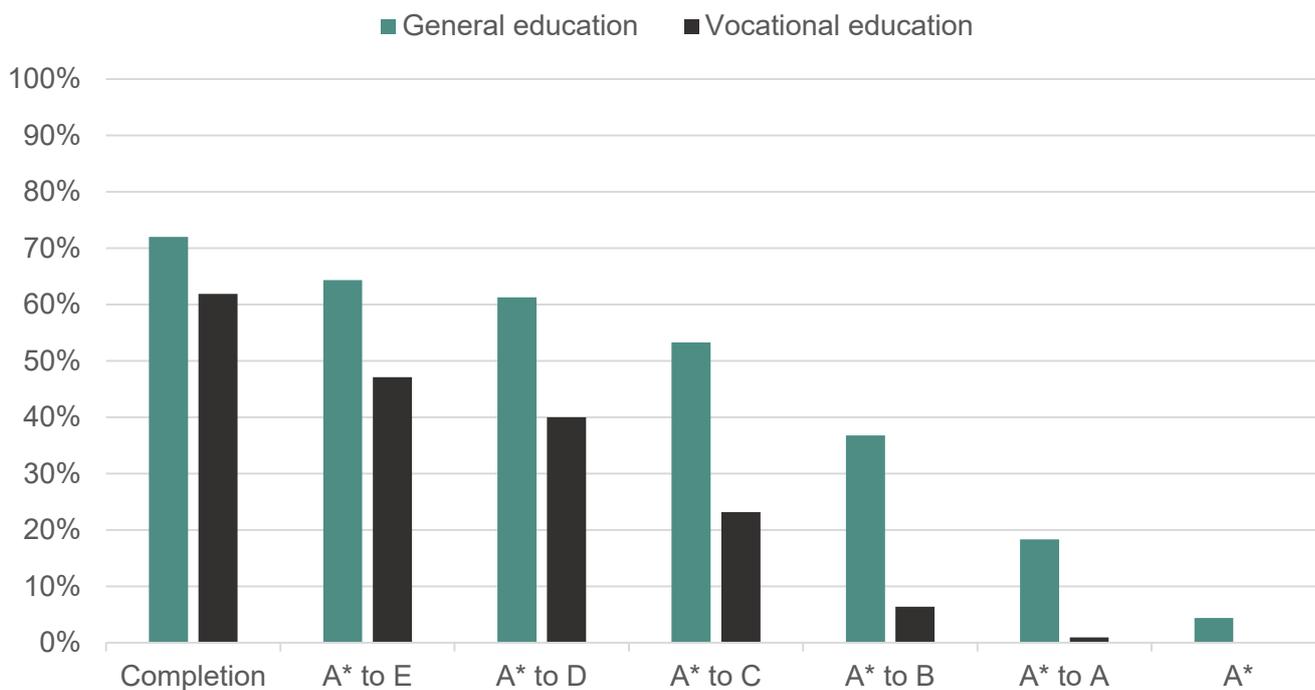Figure 4.1: Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales achievement measures, academic year 2024/25

Description: Of the 16,975 Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales learners enrolled at 8 weeks, 61% of learners achieved A* to E, with 48% of learners achieving A* to C.

Data in Table 3.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Learners studying general education programmes had higher Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales outcomes than learners studying vocational programmes

Figure 4.2: Achievement measures by learner programme type for the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, academic year 2024/25

Description: In 2024/25, the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales completion rate for vocational learners was 62%, compared to 72% for general education learners. Of the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales learners, 14,090 learners were enrolled in general education and 2,800 learners were enrolled in vocational education at the 8 week point.

[Note 1] Some categories based on low numbers have been excluded to avoid disclosure.

Data in Table 3.1 of the accompanying spreadsheet

The gap in Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales outcomes between general education and vocational learners is the largest at 31 percentage points for learners achieving A* to B.

Personal Learning Accounts

The Personal Learning Account (PLA) programme aims to help individuals to upskill or reskill in priority sectors, particularly those earning below the median gross annual figure for full-time adults working in Wales.

Outcomes for these courses are included in these measures for the first time. 5,855 courses where the learner was still enrolled at 8 weeks are included in these measures in 2024/25.

Level 3 courses within PLA programmes had the highest success rate in 2024/25

Figure 5.1: Completion and success rates for courses undertaken as part of Personal Learning Account programmes by level, academic year 2024/25
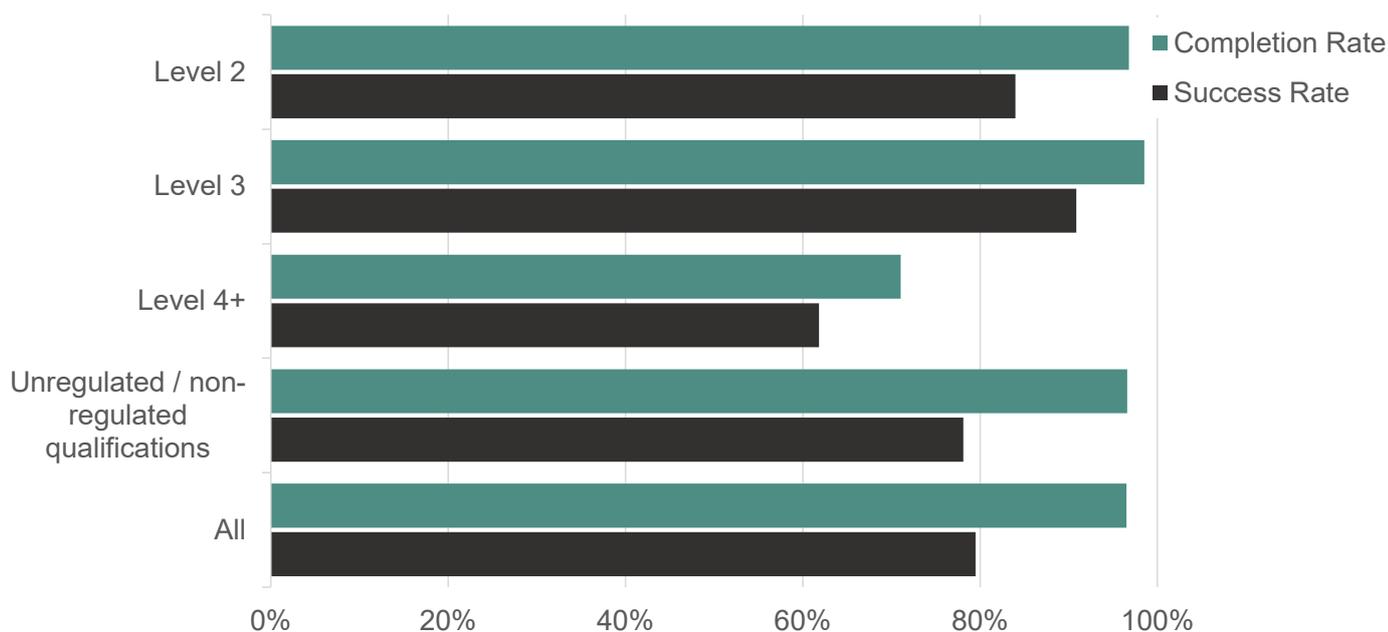

Description: Level 4+ courses within PLA programmes had the lowest success rate at 62% in 2024/25. This is a 29 percentage point gap compared to the highest success rate for Level 3 at 91%.

Data in Table 5.4 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Retail and Commercial Enterprise courses had the highest success rate for within PLA programmes in 2024/25

Figure 5.2: Completion and success rates for courses undertaken as part of Personal Learning Account programmes by Subject Sector Area (SSA) academic year 2024/25
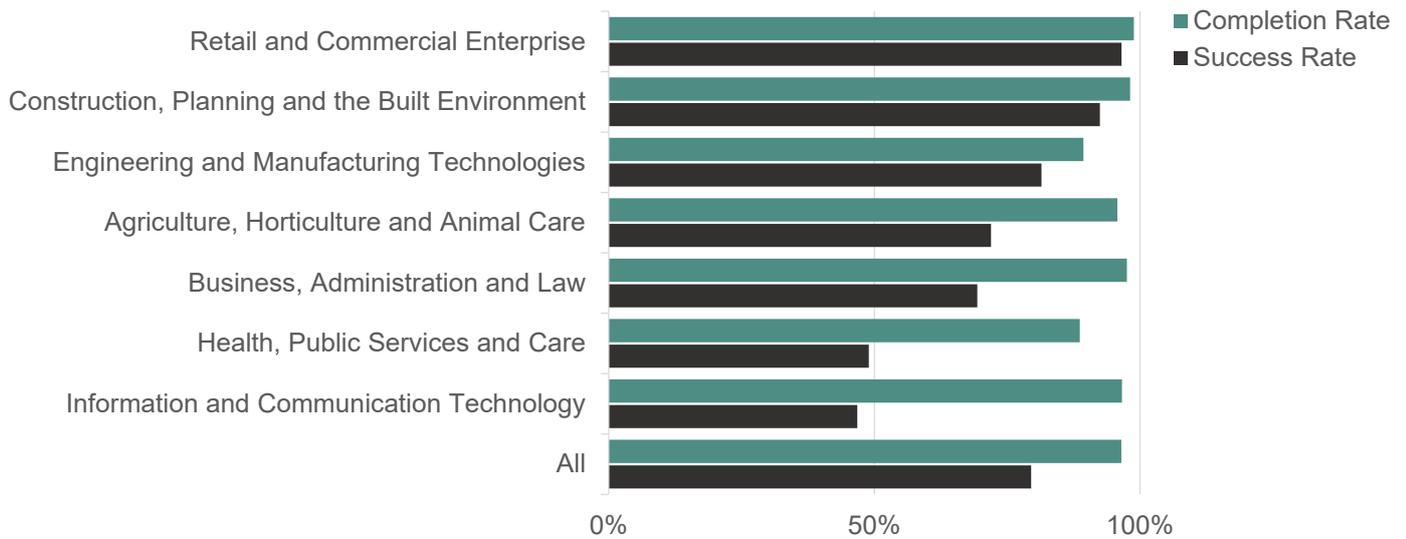
Description: Although the Information and Communication Technology SSA had a high completion rate of 97%, the success rate dropped by 50 percentage points to 47% in 2024/25. This was the lowest success rate across all SSAs.

Data in Table 5.4 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Gender / sex

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. Users should note the differences in the variables collected when interpreting the analysis.

In 2024/25, the cohort of learners studying at 8 weeks in general education is made up of 32% of from colleges, where 'gender' is recorded, with the remaining 68% of the cohort from sixth forms, where 'sex' is recorded. For vocational learners, college based provision makes up nearly all the vocational cohort, with less than 1% of vocational programmes being undertaken in sixth forms. Of the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales learners, 44% of the cohort are from colleges and 56% are from sixth forms.

In the general education cohort, learners who do not associate with a binary gender identity of female or male make up less than 0.5% of the cohort. In the vocational and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales cohorts, they make up 1% of the cohort.

Overall, female learners have performed better than males learners in achievement measures

Figure 6.1: Achievement measures by gender/sex, academic year 2024/25
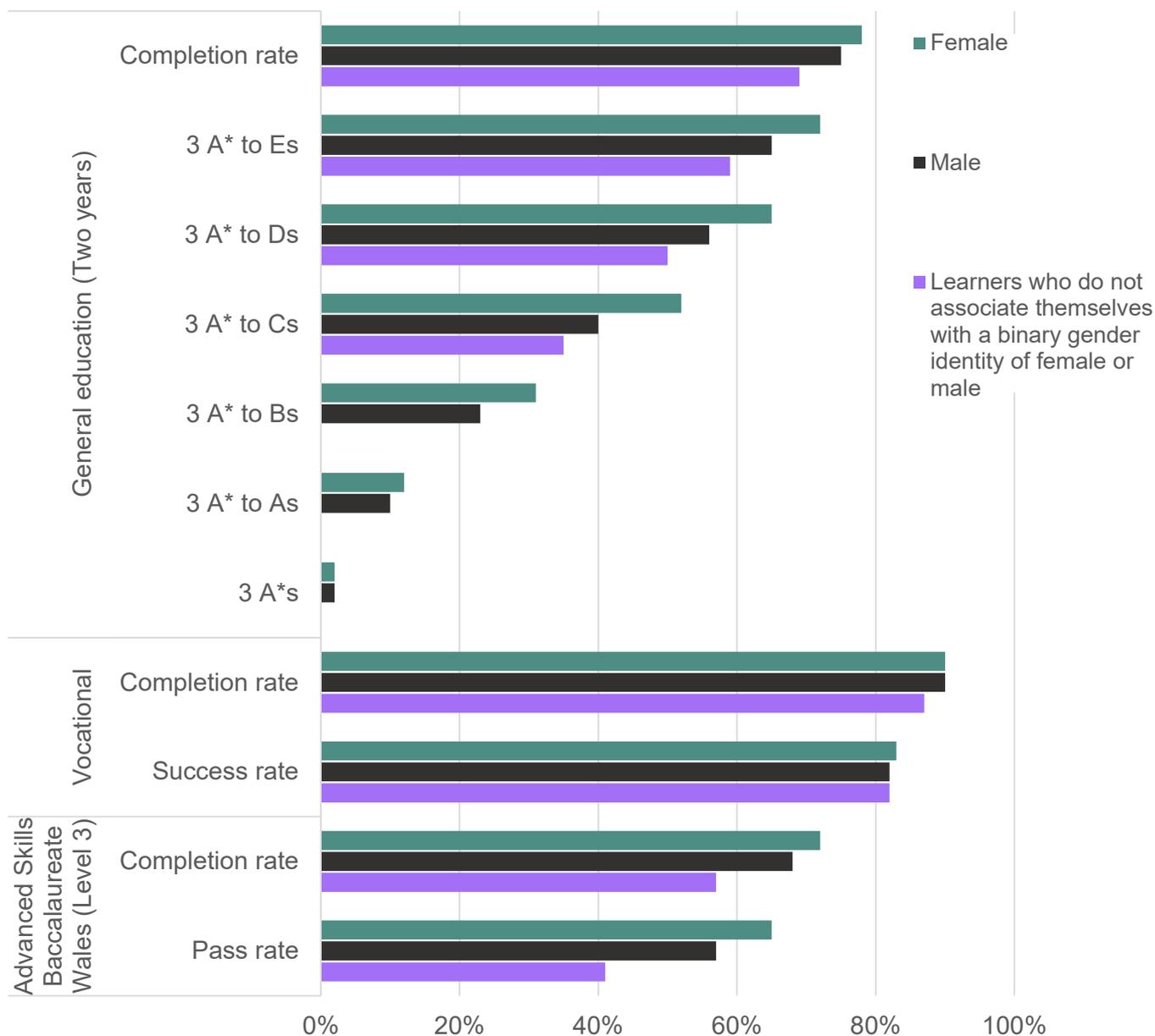
Description: Females had higher outcomes than males in general education programmes, except for the percentage of learners achieving 3 A*s. Females also had higher outcomes in the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales than males for both completion and pass rates.

[Note 1] Some categories based on low numbers have been excluded to avoid disclosure.
[Note 2] The category 'Learners who do not associate themselves with a binary gender identity of female or male' relates to learners in colleges only.
[Note 3] The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales was introduced in September 2023 and awarded for the first time in summer 2025.

Data in Table 1.2, 2.2, 3.2 of the accompanying spreadsheet

78% of females who were 8 weeks into their AS levels went on to complete their A levels, compared to 75% of males. Compared to male learners, female learners were more likely to continue onto their second year, leading to an overall higher completion rate.

52% of female AS learners went on to achieve at least three Cs at A level, compared to 40% of male learners.

Compared to 2023/24, the female/male gap for general education increased for learners achieving three A* to Es and three A* to Ds, whereas the gap remained the same for three A* to Cs, three A* to Bs and three A* to As.

The success rate in vocational programmes is slightly higher for females than males in 2024/25 by one percentage point. Furthermore, there was no female/male gap in the completion rate.

Learners who do not associate themselves with a binary gender identity of female or male generally had lower outcomes, with the exception of the success rate in vocational programmes.

Males have a higher success rate than females in courses taken as part of PLA programmes

Figure 6.2: PLA course outcomes by gender, academic year 2024/25
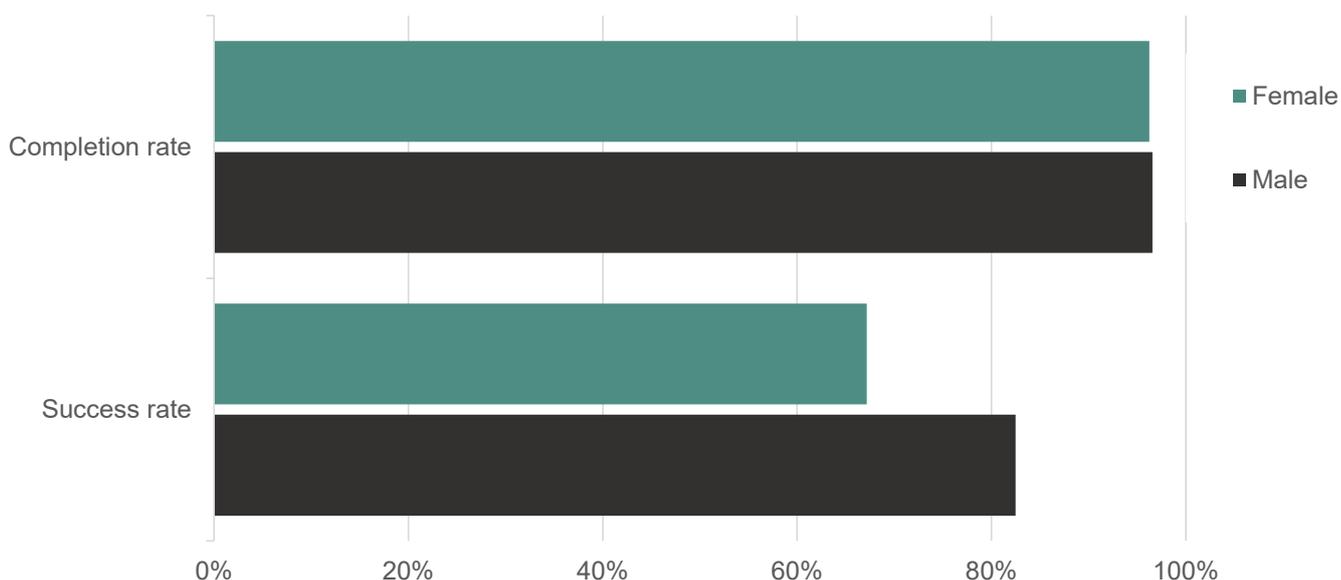
Description: In 2024/25, courses taken by male learners undertaking PLA programmes had a completion rate of 97%, which was slightly higher than female learners with a completion rate of 96%.

Data in Table 5.5 of the accompanying spreadsheet

81% of the 5,855 PLA courses were undertaken by males. Outcomes are not reported for learners who do not associate themselves with a binary gender identity of female or male to avoid disclosure, based on the small cohort size.

Age

Learners aged 16 at the start of their A levels had much higher achievement rates than older learners

Figure 7.1: General education two-year achievement measures at A level by age at the start of the first year, academic year 2024/25
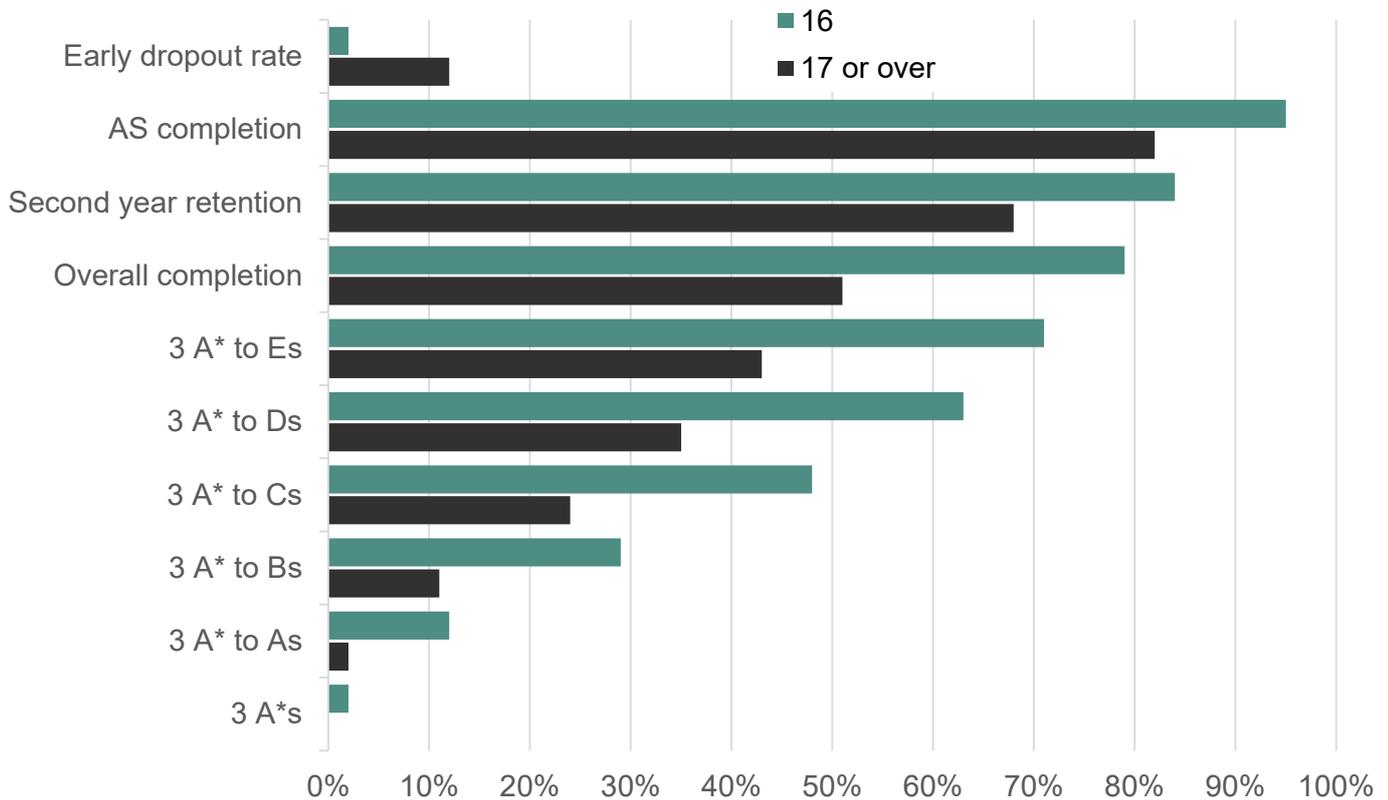
Description: 51% of AS level learners aged 17 or older went on to complete their full A level programme, compared to 79% of 16 year olds. 48% of 16 year old AS learners went on to achieve at least three Cs at A level, compared to 24% of older learners.

[Note 1] Some categories based on low numbers have been excluded to avoid disclosure.

Data in Table 1.3 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Most learners in Wales will start their A levels at 16. In 2024/25, 15,140 learners started their AS levels at age 16 compared to 1,395 learners at ages 17 and over. Older learners may have followed a less traditional education route or could be retaking A levels.

Overall, the age gap in outcomes is slightly lower or remained the same as 2023/24, except for early dropout rate and three A* to As.

Deprivation

There are two measures of deprivation in this release. The first is the deprivation of the small area that a learner lives in. It is not based on the deprivation of the learner specifically. Many non-deprived learners live in deprived areas and vice versa. This comes from the main index of the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple of Deprivation (for 2023/24 data) and the 2025 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (for 2024/25 data).

It is important to note there were some methodological changes between WIMD 2019 and WIMD 2025, 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 second is a learner level proxy measure of deprivation: whether a learner was eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at any point during secondary school.

This section contains a selection of the analysis based on these two measures. More detail is provided in the accompanying spreadsheet.

Learners from the most deprived areas had lower outcomes

Figure 8.1: General education two-year achievement measures at A level by the deprivation of the learner's home neighbourhood and academic year, 2023/24 and 2024/25

1= Most deprived 10% neighbourhoods, 10 = least deprived
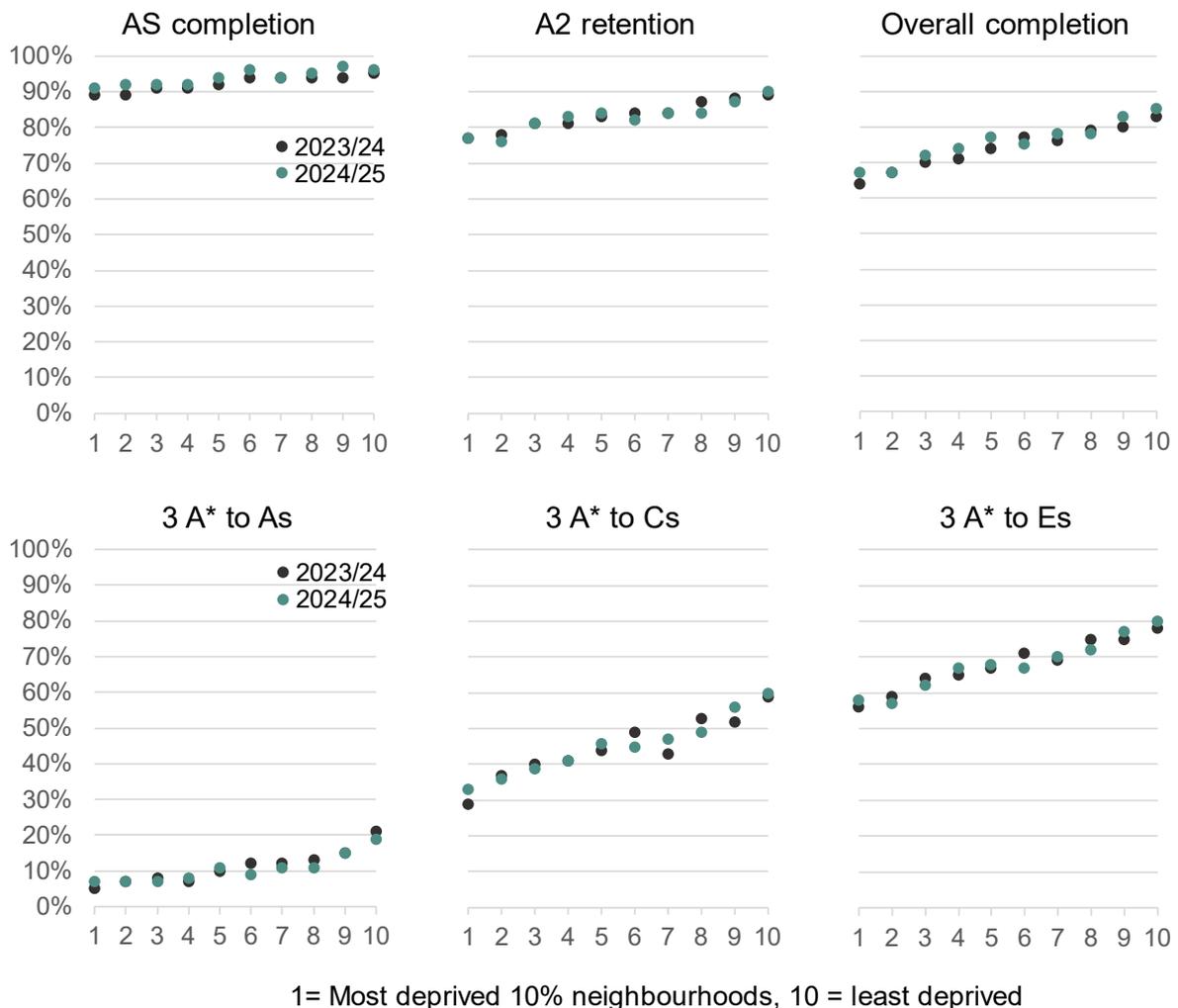
Description: In 2024/25, in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods, only 67% of AS learners went on to complete their A levels. In the least deprived 10% of neighbourhoods, 85% of AS learners completed their A levels. In 2023/24, the gap was 19 percentage points, but it has decreased to 18 percentage points in 2024/25.

Data in Table 1.4 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Most of the gap stems from learners in deprived areas not continuing onto the second year of A levels. The retention rate was only 77% for learners living in the most deprived areas, compared to 90% for learners in the least deprived areas. Learners from the most deprived areas were also less likely to complete their AS levels in the first place.

A gap was also seen between learners who had been eligible for Free School Meals in secondary school, and those who were never eligible.

Success rates are lower for vocational learners eligible for FSM
Figure 8.2: Vocational programme success rate by whether the learner was ever eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in secondary school, academic year 2024/25
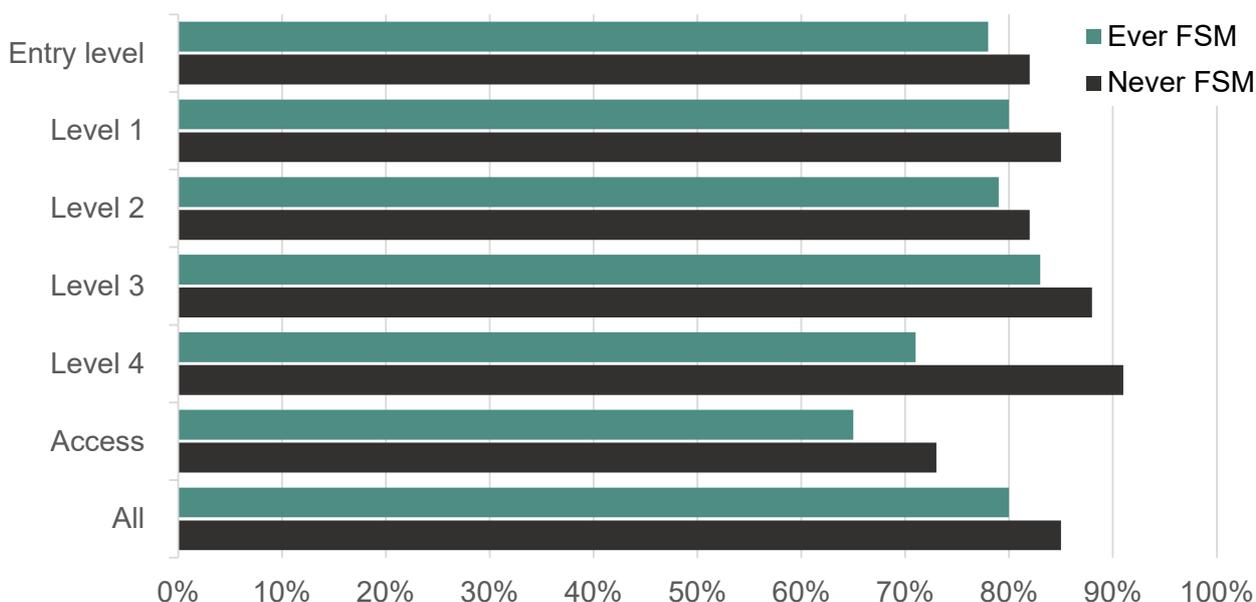
Description: The link between deprivation and achievement in vocational programmes was not as strong as general education. 80% of learners who were once eligible for [free school meals](#) achieved their vocational qualifications, compared to 85% who were not.

Data in Table 2.10 of the accompanying spreadsheet

25% of vocational learners FSM status in secondary school could not be identified. This includes learners who did not go to secondary school in Wales, and learners who left secondary school before 2010/11, which is as far back as records can be matched in the dataset used for this. There was also a deprivation gap when looking at the area based measure of deprivation, where there were fewer unknowns.

Ethnic background

Some ethnic groups saw an increase in some of the grade outcome indicators in 2024/25, while others have shown a decline or relatively stable outcomes

Figure 9.1: General education two-year achievement measures at A level by the learner's ethnic background and academic year, 2023/24 to 2024/25
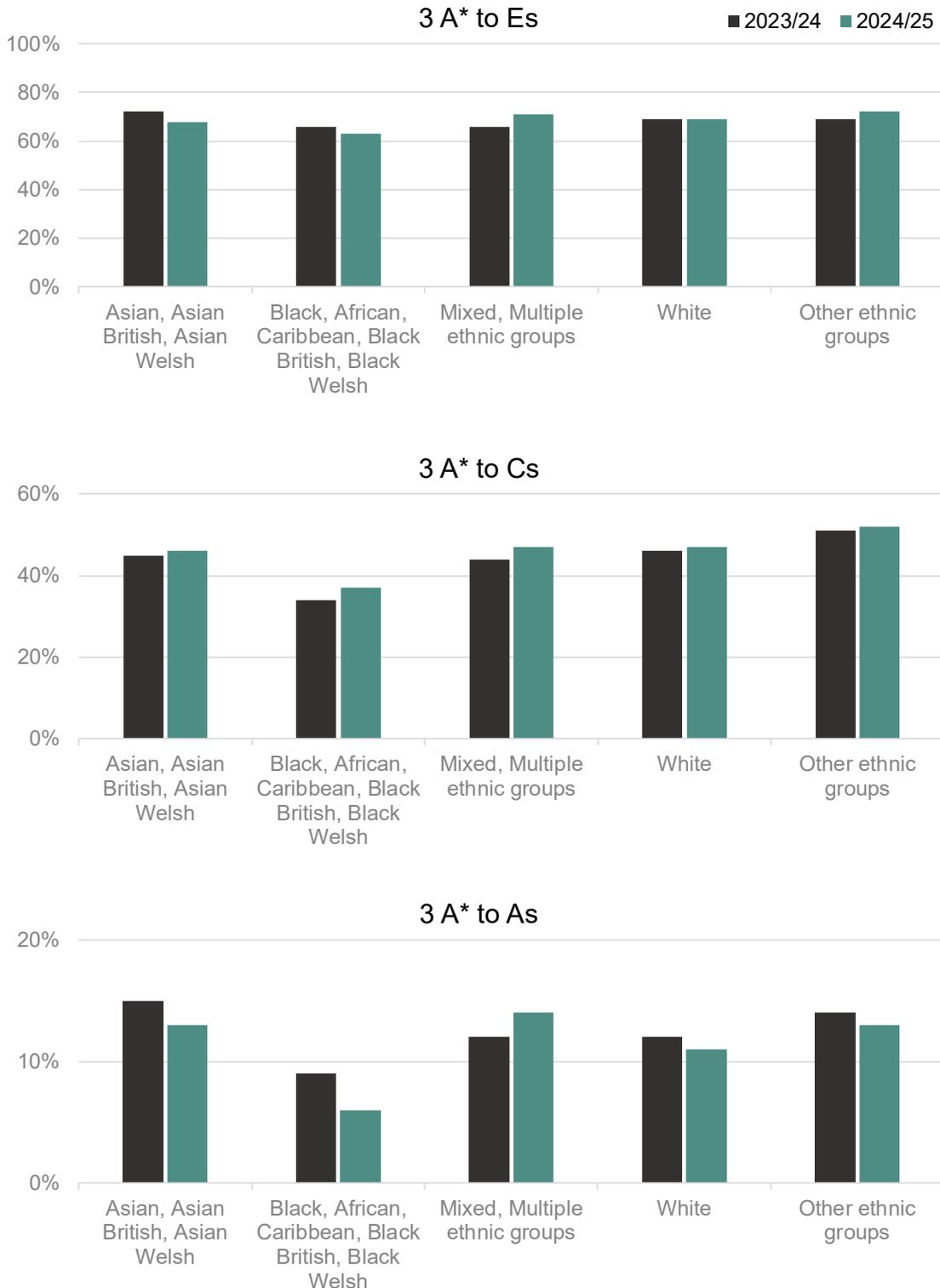
Description: Learners from Other ethnic groups were more likely to achieve at least three A levels and at least three Cs. Learners from Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups were more likely to achieve at least three As.

Data in Table 1.8a of the accompanying spreadsheet

The Mixed, Multiple ethnic group and Other ethnic group saw an increase in the proportion of learners achieving at least three Es, up six percentage points and three percentage points respectively from 2023/24.

The proprtion of learners achieving at least three Cs increased for all ethnic groups in 2024/25.

Learners from Mixed, Multiple ethnic groups was the only group that saw an increase in the percentage of learners achieving at least three As, up two percentage points from 2023/24.

The majority of ethnic groups saw increased success rates

Figure 9.2: Vocational education success rate by the learner's detailed ethnic background and academic year, excluding English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), 2023/24 to 2024/25
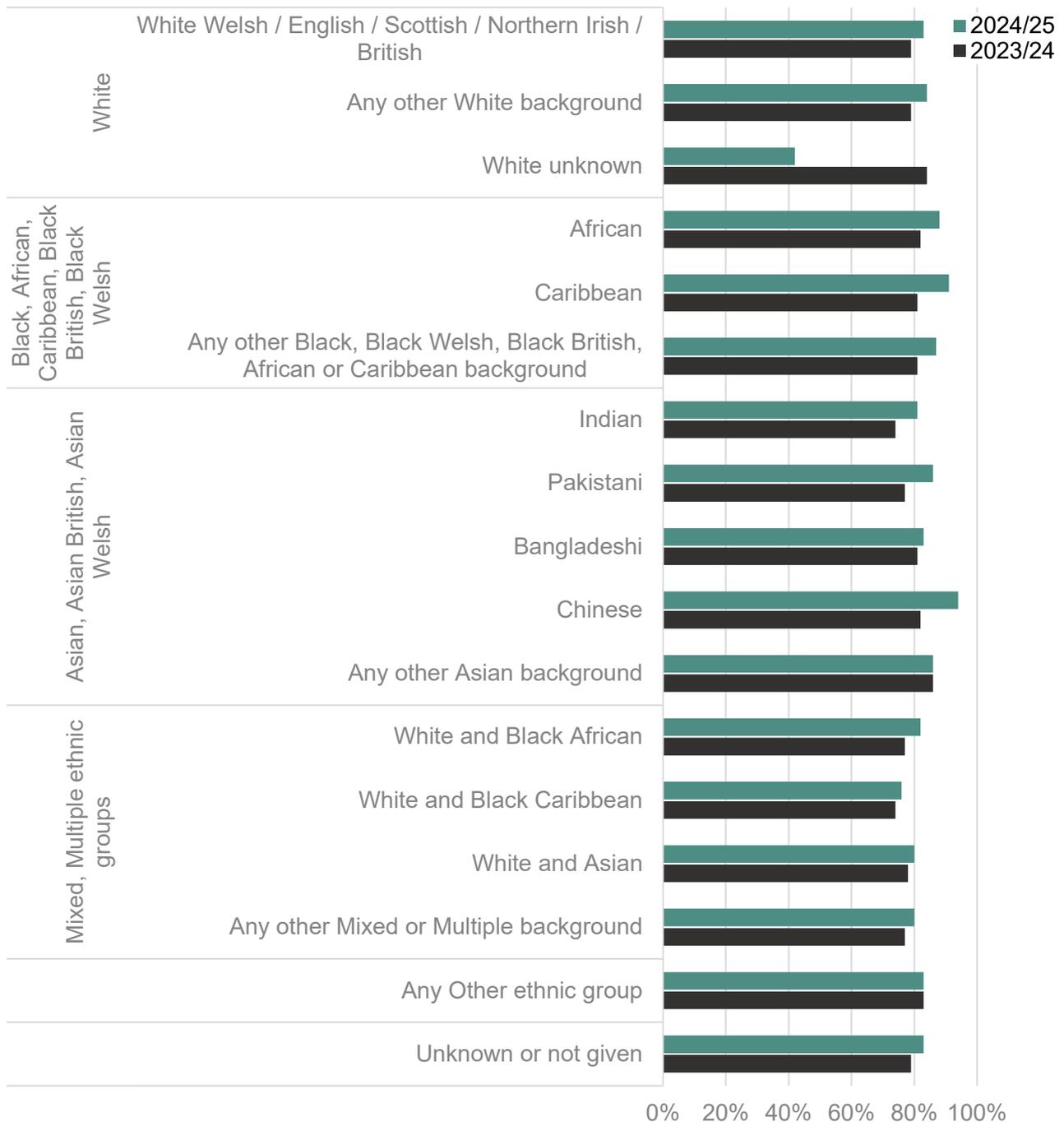
Description: Most ethnic groups saw an increase in vocational education success rates in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, while others have shown a decline or a relatively stable success rate.

[Note 1] Some categories based on low numbers have been excluded to avoid disclosure.

Data in Table 2.9 of the accompanying spreadsheet

Learners from a Chinese background had the highest success rate at 94% on vocational programmes in 2024/25 (excluding programmes that teach English for Speakers of Other Languages). This was a twelve percentage point rise compared to the previous year.

The success rate for learners from a White unknown background decreased from 84% in 2023/24 to 42% in 2024/25. The White unknown ethnic group is a historical category no longer used in the data. The decrease can be attributed to learners dropping out of the dataset with this category recorded – the White unknown cohort in vocational education decreased from 3,960 in 2023/24 to 115 in 2024/25.

Cohort sizes across ethnic groups varies for learners studying at 8 weeks, from 28,515 learners in the 'White Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/ British' ethnic group to just 15 learners in the 'Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller' ethnic group. To see full figures, go to table 2.9 in the accompanying spreadsheet.

Glossary

Academic year

For schools, the academic year is from 1 September to 31 August. For colleges, the academic year is 1 August to 31 July.

Age

A learner's age is calculated from the 31 August at the beginning of their AS year for general education, and at the beginning of the named year for vocational education.

AS, A2 and A level

A levels are qualifications which are usually taken over 2 years. Typically a learner takes Advanced Subsidiary GCE (AS) qualifications in the first year, and may then go on to take the overall Advanced GCE qualification in the second year. This second year is sometimes referred to as the A2 year.

Some learners will take linear A levels, where they spend two years working towards an A level qualification without taking an Advanced Subsidiary GCE.

Colleges and school sixth forms

In this release, 'colleges' means further education institutions, also known as FEIs. Some further education institutions are a group of several colleges. 'Schools' or 'Sixth forms' refers to maintained school sixth forms.

St David's Catholic Sixth Form College is defined as a college. Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen is a school sixth form.

Courses

Courses are individual qualifications that a learner studies. For example, a physics A level.

Completion rate

The completion rate is the proportion of programmes or activities that are finished, whether or not the qualifications were achieved. See the quality and methodology document for more information.

Early dropouts

Learners are defined as early dropouts if they:
- end their programme within 8 weeks of their start date
- and did not complete that programme
- and the programme had an expected length of 24 weeks or greater

Early dropouts are excluded from the measures.

Ethnic background

Ethnic categories are presented according to the Government Analysis Function harmonised standards. The information is self-reported by the learner.

Free school meals

Learners are eligible for free school meals if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments, or are on universal credit. Learners are only recorded as eligible if they have applied for free school meals to their local authority.

A learner is defined in this report as "Ever eligible for Free School Meals" if they were eligible for free school meals at any point during secondary school in Wales. If they were not eligible in any year of secondary school in Wales they are described as 'Never eligible for Free School Meals'. Learners who could not be matched to a secondary school record in Wales are categorised as unknown.

General education

General education refers to a programme of learning which includes a mix of qualifications across several subject areas. In post-16 learning these qualifications are often A levels, but learners can also take a mixture of vocational qualifications as part of their general education programme.

Home neighbourhood

The small area called the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) which contains the learner's address.

Main qualifications

Main qualifications should take up at least 50% of the Guided Contact Hours for a programme, with the ideal target being 70%. They should be qualifications that are approved or designated by Qualifications Wales. Whether a qualification is a main qualification is self-reported by the provider.

Programme

A programme is a collection of qualifications that a learner will study. For example, an A level programme may include three A levels and a Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales. An example of a vocational programme might be 'Carpentry & Joinery Level 1', which involves studying a 'Diploma in Carpentry and Joinery' as the main qualification, along with any supporting qualifications, such as pre-GCSE mathematics.

Qualification levels

Qualification levels range from entry level to level 8.

A level 1 qualification is equivalent to a D to G at GCSE, a level 2 qualification is equivalent to an A* to C at GCSE, and a level 3 qualification is equivalent to an AS or A level.

The Credit and Qualification Framework learner guide has a diagram outlining the levels of different qualifications.

Sector subject areas

The sector subject areas are based on the 15 first-tier areas of learning classified by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (Ofqual). They can refer to the subject of an overall vocational programme, or individual courses.

Success rate

The success rate is the proportion of main qualifications taken that were achieved. See the quality and methodology document for more information.

Vocational education

Vocational education is a set of learning activities taken by a learner with the aim of preparing them for a specific area of work. BTECs are a typical kind of vocational qualification taken as part of a vocational programme. In this release vocational education does not cover apprenticeships or Jobs Growth Wales+.

Notes

Tables are published alongside this release containing all the data presented here, and further data.

Suspension of performance measures in 2019/20 and 2021/22

Due to the changes in how grades were awarded and the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic, the Welsh Government did not produce any of its usual performance measures for schools or post-16 learning in 2019/20 or 2020/21.

Statistics were calculated using new methods to assess how learners' outcomes were affected during the pandemic for all types of post-16 learning. These included new statistics on the length of delay in completing learning and on the choices of Year 11 learners going into post-16 learning. They were reported in the Outcomes for learners in post-16 education affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic reports. The statistics in the pandemic reports should not be compared with the learner outcome measures reported in this release.

Quality and Methodology Information

Please see the accompanying Quality and Methodology: Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Achievement document for detailed information.

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in Medr's Statement of Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value have been demonstrated and improved in the following ways.

Trustworthiness

From the beginning the measures have been developed by professional statisticians according to the Medr's Statement of Compliance and pre-release access to official statistics policy. Release dates are pre-announced, protocols around data confidentiality are followed.

Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes or when a data supplier notifies Medr that they have submitted incorrect information. In these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Where changes are not deemed to be significant, figures will be corrected if they appear in future releases.

Quality

There is a validation process for data when it is collected. There is an additional reconciliation process for data from the Lifelong Learning Record Wales. The measures are created from code through a methodology that has been improved and validated over the years. Automated checks are built into the code. When the measures have been produced, the final report is written and checked by statisticians.

Each year, learning providers receive an achievement measures report for their own data, including information on how exactly the measures have been calculated and highlighting potential data quality issues. This gives providers a chance to highlight and raise issues.

Explanatory notes are sent to all providers each academic year which give guidance on how the measures are created and explain any changes to the methodology that year.

In 2021/22, colleges received the code that was used to generate the measures, giving them the opportunity to critique the methodology directly. We plan to expand this to publishing the code publicly in the future.

These processes and other work have led to the following improvements in quality:

- The data collection guidance and validation rules accompanying the data collection has been improved, leading to higher quality data.
- Changes have been made to the school sixth form and college data collections to further harmonise their results.
- The handling of data collection issues around the old Welsh Baccalaureate qualifications was strengthened, including a reconciliation process, and a system for better dealing with incomplete records.
- A method was developed for multi-syllabus qualifications, where a learner may achieve multiple qualifications within one learning code (for example in GCE Art and Design).
- A system has been implemented to check that the reported grade achieved by a learner matched the grade outcomes possible for the qualification.
- A method was created to remove programme transfers from the measures, if and only if the learner could be identified as having moved onto to a valid programme.

Value

The measures were developed with the help of a regular technical group with representatives from colleges, sixth forms, local authorities and Estyn. Their feedback has led to changes to the methodology, and an expansion of the measures to cover more aspects of post-16 learning.

The Welsh Government held a public consultation on the Consistent Performance Measures for Post-16 learning in 2017 for people to give their input into the principles and details around the measures.

The following changes have been made to improve the value of the statistics since the measures were first published in 2018:

- The A level course measures were revamped to be two-year measures with information on completion and retention.
- Measures were created for courses other than A levels, that account for the wide variety of grade structures possible.
- The vocational programme measures were expanded to include learning in school sixth forms.
- Additional demographic data has been added around gender/sex, ethnic background, home local authority, deprivation of home neighbourhood, FSM eligibility status and SEN/ALN provision in secondary school, and information about learners with impairments in data relating to colleges.
- Expanded A level grade outcomes to the full range (A* to E) instead of A, C and E only.

Related statistics

Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Achievement, August 2023 to July 2024, previous edition of this release published by Medr.
Earlier reports in this series were published on gov.wales.

Examination results: September 2024 to August 2025, published by Welsh Government, reports on A level examination results for schools on the basis of examination entries.

The Joint Council for Qualifications publishes A and AS level results on the basis of examinations sat.

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.

Further education, apprenticeships and community learning: August 2024 to July 2025 was published by Medr on 26 February 2026.

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.

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.

Next update

Date: February or March 2027.

Period covered: August 2025 to July 2026.

The next update to these statistics may not be in the same form as this report.

Contact information

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics.

Feedback, questions, and requests for further data can be directed by email to statistics@medr.cymru.