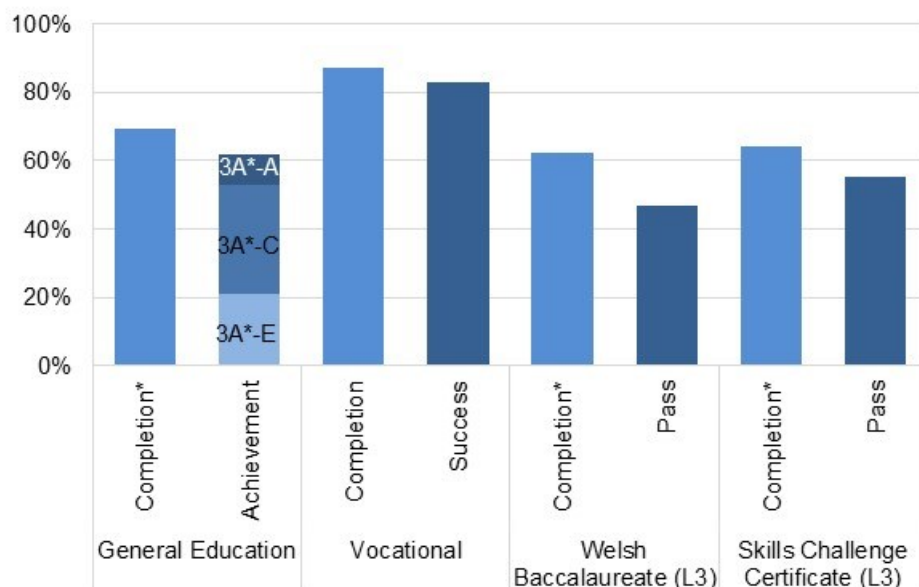


## Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: achievement, August 2017 to July 2018 (experimental statistics)

18 April 2019  
SFR 28/2019

This publication is the second statistical release and follows on from the first set of experimental statistics published in Autumn last year ([Achievement and value added](#)), and relates to measures of achievement (i.e. learning programme completion and attainment of qualifications) for the academic year 2017/18.

**Chart 1: Summary of completion and achievement measures, 2017/18**



\* Completion (2-years measure)

### General education (programmes focusing on AS/A level and equivalent qualifications)

- 92 per cent of those who enrolled on AS level programmes in 2016/17 completed the year. Around four-fifths of these continued onto the second (A2) year of the programme.
- Of those who enrolled in 2016/17, 69 per cent completed the two year programme (in 2017/18) and 62 per cent achieved the equivalent of three A levels at grade A\*-E.

### Vocational programmes

- The learning activity success rate for those undertaking vocational programmes in colleges in 2017/18 was 83 per cent.

### About this release

This release contains the second year of experimental statistics related to consistent performance measures for post-16 learning for school sixth forms and further education institutions.

The statistics are produced from number of sources - the post-16 data collection, Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) and Welsh Examinations Database (WED).

### In this release

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# Introduction

## Background and context

Previous measures of learner outcomes in the FE and sixth form sectors were entirely separate. This means that, although we have a standard system for planning and funding learning programmes across the two sectors, we have not been able to measure the outcomes of these programmes in the same way. The Welsh Government has made a commitment to replace the existing post-16 performance measures with a new set of consistent measures which will be applied across FE and sixth forms.

The independent Hazelkorn and Weingarten reviews have both noted the fragmentation of information on the outcomes of post-compulsory education and training, and advocated a more holistic approach that can measure the impact of the whole system, as well as individual institutions.

To address this disparity, the Welsh Government has been working to develop a set of consistent measures for further education institutions and school sixth forms to enable the publication of all Wales and provider level information on an annual basis. The suite of performance measures consists of:

- **Achievement** The completion, retention and attainment of learners undertaking A level, vocational and Welsh Baccalaureate programmes
- **Value added** The progress made by learners, over and above what would normally be expected based on their prior attainment and gender
- **Destinations** The proportion of learners who progress into further learning (including higher education) and/or employment.

2016/17 was the first year of reporting the new performance measures of [achievement and value added](#). The data incurred some issues about the quality of the data with a decision to exclude several schools/FEs with known or strongly suspected data quality issues. The 2017/18 data quality has improved and include all colleges and schools. As a result of these differences it is strongly advised not to draw direct comparisons between 2016/17 and 2017/18 figures.

A separate statistical release publication provides information on [learner destinations](#) for the academic year 2015/16.

There is a 'mixed economy' of post-16 providers in Wales, with considerable variation in structures across different local authority areas. In some areas, there is a tertiary structure, meaning that schools serve pupils aged 11-16 with post-16 academic and vocational courses delivered by colleges. In other areas, both sixth forms and colleges co-exist. These different delivery structures will affect the nature of the cohort who start learning programmes in different providers, in terms of their characteristics and prior attainment, and this can have an impact on post-16 learning outcomes. Just over half of young people who continue in education after the age of 16 study in further education or work-based learning, and just under half in sixth forms.

The size of the learning providers included in the post-16 performance measures varies widely. Colleges' full-time learner numbers range from 1,300 to 7,500, while sixth forms range from around 40 to 480 learners.

Post-16 learners in school sixth forms and further education institutions all undertake a programme of study, consisting of a combination of qualifications (or learning activities). There are a range of programmes, some of which focus on AS/A levels while others are based around the wide range of vocational qualifications offered. For the purposes of the achievement measures, programmes have been attributed as general education or vocational:

- **General education programmes** include those where learners are studying AS/A levels either wholly or alongside qualifications of equivalent size and value, such as vocational qualifications or the Welsh Baccalaureate, intended to be a two year programme of study.
- **Vocational programmes** are those where mainly vocational qualifications are undertaken, which vary in level and therefore length of study.

## **Achievement: General education programmes**

Table 1 and Chart 2 summarises data at Wales level related to the new achievement measures for general education programmes.

The measures present the number of learners enrolled on a general education programme of three or more AS levels (or equivalent qualifications) at the start of the 2016/17 academic year. The Table provides information related to those completing the first year of study (the AS year), those continuing into, and additionally completing, the second year of study (the A2 year). The proportion of the cohort achieving 3 A levels (or equivalent<sup>1</sup>) at grades A\*-A, A\*-C and A\*-E is also presented – on the basis of the AS cohort and the A2 cohort.

### **Key points**

- **AS completion:** 92 per cent of those who enrolled onto a general education programme in 2016/17 completed the first year (the AS year of study).
- **Retention to A2:** Almost four-fifths (79 per cent) of those who completed the first year returned to the second (A2) year in 2017/18.
- **A2 completion:** 96 per cent of those who returned for the A2 year completed it, representing more than two-thirds of those who enrolled in 2016/17.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes qualifications which are of comparable size and value to A2 level, and which are counted towards the general education achievement measure; for example, BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate.

- **A2 achievement:** 89 per cent of those who completed the A2 year achieved 3 A levels at grades A\*-E or equivalent, while 58 per cent achieved 3 grades A\*-C and 13 per cent achieved 3 grades A\*-A. Of those who initially enrolled for the 2 year programme, 62 per cent achieved 3 A\*-E, 40 per cent achieved 3 A\*-C and 9 per cent achieved 3 A\*-A.

Note: All measures exclude early drop-outs (by 8 weeks) from the programme.

**Table 1: Achievement of learners undertaking general education programmes, by gender and age**

		3+ AS Level (or equivalent) programmes - 2016/17				A2 Level (or equivalent) programmes - 2017/18						
Gender	Age group	Number of learners enrolled	% Early drop-out <sup>1</sup>	Number of learners completing (AS year)		Number of learners continuing from AS	% Retention	Number of learners completing (A2 year)		% Achieving 3 A levels at grade A*-A (or equivalent) <sup>2</sup>	% Achieving 3 A levels at grade A*-C (or equivalent) <sup>2</sup>	% Achieving 3 A levels at grade A*-E (or equivalent) <sup>2</sup>
				% Completion (AS year)	% Completion (A2 year) <sup>2</sup>							
Female	16	8,863	2%	8,043	93%	6,599	82%	6,357	96%	13%	65%	92%
	17+	1,007	6%	770	82%	514	67%	474	92%	7%	48%	81%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9,870</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8,813</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>7,113</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>6,831</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>91%</b>
Male	16	7,240	2%	6,537	92%	5,025	77%	4,853	97%	13%	52%	87%
	17+	860	4%	728	89%	487	67%	453	93%	4%	38%	78%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,100</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7,265</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>5,512</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>5,306</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>All pupils</b>		<b>17,972</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>16,080</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>12,627</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>12,139</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>89%</b>

		Two-year measures			
Cohort	Age group	% Completion <sup>3</sup>	% Achieving 3 A levels at grade		% Achieving 3 A levels at grade A*-E (or equivalent) <sup>3</sup>
			3 A levels at grade A*-A (or equivalent) <sup>3</sup>	% Achieving 3 A levels at grade A*-C (or equivalent) <sup>3</sup>	
Female	16	73%	10%	48%	67%
	17+	50%	4%	24%	41%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>65%</b>
Male	16	68%	9%	36%	60%
	17+	55%	2%	21%	43%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>All pupils</b>		<b>69%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>62%</b>

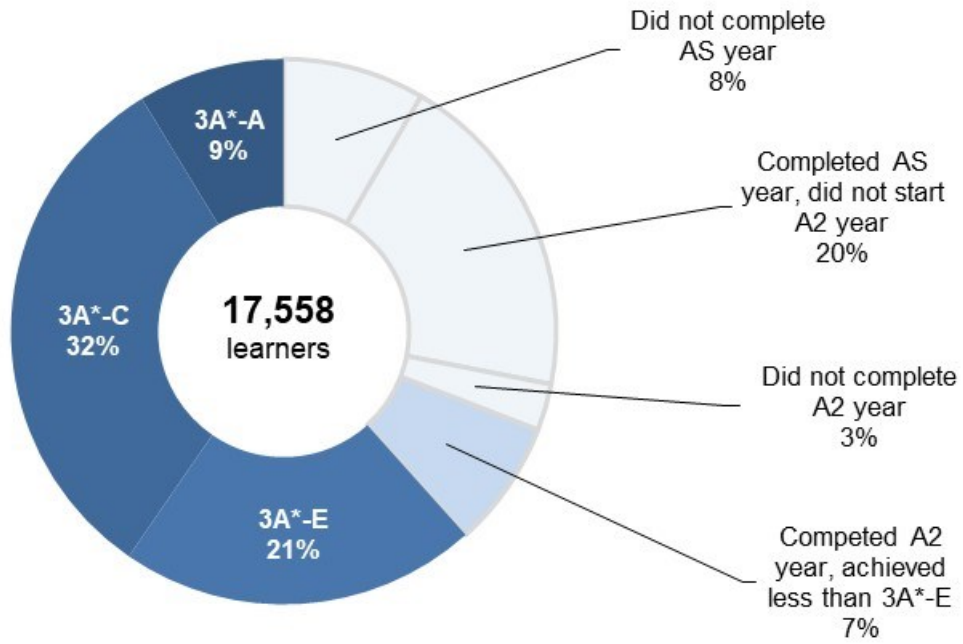
Sources: Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), Post-16 Collection, Welsh Examinations Database (WED)

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of learners terminating their learning programme within 8 weeks of enrolment (early drop outs). These learners are excluded from subsequent calculations.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated based on learners that completed an A2 programme.

<sup>3</sup> Calculated based on learners that enrolled on an AS programme (excluding early drop-outs).

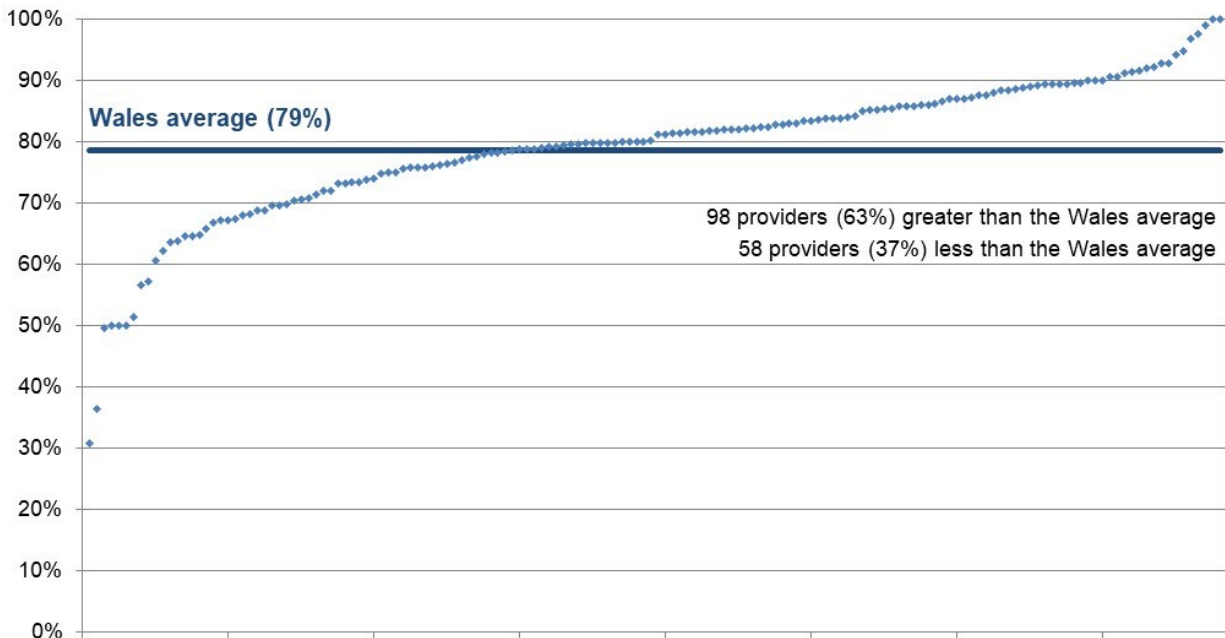
**Chart 2: Year 12 general education programmes cohort excluding early drop outs**



**Retention**

Chart 3 shows the provider (schools and colleges) distribution of retention rates – that is, the percentage of those learners who completed the AS year in 2016/17 who continued onto the A2 year in 2017/18. Wales’ retention rate for the providers included in the analysis between 2016/17 completers and 2017/18 was 79 per cent and is shown on the chart.

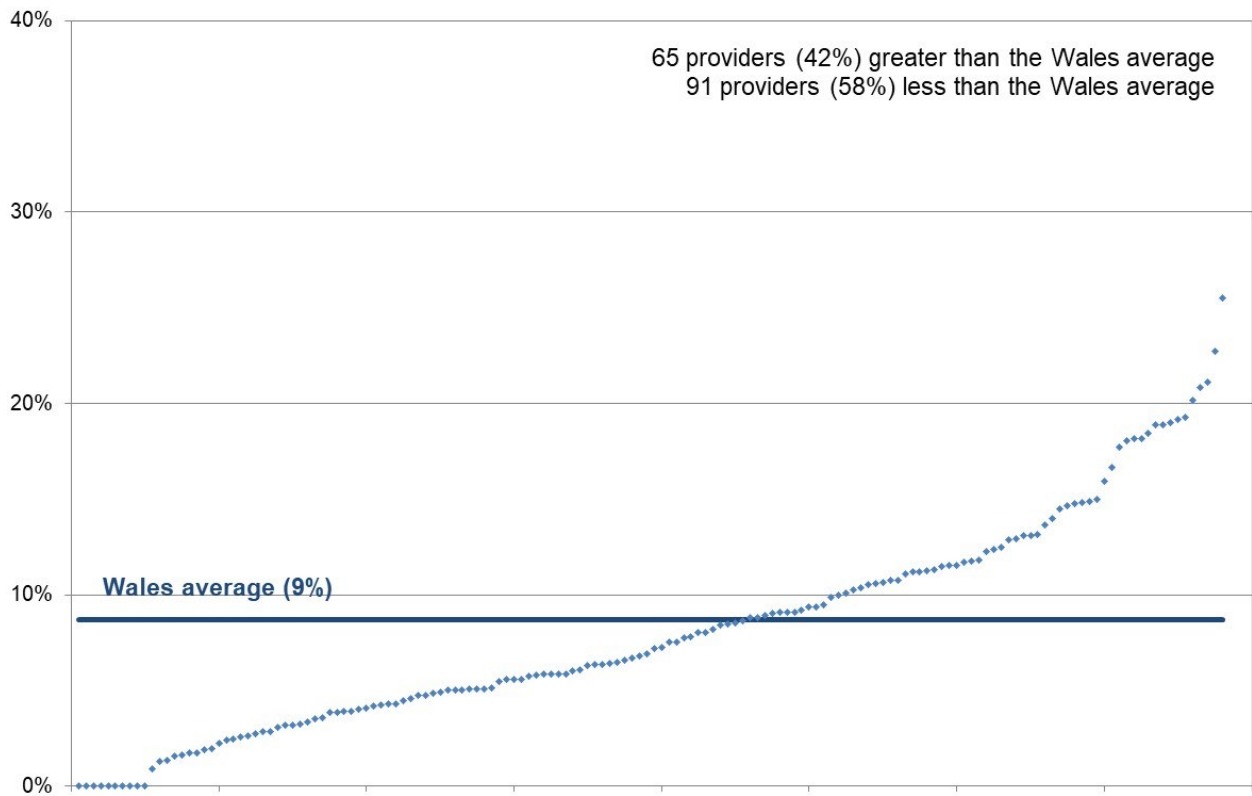
**Chart 3: Providers’ Retention Rates (AS to A2 programmes)**



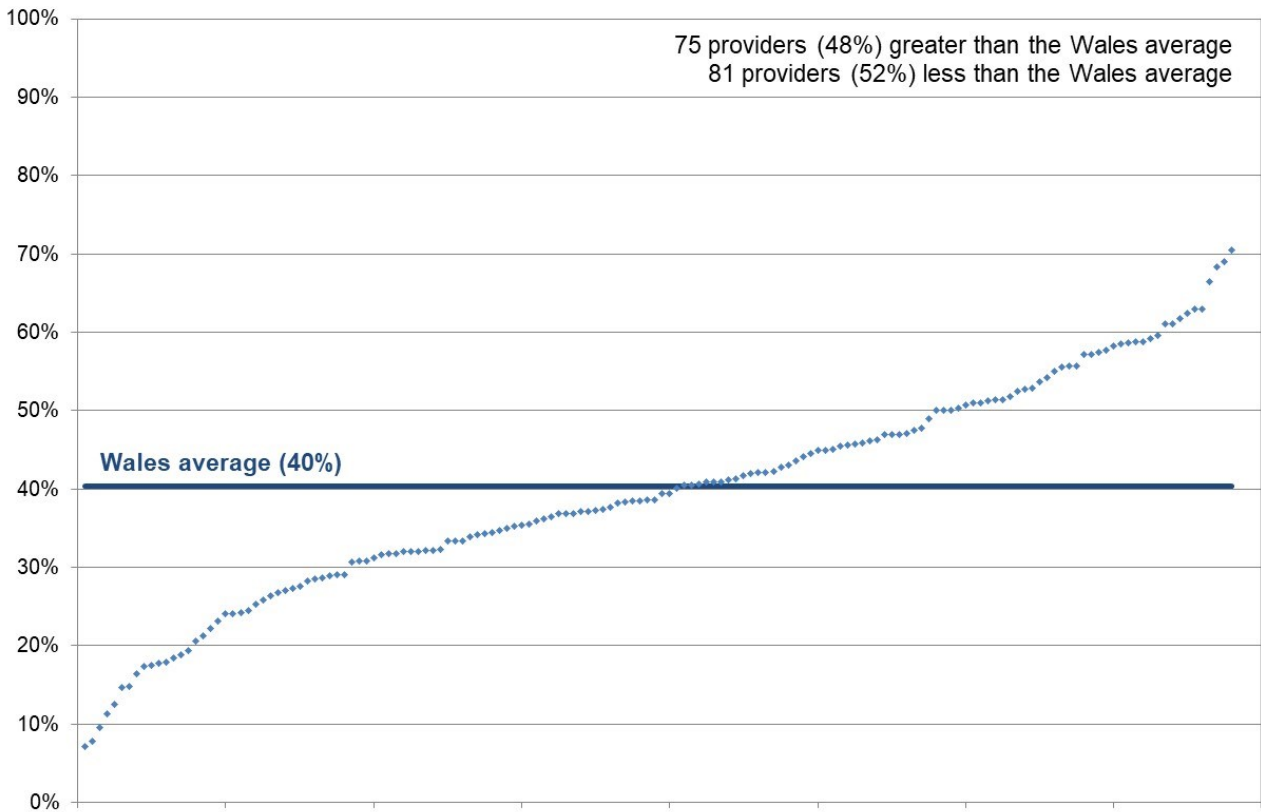
## Achievement

Chart 4 to 6 presents the provider distribution of achievement rates – that is the percentage of those enrolled on AS level programmes in 2016/17 who went on to achieve three A levels or equivalent, at grades A\*-A, A\*-C and A\*-E respectively, with the Wales average achievement rate shown for each.

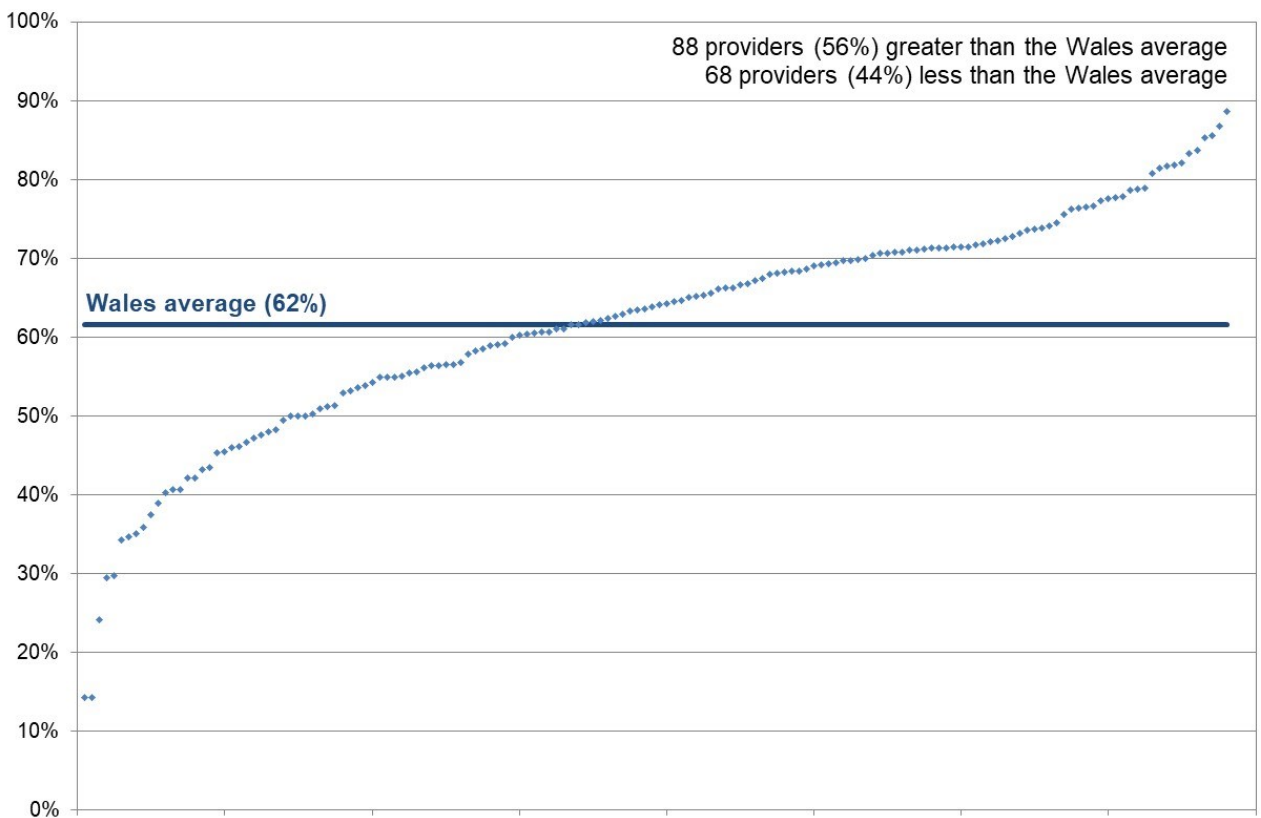
**Chart 4: Providers' achievement rates – learners achieving three A levels at grade A\*- A (or equivalent)**



**Chart 5: Providers' achievement rates – learners achieving three A levels at grade A\* - C (or equivalent)**



**Chart 6: Providers' achievement rates – learners achieving three A levels at grade A\* - E (or equivalent)**





## Achievement: Vocational programmes

Vocational programmes are those where mainly vocational qualifications are undertaken, which vary in level and therefore length of study. Given the variation in length of study the measure for vocational programmes is presented on a one year basis only, reflecting the way in which these programmes are funded. Almost all vocational programmes take place in further education institutions, and at this stage the coverage of the measure is limited to those and excludes the small number in school sixth forms. See notes for further detail.

Table 2 and 3 show the number of learners enrolled and completing vocational programmes in 2017/18 by level and gender and level and age group respectively. Additionally shown is a learning activity success rate for those enrolled (excluding early drop outs) - that is, of individual learning activities started, how many were successfully completed and attained. At the programme level the learning activity success ranged from 79 per cent for Level 2 and Level 3 Access to 90 per cent for Entry level.

**Table 2: Achievement of learners undertaking vocational programmes, by gender, 2017/18**

Programme level	Gender <sup>3</sup>	Number of learners enrolled	% Early drop-out <sup>1</sup>	Number of learners completing	% Learning activity success <sup>2</sup>
Level 3	Female	8,677	7%	7,232	84%
	Male	8,205	7%	6,929	82%
	Total	16,889	7%	14,167	83%
Level 3 Access	Female	1,456	13%	1,056	80%
	Male	392	16%	265	74%
	Total	1,848	14%	1,321	79%
Level 2	Female	4,990	12%	3,697	79%
	Male	4,967	11%	3,803	80%
	Total	9,962	12%	7,504	79%
Level 1	Female	2,438	14%	1,759	82%
	Male	5,067	12%	3,808	82%
	Total	7,510	13%	5,569	82%
Entry Level	Female	1,220	11%	886	91%
	Male	1,824	10%	1,388	89%
	Total	3,046	11%	2,276	90%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>39,255</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>30,837</b>	<b>83%</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Record Wales (LLWR)

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of learners terminating their learning programme within 8 weeks of enrolment. These learners are excluded from subsequent calculations.

<sup>2</sup> Based on all qualifications for entry level programmes, main qualifications only for all other programmes.

<sup>3</sup> The sum may not equal to the total due to a few recorded as 'unknown'

**Table 3: Achievement of learners undertaking vocational programmes, by age, 2017/18**

Programme level	Age Group <sup>3</sup>	Number of learners enrolled	% Early drop-out <sup>1</sup>	Number of learners completing	% Learning activity success <sup>2</sup>
Level 3	16	3,694	7%	3,585	83%
	17+	13,194	7%	16,245	83%
	Total	16,889	7%	14,167	83%
Level 3 Access	16	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	17+	1,848	14%	1,321	79%
	Total	1,848	14%	1,321	79%
Level 2	16	3,178	11%	2,492	80%
	17+	6,783	13%	5,011	79%
	Total	9,962	12%	7,504	79%
Level 1	16	3,978	9%	3,107	84%
	17+	3,532	16%	2,462	79%
	Total	7,510	13%	5,569	82%
Entry Level	16	1,018	11%	782	90%
	17+	2,028	11%	1,494	89%
	Total	3,046	11%	2,276	90%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>39,255</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>30,837</b>	<b>83%</b>

Source: Lifelong Learning Record Wales (LLWR)

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of learners terminating their learning programme within 8 weeks of enrolment. These learners are excluded from subsequent calculations.

<sup>2</sup> Based on all qualifications for entry level programmes, main qualifications only for all other programmes.

<sup>3</sup> Age as at 31 August 2017.

## **Welsh Baccalaureate and Skills Challenge Certificate (Level 3)**

The Welsh Baccalaureate is a Wales-only qualification piloted in 2003 and introduced in 2007. It was re-designed in 2015 and is delivered in schools and colleges across Wales for learners aged 14 to 19. It aims to develop skills useful for education and employment and is studied alongside general education and vocational qualifications.

The Welsh Baccalaureate is an award made up of a combination of qualifications including:

- i. The Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) – this is skills-based and aims to develop students' skills for education, employment and life;
- ii. GCSEs in English or Welsh language and mathematics or mathematics-numeracy, or Essential Skills Wales qualifications;
- iii. A choice of supporting qualifications of a specified size and level e.g., GCSEs, A-levels or vocational qualifications.

The Welsh Baccalaureate is awarded at three levels:

- I. Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate (level 1), awarded at key stage 4 or post-16;
- II. National Welsh Baccalaureate (level 2), awarded at key stage 4 or post-16;
- III. Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate (level 3), awarded at post-16 only.

This statistical release includes achievement figures for the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and associated Skills Challenge Certificate. Due to the relatively small numbers of learners enrolled on the Foundation and National Welsh Baccalaureates, they have not been included in this release.

**Chart 7: Percentage of learners completing and achieving the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and Skills Challenge Certificate achievement**

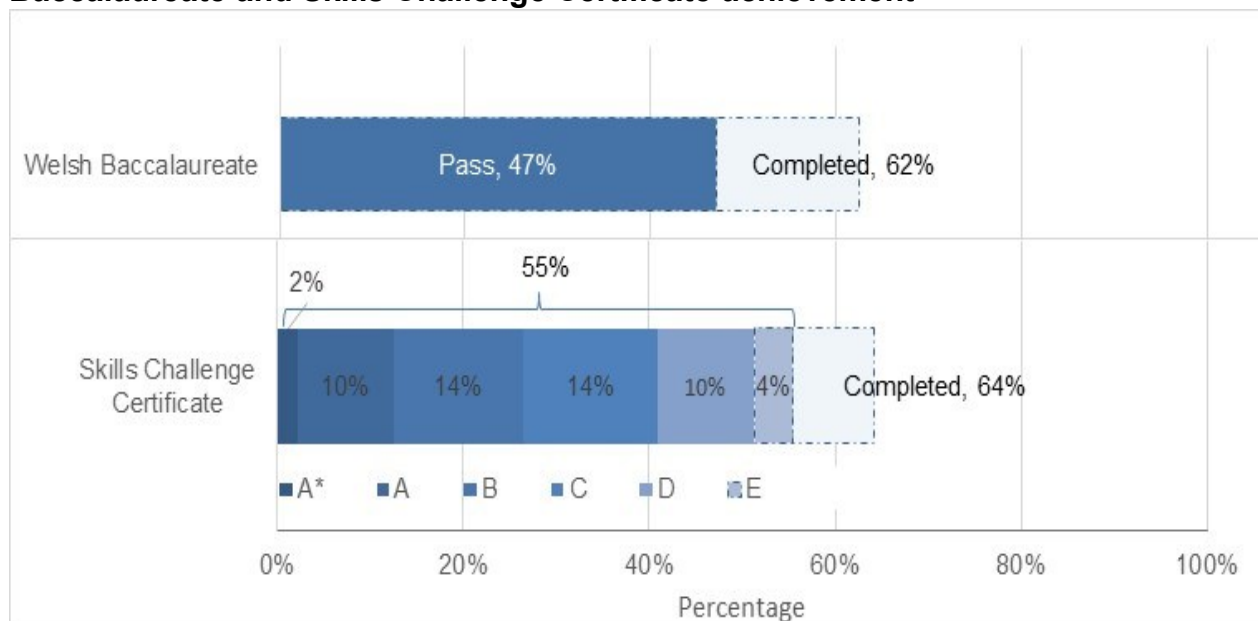


Chart 7 presents the percentage of learners completing the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and separately the Skills Challenge Certificate in 2017/18 – of those enrolled on the Welsh Baccalaureate at the start of their two-year programme of study (excluding early drop outs). Additionally shown is a breakdown of grades achieved for Skills Challenge Certificate. 47 per cent of those enrolled passed the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and 55 per cent passed the Skills Challenge Certificate Level 3 with a Grade ‘E’ or above.

## Notes

This statistical release primarily summarises data relating to the 2017/18 academic year. AS level learning programmes undertaken in 2016/17 are also included in Table 1 in order to present outcomes over the full two years of A-level study.

The key data sources used in this release are as follows:

- a. [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 learners in the previous academic year.
- b. [Lifelong Learning Wales Record \(LLWR\)](#): contains data on further education, work-based learning and adult learning, collected on a 'rolling' basis throughout the year with regular statistical freezes. It provides the official source of statistics on post-16 (non-higher education) learners in Wales.
- c. Welsh Examinations Database (WED): contains data on examination entries and outcomes collected from a number of awarding organisations.
- d. [Pupil Level Annual Schools Census \(PLASC\)](#): every January, all maintained schools are required to report learner level data including pupil characteristics such as gender and ethnicity.

## Achievement

### General Education Programmes ([Table 1](#) and [Chart 2](#))

The number of learners enrolling on AS level learning programmes in school sixth forms is drawn from the Post-16 Data Collection relating to the 2016/17 academic year. Those learners completing the AS programme are then matched to learners enrolling on an A2 level learning programme in the 2017/18 Post-16 Data Collection in order to measure retention and A2 completion. Those learners completing the A2 programme are then matched to the Welsh Examinations Database in order to capture achievement over the two years of A level study.

For further education institutions a similar methodology is applied but with all data being drawn from the LLWR.

The achievement measures include only those qualifications approved and designated for use in Wales. An examination is discounted when a pupil achieves a higher grade or 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 A2 level, are counted towards the general education achievement measure; for example, BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate.

## **Vocational Programmes** ([Table 2](#) and [Table 3](#))

The number of learners in further education institutions enrolling on vocational learning programmes during the 2017/18 academic year is drawn from the LLWR. Learning activity success is also derived from the LLWR for those learners still enrolled on their learning programme after eight weeks.

It is not currently possible to derive the measures for schools due to limitations with the data obtained via the Post-16 Data Collection. The Post-16 Data Collection captures the learning activities undertaken by learners but not the outcomes achieved. From 2017/18, the Post-16 Collection has captured the Qualifications Wales Approval/Designation (QWAD) Number for each learning activity recorded as part of the data collection to facilitate matching with outcomes data from the Welsh Examinations Database. However, the matching process has identified missing and mismatching qualifications, therefore this requires further investigations before a vocational programme achievement measure is possible for schools.

## **Welsh Baccalaureate and Skills Challenge Certificate Level 3 programmes** ([Chart 7](#))

The number of learners enrolling on Welsh Baccalaureate in school sixth forms is drawn from the Post-16 Data Collection relating to the 2017/18 academic year, with achievement derived from the Welsh Examinations Database in order to capture achievement over the two years of study. For further education institutions the same methodology is applied but with all data being drawn from the LLWR. The cohort included in the achievement outcomes are those learners who were in learning eight weeks after starting the Welsh Baccalaureate.

### **Data coverage**

#### **Learners undertaking multiple learning programmes with the same provider**

Where a learner undertakes more than one learning programme with the same provider during an academic year (for example changing from a four AS level programme to a three AS level programme), the most recent learning programme undertaken is counted in the performance measures.

#### **Learners transferring between providers**

Where a learner enrolls on a learning programme then withdraws/transfers from that programme and subsequently takes up learning at a different provider, both learning programmes will count towards the performance measures.

## **Definitions**

### **Terminology**

Data are presented on an 'academic year' basis referring to the period 1 August to 31 July.

### **Early drop-out**

Learning activities with an expected length of 24 weeks or greater that ended within 8 weeks of their start date without completing have been classified as early drop-outs, and have been excluded from subsequent calculations.

## **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 primarily used:

- by the Welsh Government to monitor providers' performance and as baseline information to set targets for improvements as part of the Quality and Effectiveness Framework for post-16 learning;
- 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 annual self-assessment cycles.

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

- ministers and Officials in the Welsh Government;
- Assembly Members and researchers in the National Assembly for Wales;
- other government departments;
- local authorities and regional education consortia;
- students, researchers, and academics;
- schools and further education institutions;
- the research community;
- individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

## **Accuracy**

The figures in this release reflect the final position of the 2017/18 data year. Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government 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.

## **Experimental statistics**

These statistics are published as experimental statistics reflecting the complexity of the different data collection systems and the different methodologies that are still in development at this stage and the data quality issues encountered. Following the first year, the methodologies and publication will be reviewed and finalised. As the methodology for the measures has been developing we have been working with providers to ensure that we minimise data quality issues that will impact upon published statistics going forward. We will work towards assessment as National Statistics going forward. We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [post16ed.stats@gov.wales](mailto:post16ed.stats@gov.wales).

## **Timeliness and punctuality**

The data in this release refers to the 2017/18 data and are presented on an 'academic year' basis.

## **Accessibility and clarity**

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

## **Comparability and coherence**

2016/17 is the first year of reporting these new measures and was published in September 2018. The 2016/17 data incurred some issues about the quality of the data with a decision to exclude several schools/FEIs with known or strongly suspected data quality issues. As a result it is strongly advised not to draw comparisons between this year's results with that of last year.

The underlying cohort, and methodology differ from the existing performance measures for schools and further education institutions, and therefore cannot be directly compared. Whilst these new consistent measures are bedding in, the existing [school performance measures](#) and [learner outcomes for further education institutions](#) also continue and provide a historic time series. These are bespoke measures and there is no direct comparison with other countries of the UK.

The Department for Education published [guidance](#) for schools, colleges and local authorities on the new 16 to 18 measures as well as statistics on further education [outcome-based success measures](#) covering the destinations (into employment and learning), earnings and the progression of learners.



## **Additional information**

### **Consultation**

The Welsh Government has consulted on a new set of consistent performance measures for school sixth forms and further education institutions. A [summary of responses](#) and [progress reports](#) on the development of the new measures have been published.

The Cabinet Secretary issued a [Written Statement](#) on 10 July 2017 to confirm adoption of the three new measures: learner achievement, post-16 value added, and destinations.

### **Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

### **Further details**

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-achievement-and-value-added>

### **Next update**

To be confirmed for the academic year 2018/19.

### **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to: [post16ed.stats@gov.wales](mailto:post16ed.stats@gov.wales)

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