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# Learners leaving Sixth Form before Year 13: Characteristics and Further Education Enrolment

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

## Analysis of the Retention and Destination of Learners in Sixth Form Schools

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not  
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## Glossary

Glossary text

<b>Acronym/Key word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
BTECs	Business and Technology Education Council qualifications
CSI	Core Subject Indicator
FE	Further Education
FSM	Free School Meal
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LA	Local Authority
LLWR	Lifelong Learning Wales Record
NPD	National Pupil Database
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual Schools Census
SEN	Special Educational Needs
ULN	Unique Learner Number
WED	Welsh Examinations Database

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this study was to provide quantified evidence to show the extent of both non-completion among post-16 learners attending Sixth Form and of the movement of these learners from Sixth Form to the Further Education (FE) sector. Recent data-linking exercises conducted by both the Welsh and UK Governments suggest that undertaking data matching in order to derive learner destination statistics for those entering into post-16 learning is feasible<sup>1,2</sup>. However, given the experimental nature of these outputs, analysis conducted to date has been limited to descriptive statistics of learner destination and breakdowns of learner characteristics. This report extends upon these analyses to explore the retention and destination of learners who attended Sixth Forms. In particular the report considers the characteristics of learners who did not complete their studies in Sixth Form and but were identified within data records as having pursued courses in Further Education (FE) institutions.
- 1.2 There is a well-established literature that has examined non-completion within Higher Education settings. Quantitative studies based on large administrative data sets point to the importance of prior academic achievement, although subject and institution effects remain after controlling for other characteristics (Naylor and Smith, 2001<sup>3</sup>). Studies that focus upon the causal mechanisms behind withdrawal tend to emphasise the importance of an inappropriate choice of course or institution (McGivney, 1996<sup>4</sup>; Yorke, 1999<sup>5</sup>; Davies and Elias, 2003<sup>6</sup>). These studies of withdrawal from Higher Education, whilst not focusing on post-16 education, would appear to resonate with findings from Estyn inspections<sup>7</sup> which suggest that there is a lack of objective advice for school pupils on their post-16 options. This lack of advice may lead to many learners dropping out of sixth form to commence studies within FE later during the year, increasingly through a structured January intake, or in the subsequent academic year.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2014/141218-educational-destinations-key-stage-4-post-16-learners-2011-12-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/323351/SFR19\\_2014\\_DESTINATION\\_MEASURES.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/323351/SFR19_2014_DESTINATION_MEASURES.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Smith J.P. and Naylor R.A. (2001) *Dropping Out of University: a Statistical Analysis of the Probability of Withdrawal for UK University Learners*, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A, 164, pp384-406

<sup>4</sup> McGivney V. (1996) *Staying or Leaving the Course*. Leicester: NIACE.

<sup>5</sup> Yorke M. (1999) *Leaving Early: Undergraduate Non-Completion in Higher Education*. London: Falmer Press

<sup>6</sup> Davies R. and Elias P. (2003) *Dropping Out: A Study of Early Leavers from Higher Education*. Department for Education and Skills, Research Report 386.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/annual-report-2013-2014>

- 1.3 Compared to research conducted for the HE sector, evidence on non-completion within the FE sector is relatively limited. A recent study of retention and achievement of one cohort within post 16 education within England, suggests that withdrawal rates from AS levels were approximately 9 per cent, withdrawal rates from A-Levels were approximately 5 per cent and that withdrawal from all learning activity was approximately 2 per cent<sup>8</sup>. Another recent study of non-progression at A-level tracked a sample of 2,400 students from a consortium of Sixth Forms in England over a period of 3 years. The analysis revealed that 31 per cent of those who embarked upon A-levels left the consortium either within or by the end of Year 12<sup>9</sup>.
- 1.4 The seemingly large differences in the incidence of withdrawal and non-completion reported by these studies highlights that defining what constitutes non-completion during Sixth Form is not straightforward. This report explores different measures that attempt to capture retention both during and at the end of an academic year. The study identified 1), those learners who were recorded by their Sixth Forms as having withdrawn prior to the successful completion of their course and 2), those learners who were registered for at least one AS/A-level during Year 12 but who did not continue to study for A-levels within Year 13 (referred to as A-level non-progression). 'Withdrawal' and 'non-progression' are different phenomena. Withdrawal from Sixth Form can relate to all learners, both A/AS-Level learners and learners undertaking other types of qualifications in Sixth Forms. Withdrawal can occur at any point during the academic year and it can affect learners in both Year 12 and Year 13. By contrast, the measure of AS/A-level non-progression relates to AS/A-level students only and relates specifically to the absence of a transition from Year 12 to Year 13.
- 1.5 The relationship between withdrawal and non-progression among Year 12 Sixth Form learners is depicted in Figure 1.1. Where learners are recorded as having withdrawn from all of their AS/A-levels during Year 12 (referred to as 'complete A-level withdrawal'), these learners would also be regarded as non-progressing at AS/A-Level. However, there will be many more learners who are recorded as having withdrawn from just some but not all of their learning activities, possibly including one or more of their AS/A-levels. Similarly, AS/A-Level non-progression is

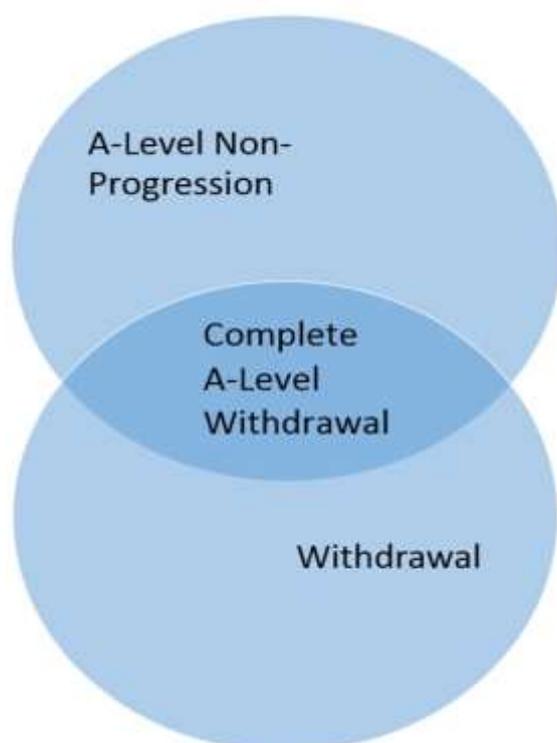
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<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11431/Achievement+and+retention+in+post-16+education.%20February+2015/746a1fb2-2a89-49e9-a53b-f5339288d4b1>

<sup>9</sup> Hodgson A. and Spours K. (2014). *Middle Attainers and 14-19 Progression in England: half served by New Labour and now overlooked by the Coalition?* British Educational Research Journal, 40(3), pp.467-482.

not necessarily associated with either early withdrawal or academic failure. Some AS/A-level students may be recorded as having successfully completed Year 12 but choose not to continue with their AS/A-level studies during Year 13. An important aim of this report was to quantify the relative size of these groups. Distinguishing withdrawal from non-progression was also found to be important in terms of examining the dynamics of entry into FE among those who make such a transition.

**Figure 1.1: Conceptualizing Progression and Withdrawal at Year 12**



- 1.6 The analysis was based upon two cohorts of learners who were in Year 11 (their final year of compulsory education) during 2011/12 and 2012/13. The analysis considered both the nature and extent of non-completion among learners in Sixth Form settings, including where possible those not undertaking AS or A-levels in Year 12. The analysis considered both rates of complete or partial withdrawal from Sixth Form among different population sub-groups. The study used the 'completion status' records made by Sixth Forms to identify whether a learner had completed, continued or withdrawn from a learning activity. This represents the first time 'completion status' records have been used for analysis, and provided an opportunity to investigate the validity of these records. The measures used in the report are summarized in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Classifications of withdrawal and non-progression**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Withdrawal</i>	
Any A-level withdrawal	Recorded as having withdrawn from <b>any</b> A-level learning activity
All A-level withdrawal	Recorded as having withdrawn from <b>all</b> A-level learning activity
Complete withdrawal - A-level learners only	Recorded as having withdrawn from all A-level learning activity <b>and</b> all other learning activities
Complete withdrawal - all learners	Recorded as having withdrawn from <b>all</b> learning activities
<i>Non-progression</i>	
	Learners who are identified as undertaking AS/A-level activities in Year 12 but are not recorded in Year 13
Exam entry	Learners who sat exams at Year 12 and were identified as non-progressors
Exam-non-entry	Learners who did not sit exams at Year 12 and were identified as non-progressors

1.7 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out key findings and recommendations for the study.
- Section 3 provides a description of the data sets and methods used in this analysis.
- Sections 4 to 7 set out detailed findings. Section 4 provides a description of the two cohorts of Year 11 learners that underpin the analysis, considering both the numbers and relative characteristics of those who moved into Year 12 within a Sixth Form.
- Section 5 considers the incidence of withdrawal from learning activities within Sixth Form prior to their successful completion.
- Section 6 examines the issue of A-level non-progression where learners did not progress to Year 13 within Sixth Form. The analysis distinguishes these learners according to whether or not they entered their Year 12 exams.
- Section 7 examines the incidence with which learners moved from Sixth Form to FE institutions following withdrawal or non-progression within Sixth Form. The analysis examines both the timing of entry and the nature of the new learning activities undertaken by learners.

1.8 At the outset it must be acknowledged that the reasons for non-completion of Sixth Form learning will be complex, encompassing issues such as incompatibility between the learner and their choice of course or institution, due perhaps to insufficient advice and support, or limited range of available course options, lack of commitment, financial hardship or poor academic progress. The reasons may interact and vary between different groups of Sixth Form learners. The analysis presented in this report is not able to draw conclusions about the reasons underpinning learner non-completion.

## 2. Key Findings

The key findings from the research are as follows:

- Approximately 45 per cent (around 16,000) of the 34,000-35,000 Year 11 learners were identified as Year 12 Sixth Form learners in the following academic year. Whilst over 90 per cent of these Sixth Form learners undertook A-levels, just under a third of these A-level learners also undertook a vocational qualification. Females, learners recorded as having special educational needs (SEN), those eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those with lower levels of educational attainment were each less likely to have entered Sixth Form.
- A number of measures were used to explore the incidence of withdrawal and non-progression (see Table 1.1). Among all Year 12 learners, 4 per cent (approximately 630 learners) were recorded as having withdrawn from *all* learning activities during Year 12 (this figure includes not only A-level learners but learners with any recorded learning activities). The rate of withdrawal among Year 13 learners was lower at 2 per cent (around 230 learners). Males, learners recorded as having SEN during Year 11, those eligible for FSM during Year 11 and those who attended a secondary school that had no post-compulsory provision each exhibited higher rates of withdrawal from Sixth Form. However, statistical analysis revealed that lower GCSE attainment was the most important factor increasing an individual's risk of withdrawing from Sixth Form. Absenteeism during Year 11, particularly persistent absenteeism, was also found to be a significant predictor of withdrawal from Sixth Form. Differences in rates of withdrawal by gender, SEN status and FSM eligibility were not found to be significant after controlling for the other characteristics of these groups. However, those learners recorded as not fluent in Welsh were more likely to have withdrawn compared to fluent Welsh speakers, as were learners who attended schools that did not have Sixth Form provision. There were some concerns about the quality of data on withdrawal, due to some uncertainties about recording practices in Sixth Forms and to the lack of historical data for use in validation.
- Approximately 20 per cent (around 2,600) of Year 12 A/AS-level learners were classified as non-progressors who were not observed to be doing A-levels in Sixth Form during Year 13. These students were not always recorded as having withdrawn from their studies. Whilst 20 per cent of A-level learners were not seen to be recorded in Year 13, only 6 per cent (around 800) of Year 12 A-level learners

were recorded as having withdrawn in Year 12. Non-progression among AS/A-level learners *following the completion* of Year 12 was therefore more common than the withdrawal of such learners *during* Year 12.

- Males, learners recorded as having SEN during Year 11, those eligible for FSM during Year 11, learners with lower levels of attainment at GCSE or equivalent, those with high levels of absenteeism at Year 11 and those that attended a secondary school that had no post-compulsory provision each exhibited higher rates of A-level non-progression. Low levels of educational attainment at GCSE were demonstrated to be the most important factor in contributing to an increased likelihood of non-progression among A-level students between Year 12 and Year 13. However, unlike withdrawal during the year, both males and those who were eligible for FSM during Year 11 were less likely to continue with A-levels in Year 13 when taking attainment levels into account. For example, a male learner, regardless of GCSE results, was more likely not to progress from AS level in Year 12 to A-level in Year 13.
- Among non-progressing A-level learners, approximately 50 per cent (around 1,300) were identified as having attended an FE institution in the same or following year. Those withdrawing from Sixth Form during Year 12 entered FE more quickly than non-progressing A/AS level learners. Nearly 40 per cent of non-progressing learners identified as moving to an FE institution in Year 12 were undertaking all learning activities below Level 3 at FE institutions. These figures were approximately 10 per cent higher for learners who withdrew from Sixth Form during the year, but lower for learners leaving sixth form who did not commence FE studies until Year 13.
- Among non-progressing A/AS-level learners, a subsequent move to FE was less likely to occur amongst those recorded as having SEN, those previously eligible for FSM at Year 11, those with lower point scores at GCSE or equivalent, and those with higher absentee rates. In terms of school type, non-progressing learners who at Year 11 attended a school with Sixth Form provision were less likely to transfer to FE compared to those learners who attended a school with no Sixth Form provision.
- Non-progressors from Sixth Form who were recorded as fluent in Welsh were more likely to transfer to FE than those who could not speak Welsh and slightly more likely than those that could speak some Welsh.
- The key findings indicate that discontinuing their A/AS level programmes of study, and discontinuing study in Sixth Form altogether, are disrupted pathways that

affected a significant number of students across Wales. Whilst some learners' transitions from Sixth Form may have been smooth and/or planned, it is likely that others changed direction because the subjects or institution chosen, the level attempted, or some other decision taken at the end of Year 11 may have been sub-optimal. Whilst discontinuing Sixth Form may be to the ultimate benefit of these students, for many there will have been both economic, emotional and social costs associated with such decisions.

- This study has revealed characteristics that make discontinuation more likely. The significance of lower levels of academic attainment as a predictor of non-completion highlights the importance of students embarking on programmes of learning that are commensurate with their academic abilities. However, increased likelihood of discontinuation among learners who attended a Sixth Form that was not attached to their secondary school also highlights the potential importance of the additional support that may be required by some students to help them sustain their participation.

## Recommendations

- The robustness of the analysis for this study is clearly dependent upon the accuracy with which learner status is recorded within the administrative data. Where it has been possible, we have sought to examine the consistency of this data. However, **the consistency with which Sixth Forms record the completion status of Year 12 learners should be investigated, and where inconsistencies are found, they should be addressed.** This is particularly important if data are to be used to make comparisons between schools or Local Authorities.
- Despite concerns regarding data quality, many of the findings in the report appear to be intuitive, with characteristics such as low levels of attainment at GCSE or high levels of absenteeism during Year 11 being associated with higher rates of withdrawal and non-progression within Sixth Forms. This study has been successful in establishing and measuring these phenomena, but not to explore their causes. To this end, **further research should be undertaken with learners to investigate the circumstances and influences surrounding their withdrawal, non-completion or non-progression in Sixth Form and their participation in Further Education courses or other routes.** Voluntary surveys of such groups of learners are unlikely to yield good rates of response. The responses to such surveys might also be subject to response bias, making it difficult to draw clear conclusions as to the

underlying reasons for withdrawal. We would therefore recommend a programme of qualitative research conducted with a number of different groups including: learners, tutors, other Sixth Form staff, Year 11 staff responsible for guidance, careers advisors and parents to investigate the complex reasons underlying withdrawal from Sixth Form. It would be important to understand the range of local provision that is available and how this impacts on learner decisions.

- There are also further possibilities in terms of statistical analysis that may help to shed further light on these issues through data linkage. **Data linkage to other sources of information held about Welsh learners could further enhance our understanding as to the determinants of withdrawal and non-completion at Sixth Form.** For example, links to Census data would provide a far more detailed understanding of the socio-economic background of these learners than that which can be inferred from FSM status.

### 3. Methodology

#### Overview of Data

- 3.1 The analysis utilised a linked database of school and learner records of those attending post compulsory education which was based upon three linked administrative data-sets: the National Pupil Database (NPD) for Wales (comprising Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data, and attainment data from the Welsh Examinations Database (WED)); the Post-16 collection; and the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). The NPD (encompassing PLASC) provides both demographic information and attainment data for pupils in compulsory education within the maintained sector<sup>10</sup>. The Post-16 collection provides information on the learning activities undertaken by Year 12 and Year 13 pupils attending maintained secondary schools or middle schools with such provision<sup>11</sup>. The LLWR contains individual learner, programme, activity and award records for people who are registered at post-compulsory educational institutions (not including school sixth forms or higher education)<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.2 In the analysis below, NPD data for learners at Year 11, the Post-16 collection data for learners in Year 12 and 13 at Sixth Forms and LLWR data for learners in further education institutions were used to create a database to explore learner trajectories. At its core, the database followed the educational trajectories of two cohorts of young people who were in Year 11 (the final year of compulsory schooling, referred to as Key Stage 4) during 2011/2012 (subsequently referred to as Cohort 1) and 2012/13 (subsequently referred to as Cohort 2).
- 3.3 Following their completion of compulsory education, the analysis identified those learners within the NPD who remained within Sixth Form via matching their Year 11 records with those held on Year 12 learners during the following year. The primary aim of the research was to examine rates of withdrawal from Sixth Form, whilst also identifying those learners who left Sixth Forms and subsequently started a programme of learning in an FE institution. Linking between Sixth Form data held on the NPD and the Post 16 collection and FE data held on LLWR was conducted via matching the personal details of learners (including identifiers such as name, date of birth, address etc.). Once the linking exercise was completed, all personal

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<sup>10</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/pupillevelannualschoolcensus/?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/post-16-data-collection/?lang=en>

<sup>12</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/datacollection/?lang=en>

identifiers were deleted from the linked database to maintain confidentiality of the learners and subsequent analysis was conducted on an anonymised dataset. Details of the linkage are provided in Annex 1: Technical Annex.

3.4 The structure of these databases is complex. Within Sixth Forms, learners predominantly undertake Level 3 qualifications, a majority of which are AS/A-levels. Nonetheless, even within Sixth Form environments, the analysis revealed that many learners were also engaged in vocational activities such as BTECs. Another group among those attending Sixth Form were those who were undertaking GCSEs. The complexity of the data increases further within the LLWR, in which individuals can be registered in multiple learning programmes with multiple learning providers. Learning programmes are themselves comprised of multiple learning activities. Whilst the learning programme will be associated within an ultimate learning objective (e.g. the award of a BTEC Diploma at Level 3), the activities which form part of that programme may be undertaken at a variety of levels with activities associated with varying levels of attainment often being undertaken simultaneously. For example, a learner may have a BTEC Diploma as their main qualification aim but also be undertaking GCSE resits, Essential Skills qualifications, the Welsh Baccalaureate and/or other subsidiary activities to support their learning and progression. The chronological ordering of Learning Activities does not always relate to a neat progression in the level of activity being studied for. A variety of methods were therefore developed to manipulate these databases in a way that made them amenable to subsequent analysis that utilised individuals as the unit of observation.

### **Analytical Approach**

3.5 The analysis presented in this report is largely based on a descriptive analysis of the contents of the linked databases described above. In terms of the key outcome measures of interest, the analysis specifically identified:

- The number and percentage of learners who were recorded by Sixth Forms as having **withdrawn** from Sixth Form during the course of an academic year, distinguishing between withdrawal during Year 12 and Year 13;
- The number and percentage of **non-progressing** A-level learners who were observed attending Sixth Form during Year 12 but who did not continue with their A-level studies in Year 13.

- The proportion of learners identified above who were recorded as attending an FE institution, either during or following Year 12, and the nature of the new learning activities being undertaken compared to those that they had undertaken within Sixth Form.

Within these classifications a number of variations of withdrawal and non-progression were examined, which are detailed in Table 1.1.

- 3.6 The report presents these descriptive estimates at both an all-Wales level and separately for different sub-groups of the learner population measured whilst they attended their final year of compulsory education. Results have also been presented for individual Local Authorities. The report also presents results of multivariate statistical analyses that were able to determine the separate 'contribution' that each piece of information about a learner made to the observed pattern of withdrawal and non-completion. The analysis provides some understanding of the correlation between different learner attributes and non-progression and provides evidence of association but does not provide any evidence of causation.

## 4. Tracking Participation in Sixth Form

### Participation in Sixth Form

- 4.1 The National Pupil Database (NPD) for Wales (including Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data) contains demographic information regarding the learners in the sample; for example, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, Free School Meal (FSM) status, Special Educational Needs (SEN) amongst other characteristics, as well as records about young people's attainment at school and the school they attended. This demographic information used in the report was taken from learner records at Year 11. Table 4.1 identifies that there were approximately 34,000 and 35,000 learners in the 2011 and 2012 Year 11 cohorts respectively<sup>13</sup>. Those learners staying on at secondary school with an attached Sixth Form typically enrol on a programme of study lasting two years, referred to as Year 12 (Lower Sixth) and Year 13 (Upper Sixth).
- 4.2 In terms of the numbers of learners progressing on to Sixth Form, among both cohorts of Year 11 learners, approximately 15,000 learners were identified as attending Sixth Form as Year 12 learners during the following academic year. This represents approximately 45 per cent of the Year 11 cohorts. From the outset, our analysis deliberately excludes those learners in Sixth Form who are unable to be identified among the two cohorts of Year 11 learners. This is because no background information was held on these learners that can assist us in contextualising their participation in post-compulsory education or identifying patterns in their subsequent progression. Such situations may occur if data quality issues prevented correct matching, or if learners attending Sixth Form previously attended non-maintained schools, or if they had previously attended schools in England or elsewhere, which would mean that they would not be present as Year 11 learners within the Welsh NPD<sup>14</sup>. Such pupils account for approximately one per cent of Year 12 learners in the Post 16 Collection.

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<sup>13</sup> Our estimates of the Year 11 cohort vary slightly from the figures published on the StatsWales website. <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Pupils/pupils-by-localauthorityregion-yeargroup>. Official estimates of the size of Year 11 during 2011/12 and 2012/13 are 34,214 and 35,443 respectively. It should be noted that the statistics in this report are research statistics and will not reconcile with published estimates. This is due to a number of factors, but principally arises due to the removal of some records in preparation for subsequent merging with Post 16 and LLWR data. The Year 12 and Year 13 cohort figures also differ from those in StatsWales in that they only relate to matched learners from our initial Year 11 cohorts.

<sup>14</sup> The number of learners who were not identified in the NPD is described in the Technical Annex.

**Table 4.1: Participation in Sixth Form among Year 11 Cohorts**

<i>Number of Learners</i>	<b>NPD</b>	<b>Post 16 Collection</b>	
<b>Cohort 1: 2011/12-2013/14</b>	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Total Population	33,867	16,412	10,485
Identified in both NPD and Post 16 Collection	n.a.	14,968	9,814
<b>Cohort 2: 2012/13-2014/15</b>	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Total Population	35,052	16,389	10,847
Identified in both NPD and Post 16 Collection	n.a.	15,795	10,614

Source: NPD, Post 16 Collection and January PLASC.

4.3 The number of Year 12 learners who were identified as attending Sixth Form and who progressed to Year 13 during the following academic year declines to approximately 10,000 learners, equivalent to around 30 per cent of the original Year 11 cohorts. Whilst some of this decline in the size of the learner population between Year 12 and Year 13 will be attributable to learners withdrawing prior to completing their qualifications, it should also be noted that many learners may only be engaged in activities that are expected to last up to a year. Whilst Sixth Form learners predominantly enrol to undertake AS/A-levels and equivalent qualifications over a period of two years, many may also be engaged in activities such as recognised one-year vocational qualifications (usually BTECs). Other learners may attend Sixth Form solely for the purposes of resitting their GCSE examinations. The activities undertaken by learners in Sixth Forms are summarised in Table 4.2<sup>15</sup>. Analysis of the Post 16 data revealed the complex range of activities being undertaken by Sixth Form learners. Whilst almost 90 per cent are undertaking at least one AS/A-level(s), approximately 1 in 4 are also engaged in vocational qualifications. Over 10 per cent of Sixth Form learners are also enrolled on GCSEs.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the Post-16 collection was reintroduced from 2013/14 on a full year collection basis rather than a beginning of year collection and so there may be coverage issues with some activities. Some of the differences in activities observed between the cohorts may therefore arise due to changes in the timing of data collection.

**Table 4.2: Proportion of Sixth Form Learners by Type of Learning Activity**

<i>Percentages and numbers</i>	<b>Cohort 1</b>		<b>Cohort 2</b>	
	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 13</b>	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 13</b>
<b>All Activities*</b>				
A-Levels	86.2 12,902	93.0 9,127	83.3 13,157	94.7 10,051
Vocational	24.5 3,667	20.3 1,992	26.6 4,201	23.4 2,484
GCSEs	11.5 1,721	2.9 285	12.3 1,943	0.9 96
<b>Activity Summary</b>				
A-Levels Only	69.5 10,403	79.1 7,763	64.5 10,188	75.3 7,792
A-Levels and Vocational	16.7 2,500	14.5 1,423	18.8 2,969	17.3 1,836
Vocational Only	7.8 1,168	5.6 550	7.8 1,232	6.3 669
Other Activities excluding A-Levels & Vocational	6.0 898	0.8 79	8.9 1,406	1.1 117
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>14,968</b>	<b>9,814</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>10,614</b>

Source: Post 16 collection

Notes: \* Non-exclusive groups - sum to more than 100 per cent

The lower panel attempts to summarize this information to identify learners who are undertaking either academic, recognised vocational or both types of qualifications. This classification deliberately separates A-level and Vocational activities from 'other'<sup>16</sup> activities being undertaken such as Key Skills and GCSEs into different categories in order to identify the nature of the 'main' activity being undertaken. It can be seen that among Year 12 learners, approximately 17-19 per cent of Sixth Form learners were undertaking A-levels alongside a vocational qualification.

<sup>16</sup> 'Other' includes all other categories within the classification for 'activity reference' given within the dataset. This includes key skills, other (including Welsh Baccalaureate), non-accredited and unknown or work-based activities.

Among Year 12 learners, approximately 8 per cent of learners were observed as having undertaken vocational qualifications in the absence of any AS/A-levels.

- 4.4 Table 4.2 also demonstrates how the nature of activities undertaken by Sixth Form learners varies between Year 12 and Year 13. The proportion of learners undertaking A-levels in Year 13 increases to almost 95 per cent, reflecting that those learners who were only observed during Year 12 were more likely to be undertaking vocational, other, or perhaps one-year qualifications. Similarly, the proportion of learners undertaking A-levels as their main activity increased to over 75 per cent in Year 13 among both cohorts. These observations are important in terms of understanding the relative characteristics of Year 12 and Year 13 learners.

### **Characteristics of Sixth Form Learners**

- 4.5 In order to understand whether the particular characteristics were associated with progression and non-progression into Sixth Form and the subsequent retention of Sixth Form learners, this section considers a number of individual attributes that were recorded within the NPD data. Table 4.3 presents information on the characteristics of the two cohorts as recorded at Year 11 in the NPD. The first column of each cohort provides information on the entire cohort of Year 11 learners, irrespective of whether or not they continued on to post-compulsory education. As would be expected, it can be seen that there was a relatively even gender split. Those learners classified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) accounted for approximately 1 in 5 learners across both cohorts, of whom a majority were classified as 'School Action'<sup>17</sup>. Approximately 15 per cent of Year 11 pupils were entitled to receive free school meals (FSM). The proportion of Year 11 learners with fluent Welsh language ability is approximately 16 per cent for both cohorts<sup>18</sup>. This figure rises to over 20 per cent for those who progress into Sixth Form.

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<sup>17</sup> There are three categories of intervention that may be provided for those recorded as SEN: 'School Action' where additional support provided by schools; 'School Action Plus' where additional support is provided by schools together with the involvement of external agencies; and 'Statement' where a local authority statement of SEN provides a legal entitlement to a specified package of support. See the following report for further information: <http://www.assembly.wales/Research%20Documents/15-025-SEN/15-025.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Schools should initially ask either the parent (or a pupil if aged 12 or over with the knowledge and support of parents) to determine fluency in Welsh. If no response is received then a follow up request should be made. Any data provided by the parent or pupil must be recorded accurately, even where the school does not agree with the data. Where no response is received from the parent or pupil after the reminder, the school can choose the category it deems most suitable for the pupil. The school must then try to confirm this choice with the parent or pupil. The source of the data must be recorded in the PLASC return. All personal data items should be checked for accuracy at least once a year.

- 4.6 Two measures of absenteeism are presented. The first measure considered days absent which relates to the time that learners were absent from school, as a proportion of half-day sessions. Where learners were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions during the school year this is referred to as persistent absenteeism<sup>19</sup>. It can be seen that approximately 1 in 10 learners in these two cohorts were classed as being persistently absent whilst they were in Year 11, with levels of absenteeism being higher among Cohort 1 (11 per cent) compared to the Cohort 2 (9 per cent). This finding is consistent with long term downward trends in levels of absenteeism<sup>20</sup>. Figures are also presented on the proportion of learners who had at least one unauthorised absence during the school year (that is an absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school)<sup>21</sup>. It can be seen that 42 per cent of Year 11 learners from Cohort 1 were recorded as having had at least one unexplained or unjustified absence during the course of the academic year. Once again, this figure falls for Cohort 2 (38 per cent).
- 4.7 Finally, Table 4.3 provides information on the GCSE attainment of learners, expressed in terms of their capped GCSE points which relates to the eight best GCSEs achieved by learners and which forms an important component of the publication of examination statistics by the Welsh Government<sup>22 23</sup>. It can be seen that approximately 18 per cent of learners achieved more than 400 capped points. In 2006/07, the Level 2 inclusive threshold was introduced as the headline indicator for pupils aged 15. (This is defined as a volume of qualifications at Level 2 which is equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSE's at grade A\*-C including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics<sup>24</sup>.) It can be seen that across the two cohorts of Year 11 learners, approximately half were recorded as having achieved the Level 2 threshold at Key Stage 4. (This measure of attainment has continued to increase among subsequent cohorts, with latest estimates indicating that 60 per cent of Year 11 learners in 2015/16 achieved this threshold<sup>25</sup>.)
- 4.8 The remaining columns of Table 4.3 show the characteristics of those learners from the two cohorts who attended a Sixth Form in the years immediately following their

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<sup>19</sup> <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-pupil-characteristics/?lang=en>

<sup>20</sup> <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Absenteeism/absenteeismbypupilsofcompulsoryschoolageinsecondaryschools-by-schooltype-year>

<sup>21</sup> See <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2011/111214sdr2312011en.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Statistical release for examination results, see <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

<sup>23</sup> Description of derivation of capped points score, see <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2010/101130calculationen.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> See: <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/160721-key-stage-4-performance-measures-changes-comparability-en.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/161012-examination-results-2015-16-provisional-en.pdf>

completion of compulsory education. Table 4.3 shows that females, learners recorded as having SEN, those eligible for FSM and those with lower levels of educational attainment at Key Stage 4 were each less likely to be observed to have entered Sixth Form during Year 12. Furthermore, where learners with these characteristics did progress into Sixth Form at Year 12 they were less likely to progress to Year 13.

**Table 4.3: Overview of Cohorts: Characteristic measures at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	Cohort 1			Cohort 2		
	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	50.9	52.4	54.5	51.1	53.2	55.2
Female	49.1	47.6	45.5	49.0	46.8	44.8
<b>Free School Meals</b>						
No	84.8	90.8	93.6	84.0	90.1	92.6
Yes	15.2	9.2	6.5	16.0	9.9	7.5
<b>Special Education Needs</b>						
No SEN	79.6	89.9	92.4	79.1	89.4	92.2
School Action	11.3	6.3	5.0	11.1	6.4	4.8
School Action Plus	6.3	2.6	1.8	7.0	2.9	2.0
Statement	2.9	1.2	0.8	2.7	1.3	1.0
<b>Speak Welsh</b>						
Fluent in Welsh	15.7	20.6	21.6	16.2	21.3	20.7
Not fluent in Welsh	41.0	38.9	38.1	40.7	39.4	59.2
Cannot speak Welsh	43.3	40.5	40.3	43.1	39.4	40.8
<b>Sessions Absent</b>						
0-5%	39.9	48.4	53.8	48.1	57.0	64.1
5-10%	27.4	29.8	29.9	25.4	25.8	24.2
10-15%	14.2	12.4	10.6	11.9	9.9	7.8
15-20%	7.3	5.1	3.6	5.9	3.9	2.5
>20%	11.1	4.4	2.1	8.8	3.5	1.4
<b>Unauthorised Absence(s)</b>						
No	58.2	59.0	65.2	61.8	64.9	70.4
Yes	41.8	41.1	34.8	38.3	35.1	29.6
<b>Capped GCSE Points</b>						
<300	24.4	6.7	2.6	19.5	5.5	2.0
300-349	26.5	22.7	17.2	26.4	21.1	15.8
350-399	31.3	40.7	42.6	36.1	44.4	45.3
400-449	14.6	24.0	29.8	15.2	24.1	30.3
450+	3.2	5.9	7.9	2.9	4.9	6.6
<b>Key Stage 4 Level 2 Mathematics, English/Welsh</b>						
No	48.0	26.0	17.1	46.4	25.0	16.7
Yes	52.0	74.0	82.8	53.6	75.0	83.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>33,867</b>	<b>14,968</b>	<b>9,814</b>	<b>35,052</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>10,614</b>

Note: All measures taken from the NPD are characteristics at Year 11

## 5. Withdrawal from Sixth Form

- 5.1 This section examines the issue of withdrawal from Sixth Form *during* the academic year (see Table 1.1 for descriptions). The Post-16 Collection records the completion status for each learning activity undertaken by a learner within a given year. Four classifications are contained within the data:
- continuing the learning activity leading to the learning aim
  - completed the learning activity leading to the learning aim
  - withdrawn from the learning activity
  - transferred to a new learning activity.
- 5.2 Transfer of learning activity will relate to those situations where a learner has withdrawn from a learning activity and as a direct result has at the same time started studying for another learning activity within the same provider<sup>26</sup>. For the purposes of this report, we do not include transfers in our measure of withdrawal. As noted in sections 2 and 3 above, a student may complete a Year 12 AS learning programme, but not progress to Year 13 A-level studies. Results of a comparison between withdrawal and non-progression measures are set out in section 6 from paragraph 6.10.)
- 5.3 Table 5.1 summarises the incidence of continuation, completion, withdrawal and transfer as recorded in the Post 16 collection across all activities. The recording of completion status was not in place for the 2012/13 collection and therefore the analysis which follows is only based on data from 2013/14. It must be acknowledged that being a new data collection, there may have been quality problems with records of completion status which are difficult to validate given the lack of longitudinal data, or another source against which this data could be checked. For example, rates of course continuation and transfer among Year 13 learners recorded during the 2013/14 academic year (Cohort 1) were lower than those recorded for Year 13 learners during the following academic year (Cohort 2). Nonetheless, analysis of completion status does provide a unique opportunity to examine withdrawal during an academic year as opposed to at its end, which is likely to have implications in terms of accurately capturing the dynamics of entry into Further Education.

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<sup>26</sup> See <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160629-completion-notes-en.pdf>

5.4 Table 5.1 shows that a large majority of learners were recorded as having ‘completed’ a learning activity. However, more than a quarter of Year 12 learners among Cohort 2 were also recorded as having withdrawn from a learning activity. The incidence of activity withdrawal among Year 13 learners is lower within both cohorts (20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). These seemingly high rates of withdrawal may reflect the number and variety of activities undertaken by Sixth Form learners that will increase the likelihood that any one learner will have withdrawn from at least one learning activity (for example, dropping one AS-level subject during Year 12, but continuing with other subjects).

**Table 5.1: Withdrawal and Transfer Recorded within Post -16 collection**

<i>Percentage of learners</i>	<b>Cohort 1</b>		<b>Cohort 2</b>	
	<b>Year 13</b>	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 13</b>
<b>All Sixth Formers</b>				
Completed activity/ies	97.1	88.3	88.3	97.6
Continuing activity/ies	0.9	13.0	13.0	2.2
Withdrawn activity/ies	20.1	26.7	26.7	23.9
Transferred activity/ies	1.7	7.9	7.9	5.2
Sample (number of learners)	9,814	15,795	15,795	10,614
<b>Measures of Withdrawal</b>				
Any A-level withdrawal	19.2	25.6	25.6	20.6
All A-level withdrawal	3.3	5.6	5.6	4.3
Complete withdrawal - A-level learners only	2.0	3.2	3.2	1.7
Sample (number of learners)	9,187	13,149	13,149	9,827
Complete withdrawal - all learners	2.2	4.0	4.0	2.2
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>9,814</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>10,614</b>

Source: Post-16 Collection

5.5 The ‘Measures of Withdrawal’ section in Table 5.1 provides summary estimates of withdrawal among Sixth Form learners. The first row shows the proportion of A/AS-level learners who were recorded as having withdrawn from one or more A/AS-levels. It can be seen that over a quarter of Year 12 A/AS-level learners (26 per cent) were recorded as having withdrawn from one or more A/AS-Levels. One fifth of Year 13 learners in both cohorts also withdrew from at least one A-Level. It is also important to note that these figures relate specifically to withdrawal within the

academic year, prior to the successful completion of the learning activity. These figures do not include those learners who successfully completed all A/AS-Levels in Year 12 but who then decided not to continue with one of their A/AS-Levels in Year 13. This issue is examined in the following section.

- 5.6 Whilst a significant proportion of students withdrew from one or more A/AS-Levels, the withdrawal of learners from *all* A/AS-levels was estimated to be less than 6 per cent among Year 12 learners ('All A-level withdrawal'). Withdrawal from all A/AS-Levels does not necessarily equate to a complete withdrawal from Sixth Form. Table 5.1 also provides an estimate of complete withdrawal from all A-level activity. The incidence of complete withdrawal among A/AS-Level learners during Year 12 was estimated to be just 3 per cent. The final row of Table 5.1 shows complete withdrawal amongst all learners and is defined as those learners who were recorded as having withdrawn from all learning activities during a given academic year and is not restricted to only AS/A-level learners. The analysis reveals that among the Cohort 2, 4 per cent of Year 12 learners were recorded as having withdrawn from all learning activities by the expected end date for these activities. This rate is higher than the rate of complete withdrawal among A-Level students, reflecting higher rates of withdrawal for other types of learning activity beyond A/AS-Levels. (Note that some learners for whom a complete withdrawal was not recorded, may nevertheless not return to the same school in year 13.)
- 5.7 Due to the relatively recent introduction in Wales of the requirement for Sixth Forms to record data on completion status, it is difficult to assess the quality and completeness of the information being used in this analysis to derive estimates of withdrawal from Sixth Form. Published estimates for England report that in 2012/13, approximately 14 per cent of the entire cohort of 16-18 years olds in the state funded sector withdrew from a learning activity. Furthermore, 2.4 per cent of the student cohort withdrew from *all* of the learning activities that they started during 2012/13<sup>27</sup>. Whilst rates of withdrawal appear to be slightly higher in Wales, the estimates presented in this section are broadly comparable to those published in England.
- 5.8 Table 5.2 presents information on rates of withdrawal from Sixth Form among A/AS-level learners for different population sub-groups. The analysis considered the

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<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11431/Achievement+and+retention+in+post-16+education,%20February+2015/746a1fb2-2a89-49e9-a53b-f5339288d4b1>

incidence of withdrawal from a) any A/AS-Level, b) all A/AS-Levels and c) all learning activities (complete withdrawal). In terms of comparisons between population sub-groups, it can be seen that differences in the rates of withdrawal from 'Any A/AS-Level' were less pronounced than differences observed in rates of withdrawal from All A/AS-Levels. For example, among Year 12 learners, the rate of withdrawal from 'Any A/AS-Level' was estimated to be 33 per cent among those pupils who were eligible for FSM. Among non-FSM learners, 25 per cent withdrew from an A/AS-Level. However, 11 per cent of pupils who were eligible for FSM were recorded as having withdrawn from 'All A/AS-Levels', more than twice the rate observed among non-FSM learners. This illustrates that among A-level learners, it was relatively common for learners to drop an AS/A-Level prior to commencing Year 13 and that measures of complete withdrawal are a more discriminating outcome measure of the difficulties faced by certain groups of learners in successfully completing their Sixth Form studies.

- 5.9 Table 5.2 also reveals a gradient in withdrawal according to levels of attainment at GCSE, where those with the highest levels of prior attainment were much less likely to withdraw from all A-levels or to withdraw completely from Sixth Form. A strong relationship was also observed between absenteeism during Year 11 and withdrawal during Sixth Form, with those learners with higher levels of absenteeism being more likely to withdraw from All A-levels or to withdraw completely from Sixth Form. Among those Year 12 pupils who were absent for more than 20 per cent of sessions during Year 11 (i.e. persistently absent), 16 per cent were observed as subsequently withdrawing from all learning activities within Sixth Form. This is compared to a rate of complete withdrawal of less than 2 per cent among Year 12 pupils who exhibited the lowest levels of absenteeism at Year 11.

**Table 5.2: A-Level Learners: Activity Withdrawal during Year 12 by Personal Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

*Percentages*

	Year 12		
	Any A-Level	All A-Levels	Complete
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	24.6	5.7	3.2
Female	26.4	5.6	3.1
<b>Free School Meals</b>			
No	24.9	5.2	2.9
Yes	33.7	10.7	5.9
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>			
No	25.4	5.4	3.1
Yes	27.7	8.3	4.5
<b>Speak Welsh</b>			
Fluent in Welsh	20.3	2.7	1.4
Not fluent in Welsh	28.5	6.5	3.3
Cannot speak Welsh	25.1	6.1	3.9
<b>Percentage of Sessions Absent</b>			
0-5%	20.8	3.1	1.7
5-10%	28.5	5.6	3.2
10-15%	36.2	11.8	6.1
15-20%	43.9	20.3	12.7
>20%	48.5	25.4	15.9
<b>One or More Unauthorised Absences</b>			
No	22.5	4.0	2.2
Yes	32.5	9.4	5.4
<b>Capped GCSE Points</b>			
<300	36.9	20.3	9.8
300-349	31.9	11.6	6.2
350-399	27.6	5.1	3.1
400-449	19.2	1.8	1.1
450+	11.8	<1.0	<1.0
<b>Key Stage 4 Level 2 Mathematics, English/Welsh</b>			
No	30.7	12.7	6.1
Yes	24.4	4.0	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>			<b>13,149</b>

Note: All measures taken from the NPD are characteristics at Year 11. . Figures of less than 1% have been recoded to <1 for the purposes of disclosure control.

5.10 Table 5.3 presents information on rates of withdrawal from Year 12 in Sixth Form by selected school characteristics as measured at Year 11. In terms of medium of education, learners who attended an English medium school at Year 11 generally exhibited the highest rates of withdrawal across the three measures<sup>28</sup>. These findings were consistent with analysis of withdrawal by fluency in Welsh presented above. In terms of governance structure, there was little difference in the rate of withdrawal between voluntary aided/controlled schools (often faith schools) and community (local authority-run) schools. The relatively low rates of withdrawal among learners educated in Foundation Schools must also be considered in the context of the relatively small number of schools in this group (currently fewer than 10)<sup>29</sup>. Finally, learners who attended a secondary school at Year 11 that included a Sixth Form exhibited lower rates of withdrawal than those who attended a secondary school that had no post-compulsory provision. This differential was particularly noticeable among A-Level learners in Year 12. Among Year 12 A-level learners from Cohort 2, those who attended a secondary school without Sixth Form provision were more likely to withdraw from Sixth Form than those who attended a secondary school with Sixth Form provision (7 per cent compared to 3 per cent). These differences may reflect the different experiences of learners who have had to change schools in order to attend a Sixth Form compared to those who were able to remain at the same institution.

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<sup>28</sup> There are four categories used to define schools according to Welsh-medium provision. These are i) Welsh-medium, ii) Bilingual, iii) Predominantly English-medium with significant use of Welsh, and iv) Predominantly English-medium. For the purposes of comparison, 'English and Welsh schools' in this report, refers to categories ii) and iii) grouped together, i.e. Bilingual or Predominantly English-medium with significant use of Welsh (the following guidance is provided to schools in determining and informing Welsh Government of their category: <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150203-defining-schools-welsh-medium-en.pdf>).

<sup>29</sup> Foundation schools are state-funded schools whose governing body has greater freedom than in Community Schools (see <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/earlyyearshome/foundation-phase/?lang=en>).

**Table 5.3: A-Level Learners: Activity Withdrawal by School Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Year 12</b>		
	<b>Any A-Level</b>	<b>All A-Levels</b>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Medium</b>			
English	27.1	6.3	3.5
Bilingual	22.4	4.8	3.5
Welsh	20.6	2.6	1.1
<b>Governance</b>			
Community	26.3	5.6	3.2
Foundation	17.4	4.6	2.5
Voluntary Aided/Controlled	24.7	6.3	3.6
<b>School Age Range</b>			
11-16 years	30.9	9.8	7.4
11-18 years	25.6	5.6	3.1
Total	25.6	5.6	3.2
<b>Sample</b> ( <i>number of learners</i> )			<b>13,149</b>

5.11 Finally, multivariate statistical analysis<sup>30</sup> was performed in order to test the statistical significance of associations between a variety of personal and school related characteristics and withdrawal among A-level learners. Analyses were conducted separately for withdrawal from all A-levels and complete withdrawal among A/AS-Level learners, and were restricted to Year 12 learners from Cohort 2, reflecting the availability of data and the higher rates of withdrawal observed among Year 12 pupils<sup>31</sup>. Full results of the multivariate analyses are presented in Annex 3. After controlling for other factors, no statistically significant associations were found between gender, FSM eligibility, SEN status or medium of provision and the likelihood of both withdrawal from all A-levels and complete withdrawal among A/AS-Level learners. Some factors, however, were associated with the likelihood of withdrawal. Those recorded as not fluent in Welsh (i.e. non-fluent Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers) were estimated to be approximately twice as likely<sup>32</sup> to have withdrawn from all learning activities within Sixth Form and approximately one-and-a-half times as likely to have withdrawn from all A-Levels as fluent Welsh

<sup>30</sup> More detail about analysis methods are set out in Annex 1.

<sup>31</sup> As discussed above, the 'completion status' field was only introduced for Cohort 2 and therefore analysis is not possible for Cohort 1. In addition, the sample for Year 13 learners was lower for withdrawal learners and the patterns identified were broadly similar, therefore the estimates for Year 12 learners only are presented.

<sup>32</sup> In terms of odds. See footnote 33

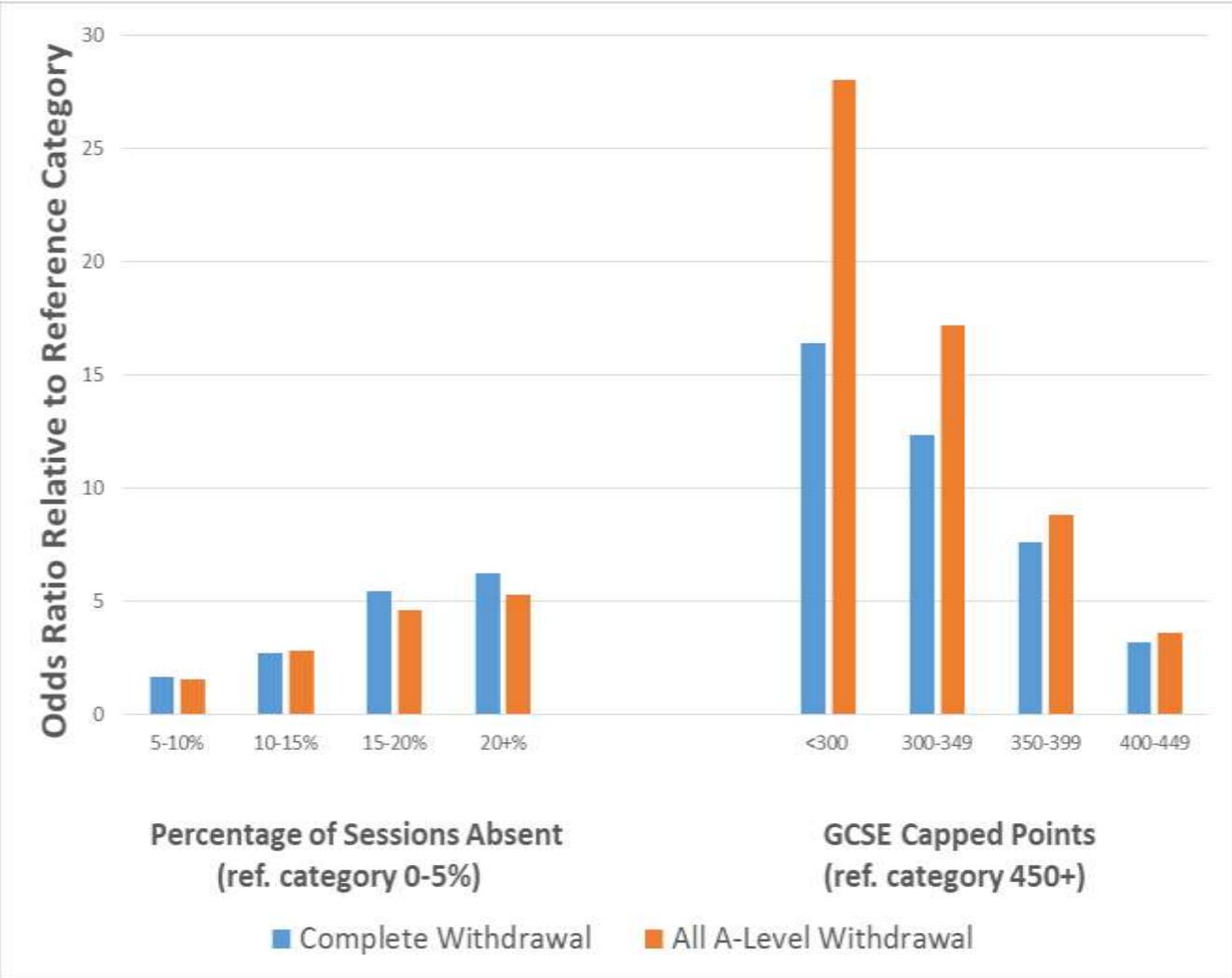
speakers. Learners attending Foundation Schools were estimated to be significantly less likely to withdraw from A-Levels than learners in Community Schools (odds ratio of 0.71<sup>33</sup>). Finally, learners who attended secondary schools without Sixth Forms were estimated to be nearly three times as likely to withdraw from all A-Levels and nearly four times as likely to withdraw completely, compared to those who attended schools with a Sixth Form (all A-level withdrawal odds ratio of 0.36, complete withdrawal odds ratio of 0.26 for without sixth forms).

5.12 As may be expected, the most important factor associated with an increased likelihood of withdrawal was lower levels of attainment at GCSE. Estimates derived from the multivariate analysis are presented in Figure 5.1 to demonstrate the importance of GCSE attainment. In terms of withdrawal from all A-levels, those learners who achieved less than 300 capped points at GCSE were estimated to be almost 28 times as likely to withdraw compared to those with 450 points or more. Those A/AS-Level learners with the lowest levels of prior attainment were also over 16 times as likely to completely withdraw from all learning activities. Even after controlling for levels of prior attainment, increasing rates of absenteeism during Year 11 were estimated to have a separate and additional effect on withdrawal with higher levels of absenteeism being associated with an increased likelihood of withdrawal. Those who were persistently absent during Year 11 (i.e. absence from more than 20 per cent of half day sessions) were estimated to be more than six times as likely to completely withdraw from all learning activities. Those A/AS-Level learners with the lowest levels of prior attendance were also over 5 times as likely to completely withdraw from all A-levels. In addition to levels of absenteeism, the statistical analysis also revealed that those learners who had an unauthorised absence during Year 11 were almost one-and-a-half times as likely to withdraw from both all A-levels and all learning activities.

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<sup>33</sup> Odds ratio is a measure of association and represents the odds that an outcome will or will not occur. Where the odds ratio is less than 1, that characteristic is associated with a lower likelihood that an 'event' such as withdrawal would occur. Where the odds ratio is more than 1, that characteristics is associated with an increased likelihood of the event occurring. For example, an odds ratio of 2 would indicate the event is twice as likely to occur.

**Figure 5.1: Multivariate Estimates of the Likelihood of Withdrawal**



Note: the reference category is the category against which the others are compared.

## 6. A-Level Non-Progression

- 6.1 This section examines the issue of progression from AS to A-levels at the end of Year 12. Whilst it is not expected that learners will necessarily pursue all of the subjects that they study at AS Level during Year 12 through to A-Level at Year 13, the data can be used to identify those learners who undertook AS levels during Year 12 but who then did not go on to take *any* A-levels during Year 13 in Sixth Form. Recent research by WISERD revealed that 10 per cent of Welsh Sixth Form learners who were recorded as having undertaken AS Level examinations were not observed to take examinations at A-level<sup>34</sup>. Those who at Year 11 were observed to be eligible for FSM, recognised as having SEN and/or who had lower levels of attainment at GCSE were all observed to be more likely not to progress from AS Levels to A-Levels. However, the limitation of that analysis was that it only considered non-progression among those who were **actually entered** for A/AS-level exams at the end of Year 12. It did not account for those who completed their tuition but who were not entered for an examinations, or those who withdrew from their AS/A-levels earlier. The measure of non-progression will encompass both of these, and therefore the current analysis provides a more complete picture of non-completion at A-level.
- 6.2 Table 6.1 presents information on rates of non-progression at A/AS-Level. Among Cohort 1, it can be seen that almost 21 per cent (2,676) of Year 12 A-Level learners within Sixth Form settings were not observed to be doing A-levels in those settings at Year 13. Among Cohort 2, this figure increases to just under 24 per cent (3,125). In terms of comparisons between population sub-groups, it can also be seen that males, learners recorded as having SEN during Year 11 and those eligible for FSM during Year 11 each exhibited higher rates of A-level non-progression. Whilst approximately 1 in 5 Year 12 A/AS-Level learners do not continue to study for A-levels in Year 13, this figure increases to 1 in 3 among those who were eligible for FSM during Year 11.

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/files/6614/2555/3786/Working\\_Paper\\_WAQNCW2014-2.pdf](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/files/6614/2555/3786/Working_Paper_WAQNCW2014-2.pdf)

**Table 6.1: A-Level Non-Progression by Personal Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 12</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	23.4	26.7
Female	18.3	21.3
<b>Free School Meals</b>		
No	19.5	22.5
Yes	36.9	37.7
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>		
No	19.9	22.8
Yes	30.0	34.3
<b>Speak Welsh</b>		
Fluent in Welsh	16.2	17.9
Not fluent in Welsh	23.3	26.2
Cannot speak Welsh	20.5	24.0
<b>Percentage of Sessions Absent</b>		
0-5%	14.8	17.3
5-10%	21.5	27.6
10-15%	28.5	36.9
15-20%	38.8	48.7
>20%	54.2	59.9
<b>One or More Unauthorised Absences</b>		
No	17.7	20.2
Yes	27.3	31.9
<b>Capped GCSE Points</b>		
<300 points	62.7	60.9
300-349	39.3	43.3
350-399	20.0	24.7
400-449	7.1	8.7
450+	2.4	2.8
<b>Key Stage 4 Level 2 Mathematics, English and Welsh</b>		
No	41.3	43.8
Yes	15.8	19.2
Total	20.7	23.8
<b>Sample</b> ( <i>number of learners</i> )	<b>12,907</b>	<b>13,125</b>

Note: All measures taken from the NPD are characteristics at Year 11

6.3 The previous section revealed that 6 per cent of A/AS-Level learners among Cohort 2 were recorded as having withdrawn from all their A/AS-Levels during Year 12. Estimates of non-progression will include both withdrawers and students who were recorded as having completed their Year 12 A/AS-Level studies but who did not progress to study A-levels at Year 13. Estimates of non-progression give a more complete picture of all the A/AS-Level learners who started Year 12 but who did not

progress to Year 13. However, the timing of exit from Sixth Form among withdrawers will differ to that exhibited by the wider body of non-progressing A/AS-Level learners, as will their potential entry to FE and the qualifications undertaken therein. The importance of distinguishing withdrawers from all non-progressing students is highlighted in Section 6.

- 6.4 Table 6.1 also reveals a gradient in non-progression according to levels of attainment at GCSE, with those with the highest levels of attainment were much less likely to fail to progress from Year 12 to A-levels at Year 13. Among both cohorts, over 60 per cent of learners with less than 300 GCSE capped points failed to progress from Year 12 to Year 13. Those learners who did not achieve the Key Stage 4 Level 2 threshold in Mathematics and English/Welsh at Year 11 were also much less likely to progress from Year 12 to Year 13. A strong relationship was also observed between absenteeism during Year 11 and non-progression at A-level. Over 50 per cent of those defined as persistently absent during Year 11 exhibited non-progression. Over 25 per cent of learners who had an unauthorised absence during Year 11 exhibited non-progression compared to 17-20 per cent of those with no such absences. Finally, those learners recorded as being fluent in Welsh during Year 11 exhibited lower levels of non-progression (16 per cent) than learners who spoke some Welsh (23 per cent-26 per cent), or no Welsh (20 per cent-24 per cent). The size of this differential was slightly larger among learners from Cohort 2.
- 6.5 Table 6.2 presents information on rates of A-level non-progression by selected school characteristics as measured at Year 11. In terms of medium of education, analysis again suggests that rates of A-Level non-progression are lower among those sixth formers who attended either a Welsh-medium or a bilingual school at Year 11 compared to those who attended an English medium school<sup>35</sup>. This is observed among both cohorts of learners, although this differential is more pronounced among Cohort 2 learners where the rate of non-progression is eight percentage points higher among pupils from English Medium schools (25 per cent) compared to those from Welsh-medium schools (17 per cent). These findings are consistent with analysis of withdrawal presented in Section 3. In terms of

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<sup>35</sup> There are four categories used to define schools according to Welsh-medium provision. These are i) Welsh-medium, ii) Bilingual, iii) Predominantly English-medium with significant use of Welsh, and iv) Predominantly English-medium. For the purposes of comparison, 'English and Welsh schools' in this report, refers to categories ii) and iii) grouped together, i.e. Bilingual or Predominantly English-medium with significant use of Welsh (the following guidance is provided to schools in determining and informing Welsh Government of their category: <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150203-defining-schools-welsh-medium-en.pdf>).

governance type, rates of non-progression appeared to be higher in voluntary aided/controlled schools (often faith schools) compared to community (local authority-run) schools. Finally, learners who attended a secondary school at Year 11 that included a Sixth Form exhibited lower rates of non-progression than those who attended a secondary school that had no post-compulsory provision. Among both cohorts of learners, rates of non-progression are approximately 2-3 percentage points higher among pupils who had previously attended a school with no sixth form provision.

**Table 6.2: A-Level Non-Progression by School Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Cohort 1 Year 12</b>	<b>Cohort 2 Year 12</b>
<b>Medium</b>		
English-medium	22.4	25.1
Bilingual	15.4	22.7
Welsh-medium	18.1	17.4
<b>Governance</b>		
Community School	20.8	23.6
Foundation school	19.2	19.8
Voluntary Aided/Controlled	21.9	27.6
<b>School Age Range</b>		
11-16 years	22.7	27.0
11-18 years	20.7	23.7
Total	20.7	23.8
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>12,907</b>	<b>13,125</b>

6.6 Table 6.3 presents information on rates of non-progression by LA. There is a significant degree of variation in the incidence of non-progression across LAs and between cohorts within each LA. Figures for Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent have been deliberately suppressed as changes in the provision of post-compulsory education in these areas involving the closure of sixth forms has meant that relatively small sample sizes were available for analysis and estimates of non-progression between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 were too volatile (see Annex 2). However, with the exception of the Isle of Anglesey (in which the highest rate of non-progressors in cohort 1 and the second highest in cohort 2 were observed) and Caerphilly and Denbighshire (in which the lowest rates of non-progression across

both cohorts were observed), many areas exhibited relatively large variations in estimated rates of non-progression between the two cohorts and so it is therefore not possible to distinguish areas that have consistently high or low rates on non-progression.

**Table 6.3: A-Level Non-Progression by LA**

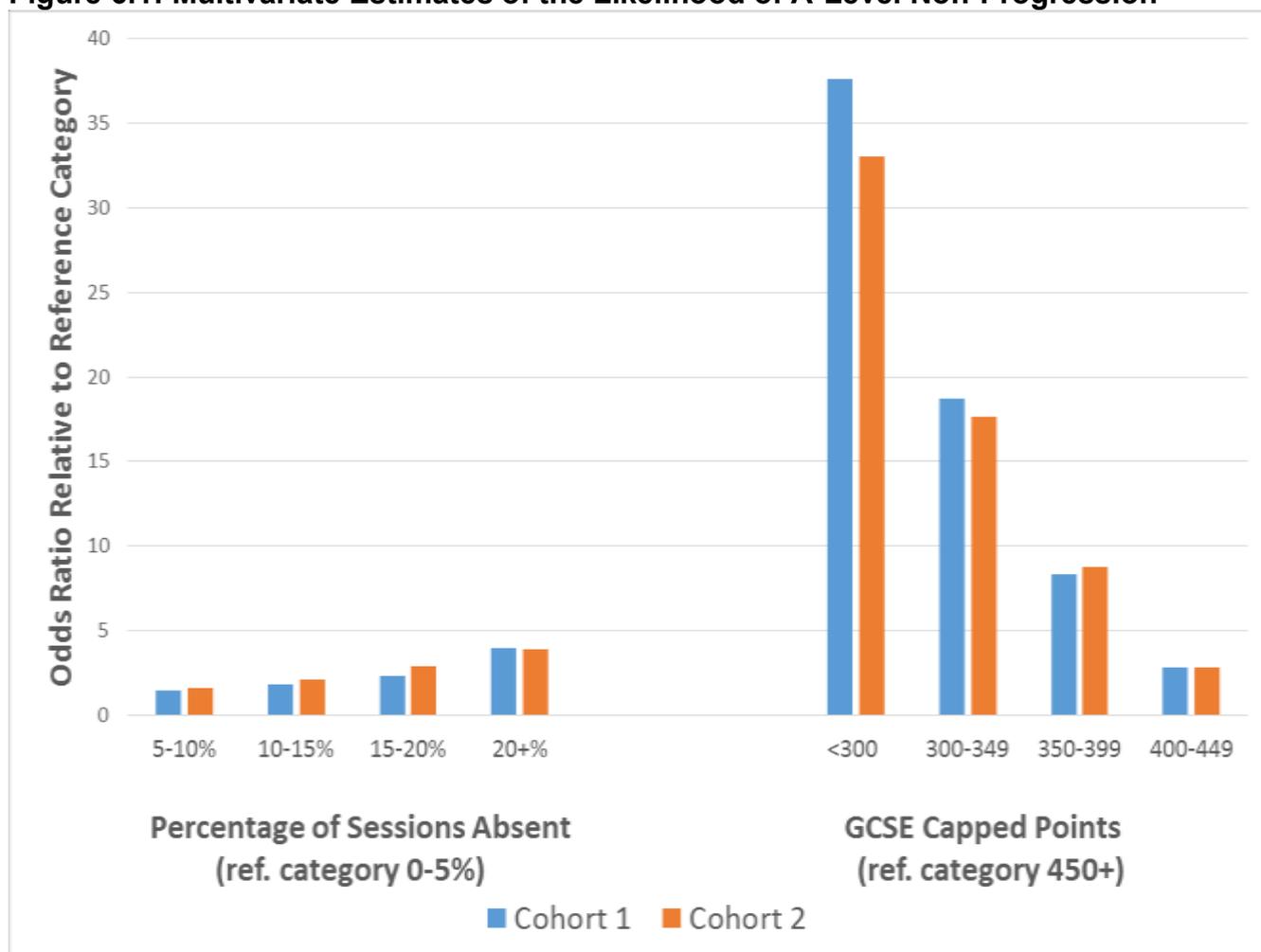
<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 12</b>
Isle of Anglesey	24.1	27.6
Gwynedd	24.5	23.3
Conwy	20.1	24.2
Denbighshire	19.1	20.0
Flintshire	19.7	24.0
Wrexham	22.6	30.2
Powys	22.8	21.5
Ceredigion	24.0	24.2
Pembrokeshire	21.6	27.1
Carmarthenshire	21.2	24.2
Swansea	20.4	21.0
Neath Port Talbot	22.5	23.5
Bridgend	20.1	24.8
Vale of Glamorgan	20.4	25.1
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	21.6	23.1
Merthyr Tydfil	-	-
Caerphilly	19.8	20.8
Blaenau Gwent	-	-
Torfaen	19.5	25.8
Monmouthshire	20.0	26.9
Newport	20.1	22.5
Cardiff	19.5	23.0
Total	20.7	23.8
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>12,907</b>	<b>13,125</b>

6.7 Multivariate statistical analysis was performed in order to test the statistical significance of associations between a variety of personal- and school- related characteristics and non-progression among A-level learners. Analyses were conducted separately for the two cohorts of A-level learners. Full results of the multivariate analyses are presented in Annex 3. After controlling for other factors, both males (odds ratios of 1.32-1.33) and those learners who were eligible for FSM during Year 11 (odds ratios of 1.28-1.38) were revealed to be more likely to not progress with A-levels during Year 13. Those who were able to speak some Welsh were estimated to be associated with an increased risk of non-progression

compared to both those who were fluent in Welsh and non-Welsh speakers. This is in contrast to the descriptive findings outlined in paragraph 6.4 which suggested that as well as those who spoke some Welsh, non-Welsh speakers also had an increased chance of non-progression. When controlling for other factors, the impact of Welsh fluency was no longer significant. Finally, learners who had attended secondary schools with Sixth Forms were estimated to have a reduced risk of A-Level non-progression (odds ratios of 0.59-0.63) compared to those who attended schools with no Sixth Form.

- 6.8 As indicated in relation to withdrawal, the most important factor associated with an increased likelihood of non-progression was lower levels of attainment at GCSE. Estimates derived from the multivariate analysis are presented in Figure 6.1 to demonstrate the importance of GCSE attainment. In terms of non-progression from all A-levels, those learners who achieved less than 300 capped points at GCSE were estimated to be over 35 times as likely to withdraw compared to those with 450 points or more. Even after controlling for levels of prior attainment, increasing rates of absenteeism during Year 11 were estimated to have a separate and additional effect on non-progression with higher levels of absenteeism being associated with an increased likelihood of withdrawal. Those who were persistently absent during Year 11 (i.e. absence from more than 20 per cent of half day sessions) were estimated to be more than four times as likely to completely withdraw from all learning activities.

**Figure 6.1: Multivariate Estimates of the Likelihood of A-Level Non-Progression**



Note: the reference category is the category against which the others are compared.

6.9 Finally in this section, non-progression among A-level learners is considered in terms of entry into examinations at the end of Year 12 and the attainment of qualifications<sup>36</sup>. The identification of learners who were entered into examinations was based upon the Welsh Examinations Database (WED). The previous analyses demonstrated that 20 per cent of learners within Cohort 1 (n=2,676) and 23 per cent of learners within Cohort 2 (n=3,125) were identified as studying for A-levels in Year 12 but did not go on to study A-levels at Year 13.

6.10 Table 6.4 shows the level of correlation between the withdrawal and non-progression measures. The point of interest in this table is to examine the degree of overlap between A-level withdrawal and A-level non-progression. It can be seen that approximately 5 per cent of learners were recorded as both having withdrawn

<sup>36</sup> The derivation of the exam entry and attainment variables are based upon WED data. Within the WED data a field labelled 'attained' is used to indicate attainment or not.

from A-levels and were identified as A-level non-progressors. Complete withdrawal from A-Levels was therefore observed to be synonymous with A-Level non-progression for over 90 per cent of those recorded as having withdrawn from all of their A-Levels. However, approximately 19 per cent of learners were classified as A-level non-progressors but were not recorded as having withdrawn from A-levels. With the overall rate of A-Level non-progression being approximately 24 per cent, complete withdrawal at A-Level only accounts for 22 per cent of A-Level non-progression.

6.11 The lower panel of Table 6.4 considers the incidence of exam non-entry among these two groups of A-level non-progressors. Among those who were classified as both A-level withdrawers and A-level non-progressors, 78 per cent were not entered for examinations at the end of Year 12. Among the remaining A-level non-progressors who were not classified as having withdrawn during Year 12, 19 per cent were not entered in to examinations at the end of Year 12. Overall, 31 per cent of all A-level non-progressors from the second cohort were not entered in to exams at the end of Year 12.

**Table 6.4: Total A-level withdrawal and A-level Non-progression Cross Tabulation, Cohort 2**

<i>Percentages</i>		<b>All A-level Non-progression</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>A-level Withdrawal</b>	<b>No</b>	75.8	18.6	94.4
	<b>Yes</b>	0.5	5.1	5.6
	<b>All</b>	76.3	23.7	<b>13,149 (100%)</b>
<b>Exam Non-entry</b>				
A-level Withdrawal	<b>No</b>		18.5	
	<b>Yes</b>		78.3	
	<b>All</b>		31.4	<b>3,125</b>

6.12 Table 6.5 indicates that across both cohorts, approximately 30 per cent of A-level non-progressors were not entered for examinations at the end of Year 12. It is noted that these learners therefore represent approximately 5-6 per cent of the Year 12 A/AS-Level cohorts. In a majority of cases, non-entry into examinations would imply that withdrawal from AS/A-Levels is likely to have taken place prior to the end of Year 12 (see Table 6.4). Table 6.5 also reveals that only approximately 10 per

cent of non-progressing learners who were entered for exams did not attain qualifications.

**Table 6.5: Examination Entry and Attainment among AS/A-Level Non-progressing Learners**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Cohort 1 Year 12</b>	<b>Cohort 2 Year 12</b>
Not entered for exams	29.9	31.4
Entered for exams	70.1	68.6
<i>Of whom:</i>		
<i>Attained at least one qualification</i>	89.3	89.1
<i>No attainment</i>	10.7	10.9
All Non-Progressing Learners	100	100
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>3,125</b>

6.13 Table 6.6 presents the personal characteristics of non-progressing A/AS Level learners who were not entered into exams and those who did not attain any qualifications where they were entered into exams. As with the other sections these personal characteristics were measured at Year 11. Table 6.5 indicates that there is little difference in non-entry by gender, although non-progressing female AS/A-Level learners were more likely to attain qualifications when they were entered for examinations. Learners recorded as FSM and/or having SEN at Year 11 were less likely to be entered into exams or to attain qualifications than those who were not recorded as such. Both the number of sessions missed during Year 11 and unauthorised absence were also associated with lower levels of exam entry and non-attainment among non-progressing A-level learners. Welsh language ability does not appear to be related to exam entry or attainment among non-progressing A-level learners. In terms of GCSE achievement, obtaining less than 300 points and not achieving the CSI during Year 11 were associated with a greater likelihood of not being entered into exams and not attaining qualifications where exams were taken.

**Table 6.6: Non-Examination Entry and Non-Attainment among A-level Non-progressing Learners by Personal Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	Year 12	Year 12	Year 12	Year 12
	No Exam Entry	No Exam Entry	No Attainment	No Attainment
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	28.6	31.0	12.5	13.3
Female	31.3	31.8	8.4	8.3
<b>Free School Meals</b>				
No	28.3	30.1	10.1	10.6
Yes	40.4	40.0	15.4	13.4
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>				
No	29.2	30.3	10.4	10.1
Yes	34.5	40.3	12.7	18.1
<b>Percentage of Sessions Absent</b>				
0-5%	23.3	24.4	9.0	9.2
5-10%	27.7	30.2	11.6	10.8
10-15%	28.9	38.9	11.8	16.3
15-20%	43.9	42.7	10.5	12.4
>20%	54.3	57.5	13.9	14.1
<b>One or More Unauthorised Absences</b>				
No	27.8	26.6	8.5	9.2
Yes	32.8	38.3	13.9	13.8
<b>Speak Welsh</b>				
Fluent in Welsh	28.3	31.8	12.7	10.5
Not fluent in Welsh	30.1	29.5	8.2	9.6
Cannot speak Welsh	30.3	33.0	12.6	12.5
<b>Capped GCSE Points</b>				
<300 points	53.2	61.6	21.9	26.3
300+	27.9	29.4	10.1	10.4
<b>Key Stage 4 Level 2 Mathematics, English and Welsh</b>				
No	38.4	42.7	14.4	17.9
Yes	24.4	25.6	8.7	8.1
<b>Total</b>	29.9	31.4	10.7	10.9
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>1,877</b>	<b>2,143</b>

Note: All measures taken from the NPD are characteristics at Year 11

6.14 In terms of the secondary school characteristics, Table 6.7 shows that attending a bilingual school in Year 11 made learners less likely to have not been entered for examinations or to not attain qualifications at Year 12, compared to learners who had attended Welsh or English medium schools. Among learners who attended secondary schools at Year 11 that did not have attached Sixth Forms, non-progressing A-Level learners were less likely to have been entered into

examinations than non-progressing learners in secondary schools with Sixth Forms. These findings corroborate the earlier analysis of withdrawal from A-Levels, suggesting that those learners who changed settings for the purposes of taking their A-levels are more likely to experience difficulties earlier during the academic year.

**Table 6.7: Examination Entry and Attainment among A-level Non-progression Learners by School Characteristics Measured at Year 11**

<i>Percentages</i>	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	Year 12	Year 12	Year 12	Year 12
	No Exam Entry	No Exam Entry	No Attainment	No Attainment
<b>Medium</b>				
English-medium	30.1%	32.1%	10.3%	11.3%
Bilingual	25.5%	26.6%	7.0%	9.0%
Welsh-medium	32.6%	31.9%	16.7%	10.8%
<b>Governance</b>				
Community School	29.4%	31.7%	10.4%	11.5%
Foundation school	27.3%	28.4%	10.8%	5.6%
Voluntary Aided/Controlled	34.4%	30.6%	10.7%	9.7%
<b>School Age Range</b>				
11-16 years	37.8%	43.1%	10.9%	13.6%
11-18 years	29.7%	31.0%	10.5%	10.8%
Total	29.9%	31.4%	10.6%	10.8%
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>1,877</b>	<b>2,143</b>

## 7. Tracking Movement from Sixth Form to FE Institutions

- 7.1 This final section is concerned with the movement of learners from Sixth Form to FE institutions. The learners in the two cohorts who were also recorded as studying within an FE institution were identified by matching Post-16 collection data and the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) dataset. The focus of this section is on two groups of AS/A-Level learners. The first group are those A/AS-Level learners in the Post-16 collection data who were identified in Section 4 as having **withdrawn** from all of their A/AS-Levels. Among this group we consider both those learners who withdrew from all A/AS-Levels and those A/AS-Level learners who were recorded as having withdrawn from all learning activities, including their A/AS-Levels. The second group of Sixth Form learners are those learners who were identified as A-Level **non-progressors** identified in Section 5. The analysis therefore deliberately focuses upon the main body of learners who were undertaking AS/A-Levels within Sixth Forms and deliberately does not include the much smaller group of students who attend Sixth Form to undertake vocational qualifications only, or to re-sit their GCSEs (see Table 4.2). As demonstrated in Section 5, a majority of withdrawers from A/AS-Levels will also be classified as A-Level 'non-progressors'. However, the analysis that follows demonstrates that withdrawers from A/AS-Levels differ considerably in terms of their entry to FE compared to the wider population of non-progressing A-Level students.
- 7.2 Patterns of entry into FE are complex. For example, some learners appear in the LLWR data before they have completed Year 11. These reflect young people pursuing less conventional trajectories, such as the 14-19 Learning Pathways that have resulted in a small proportion of young people enrolling in FE before they would have traditionally done so in the past, usually to undertake vocational learning. The analysis which follows excludes any learning activities undertaken by learners who appeared in LLWR *before* entering Sixth Form<sup>37</sup>. Some Year 12 and Year 13 learners may be observed as undertaking qualifications in both Sixth Form and FE simultaneously, through partnership arrangements which enable them to pursue a wider of choice of subjects.

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<sup>37</sup> For Cohort 1, 14 learners were identified in LLWR in the academic year 2010/11, and 835 were identified in the academic year 2011/12. For Cohort 2, 25 learners were identified in LLWR in the academic year 2010/11, 120 were identified in the academic year 2011/12, and 957 were identified in the academic year 2012/13.

7.3 The analysis also considers the effects of including and excluding learning activities in LLWR that are classified as Adult Community Learning (ACL). ACL is defined in the Welsh Government's 2010 Policy Statement *Delivering Community Learning for Wales* as "Flexible learning opportunities for adults, delivered in community venues to meet local needs"<sup>38</sup>. ACL covers a variety of learning activities encompassing both formal and informal/non-accredited learning opportunities, including courses focusing on personal development (such as language or arts courses), basic skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages. The inclusion of such learning activities may cloud our understanding of the type of learning being undertaken by Sixth Form learners who are also observed within FE settings. The analysis therefore also considers the treatment of ACL<sup>39</sup> courses in terms of understanding subsequent participation in FE. Consideration is given to the timing of entry into FE, the nature of the learning activities being undertaken and the relative characteristics of those who are identified as appearing within FE.

### **Participation in Further Education**

7.4 Table 7.1 presents the percentage of those A-level learners identified in the previous sections who either withdrew from A/AS-Levels or did not progress to Year 13 who appear in LLWR within the same or subsequent years. In-year rates of withdrawal from Sixth Form were estimated to be low, based on the schools Post-16 Collection. For example, among the second cohort of learners<sup>40</sup>, only 6 per cent were recorded as having withdrawn from all of their AS/A-Levels whilst only 3 per cent of A-Level learners were recorded as having completely withdrawn from Sixth Form. Among A-Level withdrawers, 38 per cent are identified as appearing in LLWR within the same or following year. Among those A-Level learners who were recorded as having completely withdrawn from Sixth Form, a higher proportion (43 per cent) were identified as appearing within LLWR within the same or following year.

7.5 In terms of A-level non-progression, earlier analysis revealed that approximately 20-23 per cent of learners undertaking A/AS-levels in Year 12 were not observed to be undertaking these qualifications in Year 13. Among this group, rates of enrolment in FE were higher among Cohort 1 learners (52 per cent) compared Cohort 2 learners

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<sup>38</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/communitylearning/?lang=en>

<sup>39</sup> ACL activities are defined with reference to the Learning Programme (LP17) and encompass codes 17 Welsh for Adults and 30 Adult Community Learning.

<sup>40</sup> Withdrawal data is not available for Cohort 1 learners.

(41 per cent). However, it is important to note that entry to FE can only be observed within the context of the available LLWR data. Entry to FE can be a more protracted process and there is one year's less opportunity to observe this later cohort appearing within the LLWR data.

**Table 7.1: Participation in FE learning by withdrawal and non-progression**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Cohort 1</b>		<b>Cohort 2</b>	
	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 13</b>	<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Year 13</b>
Total A-Level Withdrawal (from Section 4)		3.3	5.6	4.3
<i>Of whom</i>				
% Identified in FE		24.0	38.4	16.2
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>		<b>338</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>427</b>
Complete Withdrawal Among A-Level Learners (from Section 4)		2.0	3.2	1.7
<i>Of whom</i>				
% Identified in FE		29.4	42.8	21.3
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>169</b>
A-level Non Progression Rate (from Section 5)	20.7		23.8	
<i>Of whom</i>				
% Identified in FE	52.2		40.7	
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>2,676</b>		<b>3,125</b>	

7.6 Table 7.2 considers the timing of entry into FE. The group that is most straightforward to conceptualise are the A-Level 'non-progressors'. Twenty one percent of Year 12 A-level learners from Cohort 1 did not continue with their A/AS-level studies after the 2012/13 academic year. Of this group, approximately half were identified as attending FE during either 2012/13 or later and 71 per cent of these were first observed in FE during the 2013/14 academic year. This is in line with what would be expected, indicating that a majority of these learners were first observed in FE in what would have been Year 13 if they had remained in Sixth Form. However, approximately 1 in 4 (24 per cent) enter FE during the same academic year. This could indicate dual registration within both Sixth Form and FE settings. Among the non-progression A-level learners from Cohort 2 who were identified as attending FE, the same proportion (71 per cent) entered FE during the 2014/15 academic year (in which they, likewise, would have been in Year 13 if they

had not left Sixth Form). When taking into account the timing of entry, it can therefore be seen that rates of transfer to FE during the following academic year are the same for both cohorts.

**Table 7.2: Timing of Entry into Further Education among Year 12 Sixth Form A-Level Learners**

<i>Percentages</i>	A-Level Withdrawal		A-Level Non-Progression	
	Cohort 2		Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	All	Complete		
2012/13			24.0	
2013/14	55.3	61.5	70.7	29.0
2014/15	44.7	38.5	5.3	71.0
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>1390</b>	<b>1249</b>

7.7 Due to low recorded rates of withdrawal among A/AS-level learners in Year 13 and the small sample sizes associated with this, the analysis of withdrawal and timing of entry into FE has also been restricted to Year 12 learners. Both measures of non-completion (withdrawal and non-progression) are associated with a failure of AS/A-Level learners to complete learning activities during Year 12. As such, withdrawal from Sixth Form could occur earlier during the academic year compared to non-progressing A-level learners, thereby providing such learners with the opportunity to enter FE sooner. This is substantiated by the analysis in Table 7.2. Of those A-Level learners who withdraw completely from Sixth Form and can be identified as appearing within FE, 62 per cent first appear within FE during the same academic year. It is also interesting to note that this rate is higher than that observed among those learners who withdrew from all A/AS-Levels but who were not recorded as having withdrawn from all learning activities in Sixth Form (55 per cent).

7.8 Table 7.3 examines the levels of courses upon which these Year 12 Sixth Formers who subsequently undertake learning in FE were enrolled. As set out in paragraph 3.4, learners within FE can be registered in multiple learning programmes which are themselves comprised of multiple learning activities. Whilst the learning programme will be associated within an ultimate main learning objective (e.g. the award of a BTEC Diploma at Level 3), the activities undertaken and awards achieved as part of that programme may be undertaken at a variety of levels. The chronological ordering of learning activities does not always relate to a neat progression in the level of activity being studied for. To distil this information, Table 7.3 shows the

most commonly occurring learning level associated with all the learning activities upon which a learner was enrolled. The figures relate to the first year that the learner was observed within FE, which will be either Year 12 or what would have been Year 13 if they had remained in Sixth Form. It can be seen that among both withdrawers and non-progressing A-level learners, a majority of learners who attend FE were undertaking learning activities that were associated with Level 3 qualifications. Among both groups of A/AS-Level withdrawers from Cohort 2 and both Cohorts of A-Level 'non-progressors', approximately 6 out of 10 learners who enter FE do so to undertake Level 3 qualifications, although there is some indication that the learning activities undertaken in FE by non-progressing A-Level learners were at a slightly higher level than those undertaken by A/AS-Level withdrawers.

**Table 7.3: FE Learning Level Among Year 12 Sixth Form A-Level Learners**

<i>Percentages</i>	A-Level Withdrawal Cohort 2 – Year 12		A-Level Non-Progression	
	All A-levels	Complete	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Unknown	2.1	2.2	1.4	2.8
Entry level	3.6	3.4	1.9	2.2
Level 1	12.0	12.4	11.9	8.8
Level 2	25.2	23.0	20.4	20.7
Level 3	57.1	59.0	64.4	65.6
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>1,267</b>

Note: A small number of learners were also recorded as undertaking Level 4 qualifications. These have been combined with the Level 3 category for the purposes of disclosure control.

7.9 Table 7.4 extends the analysis of FE learning levels for all non-progressing A-Level learners by examining how learning levels vary according to a) the year of entry into FE and b) time spent within FE. The first panel of Table 7.4 shows the activity level of learners who entered FE during Year 12. For both cohorts of students, the table shows the learning levels of these learners both during their entry year to FE and, where applicable, during the following academic year (what would have been Year 13 if they had remained in Sixth Form). Among both Cohorts, around 4 out of 10 learners entering FE during Year 12, study at Level 3 or above. The learning levels for both cohorts increased when the learning activities during the following academic year were considered, with those undertaking Level 3 qualifications increasing to approximately 65% per cent in Cohort 1 and 70% per cent in Cohort 2. Similarly, when considering learning activities in the following year there was a corresponding reduction in the proportion of learners recorded as undertaking Entry Level and Level 1 qualifications.

7.10 The lower panel of Table 7.4 shows the level of learning for those students who enter FE in what would have been Year 13 if they had remained in Sixth Form. This shows that those learners who entered FE in what would have been Year 13 had they remained in Sixth Form undertook higher level learning activities than those who entered FE during Year 12. Among both cohorts of learners, over 70 per cent of Year 13 entrants are studying for qualifications at Level 3 or above upon entry to FE. These results are consistent with the earlier analysis which demonstrated that activities undertaken in FE by all non-progressing A-Level learners were at a slightly higher level than those undertaken by A/AS-Level withdrawers.

**Table 7.4: Learning Levels Among Non-Progressing A-Level Learners in FE**

	Cohort 1		Cohort 2	
	Entry Year	Following Year	Entry Year	Following Year
<b>Year 12 Entry</b>				
Unknown	4.7	.	9.2	.
Entry level	6.9	1.9	5.6	.
Level 1	31.9	6.4	14.5	10.1
Level 2	19.0	26.4	20.4	20.5
Level 3	37.8	65.3	40.2	69.5
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Year 13 Entry</b>				
Unknown	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	.
Entry level	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	.
Level 1	4.9	1.9	6.1	.
Level 2	20.0	15.2	20.8	.
Level 3	74.4	81.0	72.2	.
Total	100	100	100	.
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>889</b>	.

Note: A small number of learners were also recorded as undertaking Level 4 qualifications. These have been combined with the Level 3 category. Figures of less than 1% have been recoded to <1 for the purposes of disclosure control.

7.11 Language of learning provision for transition learners was also examined to identify whether learners who undertook Sixth Form learning through Welsh-medium or English-medium continued to study within the same medium at FE. Of the Sixth

Form cohorts, 90 per cent studied through the medium of English<sup>41</sup>. The majority of learners who were identified as transitioning from Sixth Form to FE also studied through English-medium courses (96 per cent). Of this 96 per cent, 88 per cent had studied through English-medium provision at Sixth Form and continued to study through English-medium provision at FE and 8 per cent studied through Welsh-medium at Sixth Form but not at FE. Less than 1 per cent of learners studied in Welsh both in Sixth Form and then in FE.

7.12 Finally, Table 7.5 considers how rates of enrolment in FE vary according to characteristics of learners. Due to the small sample sizes associated with withdrawal and the low rate of transfer among this group, the analysis is restricted to the two larger groups of A/AS-level learners who did not progress in their A-levels between Year 12 and Year 13. Among these learners, it can be seen that subsequent enrolment in FE is less likely to occur among those who exhibited higher levels of absenteeism at Year 11 and those with lower levels of attainment at GCSE. It is also observed that those learners who at Year 11 attended a school with Sixth Form provision were less likely to subsequently enrol in FE. Therefore, whilst learners who are able to attend a secondary school with Sixth Form provision are more likely to continue with their A-levels in Sixth Form during Year 13, if they don't progress they are less likely than those who attended an 11-16 school to transfer to an FE setting.

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<sup>41</sup> The language of provision was calculated as the most frequent language through which learners were taught. If any Welsh provision is considered, the proportion of learners studying via Welsh-medium rises from 10% in Sixth form cohorts to 16%.

**Table 7.5: Non-Progressing A/AS-Level Learners Attending FE**

<i>Percentages</i>	<b>Non Progression</b>	
	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	51.3	43.3
Female	53.0	38.3
<b>Free School Meals</b>		
No	52.6	40.8
Yes	49.9	39.6
<b>Special Education Needs</b>		
No	52.3	40.8
Yes	51.4	39.8
<b>Speak Welsh</b>		
Fluent in Welsh	56.8	44.6
Not fluent in Welsh	50.3	39.5
Cannot speak Welsh	52.5	40.5
<b>Percentage of Sessions Absent</b>		
0-5%	52.5	42.0
5-10%	55.1	41.7
10-15%	52.7	38.9
15-20%	47.5	35.5
>20%	44.3	36.0
<b>One or More Unauthorised Absences</b>		
No	53.7	41.2
Yes	50.2	40.0
<b>Capped GCSE Points</b>		
More than 300	53.2	40.9
Less than 300	43.1	38.6
<b>Key Stage 4 Level 2 Mathematics, English/Welsh</b>		
No	51.2	40.3
Yes	53.0	40.9
<b>School language medium</b>		
English	52.3	40.2
Bilingual	43.5	38.6
Welsh	60.9	46.6
<b>School</b>		
Secondary (ages 11-16)	62.2	59.5
Secondary (ages 11-18)	51.8	39.9
Total	52.2	40.7
<b>Sample (number of learners)</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>3,125</b>

Note: All measures taken from the NPD are characteristics at Year 11

## Annex 1: Technical Annex

This technical annex describes how the data was handled for the analysis presented in this report, indicating how data was transformed into individual units of analysis, the linking process and the derivation of measures.

### Transformation

The matching between the Year 11 National Pupil Database (NPD) data and the Post 16 collection involves two stages. First, all data must be reshaped into records that correspond to individual learners as units of analysis, rather than the activity-based unit in which the data is recorded and held by Welsh Government. This is also important in identifying those who are entered into the datasets multiple times leading to duplicate entries. The transformation is summarized as follows:

- 69,702 activities become 68,919 individuals in the NPD data
- 577,181 activities become 60,662 individuals in the September Post-16 collection data
- 34,839 activities become 31,939 individuals in the January PLASC data
- 49,407 activities become 28,052 individuals in the L3 WED data

### Linking

In matching the NPD data for children of compulsory school age to Post 16 data, the number of learners who were identified in Year 11 is shown in Table A.1.1. The data is linked by the ID field provided within each dataset.

**Table A.1.1: Matching rates**

Master dataset	Using/Linking dataset	Only in Master Data	In Both Datasets
Post-16 Collection	L3 WED	32,854	27,798
Post-16 Collection + WED	NPD	29,653	30,999
Post-16 Collection + WED + NPD	PLASC (JAN)	29,190	31,462

The final combined dataset which comprised the Post-16 collection, the WED and the NPD and the January PLASC snapshot contained 60,662 individual records from GCSE to Sixth Form.

## Measures

The cohorts were determined by the identification of the first learning activity within the Post 16 collection (at Year 12) and their identification (or not) in the previous academic year in the NPD (at Year 11) and in the subsequent academic year as a Year 13 learner, or not. This meant that the cohorts who were studied followed a sequential path through education. The following groups of learners were excluded:

- 2,039 learners were excluded from the analysis as they did not exist within NPD, and contextual information necessary to explore potential barriers to progression through Sixth Form, such as prior educational attainment, was not available.
- Those who did not follow a continuous education route, such as learners that may have taken a break between Year 11, Year 12 and/or Year 13 and learners who re-sat exams, and therefore remained within Year 12 for two consecutive years. In total 953 learners were excluded from the analysis as they did not follow a sequential route to/through Sixth Form.
- A further 1,892 learners were excluded as they were only identified in Sixth Form at Year 13.

This left Cohort 1 with a sample size of 14,968 and Cohort 2 with a sample size of 15,795.

There are three key measures of withdrawal used within this study. The measures of withdrawal were defined by the entry within the completion status field for any AS/A-level activities within the Post-16 Collection data. Any A-level withdrawal was coded as 0 if none of the AS/A-levels being taken by a learner (within the year of interest) were recorded as 'withdrawn from the learning activity' within the completion status field. Withdrawal was coded as 1 if any of AS/A-levels from which learners completion status was recorded as 'withdrawn'. All A-level withdrawal was defined as using the same field, completion status, and was coded 0 where the number of recorded withdrawals were lower than the number of AS/A-levels a learner was undertaking, again within a specific year. Complete withdrawal was coded as 1 where all activities were coded as withdrawn within the completion status field, otherwise complete withdrawal was coded as 0.

Further to the measures of withdrawal, the analysis also considers cases of non-progression. Non-progression was defined as Year 12 AS/A-level learners who were not identified as being in Year 13 in the subsequent academic year and therefore did not progress past Year 12 in Sixth Form.

## **Matching the combined dataset to LLWR**

The following describes the process for linking data from the combined dataset (containing information from the NPD, Post-16 collections, January PLASC and WED), to FE data from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR).

Data linkage between the combined dataset and LLWR can be done on a number of different combinations of identifiers. These identifiers include: unique learner numbers (ULN); surname; first name; middle name(s); date of birth; gender and postcode. A number of variations were tested in order to attain the most accurate matching rates.

A number of issues must be taken into consideration when matching between these two datasets. Within the LLWR the name field may be populated with first and middle names, whilst within the combined dataset middle names are contained within a separate field. This means that the two fields are not directly comparable. In order to deal with this issue, transformations were used to split the LLWR first name field to match to the combined dataset. The first iteration was simply to split the field where the spaces between names were identified, creating new fields that included only the one name in each field. The second iteration involved taking the first letter from both the combined dataset and the LLWR first name fields. The third iteration took the first 4 characters from the name in both combined dataset and LLWR. The final iteration took the second name (identified after a space) and created a new middle name variable.

In order to ensure that the variation of lower case and upper case characters did not cause any matching issues, all names in both datasets were transformed to lower case characters. Names were also checked for erroneous spacing before and after any text as this would result in potential matches not being recognised.

Table A.1.2 below indicates the matching rates between the full combined dataset sample provided and the LLWR data from 2012/2013 onwards, using a variety of combinations. In the first column, 'single id' indicates where one entry was found for the 'ID' field from combined dataset (used to link all other datasets). In the second column, 'duplicate id's' indicate where the combined dataset ID has been replicated/matched at least once with the LLWR and represents matches that are not unique. The 'matches' column indicates where the IDs were found in both combined dataset and LLWR. The 'total' column indicates the number of individuals in the merged dataset, where IDs have been matched or were only found within combined dataset.

The Unique Learner Number (ULN) within the combined dataset was present for 60,413 learners, and was missing for 740 learners. Within the LLWR dataset, of 341,707 learners, ULN data was not available for 187 learners, and was coded as 'not known' for 37,086<sup>42</sup>. Although the number of duplicate IDs found by matching via process number 2 was the lowest of all tests, the number of matches between LLWR and the combined dataset was also the lowest of tests carried out due to a lack of ULN numbers for ACL learners in FE data (see Table A.1.2).

By matching the combined dataset data to LLWR using surname, first name, date of birth, gender and postcode (Number 7 in Table A.1.2) 9,549 learners were identified in both datasets from 2012 onwards. This method was chosen as it resulted in the lowest number of duplicates, a high level of matching to LLWR and a final sample size equivalent to many other matching process. It was therefore deemed to be the most accurate of matching tests. Table A.1.3 below shows the number of learners who were identified in the combined dataset within the two cohorts who were also identified in the LLWR records between 2012/13 and 2014/15 based upon the matching outlined above.

### **Regression analysis**

Binary logistic regression was used to identify those factors (or independent variables, e.g. absences from school) that reliably predict outcomes (or dependent variables, e.g. withdrawal from Sixth Form) when controlling for all other independent variables. The benefit of employing this type of analysis over and above an analysis of simple binary significance testing is that the procedure allows us to isolate the relationship each independent variable has with the dependent variable, all else being equal. Each regression table sets out odds ratios for each independent variable. Odds ratio is a measure of association and represents the odds that an outcome will or will not occur. Where the odds ratio is less than 1, that characteristic is associated with a lower likelihood that an 'event' such as withdrawal would occur. Where the odds ratio is more than 1, that characteristic is associated with an increased likelihood of the event occurring. For example, an odds ratio of 2 would indicate the event is twice as likely to occur. As an example from this study (taken from Table A.3.2) the odds ratio for a learner who had at least 20 per cent absences from year 11 school sessions, was 5.3, compared to the reference category (less than 5 per cent absences). This shows that in terms of odds, the learner with at least 20 per cent absences was five times as likely compared to the learner with less than 5 per cent absences of withdrawing from all A Levels.

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<sup>42</sup> ULN is mandatory for school, FE and work-based learners but not for adult community learners.

**Table A.1.2: Matching rates between PLASC and LLWR**

Type of Match	SINGLE ID	DUPLICATE IDs	Matches in both combined dataset and LLWR	Total
1 ULN (unsorted)	60,393	85,332	145,725	194,886
2 ULN (sorted)	61,134	4	5,923	61,134
3 Surname, date of birth, gender,	60,958	348	10,410	61,306
4 Surname, date of birth, gender, postcode	61,017	230	10,216	61,247
5 Surname, first name, date of birth	61,106	52	11,265	61,158
6 Surname, first name, date of birth, gender	61,107	50	11,236	61,157
7 Surname, first name, date of birth, gender, postcode	61,124	8	9,549	61,132
8 Surname, first name initial, date of birth	60,728	836	13,233	61,564
9 Surname, first name initial, date of birth, gender	60,921	429	12,456	61,350
10 Surname, first name initial, date of birth, gender, postcode	61,110	44	9,929	61,154
11 Surname, four character name, date of birth	61,091	82	11,611	61,173
12 Surname, four character name, date of birth, gender	61,095	74	11,573	61,169
13 Surname, four character name, date of birth, gender, postcode	61,124	16	9,778	61,140
14 Surname, first name, middle name, date of birth	61,121	16	7,065	61,137
15 Surname, first name, middle name, date of birth, gender	61,121	16	7,049	61,137
16 Surname, first name, middle name, date of birth, gender, postcode	61,124	10	6,036	61,134

**Table A.1.3: Participation in FE learning by cohort**

	Combined Dataset	LLWR	% found in LLWR
<b>Cohort 1</b>			
<b>Year 12</b>	14,968	3,540	23.7
<b>Year 13</b>	9,814	1,543	15.7
<b>Cohort 2</b>			
<b>Year 12</b>	15,795	2,744	17.4
<b>Year 13</b>	10,614	855	8.17
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,270</b>	<b>20.4</b>

## Annex 2: Sixth Form Population by LA

**Table A.2.1: Sixth Form Population by LA, number**

		Cohort 1		Cohort 2	
		Year 12	Year 13	Year 12	Year 13
660	Isle of Anglesey	334	211	376	234
661	Gwynedd	408	252	418	281
662	Conwy	670	461	783	515
663	Denbighshire	543	372	612	441
664	Flintshire	876	573	922	626
665	Wrexham	197	125	197	121
666	Powys	648	405	701	483
667	Ceredigion	507	323	522	346
668	Pembrokeshire	628	416	714	461
669	Carmarthenshire	758	501	746	504
670	Swansea	822	542	854	593
671	Neath Port Talbot	189	119	225	138
672	Bridgend	959	637	942	639
673	Vale of Glamorgan	937	637	1,012	673
674	Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	1,754	1,134	1,863	1,269
675	Merthyr Tydfil	135	91	159	94
676	Caerphilly	712	458	754	519
677	Blaenau Gwent	40	33	46	27
678	Torfaen	561	370	612	387
679	Monmouthshire	541	358	534	349
680	Newport	1,072	710	1,112	761
681	Cardiff	1,677	1,086	1,691	1,153
<b>Total</b>		<b>14,968</b>	<b>9,814</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>10,614</b>

## Annex 3: Logistic Regression tables

### Withdrawal

**Table A.3.1: Logistic regression, complete withdrawal, A-level learners**

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	Significance	95% Confidence interval	
<i>Ref: Female</i>					
Male	1.109	0.118	0.332	0.900	1.366
<i>Ref: Non FSM</i>					
FSM	1.051	0.158	0.739	0.783	1.412
<i>Ref: Non SEN</i>					
SEN	0.961	0.162	0.815	0.691	1.337
<i>Ref: Fluent Welsh</i>					
Non-fluent Welsh	1.847	0.524	0.031	1.587	3.220
Non Welsh	2.199	0.635	0.006	1.249	3.874
<i>Ref: 0-5% Absence</i>					
5-10%	1.629	0.224	0.000	1.244	2.132
10-15%	2.723	0.440	0.000	1.984	3.738
15-20%	5.451	1.013	0.000	3.787	7.846
≥20.00%	6.238	1.201	0.000	4.278	9.098
<i>Ref: No Unauthorised Absence</i>					
Unauthorised Absence	1.480	0.165	0.000	1.190	1.841
<i>Ref: 450+ capped points</i>					
400-449	3.196	2.328	0.111	0.767	13.320
350-399	7.581	5.414	0.005	1.870	30.730
300-349	12.321	8.835	0.000	3.022	50.238
<300 points	16.378	12.143	0.000	3.830	70.041
<i>Ref: Welsh-medium school</i>					
Bilingual	1.607	0.262	0.004	1.167	2.213
English-medium	0.605	0.215	0.157	0.302	1.213
<i>Ref: Governance Community School</i>					
Foundation school	0.660	0.155	0.077	0.416	1.047
Voluntary Aided/ Controlled	0.996	0.175	0.980	0.705	1.405
<i>Ref: School Age Range 11-16 years</i>					
11-18 years	0.256	0.053	0.000	0.171	0.384
<b>N</b>	<b>12767</b>				

**Table A.3.2: Logistic regression, All A-level withdrawal**

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	Significance	95% Confidence interval	
<i>Ref: Female</i>					
Male	1.077	0.089	0.369	0.900	1.266
<i>Ref: Non FSM</i>					
FSM	1.125	0.131	0.315	0.895	1.414
<i>Ref: Non SEN</i>					
SEN	1.003	0.129	0.984	0.779	1.290
<i>Ref: Fluent Welsh</i>					
Non-fluent Welsh	1.768	0.398	0.011	1.137	2.748
Non Welsh	1.639	0.378	0.032	1.044	2.575
<i>Ref: 0-5% Absence</i>					
5-10%	1.517	0.158	0.000	1.236	1.861
10-15%	2.793	0.339	0.000	2.201	3.544
15-20%	4.590	0.690	0.000	3.418	6.164
≥20.00%	5.279	0.829	0.000	3.880	7.182
<i>Ref: No Unauthorised Absence</i>					
Unauthorised Absence	1.454	0.124	0.000	1.230	1.720
<i>Ref: 450+ capped points</i>					
400-449	3.603	2.139	0.031	1.125	11.534
350-399	8.802	5.132	0.000	2.808	27.595
300-349	17.195	10.054	0.000	5.467	54.087
<300 points	28.030	16.859	0.000	8.623	91.114
<i>Ref: Welsh-medium school</i>					
Bilingual	1.097	0.152	0.501	0.837	1.439
English-medium	0.666	0.176	0.125	0.396	1.120
<i>Ref: Governance Community School</i>					
Foundation school	0.708	0.124	0.049	0.502	0.998
Voluntary Aided/ Controlled	0.972	0.134	0.834	0.742	1.273
<i>Ref: School Age Range 11-16 years</i>					
11-18 years	0.361	0.065	0.000	0.253	0.514
<b>N</b>	<b>12767</b>				

## Non-progression

**Table A.3.3: Logistic regression, Non-progression Cohort 1**

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	Significance	95% Confidence interval	
<i>Ref: Female</i>					
Male	1.327	0.065	0.000	1.205	1.461
<i>Ref: Non FSM</i>					
FSM	1.382	0.112	0.000	1.180	1.619
<i>Ref: Non SEN</i>					
SEN	1.094	0.088	0.265	0.934	1.280
<i>Ref: Fluent Welsh</i>					
Non-fluent Welsh	1.315	0.144	0.012	1.061	1.629
Non Welsh	0.955	0.110	0.686	0.762	1.196
<i>Ref: 0-5% Absence</i>					
5-10%	1.446	0.083	0.000	1.292	1.618
10-15%	1.813	0.136	0.000	1.566	2.099
15-20%	2.282	0.238	0.000	1.861	2.799
≥20.00%	3.970	0.474	0.000	3.141	5.017
<i>Ref: No Unauthorised Absence</i>					
Unauthorised Absence	1.055	0.056	0.311	0.951	1.170
<i>Ref: 450+ capped points</i>					
400-449	2.811	0.666	0.000	1.767	4.473
350-399	8.333	1.915	0.000	5.311	13.075
300-349	18.723	4.335	0.000	11.892	29.476
<300 points	37.648	9.760	0.000	22.651	62.575
<i>Ref: Welsh-medium school</i>					
Bilingual	0.717	0.065	0.000	0.601	0.856
English-medium	0.805	0.103	0.089	0.627	1.034
<i>Ref: Governance Community School</i>					
Foundation school	0.956	0.095	0.648	0.787	1.161
Voluntary Aided/ Controlled	0.921	0.075	0.311	0.784	1.080
<i>Ref: School Age Range 11-16 years</i>					
11-18 years	0.593	0.088	0.000	0.443	0.793
<b>N</b>	<b>12525</b>				

**Table A.3.4: Logistic regression, Non-progression Cohort 2**

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	Significance	95% Confidence interval	
<i>Ref: Female</i>					
Male	1.317	0.061	0.000	1.203	1.442
<i>Ref: Non FSM</i>					
FSM	1.279	0.095	0.001	1.105	1.480
<i>Ref: Non SEN</i>					
SEN	1.077	0.083	0.332	0.927	1.252
<i>Ref: Fluent Welsh</i>					
Non-fluent Welsh	1.352	0.153	0.008	1.084	1.687
Non Welsh	1.154	0.134	0.219	0.919	1.450
<i>Ref: 0-5% Absence</i>					
5-10%	1.574	0.085	0.000	1.417	1.749
10-15%	2.080	0.156	0.000	1.795	2.410
15-20%	2.921	0.327	0.000	2.345	3.638
≥20.00%	3.925	0.500	0.000	3.058	5.038
<i>Ref: No Unauthorised Absence</i>					
Unauthorised Absence	1.225	0.060	0.000	1.112	1.349
<i>Ref: 450+ capped points</i>					
400-449	2.821	0.665	0.000	1.777	4.479
350-399	8.730	2.006	0.000	5.564	13.697
300-349	17.647	4.096	0.000	11.197	27.813
<300 points	33.058	8.587	0.000	19.869	55.001
<i>Ref: Welsh-medium school</i>					
Bilingual	1.049	0.082	0.543	0.900	1.222
English-medium	0.793	0.102	0.072	0.615	1.021
<i>Ref: Governance Community School</i>					
Foundation school	0.763	0.074	0.005	0.632	0.922
Voluntary Aided/ Controlled	1.178	0.091	0.033	1.013	1.369
<i>Ref: School Age Range 11-16 years</i>					
11-18 years	0.629	0.078	0.000	0.493	0.801
<b>N</b>	<b>12525</b>				