

Section 4.5a

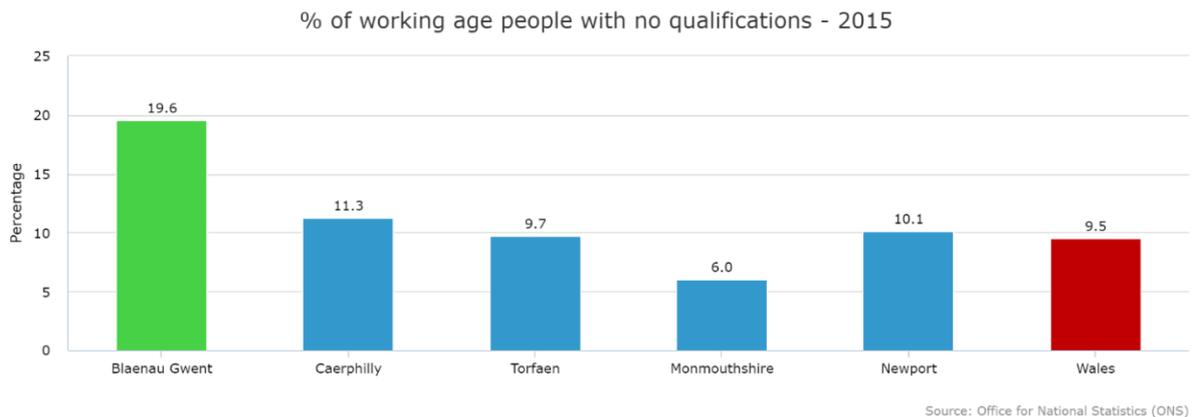
Title: Draft 1 Education and Skills for Work

1. Overview

Working Age population Qualifications

Figure E38 shows that across the Gwent region there was variation in the percentage of working age people with no qualifications. In 2015 the percentage for Blaenau Gwent, at 19.6%, was more than three times that of Monmouthshire at 6.0%. The value for Wales was 9.5%.

Figure E38



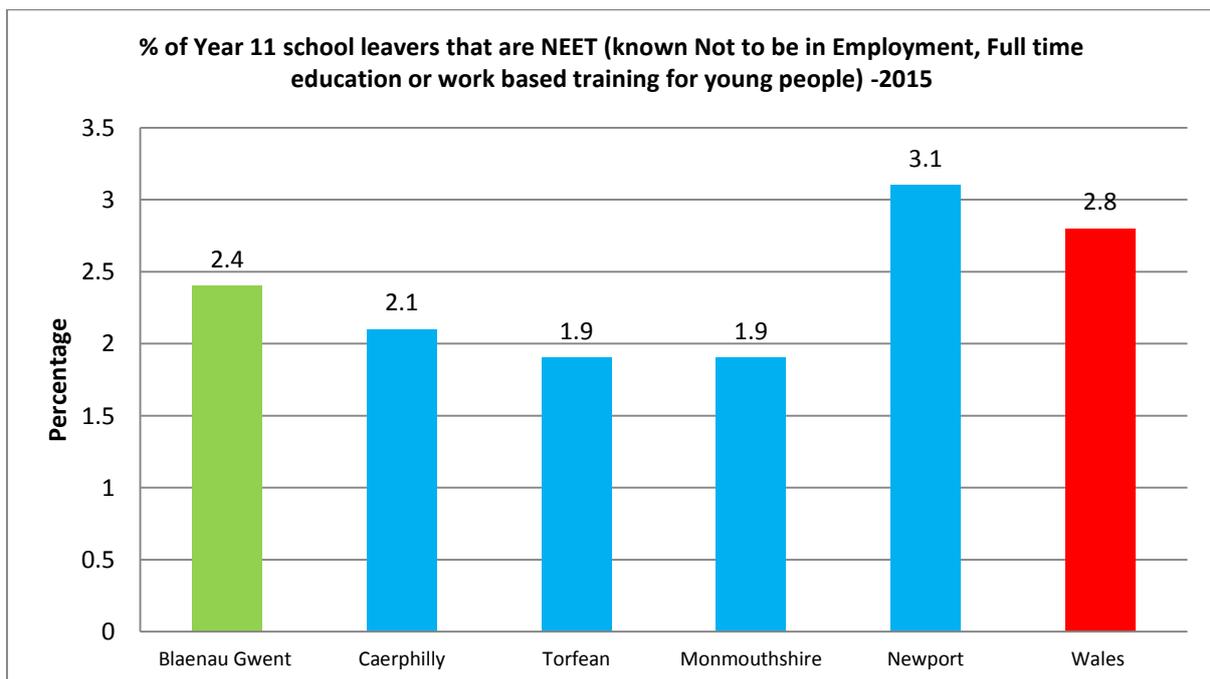
Year 11 school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training

We are not reporting on the year 13 data, as originally intended, as the national data collected and published by Careers Wales does not include the full year cohort. It only reflects the destinations of any 6th form students in the area, which in Blaenau Gwent is approximately 24 pupils in Penycwm, an SEN school. It does not include the destination of the majority of young people who go on to study at either college or training, approximately 150-200 students per year. For example, 2015 data of 16% actually means that 4 young people out of a cohort of 24 who attended Penycwm became NEET. In 2014, no young people out

of a cohort of 24 became NEET, so the percentage was 0%. Therefore, the national year 13 data for Blaenau Gwent is not a true reflection of all year 13 students and this has been flagged up with Welsh Government. Instead, we will use the accurately measured data for year 11 leavers, which reflect the entire year group population and goes through a series of robust checks between Careers Wales, Local Authority, Learning Providers and Welsh Government before published. It is this data that we use locally as a measure of our progress and impact.

Figure E48 shows that the percentage of Year 11 school leavers that are known not to be in employment, full time education or work based training for young people (NEET) in the Gwent region in 2015 ranged from 3.1% in Newport to 1.9% in Torfaen and Monmouthshire. Blaenau Gwent had 2.4% school leavers become NEET, against a national Welsh average of 2.8%. This is the lowest (best) ever yet for Blaenau Gwent.

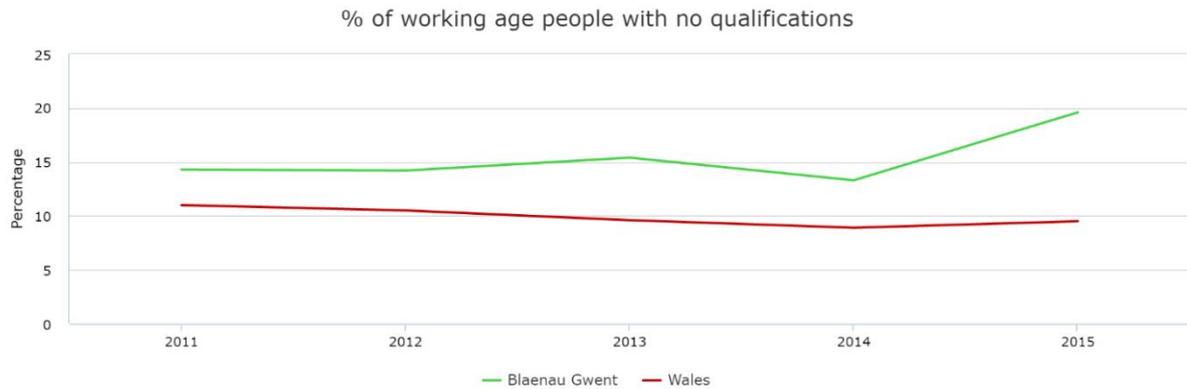
Figure E48



2. Story behind the data

Figure E39 shows the percentage of the working age people with no qualifications over the period 2011 to 2015. Between 2014 and 2015 Blaenau Gwent saw an increase of 6.3 percentage points in the percentage of the working age population with no qualifications.

Figure E39



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	14.3	11.0
2012	14.2	10.5
2013	15.4	9.6
2014	13.3	8.9
2015	19.6	9.5

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure E40 shows that in 2015 the percentage of working age people in the Gwent region who are qualified to NQF level 3 or above ranged from 41.1% in Blaenau Gwent to 64.1% in Monmouthshire. This compares with 57.5% for Wales.

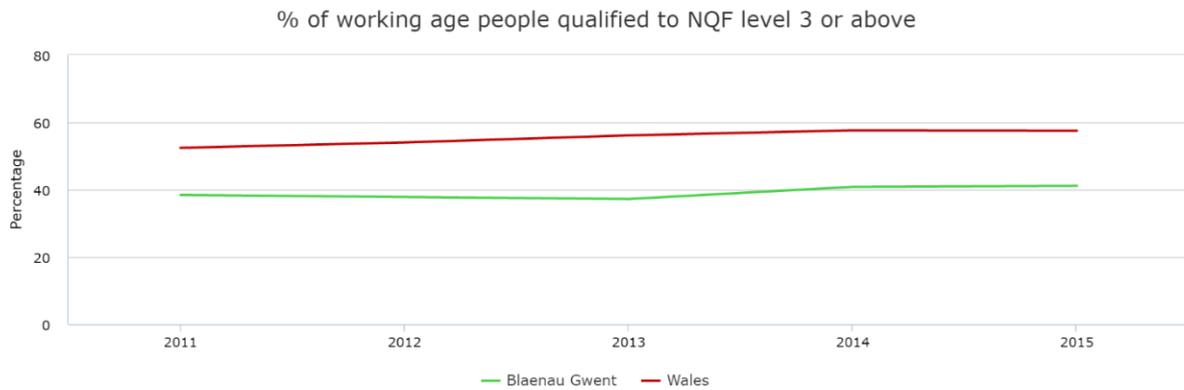
Figure E40



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure E41 shows the percentage of working age people qualified to NQF level 3 or above over the period 2011 to 2015. Blaenau Gwent saw an increase of 2.7 percentage points over the period. For Wales the increase was 5.1 percentage points.

Figure E41

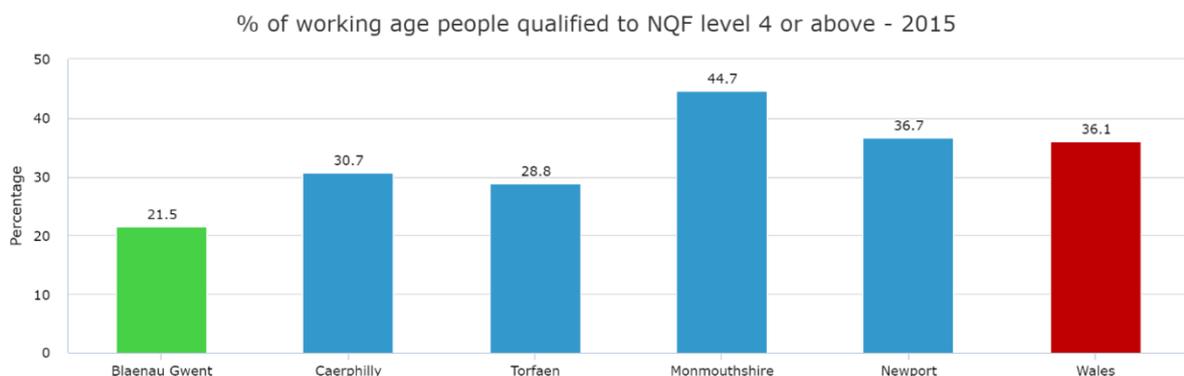


	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	38.4	52.4
2012	37.8	54.0
2013	37.2	56.1
2014	40.8	57.6
2015	41.1	57.5

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure E42 shows that, in terms of higher level qualifications, in 2015 the percentage of working age people in the region qualified to NQF level 4 or above ranged from 21.5% in Blaenau Gwent to 44.7% in Monmouthshire. The figure for Wales was 36.1%.

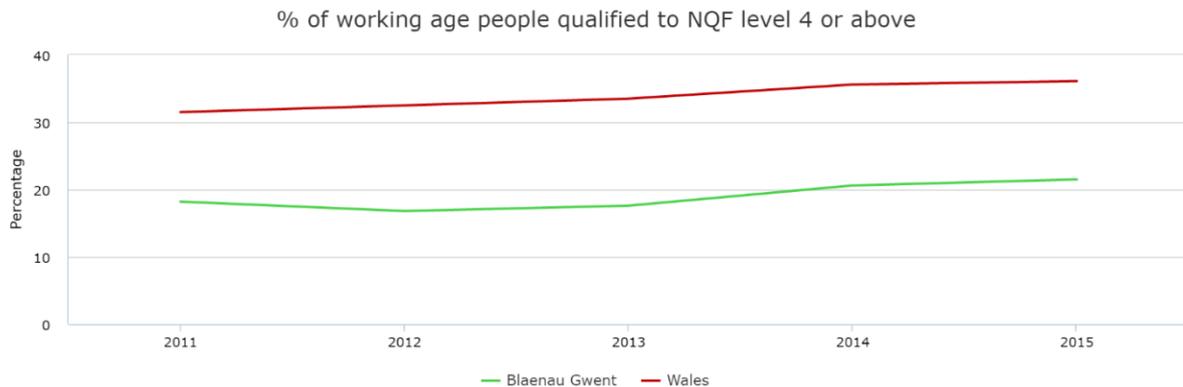
Figure E42



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure E43 shows the percentage of working age people qualified to NQF level 4 or above over the period 2011 to 2015. In Blaenau Gwent there was an increase of 3.3 percentage points over the period. This compared with an increase of 4.6 percentage points for Wales over the same period.

Figure E43



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	18.2	31.5
2012	16.8	32.5
2013	17.6	33.5
2014	20.6	35.6
2015	21.5	36.1

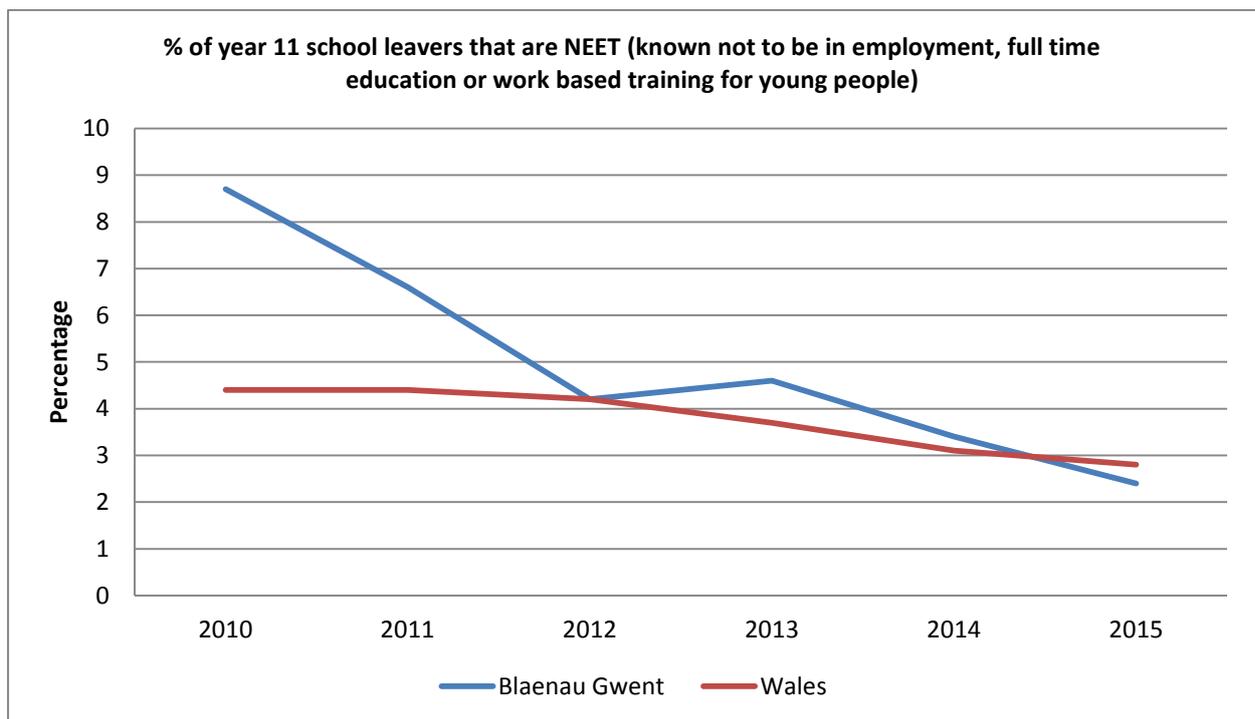
Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Year 11 school leavers becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)

Figure E49 shows the percentage of Year 11 school leavers that are NEET between 2010 and 2015. In Blaenau Gwent, there has been a steady and dramatic reduction in the numbers of young people becoming NEET, from 8.7% in 2010 to 2.4% in 2015. This reduction is due to a joined up partnership approach, overseen by the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The RAG is a multi-agency strategic partnership, chaired by the Local Authority, which oversees the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), a Welsh Government initiative to prevent young people becoming NEET.

Through the RAG, partners are held accountable, annual mapping of NEET provision is undertaken to enable all partners to address identified gaps. The NEET Practitioner Forum, a sub group of the RAG, co-ordinates multi-agency intervention and support, ensuring all young people identified through the 'Early Identification Tool' are offered timely and appropriate support. The steady reduction of the NEET figures demonstrates the success of this partnership and co-ordinated approach.

Figure E49



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2010	8.7	4.4
2011	6.6	4.4
2012	4.2	4.2
2013	4.6	3.7
2014	3.4	3.1
2015	2.4	2.8

3. What we know from engagement



During the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement exercise, the partnership undertook and attended numerous engagement activities and events throughout the borough to gather people's views.

Residents also took part via the Blaenau Gwent We Want Facebook page and partnership websites. Links to an online questionnaire were also distributed to many residents known to the partnership, such as members of the Blaenau Gwent Citizen Panel.

Residents were encouraged via the methods above to answer a range of questions that sought to capture:

- Citizen values, aspirations and priorities;
- Citizen needs – insight into the needs they and their communities encounter within daily life and what the best solutions may be and
- Citizen assets – what people can and already contribute themselves such as self-care, citizen and community action and volunteering.

Q1. What do you think is special about BG?

Q2. What things are important to you to live well and enjoy life?

Q3. What would make BG a better place?

Q4. What can you do to help make BG a better place?

Approximately 1,000 residents were engaged with (across all groups) during the engagement phase.

During phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want engagement programme we have received very limited feedback from the community on education and skills for work. For that reason we will be undertaking further work during phase 2 in an attempt to secure more feedback to

inform the picture. Can we ask during this consultation phase that if you have any thoughts on the strengths and challenges for the area can you please take the time to complete the relevant consultation survey.

Whilst the Blaenau Gwent We Want engagement has secured very limited feedback we felt it appropriate to include feedback received from some of our partners, which is listed below for your consideration.

The Youth Service conducts an annual consultation with young people across the Gwent region. This helps identify gaps in provisions and areas that need changing. Additionally, young people were included in evaluation reports for both the previous ESF funded programme Prevent 14-19 and the Welsh Collaboration Funded Lift Health and Wellbeing Youth project.

From these evaluations and consultations, young people identified what kind of support they needed and gaps in support. Types of gaps in support identified by young people included:

- Secondary school aged young people – changes in funding youth workers meant that young people did not have immediate access to support in school to help deal with immediate barriers/tensions, which can lead to lower attendance, lower levels of attainment and exclusions. This was addressed through ESF funding being directed to provide youth work support in schools through the Inspire 2 Achieve programme.
- Transitional support between year 6 and 7, year 11 and year 12 and breaks in school i.e. school holidays, is lacking. This is needed to ensure that young people remain motivated to return to school/college/work based learning. The same support is also needed to support young people who are NEET to transition smoothly into education, training and employment and to sustain their place. This was addressed through ESF funding being directed to provide transitional youth work support through the Inspire 2 Achieve programme.
- There is a lack of curriculum choice for non-academic 14-19 year olds, linked to recent changes in training centre contracts and the loss of the 14-19 funding. Many young people do not progress or

sustain their learning due to this lack of choice and timely offer. This is being explored through the RAG and Learning 4 Wellbeing partnership

- Barriers which young people face to remaining in education, employment or training are often about their life factors, such as lack of a stable home, lack of parental support, moving homes whilst in care. There is a lack of support for these issues in Blaenau Gwent, in particular where holistic support is required. This lack of support is impacting on young people's attendance, their levels of attainment and their behaviour, which puts them high at risk of becoming NEET. For 16-24 year olds, young people are either at risk or becoming NEET, due to these barriers. Our mapping identified that this is the greatest area of need. This has been addressed through the ESF Inspire 2 Work and Inspire 2 Achieve programme.
- There is an increase in young people being supported with identified or potential mental health needs. The waiting list for CAHMS is long and there is a lack of support for these young people, which puts them at greater risk of disengaging and not remaining in or sustaining education, employment or training. For those young people who are NEET, if appropriate support is put in place, they can transition successfully into employment, education or training. This is an identified priority of the RAG and Learning 4 Wellbeing partnership. Both the Inspire 2 Work project and Families First are collaboratively planning to provide support for young people in this area.
- There is a lack of appropriate employment support and mentoring for young people aged between 19 – 24 years old. This is contributing to Blaenau Gwent's increasing Youth Unemployment figures. This is now being addressed by the Inspire 2 Work programme

4. What we know from existing research

As part of the Lift/Codi Health and Wellbeing project, a Health Needs Assessment Survey was commissioned to inform future planning. The survey explored the health and wellbeing needs of young people at risk of becoming and currently NEET and the barriers they face. The survey also consulted with 52 organisations that support this cohort of young people, to identify any gaps in provision but also the barriers that organisations both face and create. The findings of this survey were used to inform the planning of the new ESF youth programmes, Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work.

Further research will be conducted in this area dependent on the priorities set by the Public Service Board.

5. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework - the journey so far...

This area is progressing well. The Local Authority's Youth Service co-ordinates the Welsh Government's 'Youth Engagement and Progression Framework' through a strategic multi-agency partnership the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The partnership is mature and effective and continues to address all 6 key areas of the Framework. This includes using the Early Identification Tool (4th year), updating the provision map for the Youth Guarantee (4th year), updating the online directory of support (3rd year), further developing the 'lead worker' role and further refining the tracking and support of young people. All areas of the Blaenau Gwent action plan are developing well and are either met or are on track. More recently, formalised links have been established between the RAG and the Learning 4 Wellbeing Partnership, to ensure the learning and gaps identified by the RAG are escalated appropriately.

The NEETs Practitioner Forum, a sub group of the RAG, and an operational multi-agency partnership, co-ordinates the EIT process and allocation of lead worker role, as part of the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF – NEETs).

As a result of this co-ordinated approach with partners, there has been a steady reduction of numbers of young people becoming NEET. From 8.7% (74 young people) in 2009/10 to 6.6% (51 young people) in

2010/11 to 4.2% (33 young people) in 2011/12, to 4.6% (34 young people) in 2012/13, to 3.4% (25 young people) in 2013/14 and finally to 2.4% (16 young people) in 2014/15, the lowest yet in Blaenau Gwent. Co-ordinating lead worker support through the NEET Practitioner Forum has been crucial to this success. The 2015/16 data is being collated this month by Careers Wales and will be available in April 2017.

Ultimately, research shows that preventing young people from becoming NEET makes it more likely that they will live healthier, happier and wealthier lives. Equally, research also shows that the cost of supporting a young person at risk of becoming or currently NEET is substantially more cost effective than the cost of services for an adult who was NEET as a young person, due to their additional needs that develop over time and need addressing.