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GOFAL A LLESIANT **GOGLEDD CYMRU**  
**NORTH WALES** SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING  
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

# 2021 Census

## Topic summary: education

### January 2023



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board



Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales



CYNGOR SIR  
YNYS MÔN  
ISLE OF ANGLESEY  
COUNTY COUNCIL



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



Cyngor  
sir ddinbych  
denbighshire  
County Council



CYNGOR  
Sir y Fflint  
Flintshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL



wrexham  
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# Introduction

This bulletin looks at the topic summary data from the 2021 Census for England and Wales for education. The data was published on 10 January 2023 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It provides unrounded population estimates at North Wales and unitary authority level.

It covers estimates of the percentage of the population aged 16 or over who have obtained academic, vocational, or professional qualifications, as well as the number of schoolchildren and full-time students.

Usual residents of Wales aged 16 years or older were asked to record any qualifications (including academic, vocational, and professional qualifications) they had ever achieved in Wales or elsewhere, even if they were not using them now. This can be used to calculate the highest level of qualification using the following categories.

- No qualifications: No formal qualifications
- Level 1: 1 to 4 GCSE passes (i.e. grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate, or equivalent qualifications
- Level 2: 5+ GCSE passes (i.e. grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above), Intermediate Welsh Baccalaureate, or equivalent qualifications
- Apprenticeships
- Level 3: 2+ A Levels, Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate, or equivalent qualifications
- Level 4 or above: Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree, or post-graduate qualifications
- Other qualifications, of unknown level

Figures for schoolchildren and full-time students are for people aged five years old and over.

The ONS has also published [Education: Census 2021 in England and Wales \(Office for National Statistics\)](#) which includes some data down to output area.

More data will be released in phases until the end of 2023 and will include detailed data at small area level about people, households and living arrangements, work and housing/amenities.

Changes between 2011 and 2021 may reflect how the Covid 19 pandemic affected people's choice of usual residence on Census Day (21 March 2021). Census results for Gwynedd in particular are likely to have been affected by where students were counted. These changes might have been temporary for some and more long-lasting for others. It is also not clear how exiting the European Union has affected population change in Wales and across the UK.

There were some changes in the classification of qualifications between the 2011 and 2021 censuses, but these are likely to have had only a small effect on overall trends.

# Main points

- Between 2011 and 2021 all unitary authority areas in North Wales saw a significant improvement in qualification levels, and a corresponding decrease in the number and percentage of people with no qualifications. This is mirrored in other data sets which monitor qualification levels (for example the Annual Population Survey).
- Across North Wales as a whole the proportion of people who reported their highest qualification at level 4 or above on census day 2021 (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications) was below the national average. For North Wales this was 31.1% or 176,740 people, whilst Wales was 31.5% and England and Wales was 33.8%. The proportion was highest in Gwynedd at 34.5% and lowest in Wrexham at 29.1%.
- Part of the difference compared to the Welsh average is explained by the proportion of apprenticeships as highest level of qualification in North Wales. This was greater than national averages at 6.3% or 35,791 people compared to 5.6% across Wales and 5.3% for England and Wales.
- Flintshire and the Isle of Anglesey had the greatest proportion of people in Wales who gave their highest qualification as apprenticeship (6.6%).
- 18.7% (106,341) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was lower than the Welsh average. (Wales = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%). The proportion was highest in Wrexham at 20.9% and lowest in Gwynedd at 16.3%.
- In 2021, there were 121,157 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in North Wales. This represents 18.5% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.
- Across North Wales the proportion of schoolchildren and students was highest in Gwynedd (21.4%) and lowest in Conwy County Borough (16.6%). The proportion of schoolchildren and students in the population will be affected by the location of higher education establishments and the overall age structure of the area (an older age structure/fewer young people in the population is likely to mean fewer students).

# The key results for North Wales

- In 2021, 31.1% (176,740) of usual residents aged 16 or over in North Wales reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 24.4% or 137,501 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.3% (35,791) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This compares to 23,560 or 4.2% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- Across Wales as a whole the proportion of respondents with an apprenticeship as their highest level of qualification was greatest in Flintshire and Isle of Anglesey (both 6.6%).
- 18.7% (106,341) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 24.7% or 139,683 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 121,157 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in North Wales. This represents 18.5% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.
- Across North Wales the proportion of schoolchildren and students was highest in Gwynedd (21.4%) and lowest in Conwy County Borough (16.6%). The proportion of schoolchildren and students in the population will be affected by the location of higher education establishments and the overall age structure of the area.

# The key results for the Isle of Anglesey

- In 2021, 32.3% (18,445) of usual residents aged 16 or over on the Isle of Anglesey reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 26.1% or 15,098 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.6% (3,752) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This was the highest proportion in Wales (along with Flintshire). It compares to 2,739 or 4.7% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 18.0% (10,270) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 24.2% or 13,991 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 11,540 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) on the Isle of Anglesey. This represents 17.6% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# The key results for Gwynedd

- In 2021, 34.5% (33,807) of usual residents aged 16 or over in Gwynedd reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 26.4% or 26,673 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 5.8% (5,715) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This compares to 3,783 or 3.7% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 16.3% (15,937) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 23.2% or 23,365 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 23,962 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in Gwynedd. This represents 21.4% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The location of Bangor University in the area will have contributed to this being the highest rate in North Wales. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# The key results for Conwy County Borough

- In 2021, 32.4% (31,232) of usual residents aged 16 or over in Conwy County Borough reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 25.5% or 24,473 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.3% (6,111) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This compares to 3,786 or 3.9% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 18.7% (17,998) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 25.6% or 24,577 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 18,226 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in Conwy County Borough. This represents 16.6% of usual residents aged 5 and over. This is one of the lowest rates in Wales and is in part due to the older age structure overall in Conwy County Borough. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# The key results for Denbighshire

- In 2021, 30.4% (24,010) of usual residents aged 16 or over in Denbighshire reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 24.2% or 18,615 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.3% (4,966) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This compares to 2,929 or 3.8% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 19.9% (15,668) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 25.4% or 18,615 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 16,394 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in Denbighshire. This represents 18.0% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# The key results for Flintshire

- In 2021, 29.2% (37,209) of usual residents aged 16 or over in Flintshire reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 23.5% or 27,791 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.6% (8,431) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This was the highest proportion in Wales (along with Isle of Anglesey). It compares to 6,031 or 4.9% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 18.3% (23,373) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 23.5% or 29,116 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 26,331 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in Flintshire. This represents 17.9% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# The key results for Wrexham

- In 2021, 29.1% (32,037) of usual residents aged 16 or over in Wrexham reported their highest qualification was at level 4 or above on census day (for example Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications). This was a significant increase compared to 2011 when it was 22.8% or 24,851 people. (Wales in 2021 = 31.5% and England and Wales = 33.8%).
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.2% (6,816) of usual residents aged 16 and over. This compares to 4,292 or 3.9% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 5.6% and England and Wales = 5.3%).
- 20.9% (23,095) of usual residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications. This was a significant decrease compared to 2011 when it was 26.7% or 29,094 people. (Wales in 2021 = 19.9% and England and Wales = 18.2%).
- In 2021, there were 24,704 schoolchildren and students in full-time education (aged 5 years and over) in Wrexham. This represents 19.3% of usual residents aged 5 and over. The proportion was 19.9% for Wales and 20.4% for England and Wales as a whole.

# About the Census

The census happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales.

Your answers to census questions help organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services in your area, including transport, education and healthcare.

Census Day was on Sunday 21 March 2021.

[As data from the 2021 Census becomes available, the Regional Innovation Coordination Hub website will be publishing key results and providing analysis for North Wales and our unitary authority areas.](#)

(<https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/census/>)

[A statistical bulletin summarising the key results for Wales is available.](#)

(<https://www.gov.wales/education-wales-census-2021-html>)

[The main census website](#) is:

<https://census.gov.uk/>

[Welsh Government's main Census website](#) is:

<https://gov.wales/census-population>

The full [release schedule for the 2021 Census](#) is available.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/census2021outputs/releaseplans>)