

Qualification Summary Bulletin for Shropshire

April 2023

Key Points

- In the decade since 2011, the population has become increasingly well qualified, with many more qualified to Level 3 and Level 4 standard and far fewer with no qualifications or with basic entry level qualifications.
- This has been strongly influenced by policy decisions that have been in place for many decades, encouraging post 16 education for all. As the population ages, the segment of the population for whom education was inaccessible has become smaller and the proportion with no formal qualifications has declined.
- Aligned with the growing proportion of the population which is educated to level 3 or 4 or above, numbers employed in occupations which traditionally require lower skills levels and fewer qualifications have mostly declined.

Qualifications Held

In the decade between March 2011 and 2021, there was a sharp decline in the number of people with no or low-level qualifications, and a strong increase in those with higher level qualifications. The highest increase in percentage terms was in apprenticeships, with the number rising by 78.3% (an additional 7,275 people in 2021 compared with 2011). 35,612 more people in 2021 were qualified to either NVQ3 or 4+ level, the former having risen by 54.2% and the latter by 27.2%. At the other end of the scale, the number with no qualifications fell by a fifth (11,370 fewer people) while those with level 1 or entry qualifications fell by 21.1% (7,004 fewer people).

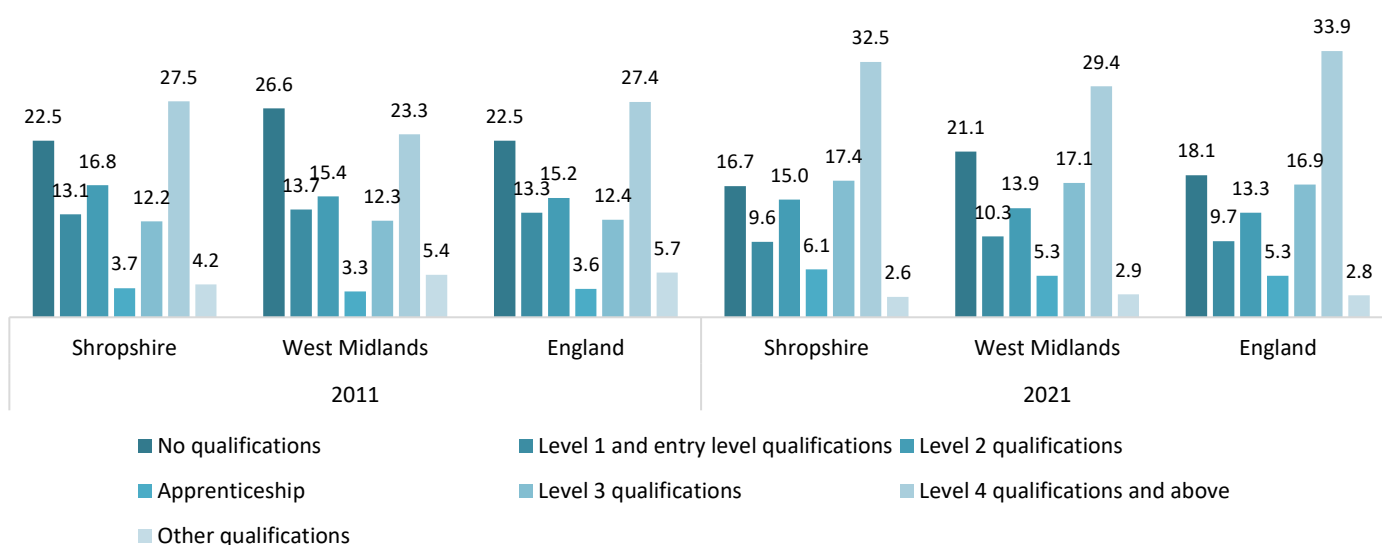
Highest Qualification Held

	2011	%	2021	%	% Change 2011-2021
No Qualification	56,943	22.5%	45,573	16.7%	-20.0%
Level 1 and Entry Level	33,158	13.1%	26,154	9.6%	-21.1%
Level 2	42,594	16.8%	40,900	15.0%	-4.0%
Apprenticeship	9,289	3.7%	16,564	6.1%	+78.3%
Level 3	30,749	12.2%	47,417	17.4%	+54.2%
Level 4 and above	69,558	27.5%	88,502	32.5%	+27.2%
Other Qualifications	10,688	4.2%	7,136	2.6%	-33.2%
Total Population Aged 16+	252,979	100.0%	272,246	100.0	+7.6%



The highest proportion of the 16+ population is now qualified to level 4 or higher, at almost a third in Shropshire. This is comparable to the national average and slightly higher than in the West Midlands. Across all geographies, the proportion qualified to this level has risen over the last 10 years. The number and proportion with at least level 3 qualifications has also risen strongly everywhere, and now accounts for about half of the Shropshire adult population (17.4% with level 3 as their highest qualification). The proportion with no qualifications fell in Shropshire from 22.5% of the adult population in 2011 to 16.7% in 2021. This proportion is lower than it is in the West Midlands (21.1%) and England (18.1%). The proportion with level 1 or entry level qualifications has also fallen across all geographies, representing 9.6% of the 16+ population in Shropshire in 2021 (13.1% in 2011). Although the number with apprenticeships as their highest qualification has risen substantially, they still represent a relatively small proportion of the 16+ population (6.1%).

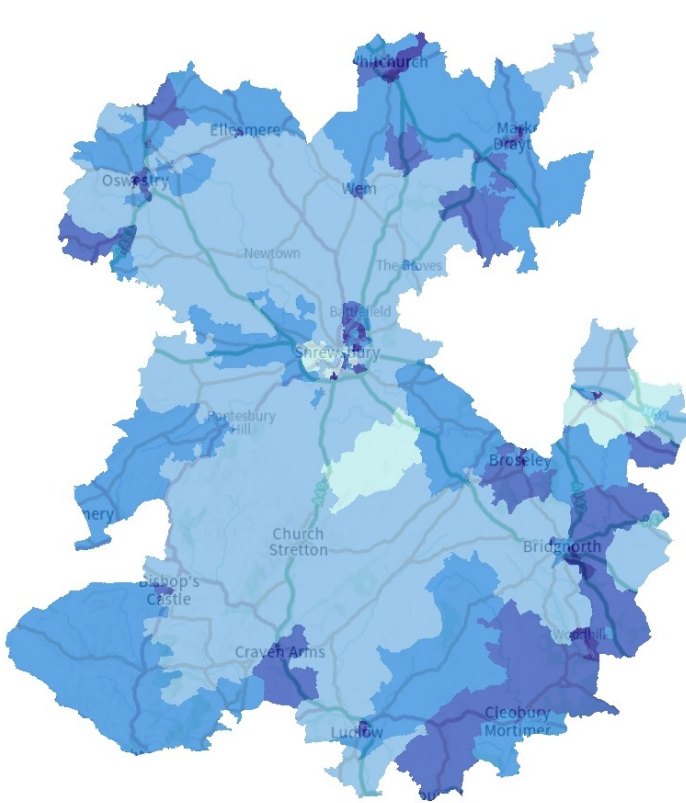
Breakdown of the 16+ Population by Highest Level of Qualification Held



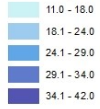
The following maps show the areas in Shropshire at lower-level super output level (LSOA) according to the proportion of those aged 16+ with the highest and lowest levels of qualifications. Qualification levels tend to be lower in areas where there is a greater level of deprivation, that is within some parts of the market towns. Conversely, a higher proportion of the population is qualified to level 4 or above in more affluent locations, especially in the southwest of Shrewsbury.



Percentage with No or Low Qualifications

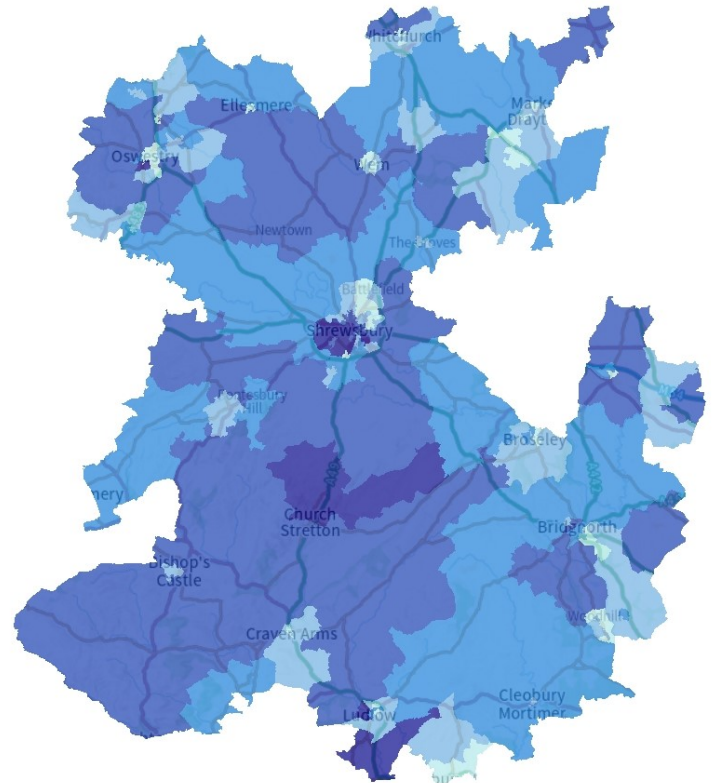


Percentage of 16+ population with no or low qualifications

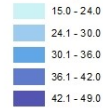


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Percentage with Level 4+ Qualifications



Percentage of 16+ population with level 4 qualifications



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Definitions

Residents of England and Wales aged 16 years and over (48.6 million) were asked to record any qualifications (including academic, vocational, and professional qualifications) they had achieved in England, Wales or worldwide. This is used to calculate the highest level of qualification (so, the highest level of qualification that an individual reported irrespective of previous qualifications listed) using the following categories:

- No qualifications: no formal qualifications
- Level 1: one to four GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, or equivalent qualifications
- Level 2: five or more GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) or equivalent qualifications
- Apprenticeships
- Level 3: two or more A Levels 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

The data in this bulletin have been extracted from 2021 Census table TS067 and from 2011 Census table KS501EW.

For more information please contact: BusinessIntelligence@shropshire.gov.uk

Or refer to ONS website:

[Education, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

