

Post-16 Attainment of Level 2 and Level 3 by the age of 19

Education, Learning and Skills Statement Kingston upon Hull 2024 – 2025



Education, Learning and Skills Statement

Kingston upon Hull 2024/25



TECHNICAL REPORT: Post-16 Attainment of Level 2 and Level 3 by the age of 19

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides Hull City Council and its internal and external stakeholders with an overview of the proportion of young people in Hull attaining Level 2 and 3 qualifications at the age of 19. The document also contains specific data sets for young people who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and those with special educational needs (with and without statements and Education & Health Care Plans).

It is one of a suite of documents that collectively make up Hull City Council's "Education, Learning and Skills Statement". This is one of a series of independent technical reports which are released at various points over the course of the year when the associated data sets¹ are available to analyse, allowing timely dissemination of intelligence relevant to stakeholders with an interest in the post-16 agenda.

Attaining Level 2 and especially Level 3 qualifications is strongly linked to improved employment outcomes. Level 3 qualifications, in particular, are widely regarded as the minimum threshold for entry into higher education and are associated with significantly better earnings and job prospects over the long term.

Despite this, a substantial number of young people in the UK remain classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), limiting both their personal opportunities and the country's broader economic potential.

According to the 2023 Youth Employment Report², better integration of NEET young people into the workforce could generate an economic gain of nearly 1% of UK GDP. Currently, the South West has the lowest NEET rate in the country at 7.8%, while Yorkshire and the Humber reports one of the highest at 14.3%. If regional NEET rates were reduced to match the South West benchmark, an estimated 324,000 young people could be moved out of the NEET category. The total economic impact of this shift could reach £23 billion annually.

For Yorkshire and the Humber specifically, the potential economic gain from reducing NEET rates to match the South West is estimated at £2.7 billion per year.

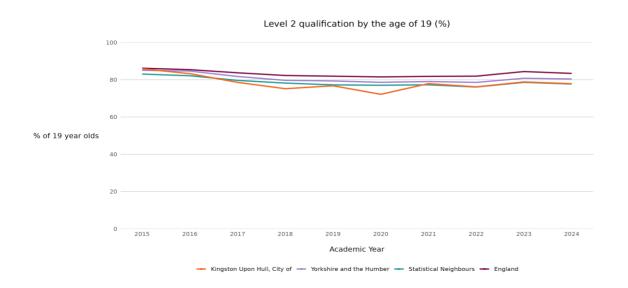
Beyond the direct financial benefits, supporting young people to transition from NEET status into education, employment, or training brings wider societal advantages. These include improved mental and physical health outcomes, reduced reliance on public services, and enhanced social mobility. On average, integrating one NEET young person into the workforce could contribute around £65,000 per year to UK GDP, based on 2022 productivity figures.

2. HULL YOUNG PEOPLE ATTAINING LEVEL 2

2.1 Percentage of <u>all</u> young people with a Level 2 qualification at the age of 19

In 2024, 77.89% of 19-year-olds in Hull achieved a Level 2 qualification, this is a slight decline of 0.95 percentage points from the previous year's figure of 78.84%. (Figure 1)

Hull continues to trail behind both the regional and national averages, which stand at 80.42% and 83.42% respectively. Hull's performance remains slightly above its statistical neighbours however the margins are small. All comparison groups have seen slight declines in performance during 2024. The gap between Hull and England remains around 5.5%.



											Change from
LAand Regions	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	previous year
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	85.87	83.28	78.6	75.2	76.78	72.19	77.93	76.19	78.84	77.89	-0.95
Yorkshire and the Humber	85.1	84.69	81.76	79.69	79.38	78.63	79.07	78.59	80.81	80.42	-0.39
Statistical Neighbours	83.05	82.16	79.66	78.22	77.25	77.05	77.29	76.11	78.62	77.72	-0.9
England	86.21	85.43	83.74	82.3	81.92	81.53	81.81	81.94	84.41	83.42	-0.99

Figure 1: Percentage of <u>all</u> young people with a Level 2 qualification at the age of 19.

2.2 Percentage of those with a Level 2 qualification <u>not</u> <u>eligible</u> for a FSM at the age of 19

In 2024, 83.64% of 19-year-olds in Hull who were not eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved a Level 2 qualification, marking an increase of 1.24 percentage points from 82.40% in 2023. This is the highest rate recorded for this indicator since 2016. However, Hull continues to trail behind regional (85.48%), national (87.38%), and statistical neighbours (84.12%) averages by 1.84, 3.74, and 0.48 percentage points respectively (Figure 2).

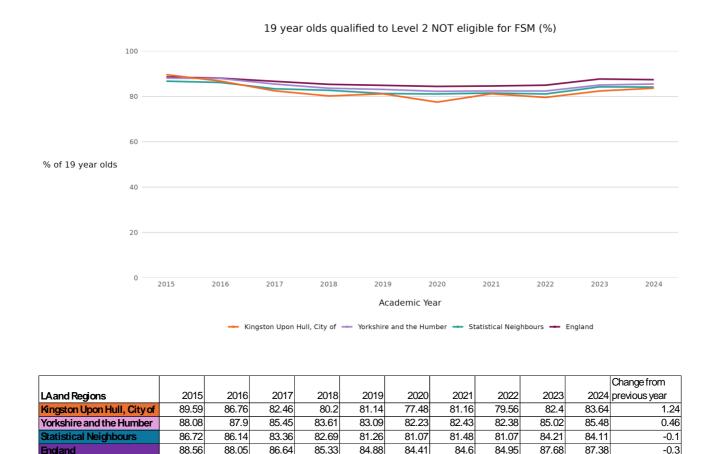


Figure 2: Percentage of those with a Level 2 qualification not eligible for a FSM at the age of 19.

2.3 Percentage of those with a Level 2 qualification eligible for a FSM at the age of 19

In 2024, the proportion of 19-year-olds in Hull eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieving a Level 2 qualification fell to 61.78%, down from 67.65% in 2023. While this decline represents a notable setback, the figure brings us broadly in line with the regional average (61.42%) and that of statistical neighbours (61.19%). In 2023 Hull outperformed the national average for this measure however this significant drop shows the gap has now widened to 4.49%. The national average now stands at 66.27% (Figure 3).

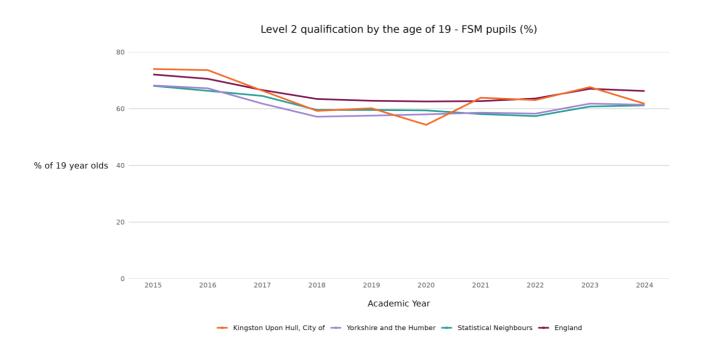


Figure 3: Percentage of those with a Level 2 qualification eligible for a FSM at the age of 19.

											Change from
LA and Regions	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	previous year
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	74.04	73.65	66.38	59.26	60.18	54.33	63.9	63.08	67.65	61.78	-5.87
Yorkshire and the Humber	68.23	67.23	61.81	57.2	57.59	58.03	58.63	58.29	61.83	61.42	-0.41
Statistical Neighbours	68.09	66.34	64.53	59.57	59.58	59.42	58.13	57.41	60.79	61.19	0.4
England	72.11	70.57	66.61	63.46	62.83	62.58	62.71	63.63	67.06	66.27	-0.79

2.4 Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2 with a special educational need or disability (<u>without</u> statements or EHC plans)

In 2024, Hull experienced a significant decline of 8.78 percentage points in the proportion of 19-year-olds with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) without statements or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) achieving a Level 2 qualification. The rate fell from 59.80% in 2023 to 51.02% in 2024. This places Hull 6.13 percentage points below the regional average and 6.09 points below statistical neighbours. Most notably, Hull remains significantly below the national average by 13.84 percentage points. Please note, all comparision groups are declining however Hull's decline is more prominent.

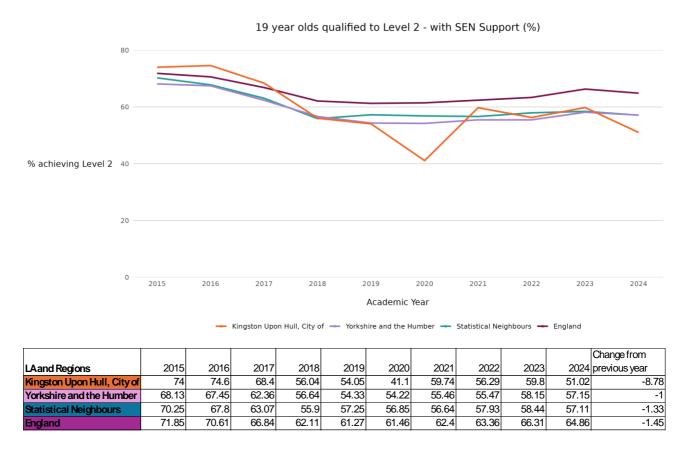


Figure 4: Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2, by special educational need (SEN) status in Year 11 (SEN without statements or EHC plans).

2.5 Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2 with a special educational need or disability (with statements or EHC plans)

In 2024, 26.79% of 19-year-olds in Hull with a special educational need or disability (with a Statement or EHCP) achieved a Level 2 qualification. This represents an increase from 25.76% in 2023. In comparison, the regional rate was 24.93%, the national rate was 29.81%, and the average for statistical neighbours was 21.81% (see Figure 5). While Hull's performance improved, regional, national, and statistical neighbour rates declined by 0.38, 1.31, and 4.09 percentage points respectively.



Figure 5: Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2, by special educational need (SEN) status in Year 11 (SEN with statements or EHC plans).

23.3

30.96

23.37

30.23

23.15

29.04

25.59

29.01

24.93

29.11

25.89

30.2

21.81

29.81

-4.08

-0.39

33.77

Statistical Neighbours

31.89

36.36

25.94

33.43

3. HULL YOUNG PEOPLE ATTAINING LEVEL 3

3.1 Percentage of <u>all</u> young people with a Level 3 qualification at the age of 19

In 2024, 42.11% of 19-year-olds in Hull achieved a Level 3 qualification, compared to 51.74% regionally, 57.56% nationally, and 46.39% among statistical neighbours (Figure 6). This marks a notable decline from 2023 for all areas: Hull decreased by 2.50 percentage points, the region by 1.36, the national average by 1.63, and statistical neighbours by 1.9. Hull continues to lag significantly behind statistical neighbours, regional and national averages. The smallest performance gap remains between Hull and its statistical neighbours, at 4.28 percentage points.

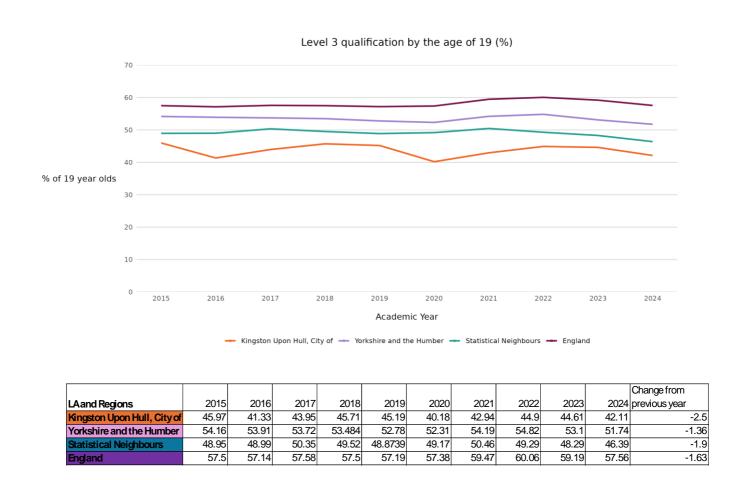


Figure 6: Percentage of all young people with a Level 3 qualification at the age of 19.

3.2 Percentage of those with a Level 3 qualification <u>not</u> <u>eligible</u> for a FSM at the age of 19

In 2024, 47.03% of 19-year-olds in Hull who were not eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved a Level 3 qualification, compared to 56.99% regionally, 62.35% nationally, and 53.37% among statistical neighbours (Figure 7). This represents a 1.17 percentage point decrease from 2023. Similarly, performance declined across all comparison groups: by 0.83 percentage points for statistical neighbours, 0.70 regionally, and 0.82 nationally. Hull continues to lag significantly behind statistical neighbours, regional and national averages.

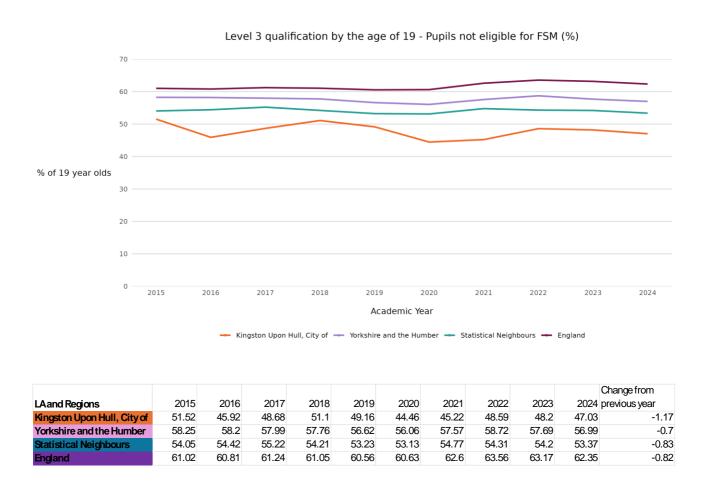


Figure 7: Percentage of those with a Level 3 qualification <u>not eligible</u> for a FSM at the age of 19.

3.3 Percentage of those with a Level 3 qualification eligible for FSM at the age of 19

In 2024, 28.35% of 19-year-olds in Hull eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved a Level 3 qualification, representing a 4.98 percentage point decrease from the previous year. This compares to 32% regionally, 36.82% nationally, and 28.19% among statistical neighbours (Figure 8). While Hull remains slightly above its statistical neighbours (by 0.16 percentage points), it has fallen further behind the regional and national averages, with gaps of 3.65 and 8.47 percentage points respectively. Note, all comparision groups have seen a decline in 2024.

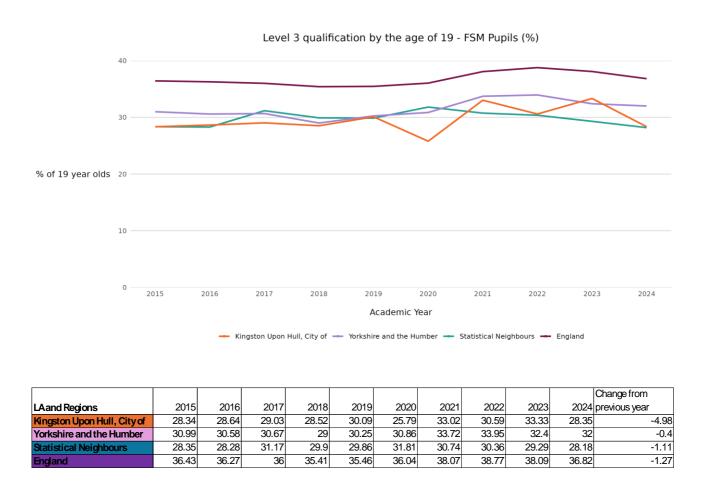


Figure 8: Percentage of those with a Level 3 qualification eligible for FSM at the age of 19.

3.4 Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 3 with a special educational need or disability (without statements or EHC plans).

In 2024, only 17.01% of 19-year-olds in Hull with a special educational need or disability (without a statement or EHCP) achieved a Level 3 qualification, marking the lowest rate recorded since 2020 and the first time performance has fallen into this percentile range since 2015. Hull has experienced a significant decline of 13.38 percentage points, and while it continues to trail behind all comparison groups, their averages have also fallen. The regional average now stands at 27.44% (a decrease of 2.67 percentage points), the national average is 35.08% (down 1.44 points), and statistical neighbours are at 25.73% (down 1.61 points).

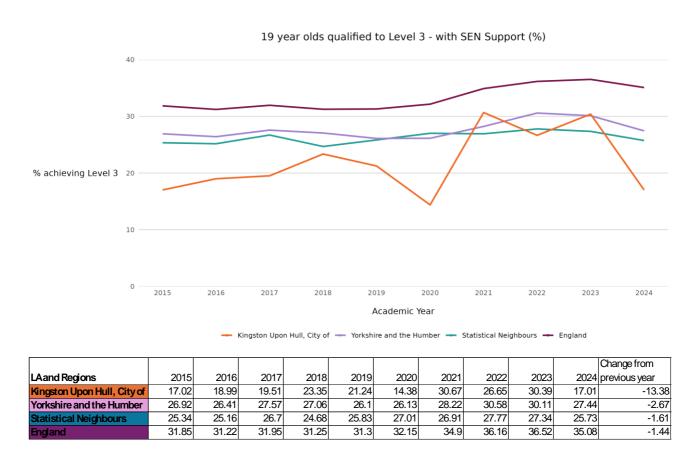


Figure 9: Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 3, with a special educational need or disability (without statements or EHC plans)

3.5 Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 3 with a special educational need or disability (with statements or EHC plans).

In 2024, 14.29% of 19-year-olds in Hull with a special educational need or disability (with a Statement or EHCP) achieved a Level 3 qualification, a significant increase from the previous year. This places Hull ahead of all comparison groups: the regional average fell to 11.61% (a decrease of 1.07 percentage points), the national average declined slightly to 14.15% (down 0.18), and statistical neighbours dropped significantly to 7.99% (down 4.79) (Figure 10). This improvement demonstrates that Hull has not only closed the performance gap but now leads in this measure.

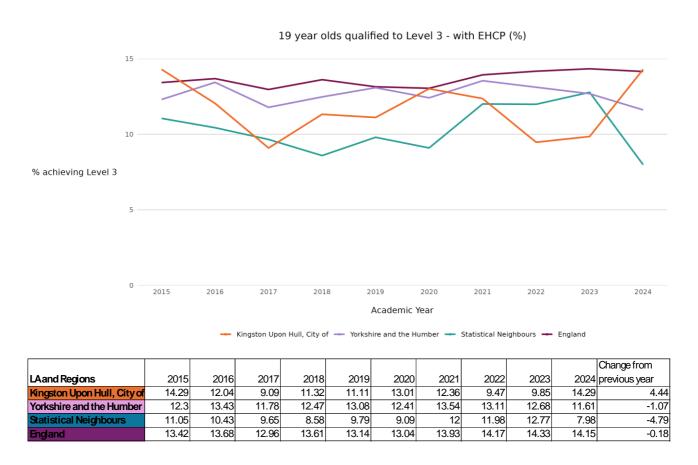


Figure 10: Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 3, by special educational need (SEN) status in Year 11 (SEN with statements or EHC plans).

4. SUMMARY

4.1 Level 2:

- In 2024, 77.89% of 19-year-olds in Hull achieved a Level 2 qualification—a slight decline from 2023. This remains below both the regional average of 80.42% and the national average of 83.42%. Hull's performance declined by 0.95 percentage points, though it's worth noting that all comparison groups also saw small decreases compared to 2023.
- None-FSM Students: 83.64% of 19-year-olds in Hull not eligible for free school meals achieved a Level 2 qualification, the highest rate since 2017. This marks a 1.24 percentage point improvement from 2023. However, Hull still trails behind regional (85.48%), national (87.38%), and statistical neighbour (84.12%) averages.
- FSM-Eligible Students: Outcomes declined significantly for FSM-eligible students, dropping from 67.65% in 2023 to 61.78% in 2024. Despite the fall, Hull's performance is now broadly in line with regional (61.42%) and statistical neighbour (61.20%) figures, however is now below the national average (66.27%).
- SEND (No EHCP/Statement): There was a sharp decline of 8.78 percentage points, with 51.02% achieving a Level 2 qualification in 2024—well below regional (57.15%), statistical neighbour (57.11%), and national (64.86%) levels.
- SEND (With EHCP/Statement): Hull saw a slight improvement from 25.76% in 2023 to 26.79% in 2024. Hull outperformed both regional (24.93%) and statistical neighbour (21.81%) rates, however remains below the national average (29.81%). All comparison groups observed declines with the exception of Hull.

4.2 Level 3:

- In 2024, 42.12% of 19-year-olds in Hull achieved a Level 3 qualification—a 2.50 percentage point decline from 2023. Hull continues to perform below regional (51.74%) and national (57.56%) levels, with the closest comparison being statistical neighbours (46.39%), where the gap is 4.27 percentage points. All areas observed a decline in 2024 however Hull's decline is more prominent.
- Non-FSM Students: 47.03% achieved Level 3, down 1.17 percentage points from 2023.
 This remains below regional (56.99%), national (62.35%), and statistical neighbour
 (53.37%) averages. All areas observed a decline in 2024 however Hull's decline is more
 prominent.
- FSM-Eligible Students: 28.35% achieved Level 3, a 4.98 percentage point drop from the previous year. Hull is now just above statistical neighbours (28.19%) but further behind

- regional (32.00%) and national (36.82%) averages. Again, All areas observed a decline in 2024 however Hull's decline is significant.
- SEND (No EHCP/Statement): Only 17.01% achieved a Level 3 qualification—the lowest rate since 2020. Hull significantly trails regional (27.44%), national (35.08%), and statistical neighbour (25.73%) performance. All areas observed a decline in 2024 however Hull's decline is significant and follows a trend of 'spiky' performance.
- SEND (With EHCP/Statement): 14.29% achieved Level 3, an improvement on the previous year. This significant increase now sees Hull leading all comparison groups: regional (11.61%), national (14.15%), and statistical neighbours (7.99%). Hull is now performing at its highest level since 2015.

5. IMPACT ON HULL YOUNG PEOPLE

For decades, Level 2 qualifications have equipped individuals with essential workplace competencies and core skills, including literacy, numeracy, and digital. These qualifications often serve as a springboard to further education and progression, including pathways into Higher Education. They also provide a critical foundation for careers in key vocational sectors such as construction, transport, healthcare, hospitality, renewables and catering.

In Hull, too many young people complete secondary education without achieving a full Level 2 qualification or its equivalent (e.g. five or more GCSEs at grades 9–4/A*–C). Currently, Hull ranks 135th out of 151 local authorities for the proportion of young people achieving a full Level 2 qualification, including English and Maths, by the age of 19.

This low starting point is reflected in Hull's broader performance: the city ranks 134th for the percentage of young people achieving any full Level 2 qualification or equivalent by age 19. The challenge becomes even more acute at Level 3, where Hull ranks 148th out of 151 local authorities for attainment by age 19.

As a result of relatively low levels of educational attainment at 19, Hull ranks 142nd for the number of 15 year old pupils from state funded schools entering higher education by the age of 19.

There may be many reasons why Hull's overall level 2 and 3 achievements by the age of 19 performance lags behind our comparison groups, these may include:

- Secondary school achievement rates
- Hull's relatively low skilled economy where the gap widens further at level 4 and above
- Low aspirations emerging from 2nd / 3rd generational benefit dependant families
- Multiple areas of deprivation
- High levels of young people who are NEET
- High percentage of children growing up within low-income families
- Despite a declining trend, the percentage of young people in Hull choosing to progress into employment without training continues to be higher than both England and the region.
- Skills supply and demand mismatch
- Patchy careers education and information, advice and guidance
- Higher volumes of young people educated in Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Units
- 23% of the NEET cohort are 'not available to the labour market' and are remaining NEET for extended periods; this is 2 x the England average
- Diminishing engagement provision

There has been a positive shift in the outcomes for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Hull. In 2024, Hull ranked 89th nationally for Level 2 attainment by age 19. Notably, there has been a significant improvement at Level 3, with Hull rising to 66th in the national rankings. This improvement may be attributed to several factors, including, enhanced targeted support for learners with EHCPs within schools and colleges, improved collaboration between education, health, and social care services, early intervention and tailored learning plans.

The performance of young people in Hull who are eligible for Free School Meals has declined. In 2024, Hull ranked 111th nationally for the proportion of FSM-eligible young people achieving Level 2 qualifications by age 19. Similarly, Hull now ranks 121st for Level 3 attainment. This decline may be attributed to a range of socioeconomic, educational, and systemic factors, including poverty-related challenges, access to appropriate educational opportunities, and reduced engagement in post-16 learning pathways.

GCSE data (see Figure 11) indicates that the city's Attainment 8 score has decreased by 1.4 percentage points, falling to 41.6% compared to the previous year. This decline in Key Stage 4 performance suggests a likely impact on future outcomes, particularly the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by age 19. Hull is now ranked 137th out of 151 Local Authorities for its attainment 8 performance.

While this trend is concerning, it is important to note that comparative areas are also experiencing declines, albeit at a slightly lower rate.

											Change from
LA and Regions	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	previous year
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	43.10	47.70	42.60	43.30	43.90	45.90	47.50	44.30	43.00	41.60	-1.40
Yorkshire and the Humber	46.90	48.90	45.40	45.10	45.40	48.30	49.10	46.90	44.70	44.20	-0.50
Statistical Neighbours	45.01	46.98	42.91	42.22	41.7	45.21	46.08	43.47	40.78	40.52	-0.26
England	48.60	50.10	46.50	46.60	46.80	50.20	50.90	48.90	46.40	46.10	-0.30

Figure 11: Attainment 8 data

Successive studies have shown the relationship between low levels of qualification and the increased likelihood of being unemployed; increased duration of unemployment; reduced chances of recovering from unemployment; reduced access to certain kinds and levels of jobs; reduced levels of earnings; and a reduction in the likelihood of acquiring additional qualifications. To buck this trend, improvements in achievement needs to begin within Hull's secondary schools, supported by a strong and progressive post 16 provision offer which meets local / regional needs. This will then set a solid foundation for increased progression into Higher Education, leading to improvements in Hull's skills levels at level 4 and above.

In support of the above and working through the 'Local Skills Improvement Plan' (LSIP), FE Providers will need to work even closer together with local employers. This work will see local provision better matched to local labour market needs. Better alignment of supply and demand has the potential to significantly drive-up skills levels locally. We also anticipate the election of a local mayor, and the formation of a Mayoral Combined Authority will assist in ensuring the commissioning of local education and training opportunities, better meets local need.

6. QUALIFICATION LEVEL GUIDE

Below you will see a guide which highlights the range of qualification levels available in the UK and the respective qualifications which are currently available at each level. In relation to this report, the below highlights where Level 2 and Level 3 sits within the hierarchy of levels and qualifications. For the purposes of this report a Level 2 is equivalent to 5 (or more) GCSEs at grades 9-4/A*-C or equivalent (eg. Level 2 vocational qualification) and a Level 3 is equal to 2 (or more) A levels or equivalent (eg. Level 3 vocational qualification).

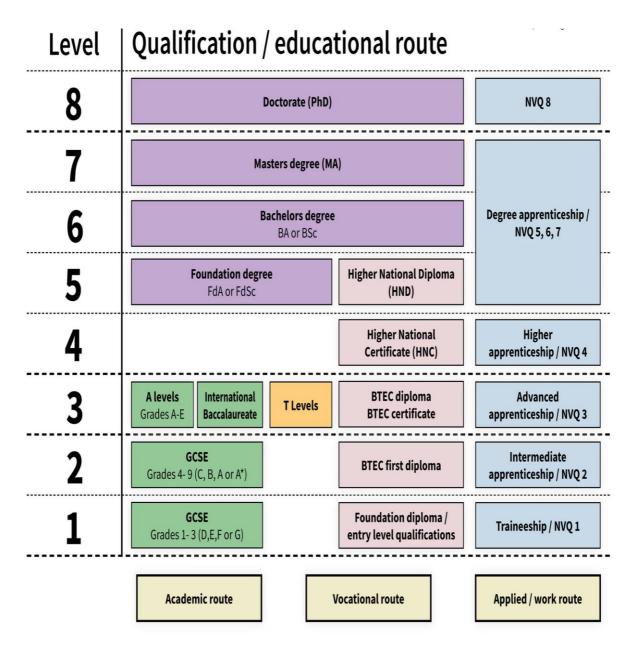


Figure 12: Qualification level guide.

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- 2. Youth Employment Index 2024. Youth Employment Index 2024 DRAFT FINAL

For more information about this publication please contact:

Post 16 Participation Manager

Kingston upon Hull City Council | Young People, Skills and Employability Team | 1st Floor, Kenworthy House | 98-104, George Street | Kingston upon Hull | HU1 3DT

Telephone - 01482 615 210 Email - ypse@hullcc.gov.uk

Or visit – www.hull.gov.uk

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