More young people are choosing to stay in learning according to Government figures out today. Compared to this time last year 31,000 more 19 year-olds have achieved a Level 2 qualification (5 GCSEs A*-C or equivalent) and 18,000 more have achieved a Level 3 (2 A levels or equivalent).

Rob Wye, National Director of Young People’s Learning and Skills at the Learning and Skills Council said: “For everyone working in and involved with the LSC and right across Further Education, these results reflect all the positive work that goes on every single day to build better lives through better learning and skills. It’s so important for young people to have choices and there has never been a better time to learn.

“Not only are young people choosing to stay in learning, more and more of them are achieving and progressing on to Level 3. We see the Further Education system is really delivering in the right way to increase the numbers of young people, particularly those who are more disadvantaged, achieving a Level 2 and Level 3, giving 1.5million young people the right head start in life.
“This is testament to the quality of teaching being offered by Further Education as well as the work being done to secure a place for every young person in learning, and reduce the numbers not in education employment or training (NEET), so that employers feel confident that young people have the right skills needed to get on at work.

“The LSC continues to work in partnership every day with local schools, colleges and training providers and with Local Authorities and Connexions services to ensure the right places and opportunities are available to all, which is vital for creating a highly skilled UK workforce with the capability to compete in the global marketplace.”

The LSC’s local partnership teams have regular conversations with schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to identify the right quality training and skills development programmes, as well as commissioning provision that addresses any gaps in training programmes, quickly and accurately.

The Level 2 and 3 attainment figures also show:

- an improvement for those who fell behind at 16 – an increasing proportion of those who missed Level 2 at 16 have gone on to reach it by 19 – 44.5% in 2007 compared to 40.2% in 2006

- more young people choosing vocational routes – the proportion of 16 to 19 year-olds achieving Level 2 via vocational routes has risen from 8.2% in 2004 to 13.8% in 2007; the proportion achieving Level 3 via vocational routes has risen from 3.5% to 10.1% over the same period
more young people opting for colleges and ‘on the job’ training – the proportion of 16 to 19 year-olds achieving Level 2 in FE institutions, work-based learning institutions and sixth form colleges has risen between 2004 and 2007 from 12.1% to 16.5%.

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Note to Editors:
1. Proportion of young people qualified to level 2 or higher and to level 3, by age and cohort:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young People Aged 19 in:</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>614,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>618,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>631,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>652,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The PSA target for measuring this progress was set in 2004 requiring a 3 percentage point increase in 2006, with a further 2% increase by 2008. In 2004, 66.4% of those aged 19 achieved Level 2, therefore our target for 2006 was set at 69.4%. The LSC recently exceeded this and enabled 71.4% to reach Level 2.

3. The new target for 2011 is for 82% of 19 year-olds to achieve a Level 2 and 54% of 16 year-olds to achieve a Level 2 (an increase of 8.1 and 6 percentage points respectively over 3 years until 2011). Since 2004 there has been an increase of 3.8 percentage points in the number achieving Level 2 when leaving school at age 16, and between the ages of 16 and 19 there has been an increase of 7.5 percentage point increase.
4. The target for 2008 is now to ensure that 73.4% of those aged 19 in 2008 have achieved a Level 2 qualification. For those aged 19 in 2007, 73.9% have achieved a Level 2 and for those who will be 19 in 2008, 73.2% have already achieved it.

5. More young people are going on to achieve a Level 3, rising from 42% in 2004 to 48% in 2007.

6. Today’s announcement shows the target has been met one year early for those aged 19 last year and the LSC plans to exceed the target for those aged 19 this year.

7. The Education and Skills Bill currently passing through parliament will raise the participation age (education or training) to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

8. Financial support may also be available to help with Further Education choices. To find out more, visit [www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands)

9. There have been significant increases in learner numbers in key priority programmes from 2005/06 to 2006/07:

   - The number of young people in FE funded learning by the LSC is higher than ever before at approximately 753,000, and comes from a 7% increase in priority learning (Skills for Life, Full 2 and Full 3), with Skills for Life and Full 2 both growing by around 9%, to 328,900 and 155,200 respectively.
   - The number of young people participating in LSC-funded activity has increased to 1,404,700.

**About the LSC:**
The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)