

# Comparing policy, participation and inequalities in education and training across the UK

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# Overview

**Large differences in policy and organisation across the UK**

**Provide overview of differences in post-16 organisation**

**Differing focus and use of apprenticeships**

**Long-run and current differences in outcomes and inequalities**

**Use specific examples and concerns to draw out key points**

**Data from Labour Force Survey and National Statistics**

# Higher use of colleges in England and Wales

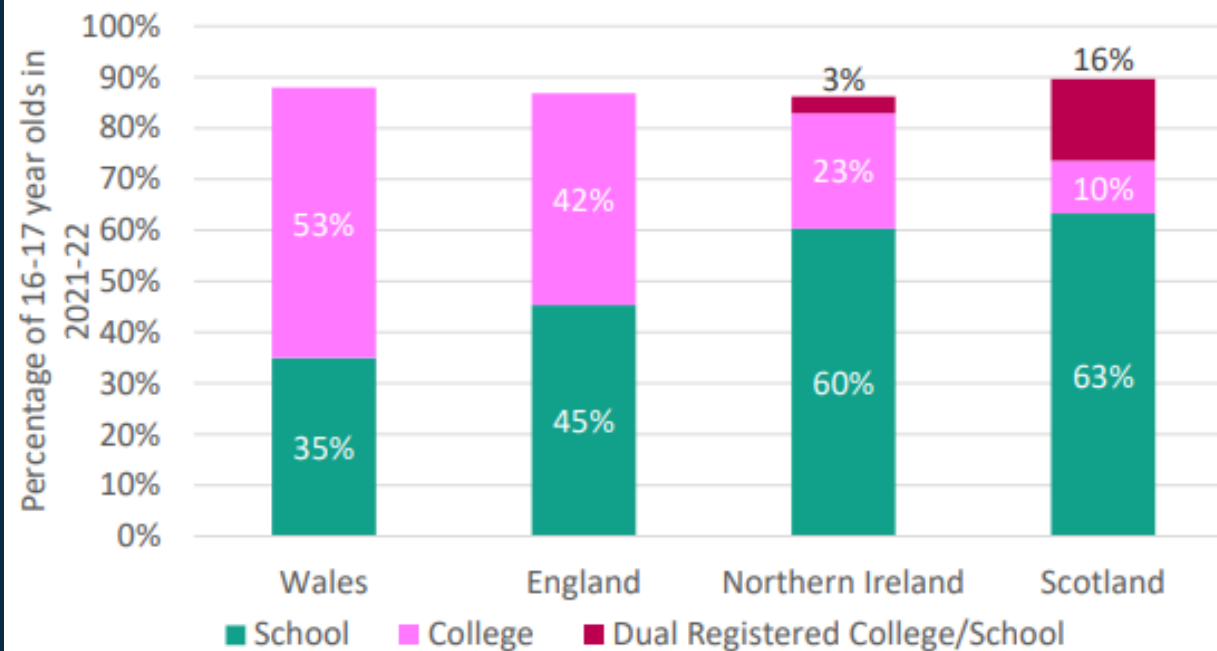
High shares of young people in school in Scotland (63%) and NI (60%)

High use of colleges in Wales (53%) and England (42%)

Overall impact depends on nature of courses taken in colleges & schools

- *Academic vs vocational*
- *Level 3 or lower*

Figure 3.8. Comparing the share of 16-17-year-olds in schools and colleges



# Changing qualification mix in colleges in England

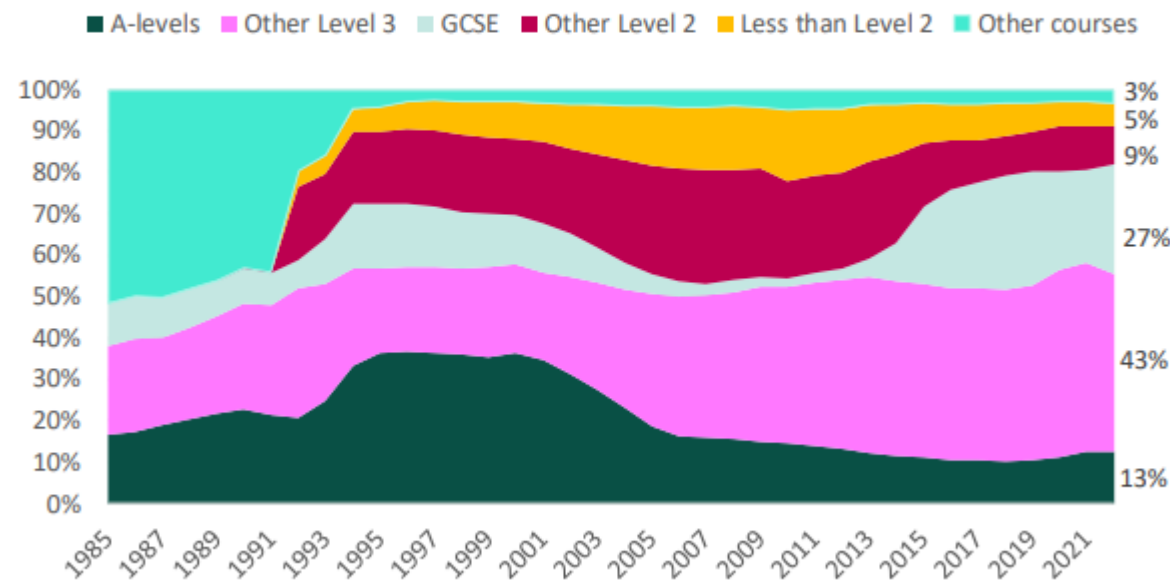
Higher post-16 education participation in England mostly absorbed by colleges

Declining use of lower level quals

Increased focus on Level 3 quals

Recent focus on GCSEs due to funding rules on retakes

Figure 3.2. Highest qualifications taken by students aged 16 and 17 in further education colleges in England over time



# Wales is beautiful!

But it makes it very hard to deliver high-quality post-16 provision!

The geography and ageing population has made it particularly hard for school sixth forms

Where you live plays a big role in determining your post-16 options

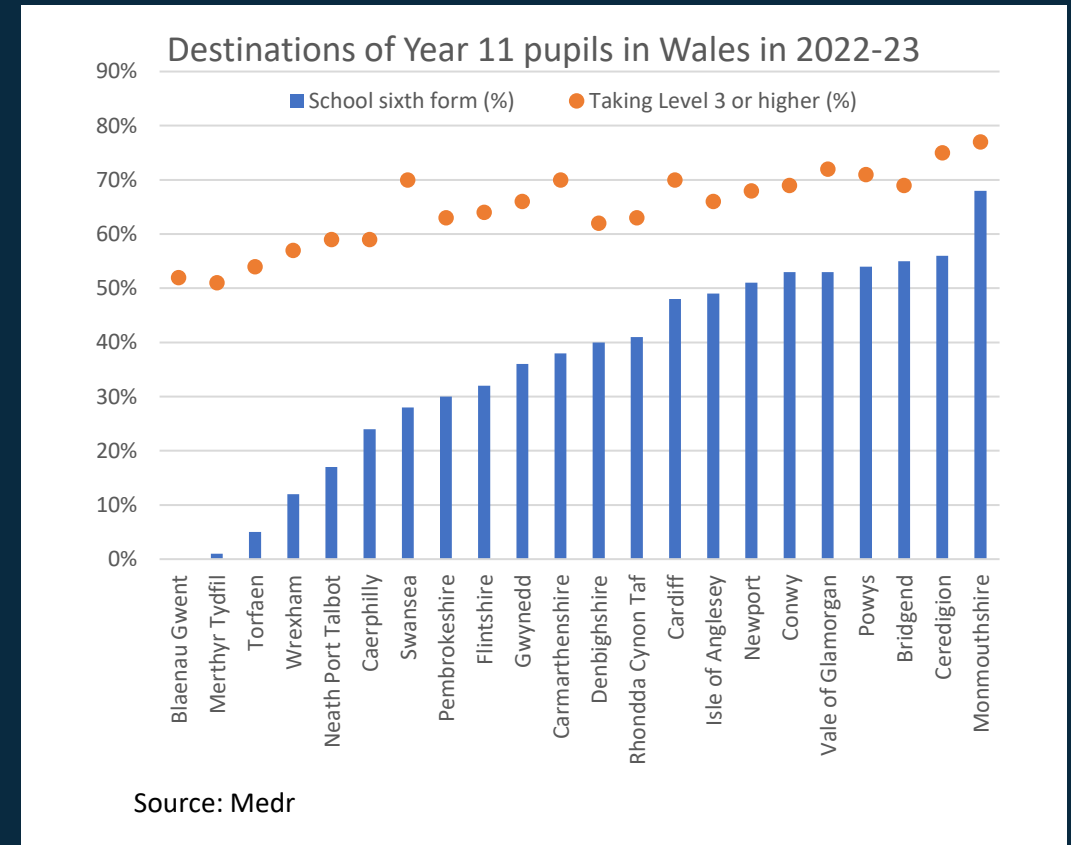


# Role of geography in Wales

Large variation in use of school sixth forms across Wales

Areas with lowest share in school sixth forms have lowest share of pupils taking Level 3 quals

These are also the areas with the lowest GCSE performance for disadvantaged pupils



# School leaving rules in Scotland

## High staying on rate in schools

- 90% of 16 year olds & 60% of 17 year olds in school

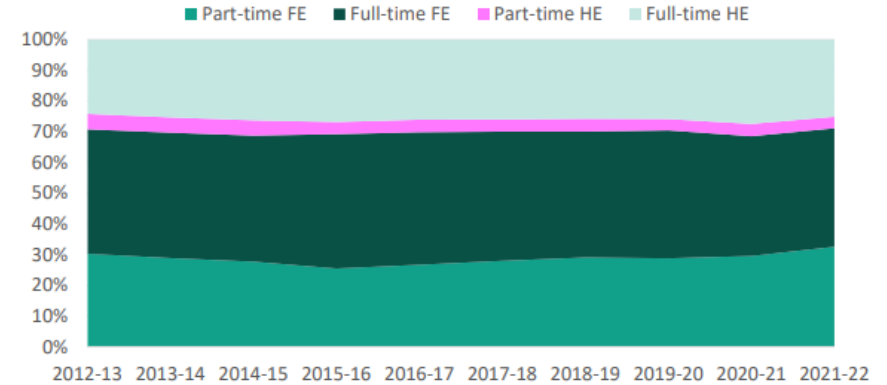
## College participation happens later and a mix between FE & HE courses

- 20% of 18-19 year olds studying full time in college

## Winter leaving rules have no positive effects

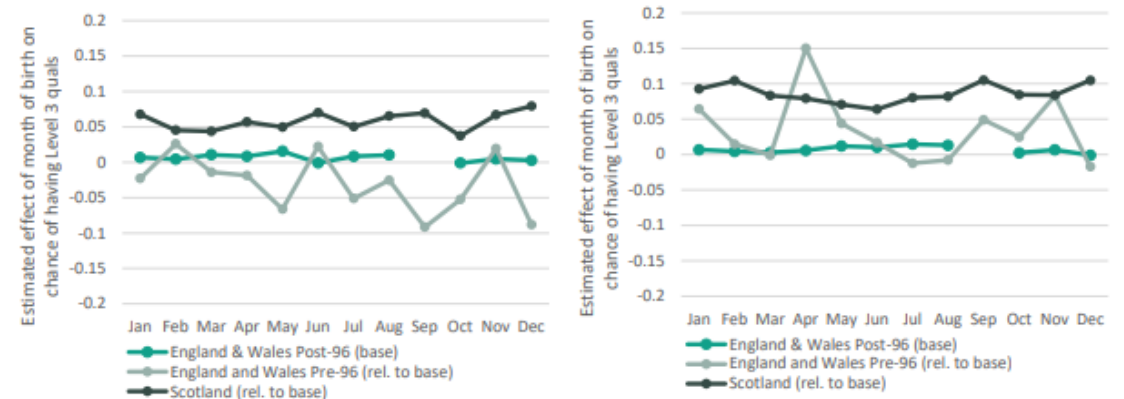
- Those born between October and February must stay in school till Christmas of S5 year
- No educational benefit and maybe some disadvantage

Figure 3.7. Qualifications taken by students of all ages in colleges in Scotland over time



Sources: Scottish Funding Council, [College Statistics 2021-22 \(sfc.ac.uk\)](https://www.sfc.ac.uk/College-Statistics-2021-22)

Figure 5.3 – Estimated effect of month of birth on chances of achieving Level 3 qualifications or higher by gender, nation and broad cohort



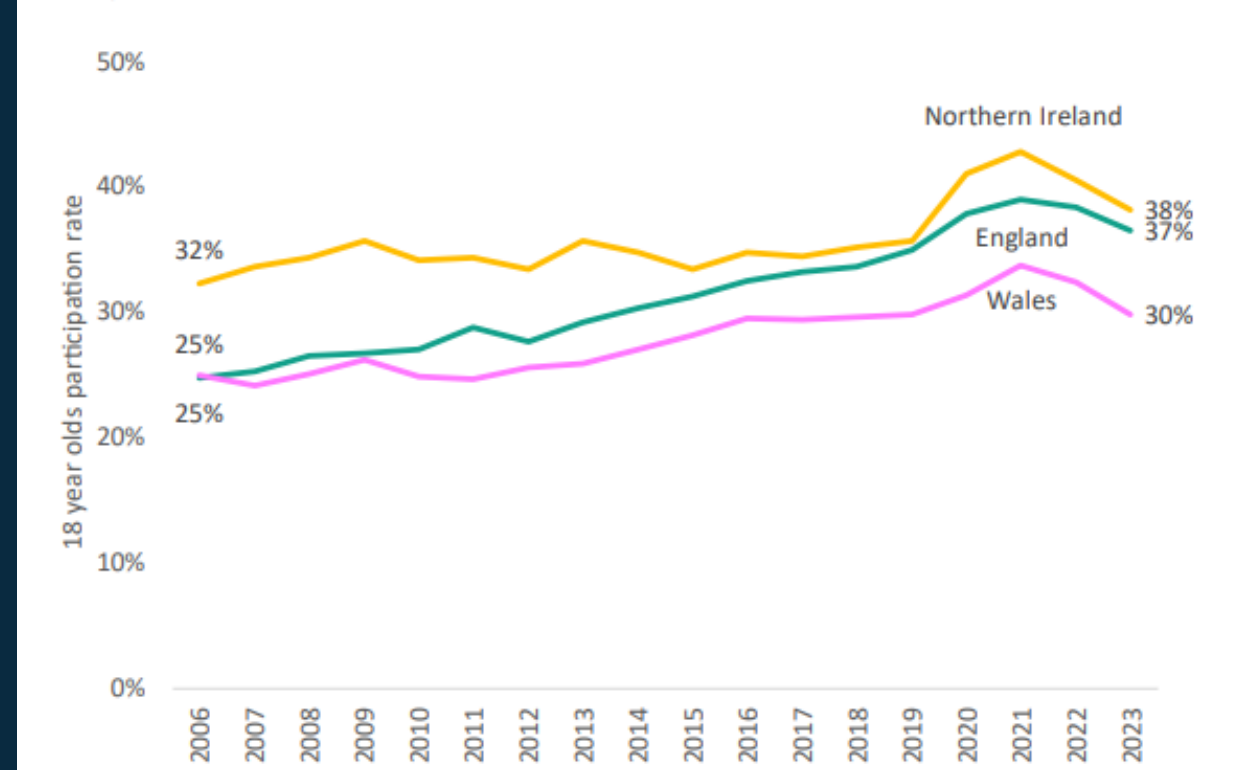
# Lower HE participation in Wales

37-38% attending HE in England & NI, compared with 30% in Wales

Other data suggests Scotland is more similar to England and NI

Particularly low HE participation for Welsh boys (24%)

Figure 3.32 – Higher Education participation rate of 18-year-olds, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2006 - 2022





# Differences in apprenticeships

High share of adults taking up apprenticeships in England & Wales

In Northern Ireland, funding mostly focused on young people since 2013

Rising share of apprenticeships at higher levels in England and Wales

Figure 3.18 – Proportion of total apprenticeship starts who are aged 25+, all nations

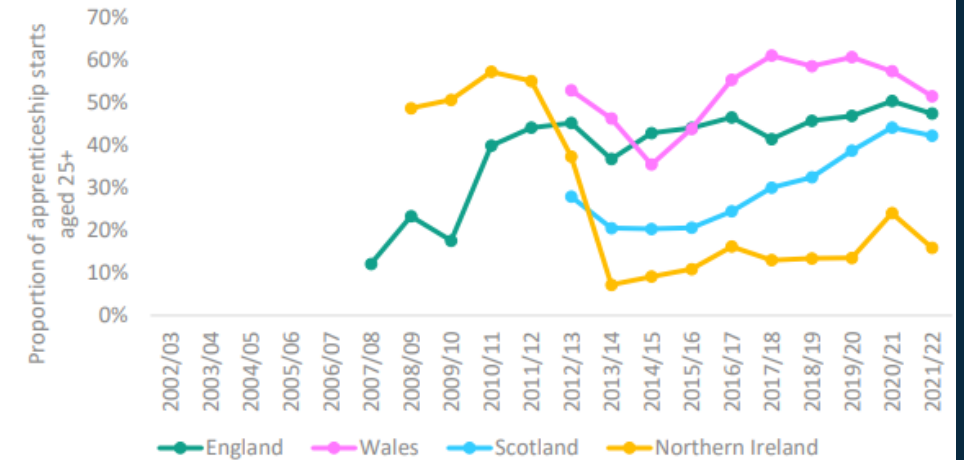
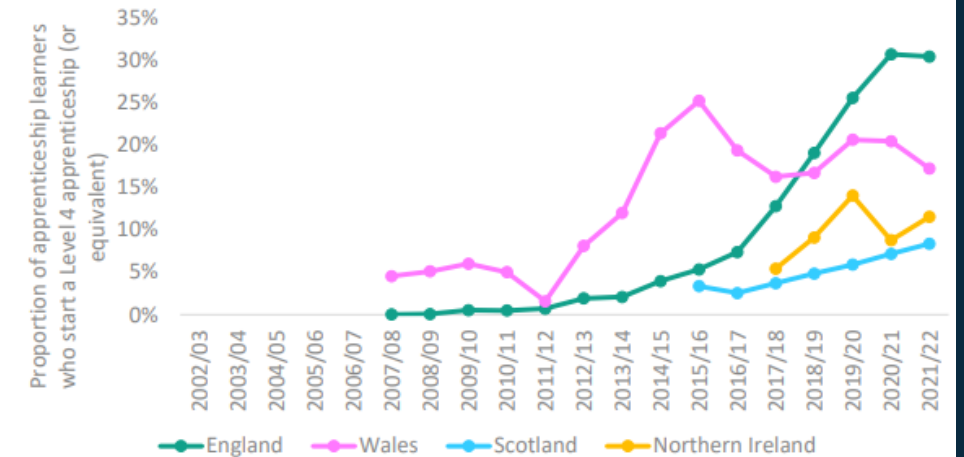


Figure 3.21 – Proportion of total apprenticeship starts at Level 4+, all nations



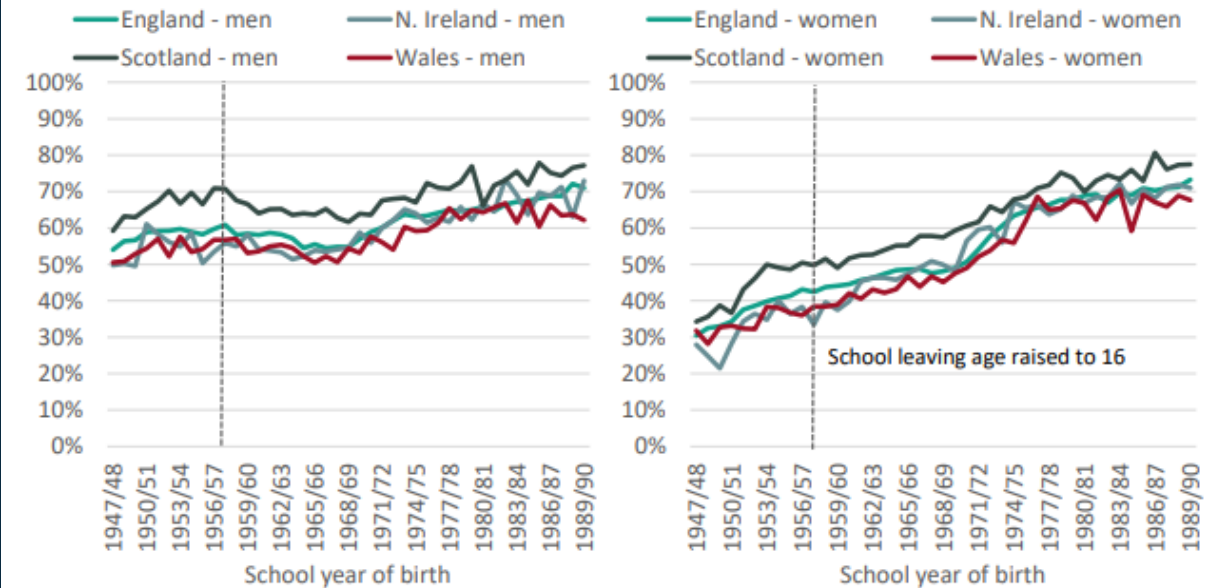
# More Level 3 quals across generations

Persistently higher share of Level 3 qualifications in Scotland

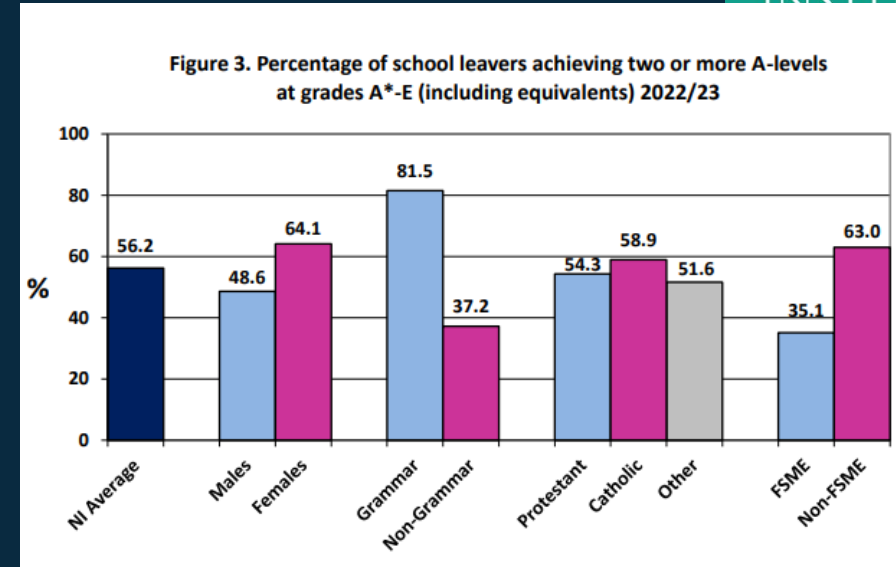
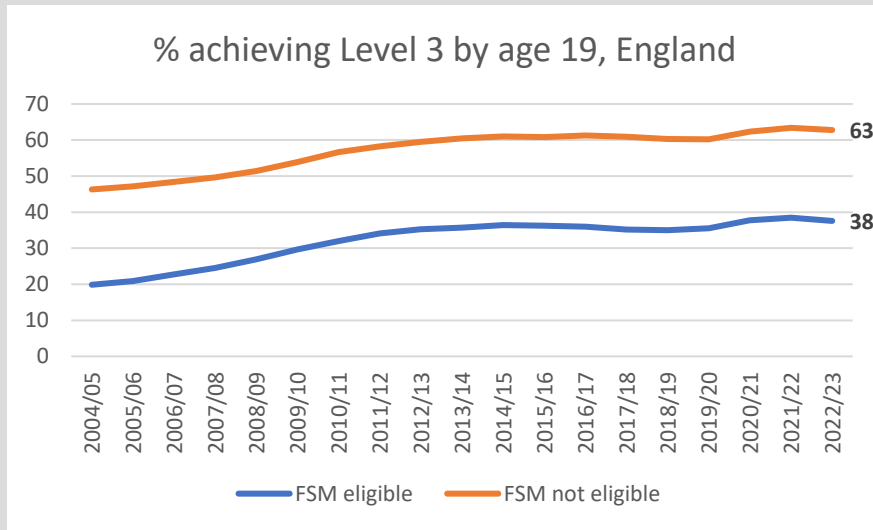
Faster rises amongst women has closed gender gap

Concern in Wales, particularly men

Figure 3.3 – Share of working age-adults born in the UK with Level 3 qualifications or higher, by nation and gender

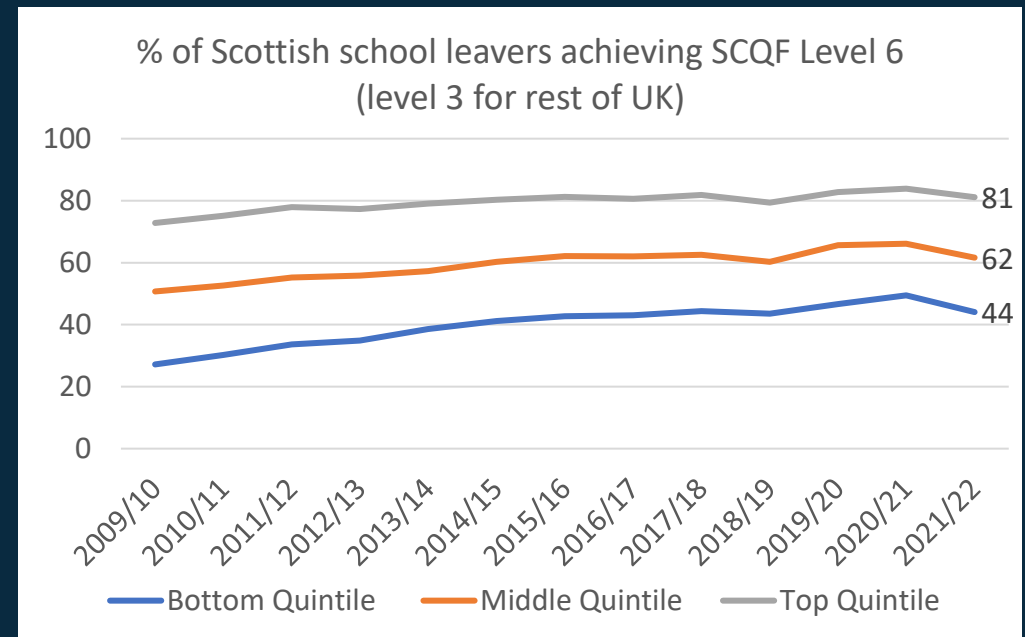


# Inequalities in 16-18 outcomes



## Wales – new data from Medr

- 39% of Y11 taking Level 3 quals, 72% for non-FSM
- Actual achievement will be lower as 10% of pupils drop out or don't pass exams



# Inequalities in later outcomes

Higher level of HE participation for deprived areas in England

Higher chance of NEET for those from working class backgrounds

- Particularly in Wales

Figure 3.34. Proportion of undergraduate enrolments from most deprived areas, HESA 2006–22

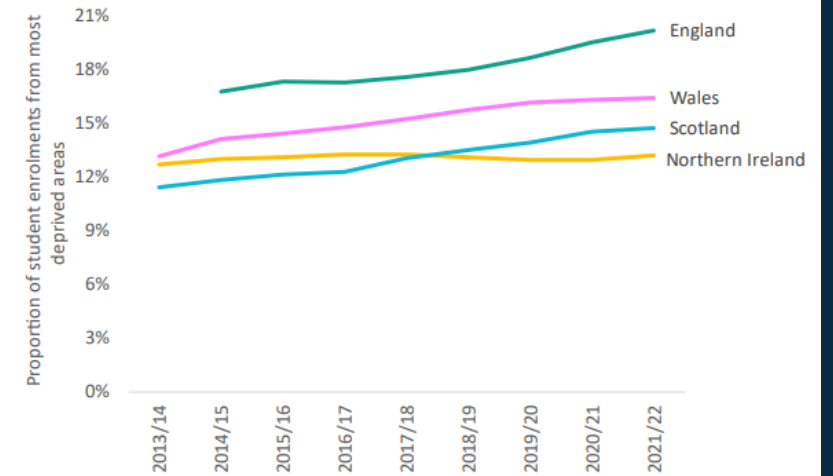
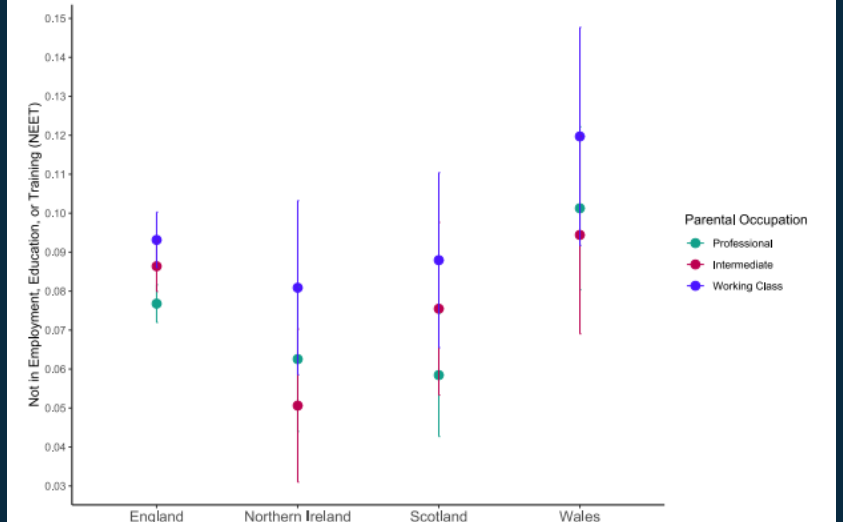


Figure 4.14. NEET levels by nation and parental background, ages 16 to 22



# Summary

- **Higher use of schools in post-16 education in Scotland and NI**
- **Greater focus on colleges in England and Wales**
- **Higher rates of Level 3 qualifications in Scotland**
- **Significant concerns about outcomes and availability of post-16 education options in Wales**
- **Apprenticeships focused on adults in England and Wales, with a more deliberate focus on young people in Northern Ireland**
- **Significant levels of post-16 inequalities across all four nations, with a need to improve data**