

**Progress Monitoring Report  
on the delivery of  
SW Regional Skills Partnership Priorities**

*Report to*

**South West RSP**

Produced by Crews Associates on behalf of SLIM

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## KEY POINTS

### **Leadership & Management Skills**

Encouragingly, the South West has the third highest proportion of managers (34%) who have received training, higher than the national average of 32%. Also on a positive note, training levels (both for managers and all employees) appear to have stabilised in the South West, despite a year of recession.

### **Enterprise Skills**

Prior to the onset of recession (data is currently only available up to 2008) the South West has experienced a net growth in its business stock for each of the last five years, with the number of new businesses (births) consistently outstripping the number of business failures (deaths). However, the South West has consistently had the lowest regional business start-up rate since 2004.

Data from the HE-BCIs shows that the number of HE spin-offs established in the South West was higher in 2007/08 than in the previous year, albeit lower than the 'spike' of higher activity in 2005/06, resulting in a declining number of active firms. The portfolio of 38 active firms in the region employ an estimated 520 people (full-time equivalents), and have a combined turnover of £40.2 million. However, the number of patent applications has fallen in the last year.

### **Innovation & Creativity**

At Key Stage 2 in Maths, the South West's performance has exactly mirrored that for England as a whole. Provisional data for 2009 shows that 79% of pupils achieved level 4 or above, up from 78% in 2008. In Science, achievement of level 4 is significantly higher than in Maths, with 89% of pupils reaching this level in 2009 (up slightly from 88% the previous year).

Taking into account the achievement of good GCSE grades including the key subjects of English and Maths, the South West outperforms the national average, with 51.6% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C including both English and Maths in 2009.

The overall number of GCSE attempts in STEM related subjects has risen by 1.5% in the South West between 2008 and 2009. In this time, there has been a slight decline in Maths entries, with more substantial declines in IT ((with attempts down by 12%) and 'Design and Technology' (down by 7%). In both subjects, the decline in the South West has been less severe than nationally.

The total number of good passes in STEM subjects has increased by 2.9% between 2008 and 2009, more than twice the national average of 1.3%. In line with falling numbers of GCSE attempts, the number of good passes in IT is down by 8% and in Design & Technology by 6%. There has been a healthy increase in good Maths and Science grades.

As a whole, the number of A Level entries in these STEM subjects has increased slightly in the last year, by 0.9%. This is slightly higher than the increase in the take up of A Levels across all subjects (down by 0.4%). Entries in STEM subjects

accounted for 28.7% of all A Level entries in 2009, up from 28.2% in 2008, suggesting that STEM subjects are slowly increasing in popularity among the region's young people.

This increase in STEM subject entries has not been uniform across each subject. The only areas to grow in the South West were Maths and Further Maths, while all areas of Science have fallen – when there has been some growth nationally.

### **Higher Level Skills**

There were over 11,800 students studying foundation degrees in the South West in 2008/09, three times as many as in 2003/04, around 14% of the total across England as a whole.

49.5% of the working age population were qualified to level 3 or above in 2008, the third highest scoring English region behind London and the South East.

As with level 3 - the South West has the third highest proportion of the working age population were qualified to level 4 or above in 2008 (28.3%).

### **Sub-Priorities**

Just over 686,000 non-UK nationals registered for a National Insurance number in the UK in 2008/09. The most recent data shows the first decline in the number of new registrations, following year on year increases from 2002/03 to 2007/08. There were 33,100 new registrations in the South West in 2008/09, more than double the level of registrations in 2002/03, and higher than the increase nationally. However, the number of new NINos in the South West has now fallen for the second consecutive year, strongly suggesting that the flows of new migrant workers into the region may have already peaked and are now starting to fall.

Data for the 2007/08 academic year shows that there were around 10,300 ESOL enrolments across the South West. However, this number has fallen for the last two years (both regionally and nationally), down by more than a third in the South West, more than double the decline for England as a whole. However, this change has been driven more by changes to funding eligibility rather than any decline in demand.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context

At the request of the RSP Board, SLIM has developed a Performance Monitoring Framework, containing a number of indicators that can be used to assess progress in the delivery of RSP priorities. The report contains data for all indicators under each of the four main priorities and three 'sub-priorities', which are:

### Priorities

- Leadership & Management Skills
- Enterprise Skills
- Creativity and Innovation Skills, including Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) skills
- Ensuring skills needs of the regional economy, and in key sectors, are addressed at Level 3 and above

### Sub-Priorities

- Supporting strategies for the integration of migrant workers
- Supporting the development of integrated information, advice and guidance service
- Supporting strategies for the reduction of NEETS

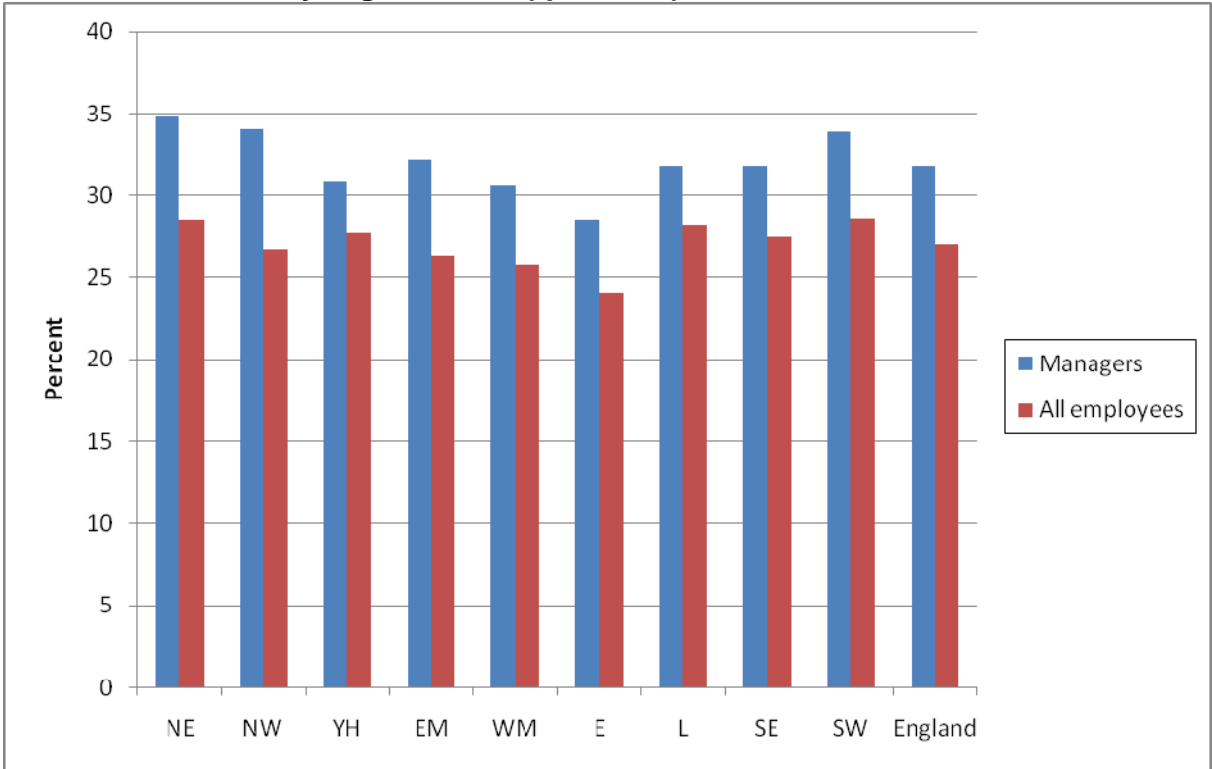
## 2 Leadership & Management Skills

### 2.4 Proportion of Managers & those with Supervisory Responsibilities who have undertaken work-related training in the last 13 weeks

The National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) in recent years has provided significant evidence of the need for managers in the South West (as across England as a whole) to improve their skills. It is therefore important to monitor the extent to which managers are undertaking training to improve skill levels.

Figure 1 shows that employees with managerial responsibility in all regions are more likely to have received training in the last 13 weeks compared to all employees. Encouragingly, the South West has the third highest proportion of managers (34%) who have received training, higher than the national average of 32%.

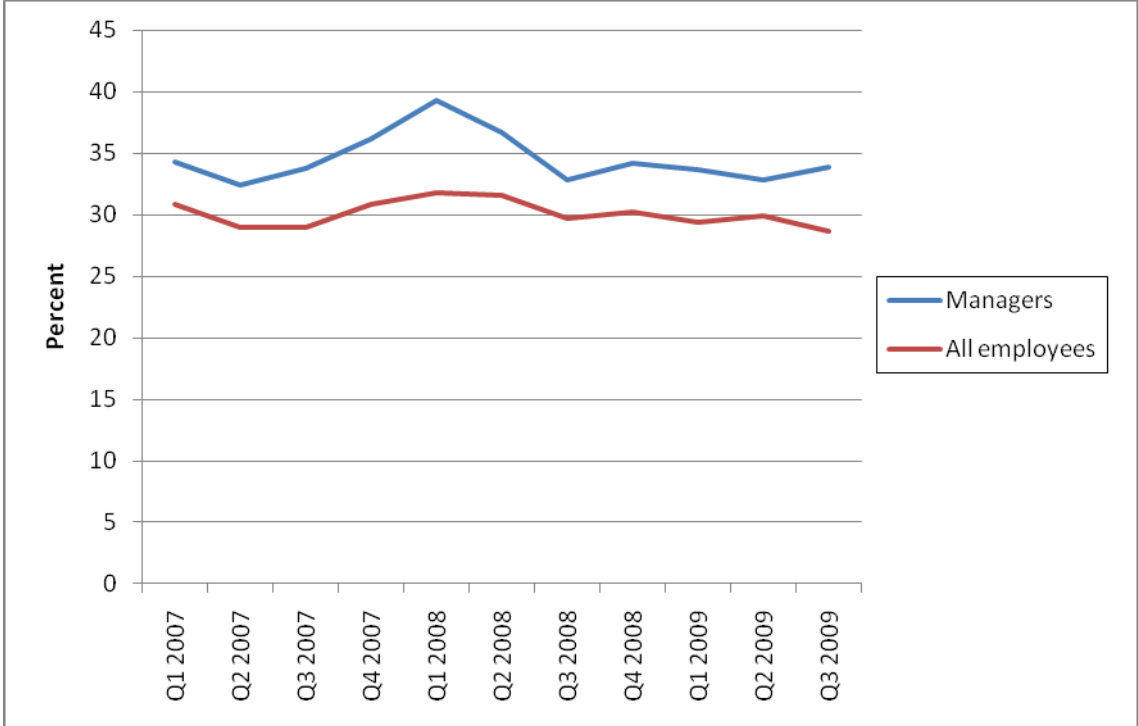
**Figure 1: Percentage of employees who have received job-related training in the last 13 weeks, by region, 2009 (quarter 3)**



Source: Labour Force Survey 2007-2009

Figure 2 shows the proportion of managers who have received training in the last 13 weeks, going back over the last 2 years. It suggests that training levels were rising through 2007, but fell back as the economy headed for recession during 2008. Encouragingly, training levels (both for managers and all employees) appear to have stabilised in the South West, despite a year of recession.

**Figure 2: Percentage of employees who have received job-related training in the last 13 weeks, South West, 2007-2009**



Source: Annual Population Survey

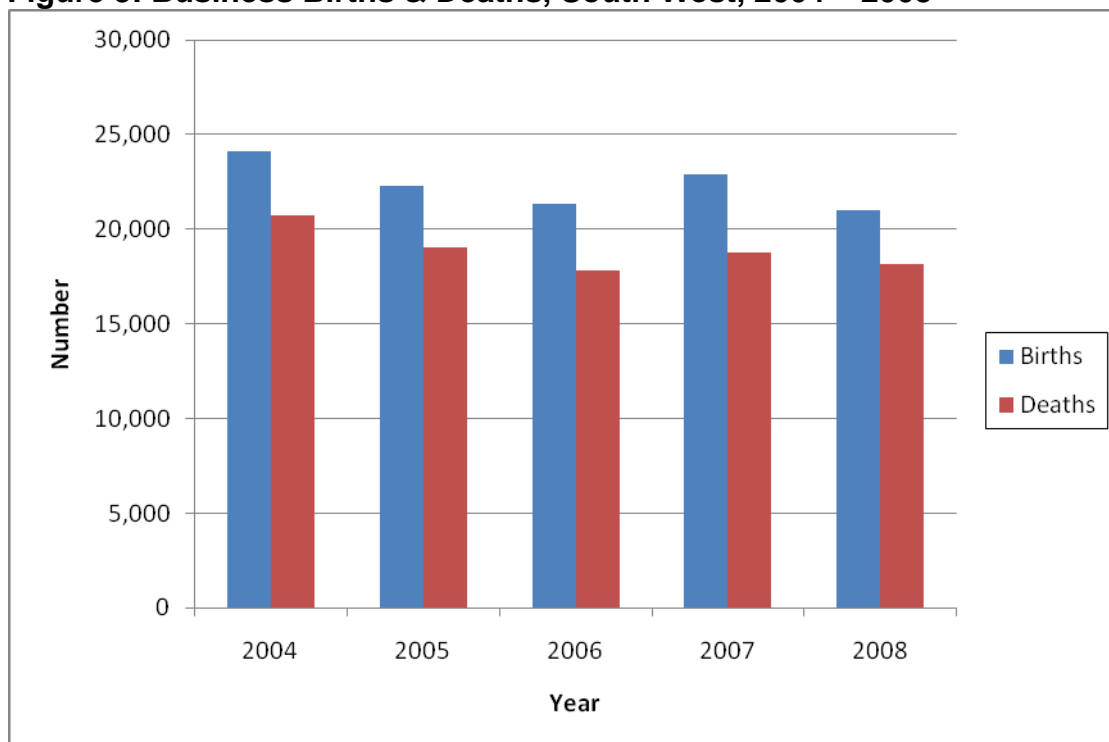
### 3 Enterprise Skills

#### 3.1 Business start-up rates

Figure 3 shows that the South West has experienced a net growth in its business stock for each of the last five years, with the number of new businesses (births) consistently outstripping the number of business failures (deaths). During 2008, there were 21,025 business births in the region, compared to 18,130 deaths.

Data is only currently available to the end of 2008, so it is impossible to draw out any impacts caused by the recession, which officially started in the fourth quarter of that year. Although there was a slowdown in the number of new businesses during 2008 (down from 22,870 in 2007), the number of deaths was also down compared to the previous year.

**Figure 3: Business Births & Deaths, South West, 2004 – 2008**



Source: National Statistics Business Demography 2008

When expressed as a percentage of the total business stock, the South West has consistently had the lowest regional business start-up rate since 2004 (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Births as % of business stock by region, 2004-2008**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
North East	13.4	13.2	12.1	14.2	12.2
North West	13.5	13.4	12.3	13.0	11.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	13.0	12.5	11.5	12.3	11.3
East Midlands	12.8	12.8	11.7	11.9	10.7
West Midlands	12.8	12.6	11.4	12.0	10.8
East	12.5	11.8	11.1	11.9	11.1
London	14.9	14.3	13.2	14.1	15.0
South East	12.5	12.0	11.0	11.5	10.9
<b>South West</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>
England	13.2	12.7	11.7	12.4	11.8

Source: VAT Registration Data (Nomis)

### 3.5 Creativity and Innovation

One key requirement of successful enterprise is the need to be creative and innovative. Perhaps the most useful data source to improve our understanding of creativity and innovation is the annual Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HE-BCI), which provides data on the so-called ‘third stream’ of HEI activity i.e. enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society. The most useful aspects of the survey for this report focus on the two following topics:

- Number of patent applications made
- Number of spin-off companies from HEIs

Disclosures and patents are simple indicators for much of the exploitation of intellectual property activity carried out by HEIs. The disclosure is the point at which an HEI recognises that research may require protection, licensing is the moment that protected IP is exploited, although there are other options such as the creation of a new company (referred to as a spin-off). Table 2 shows that the number of disclosures has risen significantly in the South West in recent years, although they have fallen in the last 12 months, from 259 in 2006/07 to 242 in 2007/08. Although the number of patent applications has also fallen in the last year, the number of patents granted in the most recent survey is much higher than in 2005/06. Despite this fall in new patents granted, the size of the portfolio of active patents of South West HEIs has increased.

Table 3 shows the number of spin offs with some HEI ownership. It can be seen that the number of spin-offs established in the South West was higher in 2007/08 than in the previous year, albeit lower than the 'spike' of higher activity in 2005/06, resulting in a declining number of active firms. The portfolio of 38 active firms in the region employ an estimated 520 people (full-time equivalents), and have a combined turnover of £40.2 million.

**Table 2: Disclosures and patents from HEIs by region, 2005/06 to 2007/08**

Area	No. disclosures			No. new patent applications filed in year			No. patents granted in year			Cumulative portfolio of active patents		
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
NE	192	174	163	42	58	44	10	7	6	276	238	171
NW	480	524	445	97	75	43	24	41	41	337	327	305
YH	346	293	254	150	139	136	26	38	24	742	597	562
EM	214	163	174	136	107	68	23	12	34	381	380	302
WM	208	255	351	78	84	123	17	28	20	463	450	381
E	186	191	229	122	158	129	55	43	31	1371	539	455
L	788	856	561	365	381	316	153	175	123	4144	4,036	3,285
SE	358	380	350	325	386	319	110	162	79	2987	1,167	976
<b>SW</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>3,014</b>	<b>3,095</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>1,534</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>11,116</b>	<b>8,062</b>	<b>6,732</b>

Source: HEBCI, 2005/06 – 2007/08

**Table 3: Spin-offs with some HEI ownership by region, 2005/06 to 2007/08**

Area	Number established			Number still active which have survived at least 3 years			Number of active firms		
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
NE	10	3	3	19	23	19	32	30	30
NW	12	25	21	73	70	43	116	111	118
YH	19	19	14	87	88	78	126	114	106
EM	23	20	3	48	46	39	68	61	52
WM	9	5	22	50	37	42	78	71	75
E	4	3	6	56	46	44	61	61	60
L	35	40	23	146	129	132	175	184	176
SE	9	22	20	83	82	72	121	120	103
<b>SW</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>775</b>

Source: HEBCI, 2005/06 – 2007/08

## 4. Creativity and Innovation Skills

### 4.1 Key Stage 2 Maths and Science Results at Level 4

At Key Stage 2 in Maths, the South West's performance has exactly mirrored that for England as a whole. Provisional data for 2009 shows that 79% of pupils achieved level 4 or above, up from 78% in 2008. The current PSA target is for 78% of young people to achieve level 4 in both English AND Maths by 2011.

Within the region, in recent years Bristol has stood out as the local authority that is lagging way behind the rest of the region (see Table 4). However, in 2009, the proportion achieving level 4 had risen to 74% (up from 66% in 2007), just two percentage points below the next lowest ranked local authority (Poole).

**Table 4: Percentage of Pupils achieving Level 4 or above in Maths and Science at Key Stage 2, South West, 2009**

Local Authority	Maths	Science
Bath and North East Somerset	85	92
Bournemouth	76	87
Bristol, City of	74	85
Cornwall	79	88
Devon	80	90
Dorset	79	91
Gloucestershire	81	90
Isles of Scilly	91	91
North Somerset	78	91
Plymouth	78	89
Poole	76	88
Somerset	78	89
South Gloucestershire	80	90
Swindon	79	88
Torbay	77	87
Wiltshire	77	89
<b>South West</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>ENGLAND (LEA maintained only)</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>88</b>

Source: DCSF (Note: 2009 data is provisional)

In Science, achievement of level 4 is significantly higher than in Maths, with 89% of pupils reaching this level in 2009 (up slightly from 88% the previous year), slightly higher than nationally (88%).

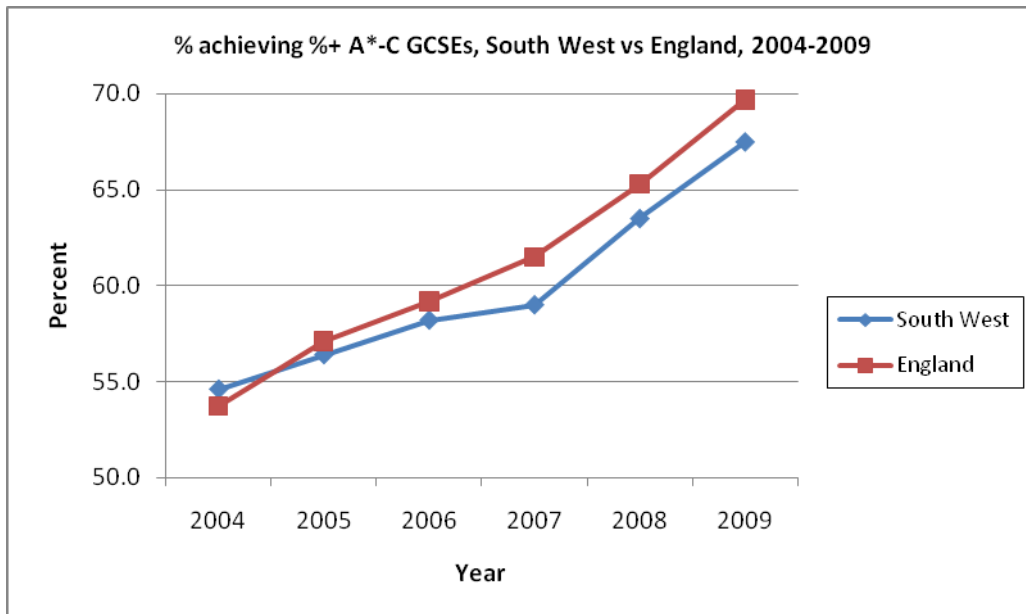
Unfortunately, Bristol again stands out as performing significantly below the regional average, with 85% of pupils achieving level 4 in 2009, up from 82% in 2008.

### 4.3 GCSE achievement of 15 year old pupils

As shown in Figure 4, the South West lags slightly behind the national average in terms of GCSE achievements. Although the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C has improved year on year (to 67.5% in 2009), the rate of improvement has been slower than nationally. This slower rate of improvement has

seen the region's performance drop from second best in England in 2004 (out of nine regions), to ninth in 2009.

**Figure 4: Achievement of 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C, South West and England, 2004-2009**



Source: DCSF

As the South West's position relative to the national average has declined over the last five years, it may be worth investigating further any local effects that have contributed to this trend. Table 5 shows each local authority's results for 2005 to 2009, and shows that the majority have actually shown positive growth in the proportion achieving 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE, both over the last year and the last four. The only exception was the Isles of Scilly (where there are very few students).

In previous years, Bristol has consistently been the worst performing local authority on this measure. However, significant improvements in recent years have closed the gap with the regional average to less than nine percentage points in 2009, compared to more than 20 in 2005.

With the majority of local authorities are improving on this measure in absolute terms, the South West's decline relative to the national average has been caused by slower improvement in the region compared to England as a whole. Table 2 also shows that over the last four years, the majority of the region's local authorities have experienced slower than average growth on this measure, with the exceptions being Bristol, Plymouth, South Gloucestershire, Torbay, Bournemouth and Swindon.

Excluding the Isles of Scilly, where there are very few students, the biggest declines relative to the national average have been in Poole, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Dorset.

Between 2008 and 2009 – a slightly better year for the South West as a whole – 7 of the region's 16 local authorities saw higher than average growth.

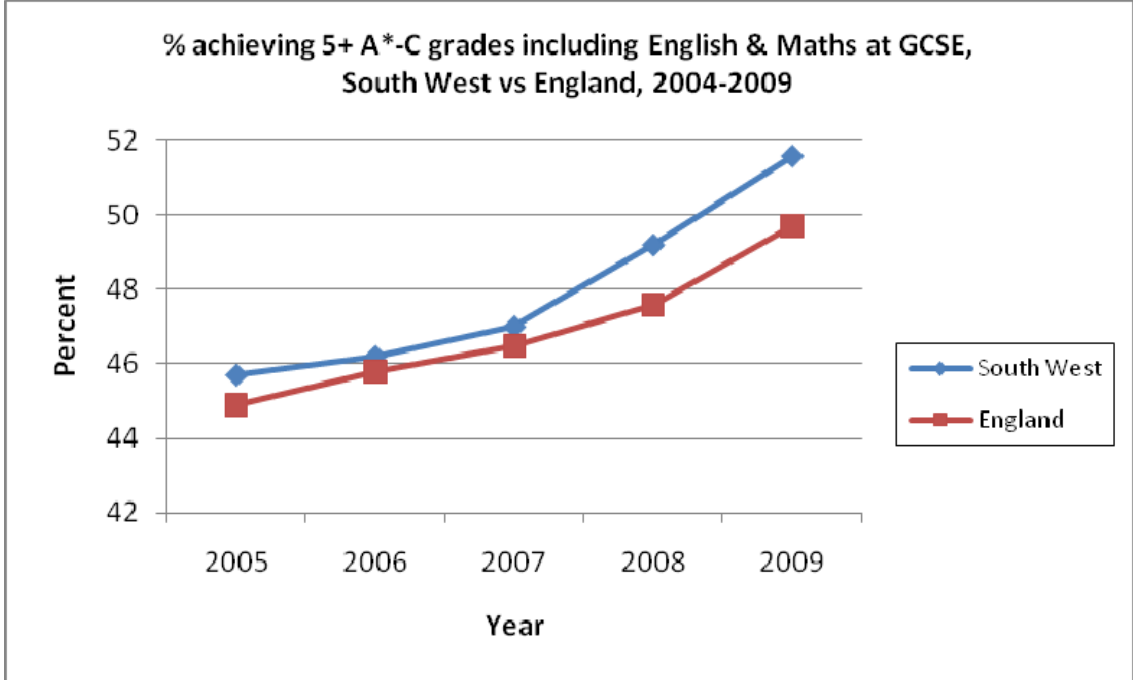
**Table 5: Achievement of 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C, 2005-2009, by South West local authority**

Local Authority	Year					Change	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005-2009	2008-2009
Bath & NE Somerset	63.5	66.9	65.7	69.4	75.7	12.2	6.3
Bristol	36.5	43.8	46.5	54.9	61.1	24.6	6.2
North Somerset	57.4	58.4	59.5	63.6	69.3	11.9	5.7
South Glos	55.5	54.9	55.9	63.5	67.9	12.4	4.4
Cornwall	55.9	57.3	57.9	61.4	67.7	11.8	6.3
Isles of Scilly	82.6	85.2	88.2	87.0	80.0	-2.6	-7.0
Torbay	53.4	54.2	59.7	62.8	66.6	13.2	3.8
City of Plymouth	55.1	59.8	59.5	67.3	72.3	17.2	5.0
Devon	55.9	58.0	57.0	63.5	65.6	9.7	2.1
Bournemouth	52.0	54.7	58.4	64.1	66.4	14.4	2.3
Poole	63.8	63.1	65.9	66.8	68.9	5.1	2.1
Dorset	60.8	62.2	63.3	67.1	69.8	9.0	2.7
Gloucestershire	62.8	63.9	64.2	67.6	70.8	8.0	3.2
Somerset	56.6	56.6	58.1	60.5	62.6	6.0	2.1
Swindon	50.3	53.5	53.5	53.1	61.8	11.5	8.7
Wiltshire	58.2	58.2	59.2	64.8	68.4	10.2	3.6
<b>England Average</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>65.3</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Indexed (England = 100)</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Change 2005-09	Change 2008-09
Bath & NE Somerset	111.2	113.0	106.8	106.3	108.6	-2.6	2.3
Bristol	63.9	74.0	75.6	84.1	87.7	23.7	3.6
North Somerset	100.5	98.6	96.7	97.4	99.4	-1.1	2.0
South Glos	97.2	92.7	90.9	97.2	97.4	0.2	0.2
Cornwall	97.9	96.8	94.1	94.0	97.1	-0.8	3.1
Isles of Scilly	144.7	143.9	143.4	133.2	114.8	-29.9	-18.5
Torbay	93.5	91.6	97.1	96.2	95.6	2.0	-0.6
City of Plymouth	96.5	101.0	96.7	103.1	103.7	7.2	0.7
Devon	97.9	98.0	92.7	97.2	94.1	-3.8	-3.1
Bournemouth	91.1	92.4	95.0	98.2	95.3	4.2	-2.9
Poole	111.7	106.6	107.2	102.3	98.9	-12.9	-3.4
Dorset	106.5	105.1	102.9	102.8	100.1	-6.3	-2.6
Gloucestershire	110.0	107.9	104.4	103.5	101.6	-8.4	-1.9
Somerset	99.1	95.6	94.5	92.6	89.8	-9.3	-2.8
Swindon	88.1	90.4	87.0	81.3	88.7	0.6	7.3
Wiltshire	101.9	98.3	96.3	99.2	98.1	-3.8	-1.1
<b>England Average</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Source: DCSF

Taking into account the achievement of good GCSE grades including the key subjects of English and Maths, the South West outperforms the national average, with 51.6% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C including both English and Maths in 2009 (see Figure 5). Since this measure was introduced in 2005, there has been year on year improvement in the South West, initially at a similar rate to nationally but at a faster rate in the last two years.

**Figure 5: Achievement of 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English and Maths, South West and England, 2005-2009**



Source: DCSF

Within the region, Bristol is the worst performing area. Only 40.1% achieved this measure locally in 2009, almost five percentage points lower than the second worst performing local authority (Swindon). Over recent years, the majority of local authorities have seen improvement on this measure, although some have improved relatively slowly compared to the national average, i.e.

- Cornwall
- Isles of Scilly
- Poole
- Dorset
- Gloucestershire
- Somerset

**Table 6: Achievement of 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English & Maths, 2005-2009, by South West local authority**

Local Authority	Year					Change	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005-2009	2008-2009
Bath & NE Somerset	50.4	52.0	50.5	57.2	59.5	9.1	2.3
Bristol	28.2	30.4	31.4	35.5	40.1	11.9	4.6
North Somerset	46.8	47.4	48.1	50.5	51.9	5.1	1.4
South Glos	43.6	44.4	45.2	48.1	49.0	5.4	0.9
Cornwall	44.3	43.9	43.8	43.5	48.5	4.2	5.0
Isles of Scilly	82.6	77.8	64.7	69.6	80.0	-2.6	10.4
Torbay	45.8	45.5	49.9	48.1	53.6	7.8	5.5
City of Plymouth	41.9	42.5	43.9	46.3	48.7	6.8	2.4
Devon	44.7	46.2	46.5	49.5	51.6	6.9	2.1
Bournemouth	42.9	43.6	48.0	48.9	50.9	8.0	2.0
Poole	53.8	52.0	54.5	56.5	56.4	2.6	-0.1
Dorset	49.8	50.0	49.7	53.3	54.5	4.7	1.2
Gloucestershire	52.6	53.8	54.1	56.8	57.7	5.1	0.9
Somerset	45.9	44.4	46.6	46.7	48.7	2.8	2.0
Swindon	38.2	40.7	41.1	40.7	44.8	6.6	4.1
Wiltshire	49.4	48.5	49.4	53.2	55.2	5.8	2.0
<b>England Average</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Indexed (England = 100)</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Change 2005-09	Change 2008-09
Bath & NE Somerset	112.2	113.5	108.6	120.2	119.7	7.5	-0.4
Bristol	62.8	66.4	67.5	74.6	80.7	17.9	6.1
North Somerset	104.2	103.5	103.4	106.1	104.4	0.2	-1.7
South Glos	97.1	96.9	97.2	101.1	98.6	1.5	-2.5
Cornwall	98.7	95.9	94.2	91.4	97.6	-1.1	6.2
Isles of Scilly	184.0	169.9	139.1	146.2	161.0	-23.0	14.7
Torbay	102.0	99.3	107.3	101.1	107.8	5.8	6.8
City of Plymouth	93.3	92.8	94.4	97.3	98.0	4.7	0.7
Devon	99.6	100.9	100.0	104.0	103.8	4.3	-0.2
Bournemouth	95.5	95.2	103.2	102.7	102.4	6.9	-0.3
Poole	119.8	113.5	117.2	118.7	113.5	-6.3	-5.2
Dorset	110.9	109.2	106.9	112.0	109.7	-1.3	-2.3
Gloucestershire	117.1	117.5	116.3	119.3	116.1	-1.1	-3.2
Somerset	102.2	96.9	100.2	98.1	98.0	-4.2	-0.1
Swindon	85.1	88.9	88.4	85.5	90.1	5.1	4.6
Wiltshire	110.0	105.9	106.2	111.8	111.1	1.0	-0.7
England Average	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0

Source: DCSF

#### 4.4 GCSE exam results in STEM

The recent emphasis on the importance of STEM-related subjects has led to the recent publication of GCSE results by subject for local areas. Table 7 shows that the overall number of GCSE attempts in STEM related subjects has risen by 1.5% in the South West between 2008 and 2009.

In this time, there has been a slight decline in Maths entries, with more substantial declines in IT ((with attempts down by 12%) and 'Design and Technology' (down by 7%). In both subjects, the decline in the South West has been less severe than nationally. There has been an increase in the overall number of Science entries.

**Table 7: GCSE attempts by STEM subject area, South West and England, 2008-2009**

Subject	South West			England
	2008	2009	% change 2008-2009	% change 2008-2009
Maths	55,620	54,823	-1.4%	-3.0%
Science	98,922	105,310	6.5%	4.5%
Design & Technology	31,138	28,949	-7.0%	-8.2%
IT	4,257	3,729	-12.4%	-20.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>189,937</b>	<b>192,811</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>

Source: DCFS

Within 'Design and Technology', there has been a decline both regionally and nationally across most specific subject areas, i.e.

- Electronic Products (attempts down by 14% in the South West)
- Food Technology (down by 1.4%)
- Graphic Products (down by 4.1%)
- Systems & Control (down by 1%)

#### Good GCSE passes

Although it would also be interesting to look at the overall numbers of GCSE passes in STEM subjects, it may be more helpful to examine the number of 'good' passes at grades A\* to C, as these are more indicative of the likely progression towards higher level qualifications and skills in these subjects.

Table 8 shows that the total number of good passes in STEM subjects has increased by 2.9% between 2008 and 2009, more than twice the national average of 1.3%. In line with falling numbers of GCSE attempts, the number of good passes in IT is down by 8% and in Design & Technology by 6%. There has been a healthy increase in good Maths and Science grades.

**Table 8: Good GCSE passes by STEM subject area, South West and England, 2008-2009**

Subject	South West			England
	2008	2009	% change 2008-2009	% change 2008-2009
Maths	32,830	33,911	3.3%	0.7%
Science	67,764	71,654	5.7%	4.7%

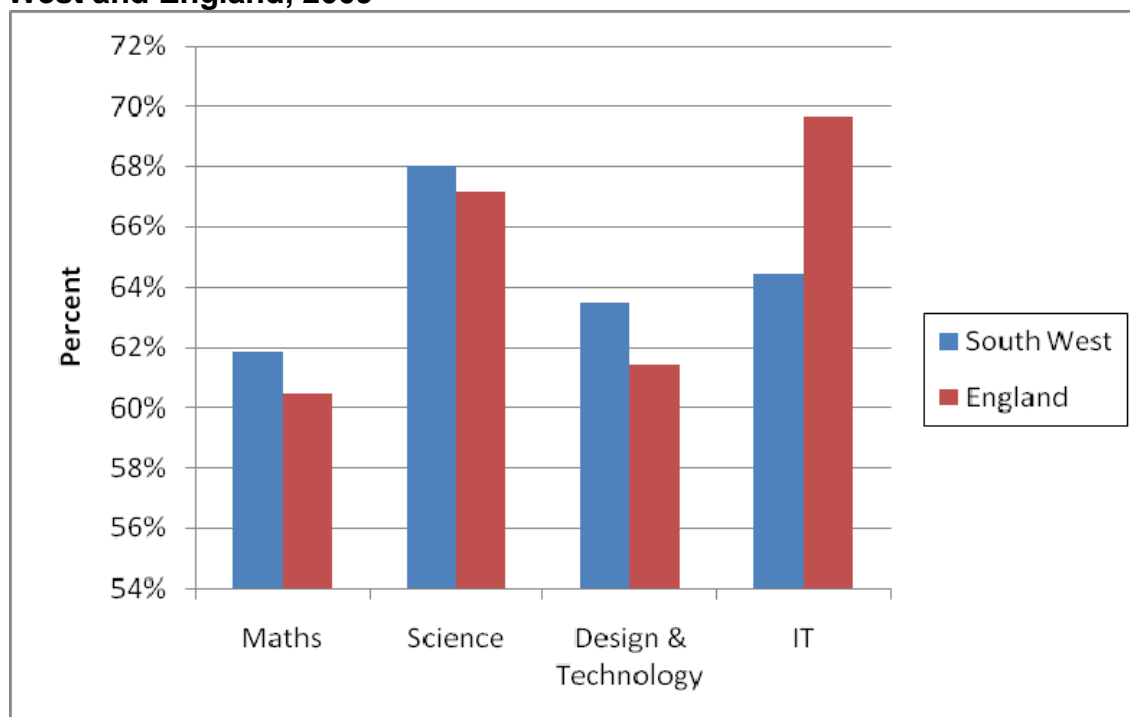
Design & Technology	19,550	18,378	-6.0%	-6.3%
IT	2,614	2,403	-8.1%	-14.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122,758</b>	<b>126,346</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

Source: DCFS

### Pass Rates

As well as overall numbers of qualifications, GCSE pass rates are also a useful indicator of how well the education system is performing in terms of STEM subjects. Compared to the national average, the region performs well, with a higher rate of 'good' passes in three of the four STEM subject areas, the only exception being in IT.

**Figure 6: 'Good' GCSE passes as a % of attempts' by STEM subject area, South West and England, 2009**

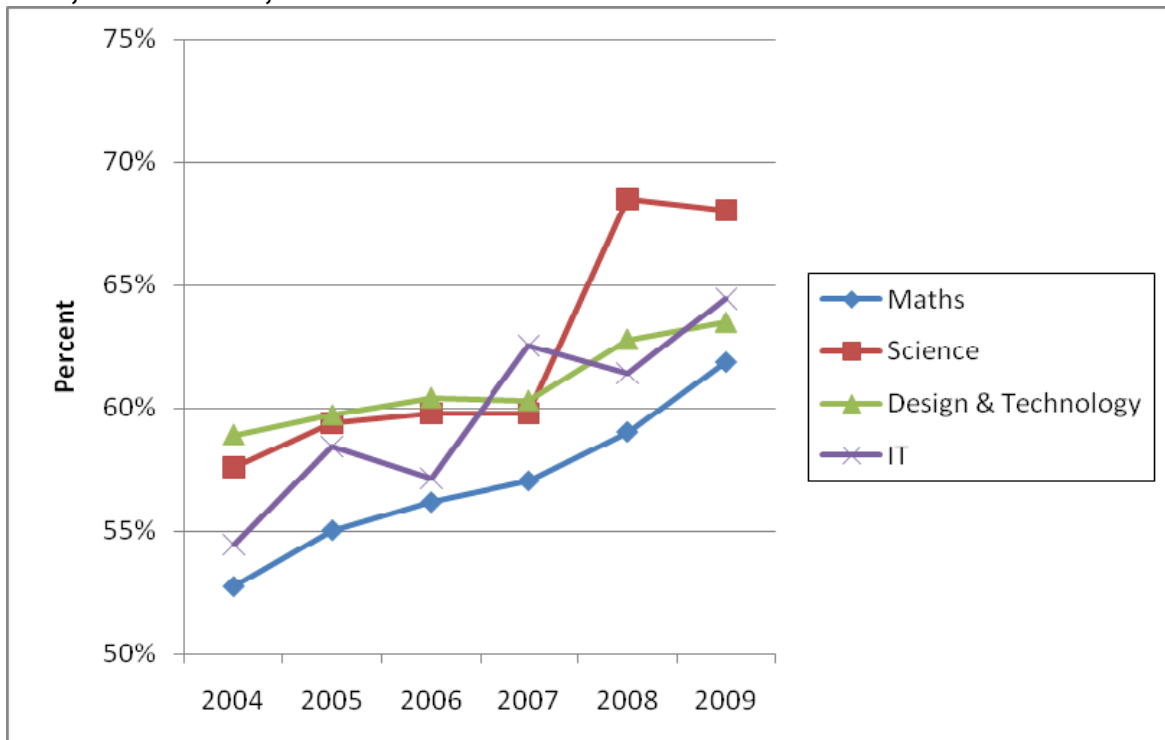


Source: DCFS

Figure 7 shows how the achievement rate of good GCSEs has changed since 2004. Encouragingly, all four subject areas have seen generally consistent improvement in the rate of achievement of 'good' GCSE passes. The biggest increase has been in Science, although this has been sharply raised by the introduction of the new structure of '21<sup>st</sup> Century Science' GCSEs in 2008.

The new GCSE is aimed at attracting more students to science, with a core qualification that all pupils will take. Alongside this course, pupils will also be expected to study an Additional Science GCSE - either "general", with a more factual basis, or "applied", with a more practical focus. Critics of the new GCSE science curriculum have branded it "sound bite science" and a "dumbed down syllabus" (source <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6038638.stm>).

**Figure 7: Change in ‘Good’ GCSE passes as a % of attempts’ by STEM subject area, South West, 2004-2006**



Source: DCFS

#### 4.5 A Level entries in STEM Subjects

The consideration of students’ A Level choices is of considerable interest, as students have much more choice in their selections compared to at GCSE level. The STEM subjects of most interest are:

- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Design and Technology
- Computer Studies
- ICT

As a whole, the number of A Level entries in these STEM subjects has increased slightly in the last year, by 0.9%. This is slightly higher than the increase in the take up of A Levels across all subjects (down by 0.4%). Entries in STEM subjects accounted for 28.7% of all A Level entries in 2009, up from 28.2% in 2008, suggesting that STEM subjects are slowly increasing in popularity among the region’s young people.

Table 9 shows that the increase in STEM subject entries has not been uniform across each subject. The only areas to grow in the South West were Maths and Further Maths, while all areas of Science have fallen – when there has been some growth nationally.

**Table 9: A Level entries in STEM subjects, South West, 2008-2009**

STEM Subject	South West			England
	2008	2009	% change	% change
Biological Sciences	5,205	5,118	-1.7%	-0.8%
Chemistry	3,608	3,588	-0.6%	2.3%
Physics	2,822	2,760	-2.2%	3.8%
Other Science	598	531	-11.2%	-2.2%
Mathematics	5,763	6,156	6.8%	12.0%
Further Mathematics	912	1,003	10.0%	11.9%
Design and Technology	1,766	1,742	-1.4%	-1.3%
Computer Studies	391	355	-9.2%	-5.9%
ICT	674	674	0.0%	-5.9%
<b>STEM Total</b>	<b>21,065</b>	<b>21,253</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

Source: DCFS

Within the region, not all areas have seen growing numbers of STEM A Level entries, with falls in STEM entries in the following areas:

- Cornwall
- Devon
- Dorset
- Gloucestershire
- Plymouth
- Somerset

However, the dip in STEM entries in these areas seems to be part of a wider decline of A level take up. When expressed as a percentage of all A Level entries, STEM subjects were growing in popularity between 2008 and 2009 across large parts of the region, with only exceptions being:

- Bristol
- Cornwall
- Dorset
- Somerset
- Torbay

## 5. Higher Level Skills

### 5.2 Foundation Degrees - Participation

Since their introduction, there has been massive growth in the take-up of foundation degrees. In total, there were over 11,800 students studying foundation degrees in the South West in 2008/09, three times as many as in 2003/04 (Table 10) around 14% of the total across England as a whole. Although there has been strong growth in student numbers across the region, this has been slower than nationally, both in the last year, and over the last five years.

**Table 10: Foundation Degree Students, South West vs England, 2003/04 – 2008/09**

Year	South West	England
2003-04	3,935	23,033
2004-05	5,319	37,316
2005-06	6,559	45,077
2006-07	8,963	58,830
2007-08	9,922	69,139
2008-09	11,843	83,548
<b>% change 03/04 - 08/09</b>	<b>201.0</b>	<b>262.7</b>
<b>% change 07/08 - 08/09</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>20.8</b>

Source: HEFCE

Note: FD figures are drawn from two different data sources, one is based on an aggregate return provided half way through the academic year (the figures above) and one is based on the return of individualised records after the academic year has ended.

The main government target relating to foundation degrees is to have 100,000 students on foundation degrees by 2010/11. The total number of foundation degree students in 2008/09 in England was just over 83,500, suggesting that the target will be reached.

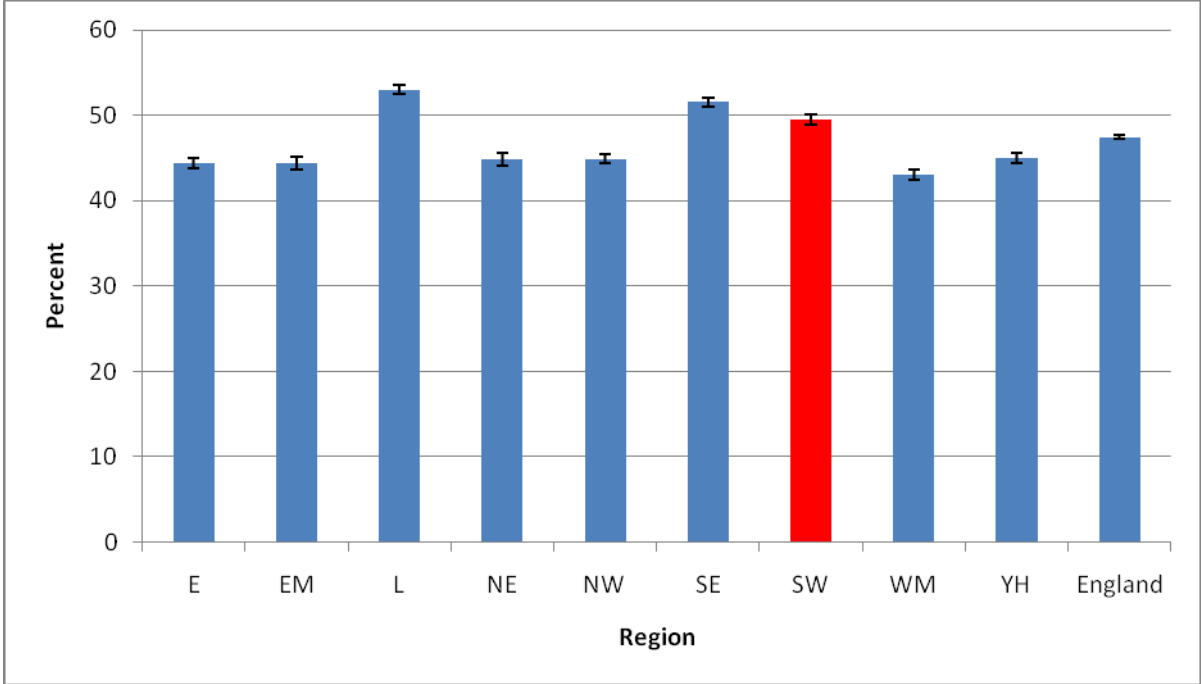
Following conversations with Foundation Degree Forward, it has become clear that the number of foundation degree achievements isn't a particularly accurate measure of positive outcomes, as many foundation degree students progress onto Honours degrees. Although this a positive outcome, this is not picked up in achievement data, as the students progressing do not actually finish with a foundation degree qualification but an Honours degree.

### **5.3 Proportion of working age population qualified to Level 3 and Level 4**

The proportion of the workforce qualified to levels 3, 4 and above is perhaps the best indicator of the availability of higher level skills in the region. Although qualification levels are the best proxy for workforce skills, the majority of people qualified to level 3 will have reached that level via the academic route i.e. A Levels. These academic qualifications may be of less value to employers than vocational qualifications at the same level, which may lead to a slight distortion of the true picture of skills in the workforce.

Looking first at level 3, Figure 8 shows that 49.5% of the working age population were qualified to level 3 or above in 2008, the third highest scoring English region behind London and the South East.

**Figure 8: Percentage of the working age population qualified to level 3 or above, by region, 2008**



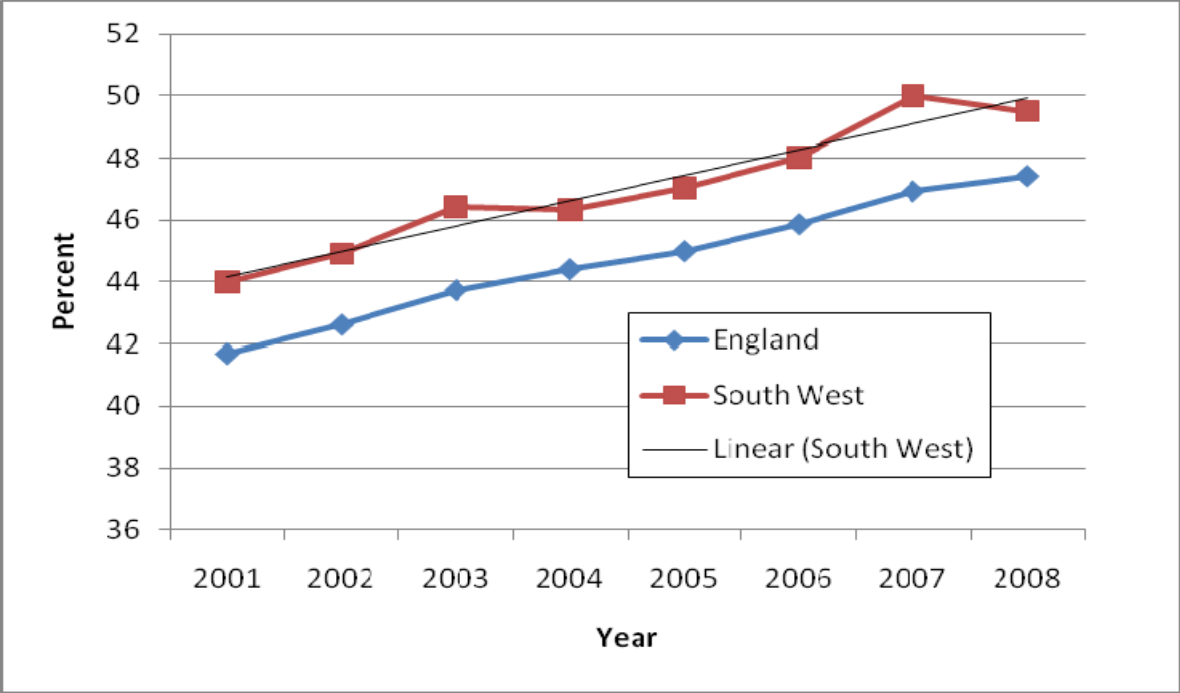
Source: Annual Population Survey  
 Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

Over time, Figure 9 shows that the proportion qualified to level 3 and above has increased (from 44% in 2001), although there appears to have been a blip in the last year, compared to the year on year improvement observed between 2001 and 2007. This blip is not evident at the national level, resulting in a narrowing of the gap with the South West.

**Statistical Note**

A statistical anomaly may be the most likely cause of this apparent backward step in the South West. The application of a trend line for the period 2001-2008 suggests that the region's position in 2008 is around where it would be expected, given the slow and steady progress observed through most of that time. It appears that the 2007 value is somewhat higher than would be expected (due in part to the confidence intervals associated with sample-based surveys such as the APS), which gives the impression of a fall in the proportion of the working age population qualified to at least level 3 in the last 12 months. The same applies at Level 4 and above.

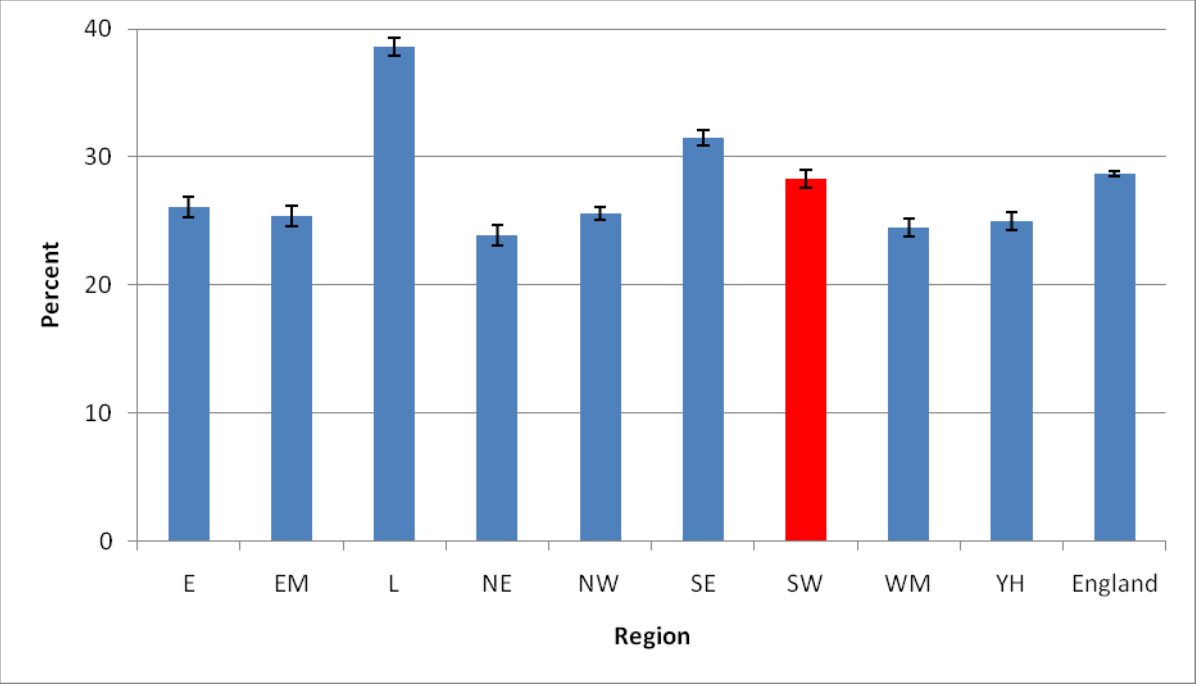
**Figure 9: Percentage of the working age population qualified to level 3 or above, SW and England, 2001 - 2008**



Source: Annual Population Survey

Moving on to level 4, Figure 10 shows that – as with level 3 - the South West has the third highest proportion of the working age population were qualified to level 4 or above in 2008 (28.3%). However, because of the concentration of people qualified at level 4 or above that live in the South East and particularly London, the South West figure is actually slightly below the national average (28.7%).

**Figure 10: Percentage of the working age population qualified to level 4 or above, by region, 2008**

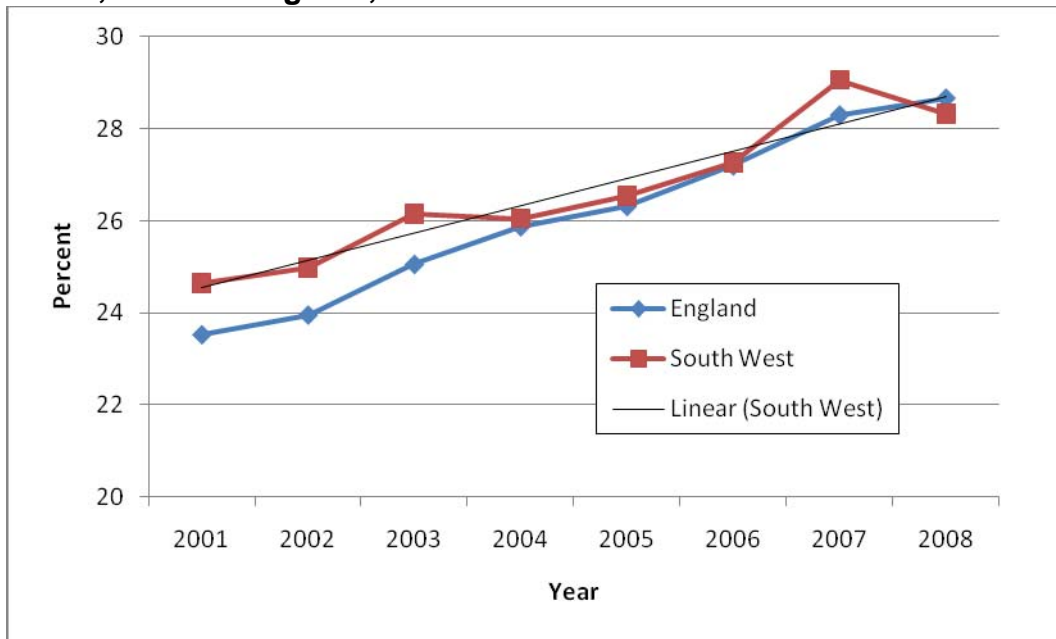


Source: Annual Population Survey

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

Since 2001, Figure 11 shows that the proportion qualified to level 4 and above in the South West has risen from 24.6% to 28.3% in 2008. However, as at level 3, the last year has suggested a slight backward step for the South West (see statistical note above).

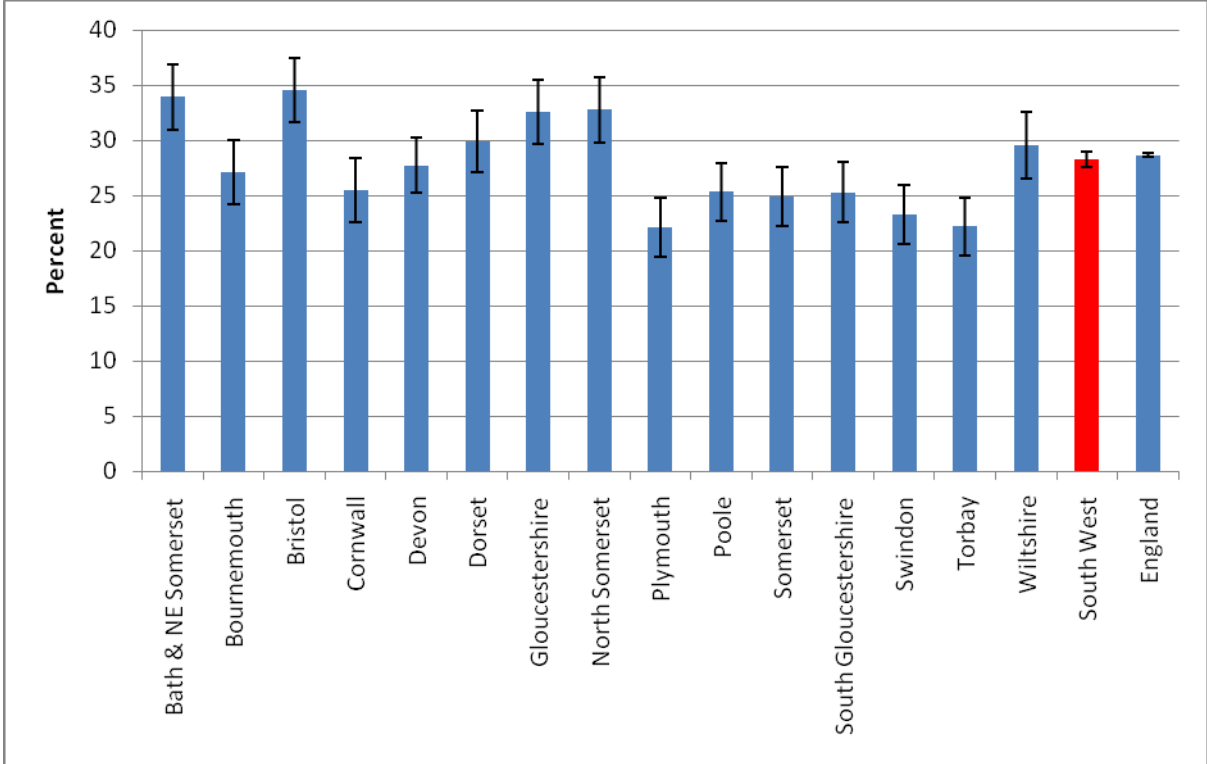
**Figure 11: Percentage of the working age population qualified to level 4 or above, SW and England, 2001 - 2008**



Source: Annual Population Survey

It is also at level 4 that some interesting variations appear across different areas of the region. Figure 12 shows that qualifications at level 4 and above are more heavily concentrated in the northern and eastern areas of the region, and are significantly lower in the south and west. This trend is most clearly seen when considering the 36.5% in Bristol, compared against just 22% in Plymouth.

**Figure 12: Percentage of the working age population qualified to level 4 or above, by local authority, 2008**



Source: Annual Population Survey  
 Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

**6 Sub-Priorities**

**6.1 Number of National Insurance Number Registrations**

Table 11 shows that just over 686,000 non-UK nationals registered for a National Insurance number in the UK in 2008/09. The most recent data shows the first decline in the number of new registrations, following year on year increases from 2002/03 to 2007/08.

There were 33,100 new registrations in the South West in 2008/09, some 4.8% of all registrations in the UK. This number is more than double the level of registrations in 2002/03, higher than the increase nationally. However, the number of new NINOs in the South West has now fallen for the second consecutive year, strongly suggesting that the flows of new migrant workers into the region may have already peaked and are now starting to fall.

At this point, it is worth restating the fact that NINO registrations only represent the first location of a migrant worker and does not track any subsequent movements to other parts of the UK. This factor limits their utility for geographic tracking or mapping purposes. In Cornwall, for instance, existing and long-standing linkages with seasonal work in Lincolnshire could explain lower NINO numbers in districts above for mobile workers.

**Table 11: National Insurance Number Registrations 2002/03-2008/09, non-UK Nationals only (thousands)**

Year	South West	UK
2002/03	15.4	346.2
2003/04	16.1	373.5
2004/05	22.6	435.4
2005/06	34.1	663.1
2006/07	41.2	705.8
2007/08	38.9	733.1
2008/09	33.1	686.1
<b>% change 02/03 - 08/09</b>	<b>115%</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>% change 07/08 - 08/09</b>	<b>-15%</b>	<b>-6%</b>

Source: DWP NINo Registration Data

### Concentrations within the South West

In terms of locations within the region that migrant workers are registering for NINos, Table 12 indicates a clear concentration in urban areas, with 9 of the 10 most popular areas being largely urban in nature. Bristol is by far the most popular location, with more than 1 in 6 new registrations.

**Table 12: Most Popular Locations for NINo Registrations, 2008/09**

Local Authority	Total NINo Registrations 2008/09	% of South West total
Bristol, City of	5,580	16.9%
Bournemouth	3,810	11.5%
Swindon	2,200	6.6%
Plymouth	1,880	5.7%
South Gloucestershire	1,490	4.5%
Bath and North East Somerset	1,220	3.7%
Exeter	1,100	3.3%
Poole	1,060	3.2%
Cheltenham	1,010	3.1%
Gloucester	910	2.8%

Source: NINo Registration Data

## 6.2 Enrolments to ESOL provision

The increased level of migrant workers coming into the South West in recent years suggests that there will be significant demand on for ESOL provision (English for Speakers of Other Languages). Data for the 2007/08 academic year shows that there were around 10,300 ESOL enrolments across the South West (Table 13). However, this number has fallen for the last two years (both regionally and nationally), down by more than a third in the South West, more than double the decline for England as a whole.

**Table 13: Total ESOL Enrolments (aged 16+), South West vs England, 2005/06-2007/08**

<b>Year</b>	<b>South West</b>	<b>England</b>
2005/06	16,400	253,800
2006/07	14,400	233,000
2007/08	10,300	211,200
<b>Change 2005/06 – 2007/08</b>	<b>-6,100</b>	<b>-42,600</b>
<b>% change 2005/06 – 2007/08</b>	<b>-37.2%</b>	<b>-16.8%</b>

*Source: The Data Service*

However, these falls in enrolments are not necessarily due to a fall in demand. In March 2007, the Minister for Further and Higher Education published a series of changes to address the unsustainable growth in ESOL provision and ensure that those learners most in need are able to access English language provision. From 2007/08, ESOL learning no longer attracts automatic fee remission, with free tuition only available to priority groups – primarily people who are unemployed or receiving income-based benefits. Evidence suggests that around half of learners will be eligible for free ESOL with around half making a contribution to the costs.