

Qualification levels in Brent

2021 Census – topic report

August 2023



Summary

census
2021

Qualifications
levels in Brent
2021

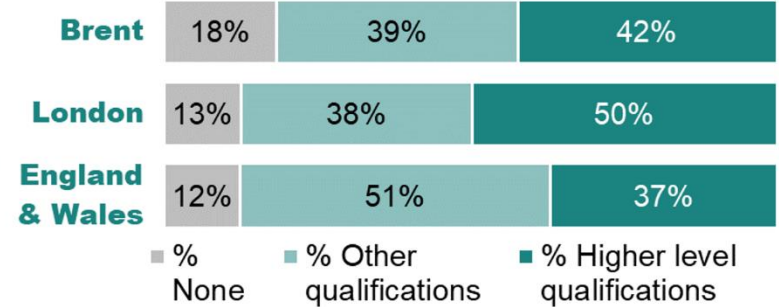
235,600
residents aged
16-64



42%
of residents
aged 16-64 hold
higher level
qualifications

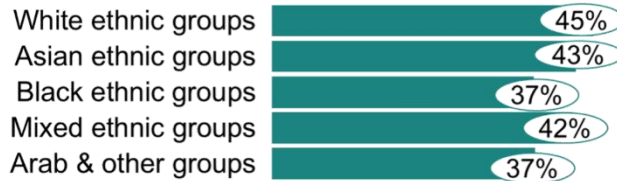


Areas
compared



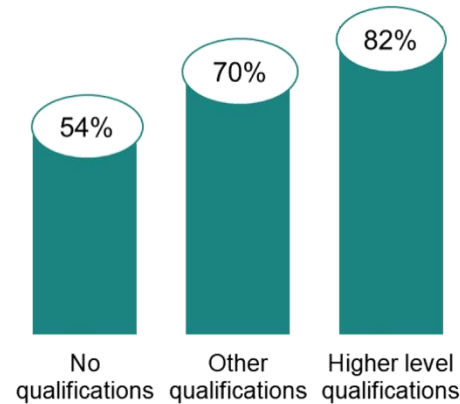
Higher level qualifications by population group

■ % with higher level qualifications

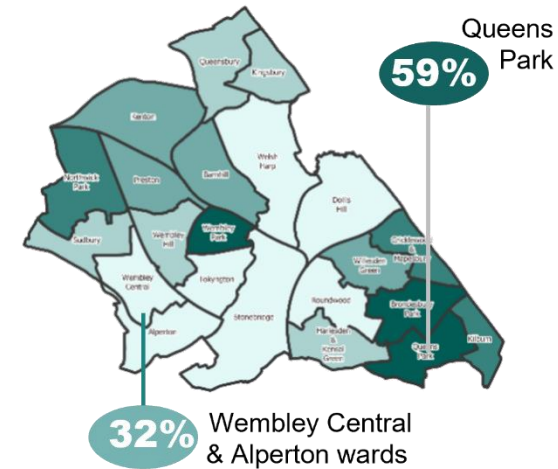


Employment rate by qualifications level

% in employment (age 25-64)



Percentage with higher level qualifications by ward



% with
higher level qualifications
by job type



20%
'Elementary'
occupations*



35%
Sales &
customer service



78%
Professional
& managerial



Headlines (1)

This report summarises 2021 census data about qualification levels in Brent. Unless otherwise specified, figures relate to the population aged 16-64. Key findings include:

- **Overview:** In 2021, around 42% of Brent adults, aged 16-64 held higher level qualifications (degree level and above) - lower than the London average (50%), but higher than the rate across England & Wales (37%). Around 18% had no formal qualifications, well above both the London and national averages (13% and 12%).
- **Brent wards:** At ward level, the percentage of residents with higher level qualifications ranged from a high of 59% of those living in Queens Park down to 32% in the two wards of Wembley Central and Alperton. The percentage with no qualifications was highest in Alperton ward (28%) and lowest in Wembley Park (5%).
- **Age:** Qualifications levels vary by age, with older residents being less likely to hold higher level qualifications. Those in the age group 25-34 are the most likely to hold higher level qualifications (56-57%), more than twice the percentage of those aged 65 and over (26%). Many young adults in the age group 16-21 are still in education and in the process of gaining qualifications: the majority in this age group hold qualifications below level 4.
- **Gender:** Overall, the qualifications profile of men and women was broadly similar, though women were a bit more likely than men to hold higher level qualifications (44% vs. 40%). Men were more likely to hold an apprenticeship qualification (4.2% vs. 2.3%).
- **Ethnicity:** Qualifications vary considerably across different ethnic groups. Chinese residents were the most likely to hold higher level qualifications: 69% were qualified to level 4 or above. The percentage with no qualifications was relatively high among the Arab (30%) and Roma ethnic group populations (27%). The 'Gypsy or Irish traveller' population – the borough's smallest ethnic group – was the least well qualified with 61% holding no formal qualifications.

Headlines (2)

- **Country of birth:** Overall, residents born in the UK were more highly qualified than those born in other countries: 48% of UK-born residents held higher level qualifications compared with 39% of those born in other countries. However, there was considerable diversity across country groups: the percentage with higher level qualifications ranged from 38% of those born in Middle Eastern countries up to 73% of those from the 'Australasia & other' group (e.g. Australia and New Zealand). The percentage of residents with no formal qualifications was highest for those born in the following countries/areas: Other Middle East* (42%); Afghanistan (39%), Somalia (34%), Romania (32%), and the Philippines (31%).
- **Language and English proficiency:** Residents whose main language was English were more likely to hold higher level qualifications than those who used a main language other than English (48% vs. 32%). Within the latter group, those who could speak English very well, were far more likely to hold higher level qualifications than those who could not speak English at all (52% vs. 5%). Of those who could not speak English at all, almost eight in ten had no formal qualifications (79%).
- **Labour market activity:** Residents with higher level qualifications were far more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications (82% vs. 54% of those aged 25-64). The majority of residents who work in professional and managerial occupations held higher level qualifications: 78% of professional and managerial workers had higher level qualifications compared with just 20% of those working in elementary occupations. Those who work full-time were more likely than part-timers to hold higher level qualifications (56% vs. 39%).

About this data

The analysis that follows summarises 2021 census data about qualification levels in Brent. On the census form, residents aged 16 and over were asked to record any qualifications they had achieved including academic, vocational and professional qualifications. This information was used to calculate the highest level of qualification. On census tables, qualifications levels are defined as below. In this report, the term 'higher level qualifications' refers to Level 4 qualifications or above.

Qualifications level	What is included
None	No qualifications
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	1 to 4 GCSEs grade A* to C, Any GCSEs at other grades, O levels or CSEs (any grades), 1 AS level, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic or Essential Skills
Level 2 qualifications	5 or more GCSEs (A* to C or 9 to 4), O levels (passes), CSEs (grade 1), School Certification, 1 A level, 2 to 3 AS levels, VCEs, Intermediate or Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First or General Diploma, RSA Diploma
Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship
Level 3 qualifications	2 or more A levels or VCEs, 4 or more AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression or Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advance Diploma, NVQ level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
Level 4 qualifications or above	Degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)
Other qualifications	Vocational or work-related qualifications, other qualifications achieved in England or Wales, qualifications achieved outside England or Wales (where equivalent not stated or unknown)

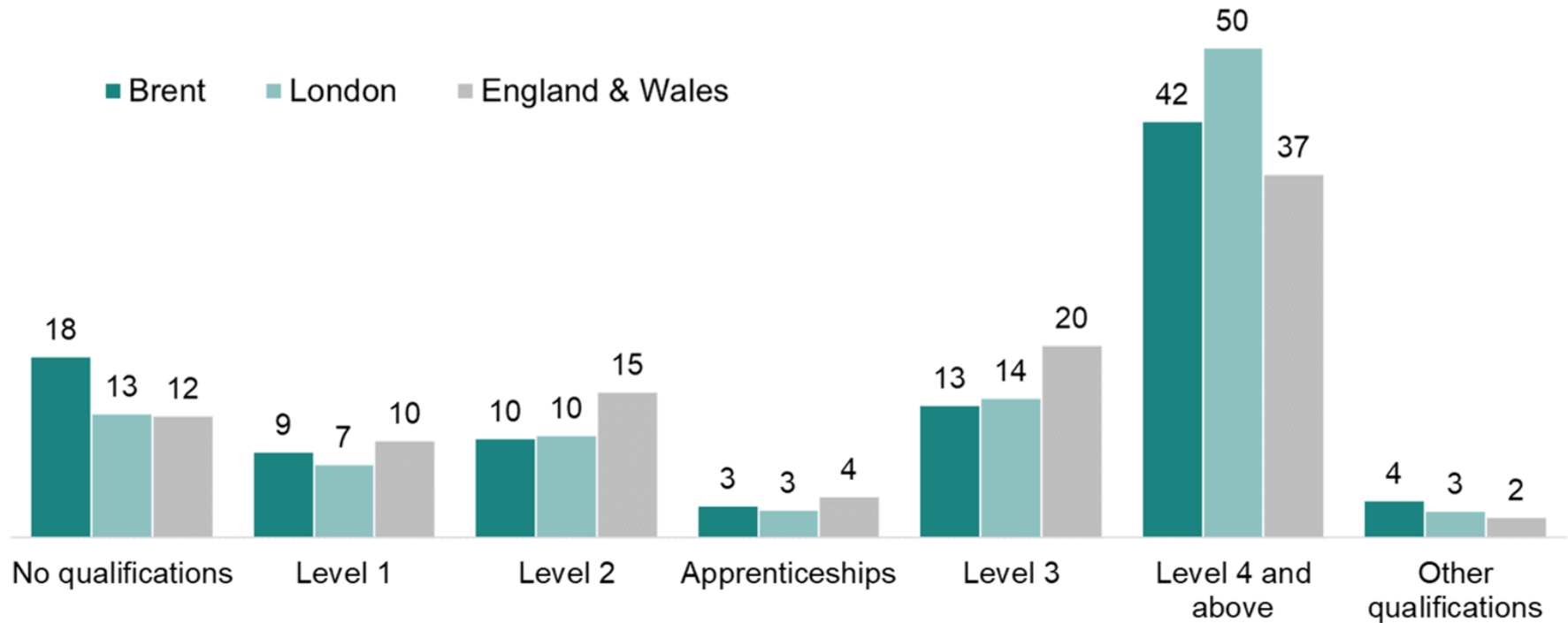
Data source and copyright: Census statistics in this report have been produced using the ONS custom dataset [tool](#) and are licenced under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 © Crown Copyright.

Qualifications: Brent overview

- In 2021, around 42% of adults aged 16-64 in Brent held higher level qualifications (level 4 and above) - lower than the London average (50%), but higher than the rate across England & Wales (37%).
- Around 18% held no qualifications in Brent, well above both the London and national average (13% and 12%).

Population aged 16-64 by highest qualifications level (% total)

Brent, London and England & Wales, 2021

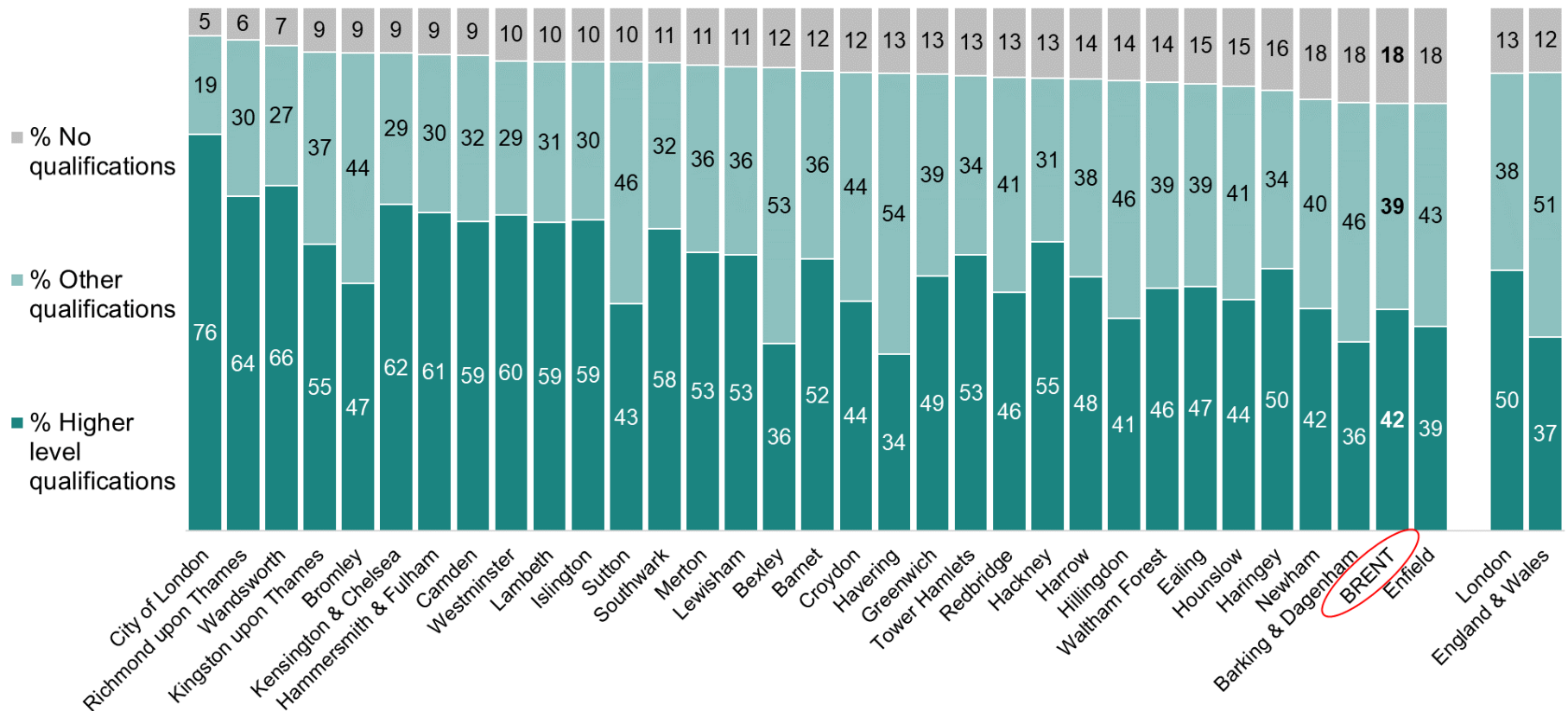


Qualification levels: London boroughs

Across London, Brent and Enfield had the highest percentage of residents with no qualifications (both 18.4%). The percentage of residents with higher level qualifications ranged from 76% in the City down to 34% in Havering. Brent was ranked 6th lowest out of the 33 areas on the percentage with higher level qualifications (42%).

Population aged 16-64 by highest qualifications level (% total)

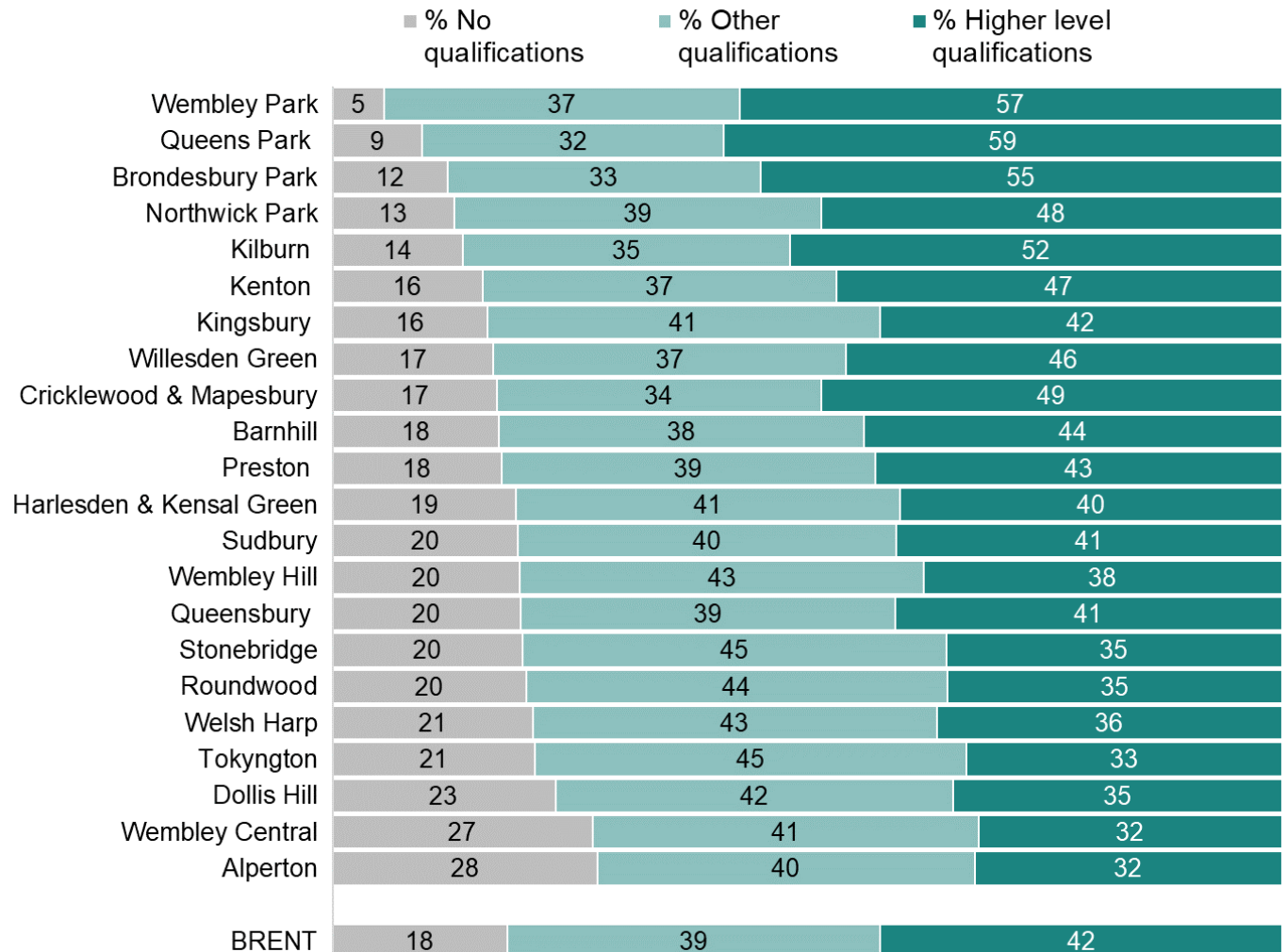
London Boroughs, 2021 (ranked on % with no qualifications)



Qualification levels: Brent wards

- At ward level, the percentage of residents with no qualifications ranged from 28% in Alperton ward down to 5% in Wembley Park.
- The percentage of residents with higher level qualifications ranged from 59% of those living in Queens Park down to 32% in Wembley Central and Alperton wards.
- The maps that follow show the variation in qualifications levels at LSOA level.

Population aged 16-64 by highest qualification level
Brent wards, 2021 (ranked on % with no qualifications)

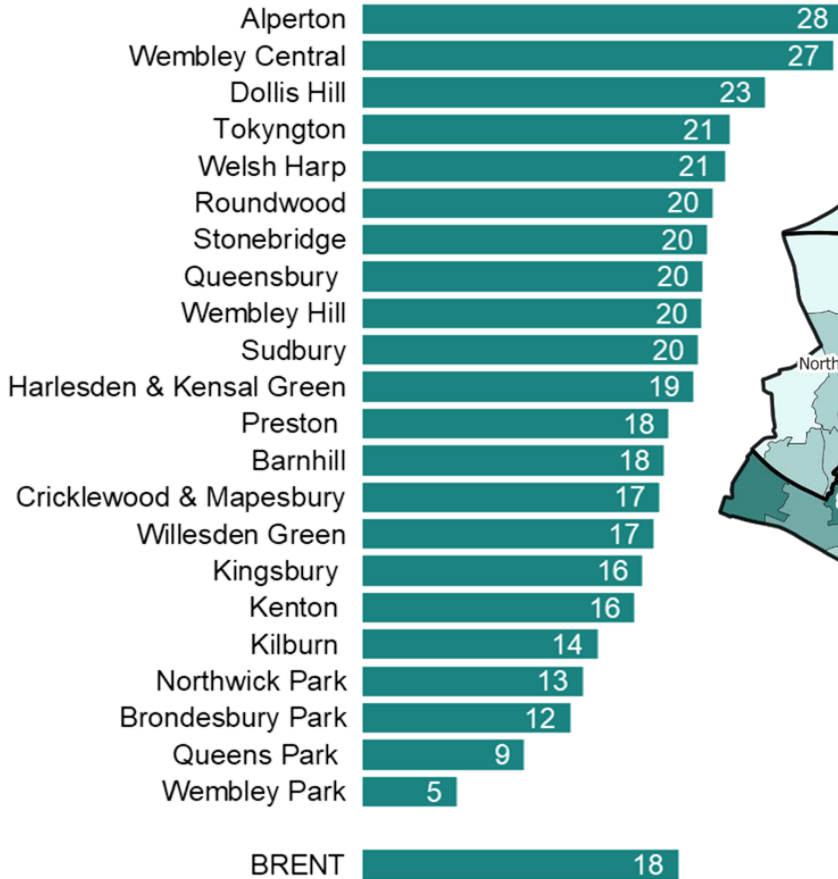


No qualifications by area, Brent

Percentage of the population (aged 16-64) with no qualifications, 2021

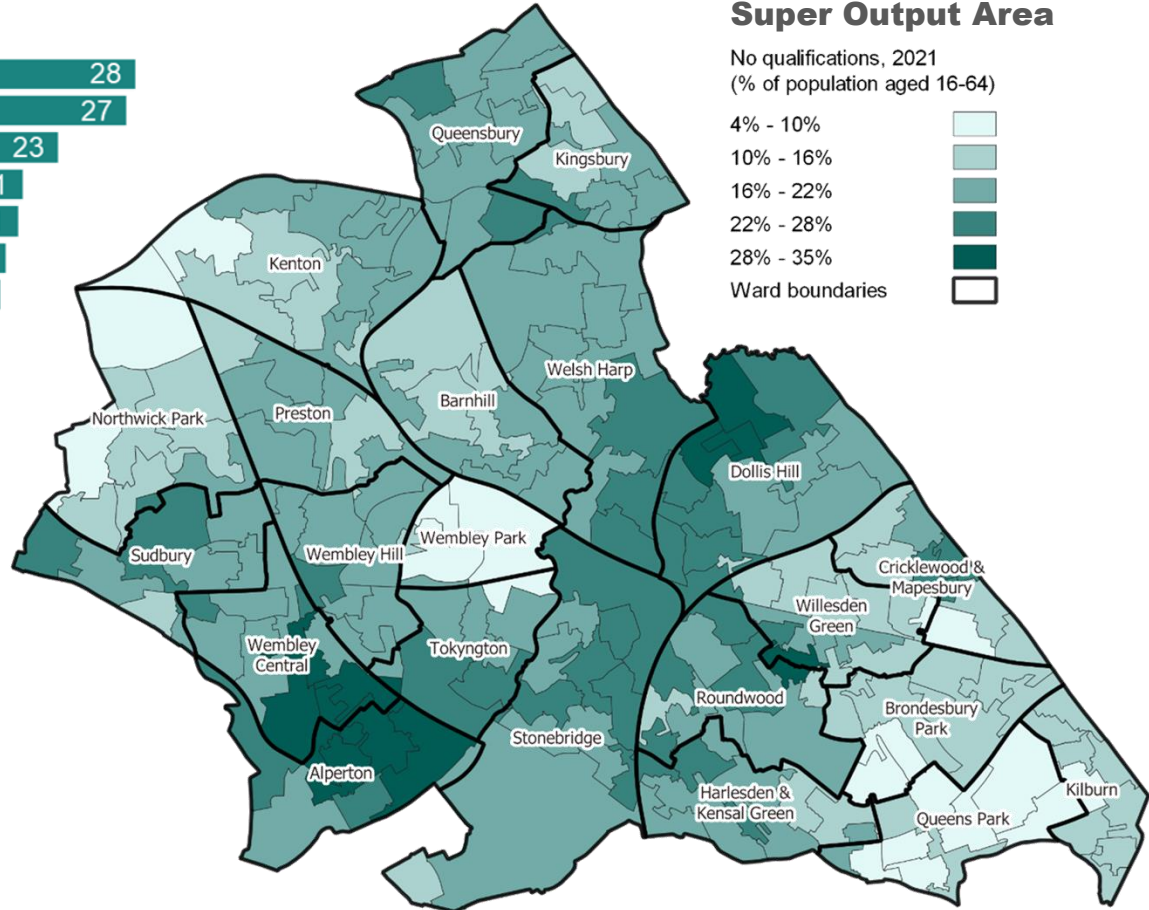
By ward

■ % with no qualifications



By Lower Layer Super Output Area

No qualifications, 2021
(% of population aged 16-64)



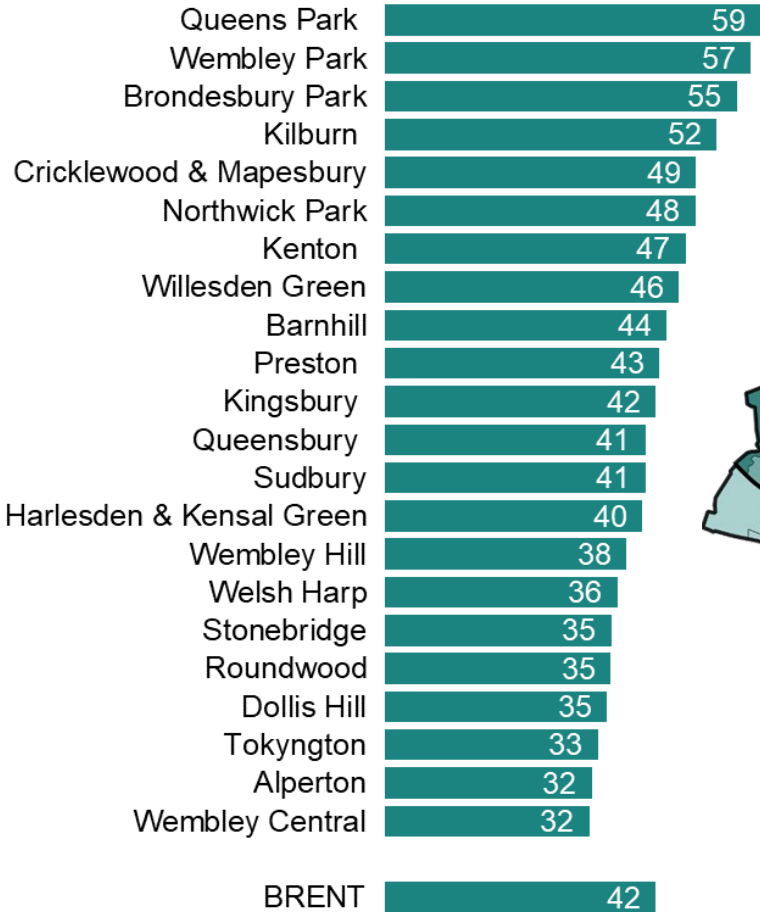
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Higher level qualifications by area, Brent

Percentage of the population (aged 16-64) with higher level qualifications, 2021

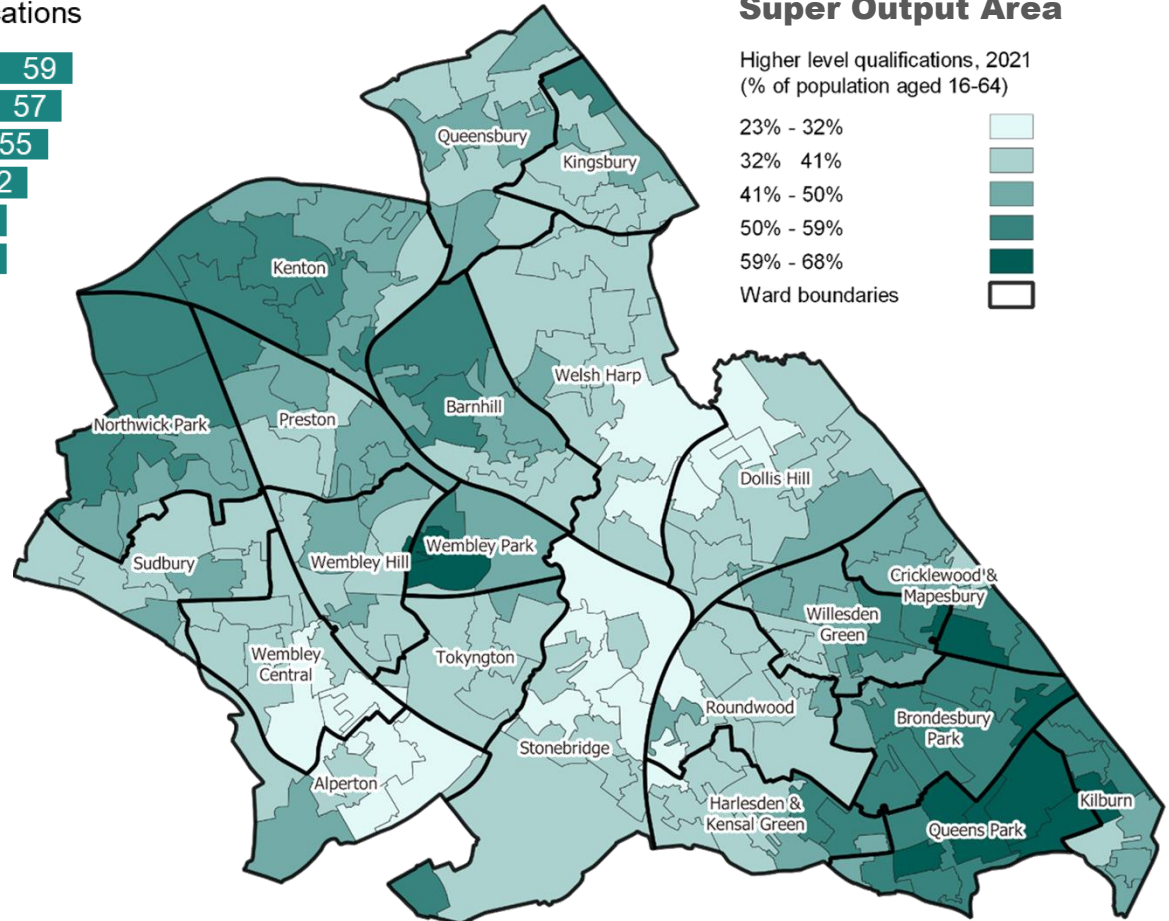
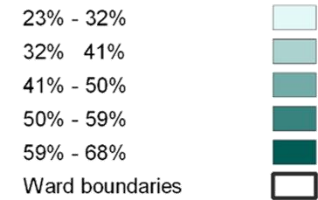
By ward

■ % with higher level qualifications



By Lower Layer Super Output Area

Higher level qualifications, 2021
(% of population aged 16-64)

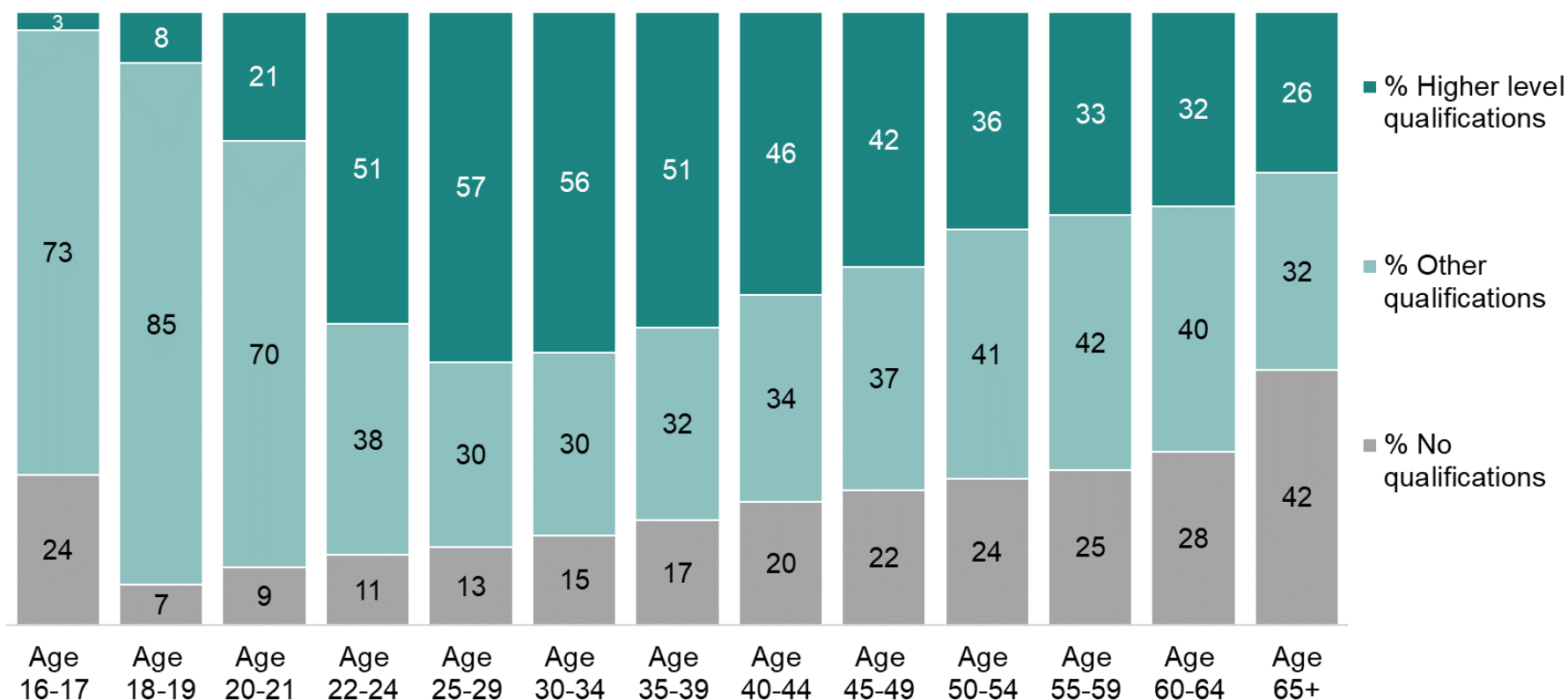


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Qualifications by age

- Qualifications levels vary by age, with older residents being less likely to hold higher level qualifications.
- Those in the age group 25-34 are the most likely to hold higher level qualifications (56-57%), more than twice the percentage of those aged 65 and over (26%).
- Many young adults in the age group 16-21 are still in education and in the process of gaining qualifications: the majority in this age group hold qualifications below level 4.

Highest qualifications level by age group, Brent, 2021 (persons aged 16+)

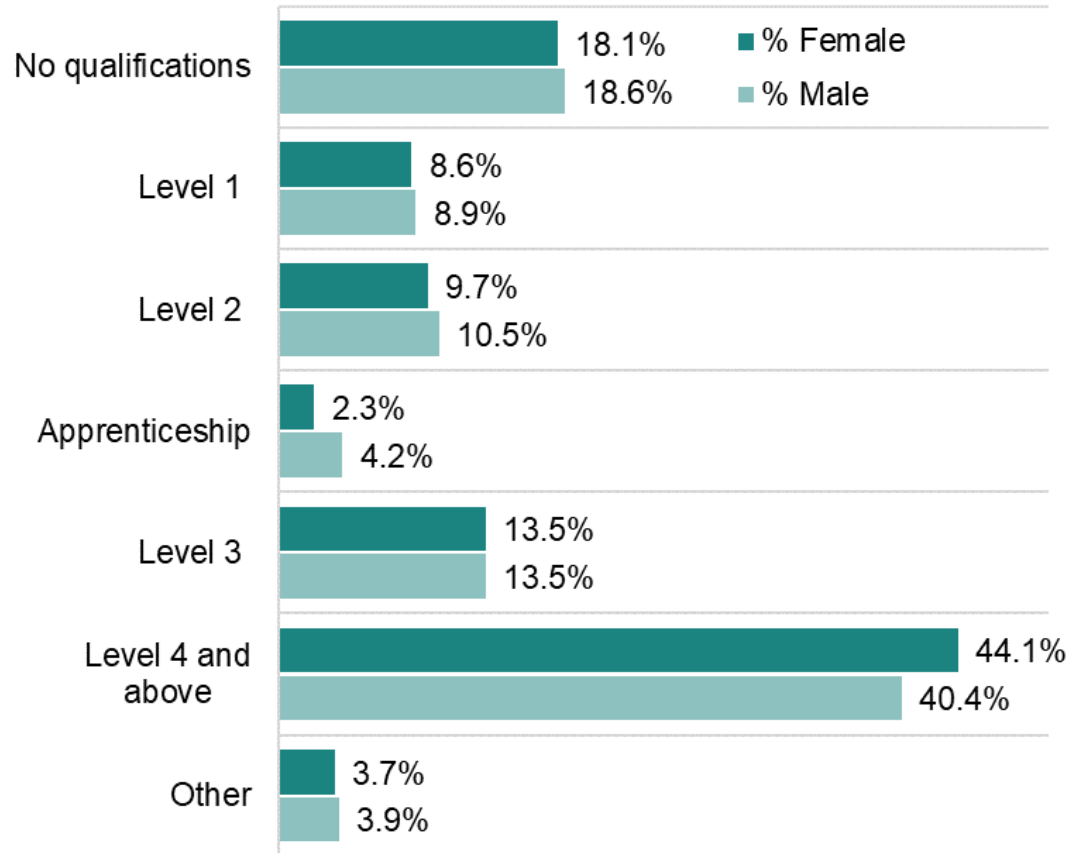


Qualifications by sex

- Overall, the qualifications profile of men and women is broadly similar, though women are a bit more likely than men to hold higher level qualifications (44% vs. 40%). Men are more likely to hold an apprenticeship qualification (4.2% vs. 2.3%).

Highest qualifications level by sex, Brent, 2021

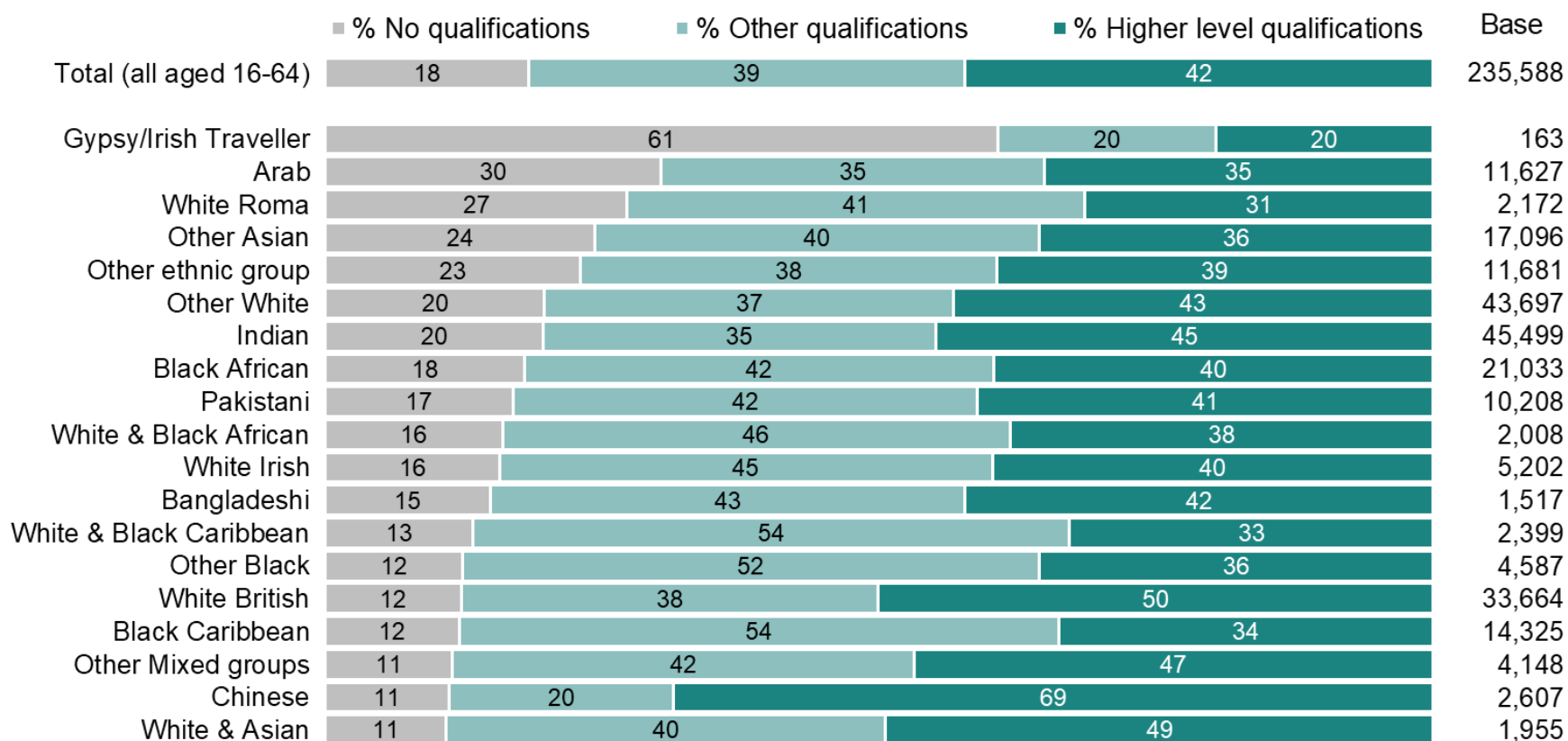
Base: persons aged 16-64



Qualifications by ethnic group

- Qualifications vary considerably across different ethnic groups. Chinese residents were the most likely to hold higher level qualifications: 69% were qualified to level 4 or above.
- The borough's smallest ethnic group - the 'Gypsy or Irish traveller' population – was the least well qualified with 61% holding no formal qualifications. The percentage with no qualifications was also relatively high among the Arab (30%) and Roma populations (27%).

Highest qualifications level by ethnic group, Brent, 2021 (persons aged 16-64)

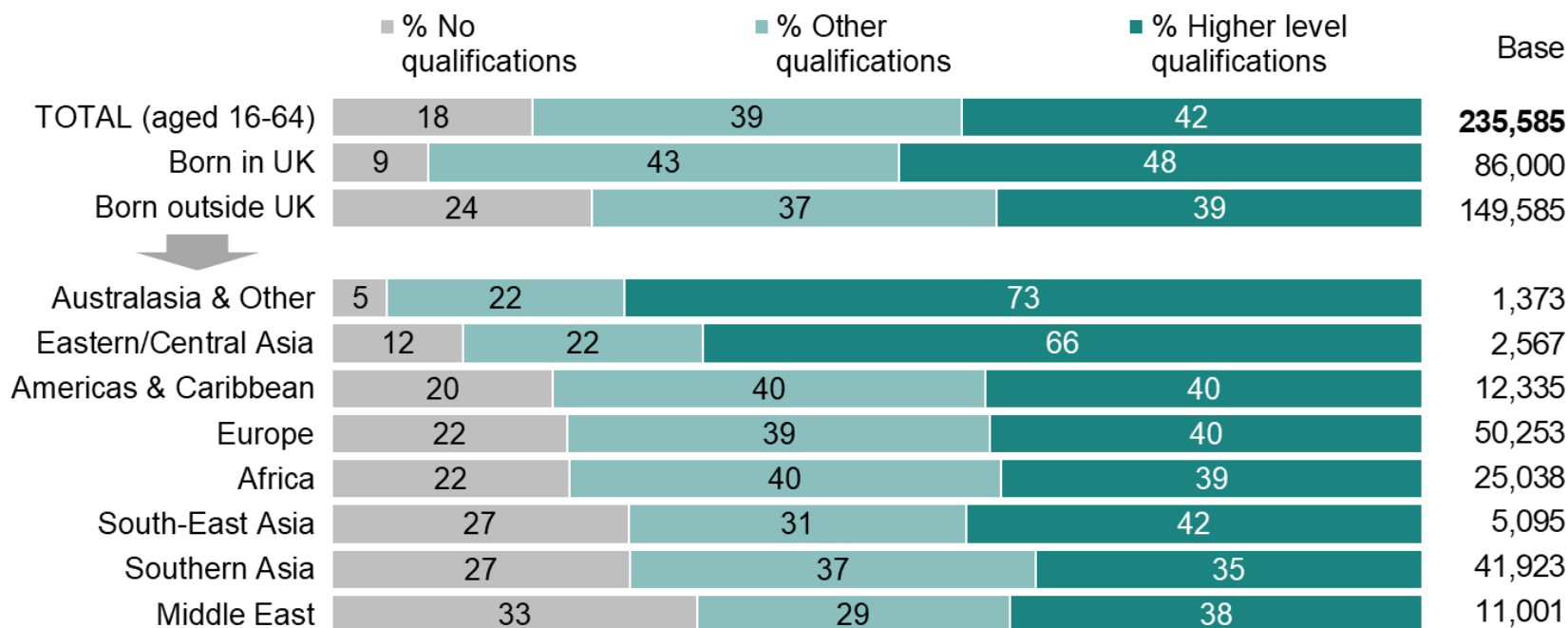


Qualifications by country of birth (1)

- Residents born in the UK are typically more highly qualified than those born in other countries: 48% of UK-born residents held higher level qualifications compared with 39% of those born in other countries. Around one quarter of those born outside the UK held no formal qualifications compared with 9% of UK-born residents.
- However, there is considerable diversity across country groups: the percentage with no qualifications ranged from just 5% of those from the 'Australasia & other' group (the most highly qualified group) up to 33% for residents born in Middle Eastern countries.

Highest qualifications level by country of birth (world regions)

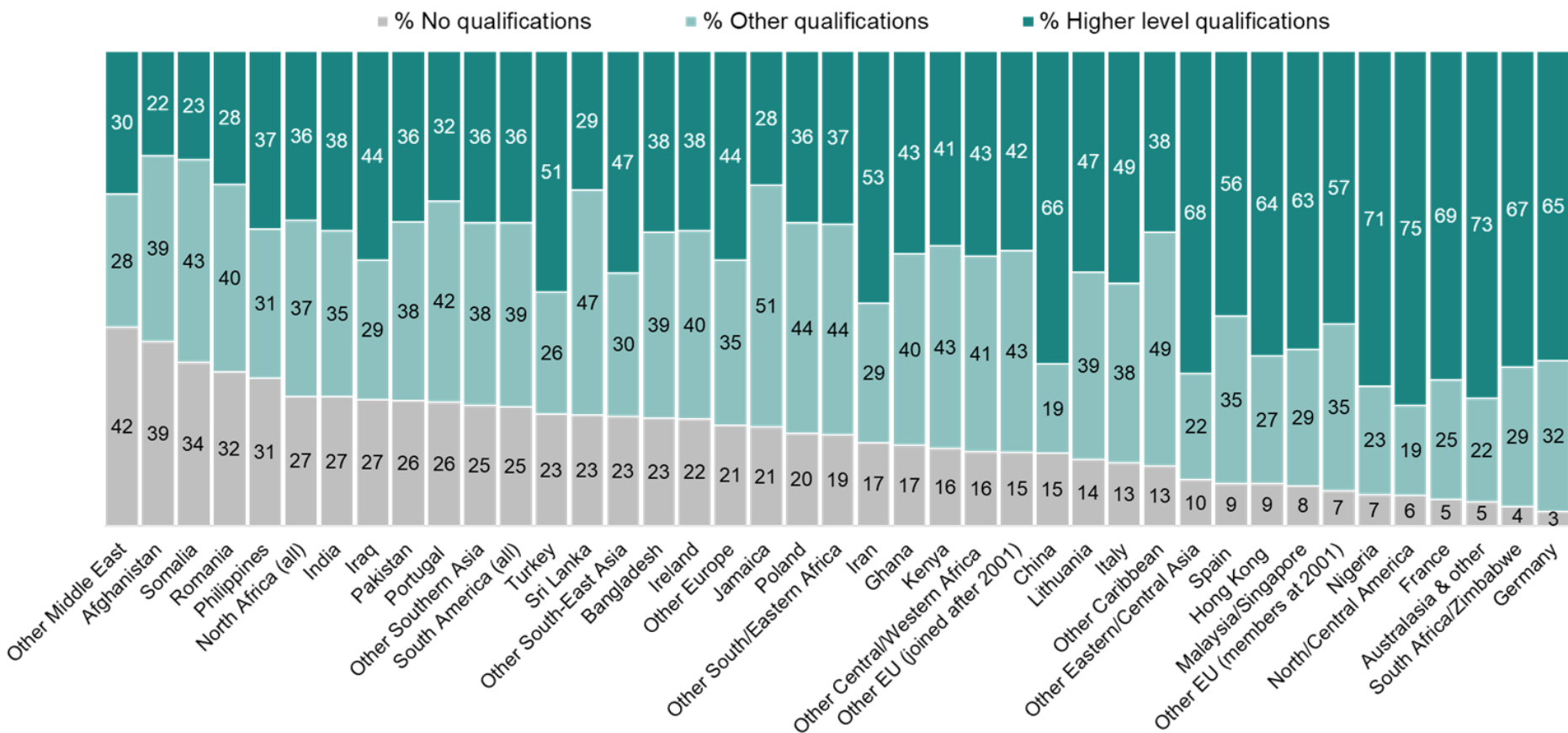
Brent, 2021 (persons aged 16-64)



Qualifications by country of birth (2)

The chart below provides more detail for individual countries / areas (note: some countries are grouped together). The percentage of residents with no formal qualifications was relatively high (over 30%) for residents born in the following five countries / areas: Other Middle East (42%); Afghanistan (39%), Somalia (34%), Romania (32%), and the Philippines (31%). The area 'Other Middle East' refers to all those born in Middle Eastern countries except Iran and Iraq which are listed separately*.

Highest qualifications level by country of birth (persons aged 16-64), Brent, 2021

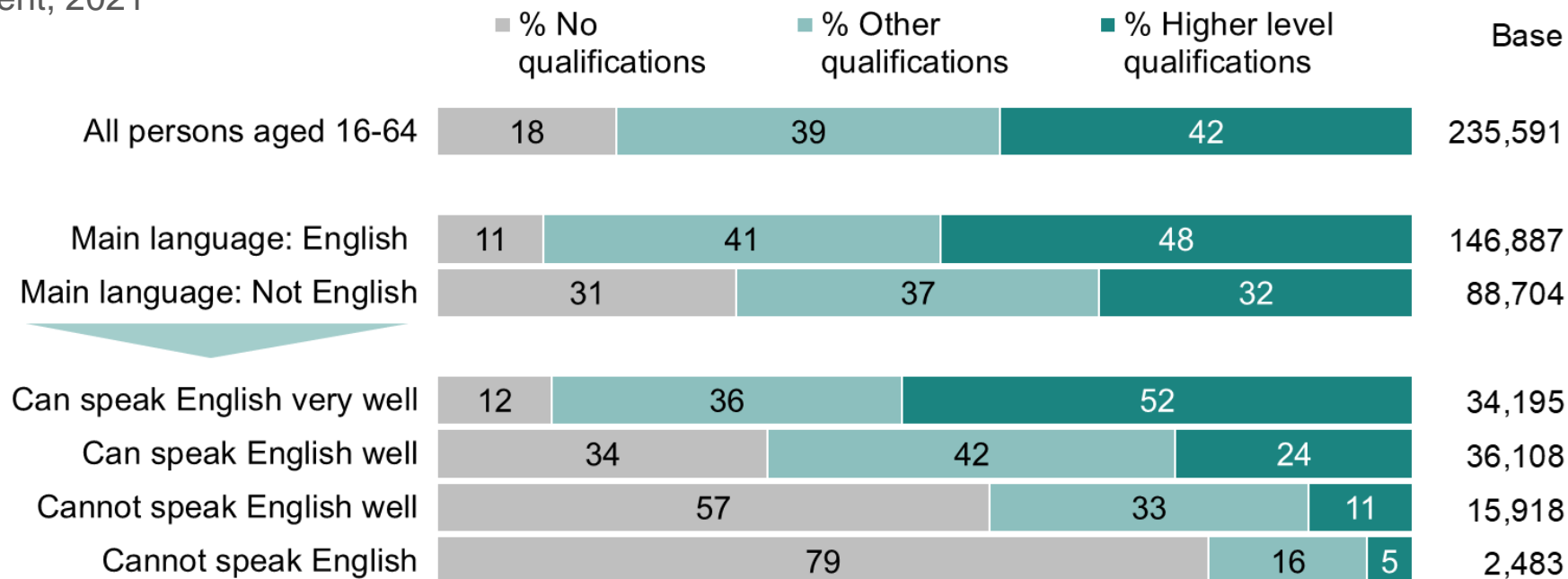


Qualifications by English proficiency

- Residents whose main language is English were more likely to hold higher level qualifications than those who used a main language other than English (48% vs. 32%). However, there was considerable diversity within the latter group in relation to qualifications levels and levels of proficiency in spoken English.
- Those who used a main language other than English, but who could speak English very well, were far more likely to hold higher level qualifications than those who cannot speak English at all (52% vs. 5%). Of those who could not speak English at all, almost eight in ten had no formal qualifications (79%).

Highest qualifications level by English language proficiency (persons aged 16-64)

Brent, 2021



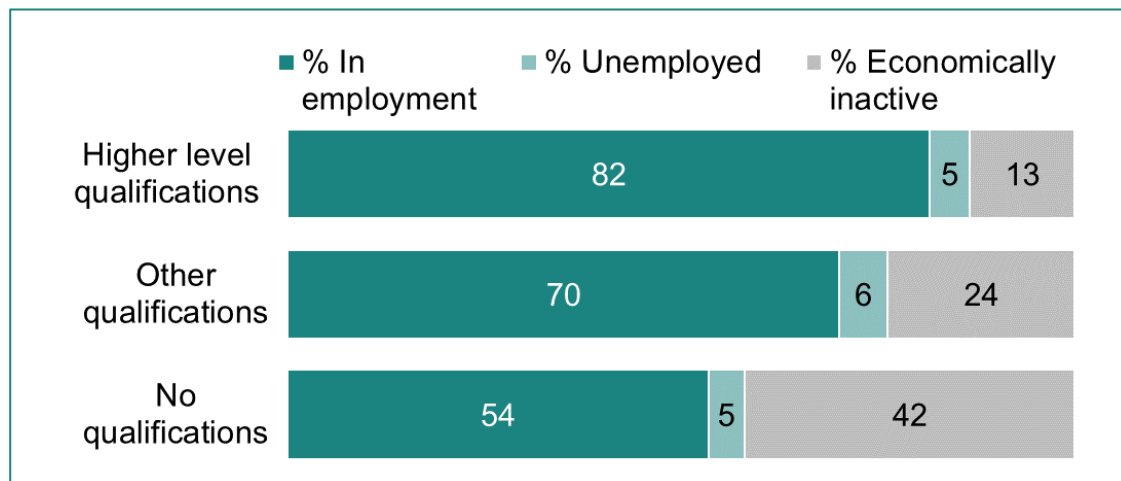
Economic activity by qualifications level

Note: the analysis presented here focuses on those aged 25-64. Those aged 16-24 are excluded as many in this group are not yet fully active in the labour market (e.g. full-time students).

- Residents with higher level qualifications were far more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications (82% vs. 54%).
- Those with no qualifications were far more likely to be economically inactive (42%) than those with higher level or other qualifications (13% and 24%).
- Of those with no qualifications, 42% were economically inactive including: 10% who were long-term sick or disabled and 17% who were looking after home or family.

Economic activity by highest qualifications level

Brent, 2021 (Base: persons aged 25-64)



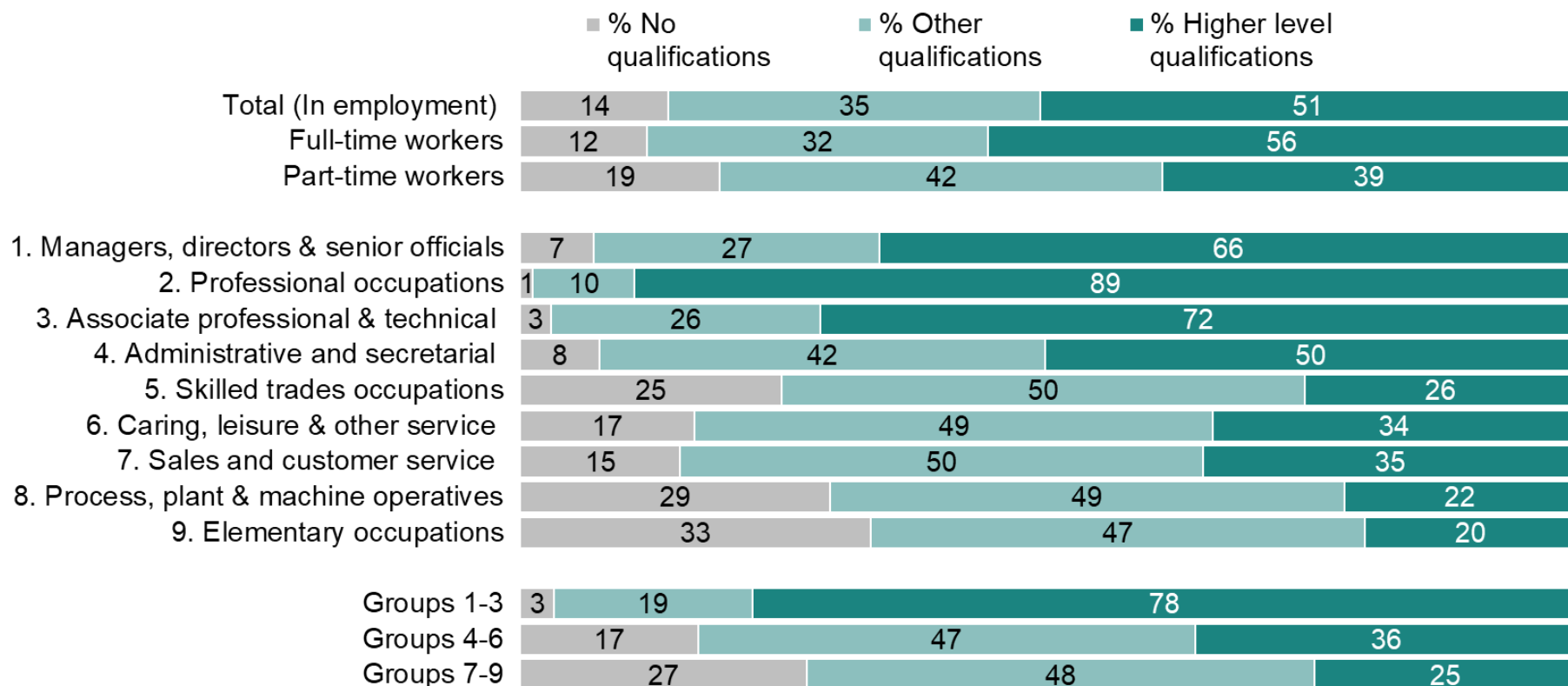
Economic activity by highest qualification level, Brent, 2021

	Qualifications level (% total)			Base: persons aged 25-64
	None	Other levels	Higher level	
Total (persons aged 25-64)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	194,374
In employment	53.5%	70.2%	81.6%	140,232
Unemployed	4.6%	6.1%	5.1%	10,379
Economically inactive	41.9%	23.7%	13.3%	43,763
Long-term sick or disabled	9.5%	4.9%	1.6%	8,350
Looking after home/family	16.5%	9.7%	5.2%	17,458
Retired	3.0%	1.9%	1.2%	3,484
Student	1.1%	1.5%	1.9%	3,141
Other	11.8%	5.7%	3.4%	11,330

Qualifications by occupation and hours

- The majority of residents who work in professional and managerial occupations held higher level qualifications: 78% of those working in occupational groups 1-3 had higher level qualifications compared with just 20% of those working in elementary occupations (Group 9). Examples of elementary occupations include: coffee shop workers, cleaners, labourers, security guards, postal workers and bar staff.
- Those who work part-time were less likely than full-timers to hold higher level qualifications (39% vs. 56%).

Highest qualifications level by occupation (persons aged 16-64), Brent, 2021



Further information

- **Data tables:** A set of data tables have been produced to accompany this report. These have been made available in spreadsheet format, alongside this topic report, on the council's [open data site](#).
- **2021 Census data:** Census statistics in this report have been produced by Brent Council using the Office for National Statistics 2021 Census [custom dataset tool](#). A range of 2021 census 'ready made' datasets can be found on the [NOMIS website](#).
- **ONS mapping tool:** ONS has produced an interactive [mapping tool](#) which allows exploration of census data across all local authority areas, and small areas, in England & Wales.
- **Brent insight:** For more census facts about Brent please see the [Census page](#) on the Council's '[Brent Open Data](#)' website.
- **Contact:** This report was produced by Brent Council's Data and Insight team. For more information please email the team at: open.data@brent.gov.uk

