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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON 19 APRIL 2023**

**SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVER ATTAINMENT  
2021-2022**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the SQA leaver attainment across our secondary schools and for this data to be scrutinised and noted as part of our improving outcomes and raising attainment focus. This is an update to the Initial Attainment Report for Secondary Schools 2022 previously presented to Committee on 2 November 2022, with leavers' update now presented to Committee at first opportunity following data release in February 2023 including initial positive destinations.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:**

- (i) scrutinise and note the Senior Phase Leaver Attainment across our Secondary Schools in Moray for session 2021/2022 with specific regard to the National Measures for leavers published on Insight in February 2023;**
- (ii) acknowledge identified improvements in performance evidenced through key measures outlined within this paper; and**
- (iii) further note identified actions for improvement arising from 2021/2022 attainment and performance as outlined in initial analysis of secondary school attainment paper previously presented to committee on 2 November 2022.**

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Contextual information relating to the examinations in place for session 2021/2022 have been provided in the [Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment: Session 2021-2022 Committee Paper](#) presented for scrutiny and noting to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 2 November 2022 (please see Background, Section 3)
- 3.2 This report provides update in relation to Insight data we receive each year for cohort attainment across S4, S5 and S6 for our school leavers across four key national benchmarking measures:
- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
  - Improving attainment for all
  - Increasing post-school destinations
  - Tacking disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to high attainers
- 3.3 Insight encourages us to take a holistic approach to evaluating attainment and achievement that takes into account the performance within Moray across all four measures in 3.2 above. We also use our breadth and depth of SCQF level qualifications for leavers as a measure against our virtual comparator.
- 3.4 As part of our revised Secondary Improvement Model approach this session and secondary school visit programme, we continue to discuss performance with Moray Secondary Head Teachers and collectively through Secondary Head Teacher meetings, with our Scottish Government Insight advisor and at school level with in-person visits to schools. This is in line with our revised Secondary Attainment and Performance Framework for school support and challenge, data scrutiny activities and discussion on key actions required and next steps focussed on improvement.
- 3.5 Caution remains with data trends over time whereby this year's return to a formal examination diet is a follow on from two very different years of Alternative Certification Models (ACMs) with Covid-19 impacting on young people and our school communities. Schools continue to support young people as a result of the legacy of Covid-19, with secondary schools reporting higher levels of absence, concerns in relation to behaviours exhibited by some young people, mental health and wellbeing concerns and further increase in Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAA) for examinations. Some AAA has resulted in acute accommodation pressures in some of our secondary schools in planning ahead for SQA Examinations starting in April 2023.
- 3.6 Secondary schools continue to support young people as much as possible through wellbeing, learning and supported study opportunities. While schools are offering the latter, it is noted that Secondary Head Teachers report in much lower than anticipated uptake for sessions offered. Further signposting to national e-learning opportunities offered through e-Sgoil and Scholar are also made by our schools in support of young people as well as wider interventions including mentoring and targeted learning conversations/target setting.

3.7 Our Best Value Audit Report for Moray highlighted scope for improvement in levels of attainment for a number of measures; this was extracted from our attainment data for session 2017/18. Within this Committee report, data from 2017/18 is noted along with data from 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 in order to demonstrate progress made to date as well as actions that are planned for improvement, albeit within very different assessment processes and operating environments compared to previous sessions when arriving at final grades, making year on year comparisons unequal.

3.8 This report will now complete the attainment picture for session 2021/22 where leaver destination data is not available until December of each year, information appearing on Insight in February 2023. This report is presented to Committee at first available opportunity following data release. For session 2021/22 there were 963 leavers in total (S4: 173; S5: 292; S6: 498)

#### 4 **SENIOR PHASE ATTAINMENT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW – LEAVERS’ DATA**

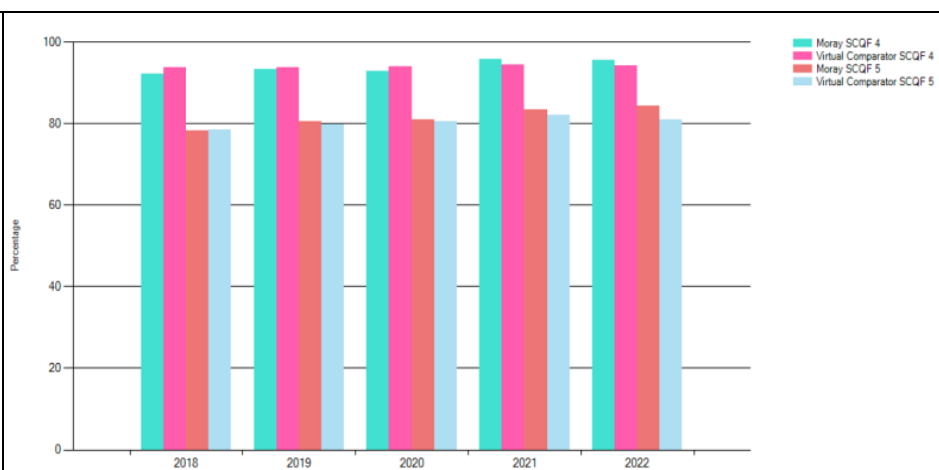
##### **Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy**

4.1 This measure presents the percentage of leavers achieving an award in Literacy and Numeracy at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 4 and 5 by the end of their school experience in Moray, compared with pupils with identified similar characteristics across Scotland (VC - Virtual Comparator) for each of the last five years. This is shown in graph form below for Moray (all leavers, percentage attaining Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and 5).

##### **Percentage of Leavers Attaining Literacy:**

SCQF level 4: Literacy remains **above** the VC, common with 2021.

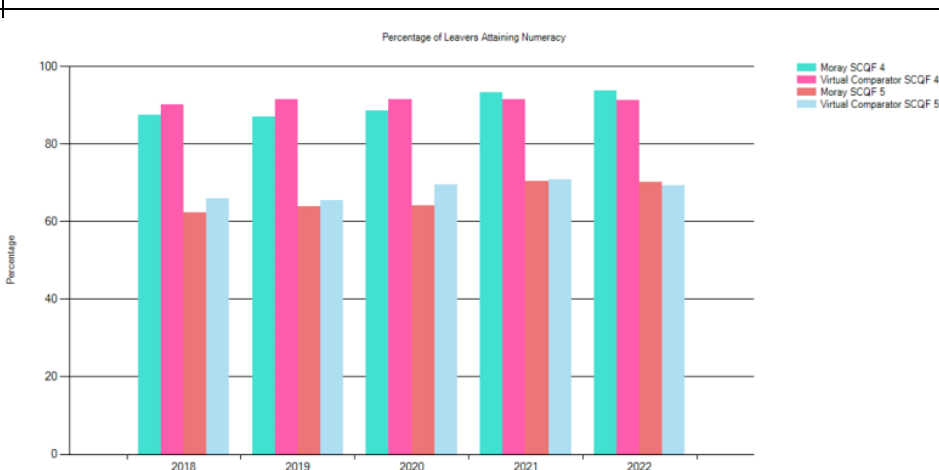
SCQF level 5: Literacy is **above** the VC, highest positive gap across 5 year trend.



##### **Percentage of Leavers Attaining Numeracy:**

SCQF level 4: Numeracy remains **above** the VC, common with 2021.

SCQF level 5: Numeracy is marginally **above** the VC, now positive and above VC (first time in 5 year trend).



*Five-year analysis: Moray performance at SCQF level 4 and 5 against Virtual Comparator*

Literacy & Numeracy	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Literacy	% Level 5 Numeracy
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2022</b>	95.53	93.87	84.32	70.09
VC	2022	94.26	91.21	81.09	69.35
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2021</b>	95.90	93.29	83.39	70.53
VC	2021	94.52	91.57	82.01	70.93
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2020</b>	92.95	88.53	80.88	64.16
VC	2020	93.95	91.62	80.44	69.63
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2019</b>	93.30	87.16	80.46	64.00
VC	2019	93.73	91.60	79.81	65.49
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2018</b>	92.22	87.46	78.38	62.38
VC	2018	93.89	90.24	78.44	65.83

4.2 Overall, Moray has performed positively and above the Virtual Comparator for leaver attainment for Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and level 5. This year is the first in a five year trend that performance has exceeded the Virtual Comparator across all four measures reported above.

### Improving attainment for all

4.3 This measure allows us to examine how different ability cohorts are attaining in relation to the appropriate virtual and national cohorts. Attainment is measured using the tariff scale, which was developed for Insight. This allocated a specific number of points to each qualification (including non-examination, unit-based courses). More demanding qualifications gain more points than less demanding ones and in graded courses, a grade 'A' is equivalent to more points than a grade 'C' for example, within the same course

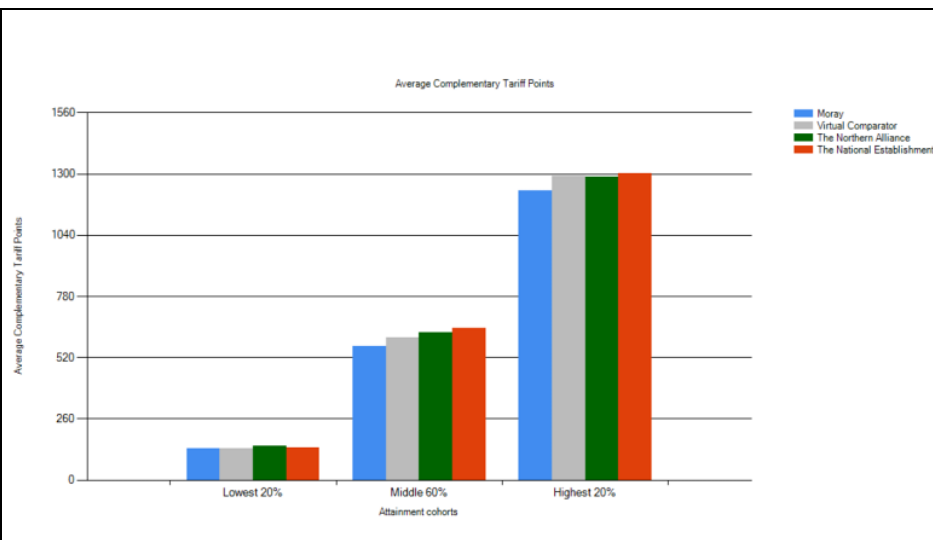
4.4 Three ability cohorts are identified for each school, the VC, the Northern Alliance (Regional Improvement Collaborative) and Scotland as a whole (The National Establishment): those in the lowest 20% of tariff points achieved, those in the highest 20% and those that fall within the middle 60% of tariff points achieved based on the courses they have undertaken and completed.

### Average Complementary Tariff Points:

The lowest 20% are **in line** with comparators overall.

The middle 60% are **marginally below** VC, Northern Alliance and Scotland.

The highest 20% are **below** comparators with gap noted.



- 4.5 Complementary tariff is a score that looks at parity of achievement of young people in their top five qualifications studied. It is not affected by the number of qualifications and units a young person completed; this removes the inequality and anomalies with different curriculum structures across Scotland of which there are many. Reasons included quality of pass and level of study can impact on the overall tariff measure, requiring schools to continue to work with young people and families in raising aspirations in order to aim high for positive achievement.
- 4.6 Recent work on curriculum choice and innovation, working with Education Scotland in collaboration with our Moray Secondary Schools and through recent ADES- Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement event focused on Senior Phase Curriculum will progress further work on curriculum design for strengthened consortia working and senior phase offers.

*3-year analysis: Lowest 20%, Middle 60%, Highest 20% across SCQF levels*

<b>Complementary Tariff</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Lowest 20%</b>	<b>Middle 60%</b>	<b>Highest 20%</b>
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2022</b>	135	568	1,231
VC	2022	133	605	1,290
Northern Alliance	2022	143	628	1,289
National	2022	138	644	1,303
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2021</b>	129	631	1,277
VC	2021	137	638	1,315
Northern Alliance	2021	143	669	1,328
National	2021	144	692	1,339
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2020</b>	117	595	1,284
VC	2020	130	610	1,286
Northern Alliance	2020	142	654	1,321
National	2020	133	657	1,313

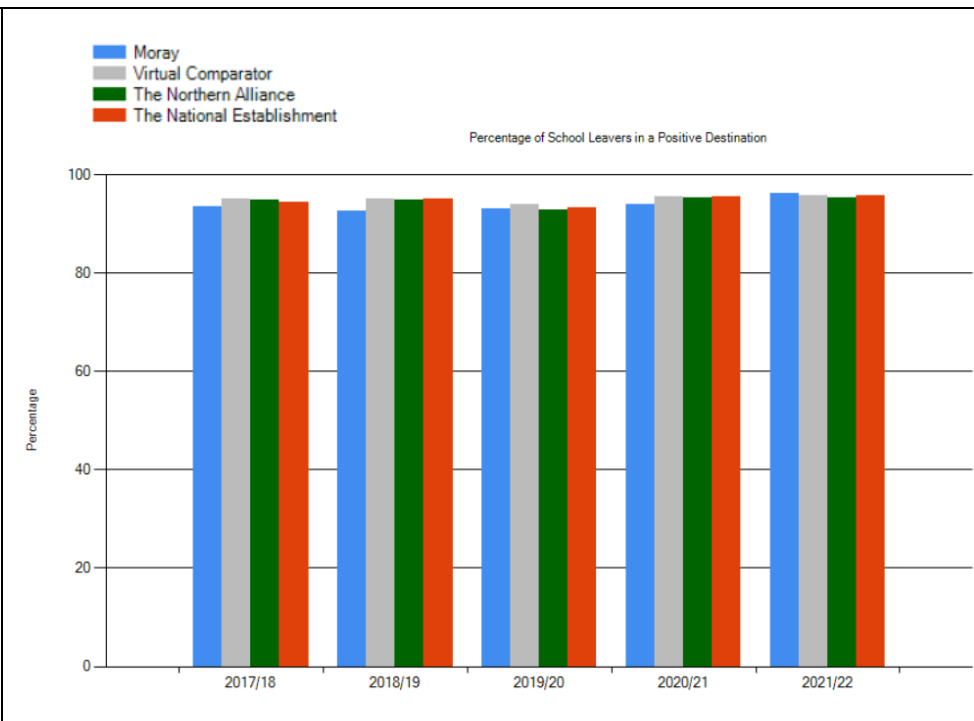
- 4.7 It is noted that the lowest 20% of leavers are marginally above the VC, the middle 60% and highest 20% below the VC, matching performance of pre-pandemic 2019 data as most recent previous year of an SQA examination diet (2019: lowest 20%: 127, middle 60%: 555, highest 20%: 1,205). Schools have continued this session to support young people as longer term impact of the pandemic continues to be realised through attendance, health and wellbeing concerns reported. Challenging behaviours exhibited by a minority of young people require schools to creatively support them and their families, impacting on resources and staffing capacity. We continue to work with multi-agency partners in support of children and families, with increased societal pressures and demand on partner services impacting on school resources.

#### **Leaver initial destinations – increased post-school participation**

- 4.8 This measure shows the percentage of young people securing an initial positive post-school destination when the leave school at their point of exit in S4, S5 or S6.
- 4.9 Destination figures reflect choices made by pupils along with opportunities available to them upon leaving school. The availability of particular opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships and employment opportunities) extend options available to school leavers. As a result, this may have impact on the number of young people progressing on to Further and Higher Education as destination pathways.

**Leaver Initial destinations – percentage of school leavers in a positive destination:**

Moray in 2021/2022 has performed **above all key comparators** (VC, Northern Alliance, National), **highest across a 5-year trend period** for initial positive destinations.

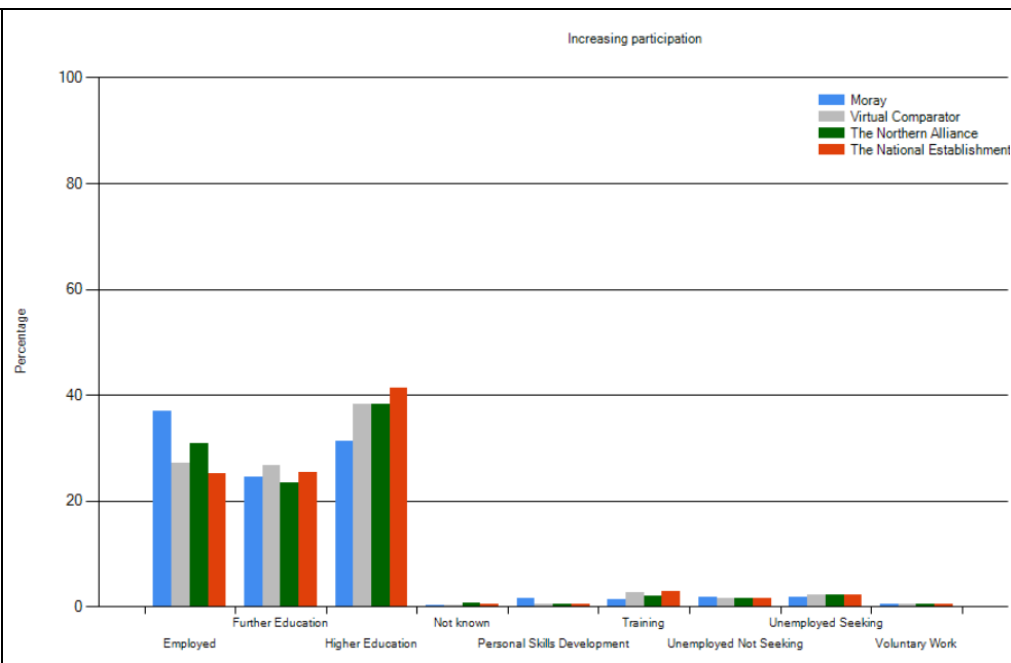


Year	Moray	VC	Northern Alliance	National Establishment
2022	96.16	95.87	95.41	95.74
2021	94.08	95.64	95.32	95.48
2020	93.07	93.78	92.99	93.36
2019	92.76	95.30	94.98	95.05
2018	93.62	95.05	94.99	94.40
2017	93.53	94.02	94.39	93.72

4.10 In Moray, for 2021/2022 we perform above national average at 96.2% compared with 94.08% in 2020/2021 and 93.07% in 2019/2020 and for the first time in 5 years, Moray is above all key benchmark comparators as outlined above. Nationally, 95.74% of leavers were in an initial positive destination compared to 95.48% in 2020/2021.

**Leaver destinations for 2021/2022:**

Data presented highlights **more young people entering employment** compared with key comparators. **Further Education is in line with comparators overall, Higher Education below comparators.**



4.11 As further outlined in graph form above and in the table below, the number of young people entering employment, Further and Higher Education contribute most to initial positive school leaver destination figures, with percentage of young people entering employment in particular this session as an initial positive destination, notably above key comparators at 36.86%. Where Covid-19 may have had impact on availability of opportunities for young people, this did not restrict prospects for our young people in Moray. We continue to work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in order to strengthen support and advice for young people as they progress on chosen pathways to initial post-school destinations.

	Year	Employed %	Further Education %	Higher Education %	Not known %	Personal Skills Development %	Training %	Unemployed Not Seeking %	Unemployed Seeking %	Voluntary Work %
Moray	2021/22	36.86	24.40	31.36	0.31	1.66	1.45	1.77	1.77	0.42
VC	2021/22	27.18	26.75	38.21	0.33	0.45	2.75	1.67	2.13	0.53
Northern Alliance	2021/22	30.84	23.35	38.28	0.66	0.48	1.93	1.63	2.30	0.53
National	2021/22	25.11	25.45	41.27	0.40	0.51	2.92	1.54	2.32	0.47
Moray	2020/21	27.42	26.62	37.09	0.23	0.46	2.28	2.16	3.53	0.23
VC	2020/21	25.53	24.81	40.91	0.25	0.50	3.58	1.73	2.38	0.31
Northern Alliance	2020/21	27.47	22.80	41.67	0.46	0.34	2.75	1.89	2.33	0.31
National	2020/21	22.58	23.29	45.11	0.30	0.47	3.67	1.69	2.53	0.37

4.12 In comparison with the 2020/21 leaver cohort, it is noted that numbers entering employment in 2021/22 was notably higher, with drop in numbers entering Further and Higher Education also witnessed as highlighted in yellow above.

4.13 Those young people who are *unemployed not seeking* and *unemployed seeking* are below or in line with key comparators respectively, lower than session 2020/21. Our schools continue to work with key partners through pathway planning meetings to ensure pupils at more risk of negative destinations are supported, during and post-school. We continue to reduce percentages in these categories to as near to zero as possible, noting impact of wider factors (for example, mental health and wellbeing) on initial positive post-school destination of identified young people.

4.14 Work also continues with key partners including Skills Development Scotland and DYW Moray to ensure Moray learners are informed and afforded opportunities to progress on to chosen post-school pathways based in individual desires and talents. We continue to analyse our key data on leaver dates, destinations and routes to success to support for young people, in order that they may succeed in their chosen journeys.

**Tacking disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers**

4.15 The graph below shows 2021/22 leaver attainment data (using complementary tariff scores) for Moray against the Virtual Comparator, broken down into the ten deciles according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Decile 1 refers to attainment of young people living in areas with postcodes considered the 10% most deprived in Scotland according to SIMD. Decile 10 refers to those young people living in postcodes identified as the 10% least deprived datazones according in SIMD. We continue to monitor the use of SIMD as a measure in authorities where rural poverty and other wider poverty related factors are of concern; however, these are not fully considered nationally within SIMD classification.

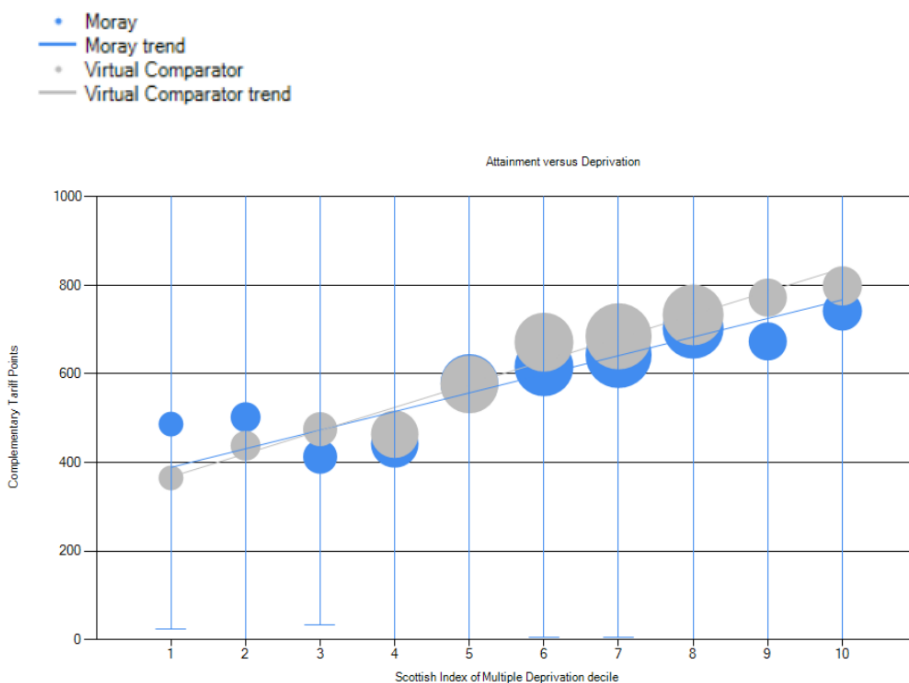
### Attainment versus Deprivation - VC

Performance at deciles 1, 2, and 5 **are above or marginally above the VC.**

Performance at deciles 4, 6, 7 and 8 **are marginally below the VC.**

Performance at SIMD 9 and 10 **are below the VC.**

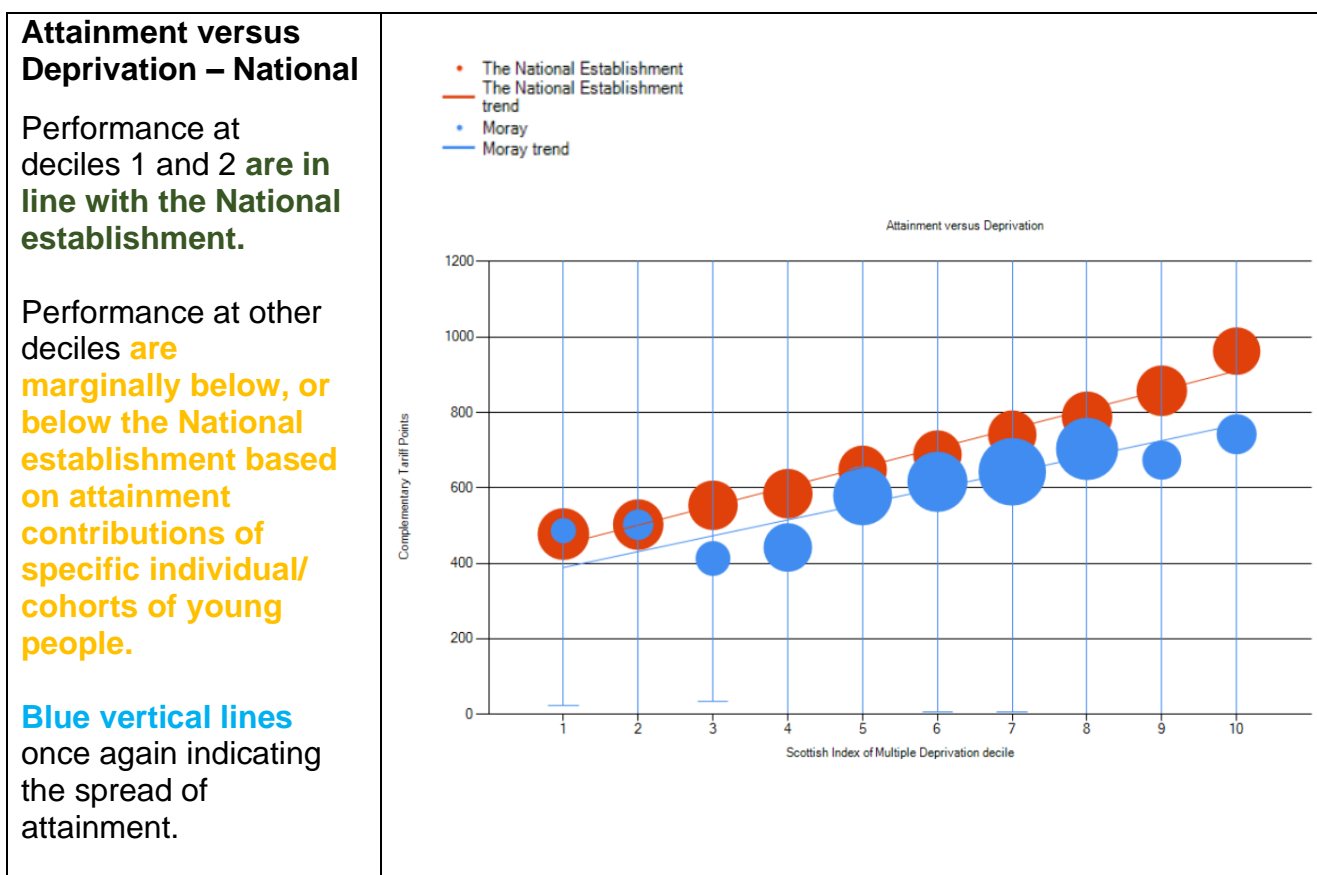
Larger circle size represents a greater amount of young people within the SIMD decile.



4.16 The highest number of young people leaving school in Moray in 2021/2022 were within SIMD deciles 4-8. It is noted that while performance at SIMD decile 5 is in line with the VC, some young people in deciles 4, 6, 7 and 8 performed less well in comparison with VC. Vertical lines within each SIMD show the range of attainment for young people within each decile, noting both positive and less favourable attainment for a variety of reasons as noted previously. As shown by trend lines, as SIMD decile increases to SIMD 10, a small attainment gap emerges as the SIMD increase between Moray and the VC.



4.17 A similar comparison may also be made against the National Establishment (Scotland) as shown in graph form below.



4.18 In Moray, we continue to work with our children and young people, and their families in order to raise aspirations and encourage positive attendance and engagement. Legacy impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is noted through school attendance levels, increase in less favourable behaviours with some young people impacting on wider school community and secondary school temporary/short term exclusions. Following the Association of Directors for Education Scotland (ADES)-Education Scotland Curriculum Innovation event in March, we look forward to planning our curriculum for the future, working further in partnership across our schools and with Moray College UHI to enhance our curriculum for all. We continue to participate in key national reform on the curriculum underway through review based activities, with a view to maximising achievement of all learners, in graded and ungraded qualifications and curriculum experiences as we look to the future.

**Breadth and depth of qualifications achieved by leavers**

4.19 This measure considers the breadth (number) and depth (SCQF levels studied) of qualifications achieved by our young people in Moray. This demonstrates the suite of qualifications that our 963 leavers in session 2021/22 (increase from 837 leavers in session 2020/21) gained throughout their Senior Phase by point of exit, whether in S4, S5 or S6 as they reach school leaving age or natural point of exit from their secondary schooling based on their chosen pathway and qualifications required.

4.20 The table below highlights overall performance across key breadth and depth measures against the VC. This measures how many qualifications learners achieved at all SCQF level qualifications (SCQF level 5, 6, 7); this includes National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher awards as well as others qualifications, including Skills for Work and National Progression Awards at level 5. Key measures are:

- 1+, 3+, 5+ and 6+ qualifications at SCQF level 5
- 1+, 3+ and 5+ qualifications at SCQF level 6
- 1+ qualifications at SCQF level 7

	SCQF level 5				SCQF Level 6			SCQF level 7
	1+	3+	5+	6+	1+	3+	5+	1+
<b>2022</b>								
Moray	90.1%	76.2%	63.1%	56.0%	60.4%	45.6%	29.8%	21.2%
VC	88.5%	77.2%	65.3%	58.3%	63.1%	49.5%	35.8%	23.3%
<b>2021</b>								
Moray	88.7%	79.3%	65.8%	57.3%	63.9%	49.7%	34.2%	23.7%
VC	89.0%	78.7%	67.4%	60.5%	65.5%	52.0%	37.6%	24.1%
<b>2020</b>								
Moray	87.6%	74.6%	61.9%	55.1%	61.2%	48.5%	34.2%	22.0%
VC	87.6%	76.5%	65.0%	57.4%	63.1%	50.3%	36.8%	22.6%
<b>2019</b>								
Moray	88.6%	74.9%	61.6%	50.3%	58.7%	44.5%	29.5%	18.7%
VC	87.8%	74.0%	60.7%	52.7%	60.6%	46.5%	32.3%	19.1%

4.21 At SCQF level 5, leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at this level or above has witnessed positive increase to 90.1% and above the VC. At other measures, performance is marginally below the VC. Across breadth and depth measures at SCQF level 6, performance is below the VC. However, compared with 2019 (as the last year prior to 2022 when formal SQA examinations were the principal form of assessment in place), all measures are above 2019 performance as highlighted in yellow above.

4.22 Through our Secondary School Improvement Model (SIM) partnership working, secondary schools are moving to pilot alternative timetabling and curriculum approaches for session 2023/2024. This includes piloting of seven SCQF level 5 qualifications in S4 in one of our SIM partnerships as well as exploration of a wider health and social care pilot option in a further SIM partnership. All schools have embraced the SCQF Ambassador programme working with the SCQF partnership to extend opportunities through wider awards and accreditation, maximising achievement of Moray's young people.

4.23 Data literacy and interrogation has been strengthened as we complete our Scottish Government Insight Benchmarking strategy timeline and working with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, we continue to monitor use of additional monies in our school supported through Scottish Attainment Challenge Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding arrangements. Looking to term 4, we look to further review our stretch aims as a measure to focus improvement activities, following review of the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress by Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

- 4.24 Further actions for improvement have previously been provided in the [Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment: Session 2021-2022 Committee Paper](#) presented for scrutiny and noting to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 2 November 2022. We continue to support our schools through support and challenge activities and our central quality improvement framework aligned to our key Quality Indicator Framework, [How Good is Our School? version 4](#).

## 5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to (3) provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence and (4) day to day service delivery in line with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan LOIP), (2) building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any future reduction in funding to schools may directly may adversely impact on data presented and impact on supports available to maximise achievement of Moray's children and young people in our schools.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

There are risk implications as to how this attainment dataset will continue to be used as comparator data for the next 3-5 years and may skew future performance reporting. The data presented herein reflects year 1 of reversion to an examination based system, differing to the previous two session's ACM and the examination process in place during session 2018/2019.

Schools continue to report concerns regarding behaviours, wellbeing, mental health and impact on learner outcomes and attainment. This has resulted in increased behaviours of concern in schools, with pressure on partnership capacity impacting on wider supports available to schools. As a result, existing resources require to be directed to support young people individually/in small groups by schools, impacting on wider school agenda of improving outcomes for individual pupils, groups and cohorts.

Schools further note increases in Additional Support Needs among pupils, impacting on number of courses studied and levels of study. This has measurable impact on attainment measures outlined above on individual schools and is anticipated to increase based on Broad General Education cohort information. A number of young people, due to their additional support needs, access a personalised curriculum with individual targets and outcomes. Where a number of other local authorities have dedicated establishments for supporting young people

with specific SEBN/ASN, this is not reflected fully in comparators presented due to different operating contexts and limited external resource offer.

Uncertainty continues as a result of further impact of the Covid-19 pandemic now being realised as a result of challenging behaviours exhibited by some young people and need for increased parental involvement and engagement in supporting schools to reinforce importance of positive relationships and raising ambition in young people. This is noted in breadth and depth measures and aspiration of young people to achieve as fully as they can, with increased levels of anxiety noted resulting in lower ambition in courses/course levels studied in Senior Phase.

All of the above are likely to have an effect on SQA results and overall performance data in future years. Changes in assessing qualifications in 2020 and 2021 as a result of cancellation of examinations as well as return to examinations this session creates risks relating to accountability and data comparability. Further potential changes are planned to our main awarding body – SQA – as it is redeveloped along with assessment approaches in the future, altering comparator datasets further.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on performance.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined due to the scrutiny based nature of activities reported and no findings related to such implications contained herein.

**(i) Consultations**

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 Committee is invited to consider and note performance of leavers in Moray for session 2021/22 based on the return to formal SQA examination diet in May 2022, after two years of Alternative Certification Models in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Positive performance is noted in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF level 4 and level 5, initial positive leaver destinations and individual measures within attainment versus deprivation (SIMD), improving attainment for all (complementary tariff)**

and breadth and depth compared with 2019 as the last year available of similar comparison due to SQA examination diet presence.

- 5.2 Work continues across our secondary schools to support young people, with wider wellbeing needs emerging as we have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools continue to work together and with key partners to ensure young people progress on to positive post-school destinations and those who require additional support are increasingly supported by our schools, creative in their approaches using resources they have available to meet learning, wellbeing, additional support and behavioural needs.**
- 5.3 We continue to analyse our data and performance centrally and with our schools through our quality improvement processes, sharing good practice and successes while focussing on improving outcomes further based on data intelligence.**
- 5.4 This report completes the cycle of performance reporting for session 2021/22.**

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers: [Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment: Session 2021-2022 Committee Paper](#)  
[How Good is Our School? version 4](#)

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