



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 8 JUNE 2022**

**SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVER ATTAINMENT
2020-2021**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the SQA leaver attainment across our secondary schools and for this data to be fully scrutinised as part of our raising attainment and improvement strategy. This is an update to the Initial Attainment Report for Secondary Schools 2021 previously presented to Committee on 24 November 2021, updated and now presented to Committee at first opportunity following local government elections in May 2022.
- 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 2020/2021 with specific regard to the National Measures for leavers published on Insight in February 2022;**
- (ii) scrutinise and note the actions for improvement arising from the 2020/2021 attainment performance; and**
- (iii) acknowledge and commend practitioner commitment, extensive preparation and support of young people throughout the session as we return to an examination based model as well as young people's resilience and dedication throughout last session's Alternative Certification Model period.**

3. BACKGROUND

SQA Attainment – Session 2020/21

- 3.1 Contextual background is provided in order to support review of data presented in subsequent sections. Following continued disruption due to the Covid-19 public health emergency, the Deputy First Minister announced cancellation of National 5 examinations for 2021 and requested that SQA develop an Alternative Certification Model (ACM) to replace 2021 exams for National 5. This was to be based on teacher judgement and supported by assessment resources and quality assurance instead of a final examination based assessment process.
- 3.2 On 8 December 2020, the Deputy First Minister further announced the cancellation of 2021 exams for Higher and Advanced Higher, and instructed SQA to extend the 2021 ACM to Higher and Advanced Higher.
- 3.3 From the start of Term 3 in January 2021, a second period of National lockdown commenced following the announcement by Scotland's First Minister on 19 December 2020 due to impact of Covid-19. In January 2021, online learning and Remote Learning approaches were re-established across all schools alongside childcare provision for critical key workers and identified vulnerable children and Additional Support Needs (ASN) pupils across all of the schools in Moray.
- 3.4 Return of some Senior Phase (S4-S6) learners to our school buildings in support of practical based subjects was provided in line with Scottish Government guidance and mitigations from early March 2021. This enabled completion of practical work which could not be undertaken at home. SQA following advice from the National Qualifications 2021 group revised guidance on course content and assessment, further removing requirement for submission of coursework as part of evidence requirement for SQA courses.
- 3.5 For session 2020/2021, provisional results were shared with learners by schools in advance of the 25 June deadline for initial result submission to SQA. Subsequently, SQA progressed with formal certification of these results as scheduled on 10 August 2021 with further opportunity as required for appeals of which few were submitted for Moray learners due to rigour of the ACM quality assurance process in place across Moray schools.
- 3.6 For learners in S5 and S6, session 2020/2021 was the second year of disruption faced by them in relation to their schooling and to the SQA examination system with move to an ACM. Learners in S4, S5 and S6 have not yet participated in an examination diet or related experience (e.g. in-school preliminary examinations or 'prelims') as was in place prior to session 2019/2020. As noted nationally, many young people have reported their mental health and wellbeing has been adversely impacted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, where schools have continued focus on supporting and monitoring wellbeing while also aiming to raise attainment and achievement for all in a very different school experience. Increased anti-social behaviour

has also arisen in certain localities involving some young people, with increase in exclusion across some schools.

Leaver Attainment

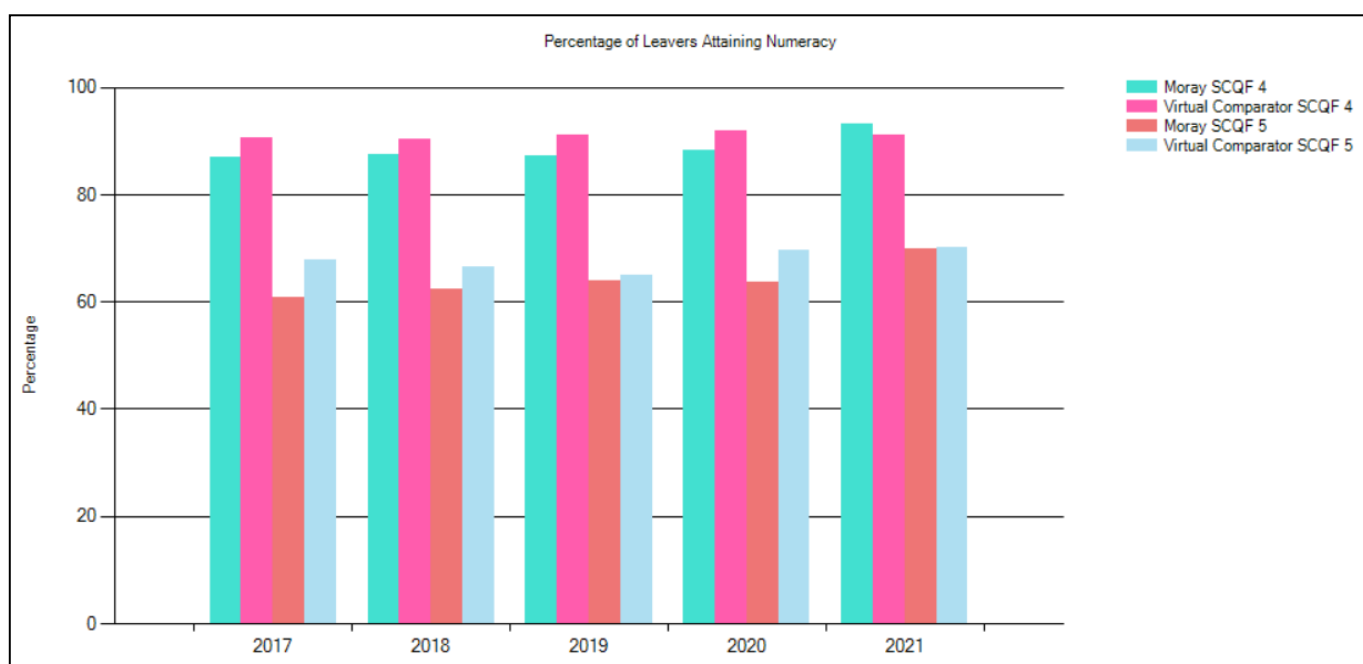
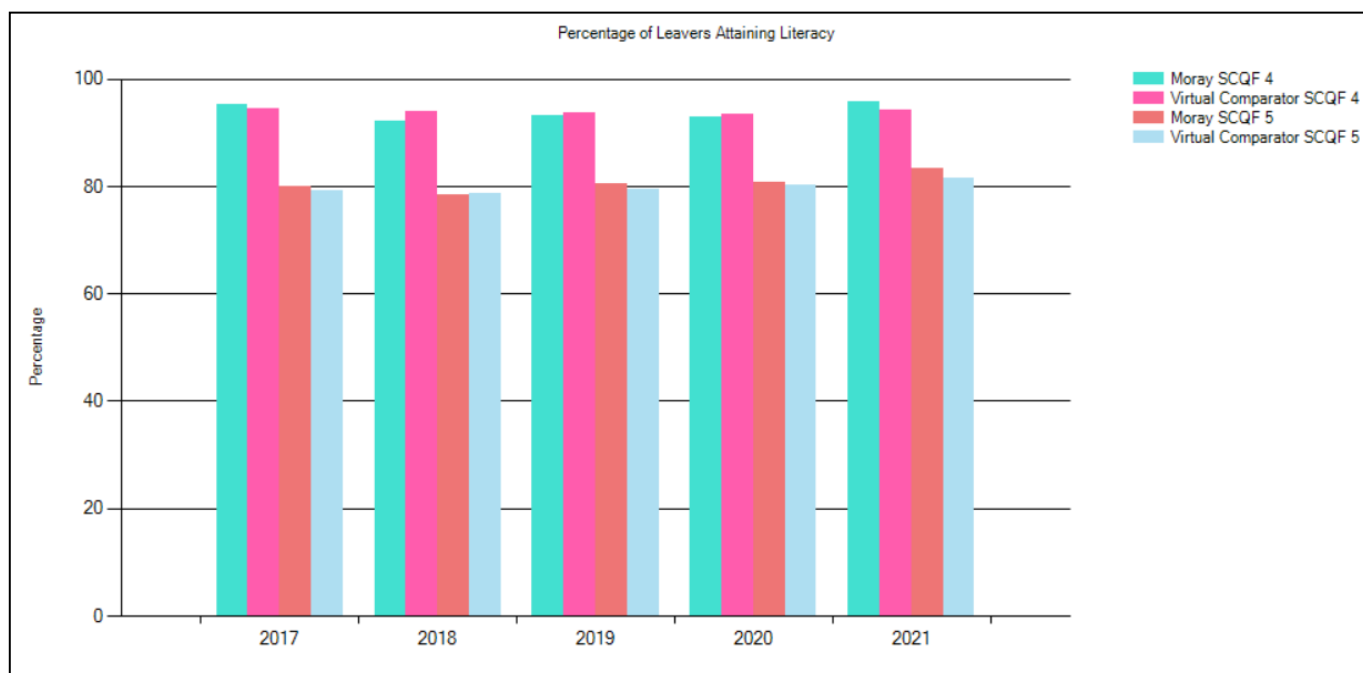
- 3.7 The Insight data we receive each year for cohort attainment across S4, S5 and S6 focuses on performance in the Senior Phase across four key national benchmarking measures:
- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy
 - Improving attainment for all
 - Increasing post-school destinations
 - Tacking disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to high attainers
- 3.8 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 3.7 above. We also use our breadth and depth of SCQF level qualifications for leavers as a measure against our virtual comparator.
- 3.9 Senior Phase Attainment meetings have taken place with secondary schools to analyse the SQA performance data and to set actions for improvement appropriate to all schools on an individual basis. Final meetings occurred in December 2021 with previous ACM Quality Assurance and Data Meetings taking place during March to June 2021 analysing data sets forming the basis for this report, now in final format.
- 3.10 In addition to Senior Phase Attainment meetings and central local authority scrutiny and support visits, working with the Scottish Government advisor for Insight, we have embarked on a 2-year pan-authority Insight Strategy for Moray with analysis and discussion sessions held during March to May 2022 for colleagues within Education across our Moray system including the Central Education Team, School Leaders, Academic and wider partners, Subject leaders and Subject colleagues. Through sessions held, data literacy and awareness of critical attainment messages has been raised, with next steps planned for continuous improvement.
- 3.11 A complete picture of the performance of a school, local authority or Scotland in totality requires data from all four key measures to be considered together. However, as indicated in the Insight update letter of 21 February 2022 to Directors of Education in Scotland, caution is expressed with year on year comparisons due to different approaches to assessment and certification in place. “Results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In particular, the cancellation of exams and external assessment of coursework in 2020, and the use of the Alternative Certification Model in 2021, will have affected the attainment of many 2020/21 school leavers. It is also likely that the pandemic will have continued to affect the destination choices made by, and opportunities available to, some school leavers in 2020/21”.

- 3.12 Although the latest set of annual exam results become available on Insight in September each year, the school leaver destination data is not available until December. This appears in Insight following update in February of the following year. Therefore, it is only possible to provide a complete picture of attainment and achievement from March/April onwards each year, this paper presented to Committee at earliest opportunity following local government elections in May 2022.
- 3.13 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 and 2020/21 in order to demonstrate progress made to date as well as actions that are planned for improvement, albeit within very different assessment processes and educational environments to previous sessions when arriving at final grades, making 'like for like' comparisons difficult.
- 3.14 Committee should also be aware that over the course of session 2020/21 there was significant disruption to learning. The 'new' timetable did start early during the first lockdown however learning was being undertaken remotely and approaches to remote learning, including roll out of devices were in the early stages. S4 learners in particular were not used to timed in-class assessments during August to December – this time was identified as a key opportunity to cover as much content as possible.
- 3.15 In normal sessions prelims would take place in January, however they did not take place due to the second lockdown and examinations had already been cancelled. As a result young people had limited opportunities to undertake controlled assessments under examination conditions until they returned to school in April 2021. Although the period for gathering evidence was extended, some young people will have found this a particularly anxious time.

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 (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).



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
Moray	2021	95.90	93.29	83.39	69.85
VC	2021	94.32	91.18	81.62	70.07
Moray	2020	92.95	88.29	80.88	63.56
VC	2020	93.57	91.97	80.13	69.65
Moray	2019	93.30	87.16	80.46	63.89
VC	2019	93.73	91.13	79.46	65.04
Moray	2018	92.22	87.46	78.38	62.38
VC	2018	93.89	90.28	78.64	66.63
Moray	2017	95.26	87.07	80.06	60.78
VC	2017	94.43	90.51	79.30	67.87

- 4.2 The information in the graphs and table in 4.1 show that with regards to literacy and numeracy, Moray has improved leaver attainment overall at SCQF level 4 and level 5 Literacy and SCQF level 4 Numeracy against the Virtual Comparator (VC). On review of the past four year's data, this is a positive and improving trend overall, particularly with regard to SCQF level 4 Numeracy. Numeracy at level 5 has also notably improved, with positive increase in performance of 6.29% on 2020 leaver cohort attainment. Green shading indicates positive and improving performance on previous session against VC, amber indicating performance marginally below VC and red shading highlighting trend performance not in line with VC.
- 4.3 Compared with targets set for Literacy and Numeracy within our current Raising Attainment Strategy for Moray for the current session for learners achieving SCQF 4 level or above, Literacy and Numeracy, overall we have met our Literacy and Numeracy targets set. Buckie High School, Forres Academy, Keith Grammar School, Lossiemouth High School and Milne's High School exceed target set for Literacy. Almost all secondary schools meet or exceed target set for Numeracy: Buckie High School, Elgin Academy, Elgin High School, Keith Grammar School, Lossiemouth High School, Milne's High School and Speyside High School. Almost all schools perform above VC data set for 2021 for school leavers.

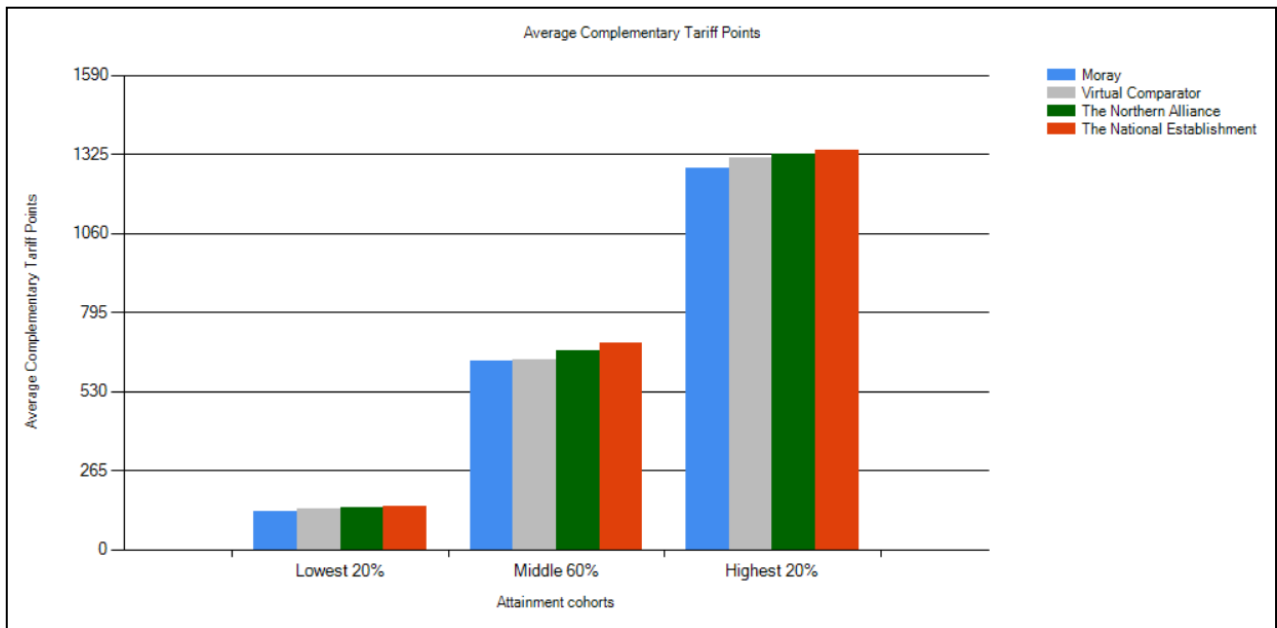
Moray's Raising Attainment Strategy Target Analysis:

Literacy & Numeracy	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 4 Numeracy
Moray	2021	95.90	93.29
Target	2021	96.00	92.00
Variance	2021	-0.10	+1.29

- 4.4 Focus on ensuring our young people leave with highest possible levels of Literacy and Numeracy continues across our secondary schools. Our Senior Leadership Teams and subject leaders continue to scrutinise cohort data and supported by wider equity teams and Principal Teachers of Raising Attainment and Alternative Curriculum, have supported young people in accessing additional interventions in order to secure core Literacy and Numeracy qualifications at the highest possible SCQF level appropriate for them, by their point of exit – S4, S5 or S6 – from secondary schools.
- 4.5 Further initiatives and interventions to support improvement in attainment for literacy and numeracy across Moray has included:
- Use of additional Covid monies to support recovery and intervention, with staff deployed to support literacy and numeracy and assessments. This has included teachers of literacy/numeracy and Principal Teachers of Raising Attainment/Equity
 - Robust tracking and monitoring across our schools of Literacy and Numeracy attainment, to ensure best possible outcomes for all learners
 - Increased focus on literacy and numeracy throughout Covid-19 disruption, strengthening skills development and focussed time
 - Scrutiny of literacy and numeracy across our schools, supported by the Insight analytical dataset for highlighting any underperformance and identifying wider attainment gaps
 - Additional time in the Broad General Education and Senior Phase to support literacy and numeracy, including working with ASG Primary Schools and focus on Numeracy interventions and strategies

Improving attainment for all

- 4.6 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
- 4.7 Three ability cohorts are identified for each school, the VC, the Northern Alliance (Regional Improvement Collaborative) and Scotland as a whole: those in the bottom 20% of tariff points achieved, those in the top 20% and those that fall within the middle 60% of tariff points achieved based on the courses they have undertaken and completed.



4.8 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.

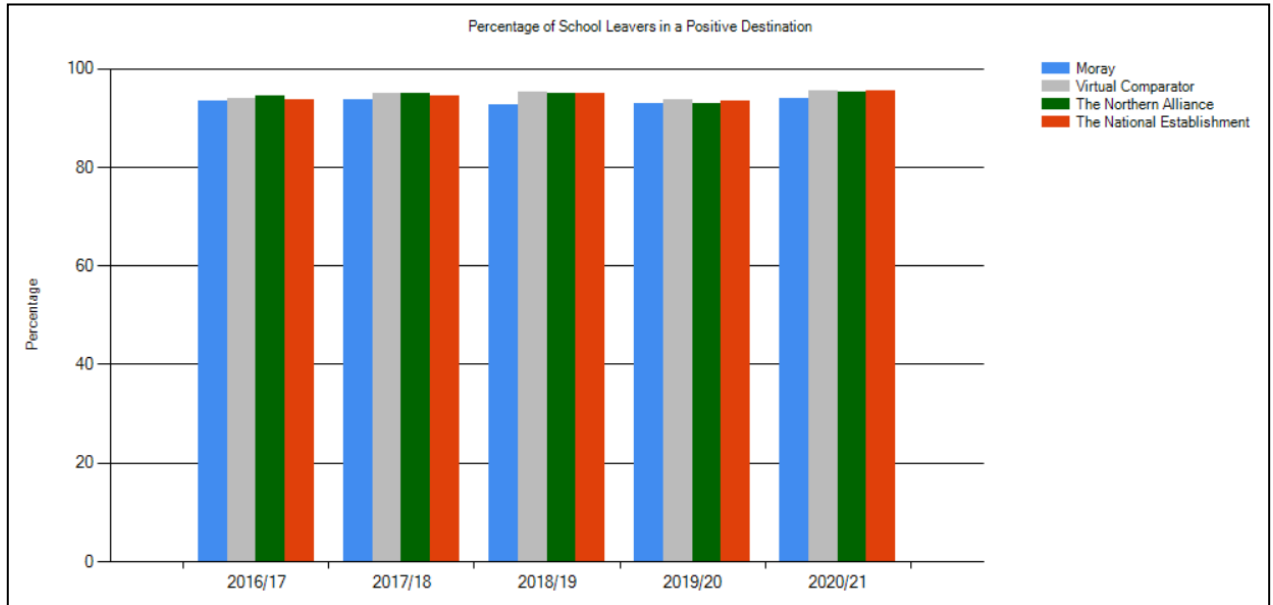
3-year analysis: Moray performance at SCQF level 4 and 5 against VC

Complementary Tariff	Year	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%
Moray	2021	129	631	1,277
VC	2021	137	638	1,315
Northern Alliance	2021	143	669	1,328
National	2021	144	692	1,339
Moray	2020	117	595	1,284
VC	2020	130	610	1,286
Northern Alliance	2020	142	654	1,321
National	2020	133	657	1,313
Moray	2019	127	555	1,205
VC	2019	130	568	1,244
Northern Alliance	2019	133	591	1,252
National	2019	134	623	1,267

- 4.9 The graph and data table in 4.6 above shows attainment of our young people leaving school in 2021. They show that in Moray, the lowest 20% are slightly below the VC (8 points). However, schools in Moray including Keith Grammar and Lossiemouth High School perform above the VC for the lowest 20% of pupils, with key learning shared regarding course choices and options available. As part of our Moray approach to Curriculum review and our Insight Strategy for Moray, performance at this level is being considered in addition to course options available to suit young people and cohort interests and need.
- 4.10 The middle 60% of leavers are broadly in line with the VC (7 points below) but are below the Northern Alliance and National average. However, this is an improvement in session 2020 by 36 tariff points, which is broadly equivalent to a course award at SCQF level 4. Forres Academy, Lossiemouth High School and Milne's High School perform well for this group of leavers. Schools are continuing to review their Curriculum offer for this group of learners, with further move to review Curriculum offer in line with our Insight Strategy for Moray.
- 4.11 The highest 20% of leavers in Moray performed lower than the VC (38 points) which is broadly equivalent to learners achieving top grades in most subjects but not all (e.g. grade 'A' in all subjects except one at Grade 'B'). It is noted that this gap has widened and schools are continuing to review through their Tracking and Monitoring of Senior Phase students, how to maximise attainment and achievement by point of exit. Tracking throughout the session along with coaching conversations with Senior Phase students on an ongoing basis is ensuring both coursing of young people along with levels of achievement are appropriate against individual targets set.
- 4.12 Underperformance in specific subject areas remains a focus for Senior Leaders through our Insight Strategy, with next steps identified at individual school levels. It is noted that Elgin Academy, Elgin High School and Forres Academy perform well in this area (highest 20%). Progress with our Insight and Curriculum strategies for Moray and review of our Raising Attainment Strategy will support improvement in our performance.

Leaver Initial destinations – Increasing post-school participation

- 4.13 This measure shows the percentage of young people securing an initial positive post-school destination when they leave school at their point of exit in S4, S5 or S6.



- 4.14 Destination figures reflect choices made by pupils along with opportunities available to them upon leaving school. The availability of particular opportunities (e.g. employment opportunities) have been impacted upon by the Covid-19 pandemic and options available to school leavers may also have been further impacted upon by approaches to certification in 2020 and 2021, and attainment levels achieved. This should be considered when reviewing this measure as outlined in 3.1-3.15 above.

- 4.15 The above graph shows 5-year data on the percentage of Moray school leavers progressing on to positive destinations compared to their VC, Moray, the Northern Alliance and National comparators. The data table below highlights data trends and performance, in percentage terms.

Year	Moray	VC	Northern Alliance	National Establishment
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

Positive trend improvement is noted for Moray from 2019 to 2021, whereby 2021 holds the highest positive destination figure for Moray across the past 5 years. However, in 2021 Moray remains marginally below the VC, Northern Alliance and National Establishment.

4.16 In reviewing our destinations, figures of particular note are shaded in yellow in the table below. In Moray, those entering employment is higher than the VC but in line with Northern Alliance local authorities and National. Those entering Further Education is higher than VC, Northern Alliance and National averages.

	Year	% Employed	% Further Education	% Higher Education	% Not known	% Personal Skills Development	% Training	% Unemployed Not Seeking	% Unemployed Seeking	% Voluntary Work
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

4.17 Numbers entering Higher Education in Moray are lower than VC, Northern Alliance and National, which may be offset against more young people progressing to Further Education.

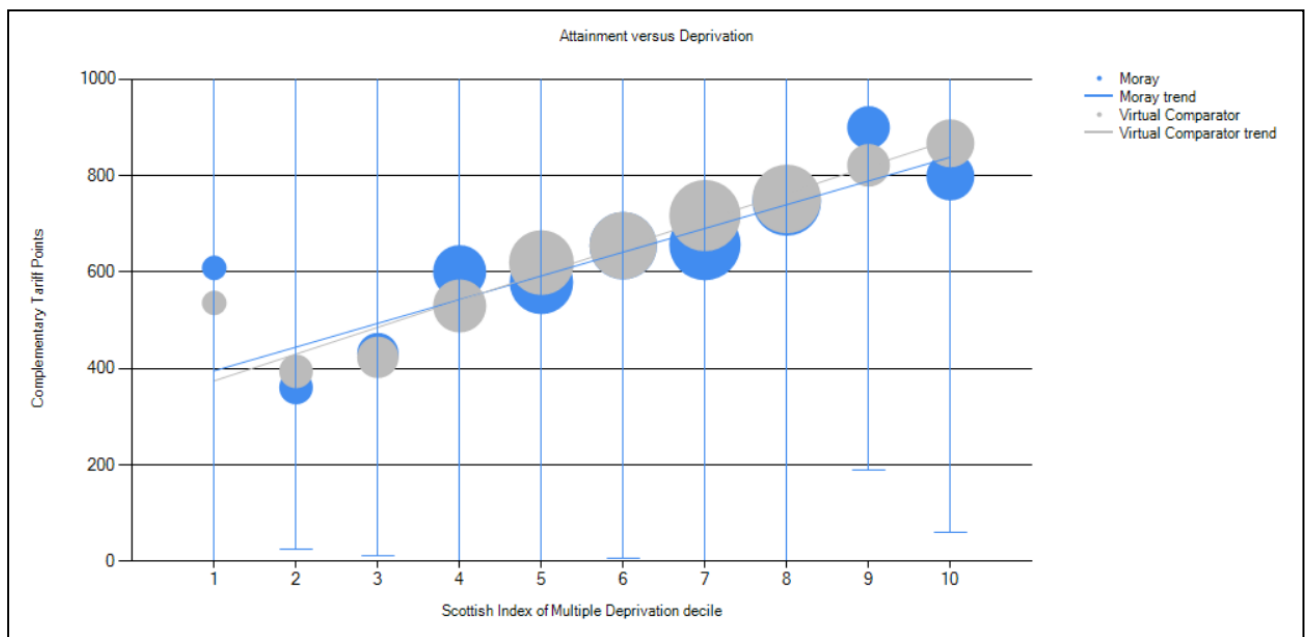
4.18 Of particular note, are the numbers of young people entering a less positive destination, with those 'unemployed seeking' and 'unemployed not seeking' higher than the VC, Northern Alliance and National averages. Work continues with our schools in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and DYW Moray to strengthen pathways to post-school destinations. Pathway planning continues in our schools with focus on all young people and particularly those with an unconfirmed or unknown post-school destination.

4.19 The positive destination breakdown for Moray is collated from 8 very different schools and operational contexts. Covid-19 has continued to impact on session 2020/2021 with related economic downturn nationally and locally. This has potentially contributed to unemployed figures noted above.

4.20 Schools overall are marginally below VC, with Elgin High School and Lossiemouth High School operating above the VC. We will continue to work with partners including Skills Development Scotland and DYW to ensure all Moray learners have access to information in support of accessing appropriate post-school pathways based on interest and individual talents.

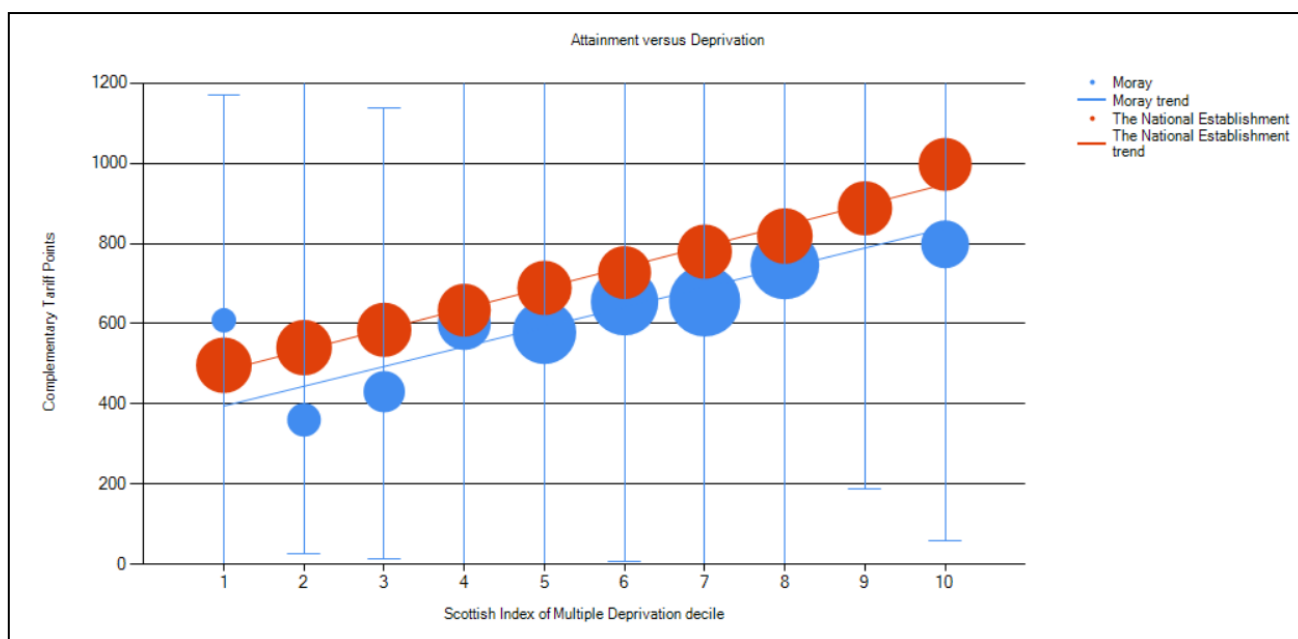
Tacking disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

- 4.21 The graph below shows 2020/2021 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. In Moray, following reclassification of SIMD criteria, we now have young people within decile 1 within Elgin High School ASG. 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.



- 4.22 The graph suggests that school leavers in Moray compare well within decile 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 against the VC, either above or overall, in line with the VC. It is noted that young people in SIMD 2 and 5 are achieving in line or below the VC and in SIMD 7 and 10, below the VC. This was similar to last session with regard to young people in SIMD 7 and 10. It is important to note that the number of young people within each decile is represented on the graph by the size of the circle presented. In this regard, the highest number of young people in Moray fall within SIMD 4 to SIMD 8. Vertical lines within each SIMD show the range of attainment for young people across each decile.

4.23 The comparison can also be made against the National picture rather than VC. The graph below shows this performance – Moray against National Establishment:



4.24 This graph highlights that young people in SIMD deciles 2 to 8 and 10 perform less well against the National average. This was similar to performance in session 2019/2020. The leavers in SIMD decile 1 compares well nationally and SIMD 9 performed in line with the National average. However, SIMD is not reflective of rurality or similar local authority contexts to Moray, noting caution in data interpretation.

4.25 In Moray, we continue to review our Senior Phase Curriculum offer and through careful pathway planning, ensure our young people where at all possible progress to positive post-school destinations as highlighted in 4.17-4.20 above. We continue to work towards consistency in approach across our Moray Secondary schools and work on Curriculum cohesion and review of alternative course awards and approaches to Curriculum delivery including partnership with Moray College UHI, we aim for all learners to achieve suitable qualifications by point of exit from Moray schools.

Breadth and Depth of Qualifications

4.26 This measure considers the breadth (number) and depth (SCQF ladder level studied) of qualifications achieved by our young people in Moray. This demonstrates the suite of qualifications that our 837 leavers 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.

4.27 The table below considers our Moray leavers' attainment against overall leaver attainment in 2019/2020. Where green shading is shown, a higher percentage of leaver overall attainment than session 2019/2020 has been achieved. While some gains are marginal, of particular note are the achievement of young people at SCQF level 5, 6 and 7 achieving a greater number of qualifications by point of exit from school than in previous sessions. For example, 45.85% of leavers left school with 7 or more SCQF level 5 (National 5 equivalent) qualifications. At SCQF level 6, 34.24% of leavers attained 5 or more SCQF level 6 courses (Higher equivalent). In 2020/2021 10.24% of leavers also left school with 2 or more SCQF level 7 (Advanced Higher equivalent) courses.

Awards	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
1 or more	97.72%	97.61%	97.38%	96.81%	88.74%	63.94%	23.66%
2 or more	96.13%	96.02%	95.68%	94.31%	83.28%	56.54%	10.24%
3 or more	93.63%	93.40%	93.06%	91.92%	79.29%	49.72%	2.73%
4 or more	90.78%	90.33%	90.10%	88.51%	72.81%	42.43%	0.11%
5 or more	85.89%	85.32%	85.10%	83.16%	65.76%	34.24%	0.00%
6 or more	77.36%	76.79%	76.56%	74.74%	57.34%	23.55%	0.00%
7 or more	64.85%	64.39%	64.05%	62.91%	45.85%	14.33%	0.00%
8 or more	50.28%	50.06%	49.72%	48.81%	33.79%	6.48%	0.00%
9 or more	31.06%	30.94%	30.94%	29.58%	19.68%	1.82%	0.00%
10 or more	17.06%	16.95%	16.84%	16.15%	9.56%	0.57%	0.00%

4.28 Within Moray, work continues on improving Curriculum offer for wider breadth and depth. This includes working with partners, Moray College UHI and intra-authority on consortia curriculum arrangements and shared delivery. Further work will follow post pandemic, in session 2021/2022.

4.29 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 other 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+
2021								
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%
2020								
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%
2019								
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%

4.30 The green highlight within the table in 4.29 above indicates an increase in leaver attainment between cohorts from session 2019/2020. Across breadth and depth measures, there continues to be improvement. However, across most measures it is noted that Moray continues to perform marginally below the VC.

4.31 The table below considers performance of Moray's leavers in comparison with our target for leavers at SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6, achieving 5 or more awards by point of exit.

	SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 6
	5+	5+
2021		
Moray	65.8%	34.2%
Target	67.0%	38.0%
Variance	-1.2%	-3.8%
Number of leavers	10	32

4.32 At SCQF level 5 and level 6, while improvements in performance continue we remain marginally below local authority targets set for SCQF level 5 (5+ awards) and SCQF level 5 (5+ awards) by point of leaving school. Schools which have performed well in relation to this target at SCQF level 5 are Keith Grammar School, Lossiemouth High School and Milne's High School. Schools performing well for SCQF level 6 in relation to target above are Elgin Academy, Forres Academy, Lossiemouth High School and Milne's High School. Study at level 7 is appropriate based on individual learner pathways where for some learners, additional SCQF level 6 qualifications may be more suitable for University entry (breadth as opposed to depth achieved through Advanced Higher Study). Elgin Academy, Forres Academy, Lossiemouth High School and Speyside High School perform well in this area in relation to local authority average.

Summary

- 4.33 Following an uncertain year with unprecedented times and disruption due to Covid-19, the leaver attainment in Moray shows a number of improvements against previous session's attainment and wider comparator data. We continue to monitor our data noting data comparison caution in 3.11 above. Work continues with all schools to ensure more pupils across Moray have the opportunity to undertake 7 and more level 5 qualifications in S4 with this initially being for Application of Maths but will extend to other subject areas as appropriate. We continue to review approaches in line with recent OECD reports relating to the review of Curriculum for Excellence into the future and work underway on review of Senior Phase qualifications following the Stobart report on upper-Secondary education student assessments and National reviews underway.
- 4.34 Schools continue to work individually and collectively on ensuring their Curriculum remains current and responsive to learner needs, with further approaches underway in extending our Moray Curriculum offer. Data literacy and interrogation continues to strengthen with support from the Scottish Government Insight Advisor as part of our Moray Strategy, supported by our continued focus on raising attainment and improving outcomes. Support and challenge of school activities and key messages from attainment continue to be a focus with Secondary Head Teachers, through in-school activities and from the central Education Quality Improvement team as part of our school visit programme. Developments which continue to contribute to our Raising Attainment agenda across our Education service will continue to be reported to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee. Actions for improvement to breadth and depth of attainment were previously reported to Committee in November 2021.

5 SENIOR PHASE SQA EXAM PROCESS FOR 2021/2022

- 5.1 On 18 August 2021, it was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills that examinations will be held for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses for session 2021/2022. This decision was informed by the views of stakeholders including the National Qualifications Group, and by public health advice. Learning Experiences akin to Prelims (LEAPs) were undertaken in Moray in January/February 2022 to prepare learners for return to SQA Examination based model in May 2022.
- 5.2 SQA examinations are currently underway, commencing on 26 April 2022 and running until 1 June 2022, with relaxations in public health requirements in April 2022 enabling these nationally. In Moray, we continue to build on the good practice across schools with SQA coordinators working closely with the local authority SQA lead QIM to ensure pupils and staff are supported in delivery and assessment preparation.

- 5.3 Modifications to assessment requirements for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses were announced by SQA to support reduction in the volume of assessment and ensure learners continue to achieve credible qualifications. For most courses, these modifications remain the same as those that were put in place for session 2020/2021. Further study support materials were also published in March 2022. Exceptional Circumstances arrangements are also in place should candidates be unable to sit their examination due to illness (e.g. Covid-19 related) with a post-certification appeals system in place from August 2022 should this be required.
- 5.4 Sincere gratitude is expressed to all Moray secondary schools and practitioners in supporting our young people to maximise their achievement and attainment.

6 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.

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 examinations in place during session 2018/2019.

There is also the consideration that more young people will continue to stay on at school beyond S4 and S5 due to coronavirus pandemic and the associated uncertainty with labour market related factors to consider. Likewise, concerns regarding wellbeing and Mental Health and impact on learner outcomes and attainment.

Schools further identify increases in Additional Support Needs among pupils, impacting on number of courses studied and levels of study. This has noted impact on attainment measures outlined above 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. An increase in Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAA) required by young people undertaking examinations has resulted this session, including Reader/Scribes, extra time, separate accommodation and access to ICT for answering examination questions.

Uncertainty surrounds potential change as a result of the unknown direction of the Covid-19 pandemic as outlined above with relaxation in mitigations around Covid-19. A number of young people have been impacted by Covid-19 during the session – both with their own absence and that of their teachers – impacting on in-school learning and teaching.

Funding for a number of key posts which have strengthened the Raising Attainment agenda across our schools, noting positive improvements in performance reported within this committee paper (e.g. Principal Teachers of Raising Attainment; Covid-19 Recovery Teachers) has not been continued post-June 2022 per March 2022 Children and Young People's Services Committee. In consequence, there is a risk regarding 2022/2023 attainment levels in regard to this and early caution is expressed.

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. This has been further noted in 3.11 above.

e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

f) Property

None.

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, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, 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

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to consider and note the SQA assessment process completed and leaver attainment data presented based on Alternative Certification model and disruption due to Covid-19, experienced during session 2020/2021**
- 6.2 The Committee is asked to acknowledge work underway in order to prepare young people for examinations across Moray Schools during the continued Covid-19 pandemic and associated uncertainty in session 2021/2022**
- 6.3 The Committee is asked to consider the potential impact on examination performance for session 2021/2022 with reversion to an examination based model after two different years of Alternative Certification Model and disruption experienced over the year, in advance of Initial Attainment Report to Committee in September 2022**

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Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-311