

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

Section 38(1)(b) – personal data of a third party

An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA (personal information) applies to a small amount of the information requested because it is personal data of a third party, e.g. names and contact details of individuals, and disclosing it would contravene the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation and in section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018. This exemption is not subject to the 'public interest test', so we are not required to consider if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption.

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Enclosure 1: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 August 2020 21:25

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Subject: OFQUAL to introduce a widened exams appeals service for results next week

PS/DFM

To make you aware that today, OFQUAL have announced that they will introduce a widened exams appeals service, which will go active following the release of A level results on Wednesday. Previously there was a limited appeals process which was only for use where it was felt that the process had not been applied properly, now there will be a process similar to the SQA appeals process. OFQUAL have confirmed that a school or college can lodge an appeal on behalf of a pupil "if they can evidence grades are lower than expected because previous cohorts are not sufficiently representative of this year's students". They list the following reasons for why this may have happened

- if a single-sex school has changed to co-educational
- if the centre has had a significant change in leadership or governance and can provide objective evidence that its previous grades are not a reliable indicator of its 2020 results
- where a centre experienced a monumental event (flooding or fire which meant students has to re-locate) which affected one year's results in the historical data used in the model
- or where – because of the ability profile of the students - a centre was expecting results this year to show a very different pattern of grades to results in previous years. That could include where the grades of unusually high or low ability students been affected by the model because they fall outside the pattern of results in that centre in recent years. In most cases, this will only be apparent by reviewing centre wide data. Therefore centres, rather than individual students, will be best placed to consider whether this has occurred

The last bullet point is significant as it addresses what critics are saying about the Scottish moderation process, however, to note (and further detail will be supplied on this), SQA have been clear that centre level moderation was based on past performance, but included an additional tolerance to allow for some degree of changes in performance beyond historical norms.

Gavin Williamson offered the following statement

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said: "No system could be a perfect substitute for real exams, but I welcome the appeals guidance confirmed by Ofqual today, to make the process as fair as possible and make sure all students get a grade that allows them to progress.

“It is vital that students with exceptional circumstances are not held back by the way grades have been calculated – including those who are highly talented in schools that have not in the past had strong results, or where schools have undergone significant changes such as a new leadership team. This appeals process does this. Students will also have the opportunity to take exams this autumn if they are unhappy with their grades.”

And the NUS commented as below linking this move to the Scottish results.

Salsabil Elmegri, the NUS vice-president for further education, said: “We have warned that using predicted grades will not reflect the ability of disadvantaged and black students. [The] highers results in Scotland should be a warning to the UK government – now they must act to protect students.

“It is also very concerning that the appeals process has not been designed to make it easy for students to challenge unfair results. I’m calling on the government to provide extra support for students to appeal, allow them to appeal their grades, and make sure that no student is charged for the inconvenience of taking exams in the autumn.”

Thanks

Jonathan

Jonathan Sewell
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic - Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
(0131 24) x.47762

email: Jonathan.sewell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Enclosure 2: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 16:58
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: RDFM Parliamentary Statement on Exams - 12 August

Thanks [Redacted]

Here's the link to the methodology paper

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQAAwardingMethodology2020Report.pdf

And the EQIA which also covers the methodology employed

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/2020-sqa-alternative-certification-model-equality-impact-assessment.pdf

We'll get a draft up by close tomorrow.

Jonathan

From[Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 06 August 2020 16:25
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Colvin I (Iona) <Iona.Colvin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; SG Corona Virus Learning and Children <SGCoronavirusLearningandChildren@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science <SGCoronavirusALS@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Minister for Children and Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: RDFM Parliamentary Statement on Exams - 12 August

Hi all,

Apologies, DFM has given some further feedback on this statement.

He would like to see a draft of the speaking note and briefing on **Friday evening**. The tone should be dispassionate, substantial and evidence based. It should set out:

The unique nature of the circumstances we faced,
The steps taken by SQA to set up alternative process,
The guidance on estimates,

The detail of estimates received,
The moderation process and the use of historical data,
The outcomes,
The need for appeals.

Jonathan - Could you send me today the link to the methodology paper for DFM?

Sorry for the change of deadline. Please give me a call if you need to discuss anything further.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | Tel: 07[Redacted] | E: DFMCSSE@gov.scot

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 06 August 2020 14:34

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Colvin I (Iona) <Iona.Colvin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Ansan@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; SG Corona Virus Learning and Children <SGCoronavirusLearningandChildren@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science <SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Minister for Children and Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: RDFM Parliamentary Statement on Exams - 12 August

Good Afternoon.

To make you aware this statement on Exams has now been moved to **Tuesday 11th** and will be a 1 hour slot for the statement. I am still waiting on confirmed times from Parly Business and will update you in due course.

Apologies for changing the deadline but due to this, can we have the briefing and speaking note to **10am on Monday 10th**.

Thanks all, and please let me know if you need to discuss anything.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | Tel: 07[Redacted] | E: DFMCSSE@gov.scot

[Redacted – out of scope]

Enclosure 3: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:26
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Thanks [Redacted], sounds good.

The disadvantaged bit links in to one of my emails of yesterday – there's something about how well the tolerance levels by centre allowed for "over or under" performance in 2020, and if by a function of the model there was less scope for this for more disadvantaged schools, but I really don't know. I thought the data that SQA sent over on the individual schools may help with that as some seemed to show that final awards were above trend performance, but some weren't. I don't know if SQA could consider that a bit more. However, happy to leave you guys to think about that.

I was already thinking that this sort of material will need to be in Wednesday's statement in a digestible form as it is an opportunity to set the record straight and away from the knee jerk you're results are bad if you went to a more disadvantaged school.

Happy to talk through the day about this.

Jonathan

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:22
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Jonathan – I suggest we get a draft to you by end of today for you to supplement with any additional material?

[Redacted] – I'll drop you a separate note re plan of action

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:11
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul)

<Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>

Subject: Disadvantaged by the results

Hi Jonathan and [Redacted],

The DFM has asked that we do lots of digging in the stats to show how young people from deprived backgrounds have not been disadvantaged by the results. Can you also please provide a clear distillation of the methodology of moderation.

I would be grateful for this by COP tomorrow please.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted s38(1) Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted] | Mob: 07[Redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot

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Enclosure 4: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 12:59
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Ok, [Redacted] is having a look at 2(c) and then pulling out some data for 2(a). I was going to have a look at what we wanted to say on the SQA moderation methodology (1). So, depending on how much you want to do [Redacted], maybe some of the text around 2(a) and/or 2(b)?

For info. the analysis for 2(b) is attached. I assume the point we are making here is similar to the point in 2(c) – teacher estimates are more ‘optimistic’ for pupils from the most deprived areas when compared with actual attainment (in fact, in 2019, teachers also underestimated performance of pupils from the least deprived areas...)

[Redacted]
Performance and Attainment Statistics Team
Education Analysis | Scottish Government

e-mail: [Redacted]@gov.scot

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 12:33
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

I was thinking our school leaver attainment stats (which helpfully aligns with SG definition of attainment gap - NIF measures)

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 12:20
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Ok, can I check on the school level attainment stats in 2a, are you thinking here of the data SQA provided or of something else? Generally our published attainment stats would demonstrate that a gap exists but I think you're possibly trying to get across what this looks like at a school level?

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 12:14
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Feel free to decide and let me know which bits you want to pick up
Thanks
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 12:10
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

eRDM link – basically just your e-mail at the moment [Redacted].

Should we agree who does what?

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:49
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

We can talk this through this afternoon if that would help

I suppose what we are saying is that pupil background dictates performance (whether we like it or not), not SQA ACM
- this is shown in a range of objective (PISA, quals) and subjective measures (raw teacher estimates, ACEL)

But there will always be exceptions to the rule, this is what the appeals process is for

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:43
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

I can create a word doc in eRDM.

There's something tricky about teacher estimates (be it from 2019 or in ACEL) show an attainment gap, and then the 2020 teacher estimates also showed an attainment gap but not as big and then SQA moderating. I can quite work out what I'm trying to say never mind articulate it but I'll have a thnk.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:33
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Let's come up with a template then we can decide who does what, here's a start, please add:

(1) distillation of the methodology of moderation

(2) attainment by deprivation

(a) we know an attainment gap exists (include school level attainment stats).
There is even an attainment gap using based solely on teacher judgements i.e. ACEL
(include some ACEL stats)

(b) 2019 picture (data we gave SQA for their EQIA)

(NB 2019 teacher grade prediction dne 2020 teacher estimates)

(c) 2020 picture (i) 2019 results v 2020 teacher estimates (ii) 2020 teacher estimates v 2020 results

I think a key point to get across is that deprivation wasn't built into the methodology but performance at school level was. Which therefore resulted in a outcome which varied by deprivation. I have some historic PISA analysis on variation of performance between and within schools which might help here.

Can someone create a word doc in eRDM for us to drop material in?

Thanks,
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 06 August 2020 11:11

To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland)

<Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick)

<Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;

McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul)

<Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>

Subject: Disadvantaged by the results

Hi Jonathan and [Redacted],

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I would be grateful for this by COP tomorrow please.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted] | Mob: 07[Redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot

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Enclosure 5: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>

Sent: 07 August 2020 11:42

To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Hi [Redacted]

A few thoughts from me

Is it possible to say that at the start of the paper that the moderation is at a course level within a centre – and then explain by saying for example Maths with in X High School? It is emphasised later in your section on “At centre level” but perhaps needs earlier mention to mitigate against the idea of whole school moderation. Much of the media rhetoric talks about whole schools being disadvantaged by the SQA moderation process, but this may differ across different subjects with in each school?

Is it possible to put some of the info about the differences between teacher estimates and actual results in 2019 in Section 2?

A really important statement that maybe needs more prominence?

he difference between teacher estimates and final results was the largest for pupils from the most deprived areas; however, this group had also seen the largest increase between 2019 results and teacher estimates. As a consequence, moderation of Teacher Estimates within this cohort were most affected.

Best Wishes

[Redacted]

[Redacted] HMI | Education Scotland | Foghlam Alba

Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted]

Mobile: 07[Redacted]

Address: Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, EH54 6GA

Web: www.educationscotland.gov.uk

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 August 2020 10:03

To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick)

<Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;
[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;
[Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

All,
With thanks to [Redacted] and [Redacted], please find attached draft response. [See enclosure 7a]
Grateful for comments by 2pm today.
Thanks,
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:11
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>
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I would be grateful for this by COP tomorrow please.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted] | Mob: 07[Redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot

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Enclosure 6: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>
Sent: 07 August 2020 11:45
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Thanks very much – very helpful note in short order!. Some specific comments/queries tracked in.

Can we look at the methods section (especially the summary bit) and see if the language can be simplified – appreciate it's technical stuff, like. There's quite a lot of "that course/that level/that grade" which is hard to focus on (maybe it's just me...).

I think 2.2 isn't showing the data it is supposed to be? Table 1 is right, but the bullets above don't seem to be...

It's missing something on grade distribution – the increase in As based on estimates is stark, and helps the case that "moderation was needed". I've put a comment where I think it can go.

Thanks.

Mick Wilson
Deputy Director, Education Analysis
I am currently working from home - Tel: 07[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 07 August 2020 10:03
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

All,
With thanks to [Redacted] and [Redacted], please find attached draft response.
Grateful for comments by **2pm today**.
Thanks,
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:11
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>;

Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland)
<Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick)
<Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;
[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;
McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul)
<Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>
Subject: Disadvantaged by the results

Hi Jonathan and [Redacted],

The DFM has asked that we do lots of digging in the stats to show how young people from deprived backgrounds have not been disadvantaged by the results. Can you also please provide a clear distillation of the methodology of moderation.

I would be grateful for this by COP tomorrow please.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted] | Mob: 07[Redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to another official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the primary recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Enclosure 7: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 07 August 2020 16:43
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Disadvantaged by the results

Please find attached a briefing note on the SQA Alternative Certification Model methodology and results by pupil deprivation background.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Education Analysis
Scottish Government | t: 07[Redacted]

From: Peaston C (Craig) <Craig.Peaston@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:11
To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland) <Elizabeth.Morrison@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>
Subject: Disadvantaged by the results

Hi Jonathan and [Redacted],
The DFM has asked that we do lots of digging in the stats to show how young people from deprived backgrounds have not been disadvantaged by the results. Can you also please provide a clear distillation of the methodology of moderation.

I would be grateful for this by COP tomorrow please.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted] | Mob: 07[Redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot

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Enclosure 7a: SQA 2020 - ACM and pupil background

SQA results and pupil background

1. Outline of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM)

Moderation was undertaken at course level within each centre (school/college), then checked at a national level.

A **centre's** 2020 estimated attainment level for each grade on a course was assessed against historical attainment for each grade/course/centre combination. Four years' worth of historic data was used, where available. Additional tolerances were built in to allow for year-on-year variability in a centre's attainment. The moderation process was conducted 'blind' meaning that individual centres were not identified during the process.

In addition, at a **national** level, an assessment was undertaken for each course, to ensure that cumulatively across all centres, the national attainment level for each grade for that course was in line with historical attainment levels for each course — again with additional tolerances added to allow for variability in national attainment. Estimates were only adjusted where necessary and only by the minimum amount needed to bring attainment within the tolerable ranges for that grade.

For example, Higher Mathematics at Leith Academy was considered separately from Higher English at Leith Academy. Higher Mathematics at Leith Academy was considered separately from Higher Mathematics at Trinity Academy. Once this centre level process was completed, the grade distribution for Higher Mathematics for *all* centres was compared to the national target grade distribution (and amended if required).

Full details of the moderation methodology is at **Annex A**.

2. The attainment gap

It is widely acknowledged that there exists an attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. Any set of credible results for 2020 would also reflect the existence of an attainment gap.

The National Improvement Framework identifies 11 key measures to assess progress in closing the attainment, including school leaver attainment and Achievement of CfE Levels (see **Annex B**). For all of these the latest data shows that further progress must be made to close the gap.

A-C pass rates of National Qualifications (as published by SQA this week) are not one of the NIF attainment gap measures.

3. SQA Results 2020, by deprivation

As illustrated in Table 1, the difference in pass rates between 2019 attainment and 2020 *teacher estimates* was greater for pupils in the most deprived areas of Scotland than for those in the least deprived areas. Further detail is provided at **Annex C**.

When comparing 2020 teacher estimates and 2020 results, there was a greater difference in pass rates for pupils in the most deprived areas of Scotland than for those in the least deprived areas. Further detail is provided at **Annex D**.

Comparing 2019 and 2020 final results, there was still a greater increase in performance of the most deprived pupils than any other group for National 5 and Highers.

The difference between teacher estimates and final results was the largest for pupils from the most deprived areas; however, this group had also seen the largest increase between 2019 results and 2020 teacher estimates. As a consequence, Teacher Estimates for this cohort were most affected by moderation.

Table 1 – Proportion of grades A–C at National 5, Higher & Advanced Higher by SIMD.

	SIMD	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	Difference between		
						Estimates	Results	2020 estimates and 2019 results	2020 estimates and 2020 results	2020 results and 2019 results
National 5	0-20% (Most Deprived)	71.4	71.4	69	68.7	84.5	74	15.8	10.5	5.3
	20-40%	74.4	74.7	71.9	73.2	85.8	76.7	12.6	9.1	3.5
	40-60%	78.5	78.4	76.2	77.2	88.2	80.1	11	8.1	2.9
	60-80%	81.8	81.9	80.2	81.1	90	83.1	8.9	6.9	2
	80-100% (Least Deprived)	86.8	86.9	85.3	85.8	92.3	87.1	6.5	5.2	1.3
Higher	0-20% (Most Deprived)	68.6	68.2	68.2	65.3	85.1	69.9	19.8	15.2	4.6
	20-40%	72.7	71.9	71.3	68.3	86.3	73.8	18	12.5	5.5
	40-60%	75.8	75	74.7	73.4	88.2	77.3	14.8	10.9	3.9
	60-80%	79.1	78.8	78.9	76.9	89.6	80.6	12.7	9	3.7
	80-100% (Least Deprived)	83.2	83.9	83.5	81.7	91.5	84.6	9.8	6.9	2.9
Advanced Higher	0-20% (Most Deprived)	76.1	72.2	73.4	69.7	91.4	80.6	21.7	10.8	10.9
	20-40%	76	75.6	73.3	73.4	89.8	81	16.4	8.8	7.6
	40-60%	79.1	77	78.5	77.2	92.3	84.3	15.1	8	7.1
	60-80%	82.7	79.8	80.5	80.2	92.9	85.2	12.7	7.7	5
	80-100% (Least Deprived)	84.8	84.1	84.8	83.3	94.1	86.8	10.8	7.3	3.5

4. SQA results and pupil background

4.1 Impact on individual pupils

Centre level moderation will mask variation in performance at the pupil level.

We know from historic (2009) PISA data that there tends to be more variation in performance within schools than between schools i.e. on average, schools perform similarly to each other, however individual pupils within each school perform differently from each other.

We also know that pupil performance is strongly linked to background. This is evident from a range of sources on educational attainment (PISA, SSLN, ACEL, school leaver attainment) based on a range of methodologies (assessment, teacher judgement, national qualifications).

However, there are exceptions to this trend and there will be individual pupils who outperform their school predecessors and attain at a higher level than will be expected based on the historic attainment on that course at that school, regardless of their own background or circumstances.

There has been criticism that a high performing pupil at a school with poor historic attainment would be more likely to have had their result downgraded due to the moderation process. This is difficult to assess without the underlying dataset. The tolerances built in to the ACM should give some protection against this, but not completely. If a relatively large number of high performing pupils were taking a course in 2020 at a centre with a poor historic attainment record within that course then it may be more likely that they would be downgraded. This is where the appeals process is key to this year's certification process.

From this year's results data we know

- Around 134,000 grade estimates were adjusted by the SQA
- Around 45,000 grade estimates were adjusted from a A/B/C to a D/No Award - that happened at 418 out of 467 centres (89.5%)
 - this affected 36,000 candidates
 - the majority of these candidates will have had 1 estimate changed, the minority will have had 2 or more estimates changed.

4.2 Impact on pupils from the most deprived areas overall

Attainment for pupils from the most deprived areas is highest in 2020 than for the past four years. Pass rates for this group for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher pass rates increased by 5.3pp, 4.6pp and 10.9pp respectively; this is the reversal of a trend which has seen stable or declining pass rates for this group over the last 5 years.

The gap between pass rates of pupils from the most deprived and least deprived areas is narrower in 2020 (based on the Alternative Certification Model) than the gap in 2019 or indeed the average gap over the last 4 years. This is true for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher.

Teachers want their young people to achieve the best they possibly can do, and being aware of the challenges and stresses that young people have faced may have meant that teachers who are aspirational for their young people may have 'given the benefit of the doubt' to those young people who are close to grade boundaries.

We can examine teacher estimates compared to attainment (2019 exam diet) to check for any patterns in estimation accuracy by deprivation group.

4.2.1 Teacher estimates compared to attainment – 2019 exam diet

In 2019, both teacher estimates and achieved grades show a gap in performance between pupils from the most and least deprived areas at National 5 and Higher. In general, those estimates were also much closer to the final result attained than is the case in 2020, and the proportion of over- and under-estimated grades is more balanced. It is worth bearing in mind that teacher estimates were made under very different circumstances in 2019 than in 2020.

Across all levels, the gap between pass rates from the most deprived and least deprived areas is wider in achieved grades than for teacher estimates. This wider gap in attainment, in

comparison to estimates, appears to be a result of teachers estimating higher grades for pupils from the most deprived areas than they actually go on to achieve, and predicting lower levels of achievement for those from least deprived areas than they subsequently achieve.

See also Charts 4, 5 and 6, in **Annex E**, which show estimation accuracy in 2019 by deprivation group. They show overestimation is greatest for pupils from the most deprived backgrounds and lowest for pupils from the least deprived backgrounds.

Annex A - Outline of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM)

In general terms, moderation was undertaken at course level within each centre (school/college). A consistent process was applied across centres with the exception being in cases where a centre had no prior attainment in a given course – in these cases teacher estimates were accepted without moderation. The moderation process was conducted ‘blind’ meaning that individual centres were not identified during the process.

A centre’s 2020 estimated attainment level for each grade on a course was assessed against historical attainment for each grade/course/centre combination. Four years’ worth of historic data was used, where available. Additional tolerances were built in to allow for year-on year variability in a centre’s attainment.

In addition, at a national level, an assessment was undertaken for each course, to ensure that cumulatively across all centres, the national attainment level for each grade for that course was in line with historical attainment levels for each course — again with additional tolerances added to allow for variability in national attainment.

Estimates were only adjusted where necessary and only by the minimum amount needed to bring attainment within the tolerable ranges for that grade.

For example, Higher Mathematics at Leith Academy was considered separately from Higher English at Leith Academy. Higher Mathematics at Leith Academy was considered separately from Higher Mathematics at Trinity Academy. Once this centre level process was completed, the grade distribution for Higher Mathematics for *all* centres was compared to the national target grade distribution (and amended if required).

At National level

SQA determined a ‘reasonable’ grade distribution for each course. This was based on historic attainment trends supplemented by a qualitative review by key SQA subject expert staff and appointees including Qualifications Development heads of service, qualifications managers and principal assessors.

In addition, for Higher and Advanced Higher courses where SQA held prior attainment data for candidates on the equivalent course at the lower level (National 5 and Higher respectively) this prior attainment data was used to provide an additional sense check for Higher and Advanced Higher distributions.

SQA built in tolerance ranges (based on 90% confidence intervals) for each grade for each course to allow for year-on-year variation in attainment (as typically seen for many courses historically).

For courses where historical attainment has been stable the tolerance ranges were typically smaller. For courses where year-on-year attainment has historically been more volatile (often courses with lower uptake) the tolerance ranges per grade were wider.

At Centre level

In the main, the moderation process was undertaken for each centre, for each course and by each grade and total A–C rate. For each centre the proportion of entries achieving each grade on a given course, was considered for each of the past four years, i.e. 2016–19, with additional tolerance built in.

Adjustment of estimates

Teacher estimates by grade, course and centre were assessed against these tolerable ranges.

Where the assessment showed that a centre's 2020 estimated attainment on a grade was outside the tolerable range for that grade at the centre, the centre's estimates for that course were adjusted.

Where such an adjustment was made, there may have been knock-on effects.

For example, if the estimated proportion for a grade was higher than the tolerable range for that grade, then some entries estimated to receive that grade would have to be moved to another grade. The number of entries in that receiving grade would, therefore, increase and could consequently take that grade outside its tolerable range as well. This is sometimes referred to as a 'waterfall effect' and will result in further adjustments until the attainment for all grades are within the tolerable ranges set for each grade at that centre for the course.

Where adjustment was required to a centre's estimates, all entries in the refined band were moved between grades (as a group) e.g. all Grade A Band 5 would move to Grade B. Where this happened those entries previously in the recipient refined band were displaced, to maintain rankings, rather than the two groups of entries merging. Teacher rankings were always maintained throughout this process.

A technique called 'mathematical optimisation' was used to ensure that the adjustment process was undertaken efficiently and objectively. This technique was set up to ensure that the smallest number of grades necessary were adjusted.

Annex B - The attainment gap

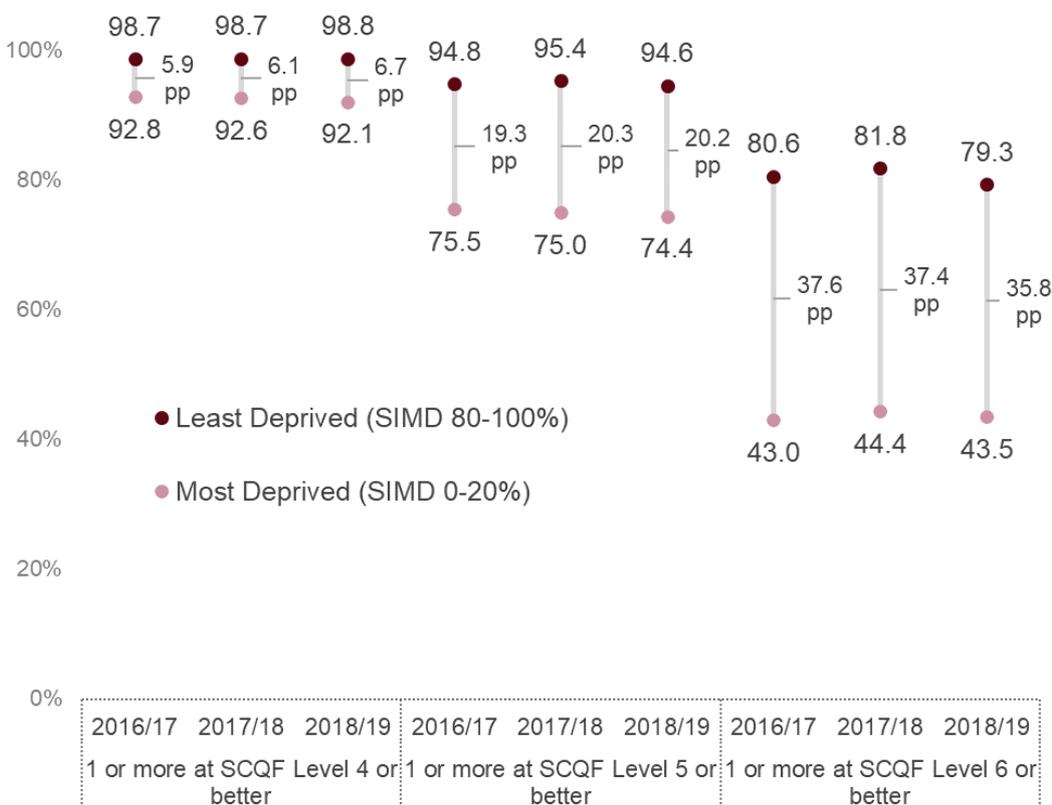
School Leaver Attainment Statistics

School leaver attainment statistics demonstrate that there is a difference in attainment between pupils from the most and least deprived areas of Scotland. The size of this gap varies over time but it is persistent. Amongst school leavers in 2018/19:

- At **SCQF Level 4 or better, 92.1% of pupils from the most deprived areas** achieved 1 pass or more compared to 98.8% of pupils from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 6.7 percentage points,
- At **SCQF Level 5 or better, 74.4% of pupils from the most deprived areas** attained 1 pass or more compared to 94.6% of those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 20.2 percentage points,
- At **SCQF Level 6 or better, 43.5% of pupils from the most deprived areas** attained 1 pass or more compared to 79.3% of those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 35.8 percentage points.

Attainment in the 2020 National Qualifications will feed into school leaver attainment statistics for the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 school leaver cohorts.

Chart 1: Percentage of school leavers by attainment at SCQF Level 4 to 6, by SIMD¹ quintile, 2016/17 to 2018/19



Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL, based on teacher judgement)

The attainment gaps described above are based on qualifications achieved by the time the young person leaves school, but even looking at data based solely on teacher judgements an attainment gap can be seen. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) statistics are based on teacher judgment of pupil performance against the expected level in literacy and numeracy organisers.

In 2018/19 ACEL data based on professional teacher judgements showed that:

- 63.1% of **primary** pupils from the most deprived areas achieved the expected level in **literacy** compared to 83.7% amongst those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 20.7 percentage points.
- In **numeracy**, 71.7% of **primary** pupils from the most deprived areas achieved the expected level compared to 88.5% amongst those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 16.8 percentage points.
- Amongst **S3** pupils, 81.0% of pupils from the most deprived areas in Scotland achieved the expected levels in **literacy** compared to 94.7% amongst those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 13.8 percentage points.
- In **numeracy**, 82.9% of **S3** pupils from the most deprived areas achieved the expected level compared to 96.3% amongst those from the least deprived areas – an attainment gap of 13.5 percentage points

Chart 2: Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils (combined) achieving expected Level in Literacy and Numeracy by SIMD, 2016/17 to 2018/19^a

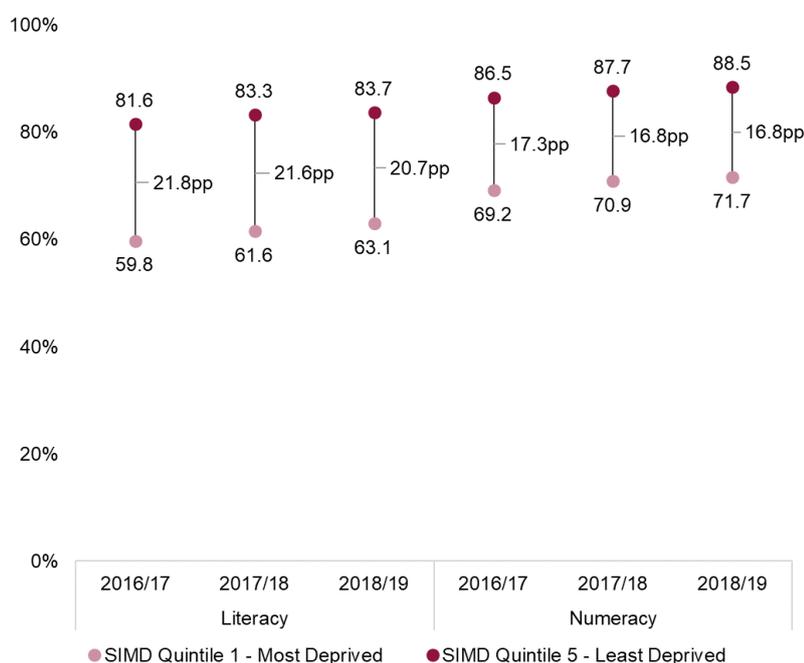
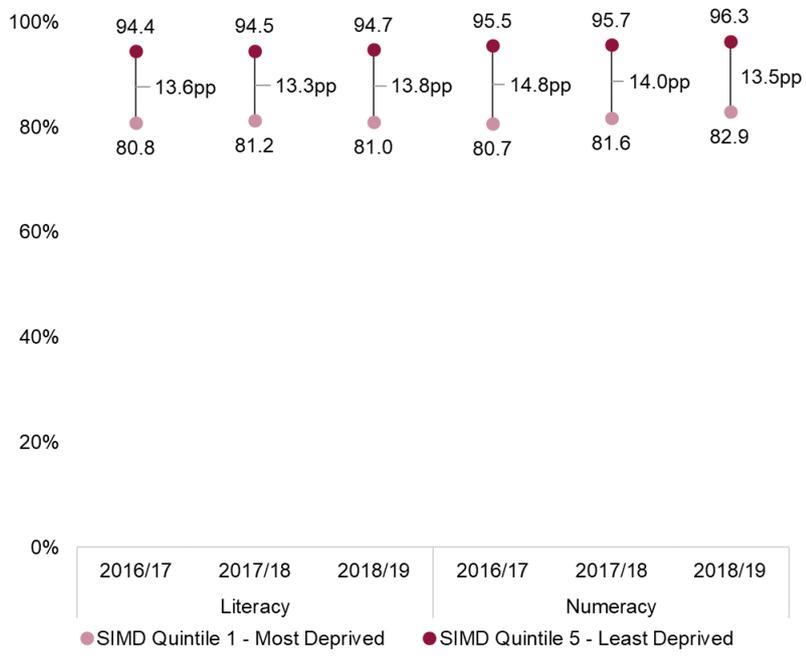


Chart 3: Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better, by SIMD, for Literacy and Numeracy, 2016/17 to 2018/19^a



Annex C - 2020 teacher estimates compared to 2019 results

At National 5

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 68.7% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2019.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 84.5% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C.
- This is a difference of 15.8 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 85.8% of entries resulted in a pass in 2019.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 92.3% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 6.5 percentage points.

At Higher

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 65.3% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2019.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 85.1% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C.
- This is a difference of 19.8 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 81.7% of entries resulted in a pass in 2019.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 91.5% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 9.8 percentage points.

At Advanced Higher

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 69.7% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2019.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 91.4% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C
- This is a difference of 21.7 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 83.3% of entries resulted in a pass in 2019.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 94.1% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 10.8 percentage points.

Annex D - 2020 teacher estimates compared to 2020 results

At National 5

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 74.0% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2020.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 84.5% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C.
- This is a difference of 10.5 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 87.1% of entries resulted in a pass in 2020.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 92.3% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 5.2 percentage points.

At Higher

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 69.9% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2020.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 85.1% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C
- This is a difference of 15.2 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 84.6% of entries resulted in a pass in 2020.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 91.5% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 6.9 percentage points.

At Advanced Higher

Amongst pupils from the most deprived areas,

- 80.6% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas resulted in a grade A-C pass in 2020.
- Based on 2020 teacher estimates, 91.4% of entries from pupils from the most deprived areas were given a grade A-C.
- This is a difference of 10.8 percentage points.

Meanwhile, amongst pupils from the least deprived areas,

- 86.8% of entries resulted in a pass in 2020.
- based on teacher estimates for 2020, 94.1% were estimated to result in a pass.
- This is a difference of 7.3 percentage points.

Annex E – Teacher estimation accuracy, 2019 exam diet

Chart 4: Overall estimating accuracy at National 5 (Diet 2019) by SIMD

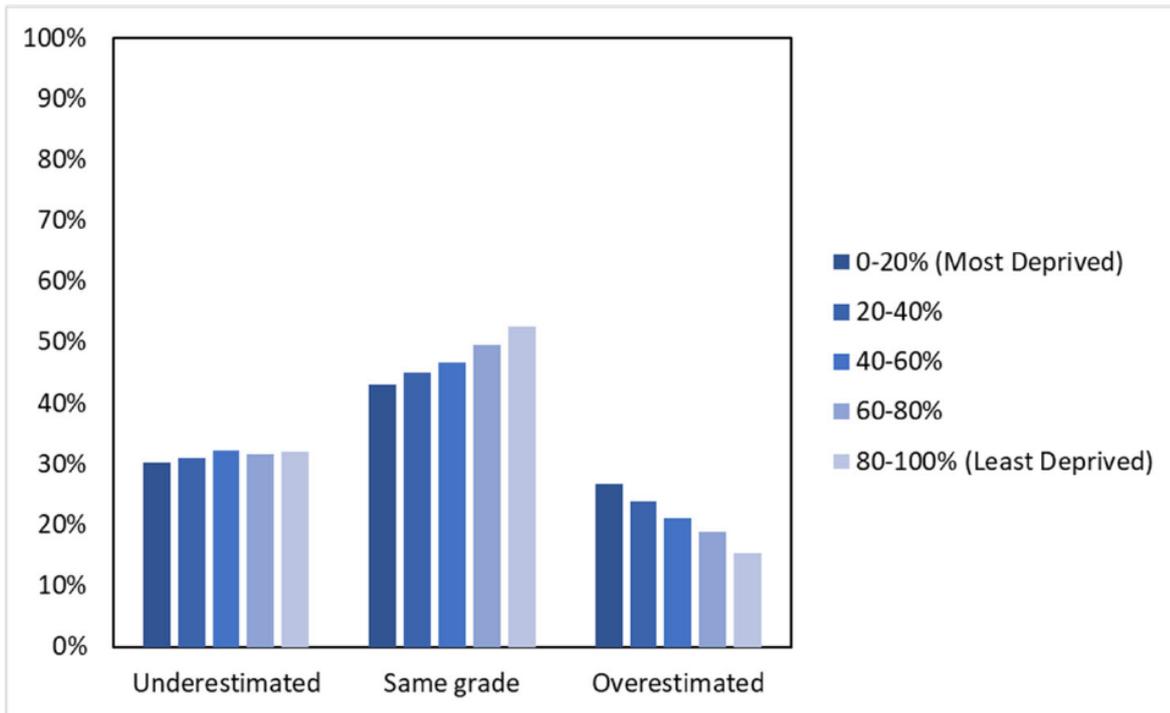


Chart 5: Overall estimating accuracy at Higher (Diet 2019) by SIMD

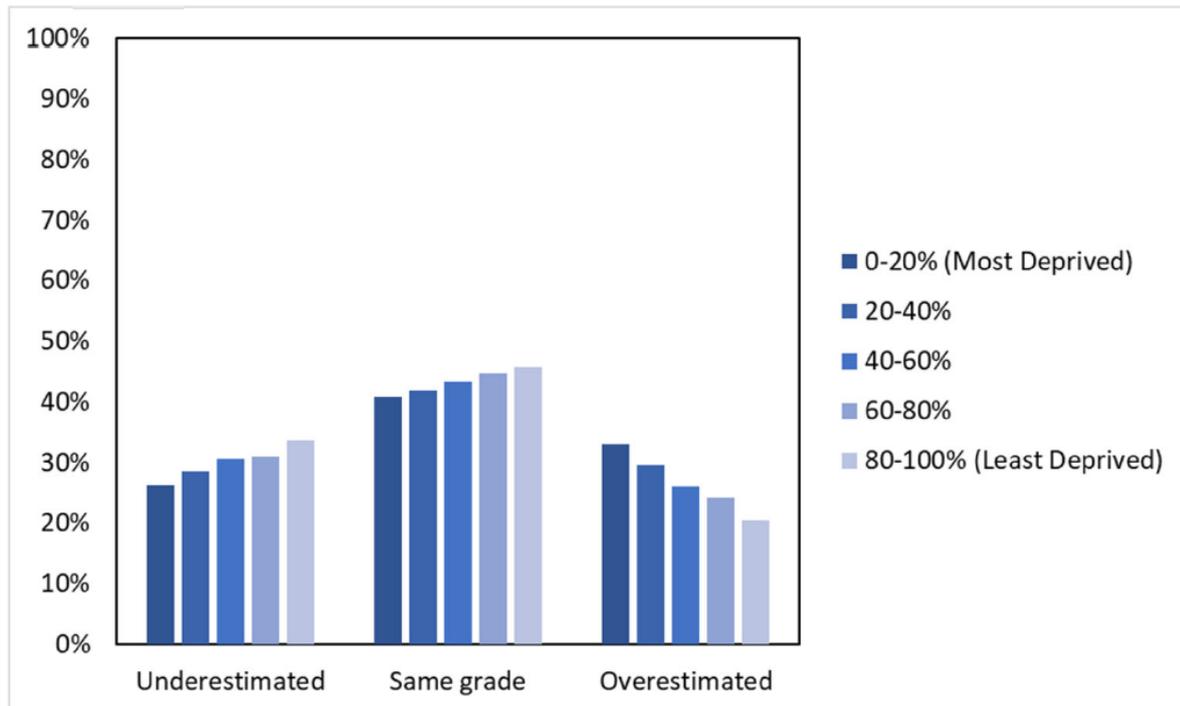
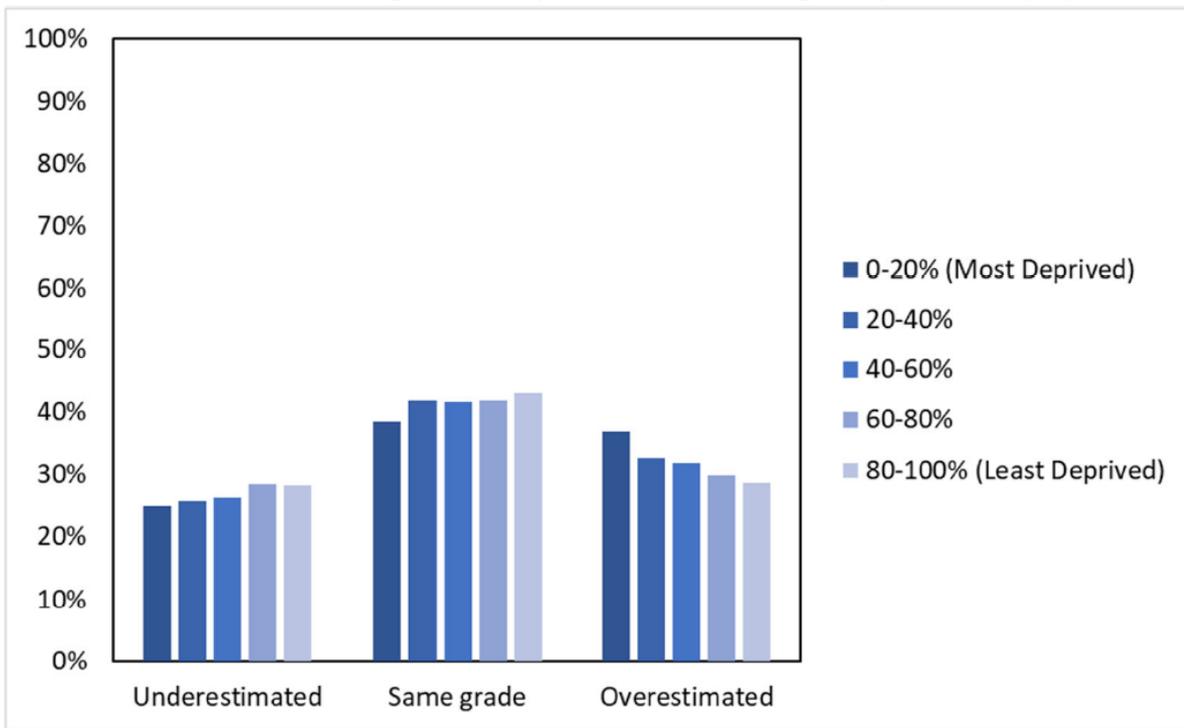


Chart 6: Overall estimating accuracy at Advanced Higher (Diet 2019) by SIMD



Enclosure 8: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science's office

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 August 2020 14:45

To: richard.lochhead.msp@parliament.scot

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

<DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

<MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>; Sewell J

(Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ingebrigtsen R

(Ross) <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>;

Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Factual info for clearance: Coronavirus Qualifications Contingency Group - Sunday Mail

Afternoon Minister,

[Redacted] of the Sunday Mail has asked when the Coronavirus Qualifications Contingency Group last met. According to Scot Gov web-site it was April 22.

Comms, Spads and officials have discussed and agreed the factual info for issue below.

Are you content for this to issue to the journalist?

The Qualifications Contingency Group was first convened in 2008 to provide advice and support as needed for any scenario which has the potential to cause significant disruption to the qualifications system. It was convened during the current pandemic to share information and intelligence to ensure clear understanding of relevant developments in relation to delivery of a certification model for the awarding of qualifications in the absence of the 2020 exam diet. Its wider remit includes promoting collective leadership across the education system in Scotland and contributing to ongoing communications.

This group met five times during the pandemic and the last occasion it met was on 29 May.

There were also Education Recovery Group meetings happening during this time and the Curriculum and Assessment Board had also resumed meeting since June. All these mechanisms and others were able to provide advice to the Scottish Government and the SQA during this time on the certification model and other awarding matters. The SQA is responsible for the development and delivery of the certification model and has its own governance structures to support this, in addition to its own channels and mechanisms for engaging and consulting stakeholders and obtaining expert advice. SQA also engaged directly with member organisations of the Qualifications Contingency Group bilaterally on various matters associated with awarding this year.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Communications DFM, Education and Justice | Scottish Government

Tel – 0131-244-[Redacted]/ 07[Redacted] | [Redacted]@gov.scot

Enclosure 9: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science's office

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 August 2020 17:20

To: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science
<MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

<DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>;

Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;

News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; First
Minister Covid Briefing Unit <FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin)

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ingebrigtsen R (Ross) <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>

Subject: FOR URGENT CLEARANCE: Media queries - exam results - Scotsman, Herald,
Daily Mail, Evening Times

Good evening Minister/PO

Labour is launching a petition calling for a review into the exam results process. The Scotsman has asked for comment.

SNP candidate Chris McEleny is calling for the process to be reviewed and teachers' estimates to be upheld. The Herald has requested comment.

A protest is planned at the SQA in Glasgow tomorrow – the Evening Times has asked for comment.

Former SQA vice chair Sir Iain McMillan is calling for an investigation by HM Chief Inspector of Education. The Daily Mail has asked for comment.

Willie Rennie has called for Audit Scotland to investigate the process. The Herald and Daily Mail have asked for comment.

Grateful for clearance - by 6pm if possible - to issue the following response to cover all the above.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“Scotland’s exams have never previously been cancelled, so the SQA had no alternative but to put in place an alternative certification model this year. Moderation is an annual process and ensures the integrity of awards and fairness to learners.

“Teachers and lecturers applied their professional judgements and three out of every four grade estimates were not adjusted by the SQA.

“The SQA results show a narrowing of the gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people attaining grades A-C compared to last year, and to a level below the average for the last four years.

“We know some young people feel they have been graded unfairly and we would encourage them to talk to their schools about the free appeals process. The SQA moderation was only one part of the process – the appeals will be based solely on each student’s individual circumstances.

“Deputy First Minister John Swinney will make a statement to Parliament next week.”

Sir Iain McMillan's comments

'I am concerned that the results of the exams have caused such concern. The First Minister and the SQA appear to be standing by the validity of the results whilst there is a great deal of public concern and I think it would be a good thing for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education to review what has happened and give a verdict.

'If HMCIE were to give the SQA a clean bill of health then that would help to restore confidence in the system.

'Were HMCIE to find fault with the exam process this year, I think it would be helpful if they made recommendations as to how this could be avoided in future.

'If they are unable to support what the SQA has done this year they could make constructive proposals about how to avoid these issues in future years, if avoiding actually sitting end of year exams is required. If there have been mistakes, they could help ensure they are not repeated.'

SCOTTISH LABOUR CALLS FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR REVIEW INTO RESULTS FIASCO – GRAY

John Swinney must launch an urgent review into the downgrading of more than 120,000 exam results by the SQA which has left pupils across Scotland unfairly penalised because of where they go to school, Scottish Labour has said.

Today, Scottish Labour is launching a petition to gather support for the call to launch a review into what has been branded a fiasco and a scandal in education.

With a deluge of appeals predicted, John Swinney must also instruct the SQA to make public the methodology for marking appeals to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents have confidence in the system.

Scottish Labour education spokesperson, Iain Gray, has accused the Deputy First Minister of 'baking in' inequality into Scotland's education system and has said that if Mr Swinney does not apologise to the young people of Scotland and act to rectify his failure then his position will be untenable.

Commenting, **Iain Gray said:** "All across Scotland, parents, pupils and teachers are united in outrage over John Swinney's failure of the poorest students in our society.

"We urgently need a review into this fiasco to determine whether the downgrading of results by area has infringed the human rights of pupils.

"If John Swinney does not commit to this review and does not apologise to the young people of Scotland and seek to mitigate the damage he has wrought then his position is not sustainable.

"Scottish Labour is calling on the people of Scotland to sign our petition to ensure that John Swinney is held to account for his actions."

Link to petition: <https://secure.scottishlabour.org.uk/page/s/urgent-sqa-results-review>

Call to overturn exams decision and award grades submitted by teachers

A leading SNP figure has called for the Scottish Government to instruct the SQA to overturn its controversial decision that resulted in many young people from deprived areas having their exam results downgraded.

Chris McEleny, who is seeking the SNP selection to be their Greenock & Inverclyde candidate in next years, is calling for young people who were marked to have their grades re-awarded at the level predicted by their teacher. He wants Education Secretary and Deputy First Minister John Swinney to step in and instruct the SQA to uplift the grades of an estimated 125,000 young people in Scotland.

McEleny, who's Inverclyde Council area contains the most deprived community in Scotland, believes that the system that has been used has adversely impacted upon people from deprived areas and that a no detriment approach should have been deployed.

In calling for results for children across Scotland to be increased to the grades teachers predicted they would be, the SNP man said that " the unprecedented situation merited more support for children from deprived backgrounds " due to the impact Coronavirus was already having on these communities.

He said:

" The SQA were clear in March that estimates should be based on classwork and evidence available at the time of lockdown and teachers were asked to use that evidence and their knowledge of the young person to estimate their grades and then rank them. This was a sensible approach considering the circumstances.

" I am confident that teachers know their pupils best, and that in these unique circumstances, given the choice between marking down results or allowing them to look better than some would've said was credible, there shouldn't have been a thought about how the results would look but instead the only consideration should've been that there be no detrimental impact on the life chances of young people.

" It is important to stress that, although we are talking about teacher estimates being downgraded, these estimates were made by teachers, they then discussed with their principal teacher and agreed it, the senior management team of the schools then discussed and agreed it, and then the local authority team verified the school's estimates. This isn't teachers going rogue and over-estimating.

" The SQA should be immediately instructed to re-issue grades to Scotland's young people, giving them the grade that their teacher, and their schools, believe they deserved. "

McEleny has also called on his SNP colleagues to join the call to improve the grades of the students. He added:

" The reality is that it is upto SNP politicians to force the Scottish Qualification Authority to do the right thing. The opposition parties have no shred of credibility and all they care about is making political capital out of young people's education, but now that they've demanded action, without saying what it should be, when they then wouldn't have an issue with what I am proposing. "

Scottish Liberal Democrats

Rennie calls for Audit Scotland investigation over SNP exam damage

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie has today called for the Education Secretary to enlist Audit Scotland to investigate the measures used by the SQA to determine this year's exam results, after more than 120,000 exam results were downgraded by the qualifications authority.

Mr Rennie said:

"The Education Secretary and the SQA were warned for months that their moderation process would embed inequality and potentially damage the prospects of bright pupils for life. The SQA refused transparency, scrutiny and discussion of the methodology that has led to this injustice on a such large scale. Audit Scotland should now look into whether this methodology was fit for purpose.

"It is unacceptable that pupils have been downgraded for exams they didn't sit based on the historical performance of their school. We must have confidence in the process used by the Scottish Qualifications Agency especially if next year's exams are cancelled too and this exercise has to be repeated.

"A thorough investigation by Audit Scotland should be done to rectify these problems and ensure lesson have been learned.

"Young people have made tremendous sacrifices over the past six months. They do not deserve to see their futures carved up by a computer algorithm based on where they happen to live."

[Redacted]

Newsdesk

Desk: 0131 244 [Redacted]

Scottish Government | news.gov.scot

Enclosure 10: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Sent: 08 August 2020 17:10
To: Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Application of the moderation process

Hi all

To see the attached tweet. <https://twitter.com/mikpeck/status/1292033580764405760>

There will always be a question of the robustness of stats on twitter, but I've seen these sort of reports in a few places now. Do we have any thoughts on how these sorts of results could come about where awards seem quite different to historical performance (both at a centre level and potentially at a cohort level)?

This is really trying to distinguish between the cases where the model couldn't get it right (there will always have been exceptions), versus the possibility that the model wasn't applied correctly (a quality control issue).

Thanks

Jonathan

Jonathan Sewell
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic - Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
(0131 24) x.47762

email: Jonathan.sewell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Enclosure 11: Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 10 August 2020 21:28
To: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Letter to young people

Hi [Redacted], [Redacted]

Please see draft letter to young people below, which subject to details of final statement could be sent tomorrow from Spads.

Depending on the volume of letter we have from young people then we could be possibly add a personalised paragraph rather than send out blanket ones, which are a bit impersonal.

Could you please look over and ensure it is all ok, and let me know any comment/changes.

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxx

Thank you for your letter and for raising your concerns with me over the system used to award exam results this year and the impact it has had on you.

Your letter and others like it, have led me to reflect that while the system was designed in difficult circumstances and with the best of intentions, it has had an impact on individual pupils' results that cannot, in all circumstances, be seen to be fair.

I recognise that if this system was allowed to stand, while it tried to uphold the integrity of the exam system – so your results would be properly respected in years to come - it would not properly protect the value of the hard work young people have put in and the challenges you have faced this year.

As you know, teachers submitted grades based on a range of factors including prelims, coursework and their knowledge of your work. Those grades were then moderated by the SQA. It is that moderation, where results have been moderated downwards, that has led to so much distress.

As a result, I have announced today that all downgraded results will be replaced with the proposed grades put forward by teachers.

In the next xx weeks, you will be reissued with your results without any downward moderation. Any results which were not downgraded by SQA moderation, will not be changed.

If you are applying to university, we will send all the revised results to UCAS by xxxxxx and you will be able to begin the process of securing your place.

I have spoken to Scotland's universities and they are awaiting those results.

If you remain unsatisfied with the result you receive there will be an appeals process available to you. More information can be found at xxxxxxx

Finally, I want to apologise to you, for the difficulties this system has caused for you and to commend you for the way in which you have made your case. The last few months have been some of the most difficult young people in Scotland have had to face, every aspect of life has been impacted. That makes it all the more important that where we have made a mistake in our approach to this crisis, we listen and we correct it.

The approach was put in place, in unprecedented circumstances, for what was thought to be the right reasons, but I recognise that it has delivered an outcome that cannot remain in place and I am determined to put it right so that as a student, you have the best possible chance of success.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | Tel: 07[Redacted] | E: DFMCE@gov.scot

Enclosure 12: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 11:03
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; First Minister Covid Briefing Unit <FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

Thanks. Added to note as attached. [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 10:59
To: First Minister Covid Briefing Unit <FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

[Redacted] – apologies for the delay – please see my responses in red.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister Covid Briefing Unit
Sent: 06 August 2020 10:48
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

Can I check this is on its way please? [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister Covid Briefing Unit
Sent: 06 August 2020 10:22
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; First Minister Covid Briefing Unit <FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of

Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

Hi [Redacted],

Thanks for this. A couple of follow up questions from me below. Sorry again for the tight deadline but could you get back to us on these by 10:45 please?

Thanks,
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 06 August 2020 10:10
To: First Minister Covid Briefing Unit <FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

Hi [Redacted]

Please see some background on the post-certification review (appeals) process:

- If candidates didn't get the results they needed or were expecting they should contact their school/college as soon as possible, as appeals can only be made by a school or college. Are schools/colleges opening this week to allow candidates to do that or will this process start next week?
- Schools and colleges can only appeal if the grade awarded is lower than the estimated grade that was submitted to SQA.
- SQA website provides guidance for schools and colleges on how to support an appeal
What sort of evidence will teachers need to provide e.g. will they be using prelim results?
- Key dates:
 - 14 August deadline for those candidates confirming a college/university place. Results will be sent to the school/college by 4 September.
 - 21 August deadline for all other for all other appeals. The appeal review date will be advised by SQA shortly.

Hope this is helpful,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Senior Phase Unit | Learning Directorate
Scottish Government | Area 2-B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
T: 0131 244 [Redacted] | M: 07[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister Covid Briefing Unit

Sent: 06 August 2020 09:34

To: Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;
[Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)
<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>;
McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick)
<Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E
(Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; First Minister Covid Briefing Unit
<FMcovidbriefingunit@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>;
[Redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Appeals Process - FMQ note - deadline 10.15am

Importance: High

Jonathan

We're looking to provide some more detail this morning to FM on the appeals process. I've pulled the lines from the previous FMQ into the attached but is there anything else we can say on detail e.g. when does the appeals process run until, when can teachers/pupils expect to hear back, any other practical details on how it works?

With apologies, we'll need this back by 10.15 for our pre-meet with FM.

Give me a ring if easier to chat through.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

First Minister's Covid Briefing Unit
Mob: 07[Redacted]

[Redacted – out of scope]

Enclosure 12a: FMQ briefing – Appeals process

Whilst there should be confidence in this year's awarding process, and the qualifications gained as a result of it, further assurance is provided by a free post-results appeals service.

- This is now open for schools and colleges to lodge appeals on behalf of pupils where they believe there is appropriate and robust evidence to support the original grade estimate.
- The post-results review process is an integral part of awarding.
- SQA have ensured that sufficient resources are in place to support this appeals process.
- I welcome that our Higher Education institutions have indicated that they will work with learners who may be reliant on an appeal to meet the terms of their course offer.
- **QUOTE:** Larry Flanagan, EIS: *“Schools will wish to examine in detail the impact of the SQA’s statistical modelling on their results and where there is disquiet the evidence based appeal system should be utilised, in the endeavour to ensure that all young people receive results that accurately reflect their achievements throughout the year.”*

If candidates didn't get the results they needed or were expecting they should contact their school/college as soon as possible

- Appeals can only be made by a school or college.
- Schools and colleges can only appeal if the grade awarded is lower than the estimated grade that was submitted to the SQA.
- The SQA website provides guidance for schools and colleges on how to support an appeal.
- It confirms that appeals will be based solely on a candidate's individual merit, based on the evidence presented by the school or college.
- Schools and colleges are encouraged to submit a wide range of alternative evidence, and not solely a class test or prelim, wherever possible.
- 14 August is the deadline for those candidates confirming a college/university place.
- Results will be sent to the school/college by 4 September.
- 21 August is the deadline for all other for all other appeals.
- The appeal review date will be advised by the SQA shortly.

SQA was clear that it was not possible to enter into dialogue with exam centres on changes to teacher estimates - this is an operational decision for SQA

- SQA could not engage with individual centres as this would have required a very significant number of conversations that could not have been accommodated in the very short timescale available.
- It would not have been fair to all learners if only some centres got the opportunity to engage with SQA.

Enclosure 13: Emails between Scottish Government officials

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 11 August 2020 13:00
To: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lucas M (Michael) <Michael.Lucas@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser <Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR SPAD CLEARANCE: immediate - news release - Education Secretary SQA statement - 11 August, 2020

Thanks, Colin.

Policy – this version will go to PO once I have checked final version of statement against news release quotes.

[Redacted]

From: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Sent: 11 August 2020 12:48
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser <Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lucas M (Michael) <Michael.Lucas@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR SPAD CLEARANCE: immediate - news release - Education Secretary SQA statement - 11 August, 2020

Some tweaks below

Regards

Colin McAllister

0131 244 3248

07[Redacted]



Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot.

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 11 August 2020 12:41
To: Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser <Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Johnston P (Paul) <Paul.Johnston@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; Lucas M (Michael) <Michael.Lucas@gov.scot>
Subject: FOR SPAD CLEARANCE: immediate - news release - Education Secretary SQA statement - 11 August, 2020

Liz/Stuart/Colin,

Latest draft below. Are you content?

I will double-check quotes align with final version of Mr Swinney's statement.

[Redacted]

NEWS RELEASE

SQA results to be amended

Downgraded results scrapped; qualifications to be based on teacher judgement.

Pupils whose results were downgraded by the SQA are to receive new grades based solely on teacher estimates.

The SQA's alternative certification model was put in place after exams were cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19). After listening to the concerns of affected young people, parents and teachers over the last week, Ministers have now directed the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to re-issue downgraded awards solely on the basis of teacher judgement, without reference to historical patterns.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney today apologised to the 76,000 young people whose estimated mark was reduced by the SQA and said that the downgraded awards risked 'young people, particularly from working class backgrounds may lose faith in education and form the view that no matter how hard you work, the system is against you.'

As a result:

- Where a teacher estimate was adjusted down by the SQA, candidates will receive the grade the teacher awarded
- Candidates whose entries were adjusted up by the SQA will retain the higher grade
- The SQA will inform schools of the revised results by Friday 21 August for schools to tell pupils. New certificates will be issued in due course.
- The SQA will provide new grades to UCAS and other college and university admissions bodies, and the Scottish Government will ensure enough places at colleges and universities so that all places awarded to young people can be taken up

In order to learn lessons and plan for next year:

- Ministers have asked Professor Mark Priestley of Stirling University to conduct an independent review of the events following the cancellation of the examination diet and make recommendations for the coming year. This will initially report within five weeks.
- The OECD's ongoing independent review of Curriculum for Excellence will be asked to include recommendations on how to transform Scotland's approach to assessment and qualifications, based on global best practice.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said:

"These are exceptional times, and in exceptional times truly difficult decisions are made. In speaking directly to the young people affected by the downgrading of awards – the seventy-five thousand pupils whose teacher estimates were higher than their final award - I want to say this: I am sorry.

"I have listened and the message is clear. They don't just want an apology, they want to see this fixed and that is exactly what I will now do. To resolve this issue all downgraded awards will be scrapped. I am directing the SQA to re-issue those awards based solely on teacher or lecturer judgement.

"We now accept that the risk of undermining the value of qualifications is outweighed by a concern that young people, particularly from working class backgrounds, may lose faith in education and form the view that no matter how hard you work, the system is against you. Education is the route out of poverty for young people in deprived communities and we cannot risk allowing that view to take hold.

"The SQA will issue fresh certificates to affected candidates by as soon as possible and, importantly, will inform UCAS and other admission bodies of the new grades as soon as practical in the coming days to allow for applications to college and university to be progressed. In those cases where moderation led to an increased grade, they will not lose that award.

"I would like to thank all of Scotland's children, young people and adult learners for the incredible resilience they have shown throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. We are immensely proud of all that they have achieved. I hope that our pupils now move forward confidently to their next step in education, employment or training with the qualifications that teachers or lecturers have judged were deserved.

"We will look to learn lessons from the process to awarding qualifications this year that will help to inform any future actions. An Independent Review, led by Professor Mark Priestley of Stirling University, will look at events following the cancellation of the examination diet and given the urgency, I have asked for an initial report with recommendations on how we should go forward this coming year within five weeks."

Background

Insert link to statement to Parliament

Enclosure 14: First Minister's Questions briefing – SQA results

ISSUE: 9 August – Mail on Sunday reports on comments by Prof Lindsay Paterson, Edinburgh University that it will be 'impossible' for teachers and markers to meet SQA appeal deadlines and has accused the SQA of presiding over "a complete shambles".

ISSUE: 7 August – Scottish Labour news release reports that "SQA planning to not reveal appeal results till the end of May 2021." **9 August** – Daily Record reports "Youngsters could face 9-month delay as appeal process swamped".

ISSUE: 7 August – Daily Express reports on Labour and Conservative Party comments about the SQA's use of independent experts to support its moderation approach. Jamie Green MSP (Conservative): "It is astonishing that the SQA enlisted the help of an outside agency yet still got this so completely wrong". Ian Murray MP (Labour) branded Ms Sturgeon a 'grade snatcher' and said: "her defence of the system's inequality reveals that education is far from her number one priority."

ISSUE: 5 August – widespread negative media comment focusing on exams "chaos, fiasco, shambles".

ISSUE: 5 August – Keir Bloomer on GMS noted "I think overall what SQA has done in a very difficult set of circumstances has been reasonable and fair."

ISSUE: 4 August - Mhairi Black, MP, and Twitter: "there is a massive caveat to this year's results... and that is the changing of grades by the SQA. I am deeply concerned by the information released today, which shows students from deprived areas saw their results reduced from their predicted grades at a higher rate than those who from wealthier areas ...".

ISSUE: 4 August - Ross Greer MSP, Twitter: "They've got what they set out for, a set of #SQAresults which look fine viewed nationally. Underneath that? Thousands of young people who, exactly as we feared, have had their grades lowered for what looks like no more reason than the school they go to." "Also hearing from teachers who quite understandably feel undermined and hung out to dry by the SQA, pushing the line that the system is based on teacher judgement but in their department's case changing more than 90% of the estimated grades submitted."

ISSUE: 4 August – Jamie Greene MSP, Twitter: "Only in John Swinney's world, where schools were shut for 5 months and attainment already widening, would "national moderation" of this year's exams results see a quarter of teachers estimated grades altered and every single year on year result group go up."

ISSUE: 4 August - Iain Gray MSP, Twitter: "This is my reading of the methodology too - sqa have done exactly the thing everyone warned

against.” [in response to claims that the SQA only used historical attainment data].

ISSUE: 4 August – Prof Nason, Imperial College, outlines a number of analytical criticisms of the SQA moderation methodology (not adjusting rankings; waterfall effect is unfair; unfairness of not applying moderation to new centers).

4 August: SQA results data published [caution should be taken over comparison with previous years due to difference in methodology].

Pass rates in National Qualifications (A-C), 2019-2020

Award Level	2019	2020	Change (pp)*
National 5	78.2%	81.1%	+2.9
Higher	74.8%	78.9%	+4.2
Advanced Higher	79.4%	84.9%	+5.5

*pp = percentage point

Grade distribution, 2020

Award Level	A	B	C	A to C	D	No Award
National 5	37.5%	24.9%	18.7%	81.1%	11.5%	7.4%
Higher	31.5%	26.3%	21.1%	78.9%	13.6%	7.5%
Advanced Higher	38.4%	27.7%	18.9%	84.9%	9.6%	5.5%

Grade distribution, 2019

Award Level	A	B	C	A to C	D	No Award
National 5	35.1%	23.8%	19.2%	78.2%	12.5%	9.3%
Higher	28.3%	24.1%	22.4%	74.8%	15.2%	10.1%
Advanced Higher	31.8%	24.9%	22.7%	79.4%	8.4%	12.2%

Moderation summary (rounded figures)

- Of 500,000 entries, 134,000 (around a quarter) were adjusted.
- Of the 134,000 entries with adjusted grades – 93% were adjusted down.
- Of the 134,000 entries with adjusted grades – 96% were changed by one grade (e.g. A to B, or C to D).
- 45,454 grades were adjusted from an A-C pass to a grade D or No Award.
- A free post certification review appeals process opened on 4 August, allowing schools and colleges to request a review of the grade awarded for a learner or a group of learners.

It is particularly important in this challenging year to celebrate success for all learners following a very wide range of learning pathways.

- As well as the National Qualifications there have been successes across Skills for Work, SQA Awards and National Progression Awards, and this is in addition to successes across a range of awards which are achieved across the year by our young people.

Cancelling the exam diet was a first in over 130 years, however, the certification model has allowed the hard work of learners to be recognised, helping ensure that their life chances are protected.

- Scotland's Chief Examining Officer and her staff, working with the wider system, have been able to develop an alternative certification model to allow the awarding of qualifications this year in a manner fair to pupils.
- I want to extend my thanks to all who have enabled this to happen, ensuring that young people in our schools and colleges who, through no fault of their own, were unable to sit exams, are not now disadvantaged.

These results show an increase in the attainment of grades A-C for National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers, which by any measure should be considered a strong set of results.

- The SQA methodology has been designed to ensure that the standard of qualifications this year is consistent with previous and future years' results.
- Given that the awarding methodology is different this year to any other, SQA have noted comparisons to previous years need to be considered carefully.

The size of the gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people attaining grades A-C is narrower under this measure than for last year or indeed the average for the last four years.

- The results clearly show that grade estimates for pupils from the most deprived communities increased by the most, which required the most moderation.
- But this group still saw larger increases in pass rates than those pupils in the least deprived area.
- The pass rate of pupils in the most deprived areas increased by 5.3 percentage points for National 5s, 4.6 percentage points for Higher, and by 10.9 percentage points for Advanced Highers compared to last year, and all increases were larger than for pupils from the least deprived areas.

I recognise that there is understandably significant interest in how the results this year have been awarded, and the Chief Examining Officer has ensured transparency by publishing a suite of materials explaining the methodology employed and the results of it.

- National moderation has played an important role in this process which provides assurances that the results are credible. However, around three quarters of all grade estimates made required no adjustment by the SQA.
- Where grade estimates were moderated, the vast majority of these estimates – over 93 percent - were changed by only one grade.
- Moderation has resulted in some grades increasing as well as some decreasing.
- Today's results show that without moderation the rate of attainment at grades A-C compared to last year would have increased by 10.4 percentage points for National 5s, by 14 percentage points for Highers, and by 13.4 percentage points for Advanced Highers. Year on year change of this scale has never previously been seen in Scottish exam results.

- Inevitably in a new process there will be slight differences in how it is applied across the country, and for that reason and to maintain national standards the SQA has always been clear that it may need to moderate results if necessary.
- Only SQA has the national overview and therefore need to apply moderation to ensure consistency and fairness for learners across Scotland.
- SQA is clear that moderation has not been a purely statistical approach – there has been consideration of both quantitative and qualitative factors.
- SQA considered a number of different approaches for moderation recognising that there is no single correct manner to undertake such an activity as Professor Nason has noted.

The fact that around three quarters (377,308) of all the estimates submitted by teachers and lecturers required no adjustment demonstrates the strength within the profession and the sound understanding of standards across the new qualifications and through Curriculum for Excellence.

- Teachers and lecturers always want their young people to achieve the best they possibly can do, and being aware of the challenges and stresses that young people have faced may have meant that teachers who are aspirational for their young people may have ‘given the benefit of the doubt to’ those young people who are close to grade boundaries.
- We are confident that our teachers have acted with professionalism and integrity, the vast majority of grades have been unchanged, but our teachers and lecturers are also working through the stress of a global pandemic wanting the best for young people.
- The very high standards in our curriculum and qualifications system have been maintained this year due to the combination of work done by teachers, lecturers and the SQA.

I recognise that there may be frustration where moderation has led to an A-C award being changed to a D or no award (around 9% of all entries), but moderation is there to ensure national standards and protect the integrity of qualifications, which is ultimately for the benefit of learners.

- In those instances where teacher and lecturer estimates have been moderated and teachers or lecturers have strong evidence of higher performance, the SQA is operating a free post results appeals service, which will allow schools and colleges to present evidence to support estimates and appeal the award.
- Overall attainment levels for A-C grades at all levels remain very high.
- QUOTE: Keir Bloomer, "I think overall what SQA has done in a very difficult set of circumstances has been reasonable and fair."

These are exceptional times and there was a need to work at exceptional pace, and to aid this and to ensure that there were appropriate skills in

place, SQA appointed AlphaPlus (who provided advice in the development and execution of the methodology) and SAS (statistical software provider). In doing so there were assurances in place that appropriate due diligence was undertaken.

- SQA can enter into contracts in order to deliver its functions where it sees fit.
- This was required given the exceptional circumstances of this year.
- The SQA's National Qualifications 2020 Methodology Report outlines the assurance approach put in place for the alternative certification model.
- SQA required additional technical capacity and assurance this year to deliver.
- In order to assist the organisation in deciding on the most appropriate course of action SQA applied the 'three lines of defence' model to create an appropriate assurance framework. This model is used by the Scottish Government and widely across the public sector.
- SQA used independent technical experts to provide assurance on their approach to moderation, members of its Qualifications Committee and Advisory Council; and the Scottish Government's Qualifications Contingency Group, which involves key system stakeholders, at key points in the process.

These are a strong set of results, but we have to be very careful with any comparison to previous years. However, I have confidence in the investment that is being made in Scottish education and the positive benefits from that.

- Furthermore we are providing up to a further £135 million over the next two years to help support the return to school.
- This includes a major investment in our teaching workforce, to help address learning loss and ensure much-needed resilience in our education system
- This new funding will see us invest to tackle the impact of coronavirus in our schools, and will include investment in teaching resources and other work to support children and young people's health and wellbeing and attainment.

It is disingenuous and unfair to learners, and their hard work, to suggest that results are higher this year because of any interference in the process.

- SQA are an independent body
- Without moderation by the SQA this year's results would have been significantly higher.
- We have to be careful about comparisons between years due to the different methodologies employed, but it can be seen that this year's results are not substantially different from results in recent years.

Whilst there should be confidence in this year's awarding process, and the qualifications gained as a result of it, further assurance is provided by a free post-results appeals service.

- I would encourage any young person who is disappointed by their results to discuss with their school or college.
- Appeals will be based solely on individual merit based on the evidence presented by the school or college for each candidate.
- The appeals process is an integral part of awards this year and takes into account a student's individual circumstances including evidence supplied by their teacher or lecturer.
- It is important that the appeals process is allowed to proceed.
- The SQA has put resources in place to progress this year's appeals – and if any further resources are required this will, of course, be addressed.
- I welcome that our Higher Education institutions have indicated that they will work with learners who may be reliant on an appeal to meet the terms of their course offer.
- **QUOTE:** Larry Flanagan, EIS: *“Schools will wish to examine in detail the impact of the SQA’s statistical modelling on their results and where there is disquiet the evidence based appeal system should be utilised, in the endeavour to ensure that all young people receive results that accurately reflect their achievements throughout the year.”*

If candidates didn't get the results they needed or were expecting they should contact their school/college as soon as possible.

- Appeals can only be made by a school or college.
- Schools and colleges can only appeal if the grade awarded is lower than the estimated grade that was submitted to the SQA.
- The SQA website provides guidance for schools and colleges on how to support an appeal.
- It confirms that appeals will be based solely on a candidate's individual merit, based on the evidence presented by the school or college.
- Schools and colleges are encouraged to submit a wide range of alternative evidence, and not solely a class test or prelim, wherever possible.
- SQA have confirmed that there is no nine month wait for grades. This was a meaningless date set as part of a technical requirement to allow the system to go live.
- 14 August is the deadline for those candidates confirming a college/university place and 14 August is the deadline for all other appeals.
- The results of the priority appeals will be emailed to schools and colleges for learners by 4 September.
- SQA are committed to processing all appeals as quickly as possible. SQA will provide a date for all other reviews shortly after 21 August.

SQA was clear that it was not possible to enter into dialogue with exam centres on changes to teacher estimates - this is an operational decision for SQA.

- SQA could not engage with individual centres as this would have required a very significant number of conversations that could not have been accommodated in the very short timescale available.
- It would not have been fair to all learners if only some centres got the opportunity to engage with SQA.

I welcome that SQA have undertaken and published an Equality Impact Assessment and Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment in line with their legal duties, and as they committed to do

- The EQIA and CRWIA set out the clear actions that SQA have taken to promote fairness and reduce negative impacts on any groups.
- Under the Equality Act 2010, the SQA cannot discriminate or victimise in conferring qualifications. During 2018–19, the SQA reviewed its equality impact assessment practices, and incorporated the Fairer Scotland Duty into the process.
- The size of the gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people attaining grades A-C is narrower under this measure than for last year or indeed the average for the last four years.
- In support of the process, the SQA continues to engage with the National Parent Forum of Scotland, Connect, the Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland, Young Scot, Carers Trust Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament to share information on what is happening and when.

Autumn exam resits are a routine part of the academic calendar in England - in Scotland they are not and as such doing so in a relatively short amount of time and under uncertain conditions it would have been very difficult to guarantee fairness to learners from such an approach.

- SQA are operating a free appeals process this year, giving schools and colleges the opportunity to present evidence in support of teacher and lecturer estimates.

The framework for reopening schools made clear that planning for the examination diet is under way, and will continue.

- Any ongoing impacts on this of the pandemic will be considered further by the Education Recovery Group.
- Consideration will be given to slightly delaying the exam diet to provide more learning and teaching opportunities for senior phase candidates.
- We will also consider any other flexibilities and contingencies that may need to be in place to accommodate prevailing public health advice.
- We will ensure that further guidance on this specific issue is in place for when schools return on 11 August.
- Decisions will be based on the best assessment of current public health advice and what impact this may have on the operation of schools next year.

It is important to recognise all the different learning pathways and to note that we have seen important increases in the attainment in a range of skills-based courses and qualifications.

- This includes increases in the number of young people attaining in areas such as Awards in Employability at SCQF level 4 and Leadership Awards at SCQF level 6.
- Skills for Work courses such as Engineering Skills, Travel and Tourism, and Construction have all seen increasing numbers of entries and increases in the pass rate and demonstrate that our young people are increasingly being accredited for developing a range of employability skills in areas that are important for our economy.

We welcome the increase in Scottish students being accepted into university through UCAS, and especially the fact that these are at record numbers for those students coming from Scotland's most deprived areas.

The Scottish qualifications system is different to those in the rest of the UK and has no approach of offering exam resits. As there is no certainty as to when public health requirements would allow the sitting of exams, and I could not let this uncertainty weigh over our young people.

- Learners will, as in all other years, be able to sit any exams in the following exam diet.

It is a fundamental feature of our qualifications system that evidence of attainment must be demonstrated before an award can be issued.

- SQA's guidance is clear that it was for the school or college to decide what evidence they were prepared to accept and review. The school or college needed to be happy to authenticate this evidence and use it as a basis for the learner estimate.

ISSUE: 7 August – Daily Express runs a piece with Labour and Conservative comments about the SQA's use of independent experts to support its moderation approach. Jamie Green MSP (Conservative): "It is astonishing that the SQA enlisted the help of an outside agency yet still got this so completely wrong". Ian Murray MP (Labour) branded Ms Sturgeon a 'grade snatcher' and said: "her defence of the system's inequality reveals that education is far from her number one priority."

Background:

The 3 line of assurance: Independent review using appropriate sources of technical assurance.

- SQA used independent technical experts to provide assurance on our approach to moderation. Expertise in educational assessment and statistics was provided by AlphaPlus. Their independent experts provided assurance on SQA's approach to moderation at each step in the process. They were involved in the detailed steps of the process and provided advice at key points in the development and execution of the methodology. SAS, a leading statistical software provider, supported SQA in formulating a robust and deliverable approach for moderating estimates.

Information on the amount both companies were paid:

Here are details on Alpha Plus and SAS Consultancy from contract records.

SQA2255 - Alpha Plus

Estimated contract value - £30,000

One off requirement

SQA2252 - SAS Consultancy

Agreed Contract value - £64,800

One off requirement, but we will continue to use them until later in the year.

Background - SQA Media line of 6 August 2020, on their work with AlphaPlus:

"99% of entries were awarded at or within one grade of the estimate provided by teachers and lecturers. Nearly 75% were awarded the estimated grade. We are extremely thankful to Scotland's education system who came together to make the 2020 results and awards possible. It is also important to highlight the role of our Principal Assessors, who are practicing and

experienced teachers and lecturers, who were key to the decision-making process.

“AlphaPlus are experts in educational assessment, standards and statistics and they have provided technical advice to SQA and a number of other UK awarding bodies. We have also taken advice from members of our Qualification Committee and from academics with expertise in educational assessment.”

What is the extent of AlphaPlus’ involvement and IT firm SAS?

- The SQA’s National Qualifications 2020 Methodology Report outlines the assurance approach put in place for the alternative certification model.
- SQA required additional technical capacity and assurance this year to deliver.
- In order to assist the organisation in deciding on the most appropriate course of action SQA applied the ‘three lines of defence’ model to create an appropriate assurance framework. This model is used by the Scottish Government and widely across the public sector.

Have the firms been used in previous years? Is this common practice?

- This was required given the exceptional circumstances of this year. Other UK awarding bodies have also used specialise contractors, such as AlphaPlus, to provide help and advice in this unprecedented situation.

How was the advice from others including academics used to inform the process?

- Independent technical provided assurance on SQA’s approach to moderation.
- Academics on SQA’s Qualifications Committee – Louise Hayward and Jo-Anne Baird
- Professional expertise provided at key steps in the process.

What advice taken from the qualifications contingency group

- SQA used key members of its Qualifications Committee and Advisory Council to provide professional expertise at key steps in the process.
- SQA also sought the advice of the Scottish Government’s Qualifications Contingency Group, which involves key system stakeholders, at key points in the process.

I recognise that there is understandably significant interest in how the results this year have been awarded, and the Chief Examining Officer has

ensured transparency by publishing a suite of materials explaining the methodology employed and the results of it.

- National moderation has played an important role in this process which provides assurances that the results are credible. However, around three quarters of all grade estimates made required no adjustment by the SQA.
- Where grade estimates were moderated, the vast majority of these estimates – over 93 percent - were changed by only one grade.
- Moderation has resulted in some grades increasing as well as some decreasing.
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- Inevitably in a new process there will be slight differences in how it is applied across the country, and for that reason and to maintain national standards the SQA has always been clear that it may need to moderate results if necessary.
- Only SQA has the national overview and therefore need to apply moderation to ensure consistency and fairness for learners across Scotland.
- SQA is clear that moderation has not been a purely statistical approach – there has consideration of both quantitative and qualitative factors.
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The fact that around three quarters (377,308) of all the estimates submitted by teachers and lecturers required no adjustment demonstrates the strength within the profession and the sound understanding of standards across the new qualifications and through Curriculum for Excellence.

- Teachers and lecturers always want their young people to achieve the best they possibly can do, and being aware of the challenges and stresses that young people have faced may have meant that teachers who are aspirational for their young people may have 'given the benefit of the doubt to' those young people who are close to grade boundaries.
- We are confident that our teachers have acted with professionalism and integrity, the vast majority of grades have been unchanged, but our teachers and lecturers are also working through the stress of a global pandemic wanting the best for young people.
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Whilst there should be confidence in this year's awarding process, and the qualifications gained as a result of it, further assurance is provided by a free post-results appeals service.

- This is now open for schools and colleges to lodge appeals on behalf of pupils where they believe there is appropriate and robust evidence to support the original grade estimate.
- The post-results review process is an integral part of awarding.
- SQA have ensured that sufficient resources are in place to support this appeals process.
- I welcome that our Higher Education institutions have indicated that they will work with learners who may be reliant on an appeal to meet the terms of their course offer.
- **QUOTE:** Larry Flanagan, EIS: *"Schools will wish to examine in detail the impact of the SQA's statistical modelling on their results and where there is disquiet the evidence based appeal system should be utilised, in the endeavour to ensure that all young people receive results that accurately reflect their achievements throughout the year."*

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- Schools and colleges are encouraged to submit a wide range of alternative evidence, and not solely a class test or prelim, wherever possible.
- 14 August is the deadline for those candidates confirming a college/university place.
- Results will be sent to the school/college by 4 September.
- 21 August is the deadline for all other for all other appeals - the appeal review date will be advised by the SQA shortly.

SQA was clear that it was not possible to enter into dialogue with exam centres on changes to teacher estimates - this is an operational decision for SQA

- SQA could not engage with individual centres as this would have required a very significant number of conversations that could not have been accommodated in the very short timescale available.
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