

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**

### **S5 AND S6 SCQF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2020**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE)**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide members with an update on the performance of students in attaining Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Awards at Level 6 (Higher or equivalent) in the S5 and S6 stages, and at Level 7 (Advanced Higher or equivalent including HNC) in the S6 stage.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Education Executive notes:

- that performance of S5 students in 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 has risen in the five year period.
- that performance of S6 students in 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 has risen in the five year period.
- that SCQF examination performance of S6 students in 1+ Awards at Level 7 has risen in the five year period.
- that further detail of school by school performance will be presented to a future meeting of the Education Executive.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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|---|---|
| <b>I Council Values</b>   | Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership |
| <b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b> | Raising Attainment is a key strategic objective of the Council as set out in the Single Outcome Agreement, Corporate Plan and National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan.            |
| <b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>   | None.   |
| <b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>  | SCQF attainment is reflected in the key performance indicators of the service.  |

<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SCQF attainment is reflected in the performance indicators contained in the Single Outcome Agreement.
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	Examination results are delivered within agreed central education and devolved school budgets.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	None.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	None.

## **D TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D1 Introduction**

The Education Executive, at its meeting of 6 December 2016, agreed to adopt Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Awards as the key measure of attainment reported to members, parents and the public with effect from the 2017 exam diet.

The Education Executive noted that moving to the SCQF framework was appropriate as it includes and recognises an extended and enhanced range of achievement in the senior phase which is in line with the principles of Developing the Young Workforce. Specifically, it was agreed to adopt 5+, 3+ and 1+ Level 6 SCQF Awards at point of exit as the key measure of attainment.

It was noted that this change would allow easier comparison with national performance for members, parents and the public, and would present the fullest and most accurate measure of the totality of the attainment and achievement of young people throughout the totality of their school attendance. It was also noted, however, that performance management undertaken at schools and authority level would continue to rely on a wide range of measures in order to allow performance to be measured at key stages, and the performance of particular subjects, curricular areas, and groups of pupils to be measured.

The attainment of 5+, 3+ and 1+ SCQF Awards at Level 6 by students at the S5 stage, and 1+ SCQF Award at Level 7 by students at the S6 stage remain important measures of school performance, and for this reason they will continue to be reported to members annually. In addition in this report the attainment of 5+, 3+, and 1+ SCQF awards at level 6 by students at the S6 stage has been included.

## **D2 Context**

Following school closures on 20th March 2020, and subsequent cancellation of the 2020 exam diet, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) stated that teachers were best placed to have a strong understanding of how their learners have performed and, based on their experience and the evidence available, what a learner would be expected to achieve in each course. They then issued information to schools on the estimation process. The estimated grades were to be an overall judgement based on all activity across the year, rather than the result of one prelim or one project. Therefore teachers exercised their professional judgement based on a range of evidence including, but not exclusive to, prelims, coursework, tracking reports, homework, classwork, formal and informal feedback, added value from prelim to final and estimate to final in previous years, evidence of incremental improvement over the course, prior attainment in subject or cognate subjects, attendance, assessment arrangements e.g. scribe/reader. Schools also ensured equity and equality for all candidates through considering factors that have impacted candidates' access to learning. All teachers completed an SQA Academy online course prior to making their estimate judgements.

Schools agreed a quality assurance process which was conducted at individual school level. This included Senior Leadership Teams in schools having quality assurance discussions within their schools prior to submission to the centre.

A short term SQA Concordance Working Group led by Head of Service was established to provide guidance and assistance to schools. The data submitted to the group was then analysed and communication took place with individual schools to ensure there was a sound rationale and evidence behind the estimates. Following this, schools submitted estimates to the SQA by 29th May 2020.

On 4th August 2020, young people received their exam results from the SQA. On 11th August the Depute First Minister announced that exam results would be amended to reflect the teacher estimates. On 14th August 2020 there was also an update from the SQA on the appeals process for 2020 which allowed for three grounds upon which centres can submit an appeal. Firstly, centres can submit an appeal if they discover that an administrative error was made when they submitted their estimate or entry information for a candidate, secondly, a centre's internal review process may disclose that a candidate's estimate was affected by discrimination or other conduct by the centre that is unacceptable under the Equality Act 2010. Lastly, where the Head of Centre believes that there has been an error within SQA's internal processes for confirming results to centres following the 11th August announcement, they can also appeal. SQA anticipates that in all three circumstances such appeals will arise only exceptionally.

## **D3 Attainment at SCQF Level 6 in S5**

Over the 5 year period 2016 to 2020, the percentage of students attaining 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S5 has improved.

In each of the measures, performance of West Lothian schools and students has outperformed both the national average and the virtual comparator. Please note, comparative data for 2020 is not yet available.

The virtual comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to those in West Lothian schools in terms of factors including stage, gender, additional support needs, and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

#### 5 + Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S5

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	26	29	32	41	43
Virtual Comparator	19	19	19	22	N/A
National	19	20	20	22	N/A

#### 3 + Awards at SCQF Level 6

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	43	46	52	58	60
Virtual Comparator	40	38	39	42	N/A
National	39	40	40	43	N/A

#### 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	63	66	69	71	75
Virtual Comparator	60	58	59	61	N/A
National	59	60	60	62	N/A

### **D4 Attainment at SCQF Level 6 in S6**

Over the 5 year period 2016 to 2020, the percentage of students attaining 5+, 3+ and 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6 has improved.

**5 + Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	37	38	40	44	51
Virtual Comparator	35	35	33	33	N/A
National	33	34	34	35	N/A

**3 + Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	50	52	54	58	62
Virtual Comparator	49	49	47	48	N/A
National	47	48	48	50	N/A

**1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	66	66	70	71	72
Virtual Comparator	65	65	63	63	N/A
National	63	63	64	65	N/A

**D5 Attainment at SCQF Level 7 in S6**

**1+ Awards at SCQF Level 7**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
West Lothian	19	20	22	21	22
Virtual Comparator	22	22	22	21	N/A
National	21	21	22	22	N/A

## E. CONCLUSION

Attainment has been raised through focused and rigorous application of the Raising Attainment Strategy in all West Lothian Schools. The National Improvement Framework (NIF) Improvement Plan is also used to continue to drive improvement in performance.

The SCQF attainment figures demonstrate that the attainment of West Lothian students has risen over the five year period. They demonstrate that West Lothian students are outperforming the Scottish average and the average of pupils with similar socio economic characteristics at Level 6 in both S5 and S6.

Further detail of school by school performance will be presented to a future meeting of the Education Executive.

## F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Reports to the Education Executive 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017 and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

Appendices/Attachments: None

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Date of meeting: 8 September 2020