

**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: 18 May 2023**

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**Report by: Director of Children's Services**

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**Heading: Attainment of 2021/22 School Leavers**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. INSIGHT is a performance evaluation tool provided by the Scottish Government to schools and education authorities as a way of benchmarking performance in four key measures. This report will provide data and commentary across these measures for the 2020/21 leavers cohort.
  - 1.2. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In particular, the cancellation of exams and external assessment of coursework in 2020, and the use of the Alternative Certification Model in 2021, will have affected the attainment of many 2021/22 school leavers. The impacts of these different approaches to certification upon school leaver attainment means that care should be taken when making comparisons over time.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board are asked to note:
    - the content of this report; and
    - the efforts of our young people and the school communities in bringing about these results.
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### **3. Background**

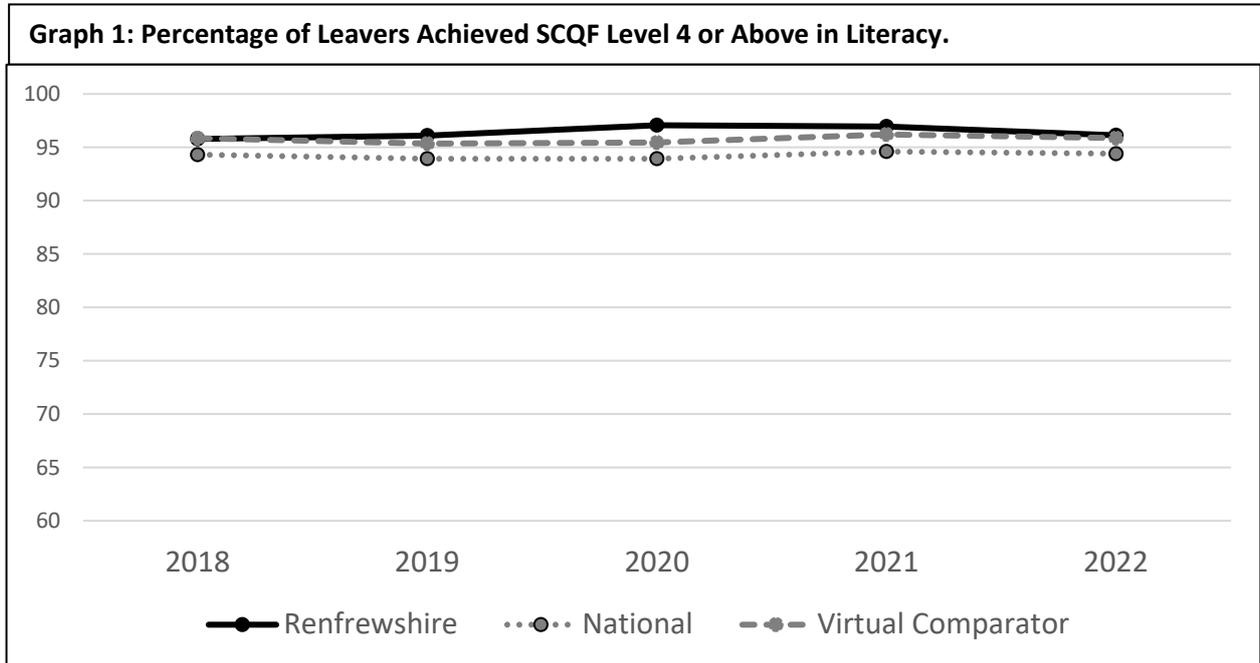
- 3.1. INSIGHT is a performance evaluation tool provided by the Scottish Government to schools and education authorities as a way of benchmarking performance in four key measures:
- attainment in literacy and numeracy;
  - improving attainment for all;
  - attainment versus deprivation; and
  - leavers' destinations.
- 3.2. This report will provide data and commentary on the performance of the 2021/22 leavers cohort in these four key measures. A leavers cohort includes all pupils that left school within a year, regardless of the stage they were at when they left school.
- 3.3. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In particular, the cancellation of exams and external assessment of coursework in 2020, and the use of the Alternative Certification Model in 2021, will have affected the attainment of many 2021/22 school leavers.
- 3.4. The INSIGHT tool uses a 'virtual comparator' (VC) to allow authorities and schools to make statistically valid comparisons between how young people have performed against young people nationally, who share four similar characteristics. These characteristics are gender, stage of leaving, percentage of time spent in mainstream classes, and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile. INSIGHT also allows us to compare our performance with national data.

#### **Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy**

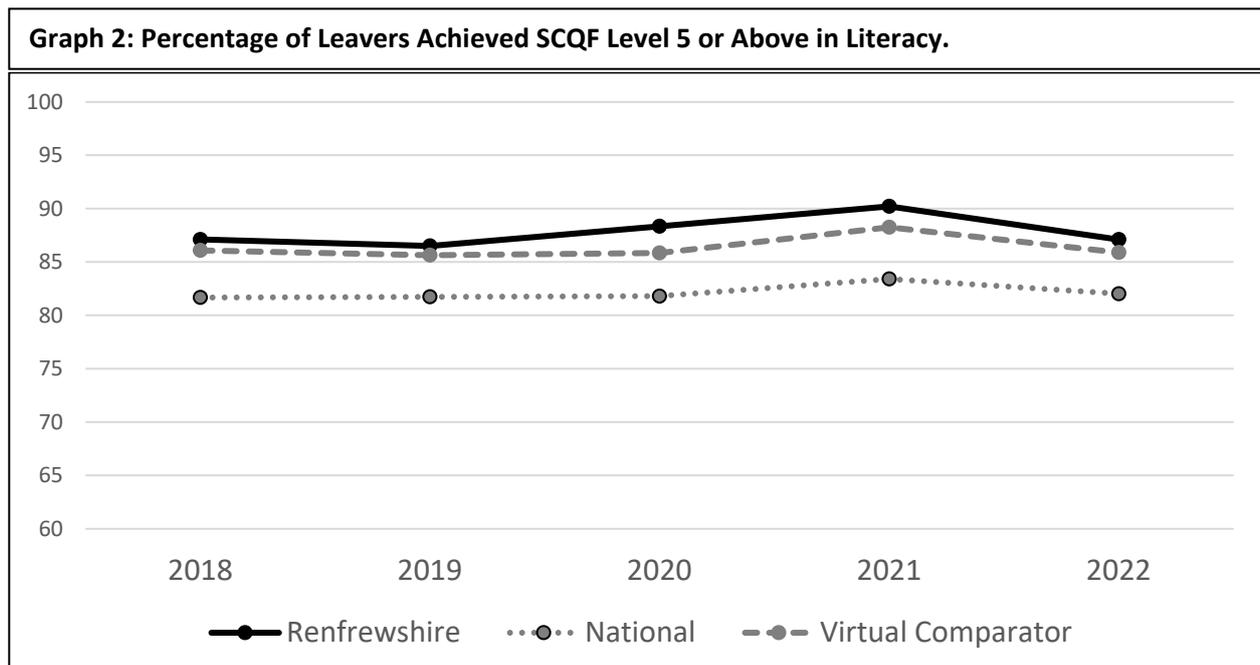
- 3.5. Raising attainment in literacy and numeracy remains a key priority of Renfrewshire Council Children's Services. This is also one of the Scottish Government's key priorities as detailed in its National Improvement Framework.
- 3.6. Attainment in literacy and numeracy includes passes at National 4 and 5 in English and Maths. It also includes passes in some other awards at Scottish Certificate and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 4 and 5 which contain certain core elements of literacy and numeracy. The tables which follow provide data on our performance of our school leaver cohort in literacy and numeracy compared to our virtual comparator and national figures.

## Attainment in Literacy

3.7. The graphs that follow show the percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 4 and SCQF 5 in literacy over 5 years.



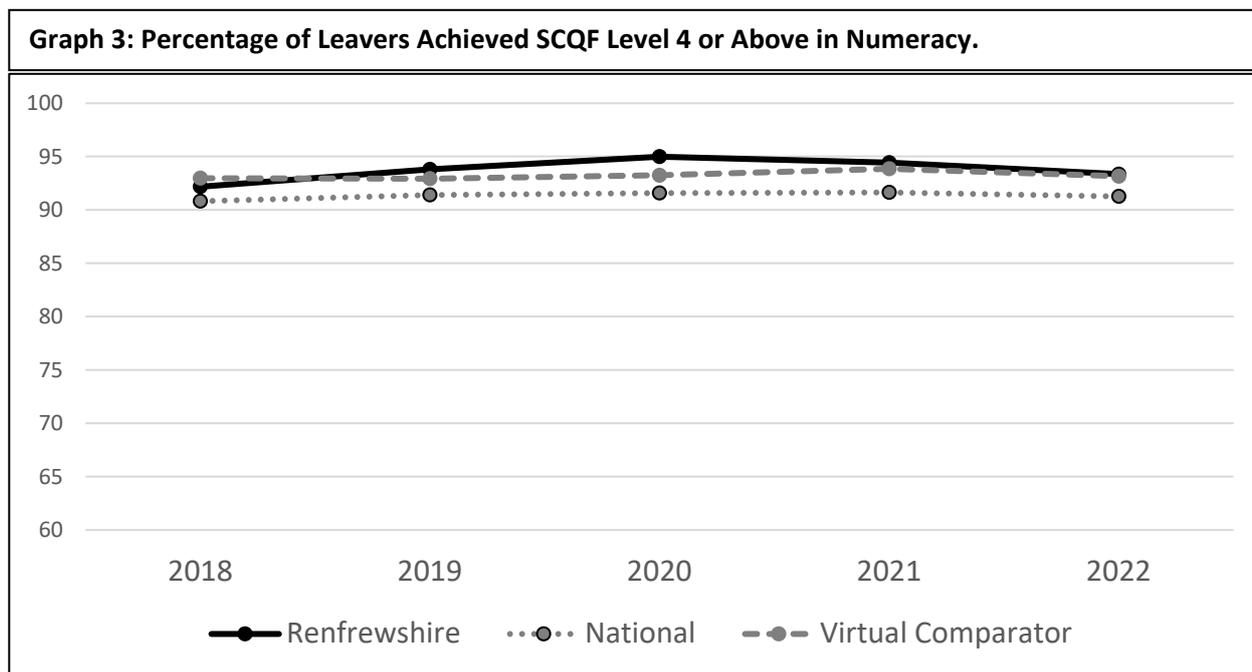
3.8. The percentage of leavers in Renfrewshire achieving literacy at SCQF level 4 or above has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years. Renfrewshire remains ahead of the national figures and in line with the virtual comparator in this measure. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort 96% of Renfrewshire pupils achieved this literacy at SCQF level 4, compared with 94% nationally and 96% for the virtual comparator.



3.9. Attainment in literacy at SCQF level 5 or above is slightly lower than the 2020/21 leavers cohort but remains consistent with previous years. Renfrewshire is ahead of both comparators over 5 years. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort 87% of Renfrewshire pupils achieved this measure, compared with 82% nationally and 86% for the virtual comparator.

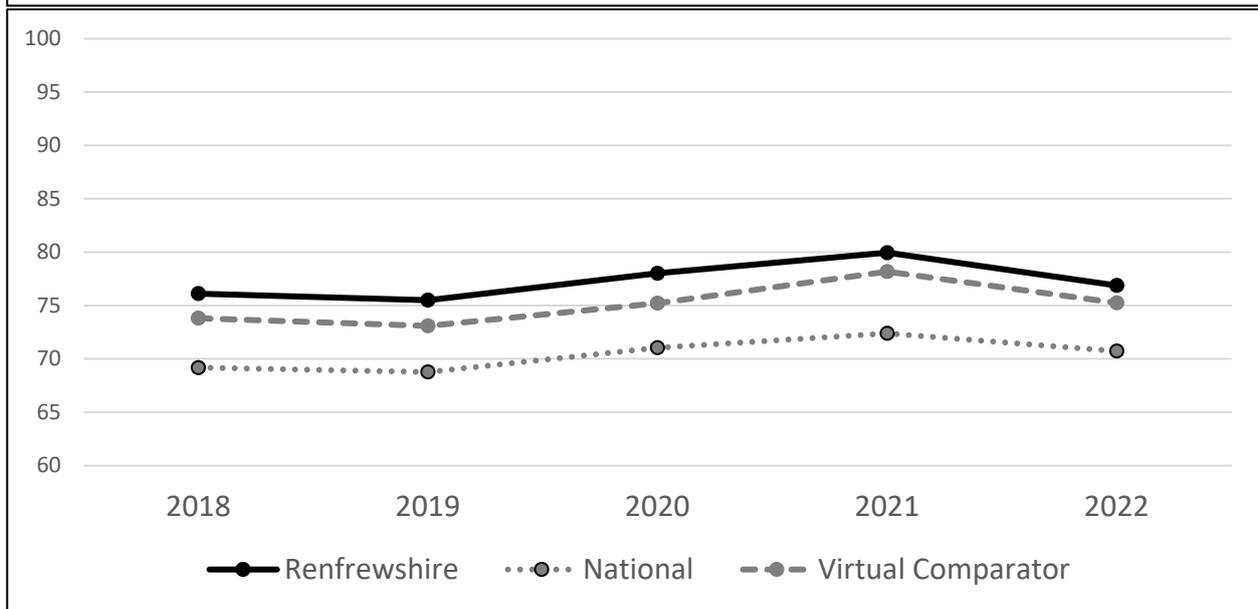
### Attainment in Numeracy

3.10. The graphs that follow show the percentage of Renfrewshire leavers who have achieved SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 in numeracy over 5 years.



3.11. Patterns of attainment in numeracy are similar to literacy, although literacy attainment is higher across both levels. At SCQF level 4, numeracy attainment is broadly consistent over 5 years. Renfrewshire is marginally ahead of national over 5 years and remains in line with the virtual comparator. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort 93% of Renfrewshire pupils achieved SCQF level 4 numeracy, compared with 91% nationally and 93% for the virtual comparator.

**Graph 4: Percentage of Leavers Achieved SCQF Level 5 or Above in Numeracy.**

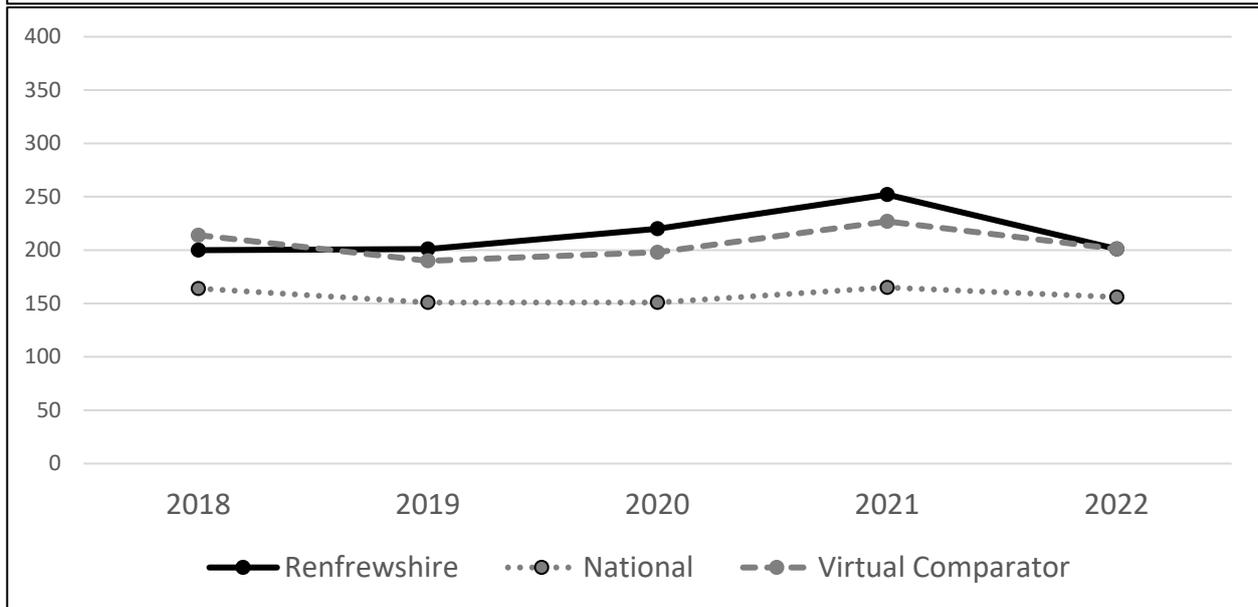


- 3.12. The percentage of Renfrewshire school leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or above in numeracy remains above both comparators over 5 years. There has been a marginal decrease since the previous year's cohort in all groups however figures remain consistent over 5 years. In the 2021/23 leavers cohort 77% of Renfrewshire pupils achieved this measure, compared with 71% nationally and 75% for the virtual comparator.

### **Improving Attainment for All**

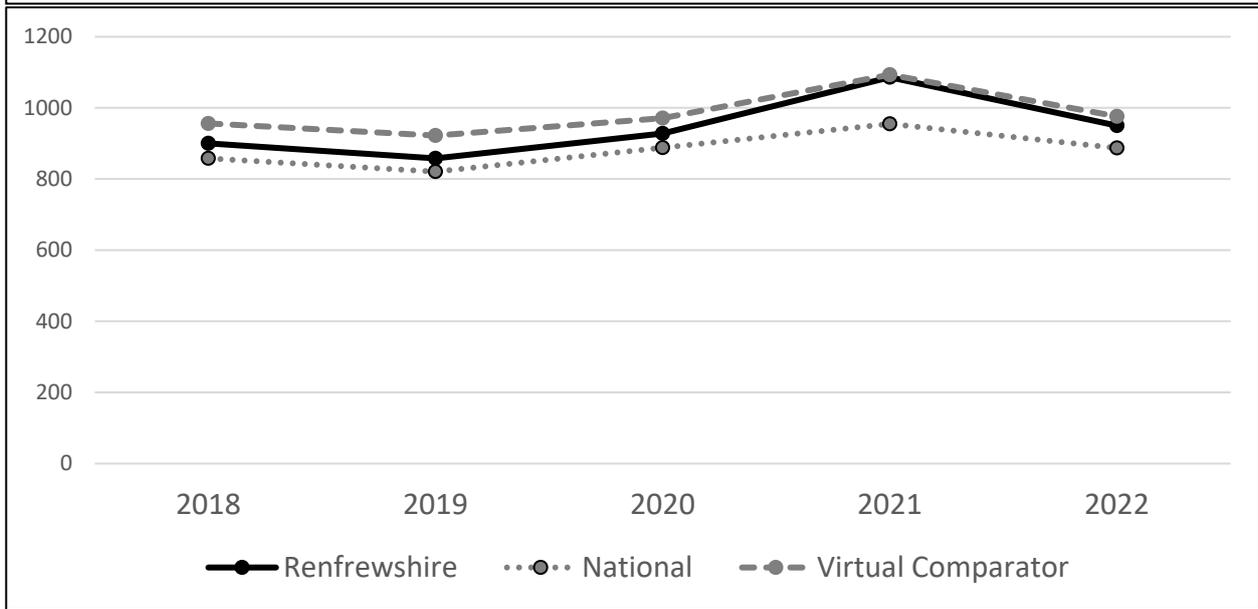
- 3.13. Each qualification on the Scottish Certificate and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is attributed a number of tariff points. The higher the level of qualification, the more tariff points are attributed. On leaving school, pupils will have a total tariff score which incorporates their latest and best achievements in the senior phase.
- 3.14. Within this measure, INSIGHT breaks the data down into three groups of leavers: the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20%. It then calculates the average total tariff points for each of these groups and compares their attainment with the virtual comparator and the national figure. Graphs demonstrating trends in each of these groups are shown below.

**Graph 5: Average Total Tariff of Lowest 20% Attainment Cohort**



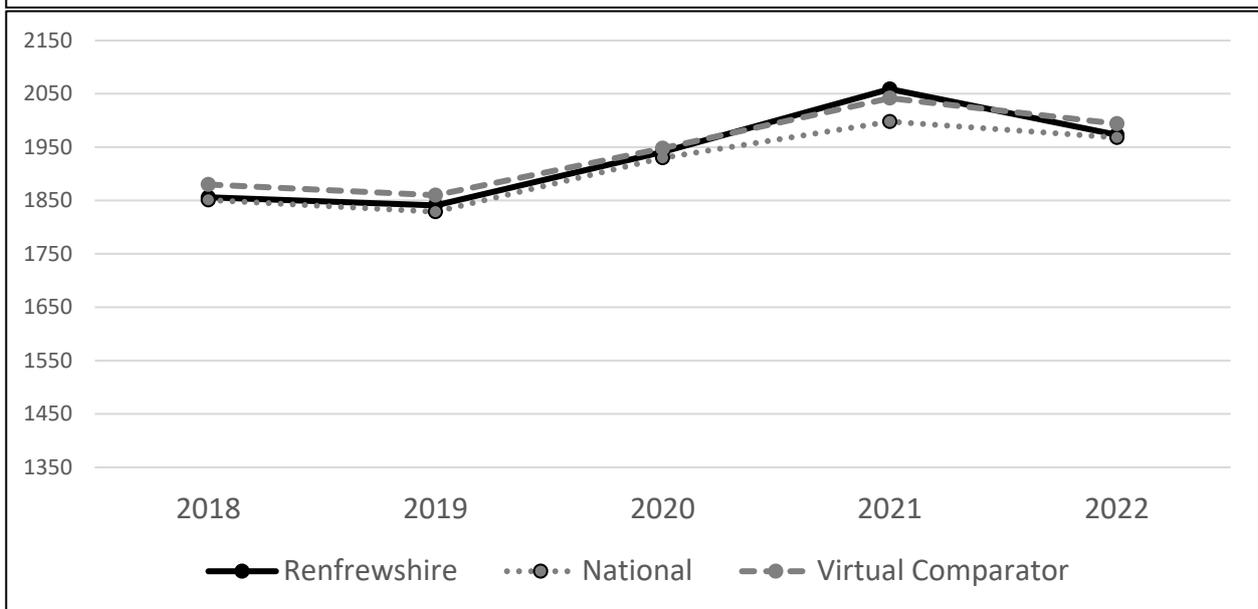
3.15. The average total tariff of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers in Renfrewshire is in line with the virtual comparator and ahead of the national figure in the 2021/22 leavers cohort. The Renfrewshire figure has decreased slightly within the latest cohort however remains closely aligned with the virtual comparator over 5 years. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, the average total tariff in Renfrewshire was 201. This compares to 156 nationally and 201 for the virtual comparator. 201 tariff points is approximately equivalent to 3 National 5 C grades.

**Graph 6: Average Total Tariff of Middle 60% Attainment Cohort**



3.16. The performance of the middle 60% attainment cohort in Renfrewshire is lower than the previous year but has increased over 5 years. This is a similar pattern to both comparator groups. Renfrewshire remains closely in line with the virtual comparator and ahead of the national figure. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, the average total tariff in Renfrewshire was 950. This compares to 887 nationally and 976 for the virtual comparator. 950 tariff points is approximately equivalent to 6 Higher C grades.

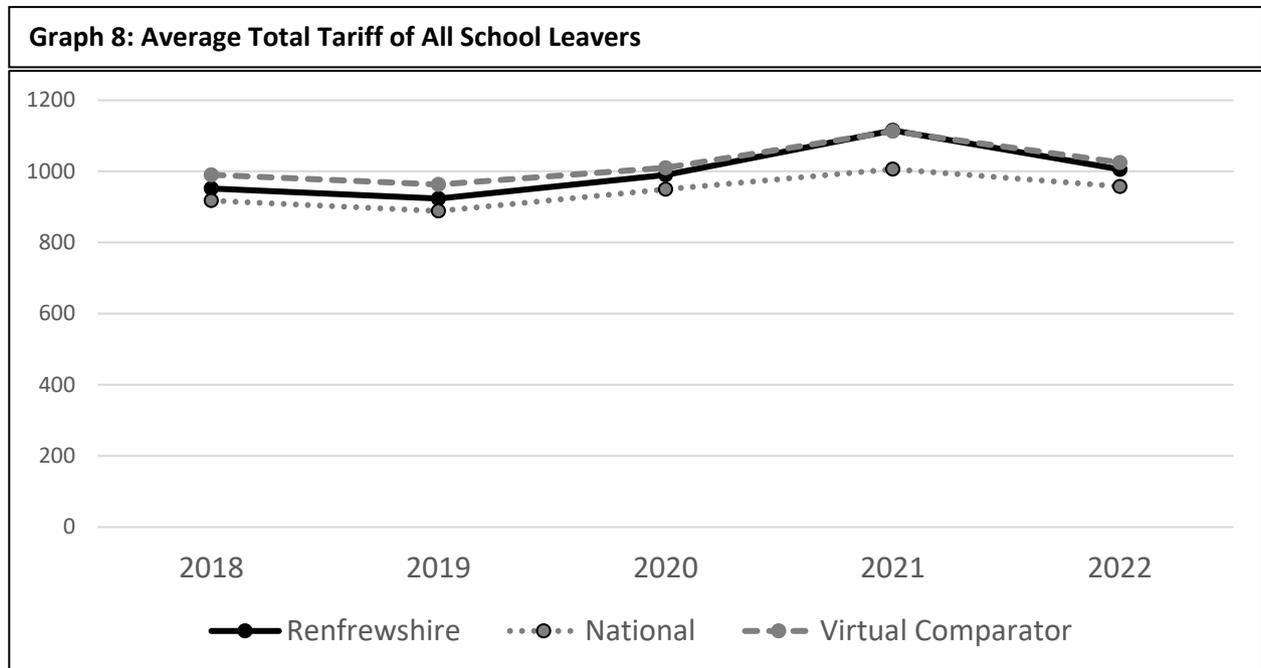
**Graph 7: Average Total Tariff of Highest 20% Attainment Cohort**



3.17. The average total tariff of school leavers in the highest 20% attainment cohort has increased over 5 years, despite a decrease since the previous year's cohort. Renfrewshire in line with the national figure and marginally below the

virtual comparator within the latest data. In the 2020/21 leavers cohort, the average total tariff in Renfrewshire was 1973. This compares to 1968 nationally and 1994 for the virtual comparator. 1973 tariff points is approximately equivalent to 5 Higher A grades plus 2 Advanced Higher A grades.

3.18.



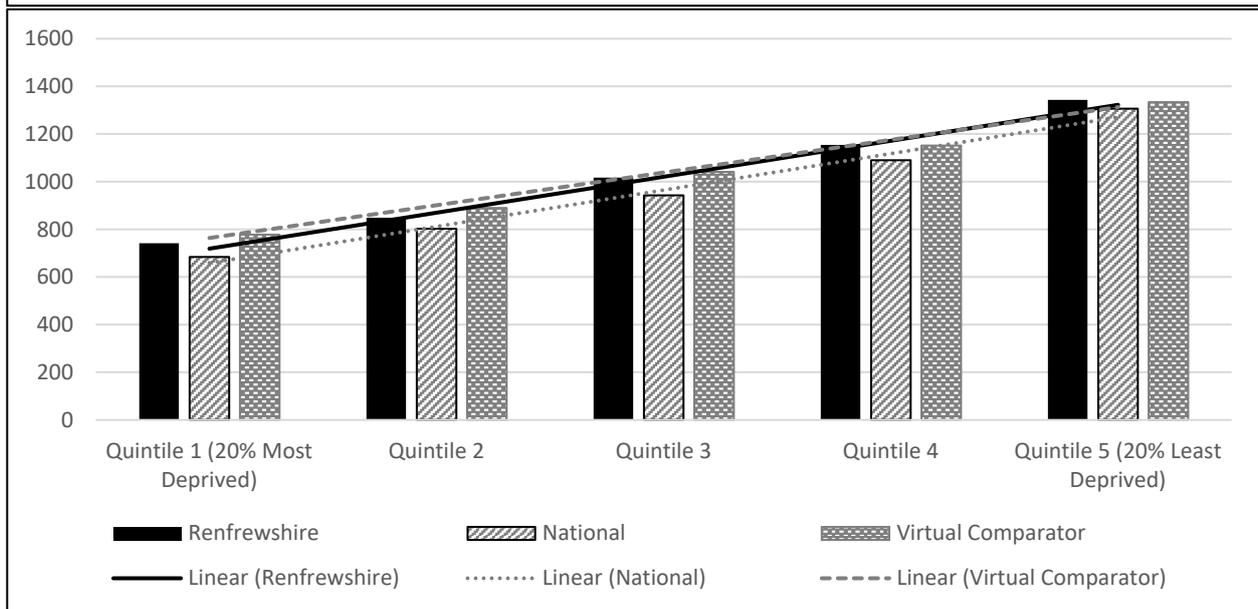
3.19. The average total tariff of all leavers, regardless of attainment cohort, in 2020/21 was 1005. This is a marginal decrease since the 2020/21 cohort but remains higher than previous years. Renfrewshire remains ahead of the national figure and marginally below the virtual comparator in this measure.

### Attainment Versus Deprivation

3.20. Closing the poverty related attainment gap is an overarching priority of Children’s Services. Schools in all sectors are getting increasingly stronger at identifying their most vulnerable pupils and using strategies to try and mitigate the impact of poverty on their attainment. The Scottish Government measures progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles. SIMD quintiles represent the 20% most deprived areas to the 20% least deprived areas.

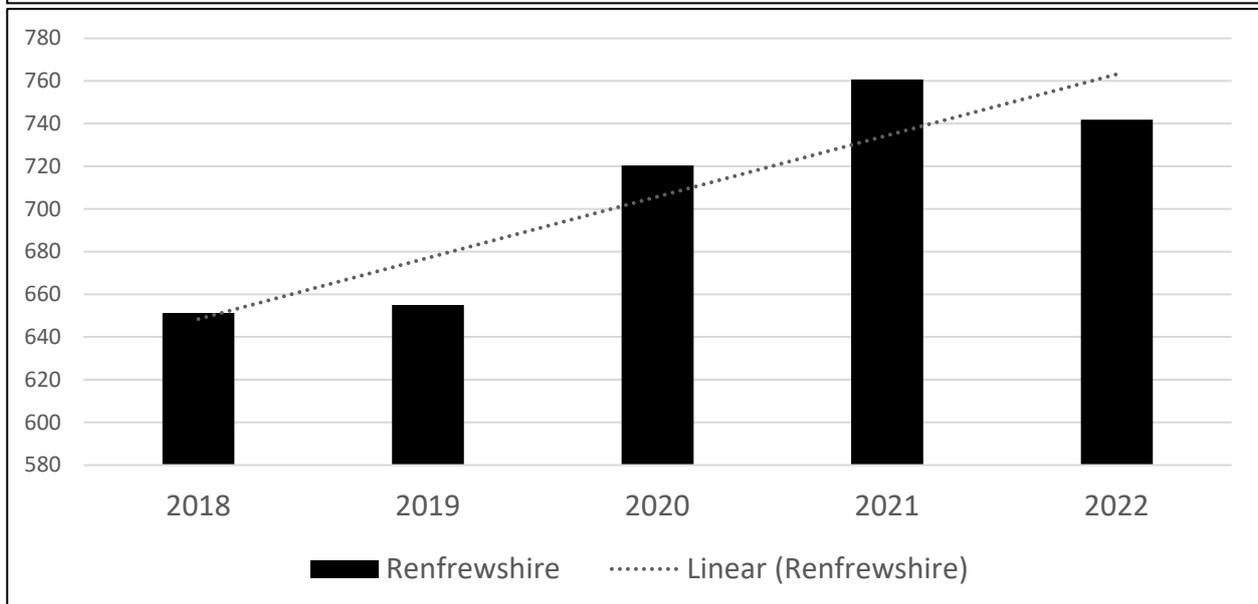
3.21. The following chart shows the average total tariff points by SIMD quintiles for Renfrewshire and its comparators.

**Graph 9: Average Total Tariff of 2021/22 Leavers by SIMD Quintile**



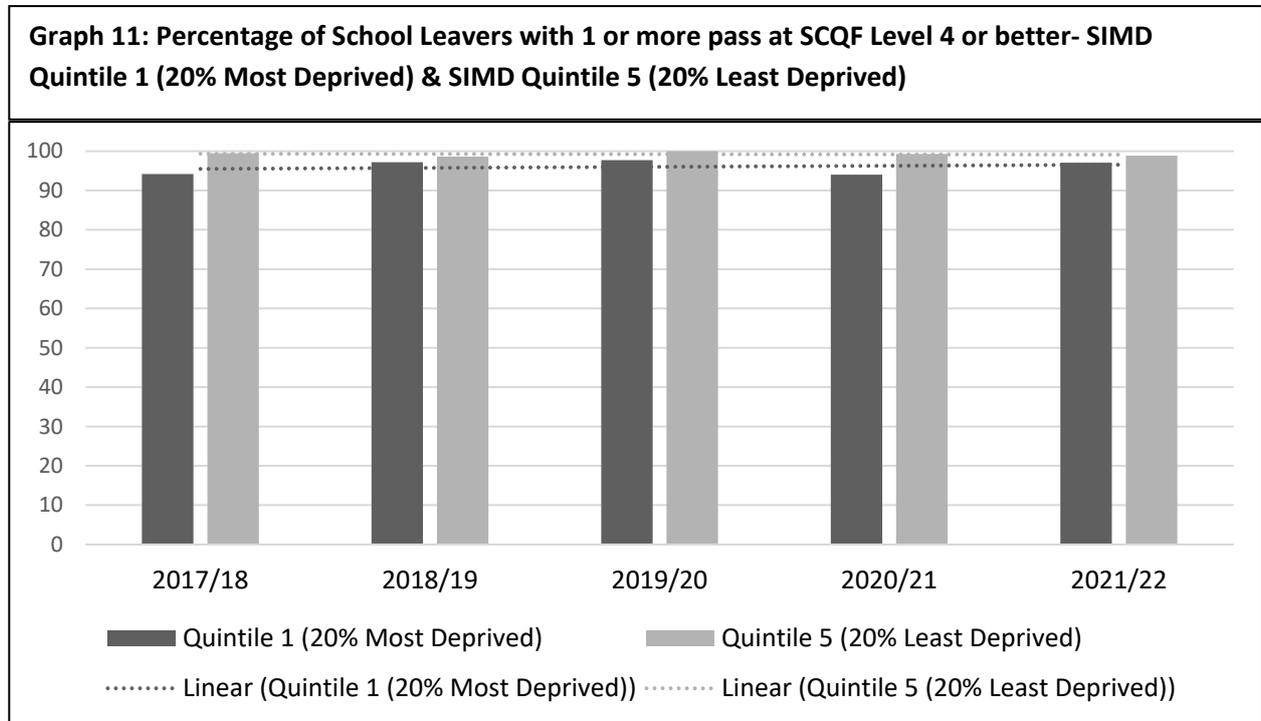
3.22. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, Renfrewshire's average total tariff is ahead of national in all quintiles and marginally behind the virtual comparator in quintiles 1 to 3. The trend across the 5 quintiles is similar between Renfrewshire and its comparators, although the national trend demonstrates lower attainment overall.

**Graph 10: Average Total Tariff of Renfrewshire School Leavers Living in SIMD Quintile 1 (20% Most Deprived Areas)**



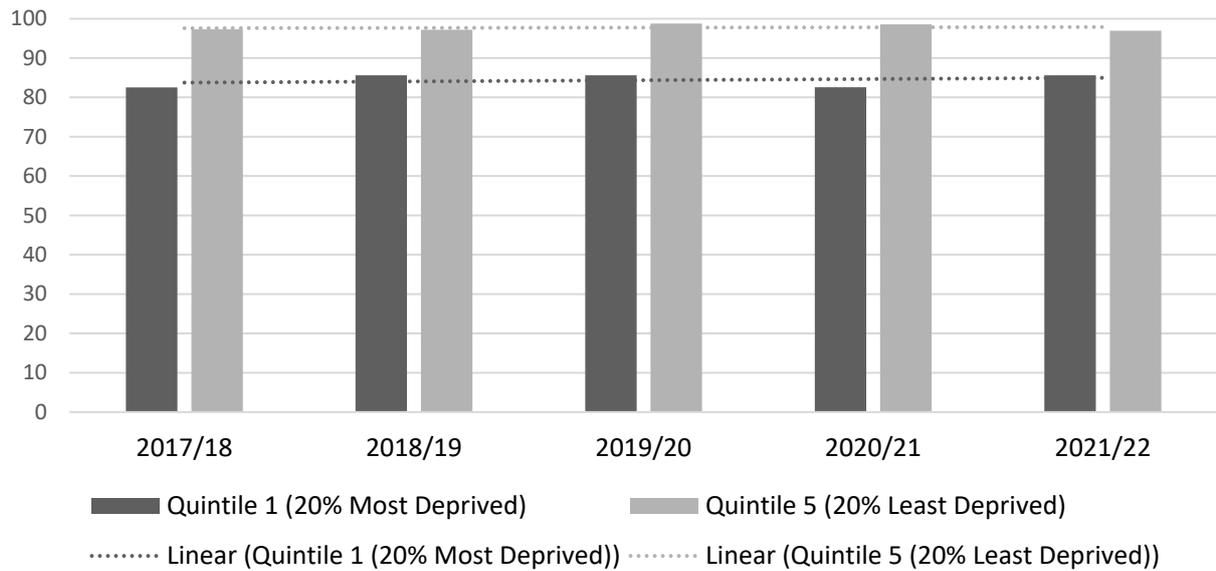
3.23. Graph 10 shows the average total tariff of school leavers living in the 20% most deprived areas in Renfrewshire over 5 years. These figures show that despite a decrease since the 2020/21 cohort there is an increasing trend over 5 years. The average total tariff was 14% higher in the 2021/22 cohort than in 2017/18.

3.24. The graphs below show the highest SCQF level achieved by Renfrewshire school leavers living in quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) and quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas). This comparison allows us to measure the change in the size of the poverty related attainment gap over time.



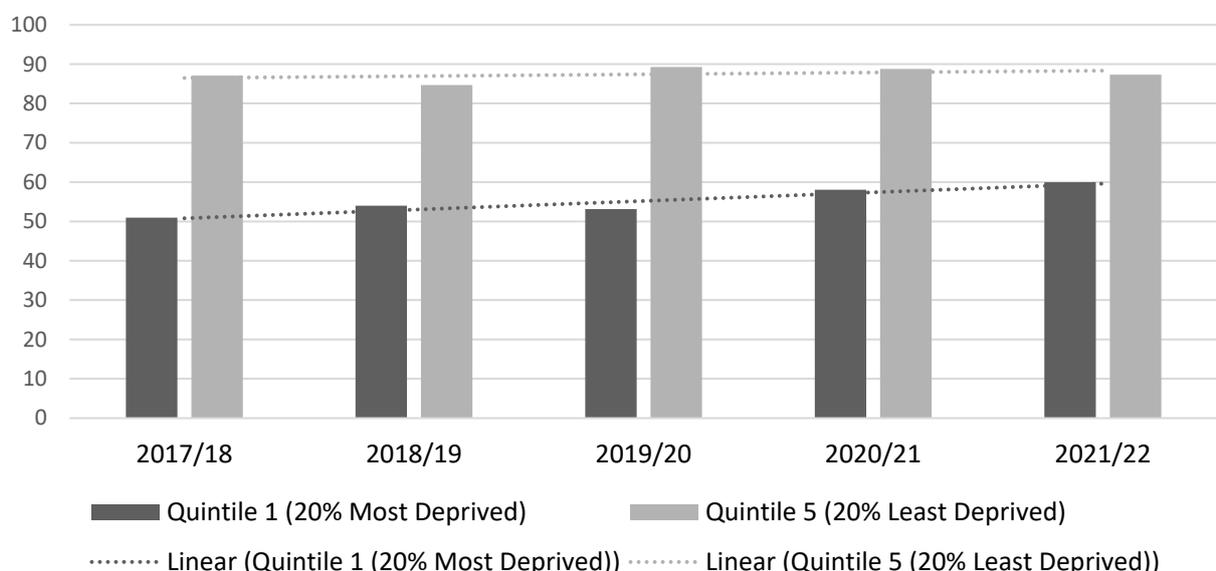
3.25. The percentage of school leavers with one or more pass at SCQF level 4 has been consistent over 5 years. Attainment in this measure is high across both groups, with 97% of leavers living in quintile 1 areas and 99% of those living in quintile 5 areas achieving 1 or more award at SCQF level 4. The size of the gap within the 2021/22 leavers cohort was 1.8 percentage points which is in line with previous years.

**Graph 12: Percentage of School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 or better.**



3.26. Graph 12 illustrates the percentage of school leavers with one or more pass at SCQF level 5. Attainment at this level has been consistently high within quintile 5, with 99% of leavers achieving 1 or more award at this level in the 2020/21 leavers cohort. Attainment of school leavers in quintile 1 is consistent with previous years at 86%. The size of the gap is in line with previous years at 11.4 percentage points.

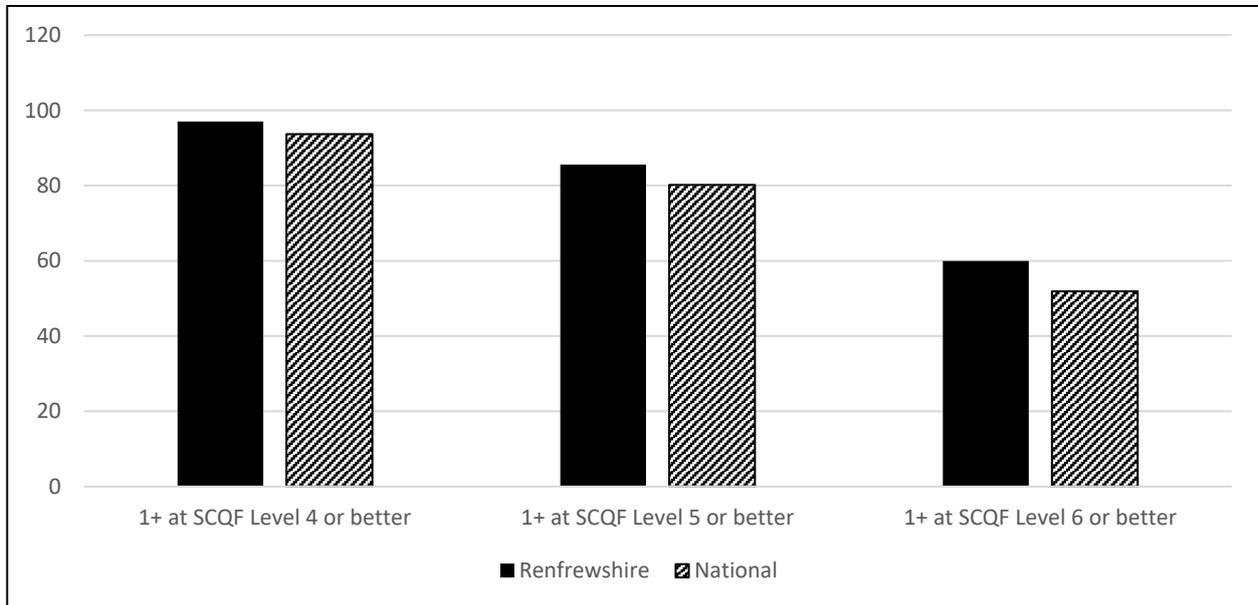
**Graph 13: Percentage of School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 or better.**



3.27. The percentage of pupils in quintiles 1 and 5 achieving one or more pass at SCQF level 6 has increased gradually over 5 years. The size of the attainment gaps are largest at this level however there has also been the biggest reduction in the size of the gap over 5 years. The size of the gap has decreased by 9

percentage points since 2017/18. This is due to greater increases in attainment within the most deprived group than in the least deprived group.

**Graph 14: Attainment of 2021/22 Leavers in Quintile 1 (20% Most Deprived Areas)**



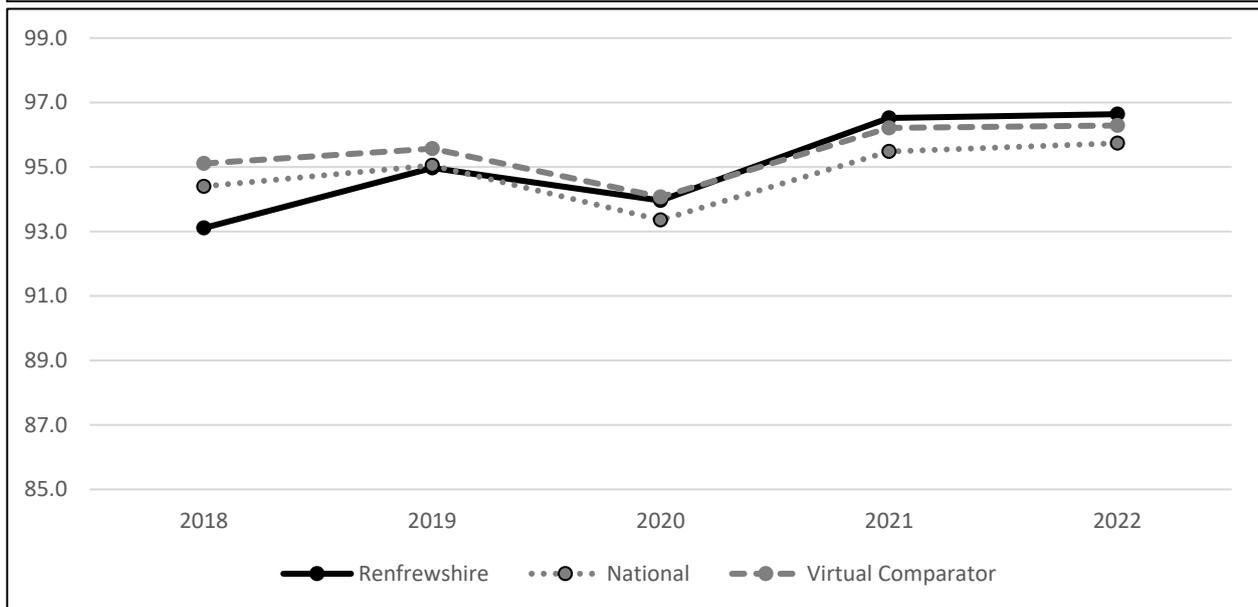
3.28. Graph 14 compares the attainment of pupils living in 20% most deprived areas in Renfrewshire and nationally. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, a higher proportion of pupils living in the most deprived areas achieved 1 or more awards across all levels in Renfrewshire. The largest difference is within the proportion of leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF level 6 as 60% of Renfrewshire leavers achieved this compared with 52% nationally.

3.29. The service and schools continue to support the Council’s and the Scottish Government’s priority of closing the poverty attainment gap through improving and targeting our provision, utilising the Scottish Attainment Challenge and pupil equity funding.

### **Leaver Destinations**

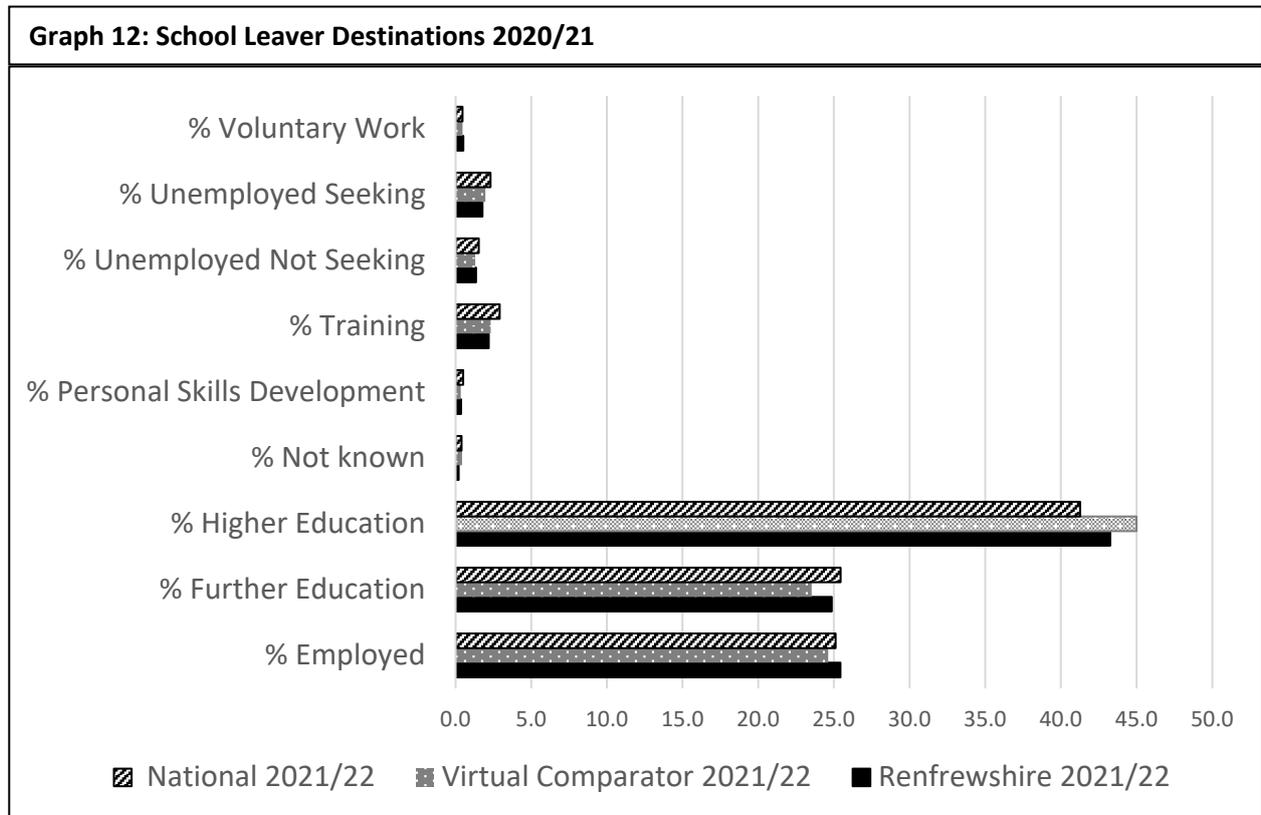
3.30. This measure identifies the percentage of school leavers that have entered a positive destination. Positive destinations include higher education, further education, employment, activity agreements, personal skills development and voluntary work.

**Graph 11: Percentage of School Leavers entering Positive Destinations.**



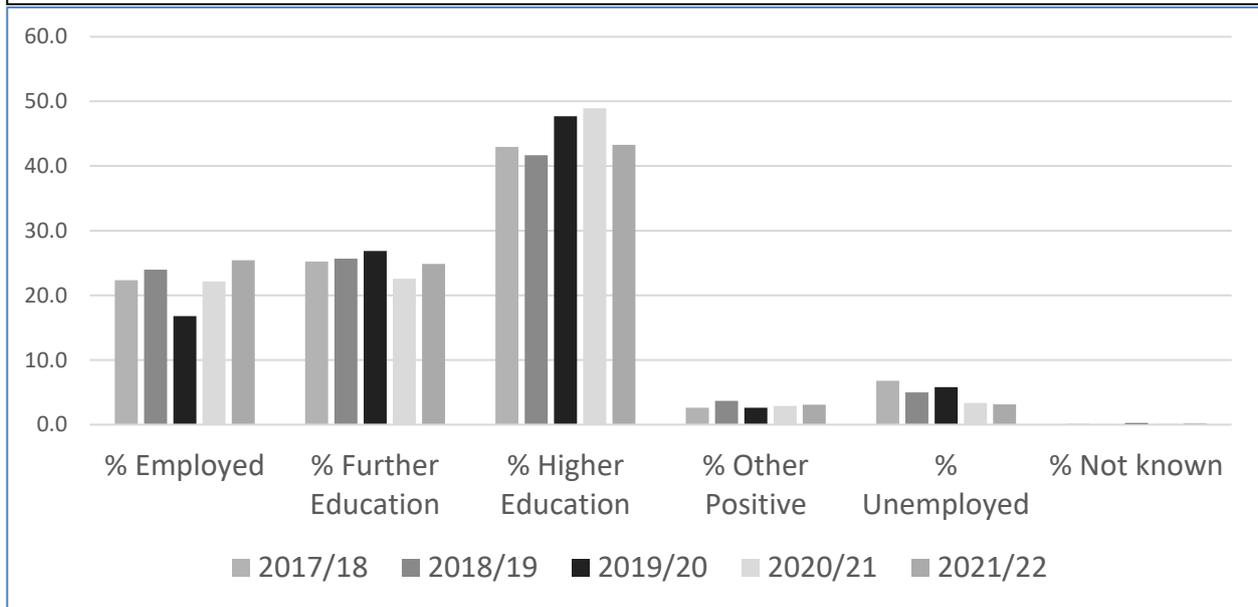
3.31. The percentage of leavers entering a positive destination has increased for Renfrewshire and both comparators over 5 years, however the Renfrewshire figure has increased at a higher rate. In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, the percentage of Renfrewshire leavers entering an initial positive destination was 96.6%, compared with 95.7% nationally and 96.3% for the virtual comparator. This is a 3.5 percentage point increase since 2017/18 in Renfrewshire, compared with only 1.3 percentage points nationally. This is the second year that Renfrewshire is ahead of both the national and virtual comparators.

3.32. The graph below shows the breakdown of the destinations of the 2021/22 leavers cohort.



In the 2021/22 leavers cohort, 43.3% of Renfrewshire’s leavers entered higher education, 24.9% went into further education and 25.4% were employed. Compared with national figures, Renfrewshire has a higher proportion of pupils entering higher education and employment. The proportion of Renfrewshire leavers entering higher education is behind the virtual comparator however Renfrewshire is above the virtual figure in both further education and employment.

**Graph 13: Renfrewshire School Leaver Destinations (5 Years)**



3.33. Employment figures have recovered from the pandemic years and are now higher than pre-pandemic levels. Conversely, the proportion of pupils entering higher education had increased during the pandemic years but has now returned to previous levels. The percentage of leavers unemployed is at its lowest level in 5 years at 3.1%.

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#### 4. Next Steps

4.1 Due to the variation in approaches to certification make recent year on year comparisons must be treated with an element of caution; however, 5-year trends indicate that Renfrewshire continues to perform well in relation to its comparators. This is particularly true in relation to national figures where Renfrewshire is consistently ahead across almost measures. There have also been improvements in the attainment of leavers from the most deprived areas, particularly at SCQF level 6 and above, although gaps remain significant. The percentage of leavers entering positive destinations continues to improve and Renfrewshire has for the second year surpassed both virtual and national comparators. However, we recognise the scope for further improvement, particularly in relation to reducing the poverty related attainment gap. We will continue to make this a priority as we strive for even further improvement.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
  2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
  3. **Community/Council Planning** –
    - Our Renfrewshire is thriving – looking at attainment in this way provides schools and Children’s Services with a robust way to evaluate the quality of education provision.
    - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all – attainment data is examined in the context of deprivation to ensure that we are working towards equity and excellence.
  4. **Legal** – none
  5. **Property/Assets** – none
  6. **Information Technology** - none
  7. **Equality & Human Rights**

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals’ human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council’s website.
  8. **Health & Safety** – none
  9. **Procurement** - none
  10. **Risk** - none
  11. **Privacy Impact** – none
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable
  13. **Climate Risk** - none
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