
To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 March 2021

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Attainment of 2019/20 School Leavers

1. Summary

- 1.1. On 21 January 2021 a report was approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board regarding the attainment of our young people in 2020.
- 1.2. In the report of 21 January 2021, it was advised that a further report be considered by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board when school leavers' data became available. This report concerns the attainment of our 2019/20 school leavers in the four key measures contained in the INSIGHT benchmarking tool.
- 1.3. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 exam diet could not take place. Results were awarded based on teacher estimates and are therefore not directly comparable with previous years. Destinations will also be impacted by the pandemic as the same range of opportunities may not have been available to young people.

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. A report on attainment was noted by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board in January 2021. It detailed the attainment of all our young people in S4, S5 and S6 in 2020. Included in the January 2021 report was a recommendation that a further report be submitted to the board with the attainment of Renfrewshire school leavers when this became available in spring 2020.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. This report will provide data and commentary on the performance of the 2019/20 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.
- 3.4. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 exam diet could not take place, and an alternative certification model was implemented. The absence of external assessment information, and the Ministerial direction to award estimated grades, means that the 2020 results presented in this report are not directly comparable to previous years. Comparisons between Renfrewshire and national and virtual comparators are available but should be interpreted cautiously.
- 3.5. 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 the national picture.

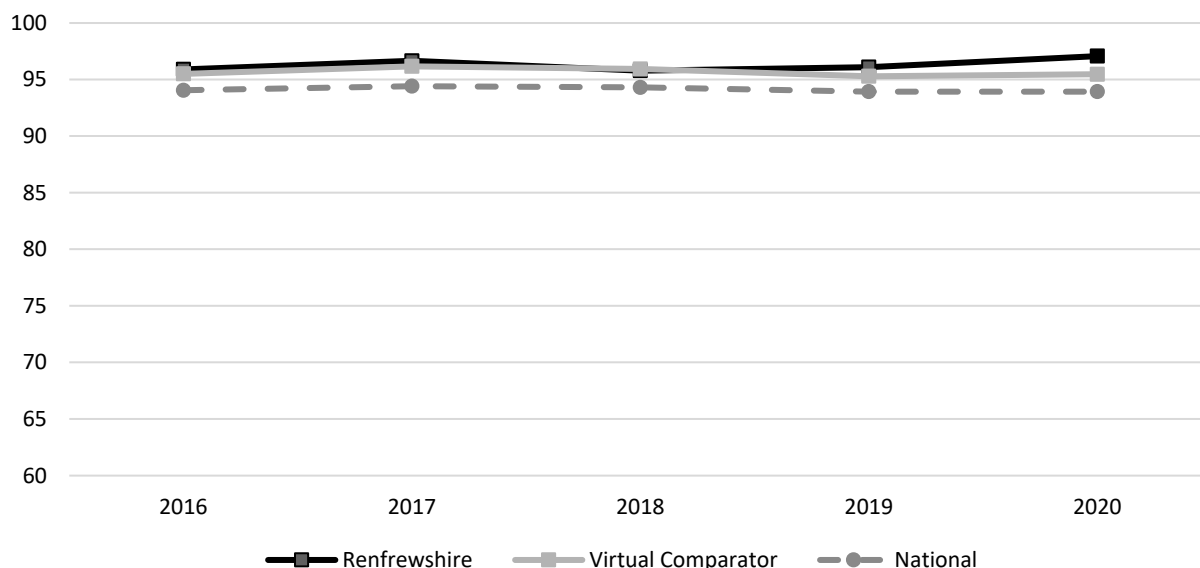
Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. 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.

Attainment in Literacy

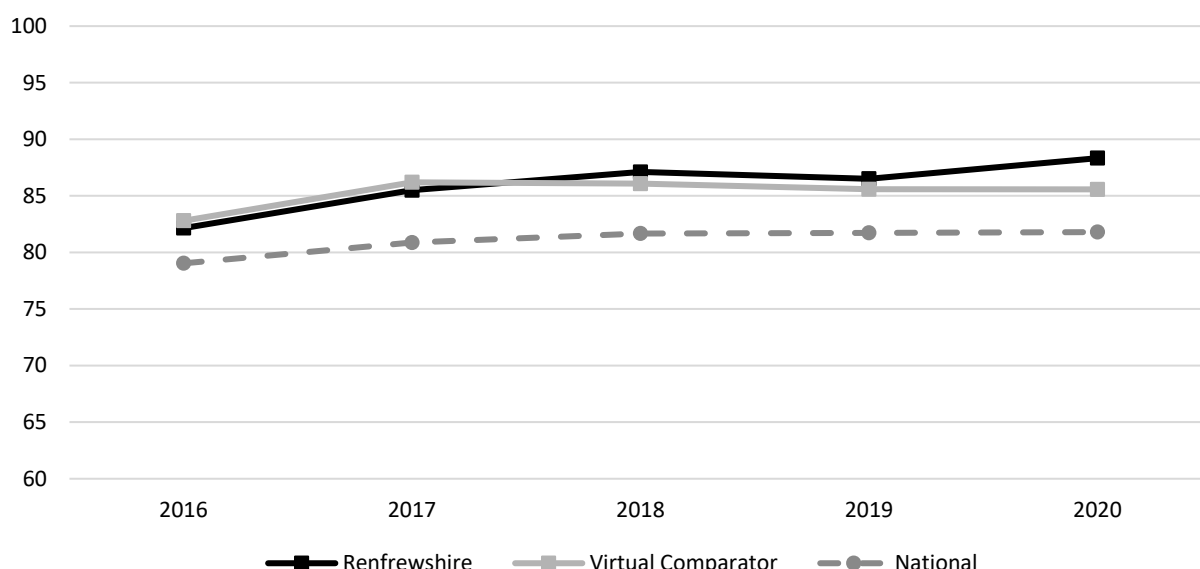
- 3.8. The graphs that follow show the percentage of leavers achieving SCQF level 4 and SCQF 5 in literacy over 5 years.

Graph 1: Percentage of Leavers Achieved SCQF Level 4 or Above in Literacy.



- 3.9. The percentage of leavers in Renfrewshire achieving literacy at SCQF level 4 or above has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years. In 2019/20, 97.1% of pupils achieved literacy at this level. Renfrewshire is above the virtual comparator and national figures, which are 95.5% and 93.9% respectively.

Graph 2: Percentage of Leavers Achieved SCQF Level 5 or Above in Literacy.

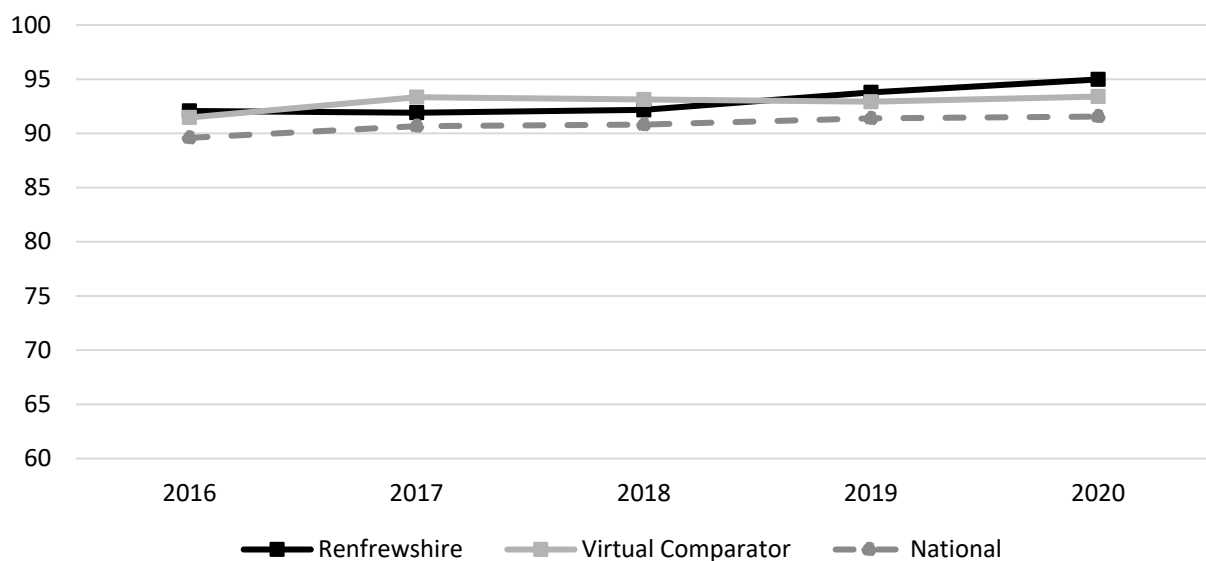


- 3.10. Attainment in literacy at SCQF level 5 or above is higher than previous years at 88.3%. This increase has resulted in Renfrewshire moving above the virtual comparator which was 85.6%. Renfrewshire remains consistently above the national figures over 5 years.

Attainment in Numeracy

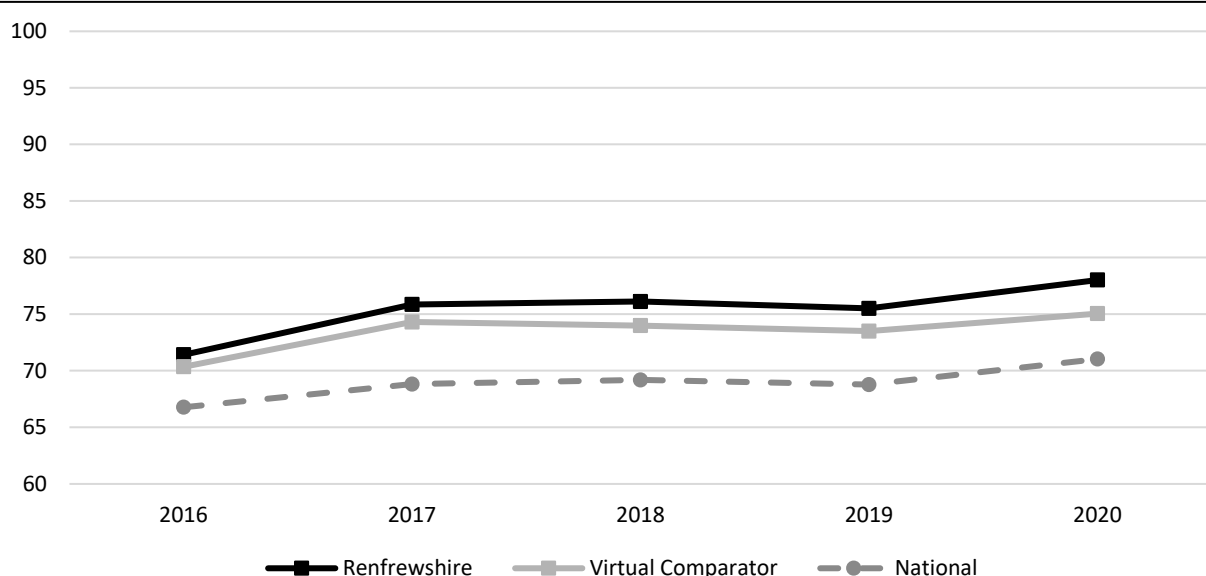
- 3.11. The graphs that follow show the percentage of Renfrewshire leavers who have achieved SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5 in numeracy over 5 years.

Graph 3: Percentage of Leavers Achieved SCQF Level 4 or Above in Numeracy.



- 3.12. The performance of Renfrewshire school leavers in numeracy at SCQF level 4 or above has increased to 95% in 2019/20. This increase means that Renfrewshire is above the virtual comparator for the second year in a row. Renfrewshire has been consistently above the national figure over 5 years.

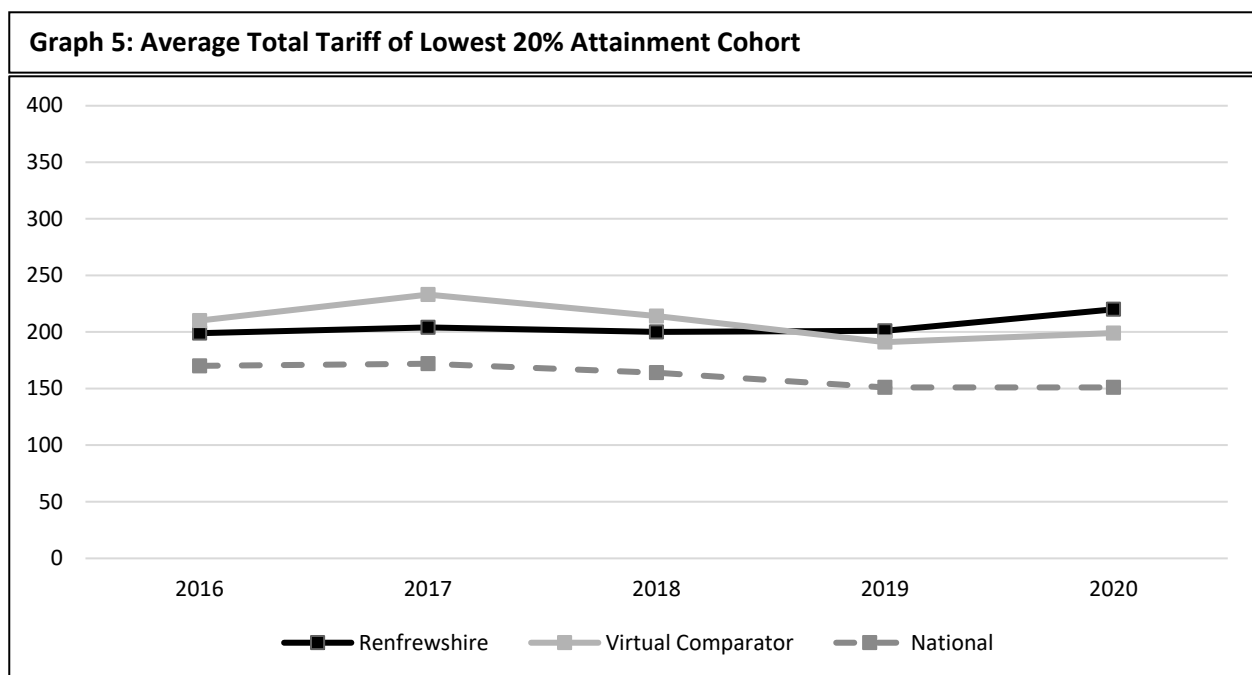
Graph 4: Percentage of Leavers Achieved SCQF Level 5 or Above in Numeracy.



- 3.13. The percentage of school leavers achieving SCQF Level 5 or above in numeracy is higher than previous years at 78%. The virtual comparator and national figures have followed a similar pattern, but both remains behind Renfrewshire. In 2018/19, Renfrewshire was 7 percentage points above the national figure.

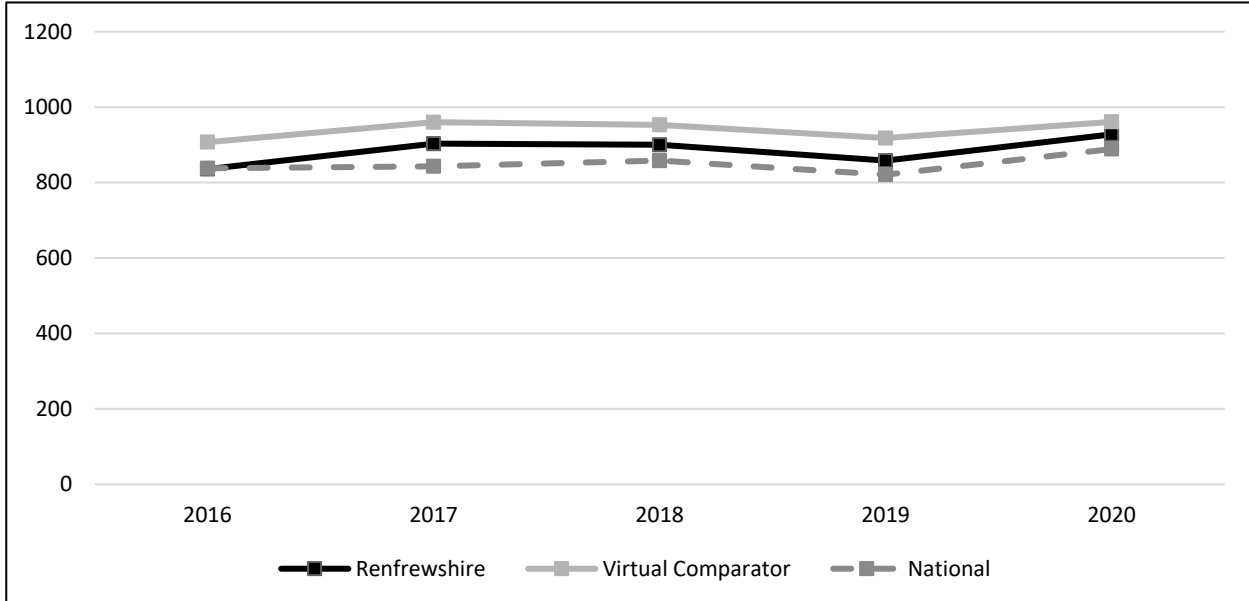
Improving Attainment for All

- 3.14. 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.
- 3.15. 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.



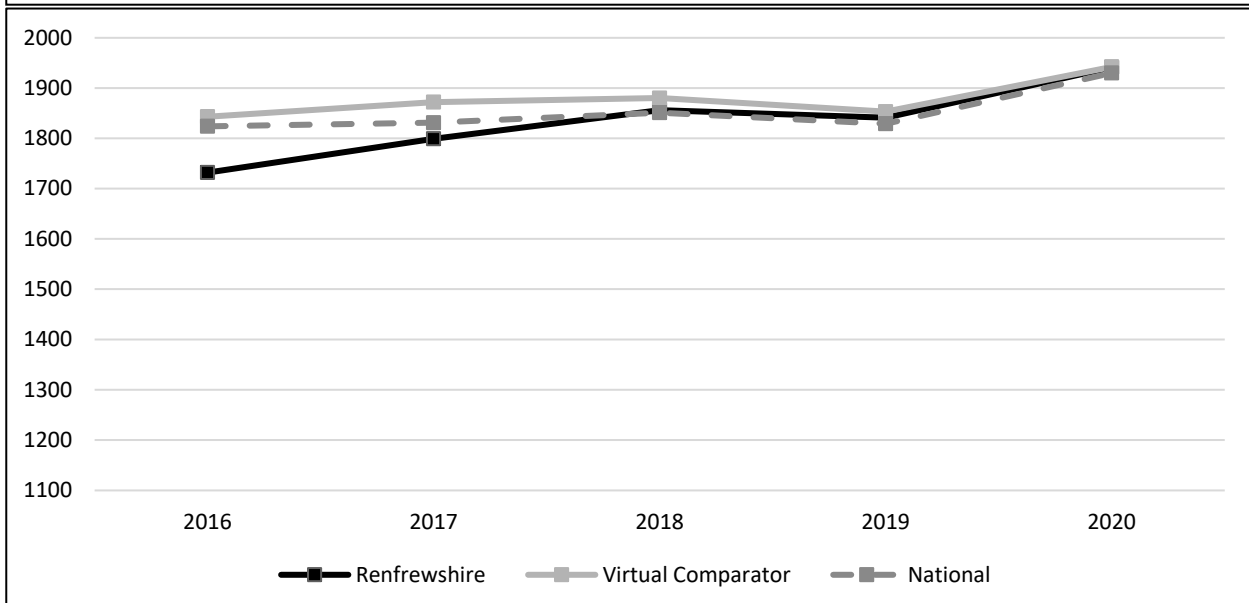
- 3.16. The average total tariff of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers has increased to 220 points. This is above the virtual comparator and national figures which were 199 and 151 respectively. Renfrewshire has been consistently above national figures in this measure over 5 years.

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



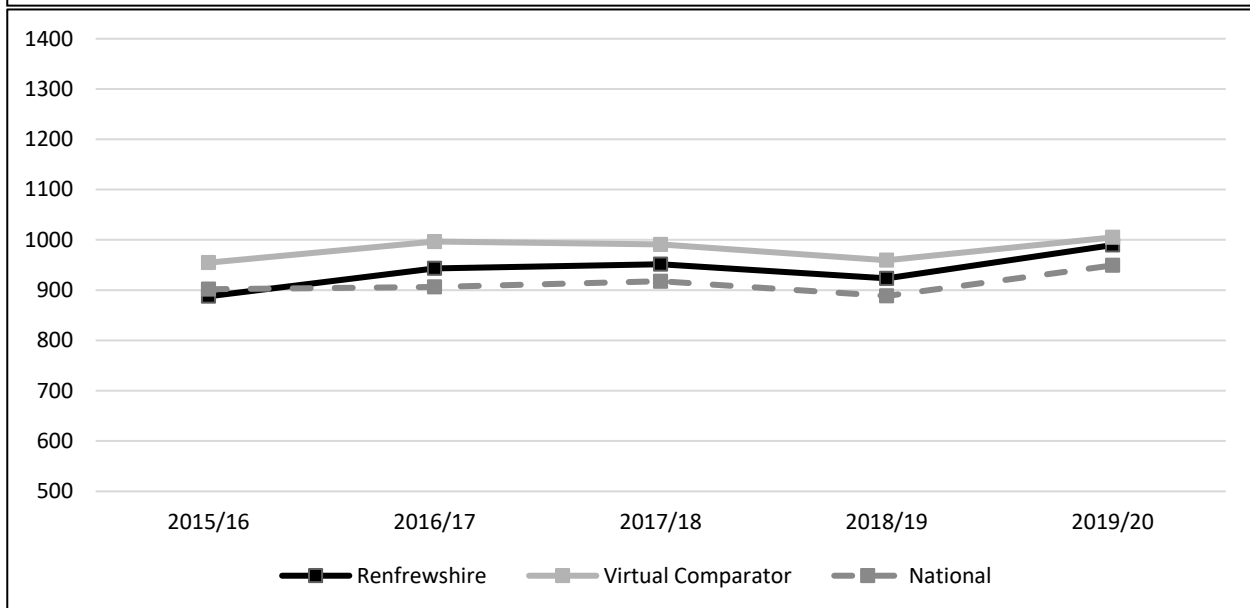
3.17. The performance of the middle 60% attainment cohort has increased in 2019/20 for Renfrewshire and its comparators. The average total tariff of leavers in this cohort in 2019/20 is 928. Renfrewshire remains above national and marginally behind the virtual comparator in this measure.

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



3.18. The average total tariff of school leavers in the highest 20% attainment cohort in 2019/20 is 1941 points. Renfrewshire remains very closely aligned with the virtual comparator and national measures.

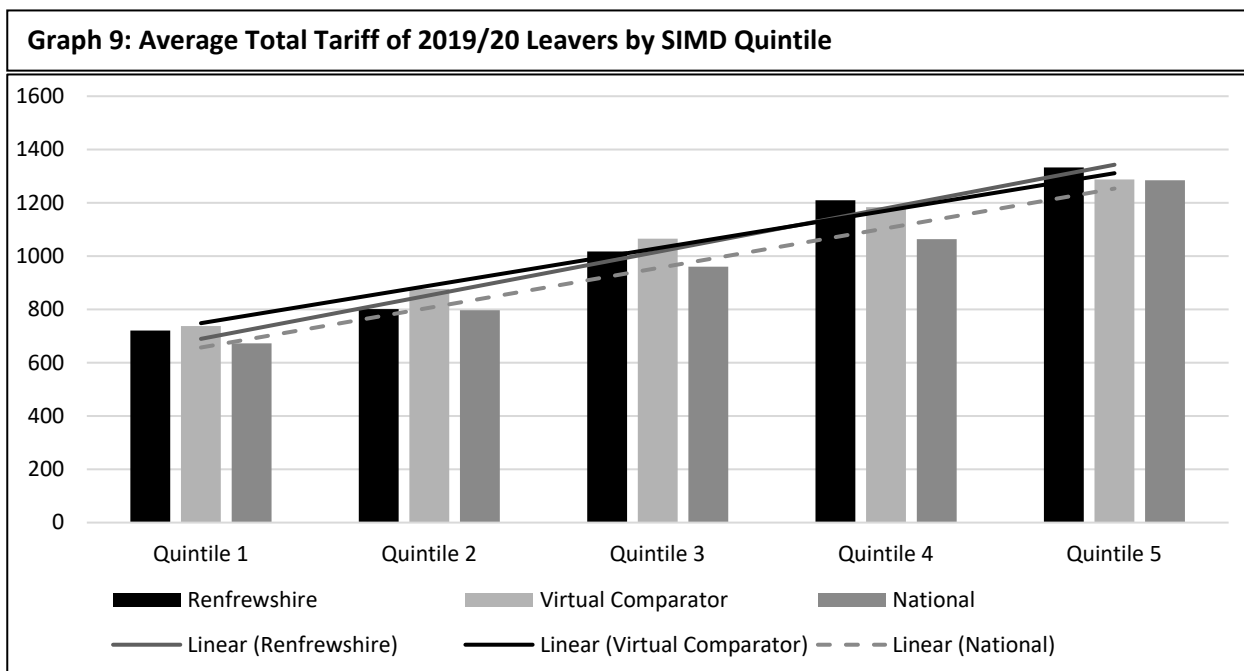
Graph 8: Average Total Tariff of All School Leavers



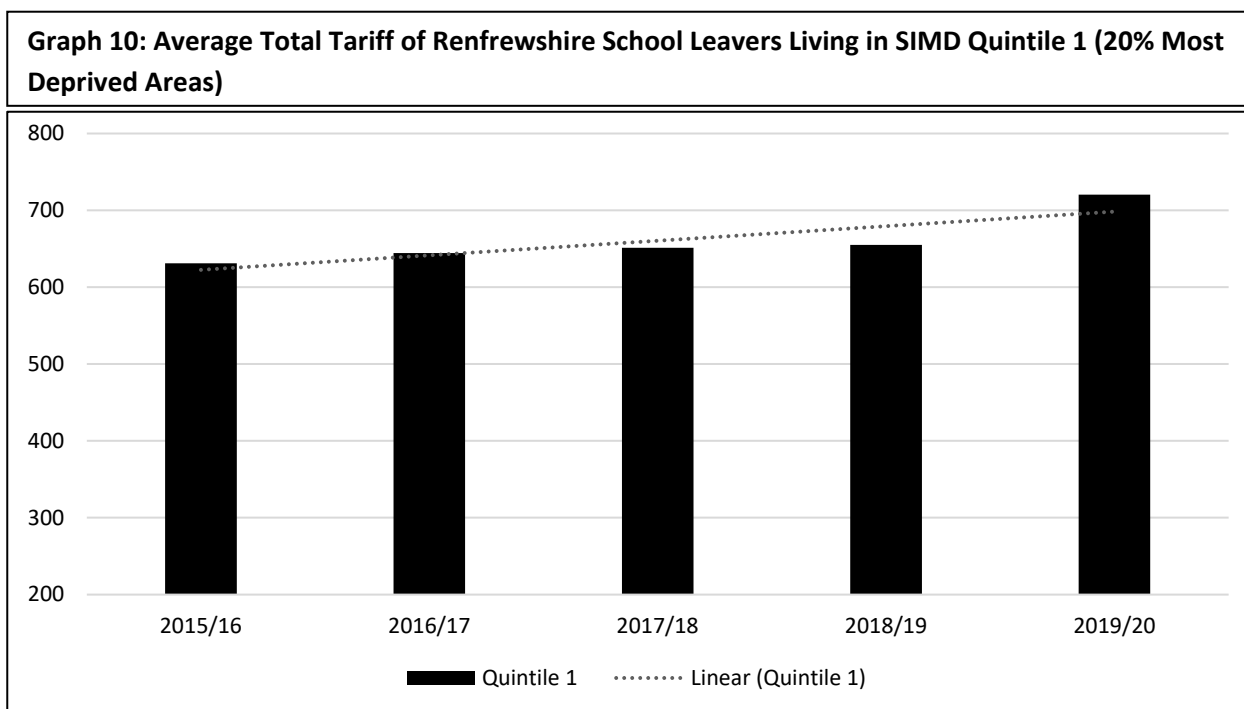
- 3.19. The average total tariff of all leavers, regardless of attainment cohort, in 2019/20 was 990. Renfrewshire remains marginally behind the virtual comparator in this measure, but the gap has reduced consistently over 5 years and is now within 2% of the virtual comparator figure. Renfrewshire remains ahead of the national figure.

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 better 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.



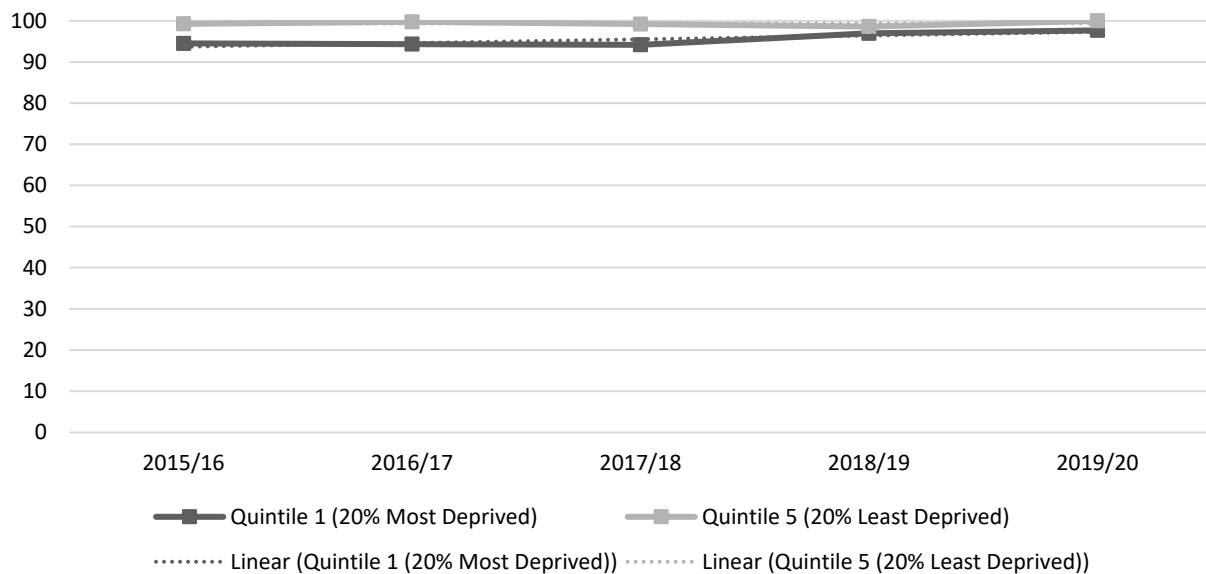
3.22. In the 2019/20 leavers cohort, Renfrewshire's average total tariff is ahead of national in all quintiles and behind the virtual comparator in quintiles 1 to 3.



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 a consistent increasing trend over 5 years.

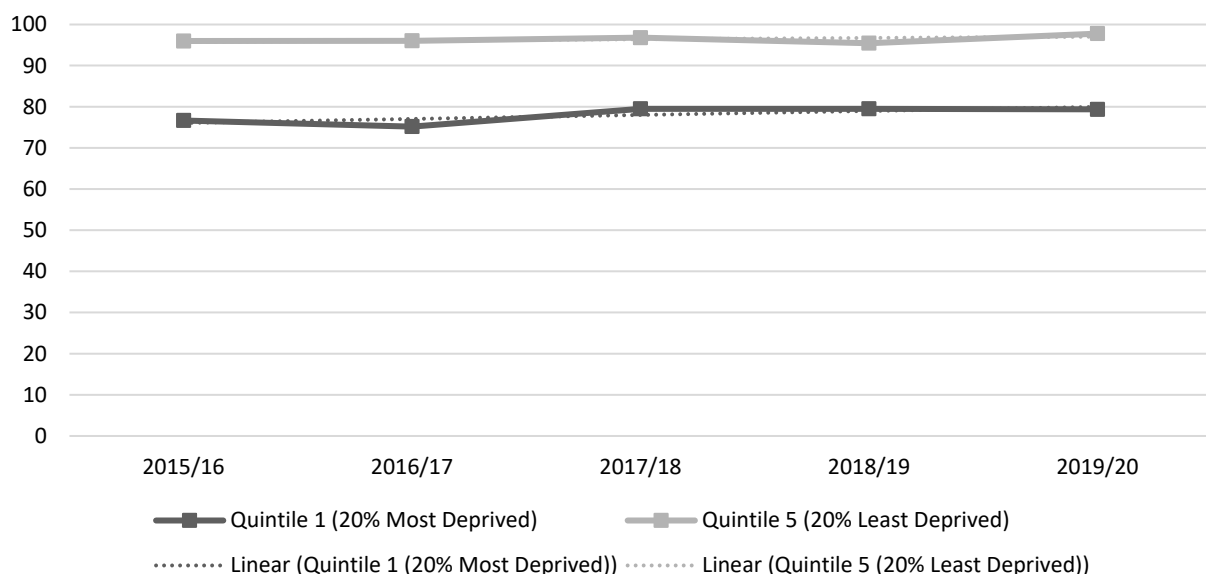
- 3.24. The graphs below show the highest SCQF level achieved by Renfrewshire school leavers living in quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) and quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas). This comparison allows us to measure the change in the size of the poverty related attainment gap over time.

Graph 11: Percentage of School Leavers with 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 4 or better- SIMD Quintile 1 (20% Most Deprived) & SIMD Quintile 5 (20% Least Deprived)



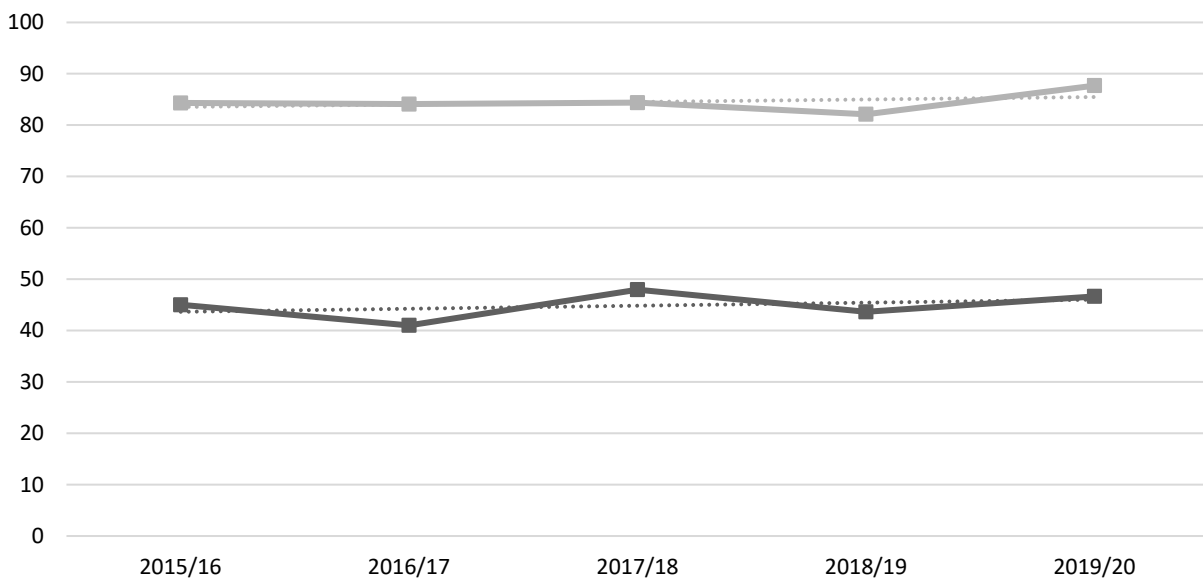
- 3.25. The percentage of school leavers in quintile 1 with one or more pass at SCQF level 4 has increased over the previous 2 years and is now up by 4 percentage points since 2017/18 to 98%. Attainment in quintile 5 has remained consistently high over 5 years and in the 2019/20 leavers cohort was 100%. As a result of the increase in the 20% most deprived group, the size of the gap has decreased to 2 percentage points.

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



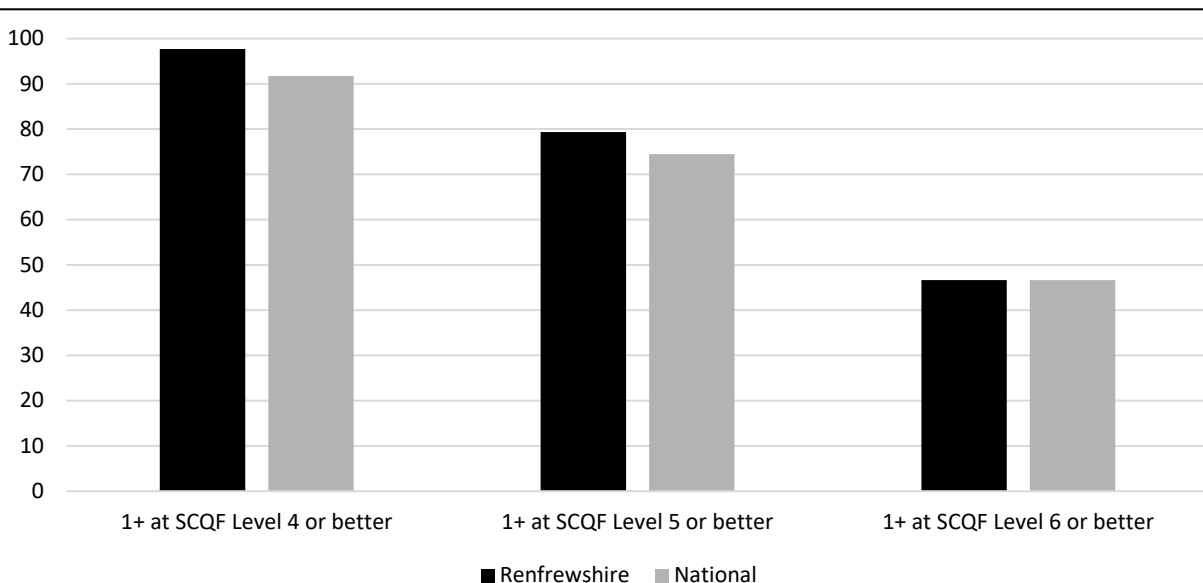
- 3.26. Graph 12 illustrates the percentage of school leavers with one or more pass at SCQF level 5. Attainment at this level has been consistently high within quintile 5, with 98% of pupils achieving 1 or more award at this level in the 2019/20 leavers cohort. Attainment of school leavers in quintile 1 is consistent with previous years at 79%. The size of the gap has reduced over 5 years, although this decrease hasn't always been consistent.

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 gaps at this level are larger than SCQF 4 and 5. Attainment of both cohorts have increased since last year and over 5 years.

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

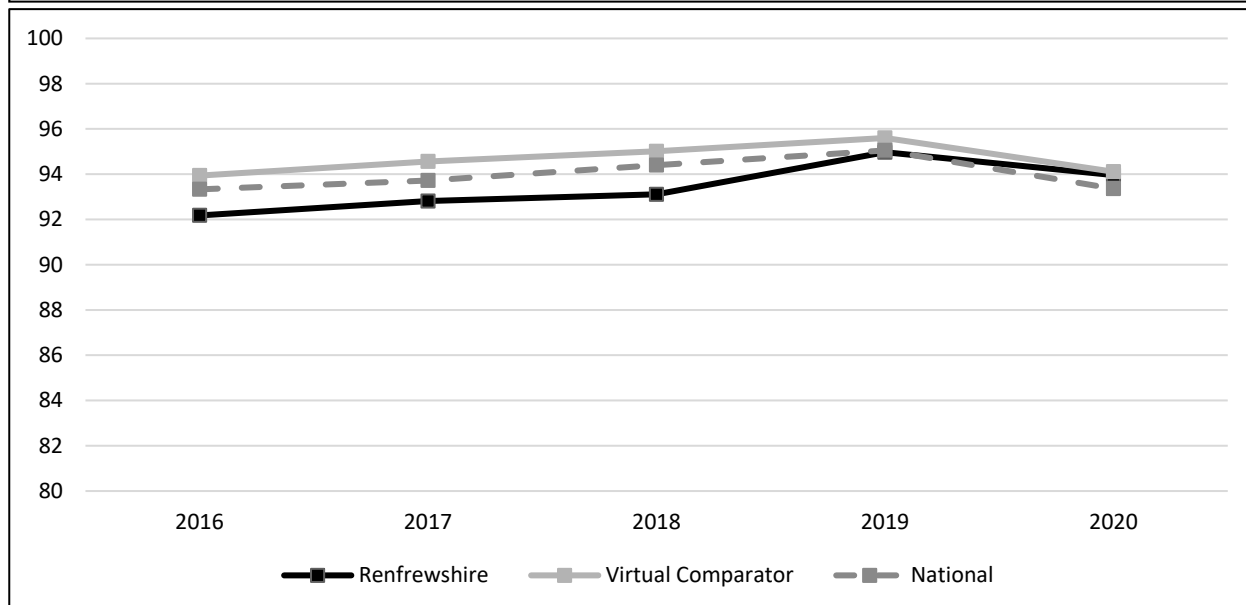


- 3.28. Graph 14 compares the attainment of pupils living in 20% most deprived areas in Renfrewshire and nationally. In the 2019/20 leavers cohort, a higher proportion of pupils living in the most deprived areas achieved 1 or more awards at SCQF level 4 and 5. At SCQF level 6, Renfrewshire is in line with national at 47%.
- 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

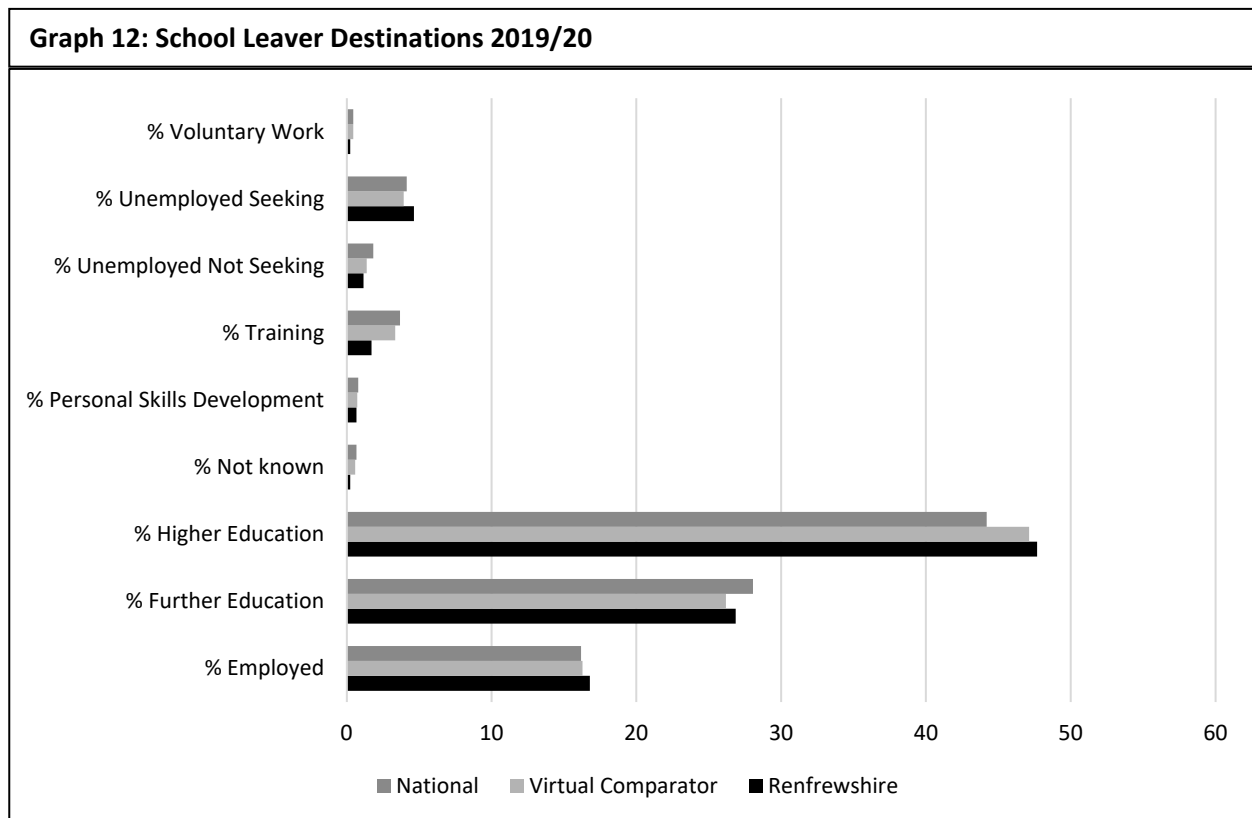
- 3.30. This measure identifies the percentage of school leavers that have entered a positive destination. Positive destinations include higher education, further education, employment, activity agreements, personal skills development and voluntary work.

Graph 11: Percentage of School Leavers entering Positive Destinations.



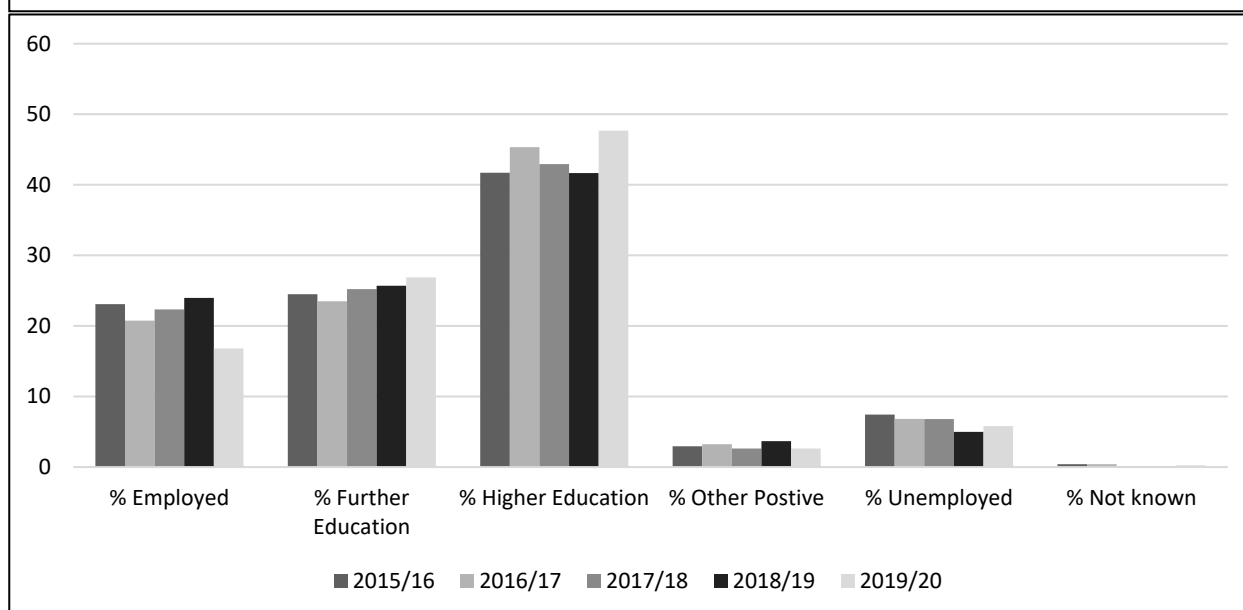
- 3.31. The percentage of 2019/20 Renfrewshire school leavers in a positive destination is 94%. This is a decrease of 1 percentage point since last year but remains higher than the previous 4 years. Both the virtual comparator and national figures have also decreased suggesting that the coronavirus pandemic has affected opportunities for school leavers. Renfrewshire remains closely in line with the virtual comparator and, due to a larger decrease in the national figure, is above national.

3.32. The graph below shows the breakdown of the destinations of the 2019/20 leavers cohort.



3.33. In the 2019/20 leavers cohort, 47.7% of Renfrewshire's leavers entered higher education. This is an increase of 6 percentage points and remains above the national figure of 44.2%. The proportion of Renfrewshire leavers entering higher education has been consistently above the national figure over 5 years. A further 26% of our leavers entered further education and 16.8% went into employment.

Graph 13: Renfrewshire School Leaver Destinations (5 Years)



- 3.34. The largest difference in leaver destinations to previous years is within employment. The percentage of Renfrewshire leavers entering employment decreased by 7 percentage points since 2018/19. The decrease in national figures was also 7 percentage points.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The 2019/20 school leavers data has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to employment opportunities. However, the percentage of Renfrewshire leavers entering positive destinations remains high and increasing numbers have gone into higher and further education. Attainment in literacy and numeracy remains high, particularly at SCQF level 5 where Renfrewshire is above both the virtual comparator and national figures. However, we recognise the scope for further improvement, particularly in relation to the total tariff points our young people living in the most deprived areas are achieving by the time they leave school. We will continue to make this a priority as we strive for even further improvement.

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

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