NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 May 2019

Cabinet

Title:	**School Attainment Results 2018**
Purpose:	To update Cabinet on: (1) the overall performance of the 2018 North Ayrshire Council school leavers[1] as highlighted in the INSIGHT benchmarking tool; and (2) Curriculum for Excellence attainment levels in literacy and numeracy for 2018.
Recommendation:	(i) Agree to note: the content of the report; the progress being made by learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy; and the achievements of school leavers in last year's SQA examinations; (ii) Approve the measures being taken to make further improvements to attainment and achievement levels across all schools.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the key performance measures of pupil attainment in the session 2017-18, based on two key national publications: (1) the benchmarking analysis tool INSIGHT, released at the end of February 2019; and (2) the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels report, published by Scottish Government in December 2018. Outline proposals are also presented for future actions to secure further improvements in performance.

1.2 Performance in literacy and numeracy is improving at almost all stages and compares positively with the performance in previous years.

1.3 The lowest attaining 20% of leavers have performed better than the national average for this group for the last four years. The middle attaining 60% of leavers has steadily improved over the last five years and is well above the virtual comparator. The performance of the highest attaining 20% has remained consistent over the last three years.

1.4 When taking deprivation into account, North Ayrshire school leavers perform better than learners from similar areas at the national level. The gap between the attainment of leavers from the 20% most SIMD deprived areas and the rest of the SIMD areas continues to reduce and is smaller than the gap at a national level.

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[1] The annual leavers' cohort in INSIGHT now matches with the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) school leavers return.

1.5   At 95.6%, the percentage of leavers going into positive destinations has improved to the 10th best performing Local Authority in Scotland this year.

2.   Background

2.1   Since 2014, the Scottish Government has produced a customised web interactive analytical tool to benchmark and inform performance evaluation in schools and education authorities. INSIGHT is consistent with the Curriculum for Excellence ethos as it emphasises the best achievement at the point of exit from school[2], rather than at stage-by-stage level, although it still allows users to drill down to cohort, level, subject or socio-demographic characteristics of pupils.

2.2   The benchmarking methodology used by INSIGHT is centred on the idea of a "Virtual Comparator". This virtual school is built around four key characteristics, which go into the make-up of any school. From these four areas, the tool matches ten leavers from across Scotland to every one of the leavers in each school/authority and treats this matched group as the virtual school/authority.

2.3   The main analysis of 2018 attainment and achievement for secondary schools was released by the Scottish Government in February 2019[3]. The INSIGHT analysts have also provided the performance of the South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC)[4] region as comparison and these values are represented in the supporting tables and charts. This Report is structured – as in previous years - along the four key national benchmarking measures aimed at:

1.   Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (% of candidates attaining Literacy and Numeracy)

2.   Improving attainment for all (Average Total Tariff Score distribution)

3.   Tackling Disadvantage by Improving the Attainment vs. Deprivation Gap (Average Total Tariff Score by SIMD decile)

4.   Increasing Post-school participation (School Leaver Destinations for 2018).

2.4   **Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy** (These highlights are supported by charts in Appendix 1)

2.4.1   Performance of North Ayrshire school leavers in attaining Literacy at Level 4 and Level 5 in 2018 has been the highest recorded to date, exceeding Virtual Comparator, SWEIC regional and national and overall levels for the year. This reflects the increased focus on core Literacy skills from the Broad General Education stages and throughout the Senior Phase. Almost all learners achieve SCQF levels 4 and above (96.4%) in English SQA qualifications, ensuring that

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[2] The 2018 benchmarking "point of exit" indicators published in INSIGHT on 28 February 2019 are called "National Benchmarking Measures". The set of similar indicators referring to specific cohorts of pupils on the school roll (S4, S5, S6) are designated as "Local Benchmarking Measures" in INSIGHT.

[3] The data for previous years' attainment is annually updated, to account for some corrections in the national methodology and the inclusion of some school leavers' records that were not available at the time. Therefore, the values of the indicators in this Paper will not match exactly the figures available in the report presented to Members this time last year.

[4] The SWEIC region comprises North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway local authorities.

school leavers are equipped with the literacy skills required for life after leaving school.

2.4.2 The performance of North Ayrshire school leavers in Numeracy has been maintained at level 4 and improved at level 5. While North Ayrshire performance in Numeracy at level 4 is currently slightly below the Virtual Comparator and National levels, performance at level 5 has increased to 70% of all 2018 school leavers, overtaking the performance of all the other three benchmarks (Virtual Comparator, SWEIC, and national performance).

2.4.3 Literacy and Numeracy results at level 6 and above continue to rise. In 2018, 58% of school leavers attained a qualification in Literacy at Higher level or above (28% in Numeracy). North Ayrshire performance exceeds Virtual Comparator levels in both measures. Performance in literacy is the same as National and better than the performance of all SWEIC authorities.

2.5 **Improving attainment for all** (These highlights are supported by charts in Appendix 2)

2.5.1 This measure focuses on the average total tariff score of the candidates' latest and best qualifications. Tariff points are assigned to each unit or course achieved by learners – in all SCQF-graded awards, not only those provided by SQA. This acknowledges to a greater extent the drive towards wider achievement qualifications and encourages schools to offer curricular choices tailored to a variety of pupil abilities and aspirations. The information is presented as the total tariff score per average leaver in one of three categories of: the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20%.

2.5.2 The average total tariff score of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers (Appendix 2) has dipped slightly again in 2018 but has remained well above the Virtual Comparator and above National performance. In four of the last five years, the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers in North Ayrshire has been greater than the National performance and, in 2018, for the first time performance is just above the 4 SWEIC authorities.

2.5.3 The performance of the middle attaining 60% of school leavers from North Ayrshire has steadily improved over the last 5 years (Appendix 2). With an average total tariff score of 815 in 2018, North Ayrshire is well above the Virtual Comparator, and although we remain below the National performance in this measure, the gap between North Ayrshire and the National figure is reducing over time.

2.5.4 The performance of the highest attaining 20% of leavers (Appendix 2) has remained broadly consistent over the last three years, exceeding the corresponding performance of the Virtual Comparator. While the trend over the last five years is towards improvement, there is scope for further improvement in this measure.

2.6   **Attainment vs. Deprivation** (These highlights are supported by charts in Appendix 3)

    2.6.1   The INSIGHT measure aimed at tackling disadvantage presents the Average Total Tariff Score (ATTS) compared across the SIMD datazone deciles[5] where the school leavers reside.

    2.6.2   The Attainment vs. Deprivation chart for 2018 SIMD decile performance (Appendix 3), clearly shows that North Ayrshire school leavers have out-performed the learners from the similar areas at the National level. In 2018, the average total tariff score of school leavers in every decile – with the exception of SIMD deciles 5 and 10 - is above National performance. School leavers in SIMD decile 6 have performed significantly higher than the National establishment. The trend line for North Ayrshire is above National trend line, indicating higher average performance, with a similar attainment vs. deprivation correlation. The slope of the line is less steep than the one for the National performance, meaning that the gap between the attainment of school leavers from the *most* SIMD deprived and those from the *least* SIMD deprived backgrounds is smaller in North Ayrshire than in similar areas across Scotland. The gap between the attainment of leavers from the 20% most SIMD deprived areas and the ones from the rest of the SIMD Areas (80%) has reduced in 2018 to 37%, from 44% the previous year and much smaller than the similar gap calculated for all leavers in Scotland – 46%.

2.7   **Increasing Post-School Participation** (Appendix 4)

    2.7.1   Over the last few years, the percentage of school leavers moving into positive destinations in North Ayrshire has been one of the highest across Scotland.

    2.7.2   In 2018, the percentage of leavers into positive destinations has increased again, following the dip in performance in 2017. 95.6% of 2018 school leavers have moved on to positive post-school destinations, exceeding the Virtual Comparator, National and SWEIC performance. It is an indication that the action plan put in place last year to address these areas with specific focus on targeting vulnerable young people at risk of not entering into a positive destination when they leave school is starting to have an impact.

2.8   Attainment in Broad General Education – Attainment of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) in P1, P4, P7 and S3

    2.8.1   In 2016, the Scottish Government began to collect statistics on the CfE level achieved in Literacy (Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing) and Numeracy by pupils in the Broad General Education stages P1, P4, P7 and S3. This is based on teacher judgement about each pupil's achievement of a level made at the end of June each session.

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[5] The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) – 2017 update - ranks the 6976 datazones across Scotland according to a composite of measures of socio-economic deprivation. We are able to pinpoint the SIMD deprivation decile of the area where a pupil resides using the pupil's postcode as collected on the occasion of the annual School Census. SIMD decile 1 represents the 10% most deprived datazones in Scotland while SIMD decile 10 represents the least SIMD deprived of datazones in Scotland. INSIGHT has now updated their analysis, which is based on SIMD2016 and the new (redrawn) datazones based on the 2011 population census.

2.8.2 At the end of the 2017/18 Academic session 72% of primary pupils (P1, P4, P7 – combined) attained the expected level[6] in Literacy (assessed in all the three components) and 80% attained the expected level in Numeracy. This compares favourably with the National performance which is 71% for Literacy in primary school (P1, P4, P7 – combined) and 78% in Numeracy.

2.8.3 By the end of S3, in the 2017/18 academic session, 91% of North Ayrshire pupils attained level 3 or better in Literacy (in all three components) and 47% attained level 4. Correspondingly, in Numeracy, 92% of S3 North Ayrshire pupils attained level 3 or better and 57% attained level 4. In 2017/18, S3 pupils in North Ayrshire exceeded the National performance in all measures.

2.8.4 Appendix 5 presents the detailed attainment of each stage in each of the Literacy components and in Numeracy, for the past three years. There is a strong improvement trend in all measures at almost all stages for the 2016-2018 period.

2.8.5 Appendix 6a shows the breakdown in performance by pupils from each SIMD Quintile (20% band) – Quintile 1 being the most deprived areas and Quintile 5 the least deprived areas.

2.8.6 Appendix 6b shows that, at all stages, the gap in attainment between the SIMD most deprived and least deprived areas is smaller in North Ayrshire than at National level and is reducing considerably for pupils expected to attain level 3 or above by the end of S3.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agrees to note the content of the report and the achievements of the leavers as highlighted in this annual attainment report.

3.2 The following improvement actions are proposed in respect of the key performance measures in pupil attainment:

3.2.1 **Improving attainment in Literacy & Numeracy**: The attainment in Literacy and Numeracy will continue to be a principal focus of the Broad General Education phase. This will be supported through the significant work of the Professional Learning Academy. North Ayrshire's Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding will continue to focus on developing better literacy and numeracy skills for targeted groups of learners.

3.2.2 **Improving Attainment for All**: There will be a continuation of the focus on the middle and highest achieving learners to ensure that our performance continues to reduce the gap between North Ayrshire and the National performance. Part of our work will include a further expansion of available courses and units to ensure that the Senior Phase is meeting the learning needs and aspirations of all learners. The re-designed senior phase curriculum structures in many schools will also enable further targeted programmes to be developed for the lowest achieving learners, particularly in S4.

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[6] P1 pupils are expected to attain the Early level in Literacy components and Numeracy by the end of their first year in school, P4 pupils – First level and P7 Pupils – Second level. S3 pupils are expected to achieve level Three or better in Literacy and Numeracy, with some having also achieved Level 4 by the time they finish their Broad General Education

3.2.3 **Attainment versus Deprivation**: North Ayrshire's Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund will continue to implement interventions for pupils living in the most deprived areas to improve their attainment and achievement levels. There will also be a focus on data literacy, to ensure that data is being used effectively, by all staff, to improve outcomes for learners. Establishments will also continue to focus specifically on the learners living in deciles 5 and 10 to endeavour to bring their performance into line with national levels.

3.2.4 **Increasing Post-School Participation**: To continue to monitor impact of the action plan implemented last session.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial:	There are no financial implications.
Human Resources:	There are no human resource implications.
Legal:	There are no legal implications.
Equality/Socio-economic Duty:	This paper relates directly to improving outcomes for all our children and young people and will contribute to the closing of the poverty related attainment gap.
Children and Young People:	Children's views will be sought in the individual target setting process.
Environmental & Sustainability:	There are no environmental and sustainability implications.
Key Priorities:	NAC Draft Council Plan 2019-2024: Aspiring Communities: "Children and young people experience the best start in life". In 2019-20, this work relates to the following high-level action: "We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens."
Community Benefits:	N/A

5. Consultation

5.1 There is a robust Quality Improvement Framework in place to support schools to analyse their performance and plan future improvements. This self-evaluation tool includes a structured approach to regular evaluative school visits by Senior Officers at school and HQ level. During these visits challenging discussions take place on how schools are using the analysis of their attainment as a mechanism to inform their targets. There is a clear focus on data literacy with a robust programme of CLPL in place to help establishments turn their data into action. As part of our annual review process, we have consulted staff across the service on the improvement priorities for the coming session.

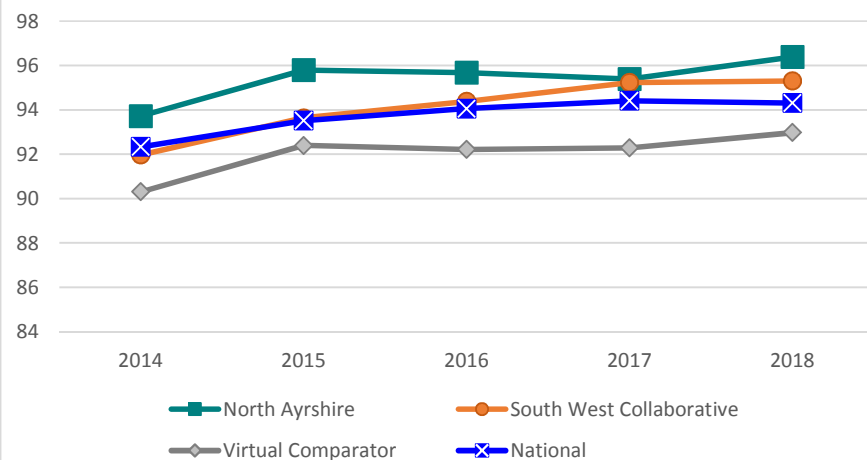Schools have engaged with their whole school communities on their own priorities for improvement.

Andrew McClelland
Head of Service

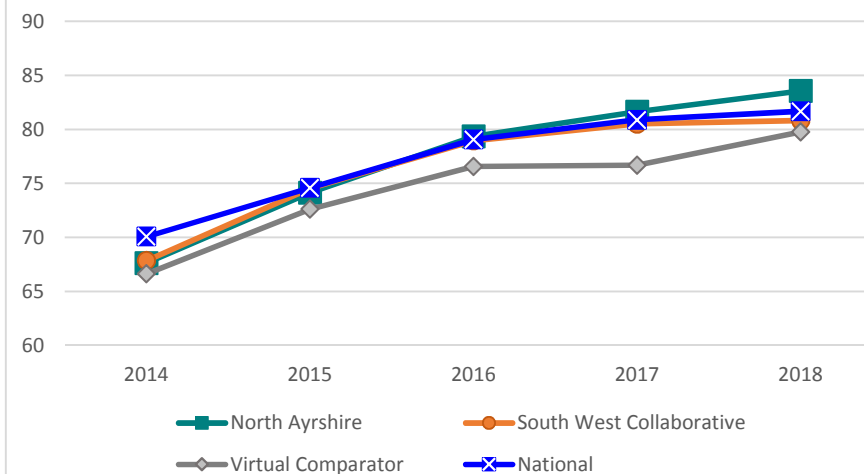For further information please contact Johana House, Senior Manager, on 01294 324045.
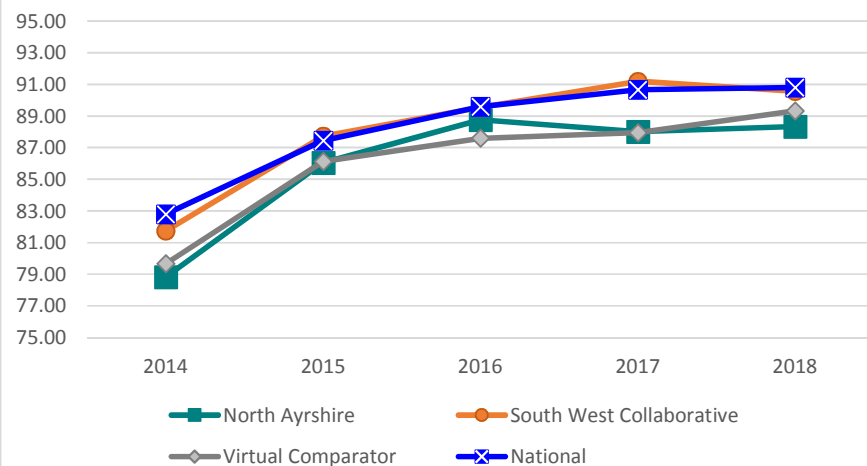
Background Papers
N/A

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Literacy
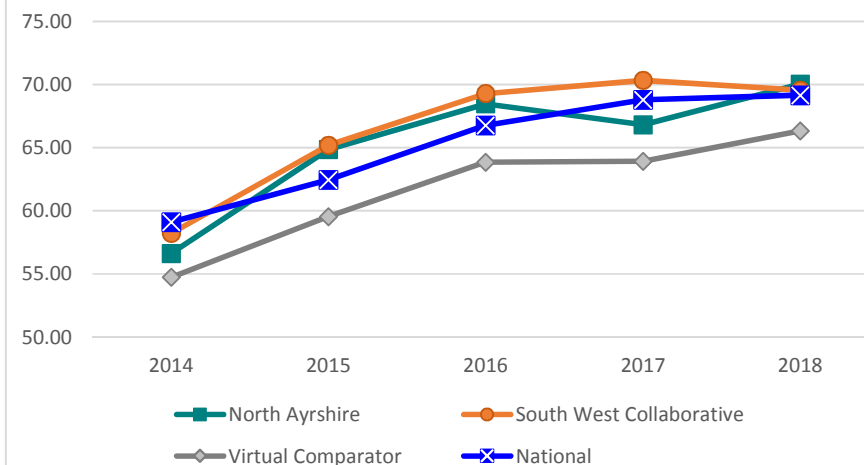

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Literacy
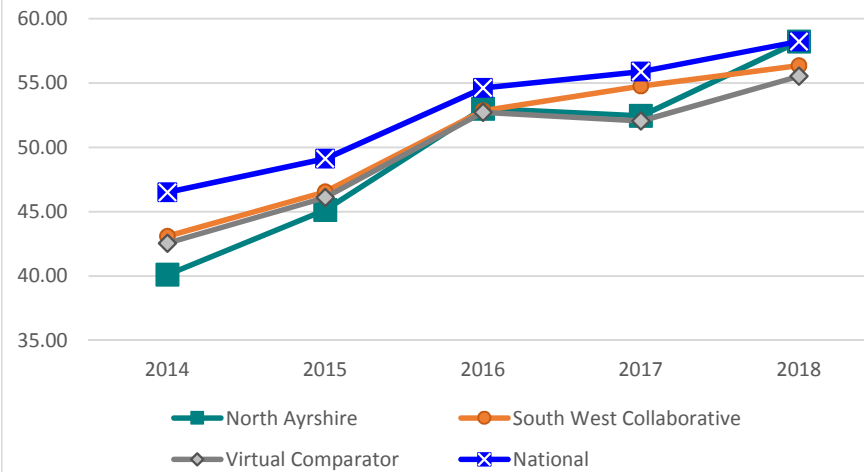

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Numeracy
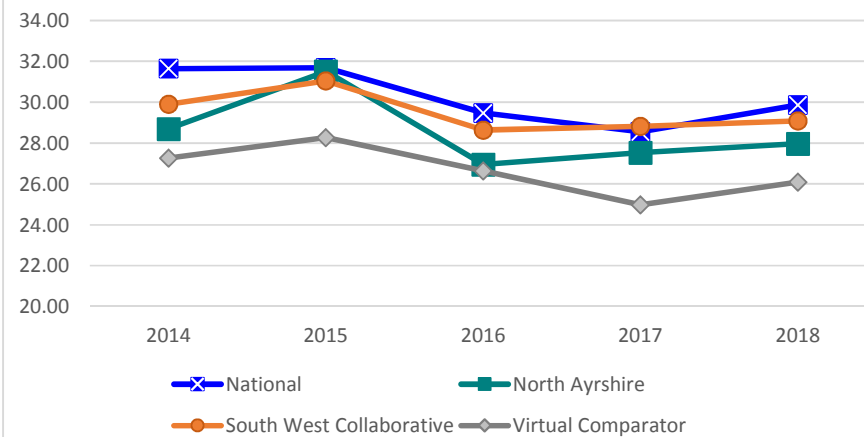

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Numeracy

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 6 or better in Literacy
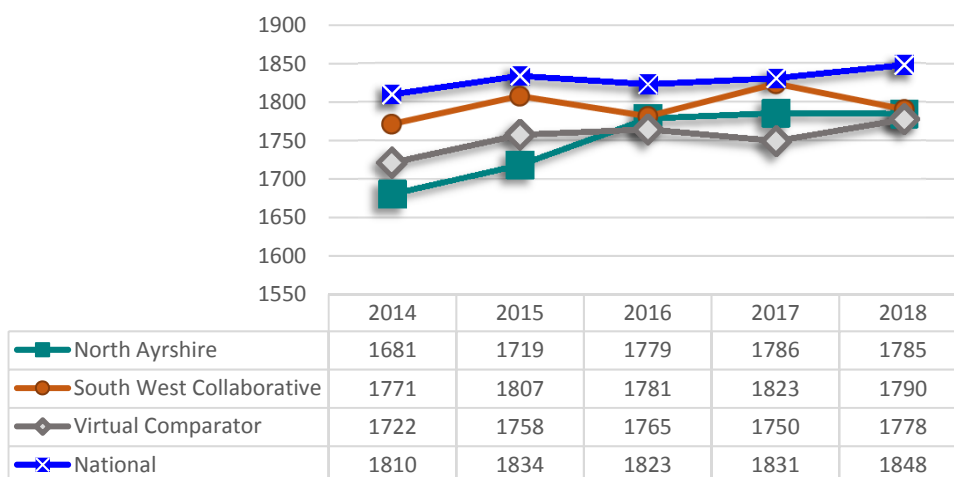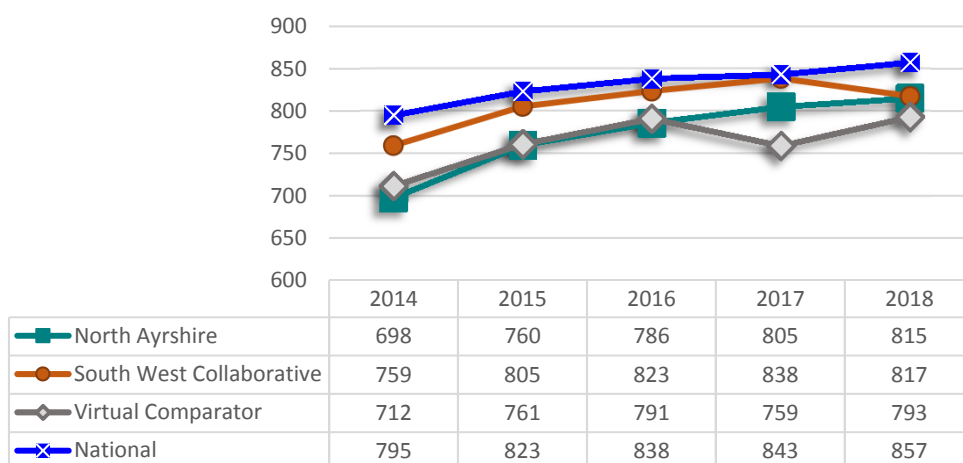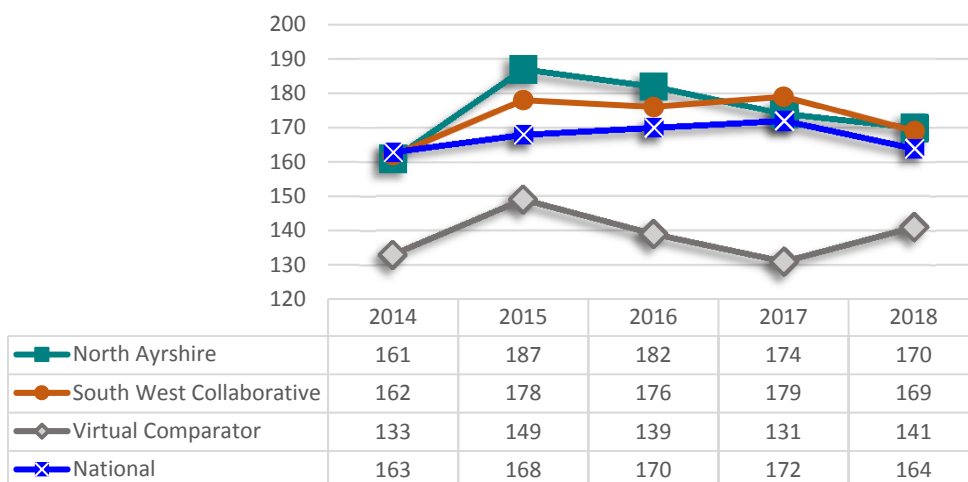

Legend: North Ayrshire, South West Collaborative, Virtual Comparator, National

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 6 or better in Numeracy

Legend: National, North Ayrshire, South West Collaborative, Virtual Comparator

Attainment for All - Highest 20%

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
North Ayrshire	1681	1719	1779	1786	1785
South West Collaborative	1771	1807	1781	1823	1790
Virtual Comparator	1722	1758	1765	1750	1778
National	1810	1834	1823	1831	1848

Attainment for All - Middle 60%

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
North Ayrshire	698	760	786	805	815
South West Collaborative	759	805	823	838	817
Virtual Comparator	712	761	791	759	793
National	795	823	838	843	857

Attainment for All - Lowest 20%

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
North Ayrshire	161	187	182	174	170
South West Collaborative	162	178	176	179	169
Virtual Comparator	133	149	139	131	141
National	163	168	170	172	164

Average Total Tariff Score by SIMD decile - All School leavers 2018

Appendix 3

North Ayrshire values: 718, 684, 752, 954, 877, 1127, 1124, 1086, 1297, 1205

National values: 622, 665, 739, 802, 824, 948, 999, 1068, 1182, 1309

SIMD Decile

● North Ayrshire   ● National   — Trend line - North Ayrshire   — Trend line - National
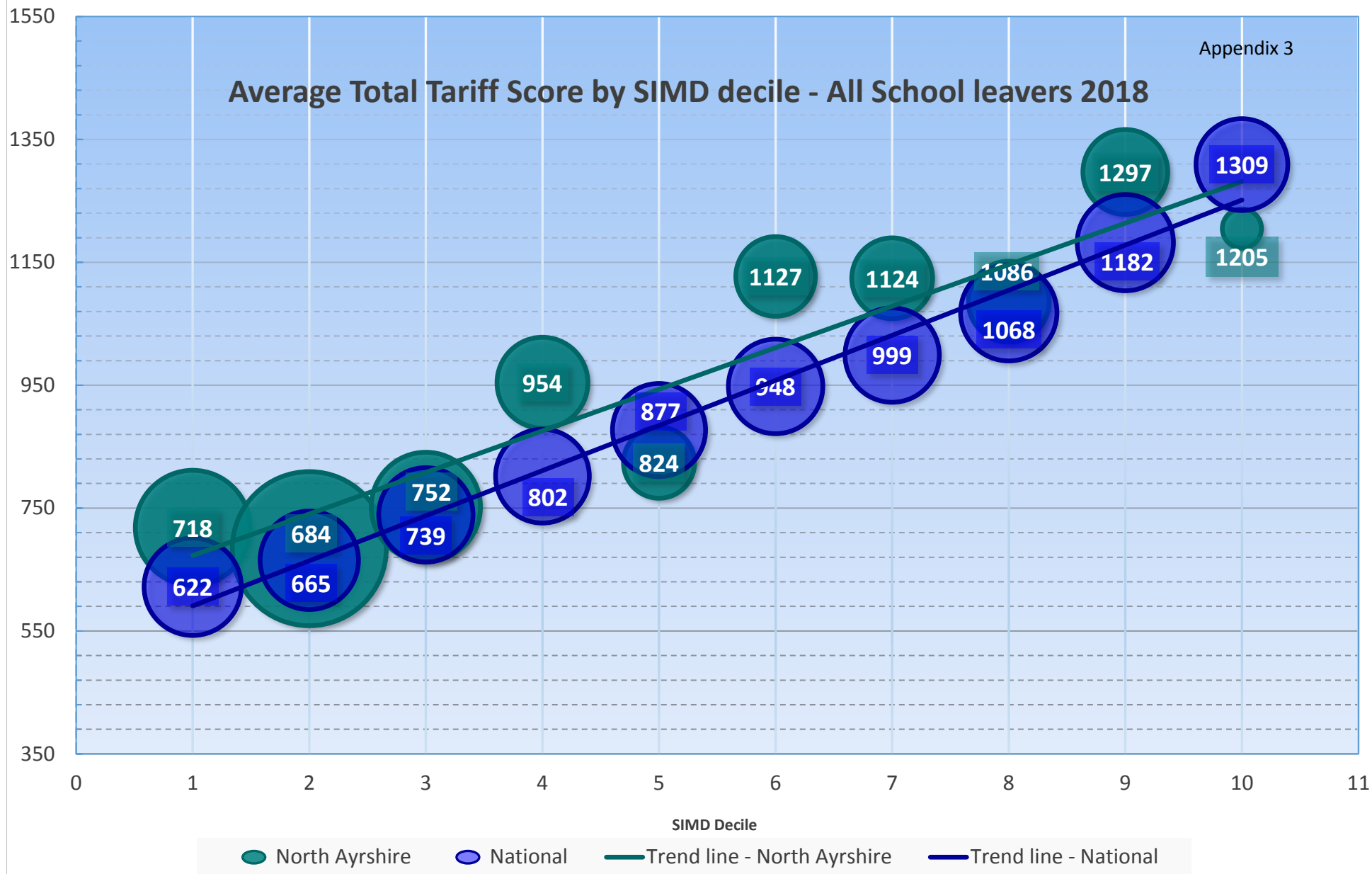
Comparative Performance on % of School Leavers Moving to Positive Destinations

Appendix 4

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
North Ayrshire	94.33	95.92	94.84	93.39	95.57
National	92.52	93.02	93.33	93.72	94.39

Legend: ■ North Ayrshire ■ South West Collaborative ■ Virtual Comparator ■ National
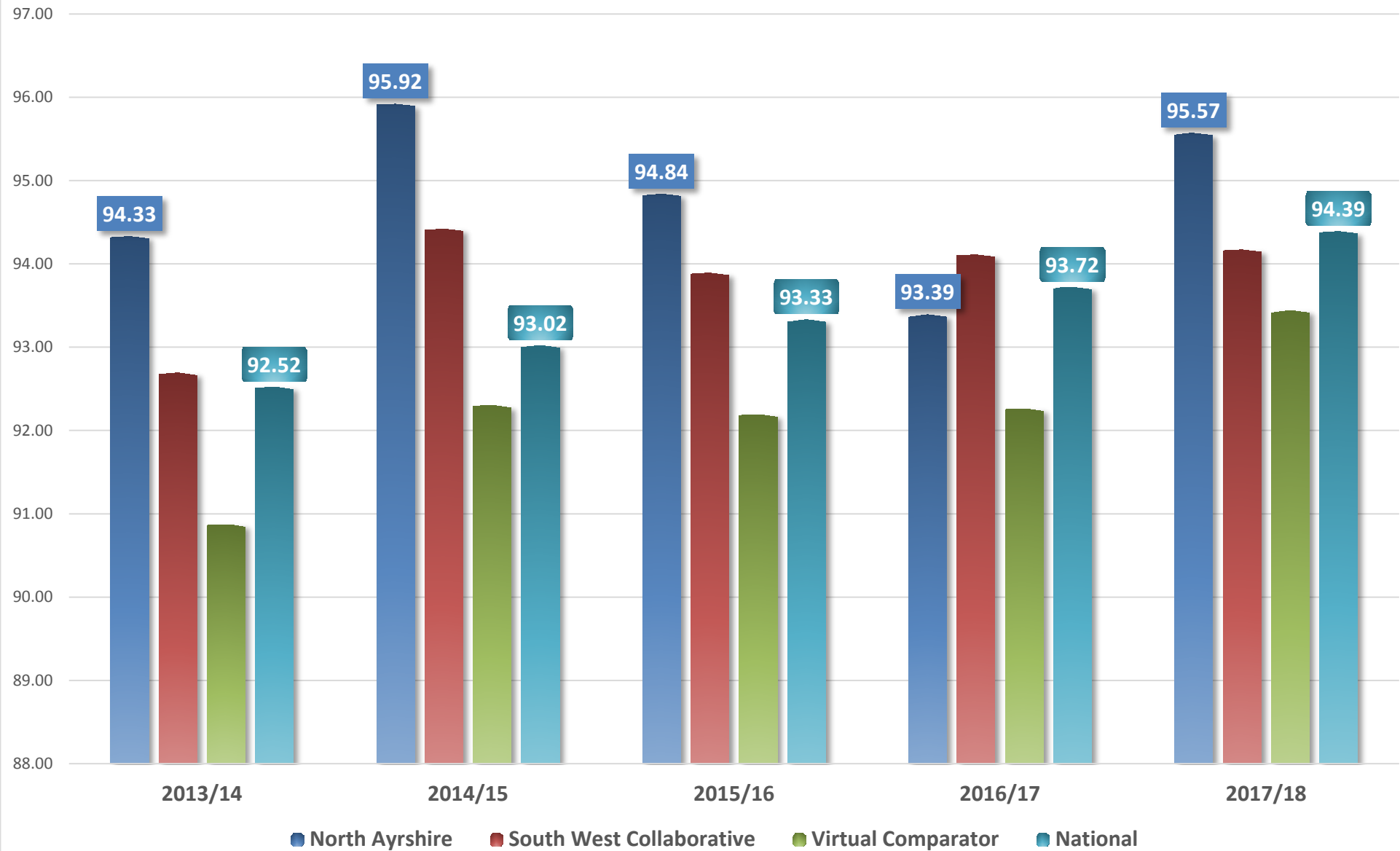
% of S3 pupils attaining Level Three or better

| | 60% | 65% | 70% | 75% | 80% | 85% | 90% | 95% |

English Reading
- 76.0%
- 88.8%
- 92.1%

English Writing
- 74.3%
- 88.1%
- 91.9%

English Listening & Talking
- 76.5%
- 88.5%
- 92.7%

Numeracy
- 81.7%
- 81.0%
- 91.6%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018
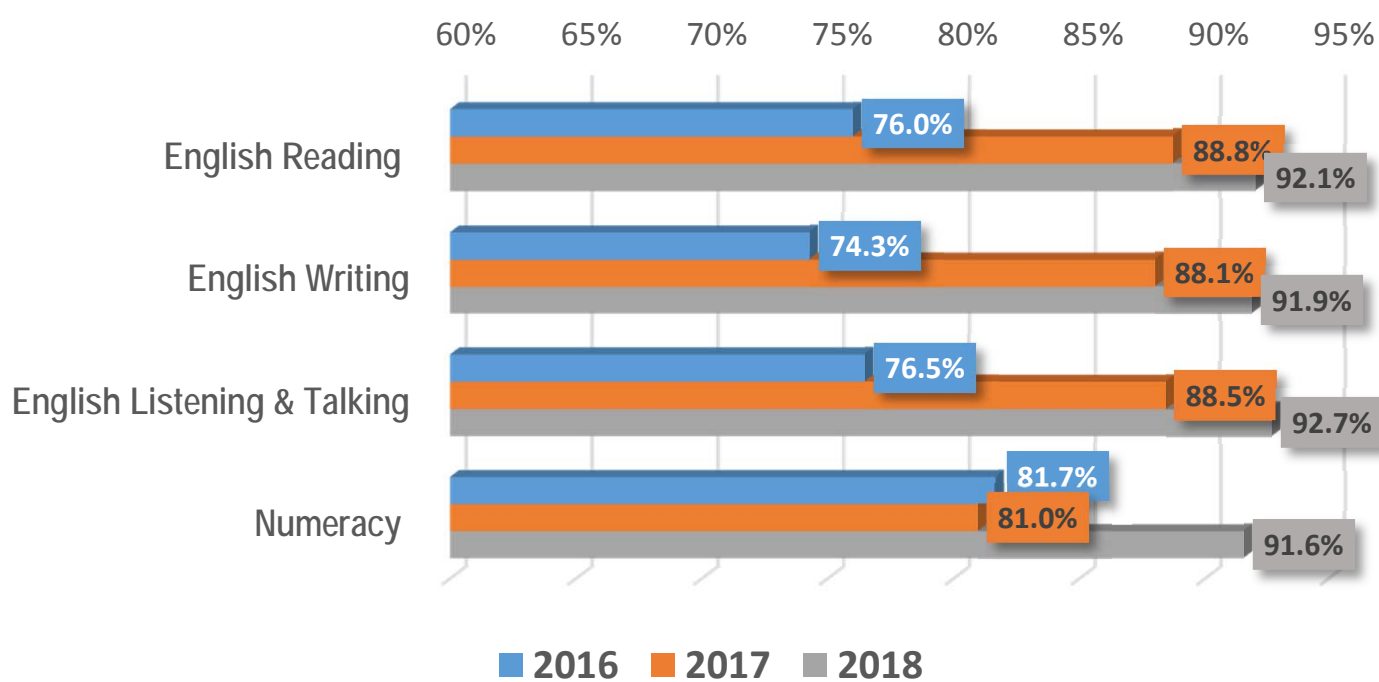
P1,P4,P7 combined performance by SIMD Quintile
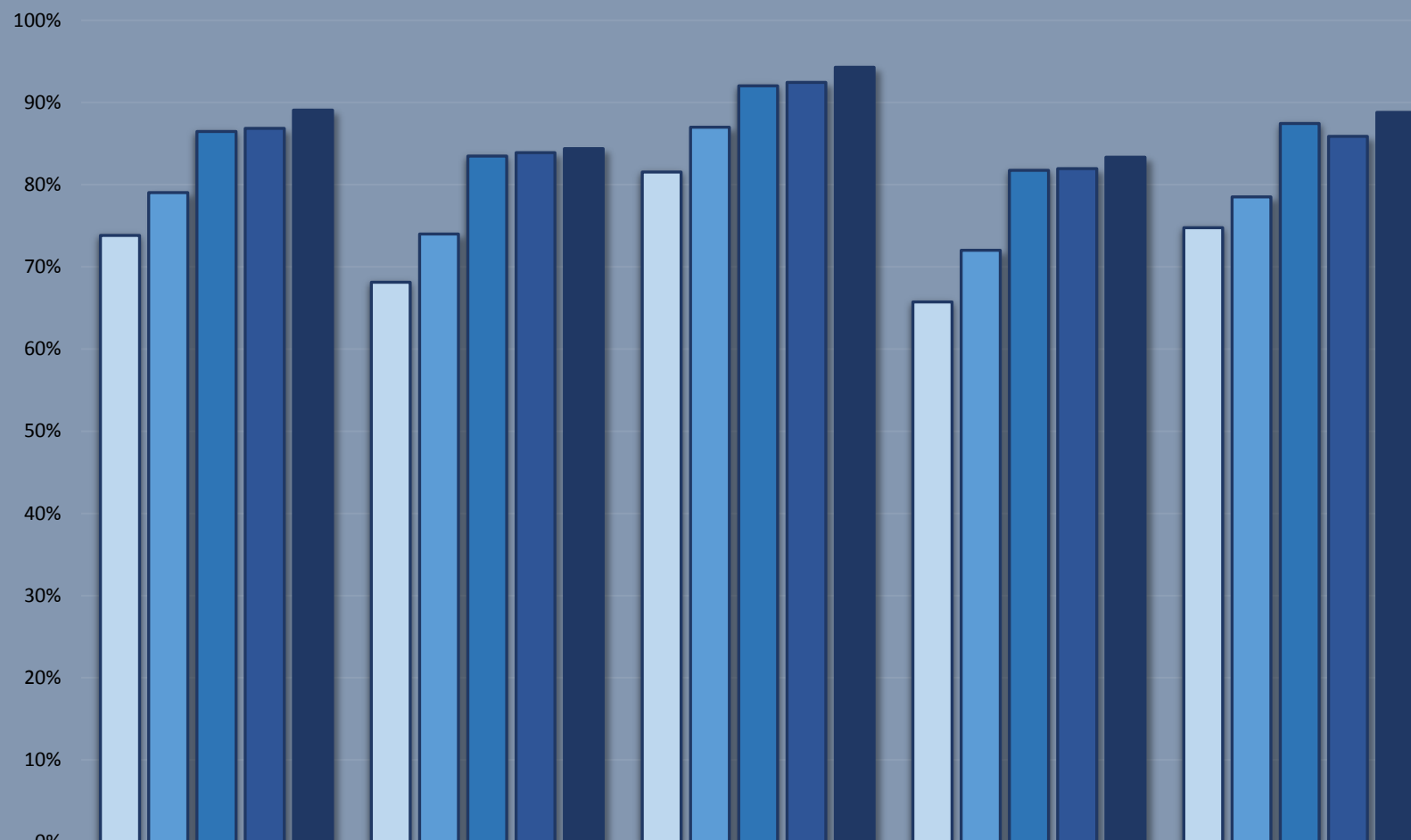
Appendix 6a

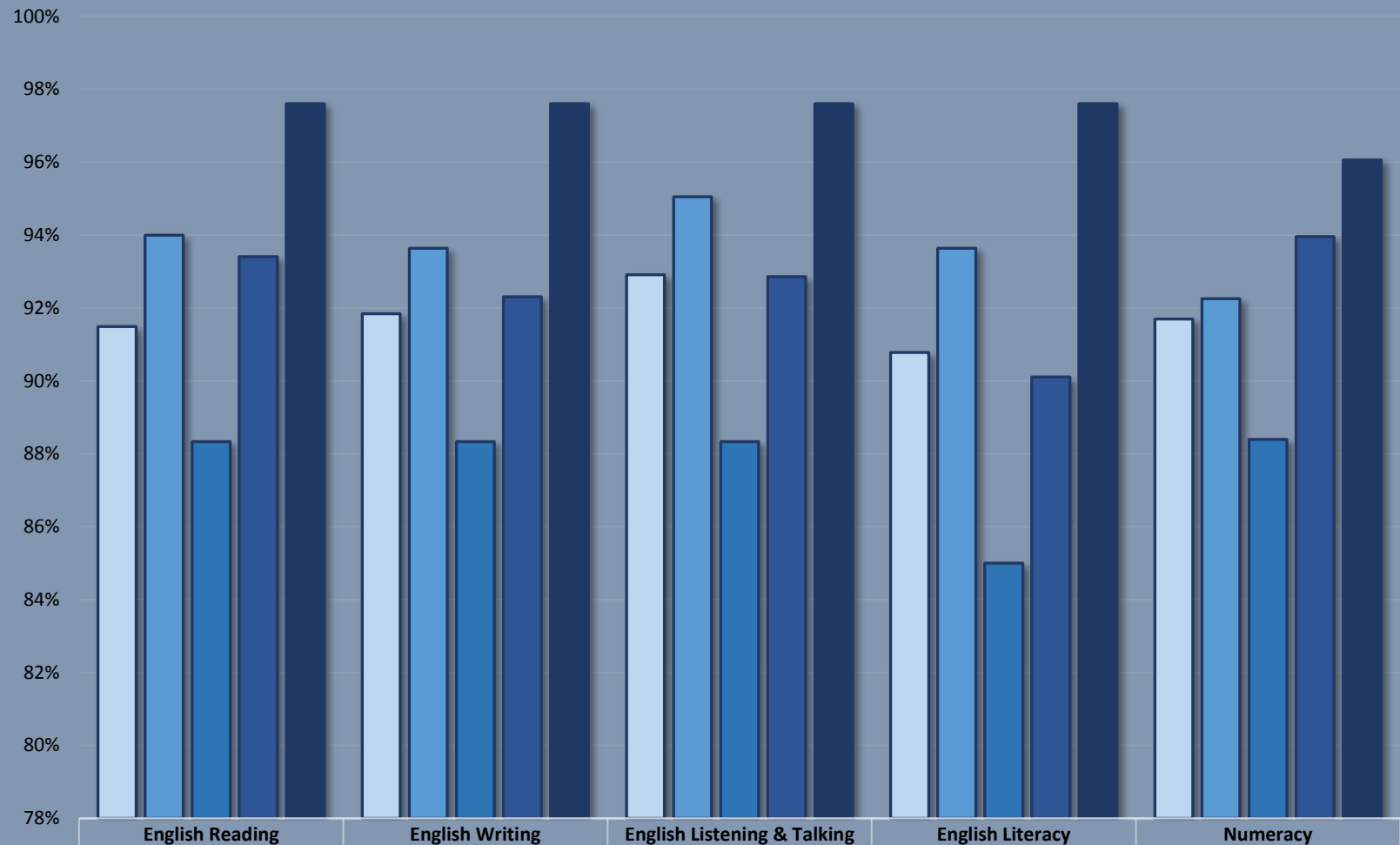|	English Reading	English Writing	English Listening & Talking	English Literacy	Numeracy
□ SIMD Quintile 1 - most deprived	74%	68%	82%	66%	75%
□ SIMD Quintile 2	79%	74%	87%	72%	79%
■ SIMD Quintile 3	86%	83%	92%	82%	87%
■ SIMD Quintile 4	87%	84%	92%	82%	86%
■ SIMD Quintile 5 - least deprived	89%	84%	94%	83%	89%

S3 level 3 or above performance by SIMD Quintile

Appendix 6a

	English Reading	English Writing	English Listening & Talking	English Literacy	Numeracy
☐ SIMD Quintile 1 - most deprived	91%	92%	93%	91%	92%
☐ SIMD Quintile 2	94%	94%	95%	94%	92%
☐ SIMD Quintile 3	88%	88%	88%	85%	88%
☐ SIMD Quintile 4	93%	92%	93%	90%	94%
☐ SIMD Quintile 5 - least deprived	98%	98%	98%	98%	96%

Attainment Gap between the 20% most SIMD Deprived and 20% least SIMD deprived areas in North Ayrshire compared to National (Percentage Points)

Appendix 6b