
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

25 May 2021

Cabinet

Title: Educational Achievement of Care Experienced Learners in North Ayrshire

Purpose: To update Cabinet on:

- 1) Curriculum for Excellence Broad General Education (BGE) attainment levels of care experienced learners in 2019;
- 2) Senior Phase attainment of care experienced learners for 2019 and 2020;
- 3) Post-school participation of care experienced learners.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the content of the report and the progress being made by care experienced learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy; and
- (ii) Notes the achievement of school leavers SQA examinations.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the key performance measures of care experienced learners, focusing specifically on the published 2019 and 2020 attainment data and trends over time. Overall, educational outcomes for care experienced learners have improved over the last five years. However, there remains a significant gap between the educational outcomes achieved by care experienced learners and all learners, both in North Ayrshire and nationally. We had a higher number of care experience learners in 2020 than we have had in the last 7 years.
- 1.2 In the Broad General Education, care experienced learners continue to achieve better in literacy and numeracy than the national care experienced cohort at P4, P7 and S3.
- 1.3 Care experienced school leavers are achieving better in literacy and numeracy than their counterparts nationally and in the South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) and there has been a positive trend in average total tariff score over the last 10 years. The proportion of care experienced learners entering a positive destination has been above the national figure for the last 5 years.

2. Background

- 2.1 Care experienced young people are categorised for the purposes of our management information system SEEMIS as: Looked After at Home, Looked After Away From

Home and Previously Looked After. The total number of care experienced young people in North Ayrshire at the annual census date in September each year is shown in the charts in Appendix 1¹. Appendix 1a shows this information by primary and secondary.

2.2 This report focuses on the following key measures:

1. Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy across the Broad General Education for care experienced learners for 2019.
2. Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy and overall attainment in all qualifications at Senior Phase level for care experienced school leavers in 2019 and 2020.
3. Average Total Tariff Score of school leavers and the impact of the stage at which they leave school.
4. Post-school participation of care experienced school leavers for 2019 and 2020.

2.3 **Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in Broad General Education for care experienced learners** (see Appendix 2).

- 2.3.1 The charts indicate that the performance of care experienced learners in 2019 is better than national levels at P4, P7 and S3. However, there is still a significant gap between the performance of care experienced learners compared with the performance of the general population at each stage, which is in line with the national picture.
- 2.3.2 The performance of North Ayrshire care experienced learners at early level in P1 in 2019 is lower than the national cohort of looked after P1 learners in both literacy (Reading and Writing) and numeracy. A slight improvement in Listening and Talking in 2019 shows attainment in North Ayrshire to be above the national measure. Although performance in P1 remains below the national measures, these statistics are a considerable improvement on previous years and show we are reducing the gap with respect to P1 LAC pupils' performance nationally.
- 2.3.3 In 2019, the gap between the proportion of care experienced learners and all learners achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence level is smaller at S3 than at other stages.

2.4 **Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy and overall attainment in all qualifications at Senior Phase level for care experienced school leavers.** (see Appendix 3)

- 2.4.1 It should be noted that the cohort size for care experienced school leavers varies from year to year and is generally between 40-50 young people. Therefore, care must be taken when analysing variations in performance for this group. For example, one care experienced learner attaining/not attaining a

¹ Care should be taken when comparing educational performance of Looked After children at national level. While national statistics categorise a looked after cohort according to the Local Authority that is responsible for the child being looked after, our local measures and strategies are concerning all looked after pupils being educated in North Ayrshire schools, irrespective of the authority responsible for the child being looked after. Approximately 15-20% of the pupils identified as looked after in North Ayrshire come from another authority (and a similar proportion of pupils looked after by North Ayrshire are studying in other authorities)

specific qualification may account for more than 2 percentage points of a difference in the overall attainment measures for care experienced learners (whereas in the general population, one pupil would make less than 0.07 percentage points of a difference in the same attainment measure).

- 2.4.2 Performance in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 is consistently lower for Looked After² school leavers than for the overall school leaver cohort in North Ayrshire. However, North Ayrshire Looked After school leavers perform generally better than their counterparts nationally and in the SWEIC authorities (see Appendix 3). From 2018, there has been a positive trend in National 4 numeracy and National 5 literacy and numeracy for North Ayrshire Looked After learners. A higher number of young people are achieving literacy than numeracy at both levels 4 and 5. This is in line with national and SWEIC authority data.
- 2.4.3 Over the last nine years, the trend for average tariff scores for North Ayrshire care experienced school leavers has been positive. Since 2012, North Ayrshire performance has been above the national figure every year (see Appendix 3a). However, the gap between the school leavers who are not care experienced and the ones who are is considerable and is mainly stemming from a higher proportion of non care-experienced pupils who are staying on into S5 and S6 to gain more qualifications and – implicitly, more tariff points.
- 2.4.4 Appendix 3b presents a comparison between North Ayrshire/National care experienced school leavers in terms of levels of qualification achieved. Over the last four years care experienced school leavers in North Ayrshire have performed better than the corresponding national cohort at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6. National data is not available for session 2019/2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the various challenging circumstances this presented. However, North Ayrshire attainment remained broadly in line or improved from the previous session. Most notable is the percentage of our care experienced learners who achieved 1 or more qualifications at level 6, which rose to 27% in 2020, which is well above the average national figure for this measure, which has remained at around 11% since 2016.
- 2.4.5 As intimated at point 2.4.3 above, the number of care experienced learners in North Ayrshire who are currently choosing to leave school at the end of S4 is much higher compared to the general school population. For example, in North Ayrshire the proportion of school leavers from S4 was 44% in 2020 for Looked After learners, compared to 10% for all school leavers. The highest proportion of school leavers for the general population is those who leave at the end of S6 –63% (compared to only 33% for Looked after). We can compare this with the national statistics from 2019, which show an almost identical pattern (42% of Looked After school leavers leave in S4, compared to only 11% leaving in S4, for the entire school leavers cohort)

2.5 Post-school participation of care experienced school leavers (see Appendix 4).

² This measure is referring to Looked After children only, as the data source – INSIGHT – does not include Previously Looked After children. It is also ensuring consistency with National and SWEIC Looked After data, for which Care Experienced overall information is not available.

2.5.1 The overall percentage of North Ayrshire care experienced school leavers entering a positive destination has remained consistently above the national performance for this group over the last five years.

2.6 The Education Service continues to focus on improving positive outcomes for care experienced learners at all stages. It is acknowledged that, whilst educational outcomes for care experienced learners have improved over time, there is still significant scope for further improvement. Attainment and achievement for this group of learners is an area of focus during quality improvement visits in all schools and the annual attainment review in each secondary school. The operational plan for the Education Service makes specific reference to actions impacting positively on care experienced learners.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the content of the report and the progress being made by care experienced learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy; and
- (ii) Notes the achievement of school leavers SQA examinations.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 Tackling inequality is a key aspect of this report. The Council is committed to a continued focussed approach to improve outcomes for care experienced leavers.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 NAC Council Plan 2019-2024: Aspiring Communities: "Children and young people experience the best start in life". In 2021-22, 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 Wealth Building

- 4.7 The Council will continue to consider the pillars of community wealth building in any future developments in this area.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 None specifically related to this report.

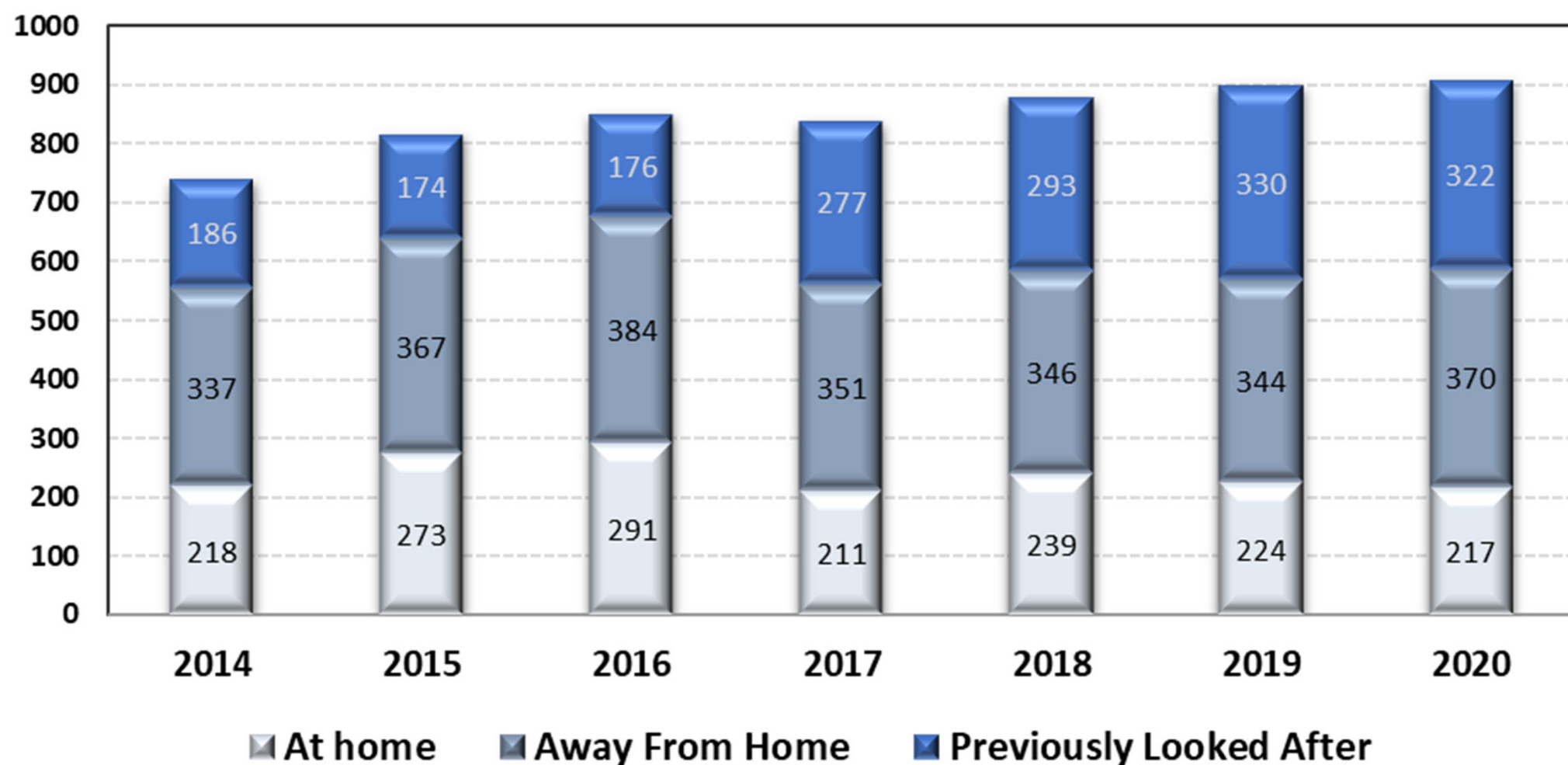
Audrey Sutton
Executive Director Communities and Education

For further information please contact **Alan MacDougall, Senior Manager, Communities and Education** on **01294 324450**.

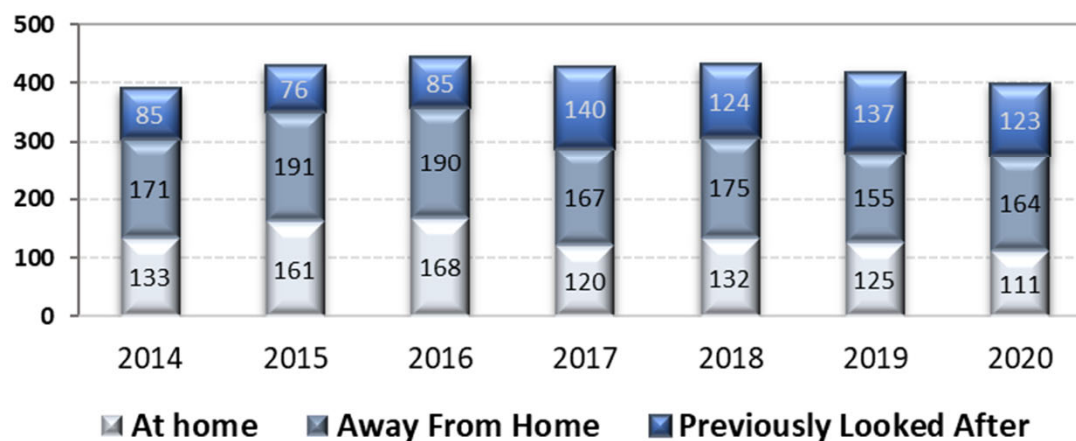
Background Papers

N/A

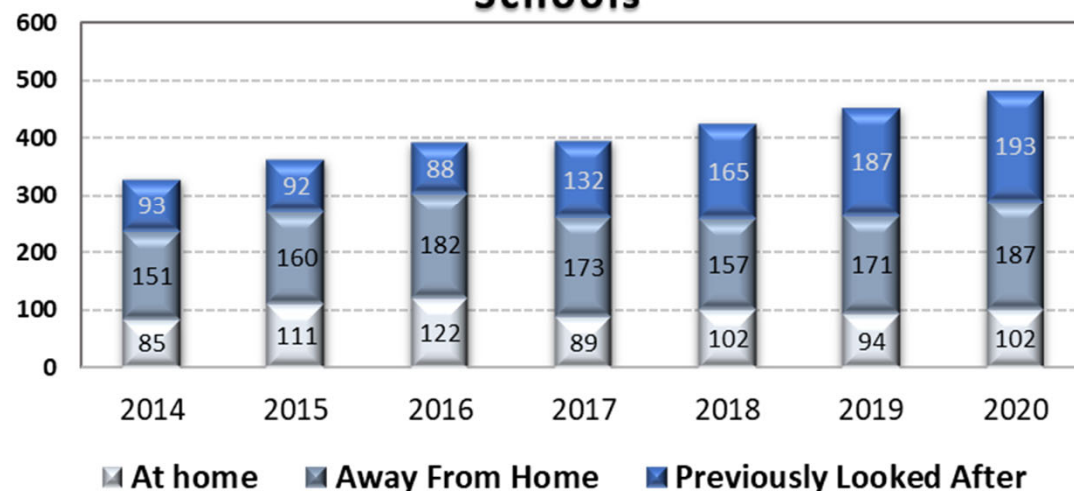
Care Experienced Pupils - All Schools

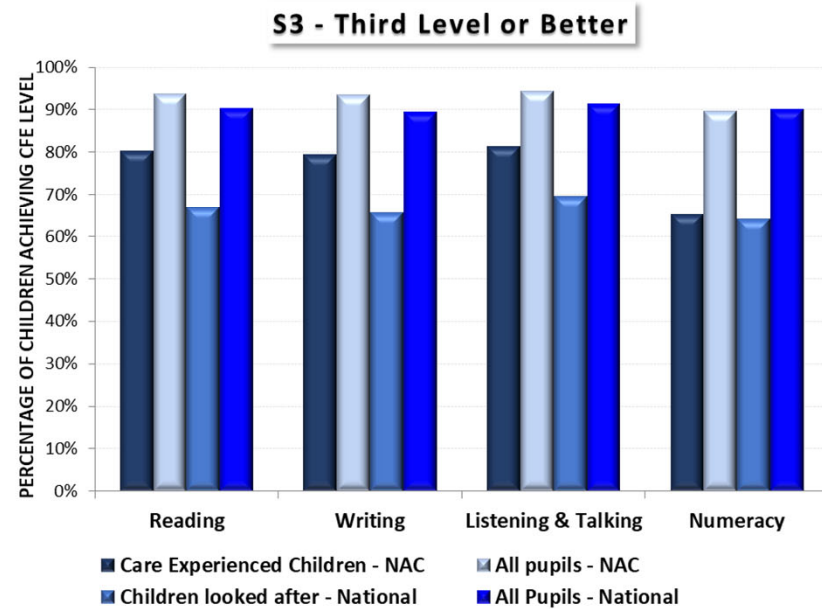
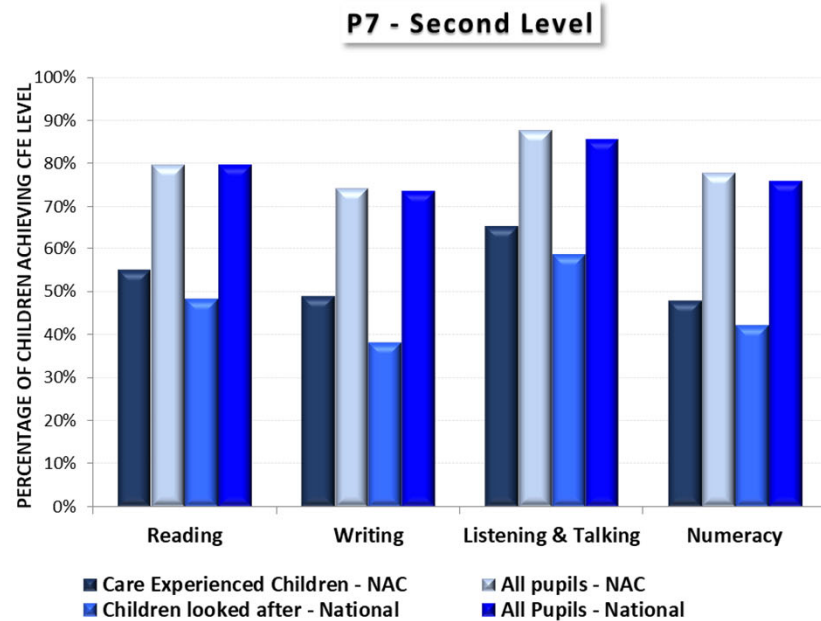
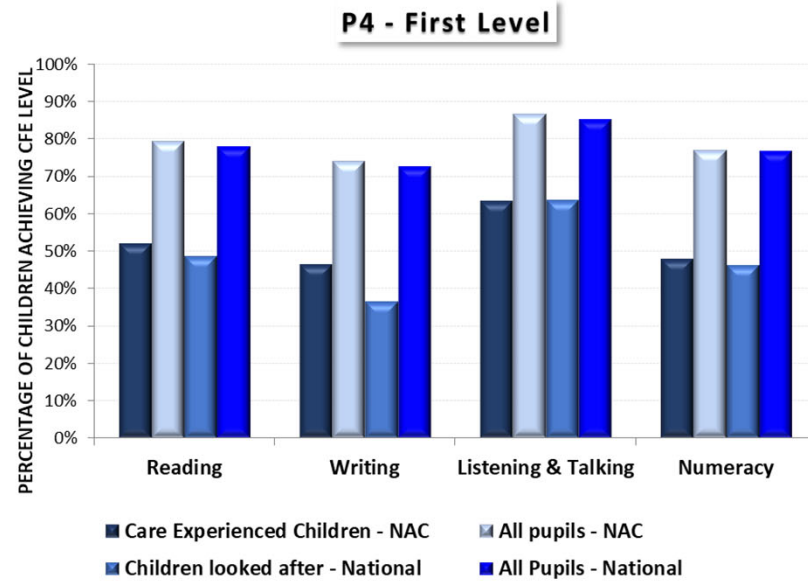
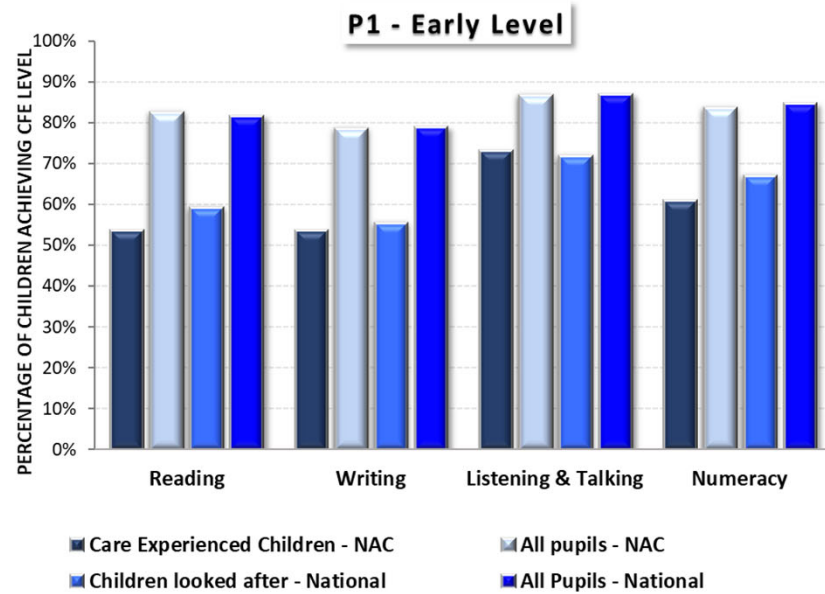


Care Experienced - Pupils - Primary Schools

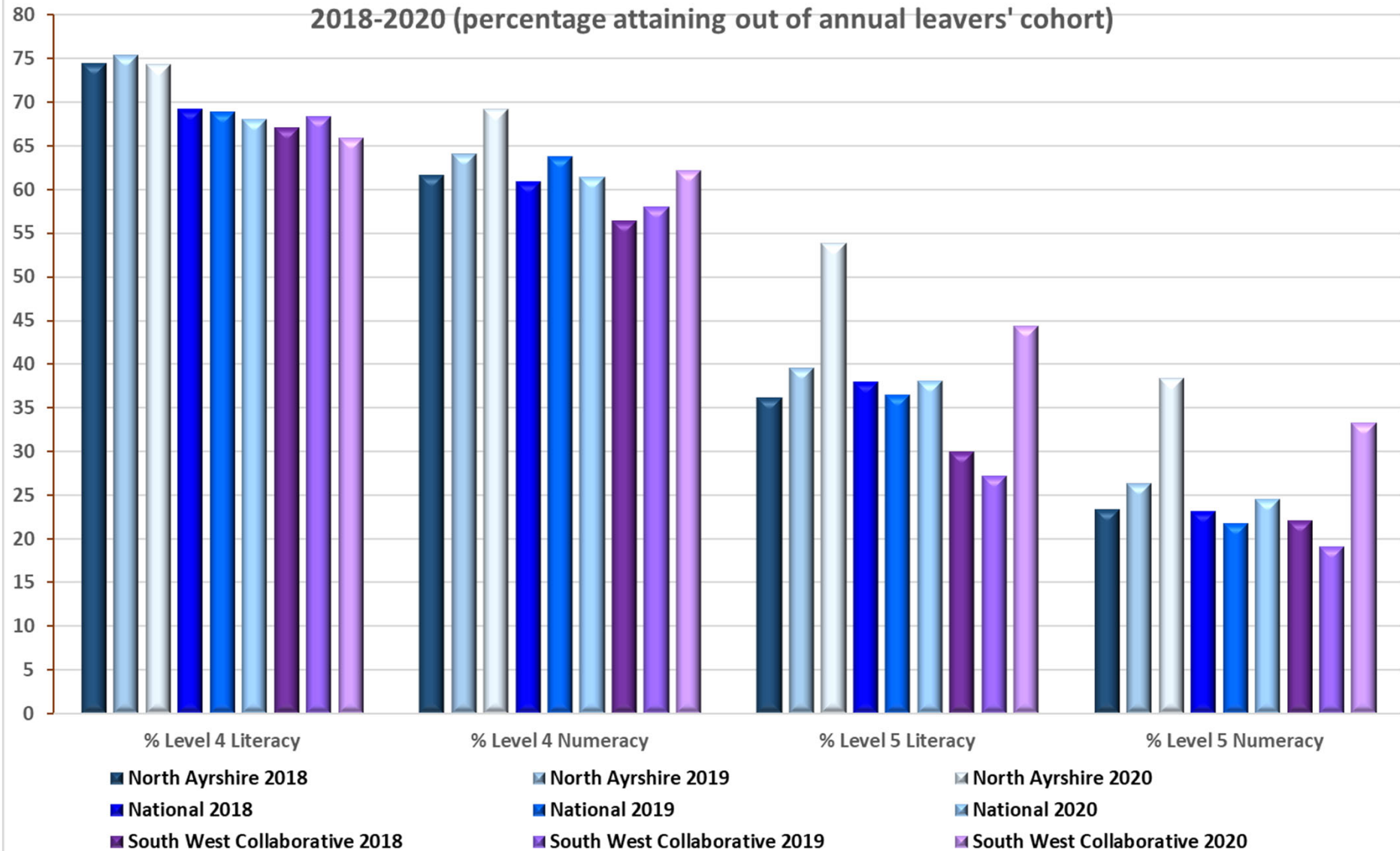


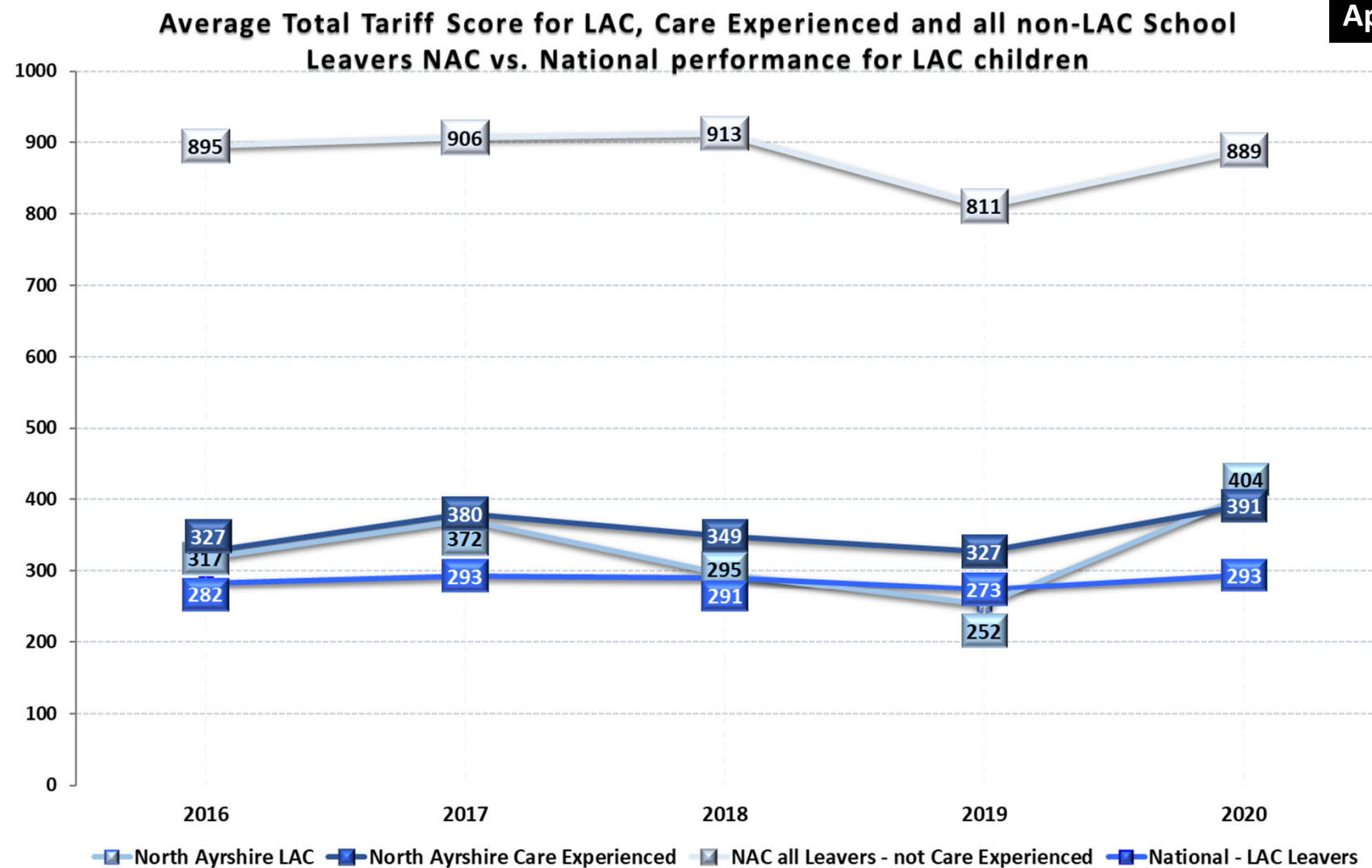
Care Experienced Pupils - Secondary Schools



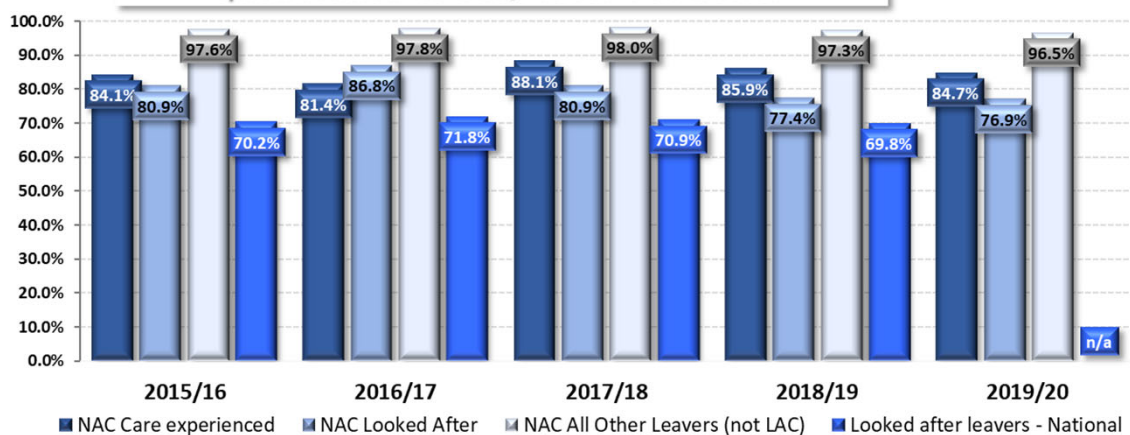


LAC attainment in Literacy and Numeracy - North Ayrshire vs. National and SWEIC - 2018-2020 (percentage attaining out of annual leavers' cohort)

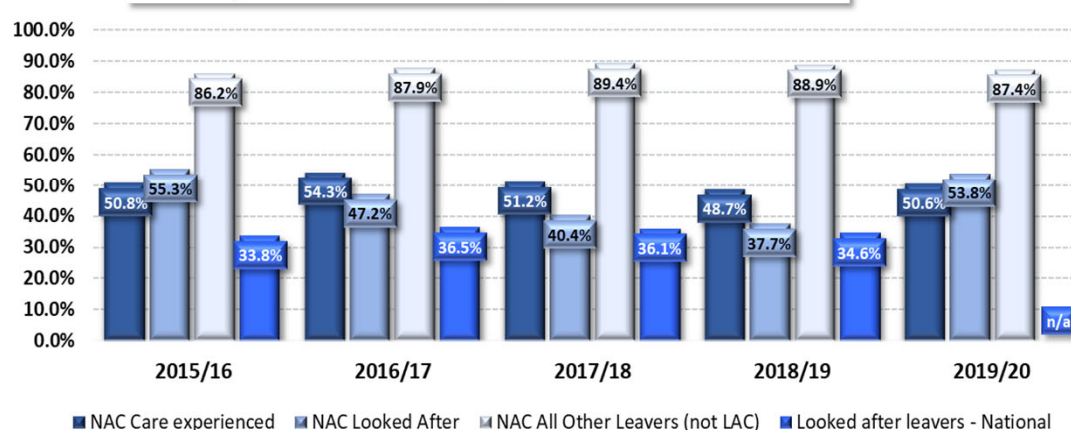




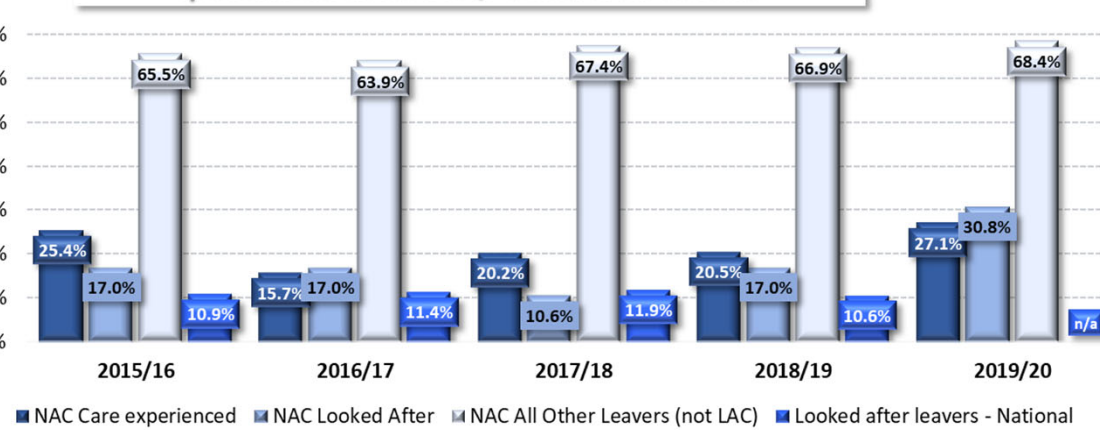
Percentage of School Leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better



Percentage of School Leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better



Percentage of School Leavers achieving 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better



Percentage of Care Experienced and Looked After Leavers entering a Positive Destination

Appendix 4

