NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

30 May 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**School Attainment Results 2022**
Purpose:	To update Cabinet on: i. The overall performance of the 2022 North Ayrshire Council school leavers as highlighted in the INSIGHT benchmarking tool and; ii. Curriculum for Excellence attainment levels in literacy and numeracy for 2022
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: a) Notes the content of the report, including the progress being made by learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy; b) Notes the achievements of school leavers in SQA examinations in 2022 and; c) Approves 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 2021-22, based on the benchmarking analysis tool INSIGHT, update released at the end of February 2023.

1.2 Highlights include the impact of improvement measures taken in BGE Literacy and Numeracy to recover from the pandemic. This is demonstrated through significantly improved “Achievement of a Level” data.

1.3 North Ayrshire school leavers recorded their highest ever positive destination figure with nearly 96% achieving an initial positive destination.

1.4 In the attainment for all measures, performance is continuing to improve following a dip after the previous change in policy affecting the number of subjects studied in S4. In 2022, leavers from across almost all SIMD deciles in North Ayrshire performed better than the national average, although there is room for further improvement.

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[1], 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 constitutes 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 each year's attainment and achievement for secondary schools is released by the Scottish Government in February of the following year of the diet analysed[2]. The INSIGHT analysts have also provided the performance of the South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) region as comparison and these values are represented in the supporting tables and charts[3]. This Report is structured – as in previous years - along the four key national benchmarking measures aimed at:

- Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy (% of candidates attaining Literacy and Numeracy qualifications)
- Improving attainment for all (Average Total Tariff Score distribution)
- Tackling Disadvantage by Improving the Attainment vs. Deprivation Gap (Average Total Tariff Score by SIMD decile)
- Increasing post-school participation (School Leaver Destinations for 2022).

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 displays a positive 5-year picture. Our schools remain above or in line with the Virtual Comparator, the SWEIC authorities and the National performance in all 5 years of this analysis. At level 4, North Ayrshire school leavers increased the gap between their achievement and the Virtual Comparator and National performance with 95.07% achieving Level 4. Similarly for Level 5, school leavers also increased the gap between their achievement and Virtual Comparator and National performance with 83.75% of learners achieving Level 5.

2.4.2 The performance of North Ayrshire school leavers in attaining Numeracy at Level 4 and Level 5 displays a positive 5-year trend with both figures above the Virtual Comparator.

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[1] The annual benchmarking "point of exit" indicators published in INSIGHT in February each year 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.

[2] Therefore, the February 2023 INSIGHT update refers to the performance of the 2022 cohort and – for comparison - the 4 years before that. 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.

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

For Level 4, 91.18% of leavers achieved this which is the second highest figure in the 5-year trend. Similarly for Level 5, 71.38% of leavers achieved this which is also the second highest figure in the 5-year trend.

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 candidate's 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 for lowest attaining 20% of learners is above the Virtual Comparator and SWEIC performance and in line with the National Performance. Although lower than 2021, it is significantly above 2019 and 2020 performance.

2.5.3 The average total tariff score of the middle attaining 60% of leavers is the second highest on record in the 5-year trend. Though slightly below the Virtual Comparator, a positive 5-year trend is evident, particularly in the years since the change of curriculum structure in S4. The policy on the number of subjects studied in S4 was revised in late 2018, with the first results of this decision being visible in 2020.

2.5.4 The average total tariff score of the highest attaining 20% of leavers is the highest on record in the 5-year trend. The figure is above the Virtual Comparator and a consistent 5-year positive trend is evident.

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 where the school leavers reside[4].

2.6.2 The Attainment vs. Deprivation chart for 2022 SIMD decile performance shows that North Ayrshire school leavers in deciles 1 through to 9 have performed above or in-line with school leavers living in the same SIMD deciles across the rest of the country. Significantly, this accounts for the vast majority, just over 98%, of our school leavers in North Ayrshire in 2022. The proportion of school leavers living in SIMD decile 10 in North Ayrshire is significantly smaller than the national share and the attainment performance of this group in North Ayrshire remains lower than the national cohort.

2.7 **Increasing Post-School Participation** (These highlights are supported by charts in Appendix 4A and 4B)

[4] 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. The SIMD decile of the area where a pupil resides using the pupil's postcode is collected as part 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 SIMD2020 and the new (redrawn) datazones based on the 2011 population census.

2.7.1 At 96%, the proportion of leavers in North Ayrshire moving into an initial positive destination is the highest on record, above the Virtual Comparator and National Performance. To maximise the percentage of school leavers entering and sustaining positive destinations, schools continue to work hard in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland.

2.7.2 The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is a measurement of the proportion of 16-19-year-olds participating in education, training, or employment over a full year (1st April – 31st March). The indicator provides a measure of the status of the wider aged 16-19 cohort – not just those who have left school.

2.7.3 The APM has been adopted in the Scottish Government's *National Performance Framework* as the measure of young people's participation. This has replaced the school leaver destination follow up as the source of data for the national indicator in the framework: Percentage of young adults (16-19-year-olds) participation in education, training or employment.

2.7.4 The 2022 APM showed that of the 5,785 16-19-year-olds in North Ayrshire, 90.8% were in education, employment, or training and personal development. This is the second highest on record since the APM started in 2016.

2.7.5 As demonstrated in Appendix 4B, the Participation Measure decreases with age. 99.3% of 16yr olds are engaged in participation which is in line with the national figure. This figure decreased to 79.7% for 19yr olds which is below the national figure.

2.8 **Attainment in Broad General Education – Attainment of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) in P1, P4 and P7** (These highlights are supported by charts in Appendix 5)

2.8.1 In 2016, the Scottish Government began to collect statistics on the Curriculum for Excellence 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 expected level made at the end of June each session[5]. This data collection by the Scottish Government was suspended in 2020 for all schools due to the impact of the pandemic. Data collection resumed in 2021 for stages P1, P4 and P7 though not S3. In 2022, data was collected from all stages (i.e., P1, P4, P7 and S3).

2.8.2 Appendix 5 presents the summarised attainment levels in Literacy and in Numeracy overall for the past 5 years, minus 2020 which was not recorded. Achievement figures for 2022 demonstrate the significant steps taken towards recovery. Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 and P7 is 76% which represents a 9-percentage point increase on the previous year and is almost back to the achievement levels before the pandemic. Similarly, combined Literacy achievement for P1, P4 and P7 is 71%, which is 8 percentage points higher than the previous year, again almost returning to pre-pandemic levels. It is evident that the additional interventions in literacy and numeracy, implemented throughout session 2021-22, have had a significant impact in continuing recovery from the pandemic.

[5] 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 3 or better in Literacy and Numeracy, with some having also achieved Level 4 by the time they finish their Broad General Education

2.9 **Proposed Improvement Actions**

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

2.9.2 Improving attainment in Literacy and Numeracy: the service improvement plan includes specific actions to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy, including: the implementation of a new learning, teaching and assessment policy; the revision of our existing literacy and numeracy frameworks; the design and implementation of a 3-year raising attainment strategy and a further focus on effective moderation across and within schools. In parallel to this, schools will continue to be supported through school improvement planning processes, quality assurance processes and the work of the Professional Learning Academy.

2.9.3 Improving Attainment for All: There will be a continuation of the focus on the lowest 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.

2.9.4 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 levels of attainment and achievement. Establishments will continue to focus specifically on the learners living in deciles 3 and 10 to endeavour to bring their performance into line with national levels.

2.9.5 Increasing Post-School Participation: To continue and enhance partnerships working with Skills Development Scotland, Ayrshire College, and the Local Employability Partnership.

2.9.6 In addition to the measures outlined above, all secondary schools will make improved use of the 16+ tab in Seemis Click and Go as a means of identifying target groups more effectively and consistently across North Ayrshire, thereby enabling interventions to be more closely tracked across all schools.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

a) Notes the content of the report, including the progress being made by learners, specifically in literacy and numeracy;
b) Notes the achievements of school leavers in SQA examinations in 2022; and
c) Approves the measures being taken to make further improvements to attainment and achievement levels across all schools.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 NAC Council Plan 2019-2024: Aspiring Communities: "Children and Young People Experience the Best Start in Life".

This work relates to the following priorities in the Education Service Plan 2022-23:
Priority 1: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
Priority 2: Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people.
Priority 3: Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

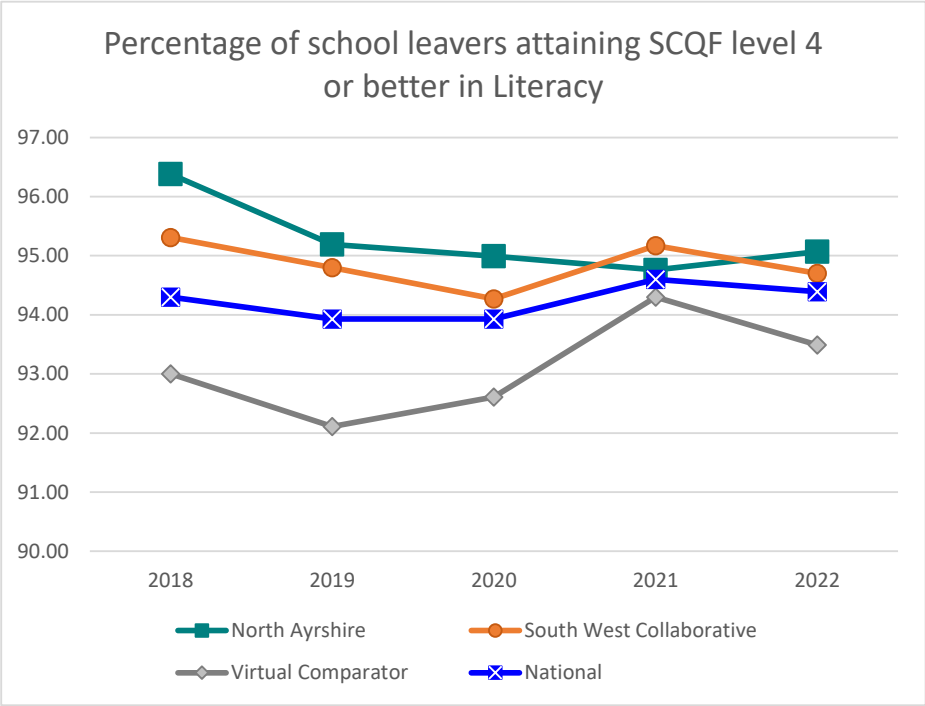
5.1 There is a robust Quality Improvement Framework in place to support schools to evaluate and analyse their performance and plan future improvements. This quality improvement process features regular evaluative visits to schools by Senior Officers. These visits feature evidence-based, challenging discussions to explore how school are using the analysis of their attainment as a mechanism to inform targets for improvement. Furthermore, as part of our annual review process, we have consulted staff across the service on the improvement priorities for the coming session, and schools have in turn engaged with their school communities on their own priorities for improvement.

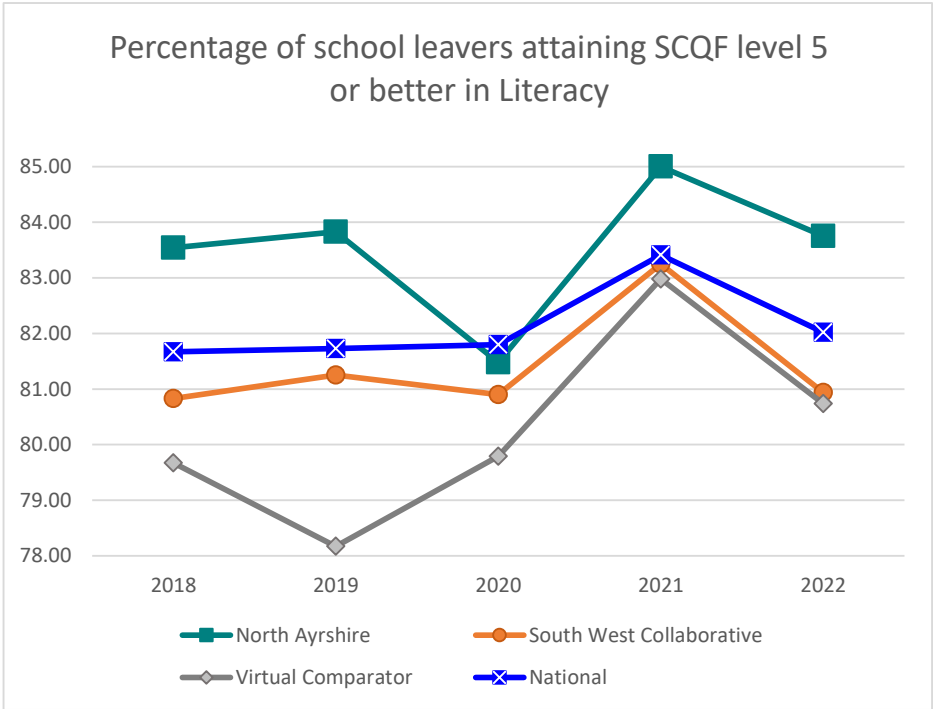
Audrey Sutton
Executive Director (Communities and Education)

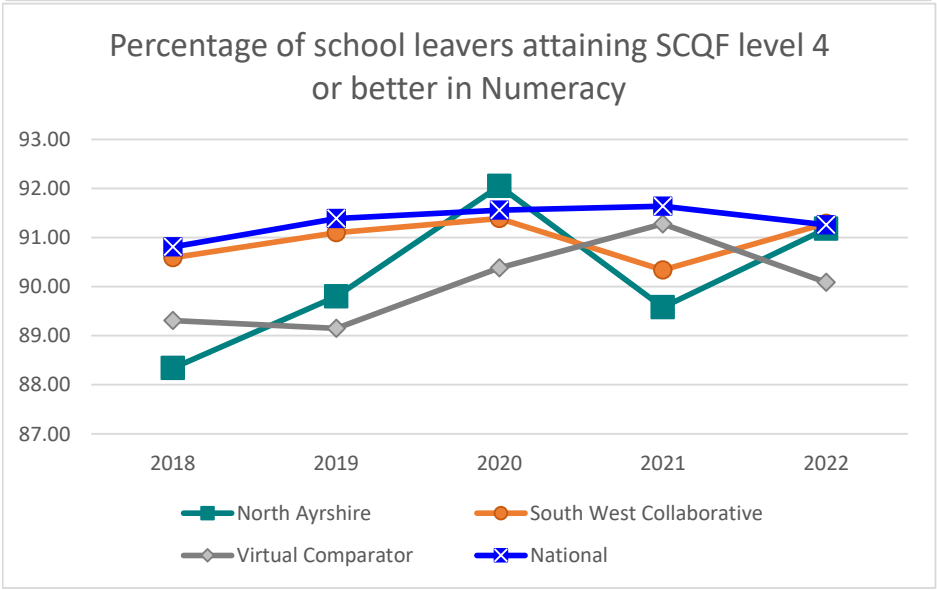
For further information please contact **Kevin Herron, Senior Manager (Education),** on **01294 324450**.

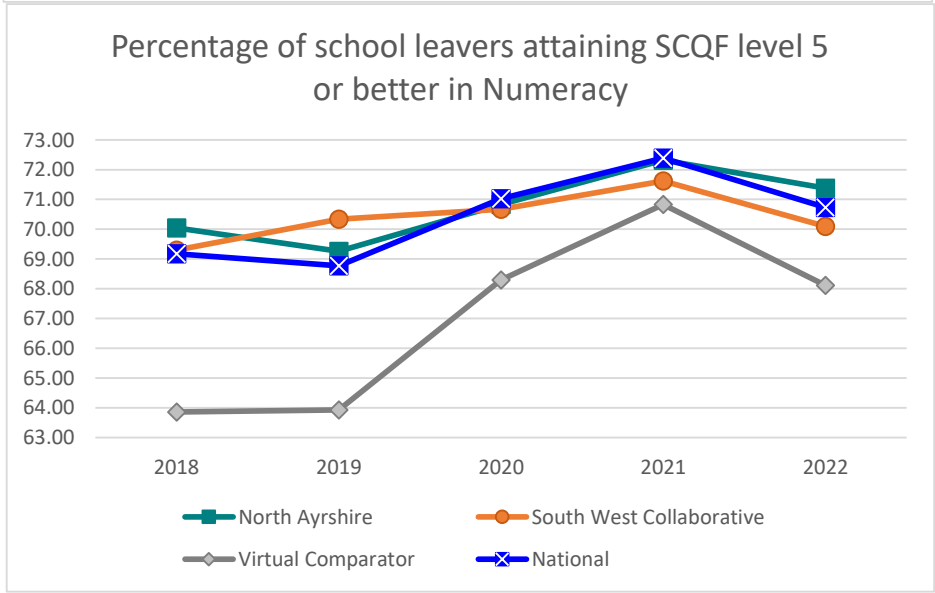
Background Papers

Appendix 1: Literacy & Numeracy Charts
Appendix 2: Attainment for All (2021 –2022)
Appendix 3: Attainment vs. Deprivation Charts (2021-2022)
Appendix 4A: Positive Destinations Insight (2021 – April 2022)
Appendix 4B: Participation Measure Statistics (August 2022)
Appendix 5: BGE Attainment (2016–2022 Charts)


Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Literacy
97.00
96.00
95.00
94.00
93.00
92.00
91.00
90.00
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
North Ayrshire
South West Collaborative
Virtual Comparator
National

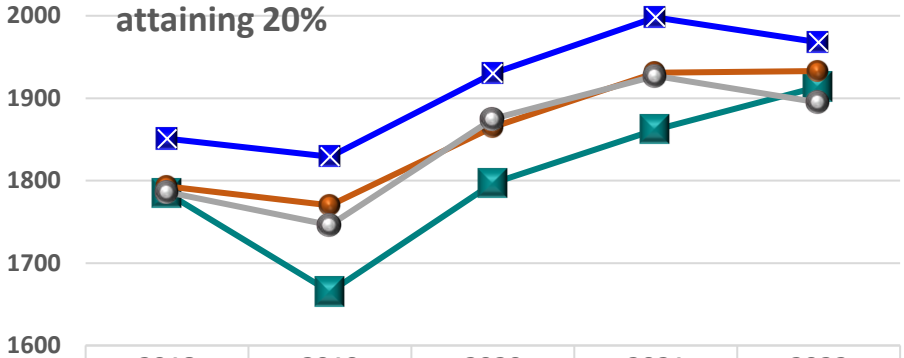

Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Literacy
85.00
84.00
83.00
82.00
81.00
80.00
79.00
78.00
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
North Ayrshire
South West Collaborative
Virtual Comparator
National


Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 or better in Numeracy
93.00
92.00
91.00
90.00
89.00
88.00
87.00
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
North Ayrshire
South West Collaborative
Virtual Comparator
National


Percentage of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 or better in Numeracy
73.00
72.00
71.00
70.00
69.00
68.00
67.00
66.00
65.00
64.00
63.00
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
North Ayrshire
South West Collaborative
Virtual Comparator
National

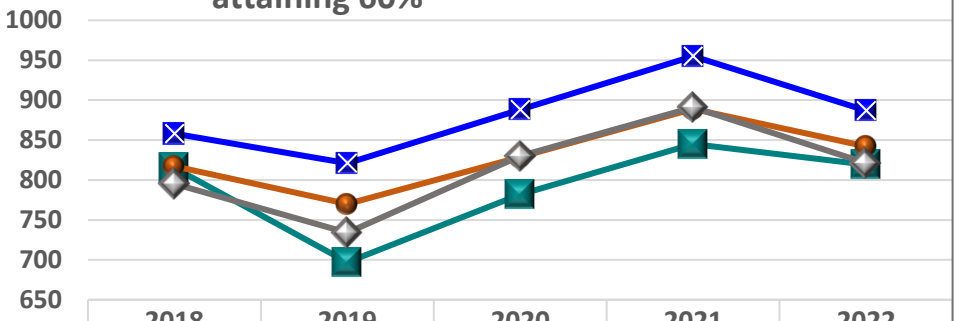
Appendix 2

Attainment for All - Average total tariff score of the highest attaining 20%



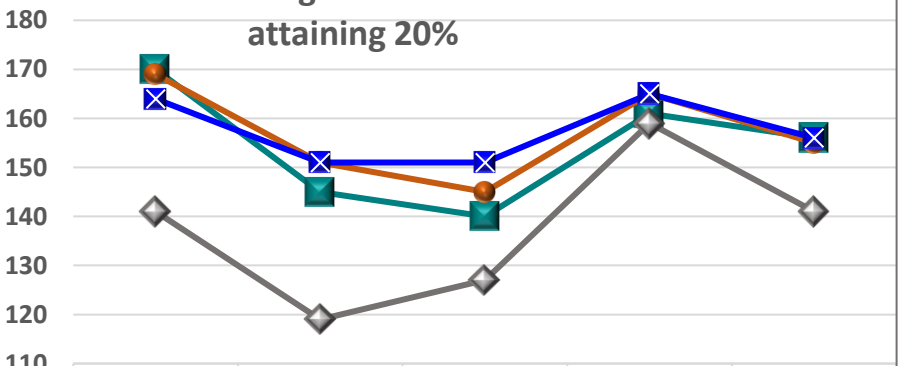
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
North Ayrshire	1785	1665	1797	1862	1914
South West Collaborative	1793	1770	1865	1931	1933
Virtual Comparator	1786	1746	1875	1927	1895
National	1851	1829	1930	1998	1968

Attainment for All - Average total tariff score of the middle attaining 60%

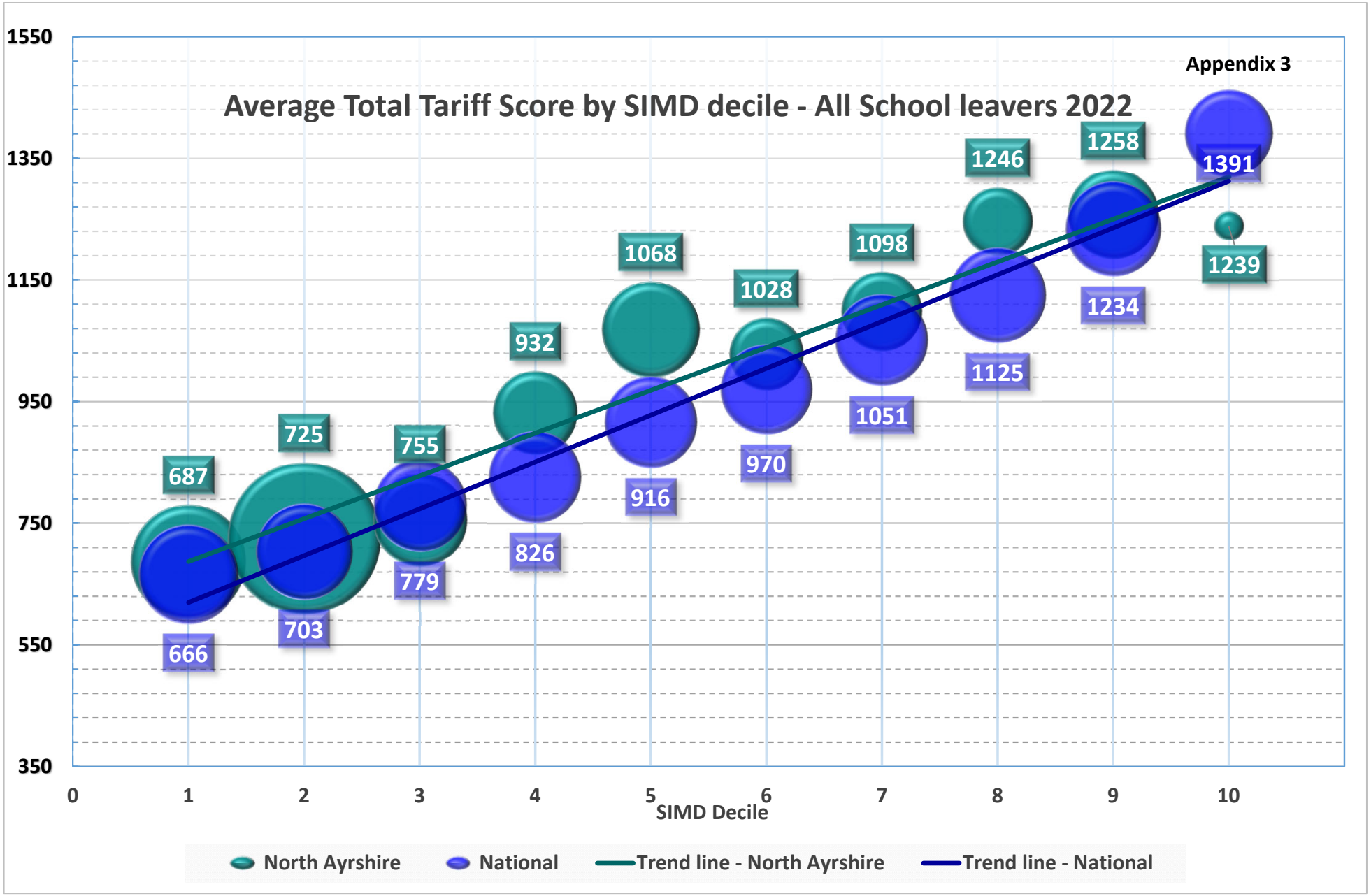


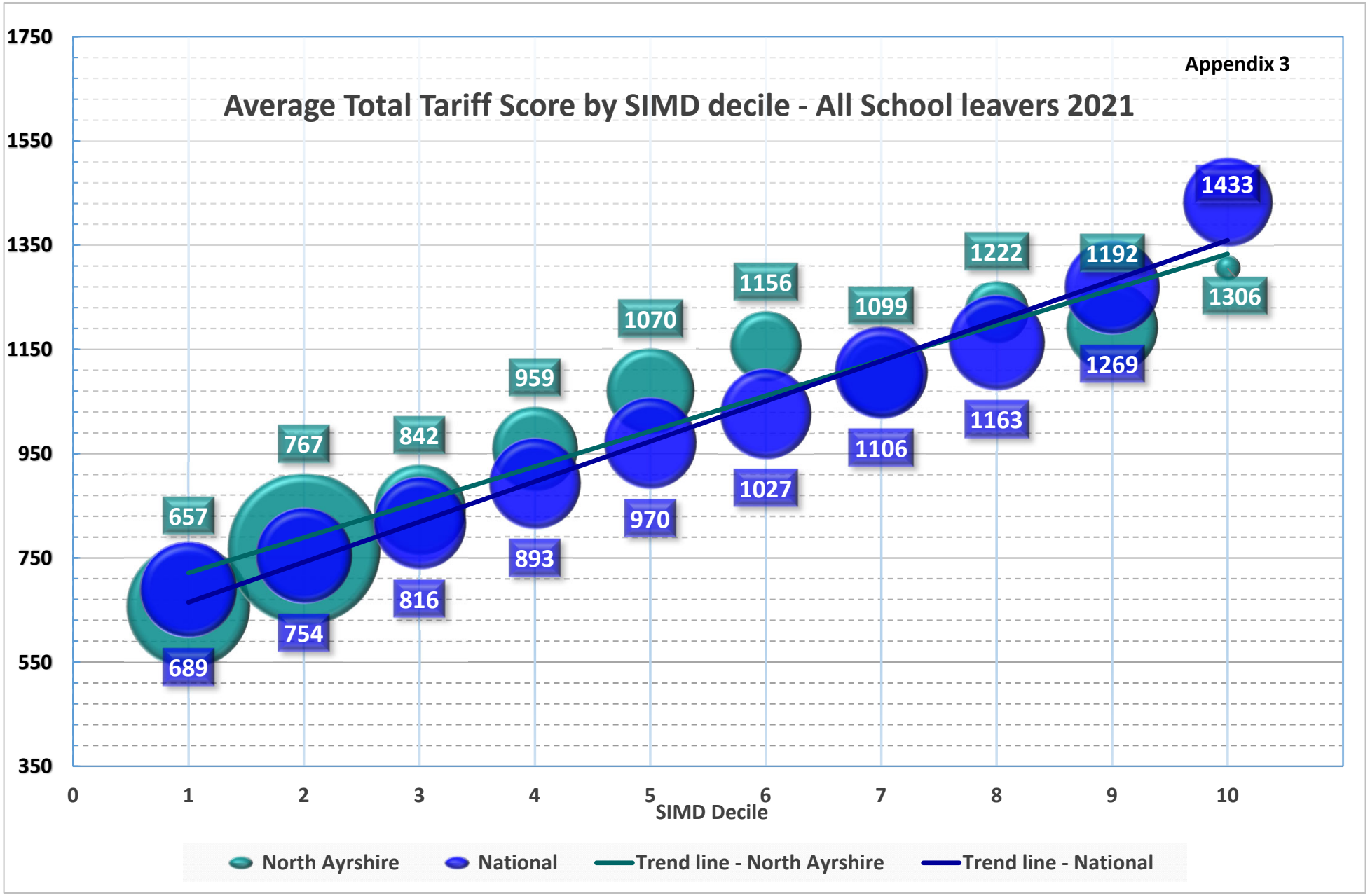
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
North Ayrshire	815	697	782	845	819
South West Collaborative	817	770	829	889	842
Virtual Comparator	795	734	830	891	821
National	858	821	888	955	887

Attainment for All - Average total tariff score of the lowest attaining 20%



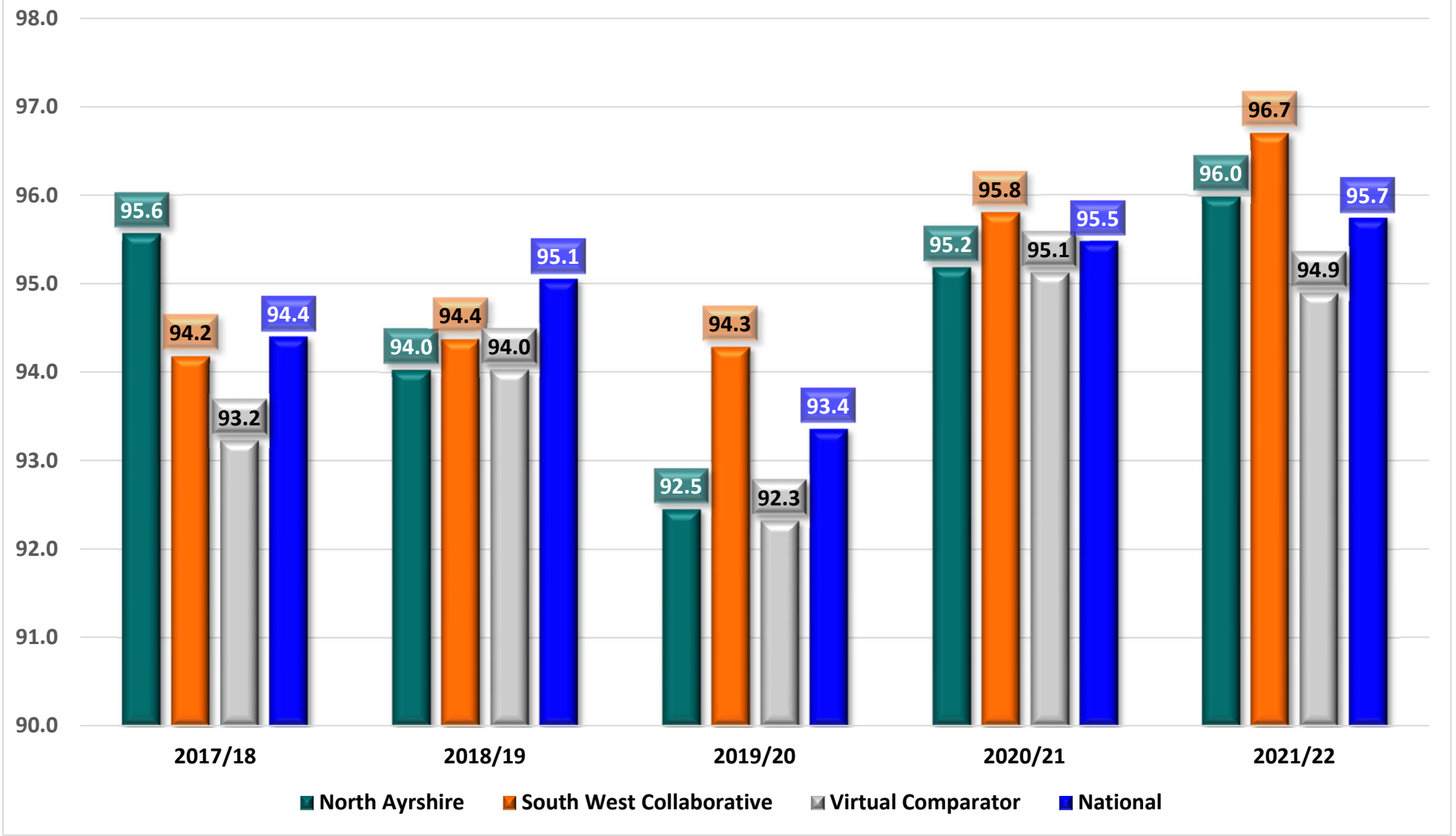
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
North Ayrshire	170	145	140	161	156
South West Collaborative	169	151	145	165	155
Virtual Comparator	141	119	127	159	141
National	164	151	151	165	156


Appendix 3
Average Total Tariff Score by SIMD decile - All School leavers 2022
1550
1350
1150
950
750
550
350
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
SIMD Decile
687
666
725
703
755
779
932
826
1068
916
1028
970
1098
1051
1246
1125
1258
1234
1391
1239
North Ayrshire
National
Trend line - North Ayrshire
Trend line - National

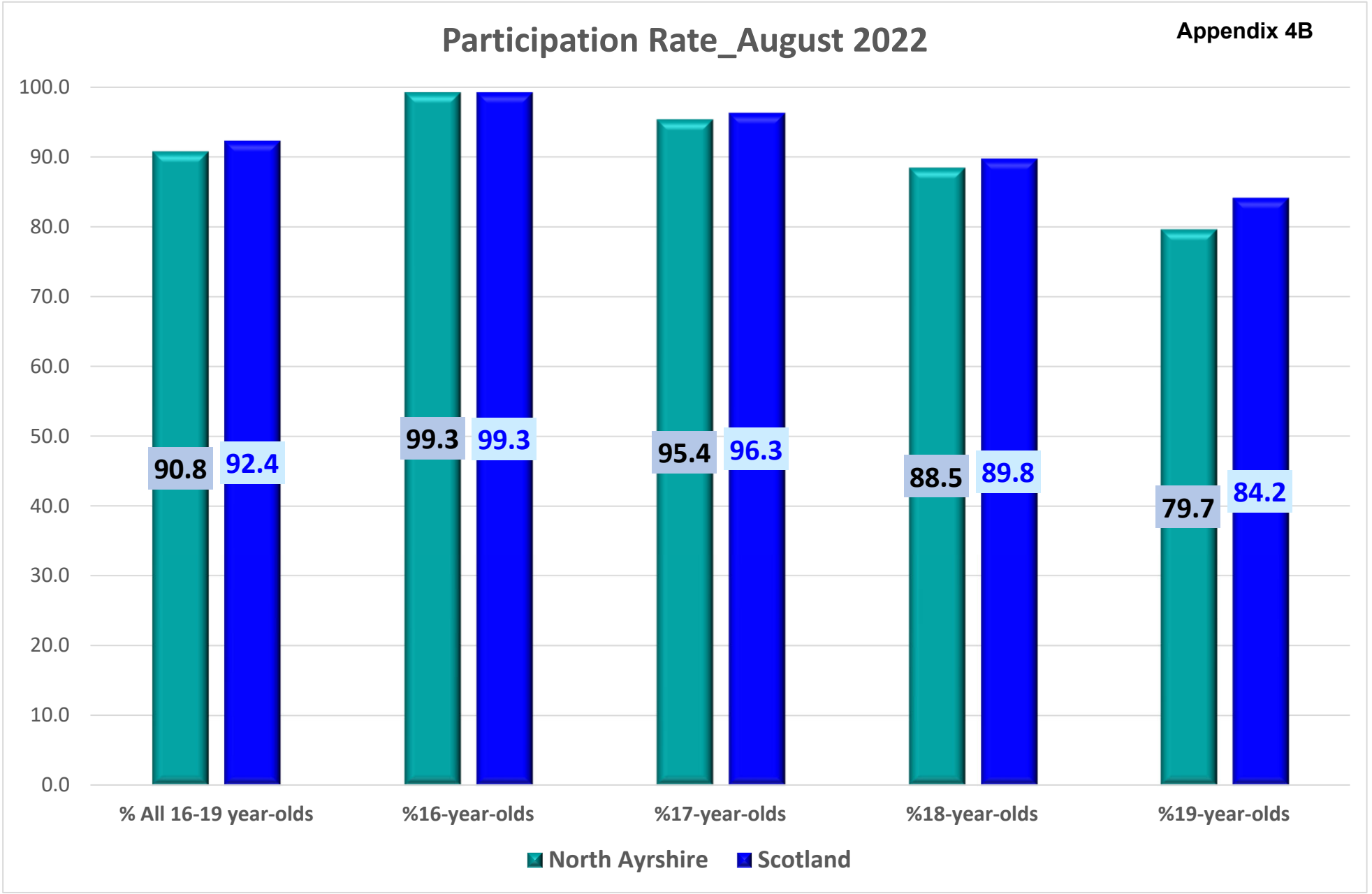

Appendix 3
Average Total Tariff Score by SIMD decile - All School leavers 2021
1750
1550
1350
1150
950
750
550
350
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
SIMD Decile
657
689
767
754
842
816
959
893
1070
970
1156
1027
1099
1106
1222
1163
1192
1269
1433
1306
North Ayrshire
National
Trend line - North Ayrshire
Trend line - National

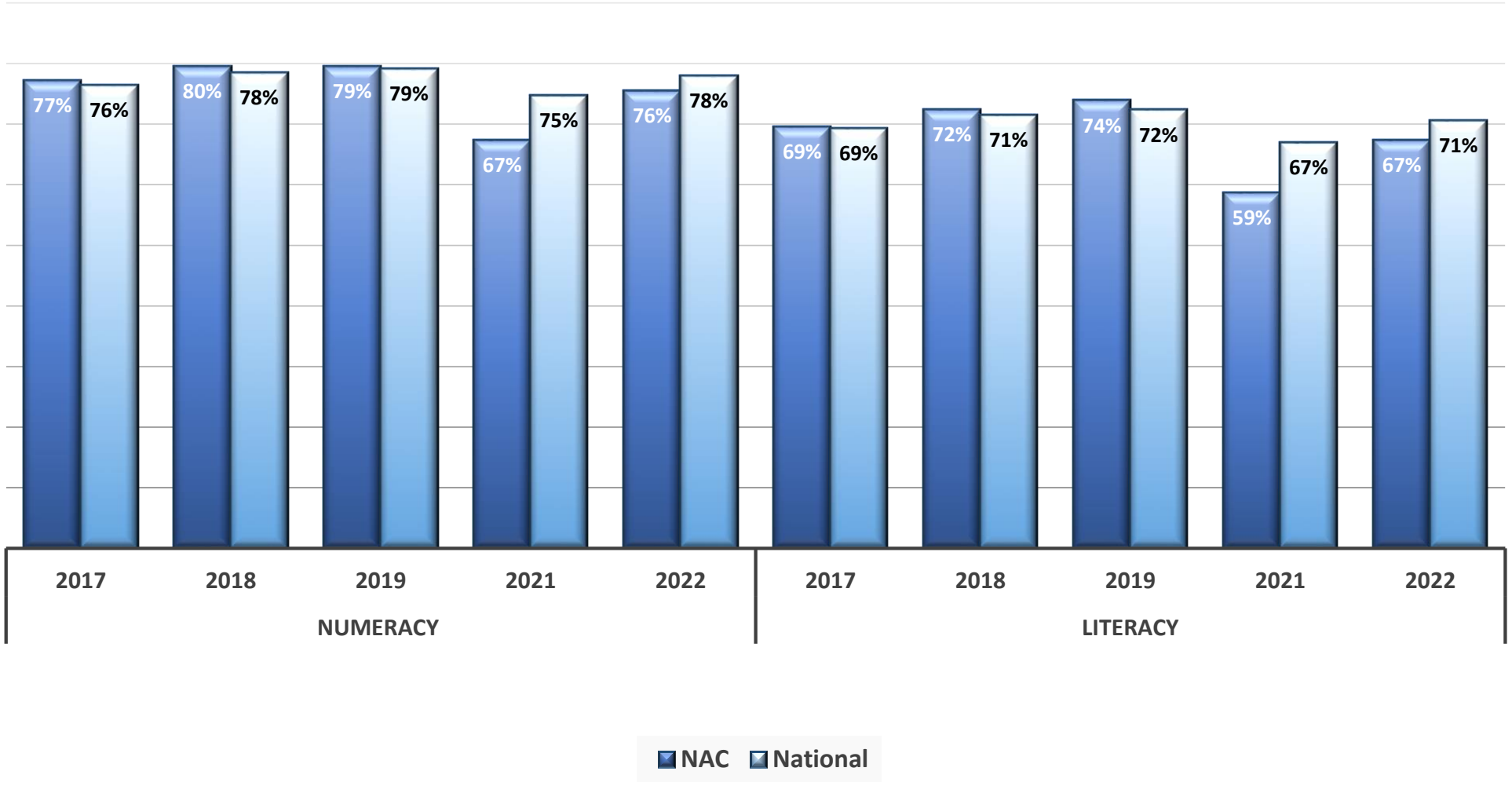
Appendix 4

Comparative Performance on % of School Leavers Moving into Positive Destinations



Appendix 4B


Participation Rate_August 2022
100.0
90.0
80.0
70.0
60.0
50.0
40.0
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
90.8
92.4
99.3
99.3
95.4
96.3
88.5
89.8
79.7
84.2
% All 16-19 year-olds
%16-year-olds
%17-year-olds
%18-year-olds
%19-year-olds
North Ayrshire
Scotland

Appendix 5

Curriculum for Excellence Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy - P1, P4, P7 - combined