



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Evidence and Insights on the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap

An Interactive Resource



Introduction



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The **Scottish Attainment Challenge** has the mission of using education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on the poverty-related attainment gap.

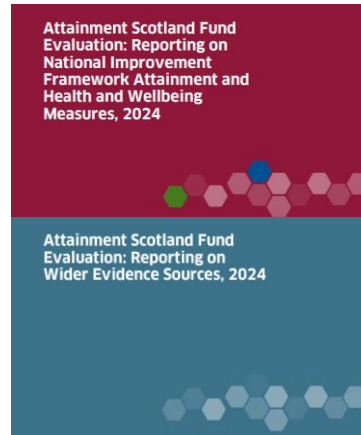
This resource provides an **interactive summary** of a range of national evidence on the poverty-related attainment gap and the impact of poverty on educational outcomes.



How this resource works

This is an interactive resource, which provides a concise and accessible **overview of data and trends on the attainment gap**, and further insights into the impact of poverty on the educational outcomes of children and young people.

The slides are based on findings in two reports published in August 2024 (click on icons to the right to access reports).



The slides are designed to be interactive – click on the icons below on each slide for further information:



Click here for audio



Click here for link to publication



Click here for video

Structure of the resource

Click on a picture to jump directly to a section



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Introduction

Evidence sources

Characteristics of pupils living in relative deprivation

Impact of Covid-19



The Learner Journey

Early Years and Primary School

Primary-Secondary transitions

Aspirations and course choices

Personal learning and achievement

Attendance and absence



Attainment and achievement

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)

National Qualifications Measures

All SCQF Measure
PISA



Positive destinations

School leaver initial destinations

Annual Participation Measure (APM)

Widening Access to Higher Education

Longitudinal Educational Outcomes



Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing

Attitudes towards and experiences of school

Life at home



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Introduction

Evidence sources

Characteristics of pupils living in relative poverty

Impact of Covid-19

Evidence sources

Core and wider measures



The resource uses a wide range of evidence sources – including the core National Improvement Framework (NIF) measures of the poverty-related attainment gap (table on left) and evidence from other national surveys and datasets (table on right).

National Improvement Framework (NIF) measures

Measure	Stage	Time period
ACEL Literacy & Numeracy	P1, P4, P7 and S3	2016/17 – 2021/22
SCQF – Levels 4-6	School leavers	2015/16 – 2021/22
Initial Positive Destinations	School leavers	2015/16 – 2021/22
Attendance rates	Primary/secondary	2016/17 – 2021/22
Total difficulties score	Primary/secondary	2018
Mental Wellbeing Score	Primary/secondary	2018
Annual Participation Measure	16-19 year olds	2016 - 23

Evidence from other national surveys / datasets

Measure	Stage	Time period
Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare	ELC	2021-25
Growing up in Scotland	Various	2005/06–2022/23
Health and Wellbeing Census	P5 – S6	2021/22
Health Behaviour in School Aged Children	P7, S2, S4	1998-2022
PISA	15 year olds	2000-2022
Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children	P1 – S6	2022/23
Longitudinal Educational Outcomes	Post-school	2013/14 cohort
Commission on Widening Access	Leavers	2013/14 – 2021/22

Age and stages



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Broad General Education (BGE)

Senior Phase

[illegible]

Summary

Characteristics of pupils living in relative deprivation



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

154,000 school pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland – 22.1% of all pupils. These pupils are more likely to have identified **Additional Support Needs, to be **Care Experienced**, and have **care responsibilities****

- 46% of pupils from the most deprived areas have an identified **Additional Support Need (ASN)** compared to 27% of those in the least deprived areas
- 59% of **care experienced children** are born into the most deprived areas in Scotland
- In the Growing up in Scotland study, 17% of children at age 14 in the most deprived areas have **caring responsibilities**, compared to 7% in the least deprived areas

8 out of 10 children in relative poverty live in at least one of the following **family types**:

- lone parent families
- in a household where someone is disabled
- in families with three or more children
- in minority ethnic families
- families with a children under one year old;
- families where the mother is under 25 years old





Evidence suggests Covid-19 disproportionately impacted those from more deprived backgrounds

Schools



Equity Audit (2021)

Key findings from interviews with school staff included:

- Younger children (P1 and P2) were most notably affected
- Higher number of pupils from more deprived backgrounds had shown regression in core skills after schools re-opened
- The number of pupils on track to achieve appropriate levels had fallen significantly

Pupils



PISA 2022

Compared to the OECD average, 15 year olds in Scotland were:

- More likely to say that they had fallen behind on their school work during school building closures
- More likely to agree that they had learnt less when their school building was closed
- Less likely to agree that they were motivated to learn

Parents



Parent Survey (2021)

Parents from the most deprived areas were:

- Less likely than parents from the least deprived areas to agree that remote learning had met their child's needs
- More likely to say that they were 'very' or 'quite' concerned about their child's schoolwork and the impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing

Impact of Covid-19



The **Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Study** was undertaken by the University of Glasgow in 2022 with a nationally representative sample of 4,388 pupils.

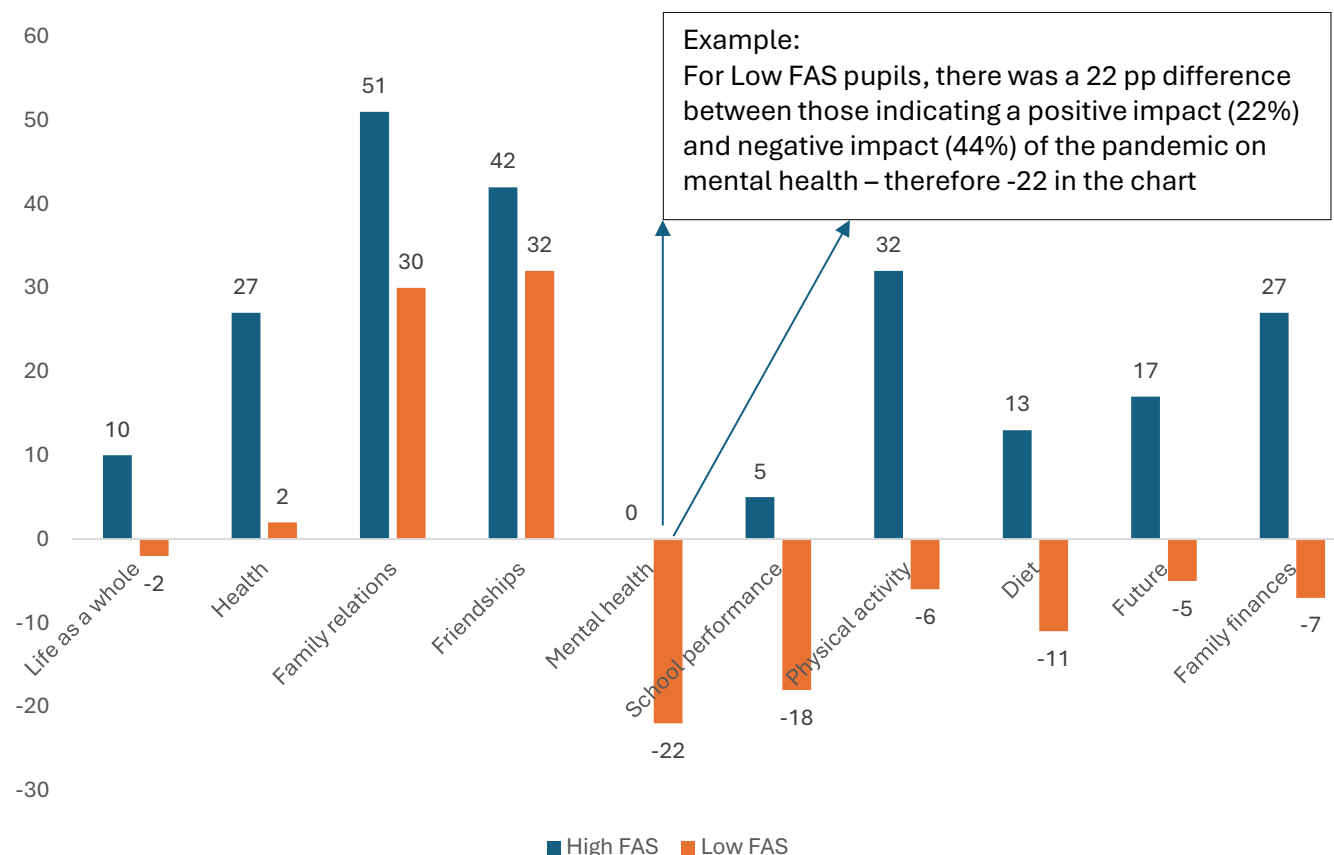
The HBSC study uses the **Family Affluence Scale (FAS)** as a socio-economic proxy. Perceived impact (both positive and negative) of the Covid-19 pandemic was analysed by family affluence.

Across all aspects of life, those in the highest family affluence group were more likely to report a positive impact. Conversely, those in the **low family affluence group were more likely to report more negative impacts**, except for life overall and friendships which did not differ by family affluence.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Difference between those reporting experiencing a positive and negative impact by Family Affluence





Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Learner Journey

Early Years and Primary School

Primary-Secondary Transitions

Aspirations and course choices

Personal Learning and Achievement

Attendance and Absence



Summary

Learner Journey



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Evidence shows that poverty has an impact across the learner journey, being evident in the **Early Years** and influencing outcomes across different stages. **Transitions**, into primary and into secondary school, appear to be crucial to pupil outcomes.

- Research has shown that **the attainment gap emerges early in a child's life**, with data indicating a disparity in cognitive development in the Early Years and Primary School
- The **transition from primary to secondary school** is viewed as crucial in the learner journey, with evidence showing that low income children are more likely to experience a negative transition
- Research suggests there is no lack of **aspiration** amongst pupils and their parents from the most deprived areas – rather, the type of aspiration is different





The Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare reports on the child health and development of 4 and 5 year olds who are accessing funded ELC

In the 2025 report, parents were asked whether they had any concerns about how their child talks or what they understand. Those living in the most deprived areas were most likely to report worries about how their child talks (27%) compared with 13% of parents living in other areas. A similar pattern was observed for concern about what their child understands.

Those living in the most deprived areas (18%) were also more likely than those in other areas (10%) to state that their child received specific support for speech and language development from their ELC setting.

Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), children living in the most deprived areas were less likely than those living elsewhere to be assessed as developmentally on schedule. On fine motor and communication domains, boys living in the most deprived areas were least likely to be on schedule.


Research in the Early Years shows that 4 and 5 year olds living in areas of deprivation – particularly boys – are more likely to have developmental concerns

Early Years and Primary School



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) longitudinal study has measured cognitive ability at ages three and five across different study cohorts

At **age 5**, compared with children in the lowest income quintile, those in the highest income quintile were around **13 months** ahead in their knowledge of vocabulary and **10 months** ahead in their problem-solving ability. 

Characteristics that were associated with higher levels of improvement for children in more disadvantaged areas:

- Living in rural areas and small towns
- Living in privately rented or owned home housing
- Being exposed to stimulating activities at home
- Reading or looking at books at home every day

Research has shown that the poverty-related attainment gap emerges early in a child's life, with data indicating a disparity in cognitive development in the Early Years and Primary School

Primary-Secondary Transitions



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The transition from primary to secondary school is viewed as a crucial period in the existing literature, with studies showing a ‘dip’ in attainment and wellbeing during the transition.

Research using the Growing Up in Scotland survey found that:

- 30% of children in the lowest income quintile had a negative transition – compared to 15% in the highest income quintile
- A negative transition experience was associated with income, area-based deprivation and low levels of parental qualifications
- A negative transition experience was associated with a lower increase in cognitive ability scores
- Children that were at a higher risk of a negative transition experience included boys, children with ASN, and children not involved in sports or other activities

Data from the Growing up in Scotland survey showed that children in the lowest income quintile were **twice as likely as children in highest income quintile to have had a **negative transition****

Aspirations and Course Choices



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The translation of aspirations into learning pathways and qualifications is a key aspect of addressing the poverty-related attainment gap.

A range of data sources has shown that young people in the most deprived areas are:

- **Less likely** to want to **stay on at school** full time after S4
- **Less likely** to say they saw themselves going to **university**
- **More likely** to say they saw themselves going to **college**

Research using Growing Up in Scotland survey data found that, while there are differences in the types of aspirations that **parents** hold for their children according to their experience of poverty, there is no 'lack of aspiration'. Parents living in poverty are 1.6 times more likely than parents with no experience of poverty to want their child to start a training course or undertake an apprenticeship on leaving school.

Research suggests there is **no lack of aspiration amongst both children and young people and their parents from the most deprived areas – rather, the type of aspiration is different**

Aspirations and Course Choices (2)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Young People in Scotland Research, commissioned by Skills Development Scotland in 2022, explored views on future aspirations and careers of a representative sample of 1,533 Scottish school pupils aged 11-18.

In terms of interest in job sectors, young people from the most deprived areas were more likely than those in the least deprived areas to be interested in **Creative Industries** (33 per cent compared to 27 per cent), **hospitality** (27 per cent compared to 24 per cent), **teaching** (28 per cent compared to 21 per cent), and **caring** (25 per cent compared to 20 per cent). Conversely, young people in SIMD 1 were less likely to report interest in sport, medicine and health, engineering, and science.

Research commissioned by SDS found that young people from the most deprived areas were more likely to be interested in a career in creative industries, teaching, hospitality and caring

Staying on rates



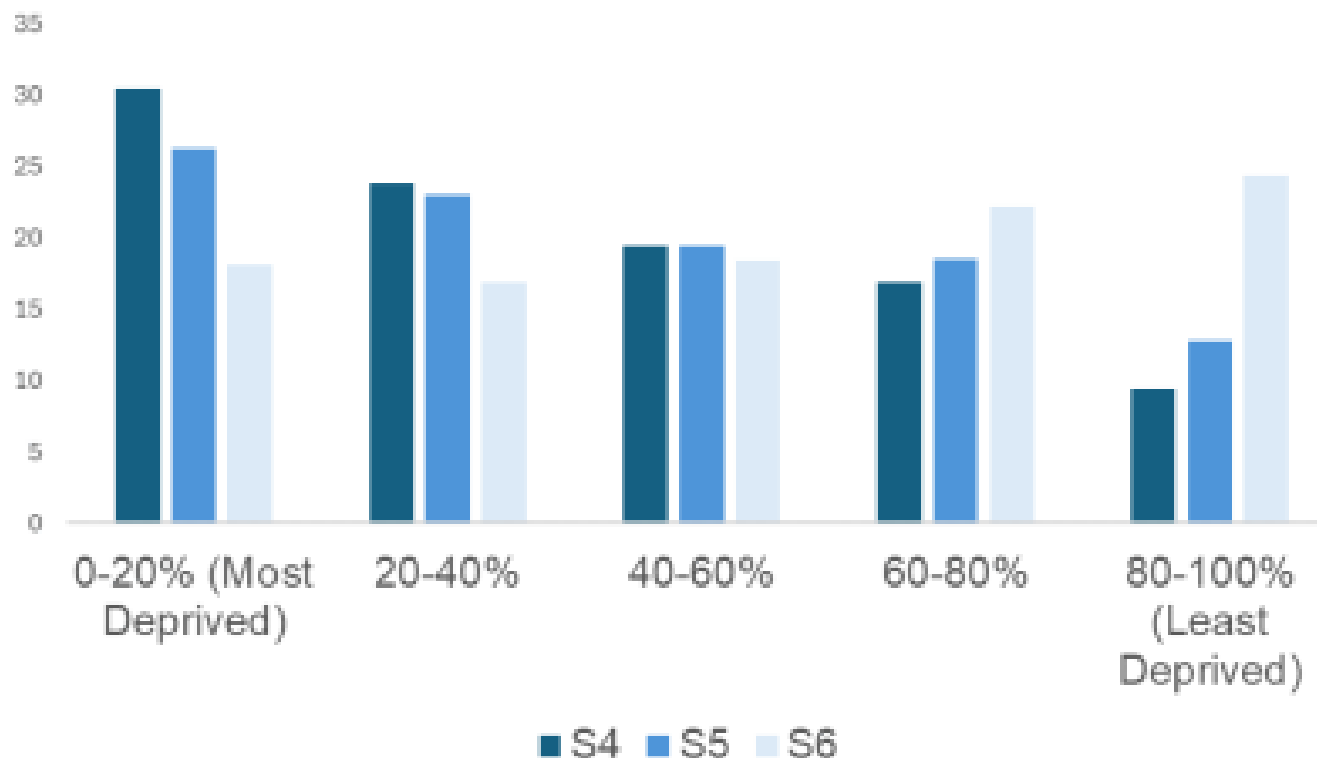
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

14.4% of 2022-23 school leavers were from **S4**, the **highest proportion** since 2010-11. This represents 7,890 young people, **1,027** more S4 leavers than the previous year.

S4 leavers were more likely to be **male** (58%), have an **additional support need** (59%) and to be from the **most deprived quintile** (30%).

Over half of S4 leavers are in **further education** (52%) 3 months after leaving, while 29% are in **employment**. However, S4 leavers are **less likely to be in a positive destination** than S5 leavers and S6 leavers.

School leavers from S4 (and S5) are **more likely** to be from the most deprived areas of Scotland than the least deprived.

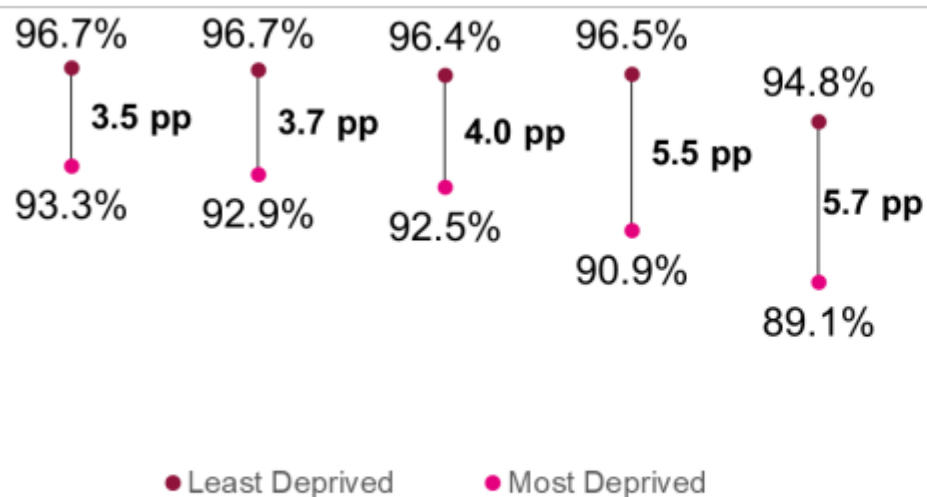


Attendance and Absence

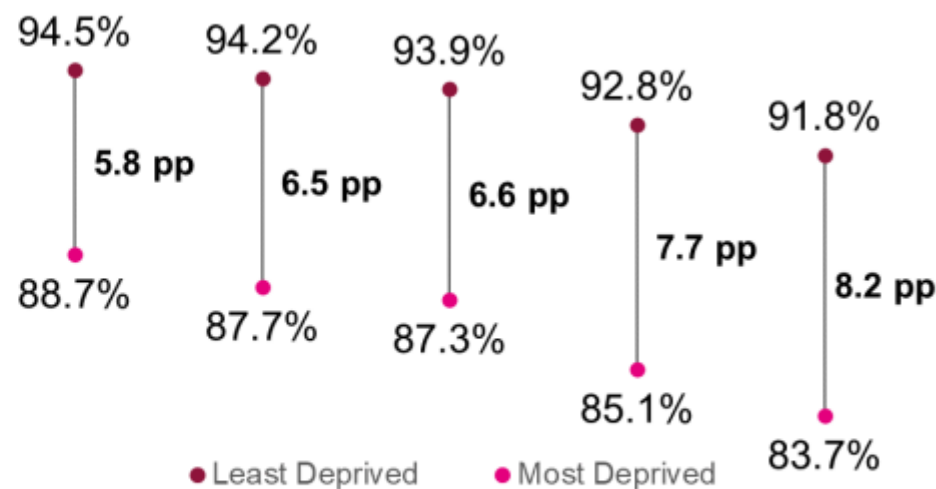


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Primary school attendance



Secondary school attendance



The gap in attendance between school pupils from the most and least deprived areas has **widened** since 2014/15

Overall, attendance for **primary** school pupils has **decreased** from 95.1% in 2014/15 to 92.2% in 2022/23.

Attendance for **secondary** school pupils also **decreased**, from 91.8% in 2014/15 to 87.7% in 2022/23.

Personal Learning and Achievement

Growing up in Scotland (Life at 14)



Compared to their less deprived counterparts, children and young people in the most deprived areas were:

- **More** likely to say that they attended a **youth club**
- **Less** likely to be in a group working towards a **youth award**
- **Less** likely to be members of a **uniformed youth group** and less likely to take part in **cultural activities** outside of school hours (such as art and music)

Health and Wellbeing Census (2021/22)



Compared to their less deprived counterparts, children and young people in the most deprived areas were:

- **More** likely to have taken part in a **buddying/mentoring** programme at school or a **youth organisation**
- **Less** likely to have taken part in **voluntary work**, to have taken part in a **drama/singing/dance** group and **sports club**

**The Scottish
Attainment Challenge
Refresh in April 2022
included a broader
recognition of children
and young people's
achievements and
attainment**



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Attainment and Achievement

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels

National Qualifications Measure

All SCQF Measure

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Summary

Attainment and Achievement



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap has been mixed since the pandemic. The attainment gap in **Achievement for Curriculum for Excellence Levels** is at its **narrowest** on record in literacy for both primary and secondary and is at its narrowest in secondary numeracy. However, the attainment gap in **National Qualifications** has **widened** since reaching its narrowest levels in 2021/22.

- At **primary** level for ACEL, the attainment gap between pupils in the most and least deprived areas was at its lowest ever level in literacy in 2023/24
- At **secondary** level for ACEL, the attainment gap between pupils in the most and least deprived areas was at its lowest ever level in literacy and numeracy in 2023/24
- The attainment gap in **National Qualifications** between leavers from the most deprived and least deprived areas was at its narrowest at Level 4 or better in 2021/22 and at Level 5 or better and Level 6 or better in 2020/21



Primary Literacy

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)

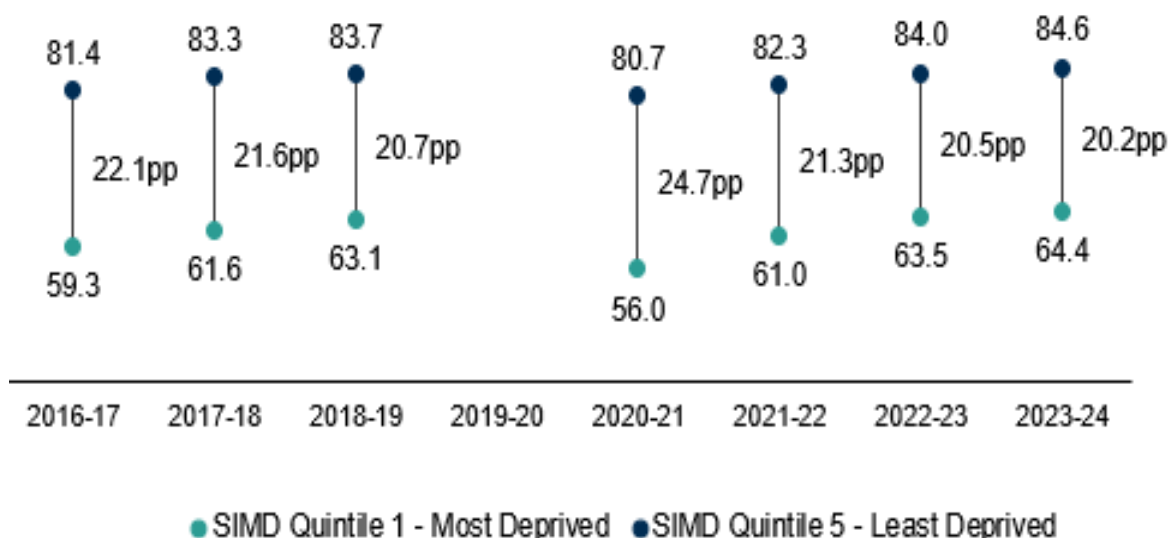


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

At four stages during schooling (P1, P4, P7 and S3), teacher judgements are used to assess individual pupil performance in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage.

The attainment gap at primary level narrowed to its lowest ever level in literacy in 2023/24

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Level in Literacy by deprivation, 2016-17 to 2023-24



Primary Numeracy

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)

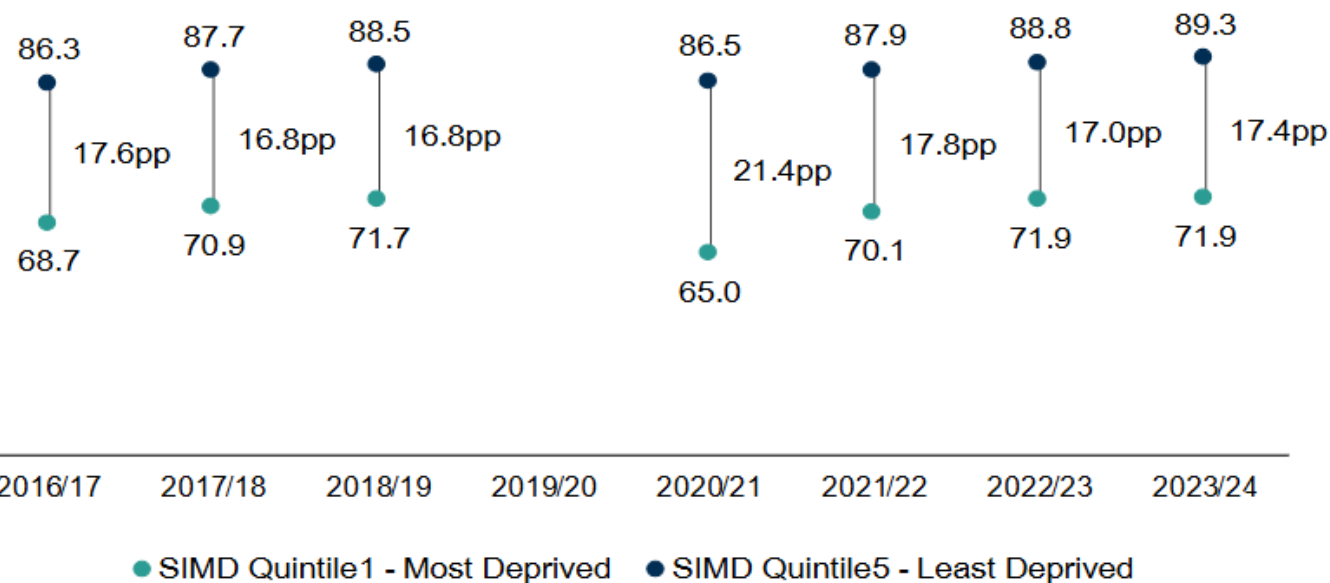


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

At four stages during schooling (P1, P4, P7 and S3), teacher judgements are used to assess individual pupil performance in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage.

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils (combined) achieving expected CfE level in numeracy by SIMD, 2016-17 to 2023-24

The attainment gap in numeracy at primary level widened in 2023/24 and remains wider than in 2018/19.



Secondary Literacy

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL)

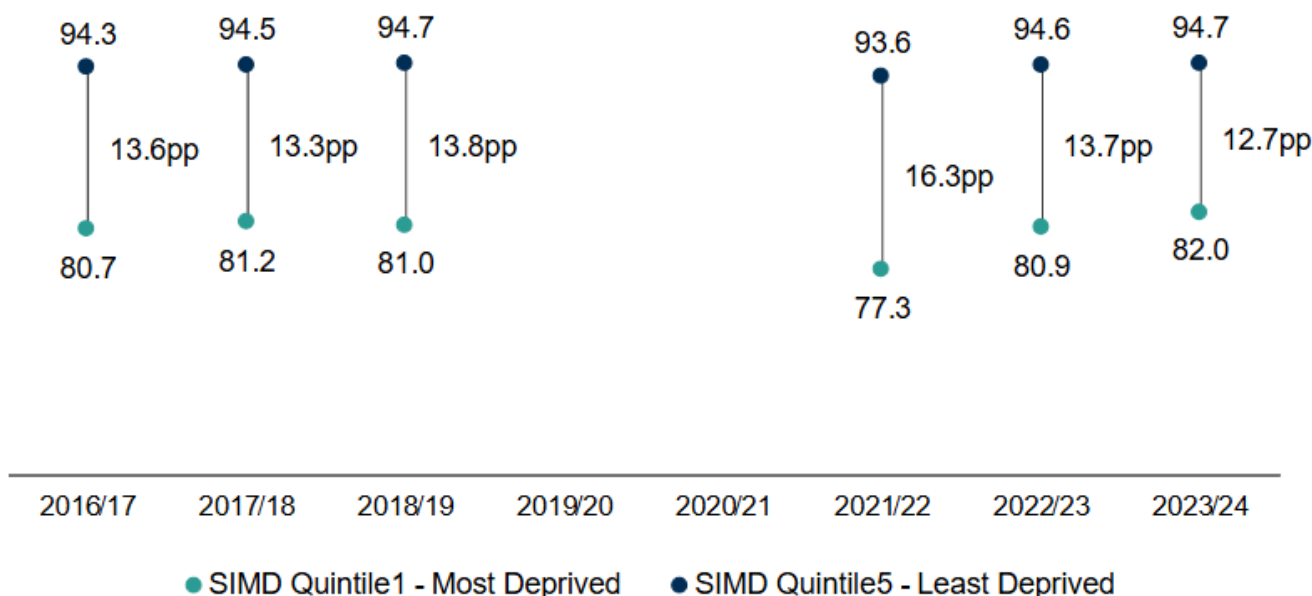


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

At four stages during schooling (P1, P4, P7 and S3), teacher judgements are used to assess individual pupil performance in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage.

The poverty-related attainment gap in literacy at S3 narrowed in 2023/24, to the lowest on record

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Literacy by SIMD, 2016-17 to 2023-24



Secondary Numeracy

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence
Levels (ACEL)

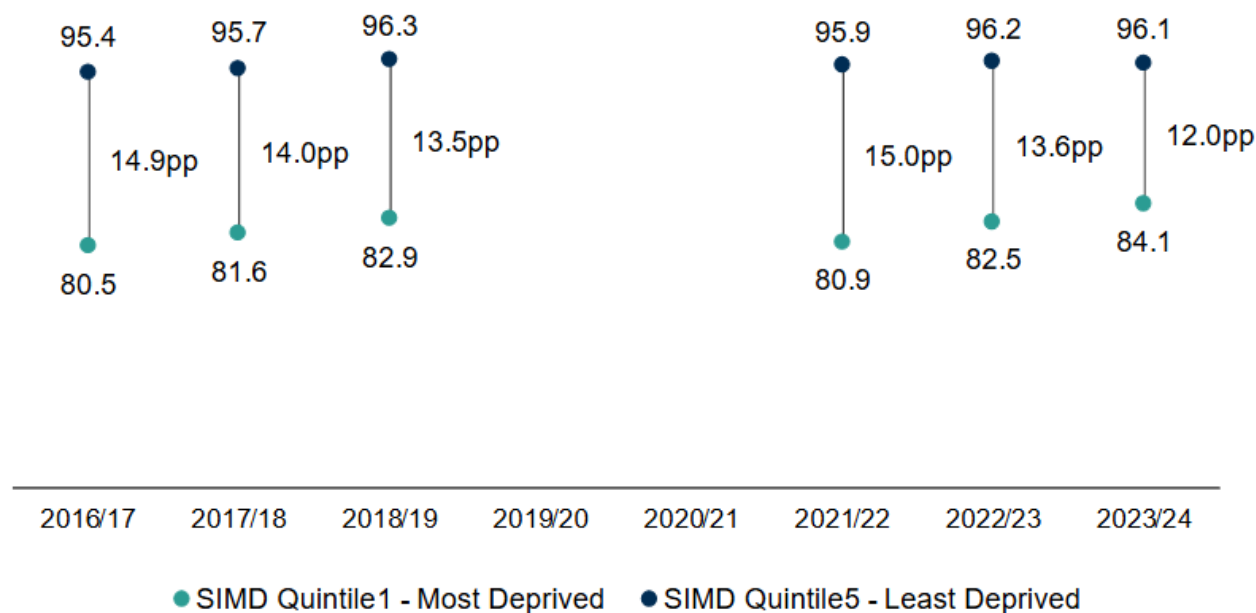


Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

At four stages during schooling (P1, P4, P7 and S3), teacher judgements are used to assess individual pupil performance in literacy and numeracy relevant to their stage.

The poverty-related attainment gap in numeracy at S3 narrowed in 2023/24 to the lowest since 2016/17

Percentage of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy by SIMD, 2016-17 to 2023-24



School leaver attainment

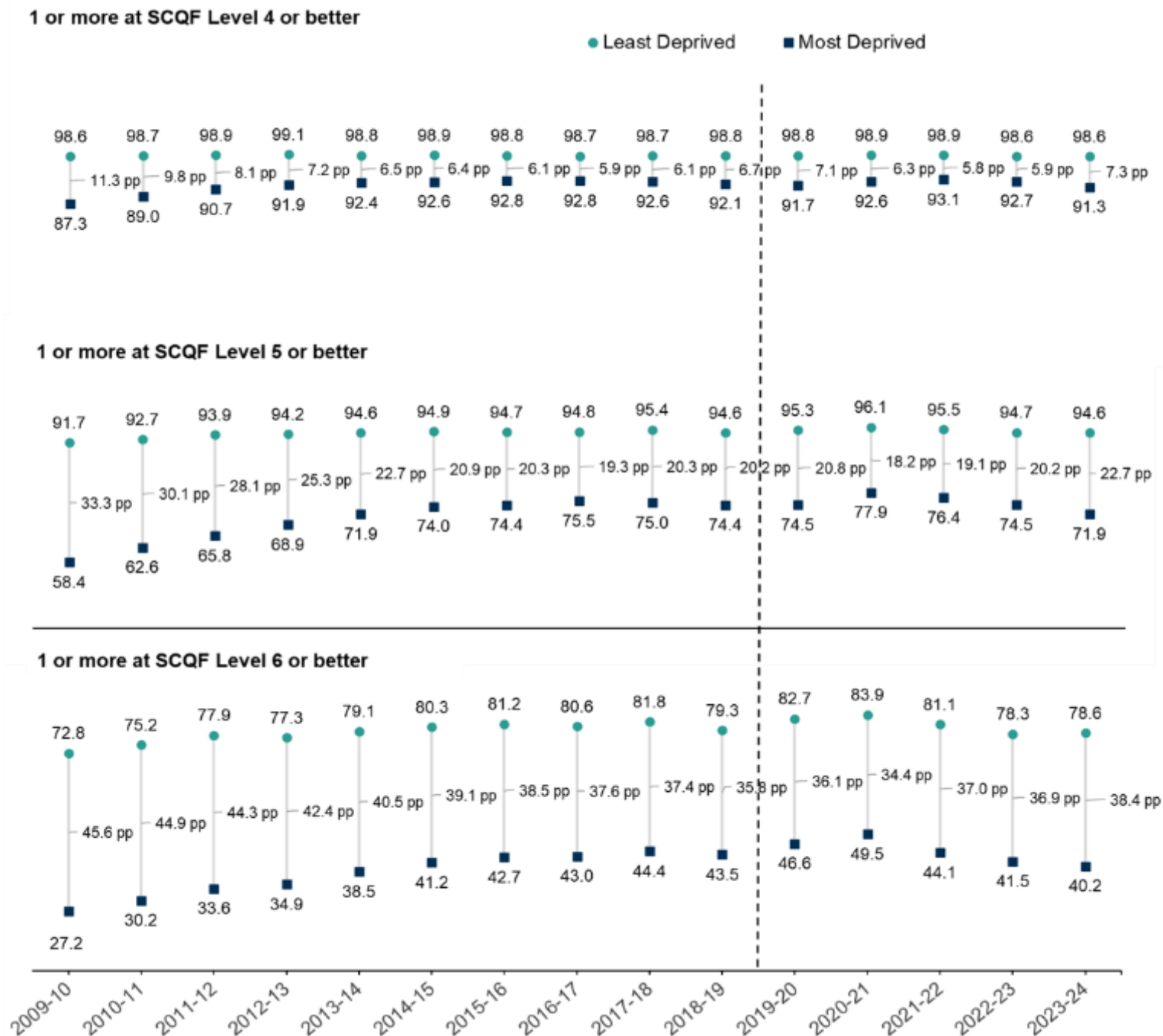
National Qualifications Measure



The attainment gap in national qualifications was at its **narrowest** in 2020/21 and 2021/22

The National Qualifications Measure relate to attainment in National Courses (e.g. National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher) and Skills for Work.

The poverty-related attainment gap between leavers from the most deprived and least deprived areas was at its narrowest at Level 4 or better in 2021/22 and at Level 5 or better and Level 6 or better in 2020/21.



School leaver attainment - Looked After Children

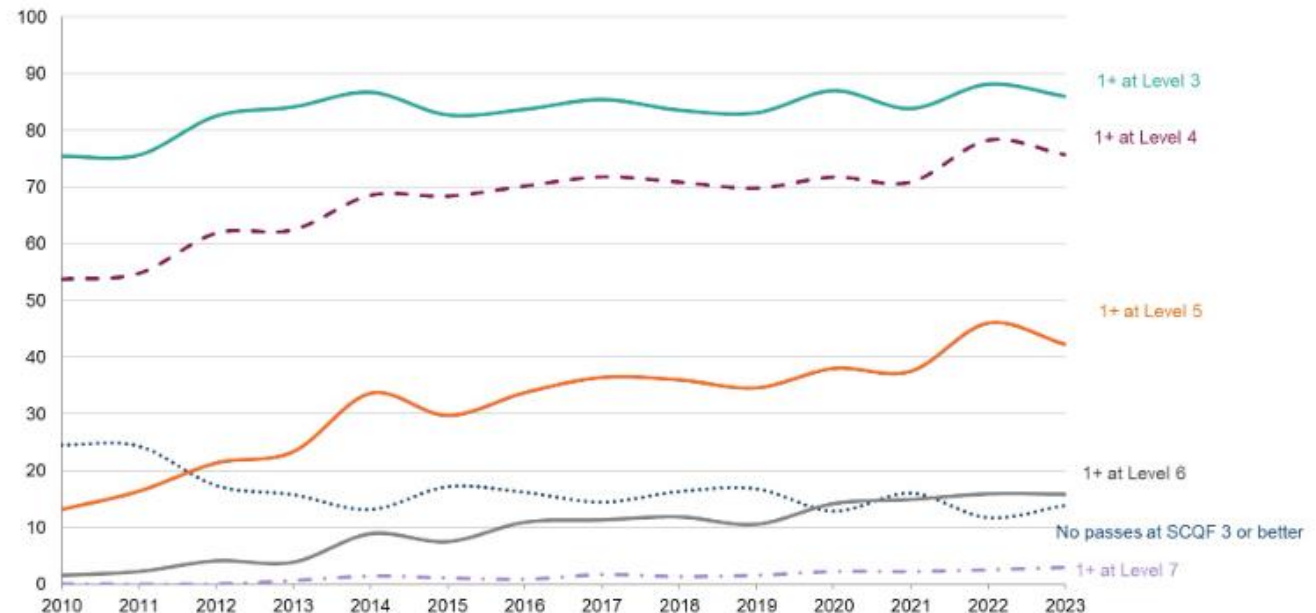
Attainment for school leavers who were looked after within the year has increased since 2009/10 at all levels but dropped slightly in 2022/23.

The gap between looked after leavers and all children in qualifications has also decreased. At SCQF Level 5 or better, the gap reduced from 63.9 percentage points in 2009/10 to 42.5 percentage points in 2022/23.

The gap in attainment between care-experienced and all pupils is lower for those children whose care experience ended at a younger age (before secondary school), and highest for those who were looked after in the last year.

There was a **three-fold increase** in looked after leavers achieving at least one qualification at SCQF Level 5 in 2022/23 compared to 2009/10

Percentage with qualifications



School leaver attainment

All SCQF Measure

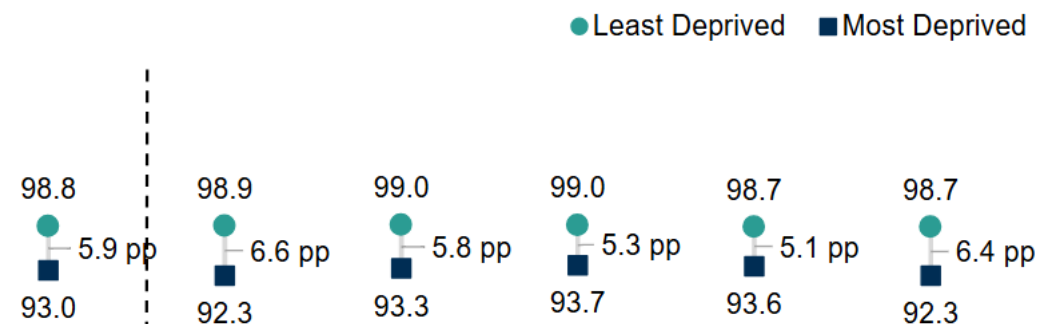


The 'All SCQF Qualifications' measure includes National Qualifications, plus qualifications such as Skills for Work Award, National Progression Award, and Scottish Vocational Qualification.

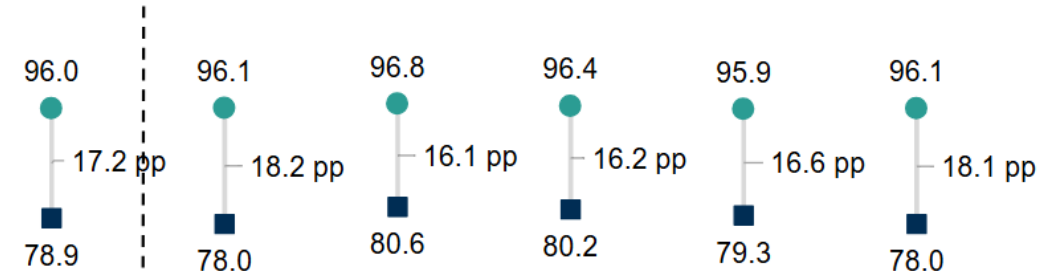
The attainment gap is **narrower** under the wider All SCQF measure than the National Qualification Measure. This indicates that learners from the most deprived areas are relatively more likely to attain at wider qualifications.

SCQF level	National Qualifications Measure	All SCQF Measure
Level 4 or better	5.9pp	5.1 pp
Level 5 or better	20.2pp	16.6pp
Level 6 or better	36.9pp	31.5pp

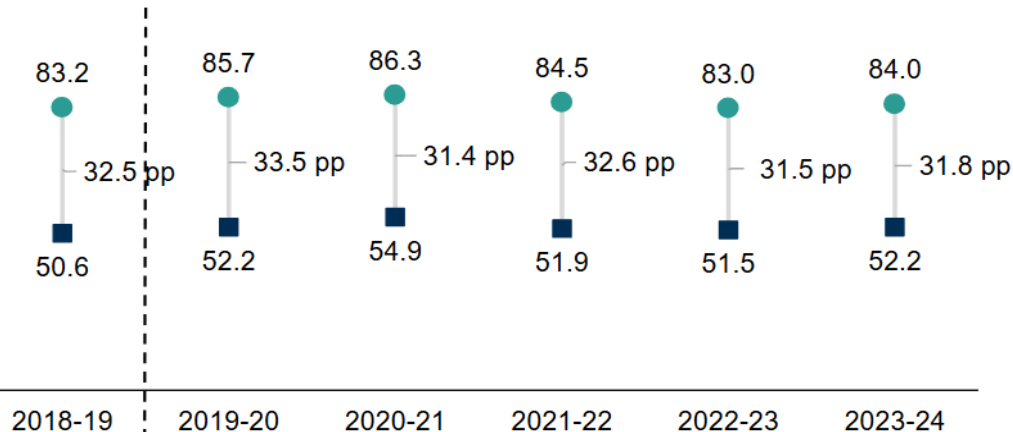
1 or more at SCQF Level 4 or better



1 or more at SCQF Level 5 or better



1 or more at SCQF Level 6 or better



PISA

Programme for International
Student Assessment



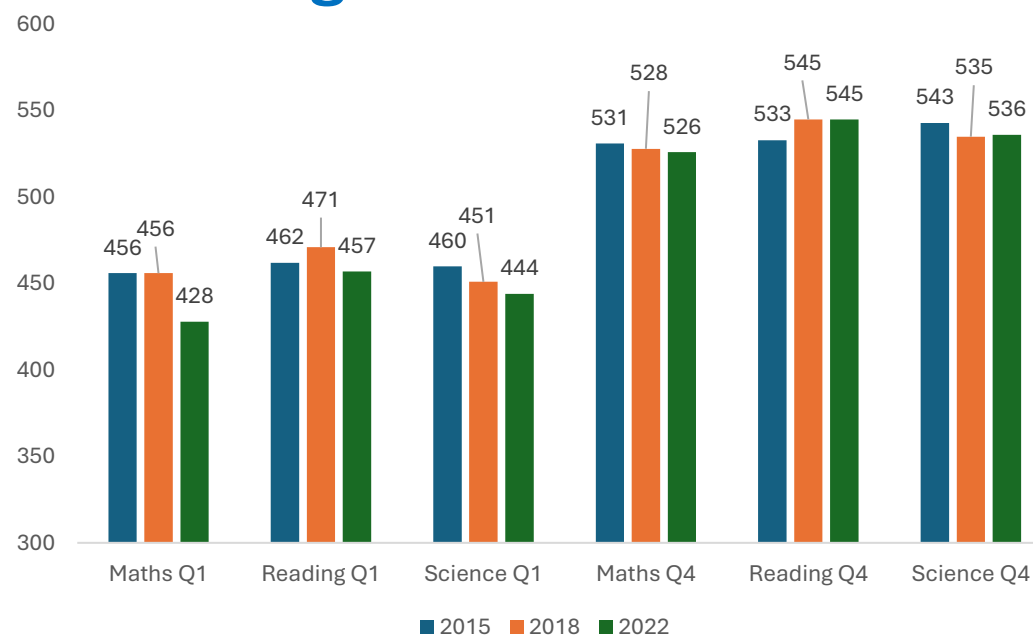
PISA is an international assessment of 15-year olds' skills in mathematics, reading and science, which are necessary to participate in society.

In PISA, a student's socio-economic status is measured by the Index of **Economic, Social and Cultural Status (ESCS)**. This is based on information from the student questionnaire around parents' highest level of education and occupational status, and home possessions.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

PISA 2022 scores for the most disadvantaged students were lower than in PISA 2018, but scores for advantaged students were similar



PISA scores by ESCS 2015-2022
(Q1 = most disadvantaged quarter; Q4 = least disadvantaged)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Positive Destinations

School leaver initial destinations

Annual Participation Measure (APM)

Widening Access to Higher Education

Longitudinal Educational Outcomes

Census 2022

Summary

Positive destinations



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The poverty-related gap in positive destinations has **narrowed** since 2015/16. An increasing proportion of pupils from the most deprived areas of Scotland have higher education as a post-school destination, with a **record number of students from deprived and care experienced backgrounds in higher education.**

- The poverty-related gap in positive destinations has **narrowed** since 2015/16
- The poverty-related gap in 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment has **narrowed** since 2016
- A **record** number of students from the most deprived areas of Scotland entered higher education in 2021/22
- However, after five years, graduates from more deprived backgrounds have **lower** earnings than those from less deprived backgrounds, influenced by course and institution choices

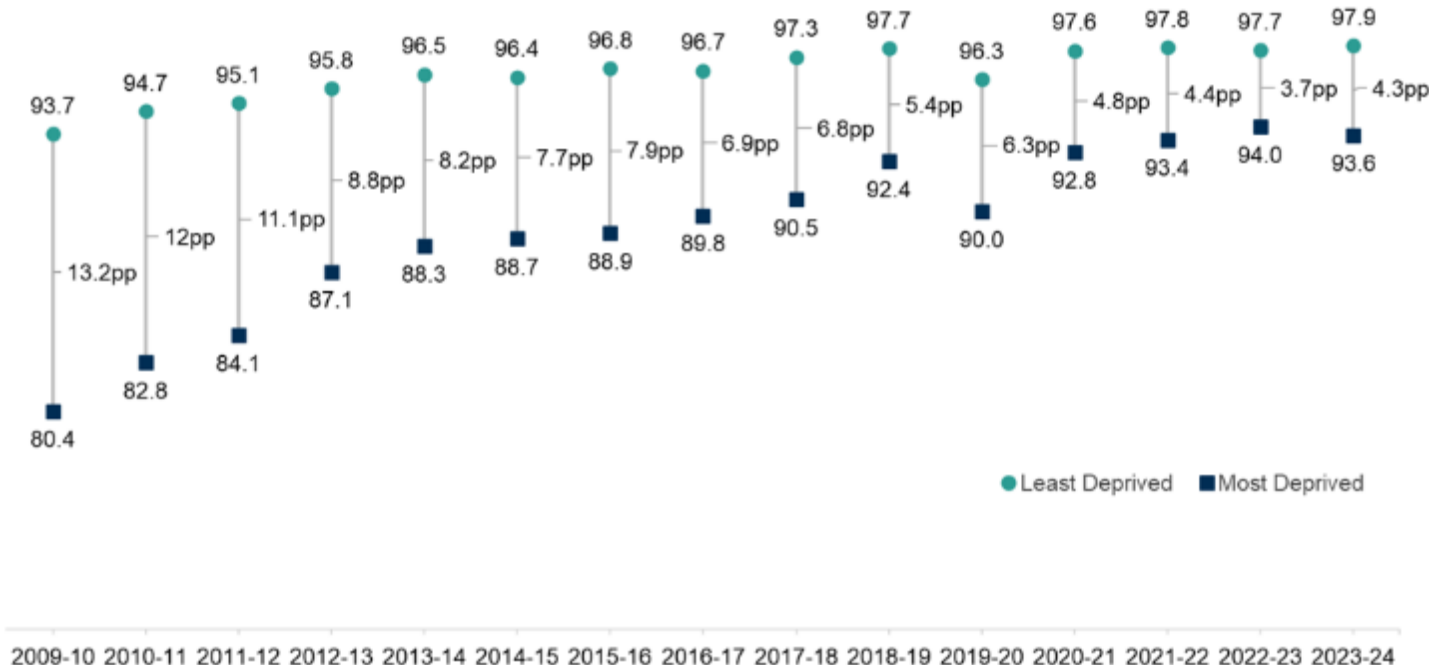


School leaver initial destinations



The poverty-related gap in positive destinations has **narrowed** since 2015/16

Percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination, By SIMD, 2018-19 to 2022-23



Overall, the percentage of school leavers in a positive initial destination has **increased**, from 93.5% in 2015/16 to 95.7% in 2023/24.

93.6% of school leavers from the most deprived areas were in a positive destination in 2023/24 compared to 88.9% in 2015/16 and 80.4% in 2009/10.

School leaver initial destinations



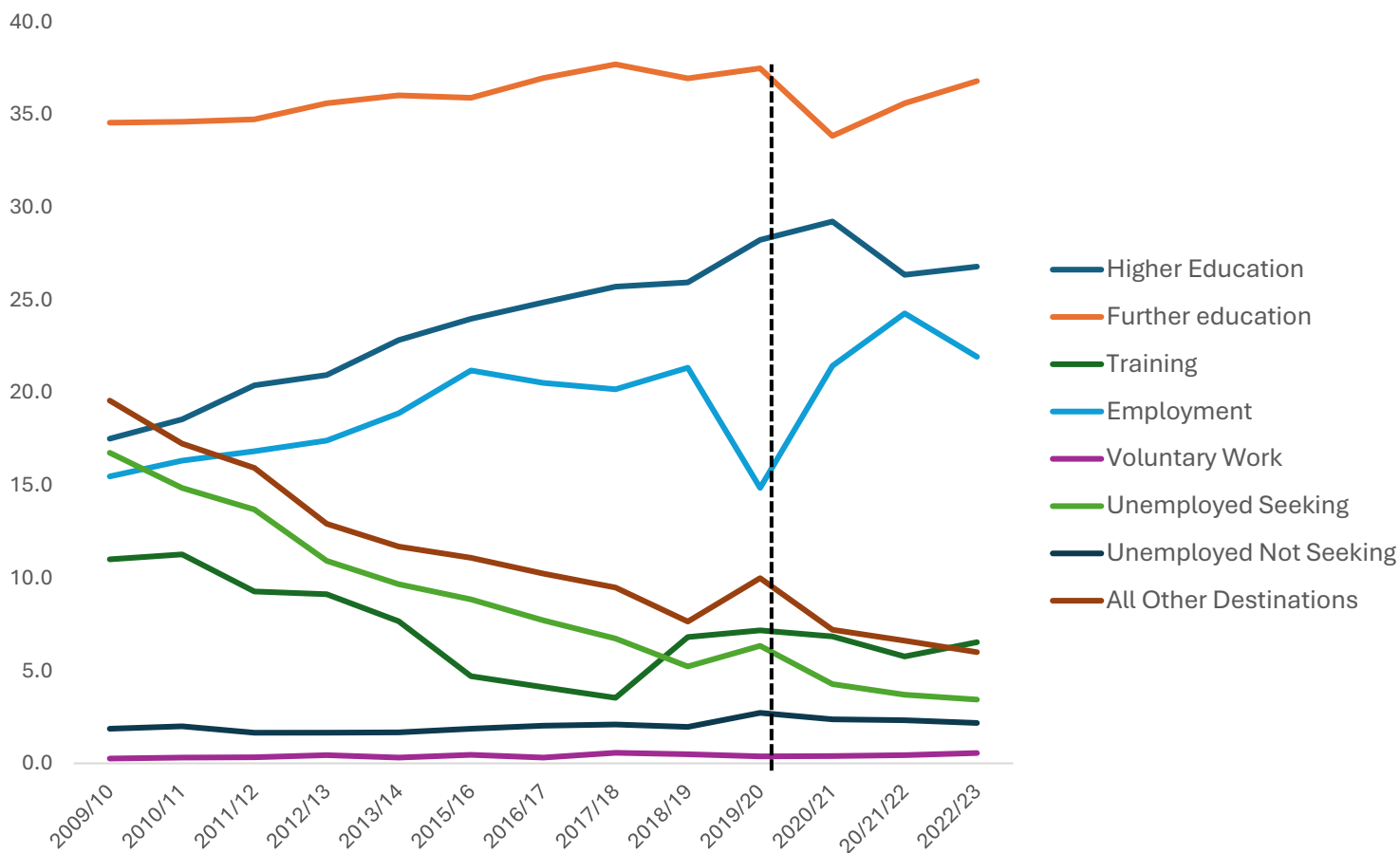
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Higher education is a post-school destination for an **increasing** proportion of pupils from the most deprived areas

One in four pupils from SIMD1 are in higher education as an initial destination after leaving school compared to **one in six** in 2009/10.

The gap between the most and least deprived pupils in higher education as an initial destination decreased by **2.9 percentage points** between 2016/17 and 2022/23.

Percentage of SIMD 1 (most deprived) secondary school leavers by initial destination category, 2009-10 to 2022-23



School leaver destinations

Looked After Children



The proportion of looked after leavers in a positive initial destination increased from 58.1% to 86.4% since 2009/10, while the proportion in a positive follow-up destination increased from 42.0% to 71.1%. However, in 2022/23, looked after leavers continue to be less likely to be in a positive initial or follow-up destination than all school leavers (95.9% and 92.8% respectively).

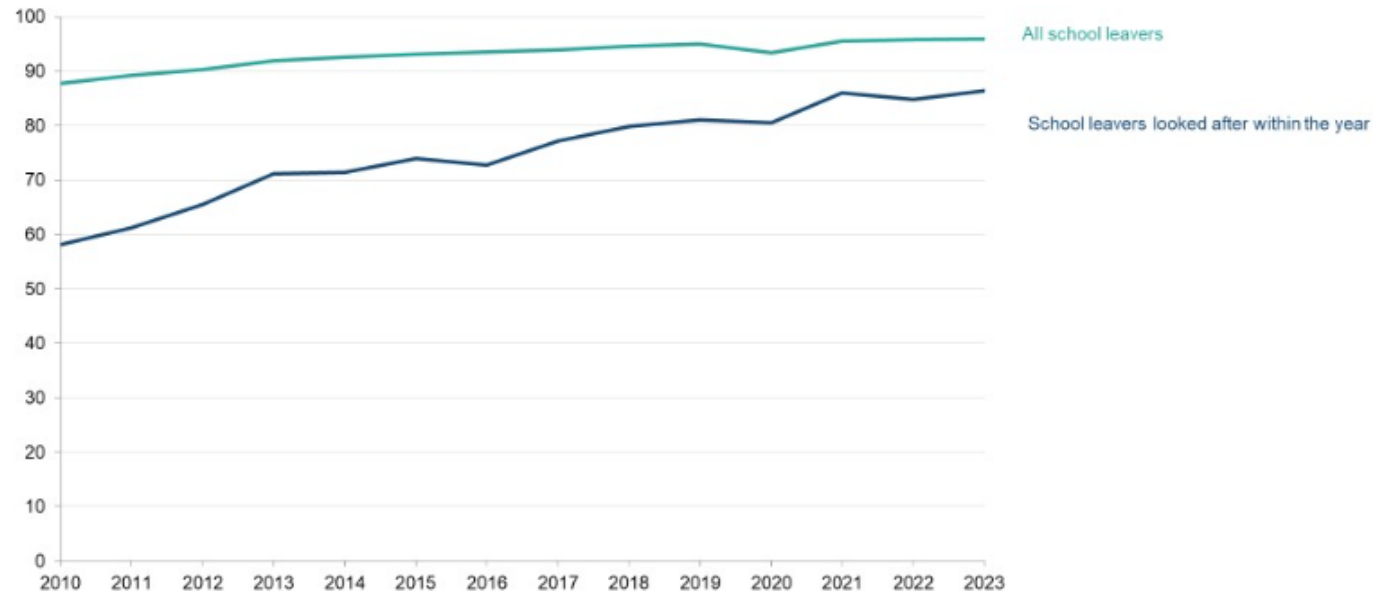
In 2022/23, the gap between the proportion of leavers looked after within the year going on to Higher Education as an initial destination compared to all school leavers was 31.7 percentage points. This is the smallest the gap has been and down compared with 2021/22 (33.2 percentage points) and in pre-pandemic 2018/19 (35.1 percentage points)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Since 2009-10, the proportion of leavers looked after within the year who were in a positive destination after leaving school has increased

Percentage in positive destinations

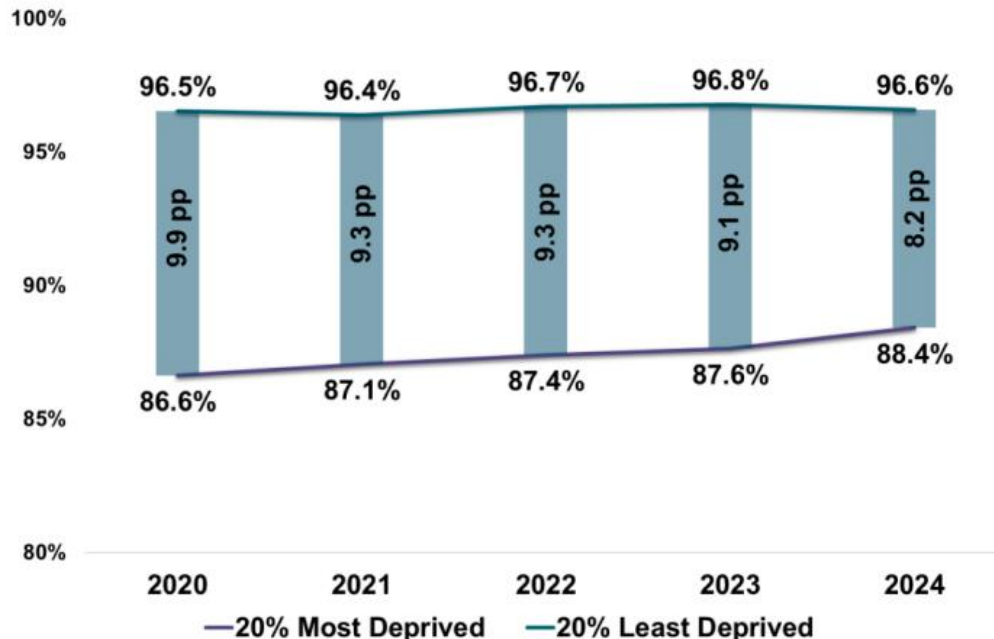


Annual Participation Measure (APM)



The poverty-related gap for 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment has **narrowed** since 2016

Participation gap between pupils from the 20% most deprived areas and 20% least deprived areas



In 2024 there was an 8.2 pp gap in participation between 16-19 year olds living in the 20% most deprived and those living in the 20% least deprived areas, **the narrowest gap on record.**

There was a 0.8 pp increase in participation between 2023 and 2024 for those living in SIMD 1. All other SIMD quintiles saw decreased participation rates compared to 2023.

Higher Education



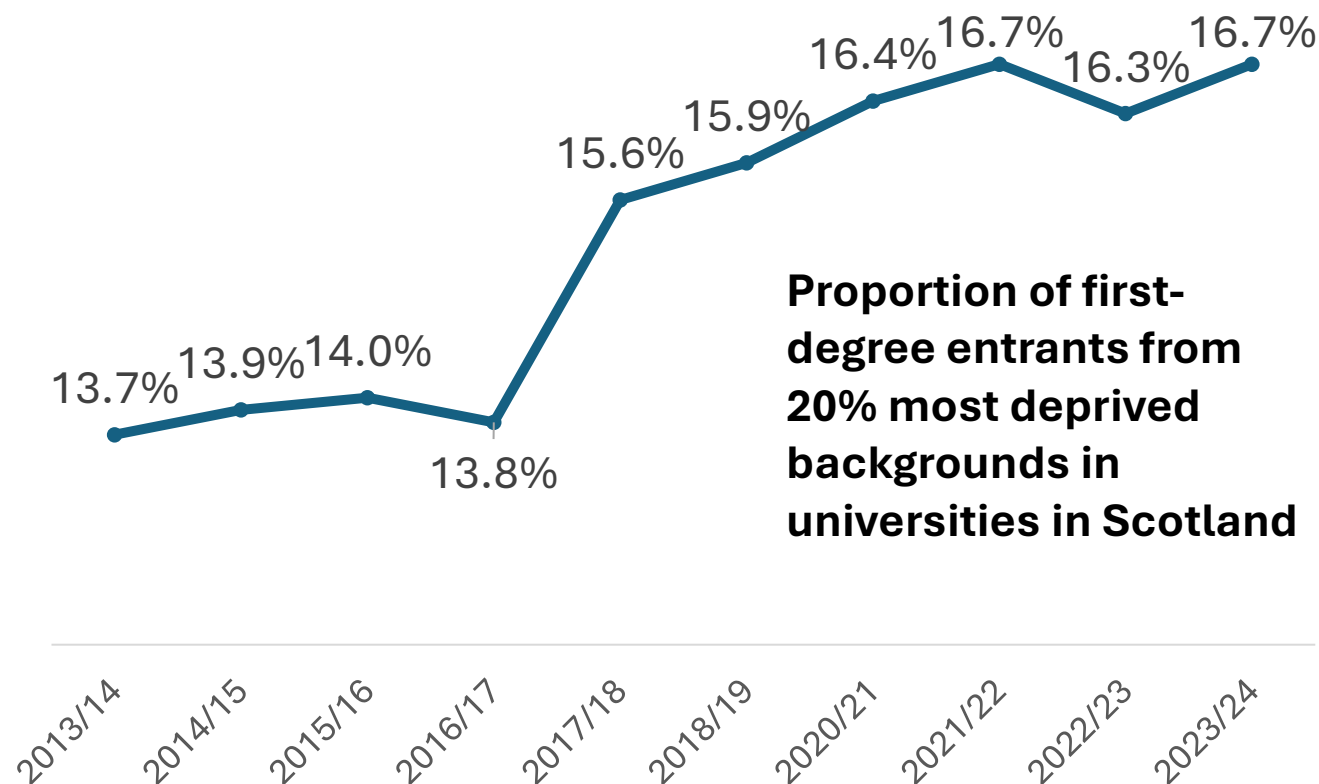
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Commission on Widening Access recommended in 2016 that, by 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of full-time, first-degree entrants to Higher Education. Interim targets of 16% by 2021 and 18% by 2026 were also set.

The **highest** ever number of entrants from Scotland's most deprived areas was achieved in 2021/22 (5,595). There was also a **record** number of Care Experienced entrants to full time first degrees in 2022/23 (585).

The increase in proportion of SIMD 1 entrants in universities is due to a higher increase in participation among **women** than for men.

A record number of students from the most deprived areas entered higher education in 2021/22



Longitudinal Educational Outcomes



The **Longitudinal Education Outcomes** (LEO) data is a recently developed database from the Department for Education (DfE), which contains information on labour market outcomes for learners from schools, colleges and universities.

For **first degree graduates**, it shows that earnings decrease with each SIMD quintile, from the highest earnings in SIMD 5 to the lowest earnings in SIMD 1.

The differences in earnings between quintiles may be partially explained by **subject choice** and **higher education institution**.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

After five years, graduates from more deprived backgrounds have **lower earnings** than those from less deprived backgrounds



Scotland's Census 2022



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Analysis of Census data by the Fraser of Allander Institute found that, between 2011 and 2022, the proportion of adults in Scotland that:

- Did not have any educational or professional qualifications **decreased**
- Had a degree level qualification or above **increased**

The gap between adults living in deprived and non-deprived areas:

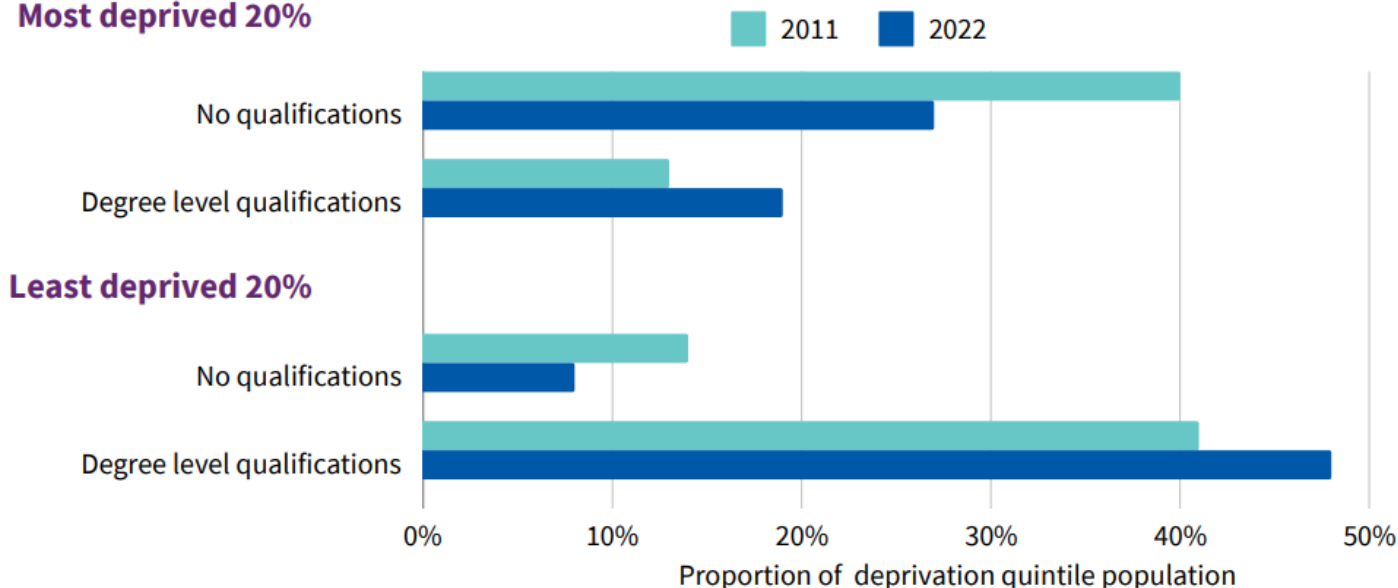
- Without any qualifications **narrowed**
- With degree level qualifications or above **widened**

In the most deprived areas, the proportion of people without education/professional qualifications **reduced** by 13 percentage points, while the proportion with degree level qualifications **increased** by 5 percentage points.

The proportion of people living in deprived areas who had no qualifications **decreased** between 2011 and 2022

Area deprivation and qualifications

Most deprived 20%



Health and Wellbeing



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Attitudes towards and experiences of school

Life at home

Summary

Health and Wellbeing



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Evidence sources indicate a **poverty-related health and wellbeing gap**, particularly for pupils between **S1 and S3**. There is evidence that **Covid-19** may have had a **disproportionate impact on the health and wellbeing of those from more deprived areas**

- The Growing Up in Scotland survey found that, at entry to primary school and at age 8, children in lowest income groups were **more** likely to have **high levels of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties**
- The Health and Wellbeing Census found that the mental health gap between the most and least deprived pupils was lowest in P5 and **highest between S1 and S3**.
- The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Study in 2022 found that the wellbeing gap between low and high affluence pupils has **increased over time**, particularly between 2018 and 2022.
- The evidence suggests that pupils from more deprived areas were **less** likely to have a high level of **support from parents/carers, trusted adults, and peers**.



Early Years



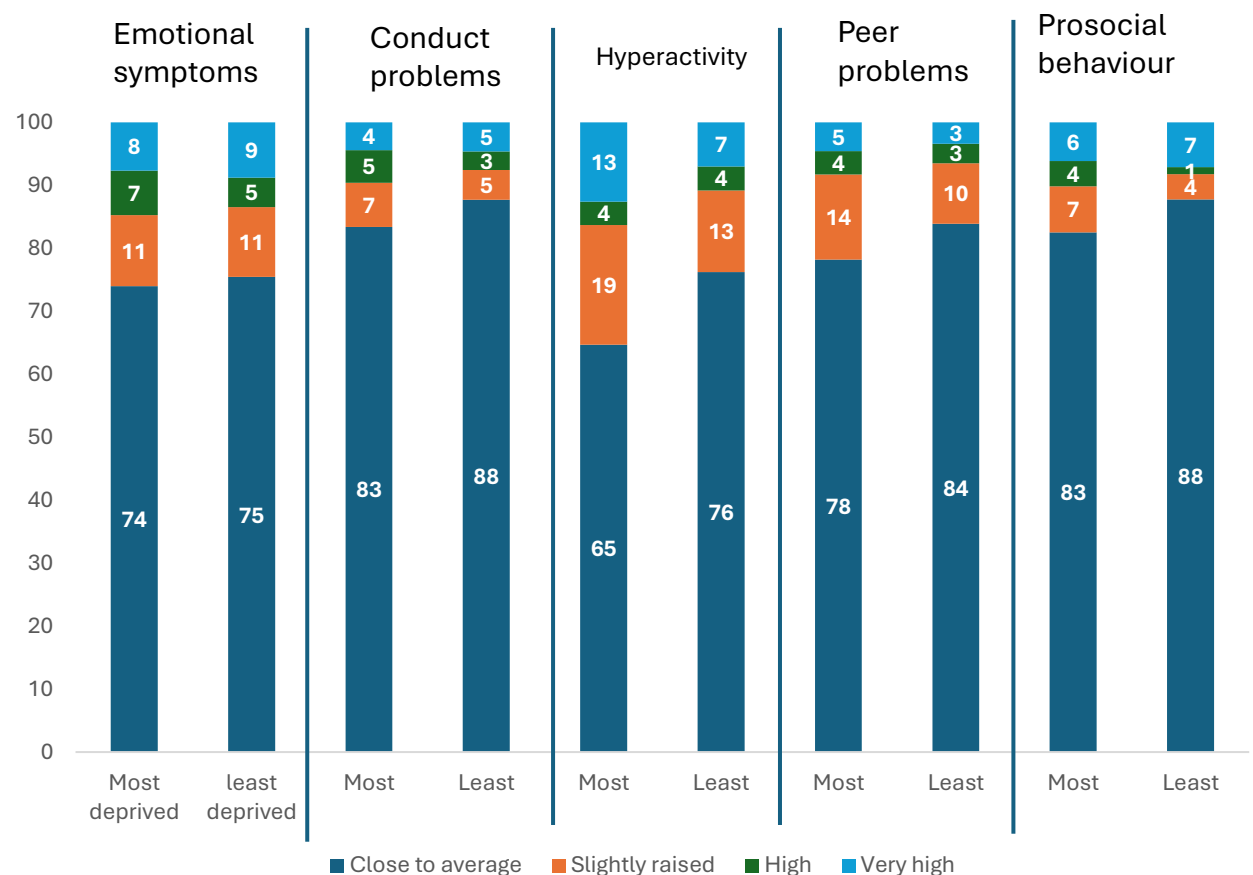
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The **Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare** reports on child health and development of 4 and 5 year olds who are accessing funded ELC.

The **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** is a commonly used behavioural screening questionnaire for use with children age 2 to 16. Area deprivation was significantly associated with SDQ total difficulties score, with children living in the most deprived areas less likely than those living elsewhere to be assessed as close to average (74% compared with 80%). Of the individual SDQ domains, **hyperactivity** was the only one where a significant difference by area deprivation was observed.

Boys living in the most deprived areas were least likely to score close to average for hyperactivity (58% compared with 64% of boys living elsewhere and 82% of all girls). One in five (18%) boys in the most deprived areas had a 'very high' score on the hyperactivity domain.

At ages 4 and 5, **hyperactivity** was the only domain with a difference by area deprivation



SDQ domain scores by most/least deprived areas

Mental Health and Wellbeing



The **Growing Up in Scotland** survey found that, at entry into primary school and at age 8, children in the lowest income group were more likely to have high levels of **social, emotional and behavioural difficulties** and to have **lower life satisfaction**.

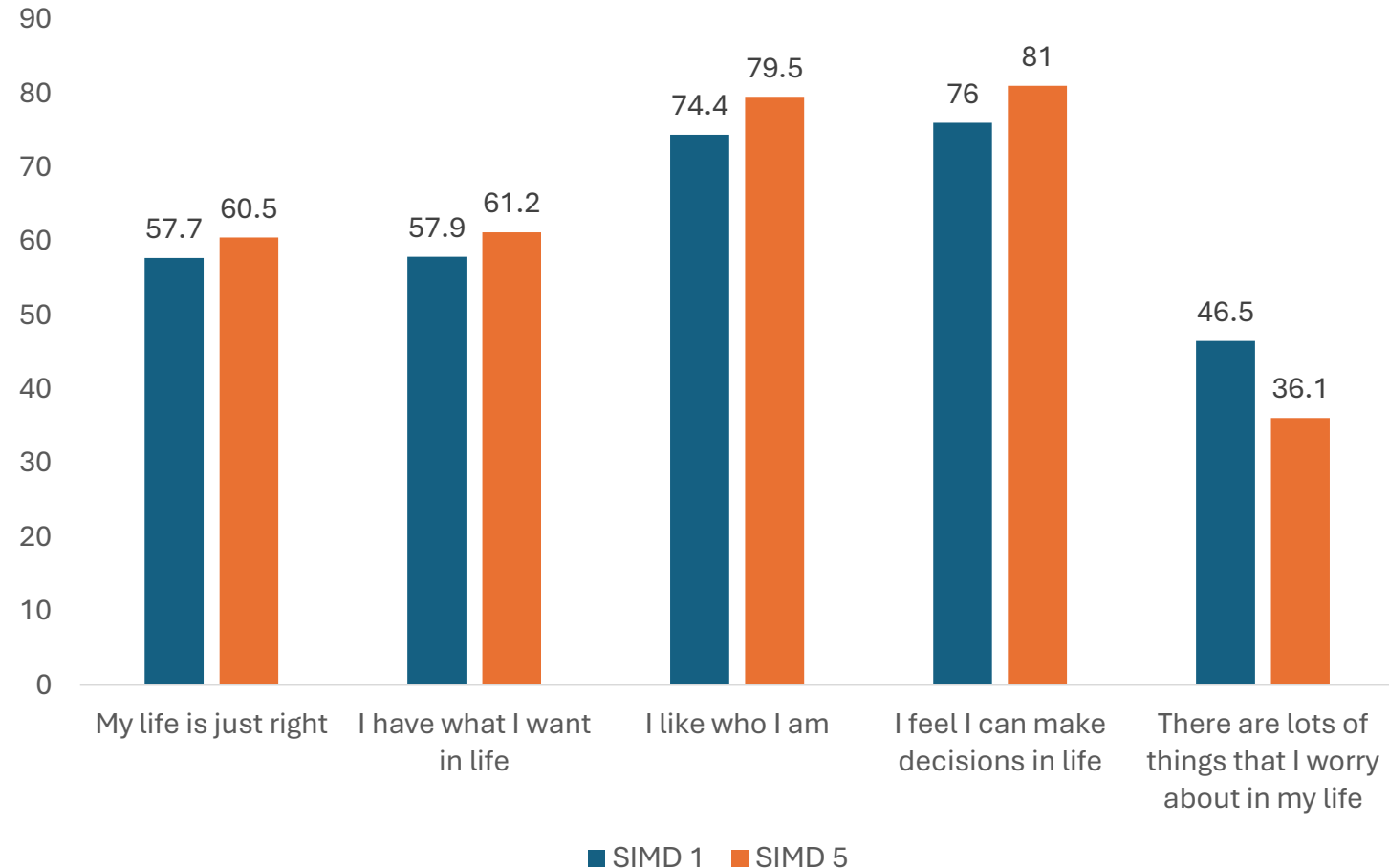


The **Health and Wellbeing Census** found that pupils from SIMD 1 were less likely than those in SIMD 5 to agree that '**my life is just right**' and that '**I have what I want in life**'. The gap between SIMD 1 and SIMD 5 on each statement is lowest in P5 and highest between S1 and S3.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The wellbeing gap between most and least deprived is **highest** between S1 and S3



Mental Health and Wellbeing (2)



The **Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Study** was undertaken by the University of Glasgow in 2022 with a nationally representative sample of 4,388 pupils.

The HBSC study uses the **Family Affluence Scale (FAS)** which is a composite measure of material wealth used as a socio-economic proxy for family wealth.

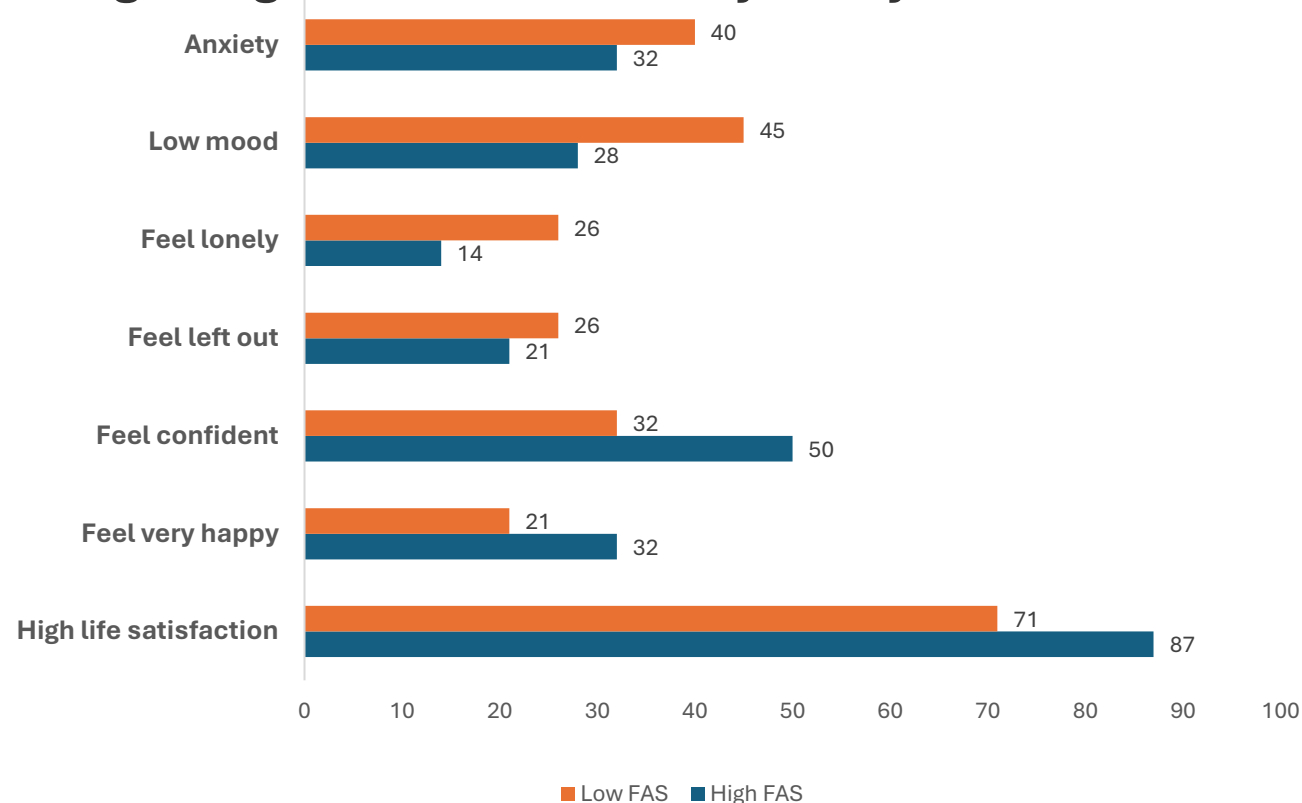
Those in the **lowest family affluence group** were more likely to feel lonely, have a higher level of stress on average, be classified as having low mood/risk of depression and less likely to report a high life satisfaction.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

On nearly all measures, more **negative mental health outcomes** were **associated with lower affluence**

% agreeing to each statement by family affluence



Mental health and wellbeing – long term trends



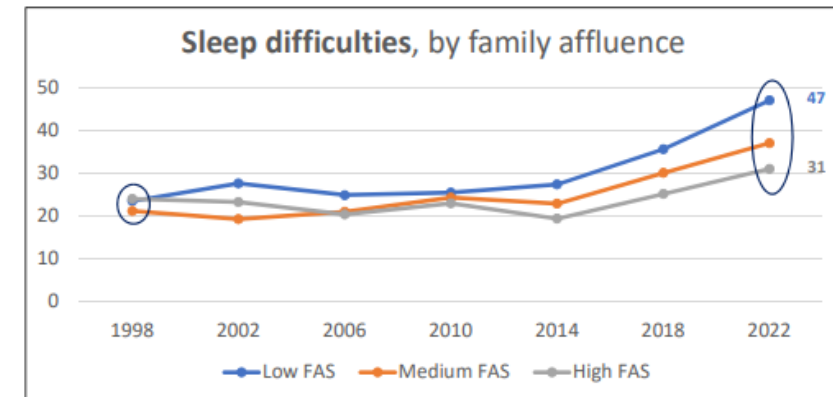
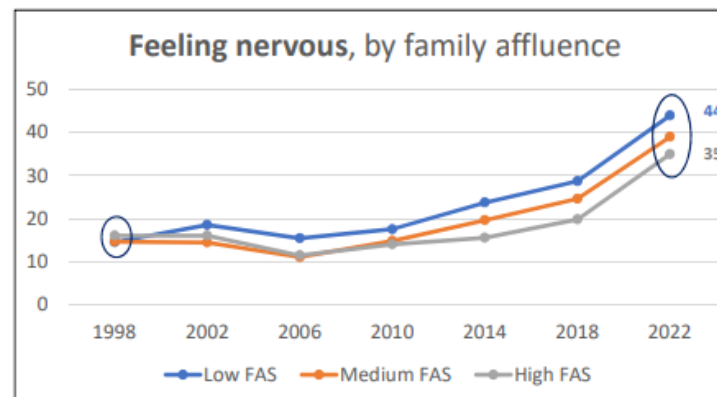
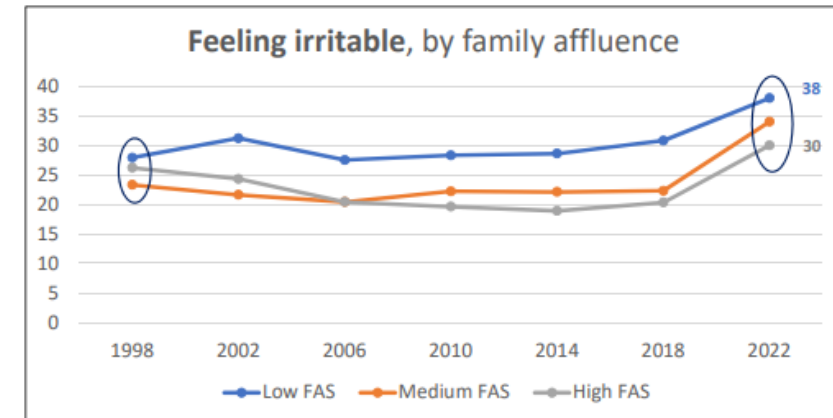
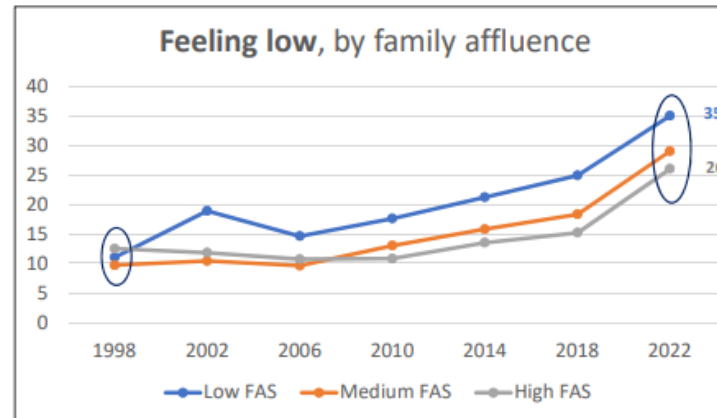
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Using data from the HBSC survey, researchers investigated changes in psychological health complaints over a **24-year period from 1998 and 2022**.

The HBSC Symptom Checklist is a non-clinical measure including four psychological measures. Students reported how often they experienced each symptom over the last six months.

There was evidence of widening inequalities in mental health, with **the gap between low affluence adolescents and their high affluence peers increasing over time for each psychological symptom, particularly between 2018 and 2022**.

The wellbeing gap between low and high affluence adolescents has **increased** over time



Attitudes towards and experiences of school



The **Health and Wellbeing Census** found that pupils from the most deprived areas were **less** likely than those in the least deprived areas to agree that:

- I enjoy learning new things
- Most of the time I am happy at school
- I feel positive about my future

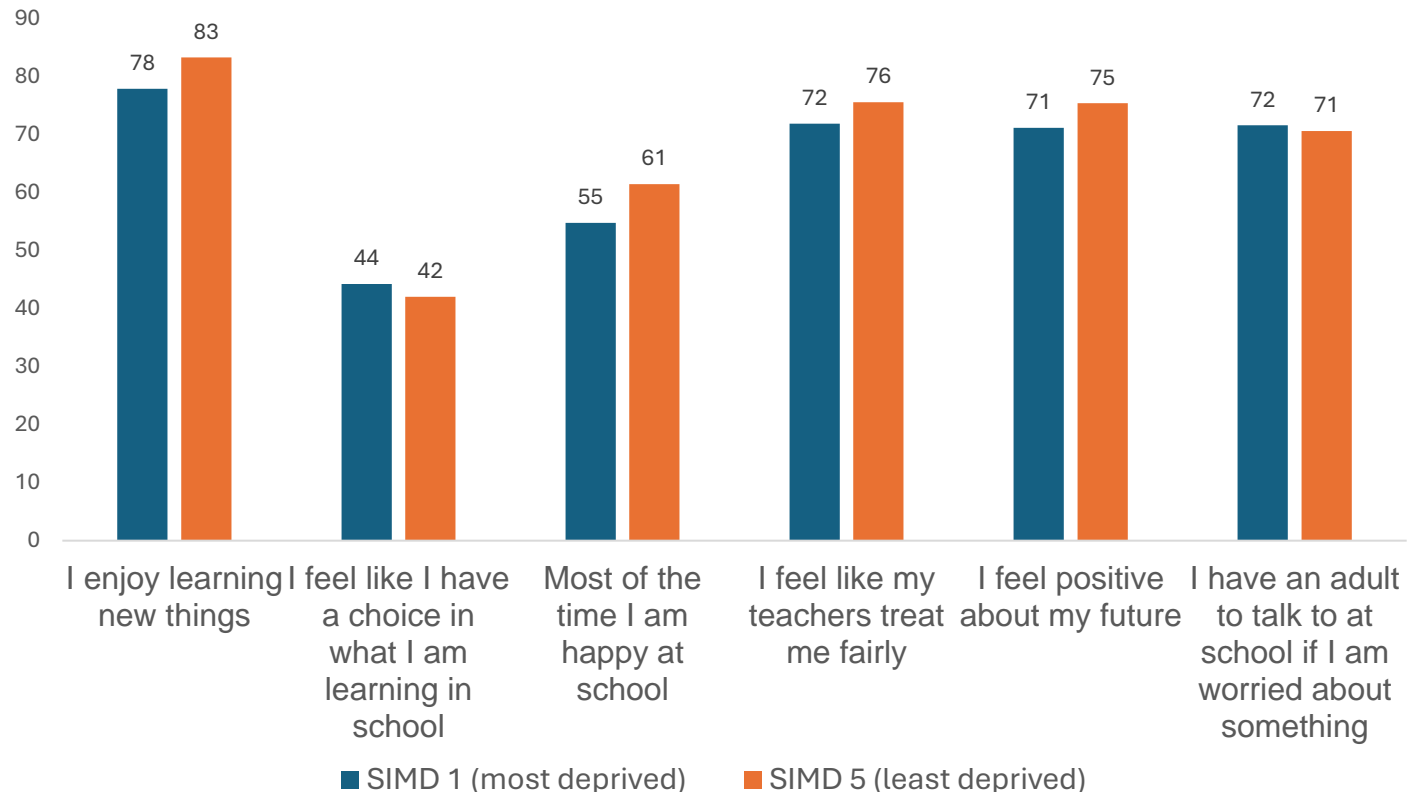
The **gap** between pupils from most deprived and least deprived areas agreeing to each statement is **lowest in P5** and **highest between S1 and S3**.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The gap between most and least deprived pupils being **happy at school** is widest between **S1 and S3**

% agreeing to each statement



Attitudes towards and experiences of school (2)



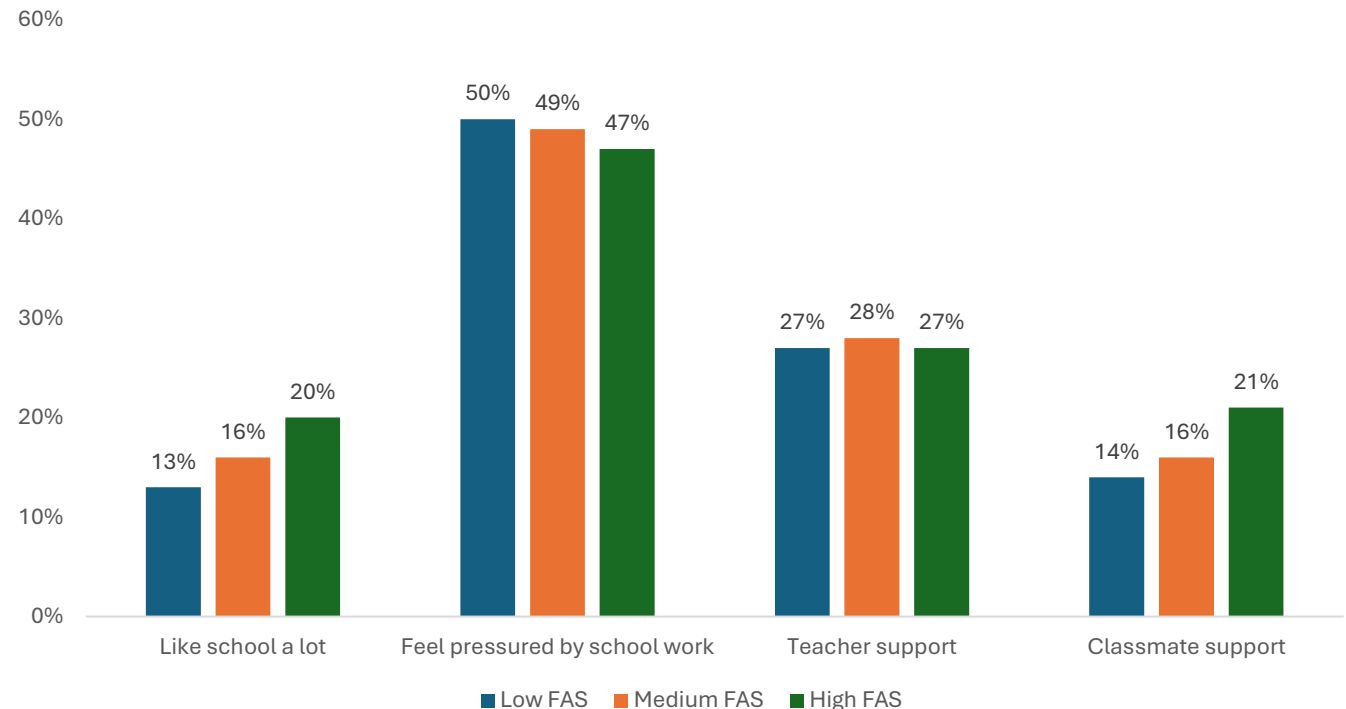
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Study includes analysis by the **Family Affluence Scale (FAS)**, which is a composite measure of material wealth used as a socioeconomic proxy for family wealth in youth surveys.

Young people from more affluent families were more likely to say they liked school a lot and to report high- support from classmates, but there was no association between family affluence and schoolwork pressure, school-related stress or teacher support.

On most measures, there was **no association** between affluence and experiences of school in the HBSC survey

% agreeing to each statement by family affluence

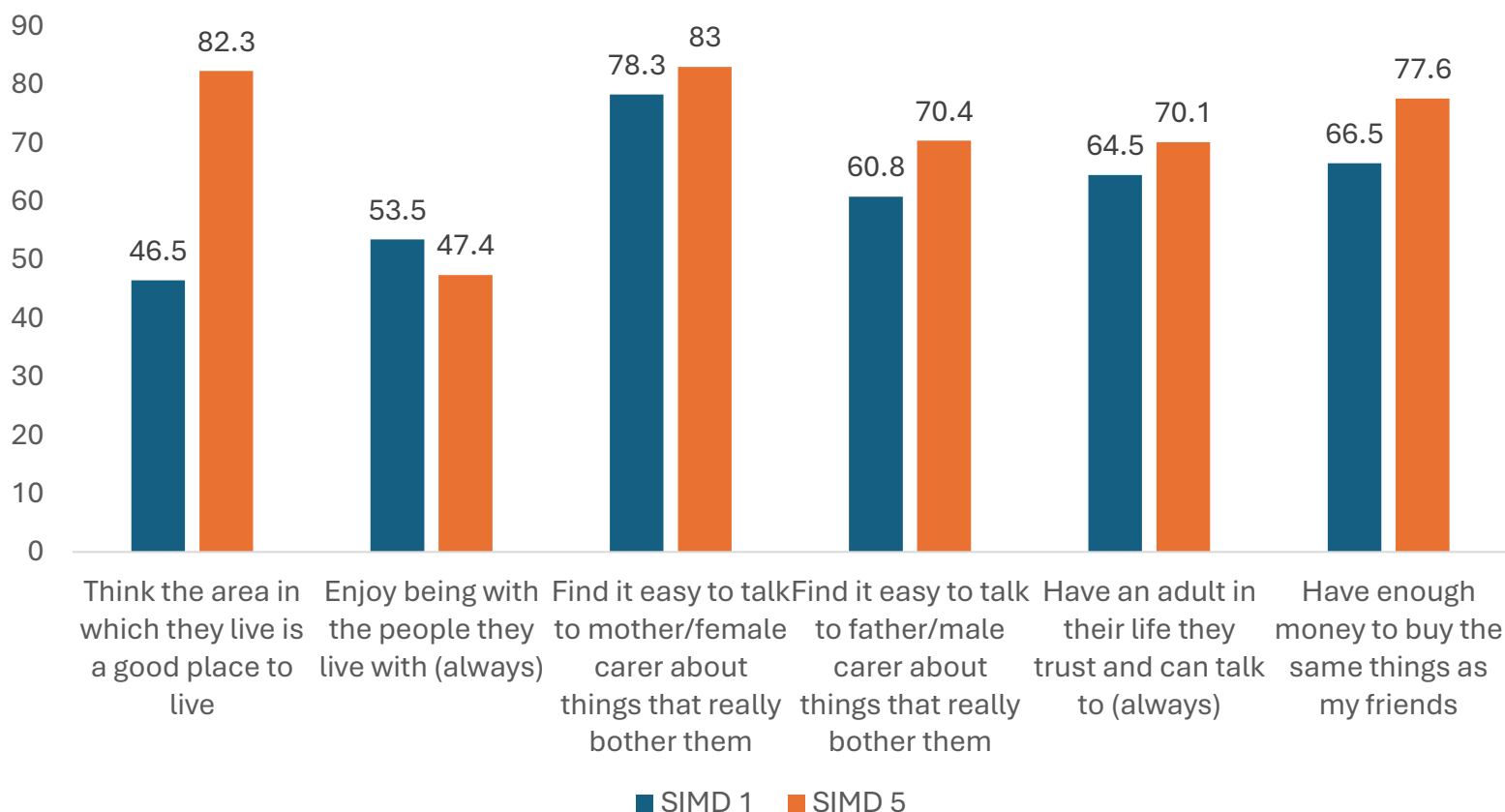




Pupils living in SIMD 1 were less likely to think their area is a good place to live, but more likely to enjoy being with the people they live with

The **Health and Wellbeing Census** found that pupils from SIMD 1 were **less** likely than those in SIMD 5 to agree that:

- I feel safe in the area where I live
- The area where I live is a good place to live
- It is easy to talk to parents/carers about things that really both you and I
- I have enough money to buy the same things as my friends



Life at home (2)

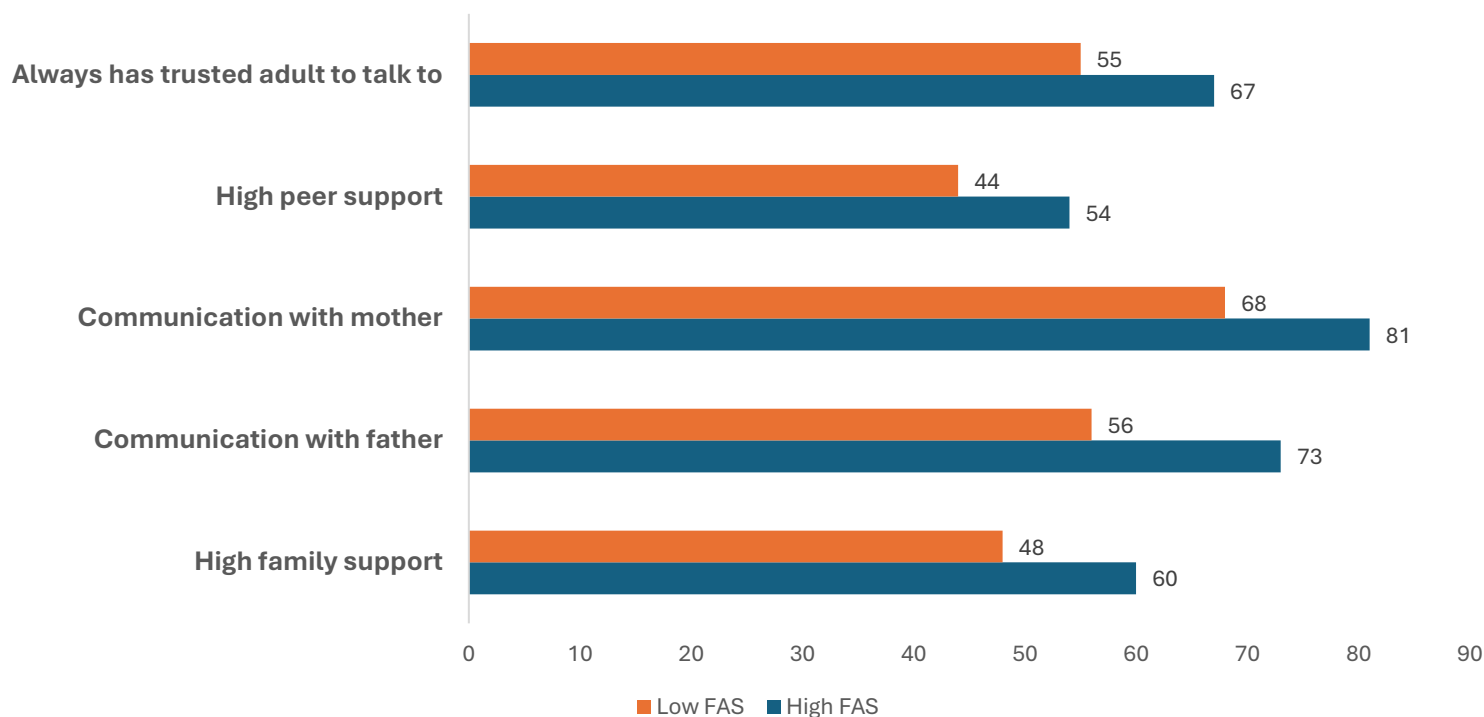
The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC) Scotland Study asked pupils about their relationships with family and peers.

All the measures of relationships and support showed a significant association with family affluence.

Young people from higher affluence families were more likely to report higher family support, easier communication with father and mother, higher peer support and were more likely to have a trusted adult they can always speak to.

Pupils from less affluent families were **less** likely to report positive relationships and support from families and peers

% agreeing to each statement by family affluence



Bullying



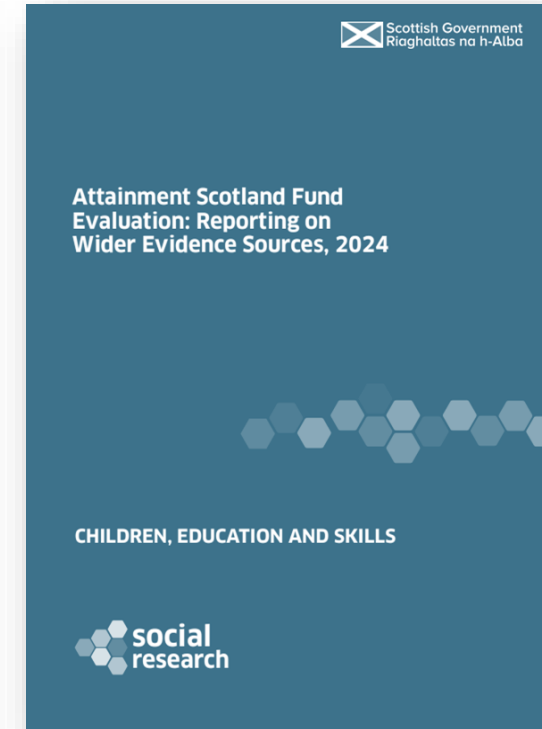
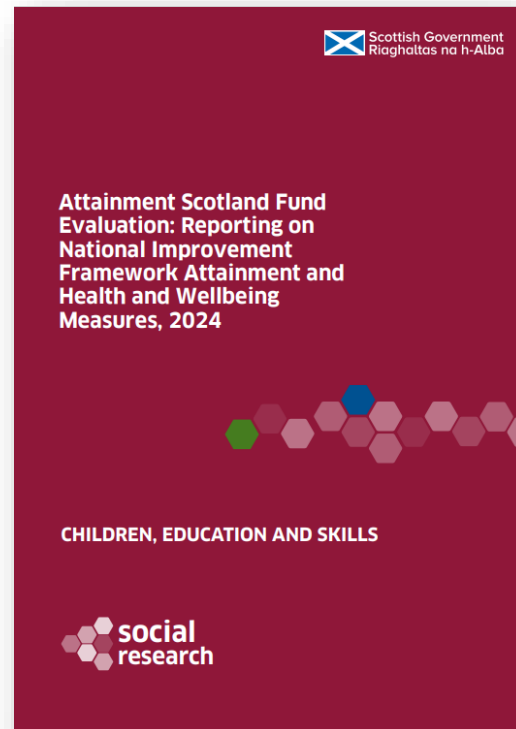
Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The **Health and Wellbeing Census** asked pupils about their experiences of bullying, including where the bullying took place:

- Pupils living in SIMD 1 (34%) were more likely than those in SIMD 5 (26%) to report having been bullied in the last year
- Pupils living in SIMD 1 who reported being bullied were more likely than those living in SIMD 5 to report being bullied '**online**' or '**somewhere else**', but less likely to report being bullied in school
- Pupils living in SIMD 1 (18.1%) reported that other children pick on them by sending emails, messaging, or posting something online, at least once per week. This compares to 12.2% of pupils living in SIMD 5.

Pupils living in the most deprived areas were more likely to report being bullied outside of school or online than those living in the least deprived areas

Conclusion



Contact: Keith Dryburgh, Principal Researcher, Scottish Government: keith.dryburgh@gov.scot