

## School Leaver Performance Data Background Information

### Sources of data

The measures presented on Parentzone Scotland come from Insight. They draw on data collected by Scottish Government, Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other awards providers. The data are already collected and processed for other uses, such as publications of National Statistics.

The **Pupil Census** is an annual collection of data by Scottish Government about pupils in Scottish schools in September. Information about young people in the senior phase (S4-S6) from the census is used for the measures shown on Parentzone Scotland. It includes the young people's schools, stage, gender, additional support needs and the concentration of deprivation in the area in which they live.

**Attainment data** is provided by SQA and other award providers. The attainment measures focus on best achievement when leaving school and recognise wider awards by including a range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit-rated awards and learning programmes. In order to be included in Insight, individual awards must be SCQF credit-rated, fit in with the Curriculum for Excellence principles, and meet the Insight technical requirements. Only qualifications achieved in the senior phase are included. The attainment data included in these measures takes account of any changes in result arising from SQA's appeals (pre-2014) or review process (2014 onwards).

**Information about school leavers** is captured by the School (Initial) Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) collected by Skills Development Scotland and shows their destination in October of each year. Skills Development Scotland also collects 'follow-up school leaver destination' data and this is published in the annual 'Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations and Healthy Living' publication in the following June.

Data from the Pupil Census, SQA, other award providers and SLDR is combined to create the measures on Insight which are presented on Parentzone Scotland.

### Definitions

#### Virtual Comparator

The virtual comparator allows you to compare the performance of school leavers from your school with a benchmark made up of school leavers from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the school leavers in your school.

This is helpful because it allows a comparison based on school leavers who are like yours on characteristics that are linked to educational outcomes rather than comparison with real schools which may have quite a different school leaver profile.

For each school leaver, 10 matching school leavers are randomly selected based on gender, additional support needs, stage of leaving school – S4 (including S5 winter leavers), S5 or S6 – and the social context in which they live (identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). These characteristics were selected due to their significance in explaining variation in the attainment and destinations of school leavers in Scotland. So, if your school has 20 leavers, your virtual comparator will have 200 different leavers with the same characteristics, from schools in the other 31 local authorities. Analysis revealed that four matches per target young person would have been adequate but Insight has chosen to select ten for even greater precision.

As Curriculum for Excellence continues to embed in the senior phase, it remains important that the virtual comparator continues to provide a meaningful comparison. A commitment has been made to continue to review the virtual comparator methodology, with a full review in 2016/17, once some years of Curriculum for Excellence data are available.

## **Tariff score**

The tariff score used in Parentzone Scotland has been developed specifically for Insight and is a useful way of providing a summary view of a wide range of achievement and different awards from a range of providers.

Tariff points for an award are calculated based on:

- the SCQF level of the course or unit;
- the SCQF credit points of the course or unit;
- whether the course includes an added value unit or exam; and
- the grade achieved.

As long as a qualification is on the SCQF it can be included in the tariff points calculation in this way. This means that the tariff score allows comparison of a wider range of awards than was previously available.

The total number of tariff points achieved by a learner is the sum of the tariff points for the awards they achieve, taking account of only their latest and best attainment in each subject. This means that, for example, if someone has a National 5 and a Higher in Mathematics, it is the points for the Higher award that are counted.

The average total tariff score for the school can then be calculated by averaging the total points for each learner.

The tariff score should not be viewed as the only way of measuring performance and should be considered in the context of all of the other outcome measures presented on Parentzone Scotland. The tariff scale should also not be viewed as a reflection of the value of the qualifications achieved to the individual learner.

The tariff score used in Parentzone Scotland should not be confused with the term 'tariff' as used by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) which is calculated differently and used for a very different purpose.

As Curriculum for Excellence continues to embed in the senior phase, it remains important that we continue to ensure that the tariff scale provides a useful way to look at attainment. We will consult on the need for any refinement of the tariff scale in the coming year.

## **School Leavers**

School Leavers are young people of school leaving age who left (from S4, S5 or S6) during or at the end of the school year. School leavers are identified by Skills Development Scotland's initial destinations collection and are included in the information presented in Parentzone Scotland for all young people who have both a leaver's destination record and a Pupil Census record for the same academic year (1 August to 31 July). In addition, the young person must not have a Pupil Census record in the following academic year in a senior phase stage.

A young person is not included as a leaver where they have moved out with Scotland or to another school, or if they are an S3 or adult leaver.

School leavers are recorded against the school at which they were present in the Pupil Census in September.

The cohort of leavers in Insight is slightly different to that published by Skills Development Scotland. This is because the SLDR data must be successfully matched to the Pupil Census for a young person to be counted as a leaver in Insight. Without such a match it is not possible to identify the characteristics and attainment of the young person, and so they are not included in the Insight leavers' cohort. In addition, Insight is designed to focus on the senior phase (S4-S6) of publicly funded secondary schools. SDS published data takes account of leavers from all from publicly funded schools, including S3 and adults.

Scottish Government will continue to work with data providers, including Skills Development Scotland, to further strengthen the data on which Parentzone draws.

## **Schools Covered**

Information is available for mainstream local authority and grant-aided secondary schools.

This information is not currently available for special schools and independent schools because not all of the source data required is available for these sectors.

## **School and College Attainment**

The information for each school includes qualifications which its school leavers (based at the school in the September school census) undertook in their own school, in a partner school, or in a further education college through a school-college partnership. This ensures that the school gets recognition for doing what is best for the learner.

### **Explanation of each of the measures**

All of the measures consider school leavers' achievements during the senior phase at the point of leaving school. If a young person has gained more than one qualification in a subject (i.e. Higher and National 5) only the best qualification (i.e. Highers) is included.

### **Positive Leaver Destinations**

The percentage of school leavers in an initial positive destination. The initial destination is collected approximately 3 months after leaving school. Positive destination categories are: higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment and activity agreements. Further information on these categories can be found in the background notes to the 'Summary Statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living' National Statistics publication:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Pub-SS-ALM>.

Many factors affect the destinations of leavers. Examples include the following points which should be noted:

- Increasing numbers of school leavers are taking a 'year out' before continuing their education or entering employment. Apart from young people with a deferred unconditional place for Higher Education, young people taking a 'year out' are included in the actual destination category they were in at the survey date. Details on the number of such young people may be obtained from individual schools.
- The destination of leavers from individual schools may depend partly on location. For example, in many rural and island areas, young people have to travel long distances or live away from home in order to take up courses in higher or further education.
- Economic factors may affect the availability of employment in the local area. A major construction project or the opening of an industrial enterprise may present many new opportunities. Equally, lack of local employment may encourage leavers towards further education or training.
- There may be a strong local tradition for young people either to stay on at school or to leave school as early as possible, affecting the numbers who stay on long enough to gain the necessary entrance qualifications for higher education.

### **Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy**

The percentage of school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better and SCQF level 5 or better. Full details of the qualifications which contribute to the literacy and numeracy measure presented on Parentzone Scotland can be found [here](#).

The measure is based upon the requirements for the Scottish Qualifications Authority's literacy and numeracy units at National 4 and National 5. A set of technical criteria has been developed, allowing a range of qualifications and learning programmes to be included in the measure with the key factor being that the main purpose of the qualification or learning programme is to improve literacy and / or numeracy skills and that the assessment standards are comparable to the SQA's literacy and numeracy units. In some cases, this measure also counts unit attainment where a young person has passed all of the units but may not have sat or gained an award in the final examination, e.g. in National 5 Mathematics.

Young people will be counted once in this measure, if they have achieved the required level regardless of the number of relevant qualifications they hold.

### **Attainment in the Context of Deprivation**

The average total tariff score of school leavers by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile (from quintile 1 – the group of areas in Scotland with the highest concentration of deprivation – to quintile 5 – the group of areas with the lowest concentration of deprivation).

### **Overall Attainment of School Leavers**

The average total tariff score of school leavers, separated into the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of attainers. For a particular school, the leavers are ordered according to their total tariff score in order to calculate the average tariff for the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20%. The virtual comparator is also ordered and split into categories in the same way. .

### **Awards Gained by Level – All**

The percentage of the school leavers gaining awards at SCQF levels 1 to 7. The measure includes all awards (from SQA as well as some other award providers) which have an SCQF level between 1 and 7 and have been achieved in the senior phase by school leavers. If a young person has gained more than one qualification in a subject (i.e. Higher and National 5) only the best qualification (i.e. Higher) is included.

### **Awards Gained by Level – SQA**

The percentage of the school leavers gaining SQA National awards at SCQF levels 1 to 7 at grade C or better (where graded). The measure takes account of awards achieved in the senior phase by school leavers. It counts attainment in National courses, Standard Grades, Ungraded National Courses and Skills for Work. If a

young person has gained more than one qualification in a subject (i.e. Higher and National 5) only the best qualification (i.e. Higher) is included.