

Agenda Item	10.
Report No	CLH 66/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 10 October 2019

Report Title: School Attainment Review Processes

Report By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides information about how schools analyse their exam results to plan for future improvements. The accompanying presentation will give members an overview of the Scottish Government database (Insight) that secondary schools use to carry out detailed analysis of exam results. This understanding - and the resultant engagement with schools - should allow members to better scrutinise the outcomes of their ward schools.
- 1.2 The presentation will propose to offer a members' seminar in order to explain the technicalities of the data and to seek consensus about how best to engage with this - be that committee, ward meeting or individual engagement with a school. The Professional Insight Advisor for this area has offered to come and deliver a training session for Councillors.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the work done by schools to analyse and plan improvement around their exam results.
 - ii. Note the range and type of additional attainment information available from Insight
 - iii. Agree to a seminar at which agreement can be reached about how best to use this information to allow members to carry out their scrutiny function.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource. There are no implications.
- 3.2 Legal. Access to the data and GDPR implications need to be considered in any plan to share attainment data.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural). There are no implications.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever. There are no implications.
- 3.5 Risk. There are no implications.
- 3.6 Gaelic. There are no implications.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 Every year secondary schools carry out detailed analysis of their SQA exam results. The first level of this is undertaken when schools are given the basic results data in early August. At this stage for each exam we can look at pass rates, % getting As - compared to other subjects and previous years, entry levels, and average attainment for pupils in that course. Departments, supported by senior management, will use this to review and possibly amend their delivery of that course in the new session.
- 4.2 More detailed analysis will take place once the Scottish Government's database – Insight - is updated in mid-September. At this stage the analysis is not only about individual subject performance but also about whole school performance against key measures such as literacy, numeracy, attainment of the highest and lowest 20% and analysis of the poverty related attainment gap.

5. Current Practice

- 5.1 Historically the Quality Improvement Team have had responsibility for meeting with the Head Teacher to review their exam analysis and agree improvement priorities. Changes in the structure of Highland Council's education department this year will see the transition to a new model. Last month at Improvement Family meetings (9th-11th September), Head Teachers started to take ownership of this situation and to discuss their data with each other and then offer challenge to their colleagues around improvement priorities. Initial reaction gathered from feedback during the improvement days, has been very positive. Head Teachers were supported by the Change Team, Programme Officer and Data Analyst who were also able to provide further detailed guidance to schools about how to use and interpret data for quality improvement and assurance purposes.

6. Future Practice

- 6.1 Schools will always engage deeply with their exam data and seek to plan improvements. The support of peer leaders through the Improvement Family model will add greater scrutiny and enhanced analysis - leading to better outcomes.
- 6.2 The form that engagement in attainment review from the centre will take - Head of Service and senior officer level - will be finalised in the coming months. Given the concurrent work around committee restructuring, it seems very timely that Members consider how they want to engage with the available data - both that generated at school level and that available through Insight. This is not straightforward and there are two comments on the entry page to Insight that members should take cognisance of when considering scrutiny of the data.

“Data in the tool are provided to all education authorities and schools on the understanding that they will be used for self-evaluation, professional reflection and benchmarking purposes only and that they will NOT be used publicly, directly or indirectly, to draw comparisons.” AND

“Schools and education authorities have made their data available to others in a spirit of co-operation and trust. Access is provided to assist colleagues in the delivery of their professional duties. Of particular note, users of Insight agree not to seek to identify individuals from the information provided, for which they have no direct professional responsibility. All data in the tool (including downloaded tables) should be treated as carefully as other confidential pupil data”

- 6.3 It is envisaged that a final decision about Member engagement with attainment data will be brought back to a future committee after briefings have been held.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 19 September 2019

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Background Papers: n/a