

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	EDU/16/22

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Education

**Date:** 23 November 2022

**Report Title:** Highland Scottish Credit & Qualification Framework Attainment and Scrutiny (Session 2021-22)

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to members on the performance of students in attaining Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Awards at Level 5 (National 5 or equivalent) in the S4 stages and at Level 6 (Higher or equivalent) in the S5 and S6 stages. In addition, SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher or equivalent including HNC) in the S6 stage are reported on.

The report also indicates how the Head of Service and Collaborative Leads Officers will engage with secondary schools to scrutinise the attainment for 2021/22 and set for stretch targets with secondary schools.

Members are reminded that SQA Results for 2022 is the first year that formal exams have taken place since 2019 but this year does not mark a return to normal. Learners continued to face disruption from COVID-19, on the back of the two previous years of disruption from the pandemic.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Scrutinise Highland's Senior Phase SCQF Attainment for session 2021/22 and specifically note the improvement in S4 attainment.
- (ii) Note that secondary school-based attainment meetings will take place in November and December 2022 and actions for improvement will be agreed. At these meetings stretch targets for session 2022/23 will be set with each school.

- (iii) Note that the Raising Attainment Action plan agreed at the September 2022 Education Committee will be used as a key driver to progress the attainment agenda in secondary schools and reduce the attainment gap.

### 3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** There are no immediate resource implications associated with this report.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications contained within the contents of this report.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** Planned improvements, target setting, and benchmarking will support better outcomes and take cognisance of the specific challenges of equity, poverty and rurality. School leaders share improvement activity through parental partnership forums.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed, as the proposals within the report do not currently represent a change to policy.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever:** There are no climate change issues arising from this report.

3.5 **Risk:**  
Reputational risk to schools should Highland's attainment not continue to improve and progress.

3.6 **Gaelic:** The delivery of better outcomes will build on the recent SQA success of our young people undertaking GME and GLE course work and courses.

### 4. Overview

4.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on current progress in improving attainment in the senior phase and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The measures reported are based on The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). SCQF is used to measure awards gained by young people in our schools and is a key measure within the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

The SCQF measure includes SQA National qualifications which are graded A to D and qualifications such as SQA National Progression Awards and SQA Skills for Work courses which are graded as pass/fail.

The SCQF framework includes and recognises an extended and enhanced range of achievement in the senior phase which is in line with the principles of Developing the Young Workforce.

This report looks at the 5+, 3+ and 1+ SCQF Awards at Level 5 and 6. For Level 7, 1+ awards are reported on as this measure relates to courses studied at Advanced Higher in the main, usually in S6.

4.2 The attainment data presented to Committee within this report is collated from SQA results across the senior phase and will cover the following:

- S4 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF level 5

- S5 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF level 6
- S6 breadth and depth attainment at SCQF levels 6 and 7

4.3 This report presents charts showing the five-year trend for SCQF attainment by year group in the Senior Phase. This shows the data for Highland, its Virtual Comparator (VC) and for the whole of Scotland (the “national” establishment).

The virtual comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to those in Highland schools in terms of factors including stage, gender, additional support needs, and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a measure of relative deprivation. SIMD classifies areas into five quintiles based on relative disadvantage, with **quintile 1 being the most deprived and quintile 5 being the least deprived**. Appendix 1 of this report highlights the secondary schools in Highland who have learners in Quintiles 1 and 5. Details of cohort size for all Highland schools in S4, S5 and S6 in each of the five quintiles is detailed in Appendix 2. Members should note that compared to Quintiles 2, 3 and 4, the cohort size in Quintiles 1 and 5 are relatively small. This can cause large fluctuations in year-on-year percentages due to the size of the cohort. Therefore, it is important in the Highland context that we look at trends over time for the attainment of these cohorts.

4.4 The impacts of the different approaches to assessment and certification over the past three years means that care should be taken when making comparisons over time. The Scottish Government has cautioned and advised against comparing 2019/20 attainment data with attainment in other subsequent sessions due to the different attainment patterns seen in 2020. The 2020 data therefore has not been included in this report.

## 5. **Breadth and Depth Attainment data for Year Stage based measures for 2021-22**

5.1 S4 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Level 5

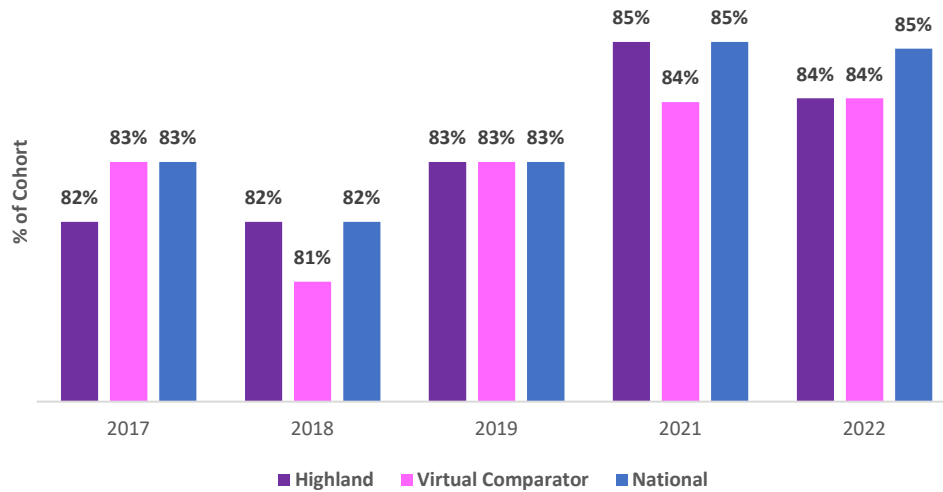
This measure demonstrates how many qualifications S4 learners achieved at SCQF level 5; this includes National 5 as well as others, including Skills for Work, National Progression Awards and other SCQF awards at level 5.

Over the period 2017 to 2022, the percentage of the S4 learners attaining 5+, and 3+ Awards at SCQF Level 5 in S4 has increased significantly and both measures are the highest in 5 years, resulting in a narrowing of the gap compared to National data for the same measures. 1+ level 5 awards have increased by 2% since 2019, and although this is in line with a similar rate of improvement at National level, the gap to National remains steady and has not closed.

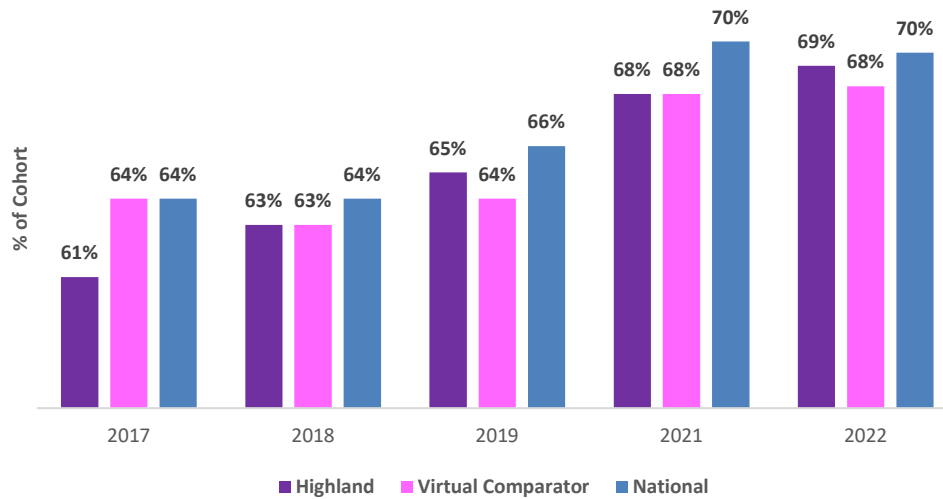
Work continues to support schools to develop their senior phase curriculum to increase the number of courses being offered at this level and to effectively track and monitor against target presentations. A breakdown of this support is provided in the next steps sections below.

In addition, the Local Authority and schools are looking to improve our senior phase tracking and monitoring with a system that provides live analysis of tracking data for schools and Local Authority officers to better monitor learner’s progression and ensure earlier interventions of support where required.

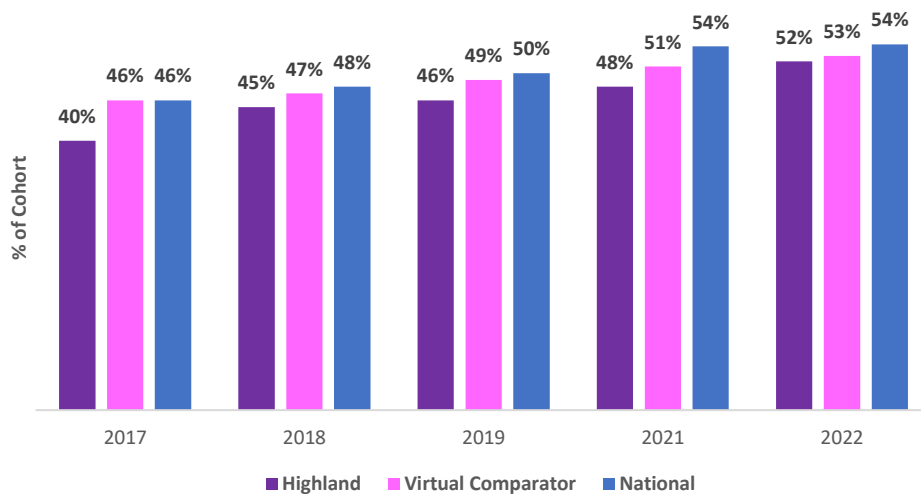
### 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 5 in S4



### 3 + Awards at SCQF Level 5 in S4



### 5+ Awards at SCQF Level 5 in S4

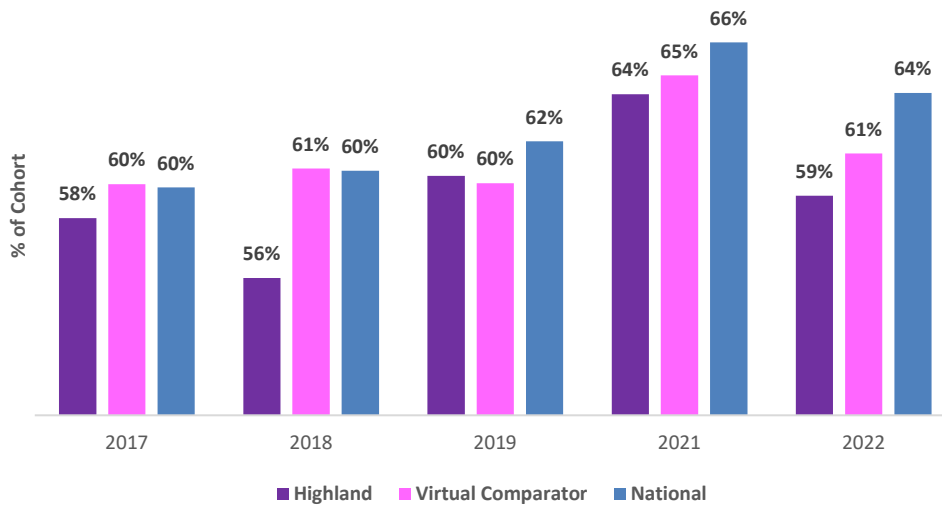


## 5.2 S5 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Level 6

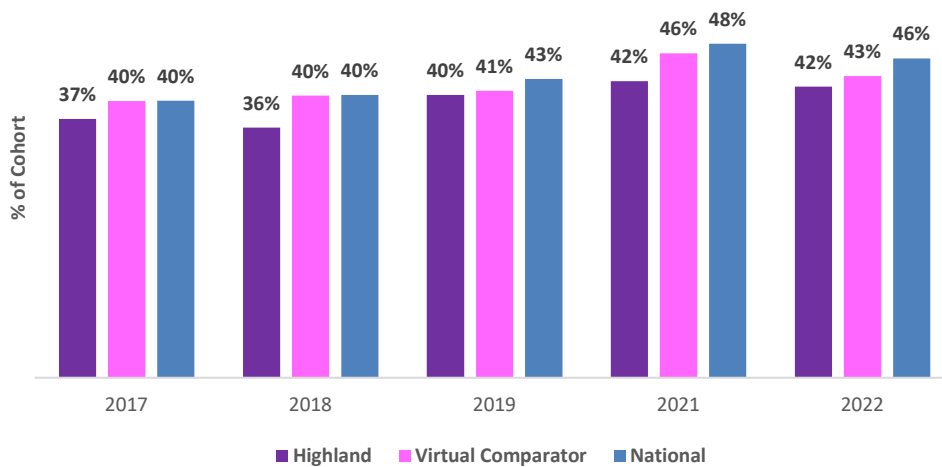
This measure demonstrates how many qualifications S5 learners achieved at SCQF level 6; this included Highers as well as others, including Skills for Work, Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards at level 6. The measure of one or more SCQF Level 6 qualification can allow young people to access higher education courses at college.

For Highland, performance in all measures in 2022 are in line with previous years, although less than National.

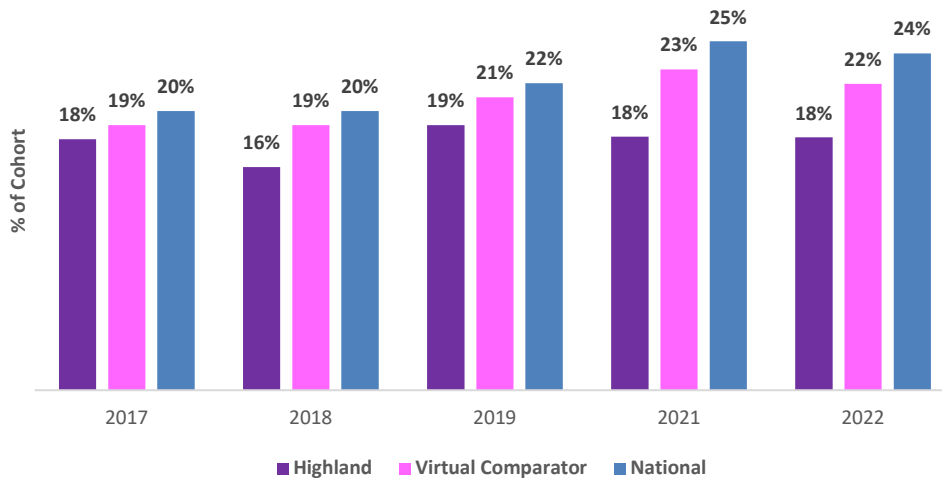
### 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S5



### 3+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S5



## 5+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S5



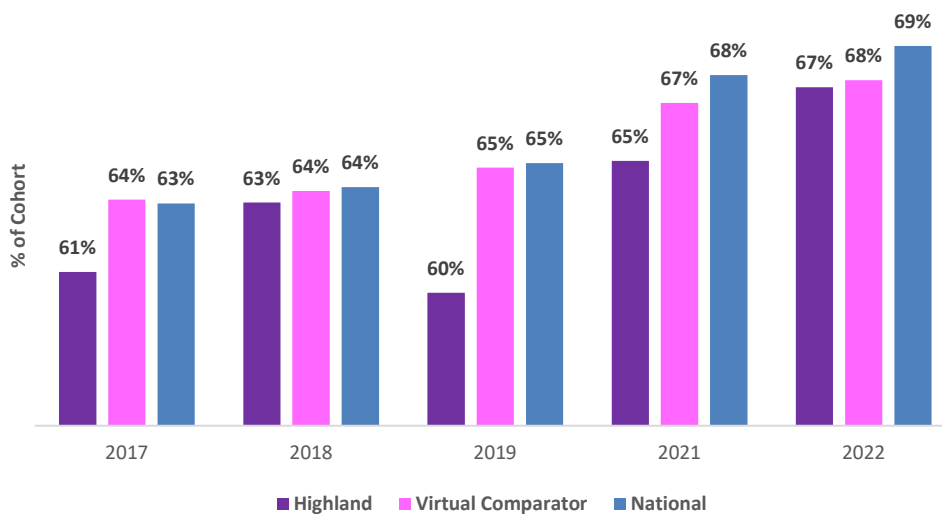
### 5.3 S6 Breadth and Depth attainment at SCQF Levels 6 and 7

This measures how many qualifications S6 learners achieved SCQF level 6 and 7 qualifications; this includes Highers and Advanced Highers as well as others, including Skills for Work and National Progression Awards at level 6 and 7.

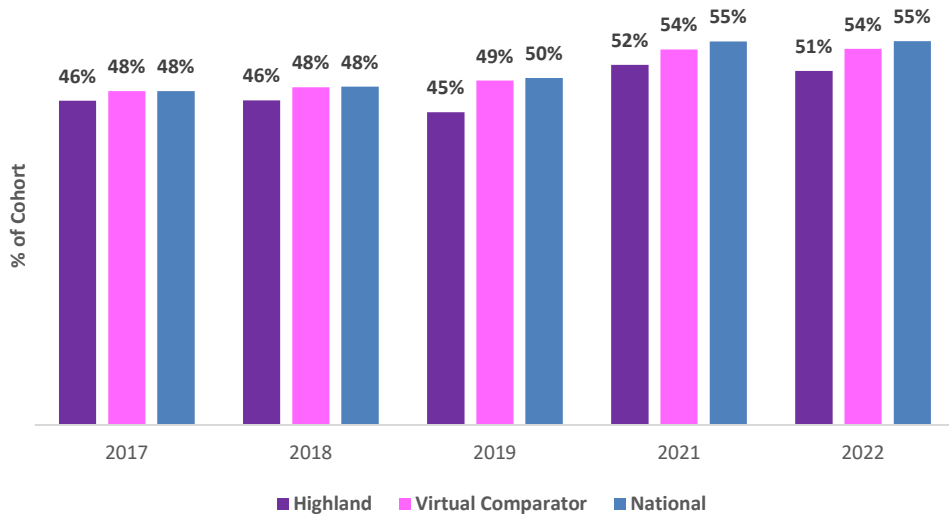
This is an accumulation of level 6 and 7 attainment which may have been achieved prior to S6 within the Senior Phase.

Our S6 attainment at both 3+ and 5+ level 6 qualifications has improved but still remains below National. Attainment of 1+ award at Level 6 has seen a significant rising trend in and the gap to National reducing significantly over the 5 year period.

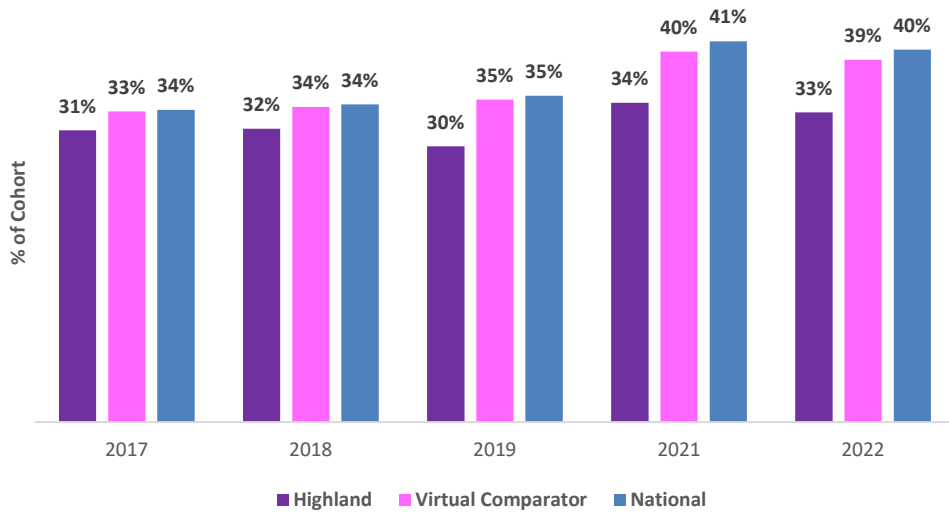
## 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6



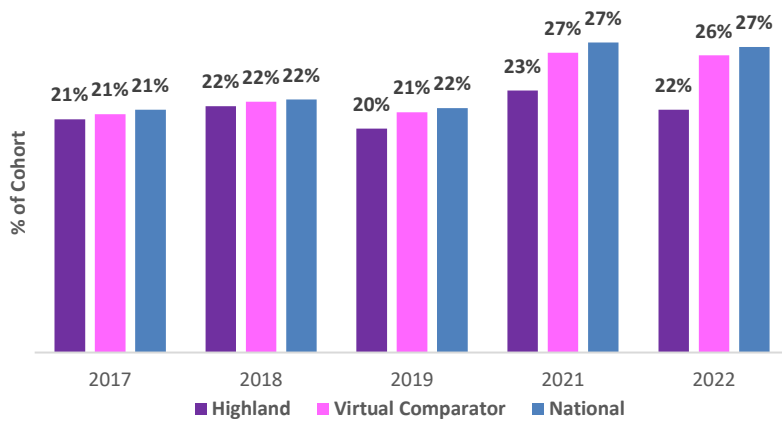
### 3+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6



### 5+ Awards at SCQF Level 6 in S6

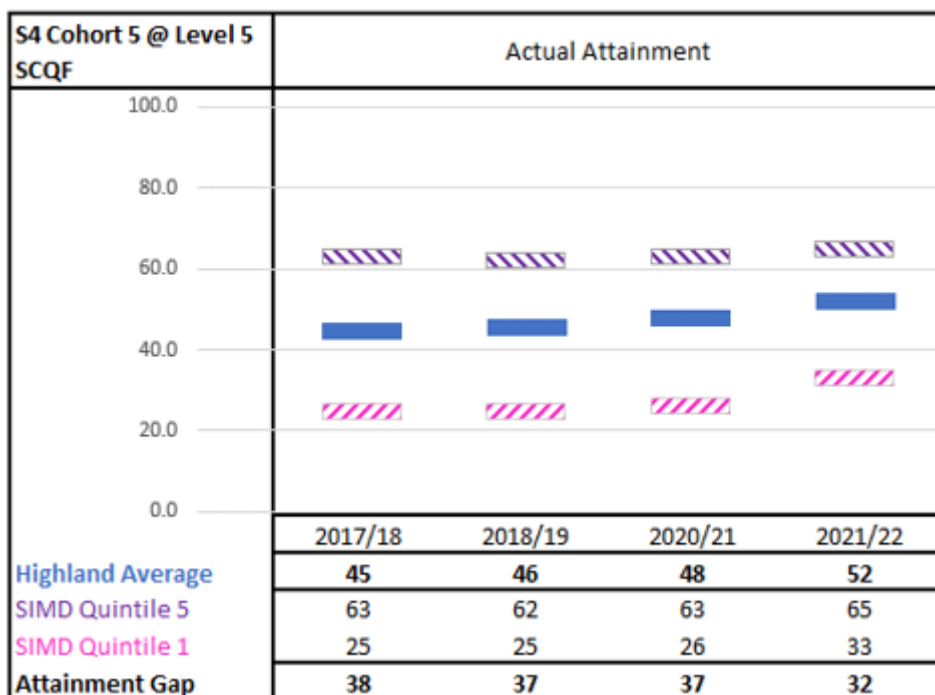
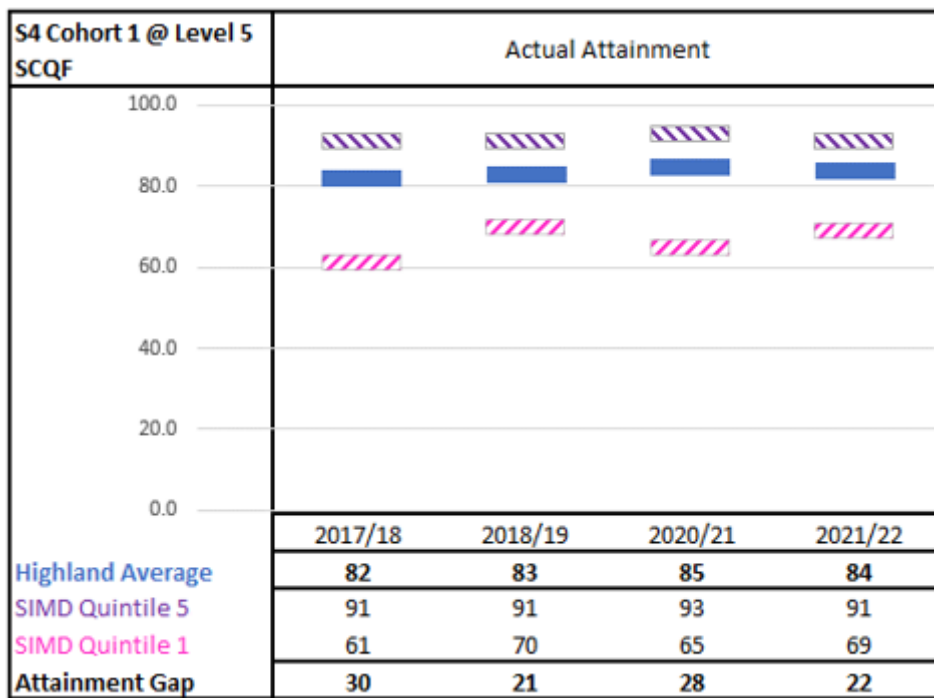


### 1+ Awards at SCQF Level 7

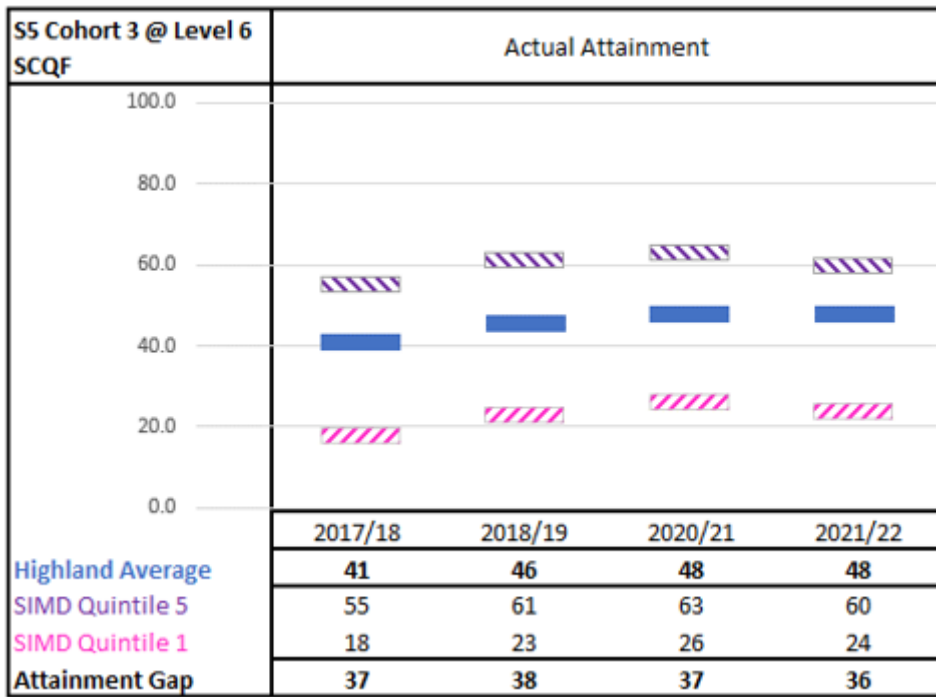
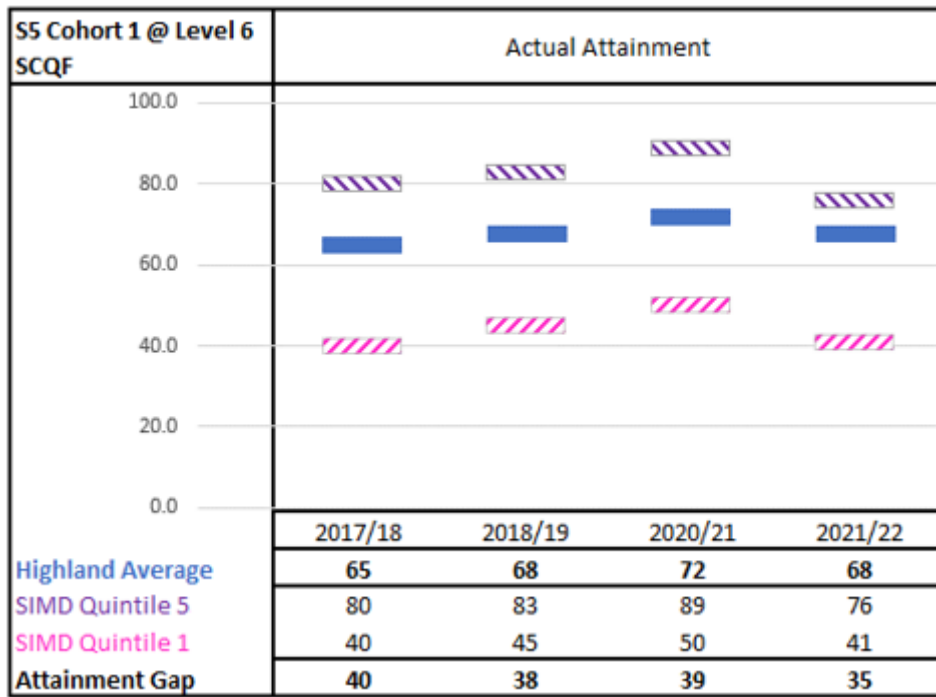


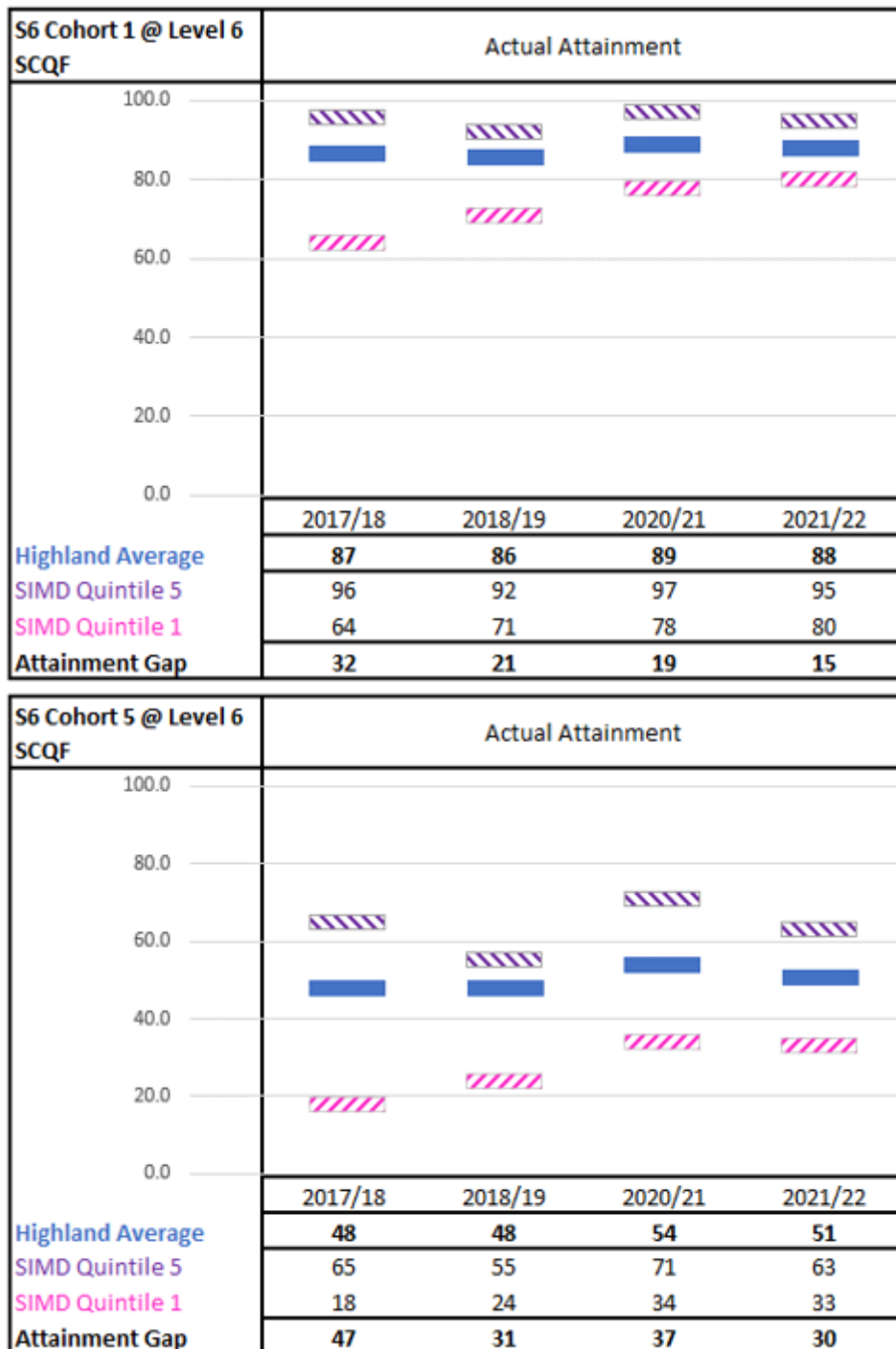
5.4 The Attainment Gap in S4, S5 and S6

The attainment of learners in quintiles 1 and 5, compared to the Highland average is shown in the following graphs. The difference between quintile 1 and quintile 5 is the attainment gap. For Highland in S4 to S6, the awards gained by young people in Quintile 1 has improved over five years, with the exception on S5 learners in 2022. In all instances the attainment gap has closed in Highland over the 4 year period and, in most instances this being as a result of Quintile 1 pupils increasing in attainment. Schools report that Covid has impacted particularly on young people living in deprivation and graphs do show the gap increasing during the pandemic for S4 and S6 in particular. There is however, indication that the gap has started to close again this session. Of particular note is the significant increase in S6 Quintile 1 attainment.





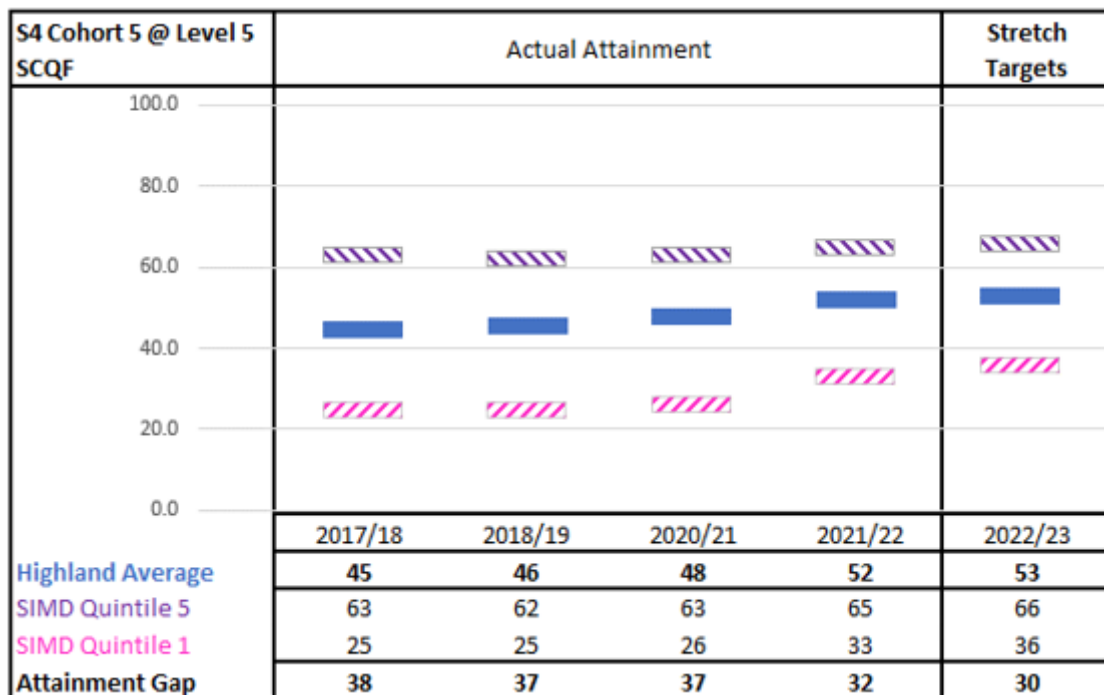
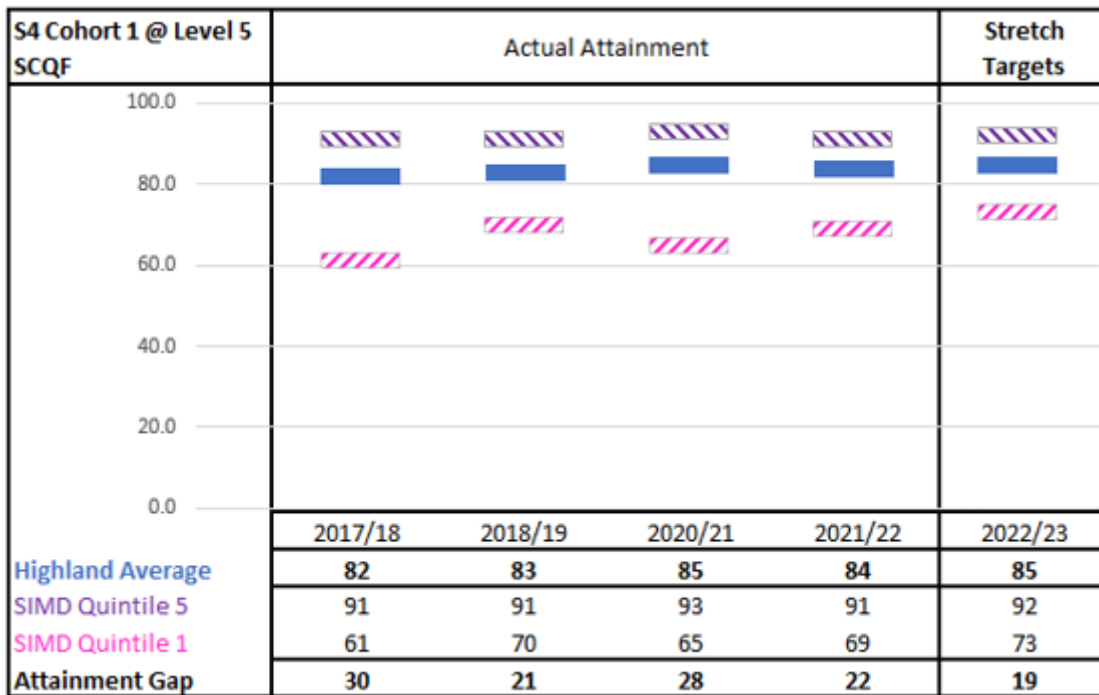




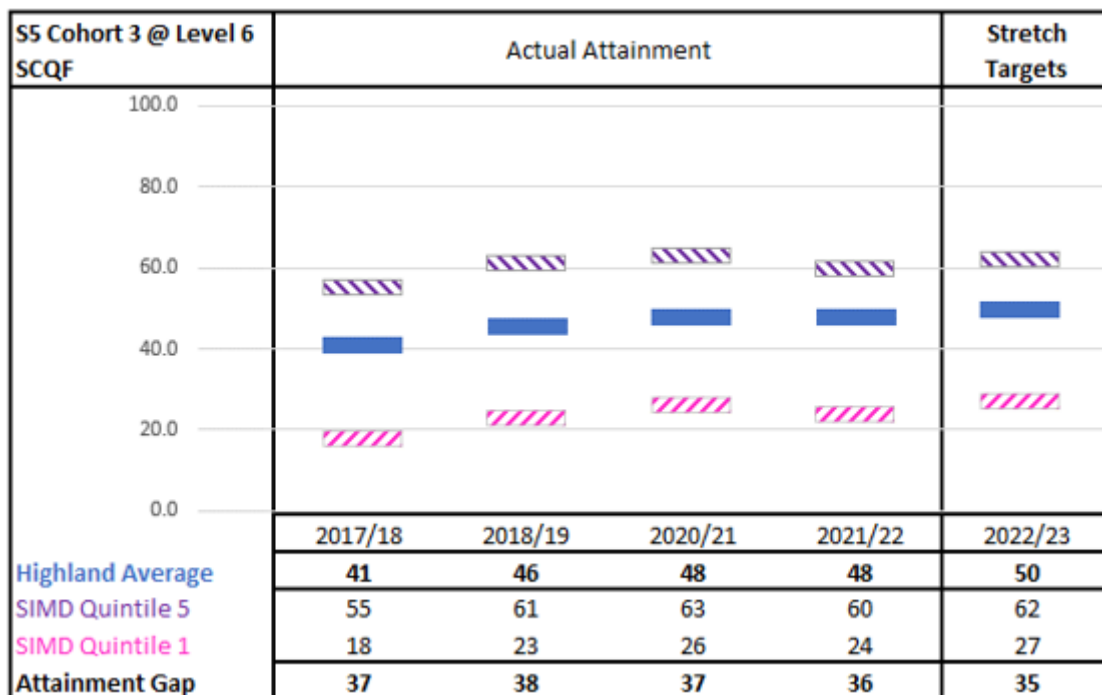
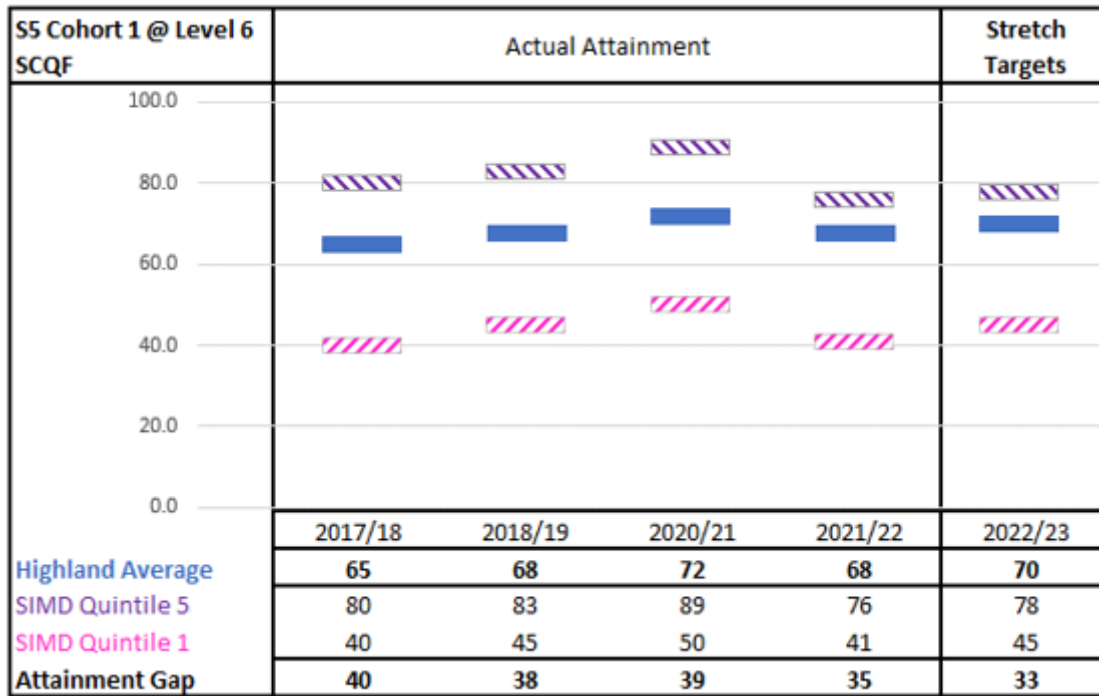
### 5.5 Next Steps / actions to support improvement

Highland has set core plus stretch targets for 2022/23 based on the LGBF framework. The Local Authority stretch targets are based on attainment trends over the past 5 years and are ambitious while remaining an achievable improvement goal for the coming year. The core plus stretch targets set for senior phase attainment by the Local Authority are outlined below. Stretch targets will be set with each school at individual attainment meetings held in November, with specific targets for the 8 of our Secondary schools who have pupils from Quintile one in their roll. Progress towards meeting these targets will be reviewed in March 2023. Highland's stretch targets will be reviewed annually.

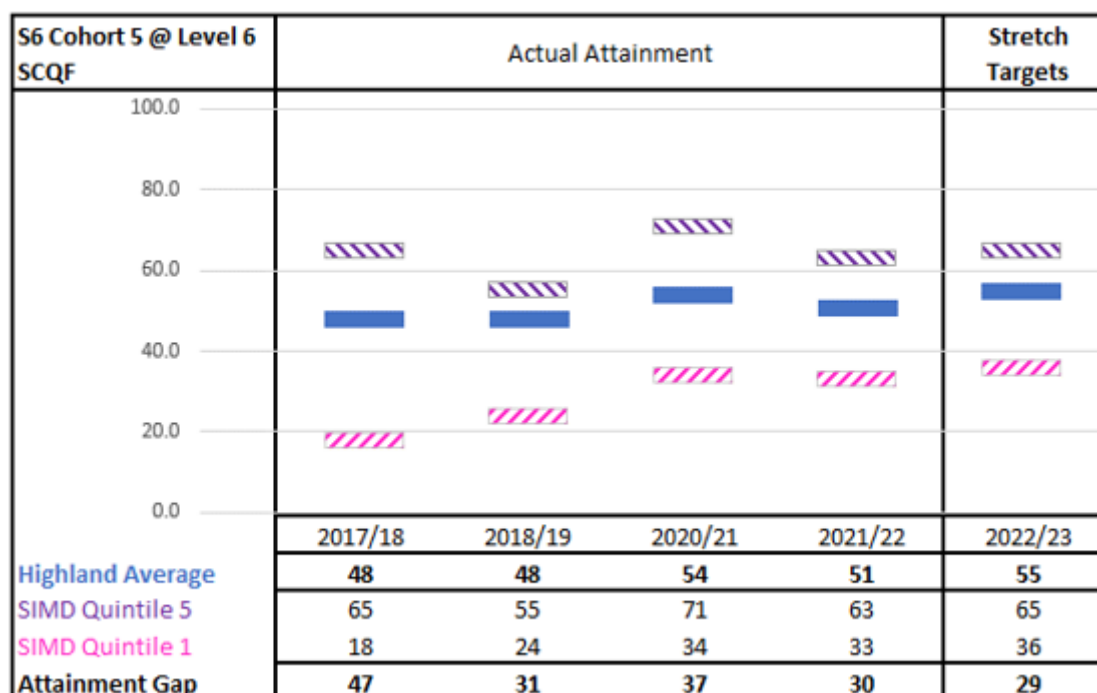
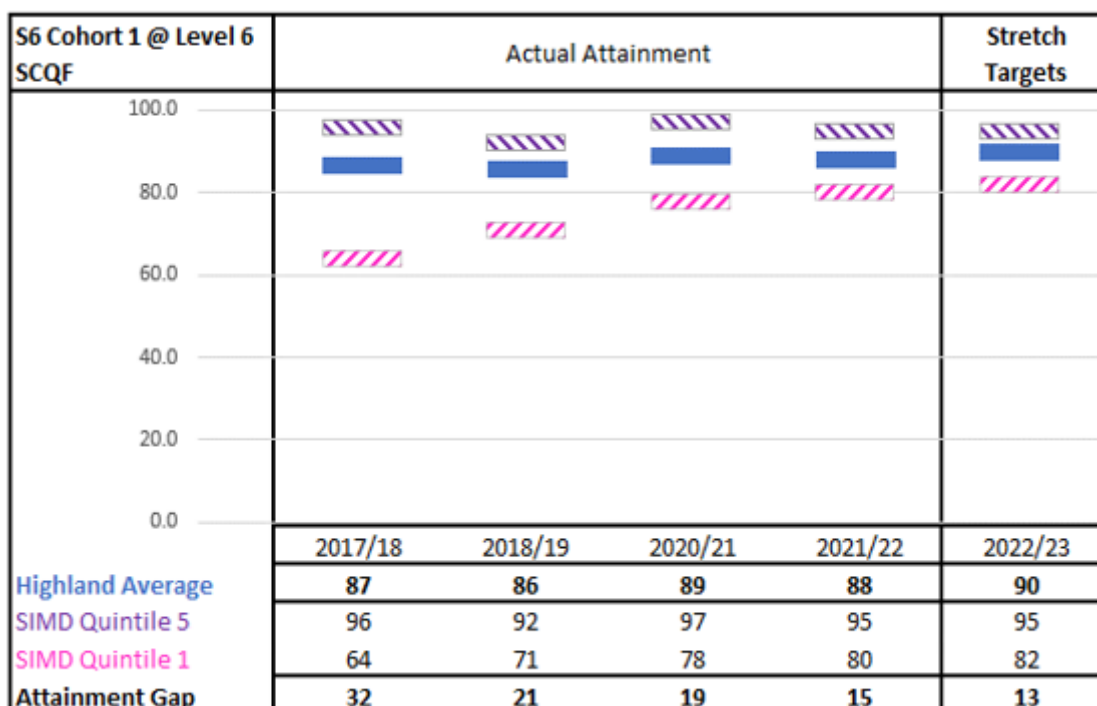
S4 Core Plus Trend and Stretch Targets for 2022/23



S5 Core Plus Trend and Stretch Targets for 2022/23



## S6 Core Plus Trend and Stretch Targets for 2022/23



Further actions for improvement include the following:

- Increase of Foundation Apprenticeship courses / delivery models at SCQF level 4 and 5
- Bespoke school-based attainment analysis sessions with middle and senior leadership teams to focus on the subject and departmental contribution to the whole school attainment. These sessions look in detail at each school's presentation culture, curriculum improvement planning, aspirational coursing and effective target setting.
- Sharing of good practice between school settings linked to widening of options including timetable and partnership approaches to support enhanced curriculum offer.

- Improved datasets issued to schools to indicate pupil specific data showing individual student attainment profiles
- Development of an interrupted learners programme delivered through the Highland Virtual Academy and widening senior phase curriculum offer
- Secondary subject working groups to include sharing of practice around raising attainment and approaches to broadening curriculum offer linked to ungraded courses within the SCQF framework.

Members will have the opportunity to scrutinise individual Associate School Group performance data at area committees in the new year.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

Date: 25 October 2022

Author: Fiona Grant – Head of Service Secondary Education

## Appendix 1: Secondary schools with learners in quintiles 1 and 5

(schools with 10 or more learners in their S4 cohort in relevant quintile)

Quintile 1	Quintile 5
Alness Academy	Culloden Academy
Charleston Academy	Inverness Royal Academy
Invergordon Academy	Millburn Academy
Inverness High School	Nairn Academy
Inverness Royal Academy	
Lochaber High School	
Wick High School	

## Appendix 2: Highland Senior Phase Cohort Sizes

### S4 Cohort – pupil numbers

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>All learners</b>	2344	2363	2502	2446	2515
<b>Quintile 5</b>	257	238	286	161	200
<b>Quintile 4</b>	781	777	821	823	813
<b>Quintile 3</b>	660	701	757	861	860
<b>Quintile 2</b>	447	458	443	353	393
<b>Quintile 1</b>	199	189	195	248	249

### S5 Cohort – pupil numbers

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>All learners</b>	2099	2068	2059	2250	2141
<b>Quintile 5</b>	227	237	219	206	154
<b>Quintile 4</b>	742	702	672	352	744
<b>Quintile 3</b>	641	586	620	764	735
<b>Quintile 2</b>	350	380	393	352	319
<b>Quintile 1</b>	139	163	155	206	189

### S6 Cohort – pupil numbers

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>All learners</b>	1579	1420	1435	1461	1576
<b>Quintile 5</b>	197	196	184	115	137
<b>Quintile 4</b>	565	518	517	482	557
<b>Quintile 3</b>	465	424	393	519	526
<b>Quintile 2</b>	253	202	255	221	223
<b>Quintile 1</b>	99	80	86	124	133