

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 18 MAY 2021

ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL 2021

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

**ABSTRACT**

This report provides Committee with information regarding the Alternative Certification Model and the arrangements for quality assurance that will support schools in awarding provisional grades for national qualifications in session 2020-2021.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Reviews the Angus Alternative Certification Model Guidance (Appendix 1);
- (ii) Notes the quality assurance process outlined in the Angus Alternative Certification Model

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN**

2.1 This report is related to the following local outcomes as stated in the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030 and the Council Plan 2019 to 2024:

- Local Outcome 4 - The best start in life for children
- Local Outcome 5 - More opportunities for people to achieve success
- Local Outcome 6 - Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

2.2 Council priorities:

- We want to maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 In October 2020, following the publication of the [Priestly Review](#) and considering the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy First Minister announced the suspension of the National 5 examinations diet. An Alternative Certification Model (ACM) for National 5 qualifications was outlined based on teacher and lecturer judgements supported by assessment resources and quality assurance.

3.2 The Deputy First Minister made further changes on 8 December 2020 indicating that there would be no external assessments of Higher or Advanced Higher courses. As a result, the entire 2021 National Qualifications examination diet was cancelled and replaced by the ACM.

3.3 The [SQA published guidance](#) for schools to support staff with awarding provisional grades for each learner for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher for 2021. The provisional grades should be 'a holistic review of a candidate's performance as indicated by assessment evidence'. SQA have provided guidance in relation to the type and quality of evidence including detailed subject-specific documents which summarise the key pieces of evidence required as the basis of provisional results.

3.4 All Angus teachers delivering national qualifications have completed the relevant SQA subject-specific courses on assessment and moderation. They have worked collaboratively to ensure that assessment materials meet the national standard and are internally verified before use.

- 3.5 Our Curriculum Advisory Groups (CAGs) consist of Principal Teachers (curriculum). Each group has representation from each secondary school. CAGs have moderated the assessments being used to ensure they meet the national standard. CAGs have coordinated groups of staff to moderate the sampling of assessment evidence from each school following internal verification.
- 3.6 Our Principal Teachers will analyse provisional results for their subject compared to their performance data for the three years prior to 2020. Head Teachers and SQA coordinators will quality assure the provisional results for each subject and review the assessment evidence of learners.
- 3.7 Representatives from Education and Lifelong Learning central team have met with the Senior Leadership Team in each school to ensure that internal verification arrangements are in place. Follow up meetings will be held to review the provisional results and to discuss the rationale for any variances. This may lead to a review of assessment evidence using local subject expertise.
- 3.8 On 16 February 2021, the First Minister announced that additional in-service days would be set aside for teachers to engage with the assessment, moderation and quality assurance process required for awarding provisional results. The dates for these assessment support days in Angus will be Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.
- 3.9 In the event of any further periods of self-isolation or absence impacting negatively upon a young persons' ability to undertake assessments or upon the school's assessment timetable, alternative arrangements will be made. The arrangements for the appeals process have still to be finalised. Further information on the appeals service for 2021 will be shared with young people, parents and carers once it is made available by SQA.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried and is attached.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: Appendix 1 - Alternative Certification Guidance