



Meeting the challenge of COVID-19

Learning and practice



How Edinburgh's Quality Improvement Team is helping teachers to assess care experienced young people's work

What was the challenge faced by City of Edinburgh Council?

There is an existing need to maximise and raise the attainment of care experienced young people in senior phase within the City of Edinburgh Council education area, while the COVID-19 public health emergency has seen a model of certification based on teacher assessments of level of achievement put in place instead of the 2020 exams. The official statistics show that the number of care experienced young people put forward for qualifications at SCQF5 and above, and their results, are much lower than that of their peers. The local Quality Improvement Team hope to establish if this is based on teachers having lower expectations of these students and if, as recent research shows, there is any evidence of an 'unconscious bias'.

What change in practice took place?

The Quality Improvement Team is acutely aware that due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, qualifications in senior phase this year, and possibly next year, are now dependent on teachers submitting estimated grades based on the evidence available to them. The team is currently analysing data from the last three academic years to compare estimated grades against the final grades that were attained for all pupils, in order to set a benchmark, and then for care experienced pupils to see if there is a noticeable difference for this cohort. From that analysis they will look to see if this could be attributed to unconscious bias based on expectations, individual relationships, and teachers' perceptions of care experienced young people and their circumstances.

Who was involved in making the change?

The Council's Quality Improvement Education Officer is currently analysing the data with the Quality Improvement Manager for secondary schools, and they are working with 'Hub for Success', an Edinburgh-based service working across HE and FE institutions to support young people with care experience to get in, stay in or return to education. The results of the analysis will determine the change needed and the approach this will take.

What difference did this change make?

If the data analysis indicates that teachers may have lower expectations of care experienced young people and are not expecting care experienced children to attain at a certain level, then the team have a greater understanding of a root cause. This intelligence will help to inform what the authority, in partnership with and inspired by the Hub for Success, could do to change the perspectives and approaches of secondary school teachers. If, on the other hand, the data shows that there isn't evidence of bias, a different approach can be taken to work with teachers and young people to improve grades and offer additional support.

More information

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