

Written evidence submitted by Dennis Sherwood

Submission to the Inquiry into The Impact of Covid-19 on education and children's services

Thursday 18th June 2020

Dennis Sherwood

This is my second submission: the first, CIE0007, was submitted on 4th April, very early in the process.

I write now for the process is, as far as the schools are concerned, over: the final date for the submission of centre assessment grades was last Friday, 12th June.

I have followed the process closely as it has evolved, and so I wish to supplement my earlier submission with three *ex-post* observations.

1. I believe that Ofqual's denial of any opportunity for there to be some form of 'dialogue' between centres and the boards, after the centres have made their submission, and to enable centres to explain their 'outliers', will lead to unnecessary unfairness. I realise that this is difficult, But difficulty is not sufficient to justify this denial. Especially in the context of Gavin Williamson's statement on 20th March that "*I have asked exam boards to work closely with the teachers who know their pupils best to ensure their hard work and dedication is rewarded and fairly recognised.*" Denial of the opportunity for dialogue does not comply with my understanding of "...work closely with...".
2. Ofqual have not disclosed the details of the 'statistical standardisation' model, so setting up some form of 'guessing game' which the schools must inevitably lose. The consequences of this are yet to evolve, but two recent publications - [this 'exit poll'](#) published by FFT Education Datalab, and [this piece](#) on the TES news website, based on information provided by ASCL, do not bode well.
3. Throughout the last several weeks, the media have consistently stated "This year's grades will be determined by teacher assessments", or words to that effect (see, for example, [here](#)). This is not true: the grades will be determined by 'statistical standardisation'. Ofqual and the boards have hardly been energetic in ensuring that the correct message has been made clearly visible, and in refuting the 'fake news'. Why not?

I have tracked the progress of events in a series of blogs published on the website of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), which I would like to submit as evidence.

The most recent was published this morning:

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/06/18/have-teachers-been-set-up-to-fail/>
(18th June)

The earlier ones are:

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/06/01/no-test-is-better-than-a-bad-test/>
(1st June)

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/05/18/two-and-a-half-cheers-for-ofquals-standardisation-model-just-so-long-as-schools-comply/>
(18th May - note the quality of the large number of comments)

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/04/18/weekend-reading-this-years-school-grades-ofquals-consultation/>
(18th April)

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/04/04/weekend-reading-a-for-ofqual-and-the-sqa-this-years-school-exam-grades-could-well-be-the-fairest-ever/>
(4th April)

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/03/21/trusting-teachers-is-the-best-way-to-deliver-exam-results-this-summer-and-after/>
(21st March)

Thank you

Dennis Sherwood

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