

SQA Where's our say?

24th February 2021

Dear Education and Skills Committee,

On the 19th February 2021, Education Scotland and the SQA sent you a joint letter regarding recent issues which had been raised surrounding education and the upcoming exam season. There are some parts of the letter we left less than satisfied with. In the section of the letter headed 'appeals' the SQA and Education Scotland state:

'SQA will shortly be undertaking a public consultation about the appeals process for 2021 awarding and further details will be available thereafter. We can confirm that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the centre of our considerations.' During the consultation in October 2020, carried out by the SQA to gain feedback on the proposed academic changes for the 2020/21 year, around 21% of respondents were candidates while 60% of people who replied to the surveys were practitioners. This means a massive amount of young people's voices were missed, and assurances are needed to make sure young people are at the heart of this process especially if the UNCRC is going to be at the centre, just as the SQA and Education Scotland claim it to be.

Furthermore, the letter also states 'Information on the 2020 appeals process was published on 2 December 2020 and is now closed as we focus on arrangements for 2021'. This simply implies that the SQA have simply turned their backs on the students affected last year, some of whom have been left with no redress, with doors slammed shut behind them with no to get justice, something the UNCRC promotes for young people. The young people affected have told us at 'SQA: Where's Our say' that they feel 'left alone' and that they 'got not that much help from the Scottish Government'. This is related to a request these young people made in December 2020 to have a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. This letter and its request ha been ignored. The SQA may have closed the door on the matter but for the young people affected, it's going to be around for years to come.

In the upcoming consultation by the SQA, I urge to highlight the importance of having, proper and meaningful engagement with young people, remind the SQA these young people are not just candidate numbers, grades, or stats, they are real people, with real lives and feeling the real impact of this situation. It's time the SQA and all the other bodies involved prove they welcome and understand the contributions that come from Scotland's young people.

Thank you,

Rachael Hatfield,
Of SQA Where's Our Say?

