

A & AS Level Results Concerns

Dear Kirsty Williams MS,

We are sure you are aware that there are many young people, across Wales, who are unhappy with being downgraded in their AS and A level results, due to a system that appears not to take any personal circumstances, previous work or the hard work teachers did during lockdown, into account.

We understand that some form of moderation is needed, but to randomly pick young people to be downgraded via an algorithm is not a fair process and we urge you to reconsider the use of the credible decisions that teachers had worked tirelessly to come up with.

The First Minister and yourself keep saying we have record numbers who are going to university and that the statistics back this up, but at what cost. How can we be sure that all of those young people had the grades they should have? It really does feel like a lottery as to whether you received the grades you should have or deserve. Who would know better than the teachers who should, or could, get the grades they deserve?

How many students will miss out in accepting the rightful offers from universities of their choice? Also for AS students who are yet to do their A2s, mediocre AS grades could also affect their applications to universities. This could affect Welsh students applying to universities elsewhere in the UK, and we are sure the Welsh government does not wish to disadvantage their own youth in this manner.

Many people in society, young and old, do not believe that exams are the best way to assess the years of work that young people put into their education. Exams only assess how well someone can memorise and not what their work ethic or effort is, and we all know exams are the biggest cause of stress to young people. When in life are people asked to do some work and do not use technology to help them and not to collaborate? Education is not a true reflection of life and we quite often hear the term that young people only start learning when they leave school.

Many members of Cardiff Youth Council, and many other young people, have contacted us to say how they feel let down by such an impersonal approach towards their results and have concerns over the appeals process's limitations.

Just one example of where the process has let down a large number of young people is those who undertook their AS levels last year, were very close to achieving higher grades than they received and who were going to re-sit AS modules, alongside their A levels, and were most likely to have

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gained those higher results. There are many more instances where there are unfair and impersonal decisions being made about our futures.

Some young people were not worried when the government announced the way that examinations were to be marked. Some saw opportunity, and a little hope, thinking that we would move away from the impersonal way of marking a student's knowledge. A new way to mark it fairly and a system where students would get what they deserve, for their years of work, not just 1 day. However, in the end we see that the advice of the teaching community has not been taken into account.

We urge the Welsh government to investigate what went wrong with the system in Wales and why this happened and review the cases of pupils who've been unfairly downgraded. This is the safest way to restore the faith between the youth and the government, which has currently taken a huge hit.

We also urge you to ensure that there is a review for the system and algorithms of the GCSE results before they come out next week and we need to ensure the same thing does not happen again, especially if COVID is to bring us to the same system next year.

This pandemic has caused huge problems for education, and society as a whole, and we believe that things must change, and now is the right time for that change.

In order for you to get a better understanding of the youth voice in Cardiff we have included a link to our newsletter (see links below), written by Cardiff Youth Council members during the height of lockdown, and we kindly ask you to read it. There is much miscommunication and confusion about what young people think or what they want, because they are not asked, or are not listened to. An example of this is that many adults are saying that this pandemic has caused the wellbeing of young people to dramatically diminish. We would argue that this is not necessarily the case and the newsletter shows how young people are actually more relaxed and stress free than they have ever been, and many more young people are saying the same.

We hope that you reconsider the governments approach towards exams results this year and look forward to hearing from you.

Shout Out News Letter English - <https://cardiffyouthcouncil.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/shoutout-lockdown-2020-edition-1.pdf>

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Shout Out News Letter Welsh - <https://cardiffyouthcouncil.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/argraffiad-y-cyfnod-clo-2020-.pdf>

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Sylwer: Os nad ydych yn dymuno bod yn aelod o CYC mwyach neu os ydych yn cysylltu â chi drwy e-bost, cyfryngau cymdeithasol neu gyswllt ffôn symudol yna atebwch i'r e-bost hwn gan nodi eich bod am gael eich tynnu.

Please note: If you no longer wish to be a member of CYC or be contacted by email, social media or mobile phone contact then please reply to this email stating you wish to be removed.

