



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department of Education
20 Great Smith Street,
London - SW1P 3BT

14.08.2020

Dear Gavin

I am writing to you today on behalf of young people across Dagenham and Rainham, to request answers and solutions to the fiasco that was yesterday's A-Level results day. Across the country, tens of thousands of young people have found themselves in limbo after having their grades knocked down. I'm sure you will agree that coronavirus has already provided enough uncertainty and disruption for students this academic year, a situation which has now been exacerbated.

In Dagenham and Rainham the outcome this week was mixed. Some schools achieved high grades whilst others have suffered a 50-60 percent downgrade in results. Whilst I congratulate those that were awarded their expected grades, I know there will be many feeling disappointed or let down by the system. As their representative I have a duty to seek answers as to why, with five months to plan, the government has created a situation of confusion and that has left many worried about their future.

When deciding how to proceed with A-Levels and GCSE's this year, the government claimed that pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds would be at risk of losing out if exams were to be delayed rather than cancelled. It seems those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds have suffered regardless. Nearly 40 percent of grades were marked down, but the controversy does not end there. Reports have highlighted that whilst many students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been downgraded, students at independent schools have seen a rise in top grades. This means those who may already be on the back foot in life, have been pushed back further.

You stated that "there is a danger where you have an exceptionally high performing child in a low performing school, they will be in a situation where they don't get the grades they want to". You have admitted yourself that exceptional students who could have excelled despite their disadvantage in terms of school or background- now won't. How is this just?

I understand we are in unprecedented times due to the ongoing adversities the COVID-19 crisis has created. However, the government had time to sort this out and I cannot help but feel that incoherence and total chaos have become the norm under this government.

Jon Cruddas MP
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I implore you to rethink and reform the grading system. A solution must be provided and this monumental wrong be made right as a matter of urgency. GCSE grades are due next week and if this is not addressed, we run the real risk of stunting the social mobility of a generation.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon'.

Jon Cruddas MP

Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham
Incorporating South Hornchurch and Elm Park