



Department
for Education

An Investigation of Key Stage 2 Access Arrangements Procedures

Research Report

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Geoff Lindsay¹ & Susan Goodlad²

**¹Centre for Educational Development,
Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) & ²Centre
for Education and Industry (CEI)**

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The research team

¹Professor Geoff Lindsay

²Mrs Susan Goodlad

^{1,3}Dr Ioanna Bakopoulou

with

¹Professor Andy Miller

¹Dr Martin Desforges

The research team wish to thank the following educational psychologists who carried out fieldwork:

Rebecca Ambler⁴, Jackie Ridsdale⁴, Alison Bray¹, James Gillum⁵, Juliet Whitehead⁵, and Brid Winn⁵

³Schools and Community Psychological Service, Wandsworth LA

⁴Psychological Service, Sheffield LA

⁵Psychological Service, Coventry LA

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Warwick to conduct a study with the following aim:

To provide evidence to inform the refinement of the draft flowchart for identifying pupils who require access arrangements for Key Stage 2 (KS2) National Curriculum Tests (NCTs) and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

The study had the following two objectives:

Objective 1: To gather the perceptions of teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), Educational Psychologists and local authority (LA) officers of the suitability, clarity, usability and efficiency of the draft flowchart as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them sufficient access.

Objective 2: To assess the accuracy of the draft flowchart as a tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

The research study comprised three strands:

Strand 1 comprised a national survey of 589 mainstream state-funded primary schools in England, including maintained schools and primary Academies; and 59 special schools that had offered KS2 NCTs in each of the previous four years.

Strand 2 comprised visits to 15 schools in four LAs where educational psychologists observed teachers and SENCOs using the flowchart to assess pupils and then interviewed the teachers and SENCOs to explore their perceptions of the draft flowchart. Finally, all educational psychologists were themselves interviewed.

Strand 3 comprised interviews with 27 local authority (LA) officers.

The study took place during November 2012 to February 2013.

Key Findings

We present the Key Findings from the study as a whole followed by detailed findings, comprising percentages of teachers/SENCOs that responded to the national survey. There was a general commonality of perspectives across all of the research participants (teachers and SENCOs, LA officers and educational psychologists) to the research questions.

Current practice

- The majority of schools currently use teacher assessment, staff discussion and standardised tests to assess pupils' needs for access arrangements; use of reports from specialist professionals is also common:
 - 90% use teacher assessments
 - 73% use standardised tests of reading and writing
 - Use of reports from professionals includes: educational psychologists (73%), speech and language therapists (46%), medical practitioners (30%), and physiotherapists (29%).
 - Judgements about pupils' access needs and also special considerations typically involve discussions between the head teachers, Year 6 teacher(s) and SENCO.

Clarity, usability, fairness, and efficiency of the draft flowchart

- The large majority of teachers, SENCOs, educational psychologists, and Local Authority LA officers found the draft flowchart efficient, clear and easy to use.
 - 85% of teachers and SENCOs in the national survey judged it efficient
 - 81% judged it clear
 - 84% judged it easy to use
 - 87% judged it fair

Suitability of the draft flowchart

- The large majority (95%) of teachers reported that the draft flowchart draws on and respects their knowledge of pupils and their ability to assess pupil levels and corresponding access needs.

Accuracy of the draft flowchart

- The majority of teachers (83%) considered that the draft flowchart enhanced their understanding of pupils' access arrangements requirements.
 - 97% were in agreement that the behaviour descriptors included in the draft flowchart avoided the use of labels that compartmentalise pupil behaviour.
 - 92% thought that the behaviour descriptors included in the draft flowchart were clear and unambiguous.
 - Just over two thirds (68%) thought that the draft flowchart would not influence the likelihood of some teachers choosing *not* to submit applications for pupils who *are* eligible for access arrangements.
 - Conversely, 32% considered that the draft flowchart *may* lead to erroneous judgements in this respect.
 - 87% considered that the draft flowchart would accurately identify pupils who *should not* sit NCTs.

Potential improvements to local authority systems

- With respect to the role of the local authority, LA officers considered that use of the flowchart would improve their authority's system for managing schools' applications for access arrangements for pupils, and improve efficiency.

Areas for improvement of the draft flowchart

- In addition to their generally positive comments, teachers, SENCOs, LA officers and educational psychologists also made helpful improvement suggestions which will enable the draft flowchart to be revised prior to the development of an online version.

Background

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) of the Department for Education specifies the access arrangements for KS2 tests in its document *National Curriculum Assessments: Assessment and Reporting Arrangements: Key Stage 2*¹. This guidance specifies for whom the access arrangements are intended and the types of arrangements allowed. It is stressed that the arrangements are intended to achieve equity not produce an unfair advantage. The target pupils are those:

- *With a statement of SEN.*
- *For whom provision is made at School Action or School Action Plus, whose learning difficulty or disability significantly affects their ability to access the tests.*
- *Who require alternative access arrangements because of a disability – which may or may not give rise to SEN.*
- *Who are unable to sit and work for a long period because of a disability or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).*
- *With EAL and who have limited fluency with English.*

The guidelines specify the access arrangements that must be approved by application to the STA, e.g. additional time and set out the evidence necessary to support an application. In addition schools have the discretion to make other access arrangements without seeking approval: e.g. rest breaks, prompts and readers.

The Government is committed to equality of opportunity in education and providing a robust and fair assessment system. The former Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) undertook work in 2011 to update DfE guidance for teachers on identifying Year 6 pupils who would be eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs and those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs. This work, designed to address perceived inadequacies with the then current system, included a review of existing guidelines and practice. It drew on behavioural theory to produce a new draft of DfE guidance, in the form of a paper-based draft flowchart that could be used by teachers to identify eligible pupils.

¹ Standards and Testing Agency (2012). *National curriculum assessments: Assessment and reporting arrangements: Key Stage 2*. <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213221/2013-assessment-and-reporting-ks2>

The Government plan to introduce a new system in 2014. Under these arrangements it is proposed that an updated and more efficient version of the DfE guidance will also be introduced in the form of online software that schools will use to identify eligible pupils. It is envisaged that this software will be an online version of the paper-based draft flowchart.

This study was designed to meet the aim and objectives specified above and thereby provide evidence that would contribute to the refinement of the structure and content of the draft flowchart before its conversion into online software.

Methodology

The research comprised a combined methods study consisting of three strands:

- *Strand 1:* A representative national survey of mainstream primary schools providing 648 responses from 128 local authorities and 642 schools (50% teachers, 36% SENCOs and 14% from teachers who were also SENCOs).
 - 589 mainstream schools.
 - 59 special schools.
- *Strand 2:* Observations by educational psychologists of teachers in 15 schools as they used the flowchart to assess the access needs of:
 - Pupils who were considered to have needs for access arrangements.
 - Pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because access arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.
 - Pupils who were not eligible for access arrangements.

The educational psychologists also interviewed 17 teachers or SENCOs (two teachers were interviewed in each of two schools) who undertook the assessments and interviews were conducted by one of the research team (GL) with the educational psychologists who conducted this fieldwork.

- *Strand 3:* Interviews with 27 LA officers with responsibility for managing the LA's system for applications for access arrangements.

The survey provided quantitative data which were analysed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. The interviews were semi-structured, face to face and largely qualitative but with some quantitative elements. Together the three strands provided rich data on the interviewees' current practice,

views of the flowchart as an instrument, its practical use, and improvement suggestions.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research indicates a clear case that the large majority of teachers, SENCOs, LA officers and educational psychologists rated the draft flowchart positively for suitability, clarity, usability, and efficiency as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible, and pupils who should not sit NCTs because arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

Furthermore the large majority of respondents judged the draft flowchart to be generally accurate but respondents did also identify specific aspects of the draft flowchart that could and should be improved.

Recommendations

- An online version of the draft flowchart should be developed to aid teachers undertaking assessments of pupils for access arrangements for Keys Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests.
- The development of the online version should be guided by the evidence from the research contained in this report and the full range of specific suggestions from the research participants. In particular, the STA should consider that:
 - Guidance should be produced to advise on the completion of the online flowchart.
 - The Guidance should stress at the start the importance of considering all pupils' access needs in the context of normal classroom practice.
 - Items 1-4 of the draft flowchart be omitted as they are confusing, or inappropriate.
 - Any statement that a pupil should not sit NCTs be replaced by stating that *consideration should be given* to the pupil not sitting NCTs.
 - More guidance be provided on the use of 'age appropriate' in order to stress the wide range of normal development.
- The Guidance should include advice on tests to be used by schools where evidence from standardised assessments is required.
- The new system be kept under review.

1: Introduction

1.1 Background

A fundamental requirement of any assessment procedure is that it should be a fair test of the abilities under examination. This requires technically sound, valid and reliable assessments and procedures.

This report focuses on a subgroup of pupils that sit end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) National Curriculum Tests (NCTs), namely those that require some form of assistance or variation of procedure to ensure they have equivalent access to the tests as other pupils, and are thereby able to demonstrate their substantive capabilities that are the focus of the test. Pupils under consideration include those with long- or short-term health issues or special educational needs (SEN) that would, without such access arrangements, result in the test not providing a fair assessment of the substantive capabilities.

Systems have been in place for many years, initially focusing on health issues (long-term and short-term such as injuries). Over time, recognition developed of the need to include pupils with SEN. For example, in the 1980s the Secretary of the Schools Council which then had oversight of the examinations system, sought to bring examination boards together to produce a common system of assessment for access arrangements for pupils with SEN taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations at 16 years. That early work has developed further with the Joint Council for Qualifications, whose most recent guidance on general and vocational qualifications covered 2011-12². The development of NCTs and their procedures has resulted in the need for a similar system for younger pupils, in the present case those at the end of KS2.

1.2 Guidance and current practice

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) of the Department for Education (DfE) specified the access arrangements for KS2 tests in its document *National Curriculum Assessments: Assessment and Reporting Arrangements: Key Stage 2*³. This guidance specifies for whom the access arrangements are intended and the types of arrangements allowed. It is stressed that the

² Joint Council for Qualifications, (2012). *Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration: 2012-2013*. <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

³ Standards and Testing Agency (2012). op cit

arrangements are intended to achieve equity: not produce an unfair advantage. The target pupils are those:

- With a statement of SEN
- For whom provision is made at School Action or School Action Plus, whose learning difficulty or disability significantly affects their ability to access the tests
- Who require alternative access arrangements because of a disability – which may or may not give rise to SEN
- Who are unable to sit and work for a long period because of a disability or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties (BESD)
- With English as an additional language (EAL) and who have limited fluency with English

The current guidelines specify the following access arrangements that must be approved (by application):

- Early opening of test papers
- Additional time
- Compensatory marks
- Special consideration

In addition schools have the discretion to make the following access arrangements at the head teacher's discretion, without seeking approval, but must notify the STA for use of:

- A full or partial transcript
- A scribe
- A word processor
- Technical or electrical aids

The following access arrangements can be made at the school's discretion and do not require an application to STA or the LA, or to submit a notification form to the STA:

- Use of apparatus
- Rest breaks
- Prompters
- Readers

The guidelines set out the requirements necessary to provide the evidence to support an application. For example, additional time may be justified on the basis of evidence from a standardised reading assessment that produces a standardised score below 85. The Guidance also indicates arrangements for pupils with EAL; the use of compensatory marks (relatively rare); modified tests (e.g. Braille); and Special Consideration where a pupil has experienced extremely distressing circumstances (application submitted after the test(s)).

National Curriculum tests, assessments and accountability have been reviewed by Lord Bew and his Review Panel⁴ to which the government has responded⁵. Changes to the KS2 NCT system are now in train. However, Lord Bew, recognising the 'extremely complex challenge' posed in ensuring that the attainment and progress of pupils with SEN is maximised, decided that this challenge must be addressed more holistically, and that it could not be tackled effectively through the statutory assessment systems in isolation. He pointed to the Green Paper on SEN⁶ now superseded by the Government's Children and Families Bill 2013.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This study was designed to address a specific aspect of the system for KS2 NCTs, namely the examination of the suitability, clarity, usability, and efficiency of a *draft flowchart* designed to aid the identification of pupils who require access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, and of pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because access arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access. The overarching aim of the study was to provide evidence to inform the refinement of the draft flowchart (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 1). The following specific objectives were:

1. To gather the perceptions of teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), Educational Psychologists (EPs) and local authority (LA) officers of the suitability, clarity, usability and efficiency of the draft flowchart as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access;

⁴ Bew (2011). *Independent review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability: Final report*, London: DfE

⁵ Department for Education (2011) *Independent review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability: Government response*. London: DfE

⁶ Department for Education (2011). *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00046-2012>

2. To assess the accuracy of the draft flowchart as a tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

The research questions below were used to address these two main objectives:

1. Is the draft flowchart efficient, clear and easy to use?
2. What methods do schools currently use when identifying pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, including special consideration, and those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs, and how does the draft flowchart compare?
3. Does the draft flowchart draw on and respect teacher knowledge of pupils and their ability to assess pupil levels and corresponding needs?
4. Does the draft flowchart enhance teachers' understanding of a pupil's access arrangement requirements?
5. Are the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart clear and unambiguous?
6. Do the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart accurately enable pupil eligibility for access arrangements to be assessed and identify those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs? Would other behaviour descriptions be more appropriate?
7. Do the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart avoid the use of 'labels' that compartmentalise pupil behaviour?
8. Does the draft flowchart influence the likelihood of some teachers choosing not to submit applications for pupils who are eligible for access arrangements? If so, why?

9. Will the draft flowchart help to ensure that the process for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements is fair and equal?
10. How do head teachers decide whether to provide pupils with access arrangements when those access arrangements are provided at the head teacher's discretion?
11. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all possible types of access arrangements required by all pupils (including those with and without statements of SEN)?
12. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who are not eligible for access arrangements, or are some pupils identified who shouldn't be?
13. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who require more than one type of access arrangement and those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs?
14. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who require access arrangements for a KS2 test in one subject but do not require the same access arrangements for another subject?
15. Does the draft flowchart identify any pupils as being eligible for access arrangements who their teacher(s) previously thought (based on classroom knowledge) did not require them?
16. Does the draft flowchart identify any pupils as not being eligible for access arrangements who their teacher(s) previously thought (based on classroom knowledge) did require them?

1.4 Methodology

This study employed a combined methods approach with three strands which comprised a variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques including questionnaires, face-face and telephone interviews, observations, and assessments. Data have been analysed to produce both quantitative and qualitative findings. The evidence from each strand has been combined in order to strengthen the findings and identify implications and actions.

The procedure for each of the three strands is summarised below (a more detailed account is available in Appendix 2).

1.4.1 Strand 1 – Survey

A representative sample of all mainstream primary schools in England, including state-maintained and primary Academies was surveyed (1,925). In addition, a census of 238 special schools that had offered KS2 NCTs in each of the last 4 years was surveyed⁷.

A survey questionnaire was developed, with a focus on answering the main research questions 1-10 (see Appendix 3). A copy of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

The survey questionnaire was subjected to an in-house, pre-pilot exercise before being piloted in the field to eradicate any potential problems with questions at an early stage. The field pilot prior to the launch of the survey was used to assess comprehension, flow of questions, timeliness and technical structure of questions to ensure it would deliver data as intended for analysis.

A postal survey was the preferred mode for the survey but it also contained a hyperlink to enable those who preferred to complete it electronically to do so⁸. Schools were given a 4 week period to return completed questionnaires.

The survey achieved 648 valid responses: 589 (91%) mainstream schools and 59 (9%) special schools, exceeding its minimum target of 385 mainstream schools and 48 special schools.

1.4.2 Strand 2 – Case study visits

A sample of schools was selected for case study visits. The initial primary criteria for the sample were that schools had offered KS2 NCTs in each of the last four years. Appendix 2 contains details of the sample characteristics. Strand 2 was focused on generating information to answer research questions 11-16 (as in Appendix 3). A copy of the research tool used in the case study schools can be found in Appendix 5.

Case study visits were conducted with 15 schools (14 mainstream primary LA-maintained schools and 1 special school: 1 was in a London borough, 4 were in the Midlands County, 5 were in a Northern City, and 5 were in a Midlands City).

⁷ The list of special schools was supplied by the DfE.

⁸ Of the 648 valid survey responses received, nine were returned online.

Case study visits yielded data from 128 pupil observations across different types of SEN: pupils with and without statements; pupils from mainstream and special schools; pupils who were eligible for each type of access arrangement; pupils who were not eligible for access arrangements; pupils for whom access arrangements would not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs; borderline and normally developing pupils. The actual selection of pupils for the study was developed with the schools on an iterative model.

This strand of research comprised two elements: *the accuracy* of the teachers' judgements and the *teachers' views* on the use of the flowchart. To address the former, an observation of the teacher assessing the pupil using the draft flowchart took place; and to address the latter, in-depth interviews with the teachers and educational psychologists were conducted.

The teacher observation was followed by an in-depth interview conducted by the educational psychologist with the teacher. The interviews included questions on the accuracy and use of the draft flowchart when assessing individual pupils, and any overarching comments on the draft flowchart as a tool for assessing the eligibility of a whole class of pupils.

Finally, after fieldwork was completed, an in-depth interview was also conducted with each of the seven educational psychologists involved in the fieldwork to gather similar data on their views of the draft flowchart and its use by teachers, in an attempt, where necessary, to ensure the teacher data on the accuracy of the draft flowchart was professionally verified by educational psychologists.

1.4.3 Strand 3 - LA interviews

Local authority (LA) officers are responsible for approving access arrangements in maintained primary schools. We created a random sample of 30 LAs (1 in 5 of all LAs in England) to reflect the demographic variation – geographic, socioeconomic and distribution of minority ethnic groups. A second random sample was selected to enable replenishment of the first sample in the event of a lower than anticipated response. However, we exhausted both samples without achieving our target of 30 interviews which necessitated the generation of a third sample. These efforts were sufficient to enable 27 interviews to be conducted.

Semi-structured interview schedules were designed and piloted before use to gather evidence from the perspective of LA officers, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 6.

Ethical considerations

The research was approved by the University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. All interviewees received an information sheet and gave informed consent to be interviewed. Interviewees were assured that no individual, school or LA would be identified and that they were free to end the interview at any time. Respondents to the surveys were also provided with information about the research and the assurance of confidentiality: consent was indicated by return of the questionnaire. To maintain confidentiality, all quotations are coded randomly where T = teachers and LA = LA officer.

1.4.4 Analysis of survey data

The survey results are based on 648 valid survey responses which have been analysed using the SPSS software package (version 20) to produce descriptive and inferential statistics. The achieved sample from state-maintained, mainstream primary schools was analysed to ensure that responses were representative of the wider school population. It was deemed that responses were representative and therefore it was unnecessary to apply a non-response weighting. Analysis has considered mode of response and inferential statistics have been calculated using Chi square and independent *t*-tests to examine relationships such as teachers vs SENCOs and mainstream vs special school. Where statistically significant differences at the 95% level of confidence⁹ are evident, they are reported. Where comparisons are made between teacher and SENCO responses, those who indicated that they were both a teacher and a SENCO (*n* = 87) have been excluded.

1.4.5 Analysis of case study and interview data

The teacher observations and in-depth interviews with teachers and LA officers have primarily been analysed using qualitative content analysis techniques. Some quantitative data, namely interviewees' ratings of the draft flowchart's characteristics, are also reported. Researchers (GL, SG) collaborated to agree pre-determined initial themes and discuss emergent themes arising during the course of analysis. The first level analysis was reviewed and revised in order to present a coherent assessment of the interview data, illustrated with verbatim quotations as appropriate.

Where possible, quantitative analysis has included frequencies of identified issues or difficulties with the judgements produced by teachers using the draft

⁹ *P* < .05, 2-tailed

flowchart, analysed against the type of pupils/access arrangements being considered to enable clusters of findings to be reported.

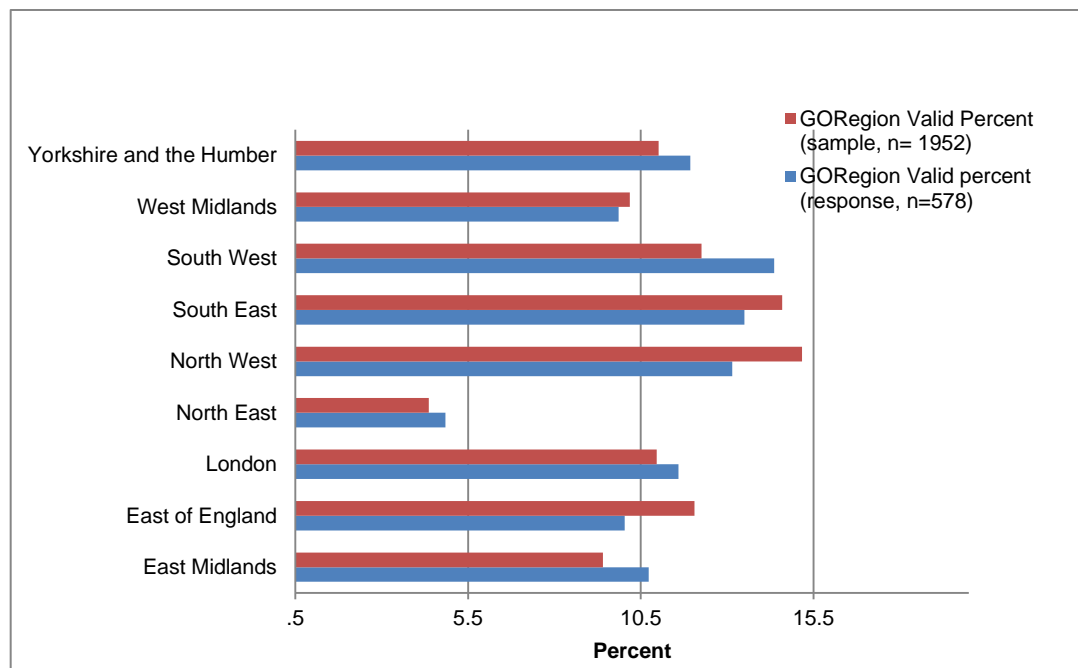
1.4.6 Profile of participants

A representative sample of state-maintained mainstream primary schools, including primary Academies in England was surveyed as well as a selection of special schools. The composition of survey responses was 91% mainstream and 9% special school. The profile of participants in each of the three research strands is presented in this section.

Survey of schools

The achieved sample of mainstream schools was representative of the population in England (Figure 1), with coverage from nine Government Regions (East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber as shown in Figure 1) and from 128 LAs.

Figure 1 Regional profile of participating schools (% of survey respondents).



The sample was proportionally representative of type of establishment (Academy Converters, Academy Sponsor Led, Community School, Foundation School, Voluntary Aided School, and Voluntary Controlled School) for Academies and LA maintained schools.

Survey respondents

Half of all survey respondents reported that they were teachers (50%), just over a third were SENCOs (36%) and the remainder were both teachers and SENCOs (14%). Respondents were experienced in the procedures for KS2 access arrangements. In fact, over two thirds of them (66%) had five or more years' experience, just over a quarter had between two and 4 years' experience and the remainder (8%) had experience of less than one year.

Case study schools

In total, 15 schools were visited: 14 mainstream schools and 1 special school. These visits yielded data from 128 pupil observations which covered the range of ability and need. In addition to 15 observations, 17 teachers were interviewed about the usefulness of the flowchart in relation to the pupils they assessed.

Interviews with LA representatives

Semi-structured, in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 27 LA representatives in a variety of contexts to reflect demographic variation across a range of variables, including: geographic, socioeconomic and distribution of minority ethnic groups.

1.5 Report structure

Section 2 presents the results of the research. We have taken a thematic approach to analysis and the presentation of data and where possible, within each theme, we present the school survey data, illustrated with charts or tables, followed by the data from interviews with teachers and finally data from interviews with LA officers.

- Sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide a contextual background from which to consider the evidence by outlining respondent views on current methods and arrangements and then a general overview of the draft flowchart.
- Sections 2.3 – 2.5 present evidence of the perceptions of teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), Educational Psychologists (EPs) and local authority (LA) officers of the suitability, clarity, usability, and efficiency of the draft flowchart as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2

NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

- Section 2.6 presents evidence which addresses the accuracy of the draft flowchart as a tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.
- Section 2.7 offers views on comparisons between the draft flowchart and present guidance and practice.
- Section 2.8 outlines anticipated impact of the draft flowchart.
- Section 2.9 addresses improvement suggestions
- Section 2.9 reports the perspectives of the educational psychologist.

The final sections of this report are Section 3, which concludes on this work and Section 4, which presents the research recommendations.

2: Results

2.1 Current methods and arrangements

Although the research is focused on the draft flowchart as a new tool, we also sought views on the current methods and arrangements in order to collect a rich source of professional judgement. Feedback from teachers, SENCOs and LA officers is presented here.

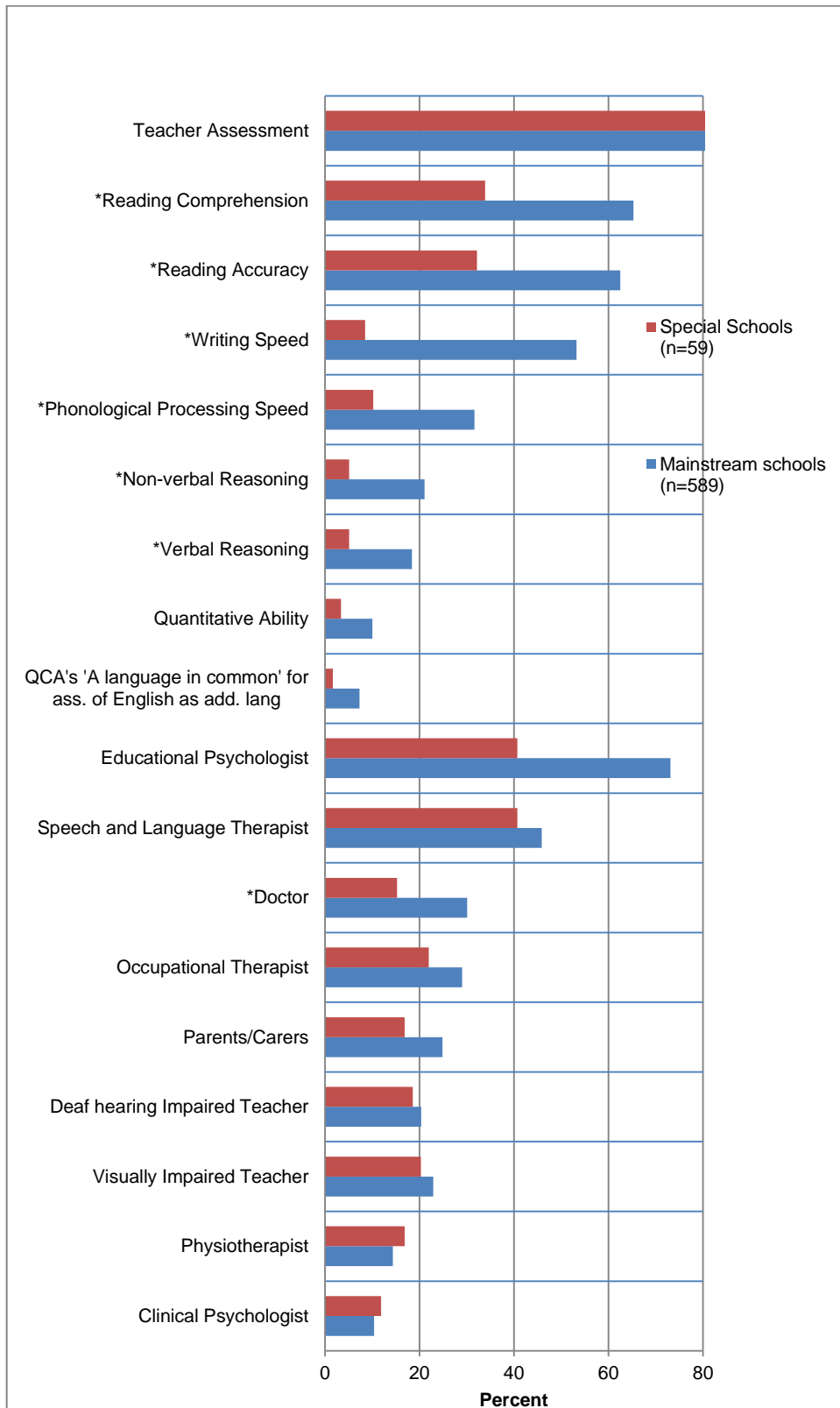
2.1.1 The present system in schools

It is clear from the survey responses that 'teacher assessments' are commonly used in schools when identifying pupils who are eligible for KS2 NCT access arrangements, with 90% of respondents indicating this. Standardised tests for reading (accuracy and comprehension) and writing speed were the most commonly used standardised tests, followed by those for phonological processing. Nonverbal and verbal reasoning were less commonly used.

Where reports from other professionals were used, just under three-quarters of the survey population (73%) cited educational psychologists, and just under half (46%) mentioned speech and language therapists. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 2.

Teachers in special schools were significantly more likely than teachers in mainstream primary schools to use most forms of standardised tests. There were no significant differences between the mainstream and special schools in use of reports from specialist professionals except for reports by doctors (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Methods currently used to identify pupils by school type (% of survey respondents).



*Denotes statistical significant associations according to type of school ($p < .05$).

In line with the survey data, interviews with teachers¹⁰ revealed that they were generally very experienced in assessing pupils' needs for access arrangements. The most common (modal) experience was 10 years (range 2 to 13). The sample comprised teachers who had roles as SENCO, assistant head teacher, teachers from Year 6, and learning support.

They assessed on average between 5 and 20 pupils a year (mode = 5). The teachers described the types of access needs they assessed in two ways:

- *Needs for provision:* extra time, a reader, translator, scribe.
- *Type of presenting difficulty:*
 - Reading/dyslexia
 - Spelling, handwriting speed, legibility
 - Motor skills
 - Concentration
 - Sensory – visual or hearing impairment
 - Behaviour
 - Tourette's syndrome

The teachers used a broad range of methods including, in all cases:

- Evidence built up over time
- Practice NCTs
- Classroom observations
- Standardised tests (including repeated tests to examine progress)
- Discussion with class teachers
- Discussion with other professionals (speech and language therapists, educational psychologist, learning support service)

Most also had experience of requesting special consideration for pupils because of problems including: home/family difficulties, bereavement, funeral, accident, and even vomiting on a test paper.

¹⁰ Schools varied in terms of whether access arrangement assessments were carried out by a Year 6 teacher or SENCO. We refer to the interviewees as 'teachers'.

Monitoring over time

The systems for conducting assessments for access arrangements, therefore, were multi-faceted, comprehensive and systematic. At the base is a system of monitoring the children over time. As one teacher commented:

“We know the children through normal assessment and termly (assessment). The children who have formal access arrangements usually are extreme and we know them long before they sit the test.”
[T9]

In addition to the systematic monitoring over time, the teachers included more specific activities from the start of Year 6 when some schools carried out a repeat reading test to identify/confirm concerns, with positive actions in January and February when applications for assessment arrangements are required, but often from the previous November. Discussions are held with class teachers and, where necessary, standardised tests are used. These may be carried out by the learning support service of the LA or a member of staff within the school.

Monitoring over time is also the overarching approach for pupils for whom access arrangements are not likely to provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs. These are supplemented by the same methods described above but reports from specialists including SLTs, EPs and specialist services (e.g. hearing and visual impairment, literacy support, learning support, behaviour support), and discussions with parents are also very important. The teachers stressed that these were not ‘one-off’ events but integrated into a process of monitoring over time.

Special considerations

Judgements about pupils’ needs for *special considerations* are made following discussions between the head teacher, the Year 6 teacher(s) and the teacher with responsibility for access arrangements. These are typically informed by parents and are based on both recent events and the general context for that pupil. In some cases, the teachers would be proactive if they felt there were problems that required further investigation, typically leading to discussions with parents and, in appropriate cases, careful monitoring of the effects on the child. Consequently, these are treated on a case by case basis. They are much less common than pupils requiring access arrangements, and more varied and individual in their nature.

Decision making at school level

Head teachers have discretion to make certain access arrangements. Most of the teachers we interviewed, however, noted that in practice this followed a discussion within the school team of head teacher, SENCO, Year 6 teacher(s), and learning support staff. This is informed, as necessary, by LA advice or consultation with the STA. In some of the schools the head teacher delegated the decision making, to the deputy head (assessment lead) or to the Year 6 team as *'the head trusts the class teachers 100%' [T7]*.

2.1.2 LA officers' perceptions of the current system

Local authority officers were also asked about how the current system of access arrangements worked. When teachers commented (Section 2.1.2) it was in relation to their particular school. LA officers on the other hand were able to provide an overview of how the system worked in their LA. In this section we present the LA officers' perspectives.

Range of applications

Applications for additional time were by far the most common mentioned, by almost all LA officers. By contrast, early opening was reported to be 'rarely used'. Some of the LA interviewees referred to specific types of need, primarily reading difficulties (or dyslexia) which made up a substantial number of applications received. Not surprisingly, requests for children with visual impairment, for example the provision of reading material in Braille, were rare. Requests concerning children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), again not surprisingly, were mainly focused in particular LAs: in some LAs they could represent a substantial proportion of applications:

"The vast majority are for the maths test for children who have EAL and (those with) SpLD". [LA13]

Number of applications

The frequency of applications varied greatly between LAs, with requests varying from fewer than 50 to about 300, with most LA officers reporting about 100-200. In addition, those interviewees that had longer term experience of the system reported a decline in numbers, for example, a fall in one LA from more than 200 to 80.

Current use of a flowchart

All interviewees reported that to the best of their knowledge, no flowchart was in use in their LA.

Role of the local authority

Interviews with LA officers confirmed that within local authorities the responsibility for access arrangements has been allocated to a number of different staff. This reflects the reduction in staff within LAs and the combining of roles for individuals. Our intention was to set up the interviews through initial contact with the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) in each LA to verify which LA officer was the most appropriate to participate. However it became clear that this was going to be difficult as PEPs began to report. Apart from issues that we expected, whereby people were out and about in schools much of the time, we found that many LAs were operating with reduced staff and that there was often no obvious LA officer with the task of reviewing applications. In these cases this task had been allocated to others who had various other duties. Consequently because an LA was often unable to readily identify the correct person we found it extremely time consuming and difficult to access the correct person for interview. In addition, in some cases these people were not permanent staff but were contracted in for the purpose of reviewing applications, which made the process of identification even more difficult.

Some of these LA officers described themselves as assessment managers and/or coordinators for Key Stage 2 and reported a broad role including supporting and training school staff. One interviewee was the LA's senior primary adviser. Others were consultants, in some cases retired staff, bought in for the period when schools were making applications for access arrangements (January – February).

The experience of the interviewees varied greatly. Some were in their first or second year whereas others were able to provide broad perspectives on the systems used within their LAs over time, and the actions they had taken to provide support to schools, through specific training and individual guidance when requested. The latter primarily occurred during the application period:

“We do statutory training and we try to go through access arrangements in that, and we draw all members to the ARA and they will apply through the NCA tools. We then approve or not as appropriate” [LA05]

One LA assessment manager reported how they advised on KS1 and 2 assessments:

“Schools typically ask for advice about which children should sit SATs and what assessment arrangements are appropriate. I am also responsible for approving applications via NCA tools – website applications for additional time and early opening.” [LA07]

Positive aspects of the current system

All except one LA officer specified positive aspects of the current system, including both STA guidance and support, together with the LA’s own support and administration.

The criteria were considered clear and ‘definitive’. Whereas some needs were less easy to identify, most concerned reading or writing speed and the difference between cognitive ability and performance, and these were considered to be easy to test. Furthermore, the present system was now familiar: *“People know it, we know it”*. [LA13].

Local authorities had also developed systems which some interviewees stressed were effective. These were generally seen as, *“Easy to administer – if they didn’t meet the criteria it won’t get as far as me”*. [LA05].

As another interviewee noted:

“If it [the application] meets the criteria I can just say yes and approve. If not, I either reject or contact the school for discussion and tell them to send more evidence or I will reject it. It’s fairly straightforward.”[LA07]

Also, the system was seen to fit well with the changing nature of LAs:

“We can do it in our own time. It gives flexibility to us, especially [important] with the decreasing workforce in the LA.” [LA08]

Local authority officers liked the online system: *“The website approach is good as it gives flexibility to both sides”*. [LA08] and *“saves paperwork”* [LA14]. Another LA officer noted that *“Up to that [the online system] it was a complete nightmare”*. [LA13]. Interviewees also reported positively on the way their system linked into other services within the LA.

“I’m really pleased with the team of specialist teachers we have who are qualified to use formal tests. Schools are using their judgements to

make informed decisions. It safeguards – it's not just based on teachers' judgments." [LA23]

Finally, the relationship between the LA officer and schools was noted as a positive development: *"The personal bit is important". [LA15]*. Another LA officer commented:

"In the four years I have been doing this we have quite close relationships. Two of us deal with it and schools know exactly who to contact when they need help and we give a quick response." [LA06]

2.1.3 LA Officers' concerns about the current system

The LA Officers identified four main areas of concern: provision of advice; lack of coverage of particular areas of need; concern about the validity of some assessments; and parity across LAs. These concerns were also identified by the teachers that we interviewed and confirmed by the educational psychologists.

Provision of advice

Some schools need help in selecting tests or their interpretation:

"(I have) questions about the psychometric tests necessary to meet the criteria. [Schools ask] 'how do I meet the criteria to show lower than average reading ability, which tests?" [LA24]

Inexperienced teachers also seek advice about which access arrangements are at their own discretion and those for which they need to apply. In some cases schools were reported not to have read or understood the guidance: *"Once we point out what the guidance does or does not allow them to do, it really meets most of their needs". [LA04]*.

The need to check and correct submissions was also reported.

"Head teachers fail to fill in both sections and miss a few questions out thinking we won't notice. So we have to send them back and ask for more information. Head teachers do not read the access arrangements guidance. They think they'll 'have a go' – they think nobody checks them. It takes time to double check, sometimes three times." [LA20]

Lack of coverage

The lack of coverage of some areas was also a concern. One LA respondent noted that the present system:

“Doesn’t really cover emotional, behavioural or social need without strong evidence. If they have a statement they get extra time anyway.”
[LA05]

In other cases, *“schools ask about needs that don’t easily match the guidance”*. [LA07] In general, LA respondents considered Section A of the guidance¹¹ to be relatively straightforward whereas there were more difficulties with Section B.

Validity of applications

The third issue causing great concern to a number of the LA officers, relates to the validity of the assessment process and the extent to which they felt uncomfortable about some applications for access arrangements. For example, one LA respondent commented:

“Sometimes it’s a bit of a nightmare. Let’s be quite blunt, because the Ed. Psych. who is writing the report says this child should have the additional time but not why. Then you have to go back to the school and say, what are the reasons?” [LA13]

This example essentially concerns provision of evidence but in other cases LA respondents were more critical of the submissions.

“Too many children are put in for extra time. Being cynical, we have too many children diagnosed as dyslexic. They are the big bulk of the applications. As soon as a medical diagnosis is put forward, then the application is a ‘Yes’.” [LA15]

In other cases, LA interviewee’ were concerned about variations between schools:

“Some schools always apply and use the arrangements. Some schools never seem to apply at all. That doesn’t seem right.” [LA19]

¹¹ Standards and Testing Agency (2012) op cit

This interviewee also suggested that:

“Some don’t bother because there’s a lot of work involved. It doesn’t seem fair to the children. Then, when they’re filling it in, they find it difficult to get information together for the criteria – teachers don’t seem to have the tests.” [LA19]

Parity across and between local authorities

Although many interviewees considered that there were few significant problems with the present system, of those concerns raised, by far the most frequent concerned parity across their LA, and also between LAs.

“I’m concerned with the ‘freedom’ in the system; much of it is with teachers’ decisions. But we do things ‘by the book’ and I don’t know how other LAs compare. Parity across LAs is a problem.” [LA23]

Across the LAs schools may vary in their patterns of applications because of the catchment: *“Children may stand out in an affluent area but not in another”*. [LA13]. A more specific aspect of this issue concerns the use of access arrangements in order to raise a pupils’ grade and thereby improve the school’s results, as indicated by this LA officer:

“The controversy is the number of children who appear to have, say, cognitive or mild special educational needs, where a school thinks if they are working at the threshold and if they have special arrangements it will bring them over the threshold and from level 3 to level 4 (e.g. a scribe or additional time for a ‘mild educational need’ might bring them over the threshold and improve their position in the league tables). Not necessarily wrong or widespread but in terms of applying a bureaucratic system I would have no way of distinguishing which schools are working in that way or not.” [LA07]

Interviewees were also concerned about the application of the criteria and about the support they received when challenging schools:

“There is a problem with being focused on issues regarding school discretion. The problem is that I can say this is against the guidance but if the LA is not backed up by those further up the chain then it undermines the LA’s position.” [LA24]

Concerns were also expressed about some schools’ lack of access to standardised tests, the difficulties with some decisions regarding *“black and*

white [decisions] (as in dyslexia)”. [A15]. One LA officer noted that some pupils with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia may not fit the criteria but did receive extra time in school. This could then “lead to parents rushing out to get some kind of report”. [LA25].

The context of the LA itself could also be a concern as cutbacks affected other services that fulfilled an important role in the assessment system.

“The Learning Support Service has been cut in half this year and it is hard to ensure rigour. It is time-consuming to do it properly. In our LA, resource issues are reaching crisis point, each term there are less people.” [LA17]

2.2 General overview of the draft flowchart

In summary, all three research strands produced evidence that was generally *positive* for the use of the flowchart, with helpful indicators where the flowchart could usefully be improved. Hence, support was not uncritical but the general approach was welcomed by the majority of respondents in all three strands.

- Over 80% of respondents to the survey considered that the flowchart was efficient (85%), clear (81%), easy to use, and would provide a fair and equitable process of assessment (86%).

The observations of teachers by the educational psychologists when they used the flowchart to assess the access needs of individual pupils, and the interviews by the educational psychologists with those teachers after they had completed their assessments, confirmed these levels of positive judgements and the accuracy of the teachers’ assessments. In addition, the interviews provided an opportunity for the teachers to provide specific comments on both the use of the flowchart overall and on specific aspects, for example the clarity of individual items.

Finally, the interviews held with the educational psychologists at the end of all the fieldwork indicated that they validated the views of the teachers they had interviewed. Their observations had demonstrated that the teachers were able to use the flowchart successfully. The teachers’ comments during the observations and during the subsequent interviews were also supported by the educational psychologists.

In the following sections we report the range of views expressed, including examples of the much less frequent negative comments. In addition, we have provided the STA with a full list of the specific comments about the flowchart

made in interviews with teachers, LA officers and the educational psychologists that conducted the Strand 2 fieldwork; and also the comments made by respondents to our survey questionnaire.

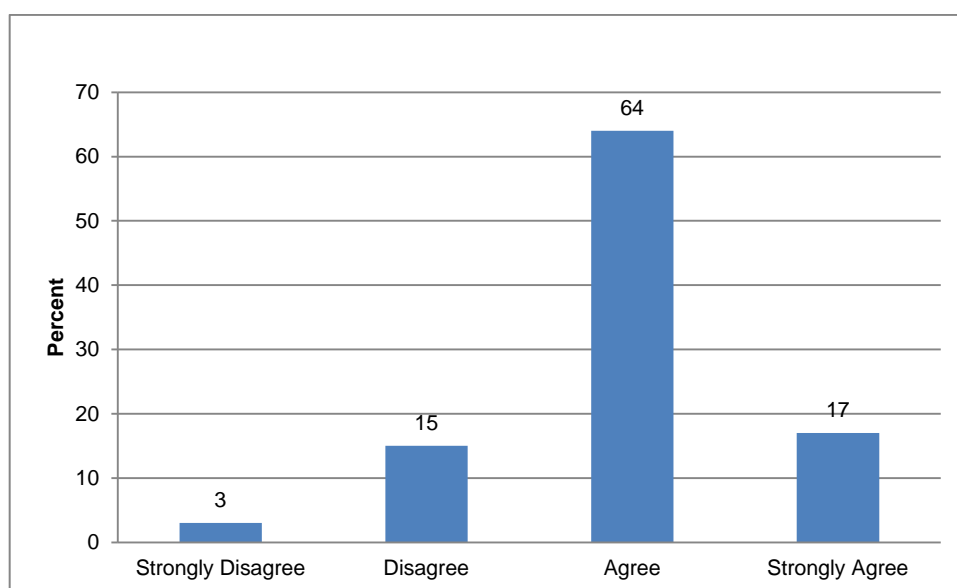
2.3 Clarity of the draft flowchart

If a flowchart is to be used by teachers to identify eligible pupils then it must be clear to use and its content as free of ambiguity as possible. It will be important to ensure that any supplementary guidance is sufficient and appropriate. In order to understand how the draft flowchart was perceived in school situations and in various contexts we asked participants in each strand of our work to make judgements about how clear the draft flowchart was to use as well as on the descriptors and labels used within it.

It is important to stress that all respondents were commenting on a paper version of the flowchart and a number of points made are specific to that medium. The STA intention is to create an online version which would address some of the issues raised by use of that medium. Other issues are pertinent to clarity independent of the medium used.

It is clear from the survey responses that teachers and SENCOs tended to hold positive views about the clarity of the draft flowchart, as illustrated by the positive skew to the results in Figure 3. However, whilst 81% rated it favourably (agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was clear) a significant minority (18%) were negative in their level of agreement (disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). No significant differences were found between school type, or between teacher and SENCO responses.

Figure 3 The draft flowchart is clear to use? (% of survey respondents)



N=627

The additional comments made by survey participants helps to shed some light on their views. For example, it seems that there was a general view that the flowchart was *user friendly and jargon free* and in general respondents tended to agree that the flowchart was clear and user friendly. However, not everyone agreed, a small minority thought it was *overly complicated*.

It seems that a distinction can be made regarding ‘clarity’ in relation to the overall usability of the flowchart, and more specifically, ‘clarity’ in relation to the actual content, i.e. the behaviour descriptors themselves (see Section 2.5.2).

2.3.1 Behaviour descriptions

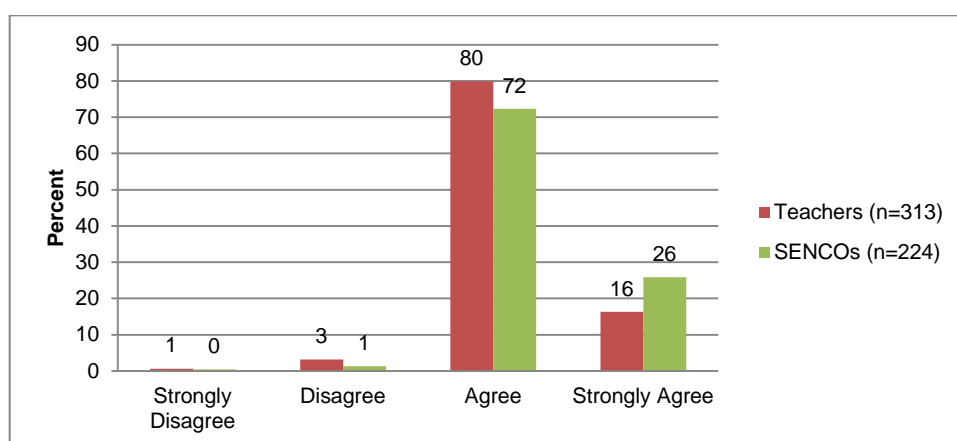
The overriding majority of survey respondents (97%) agreed that the ‘behaviour descriptions’ used in the draft flowchart avoided the use of labels that compartmentalise pupil behaviour as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 The behaviour descriptions included in the draft flowchart avoid the use of labels that compartmentalise pupil behaviour (% of survey respondents).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
1	3	76	21	630

No significant differences were found between respondents from mainstream and special schools. However, SENCOs' agreement levels (mean 3.24) were significantly higher than those of teachers (mean 3.12). Figure 4 presents the distribution of responses according to these respondent groups and shows the greatest variation between teachers and SENCOs is attributed to the stronger agreement scales, with teachers more likely to 'agree' than SENCOs, but with SENCOs more likely to 'strongly agree' than teachers.

Figure 4 The 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart avoid the use of labels that compartmentalise pupil behaviour (% of survey respondents).



Interviews with teachers revealed that most of them welcomed the use of behavioural descriptions, *“Far better moving away from labels as they don’t meet the pupils’ needs” [T5]*. This approach was seen as opening out the flowchart to a number of children as *“Children may share the same label but have different needs and different arrangements will therefore be required” [T6]*. The LA officers and educational psychologists also agreed, the latter arguing that such a change from a diagnosis to a needs-based approach complemented their general approach to assessing children’s special educational needs.

However, respondents also offered specific comments concerning particular items about which they had concerns – see Section 2.5.2.

2.3.2 Clarity of the behaviour descriptions

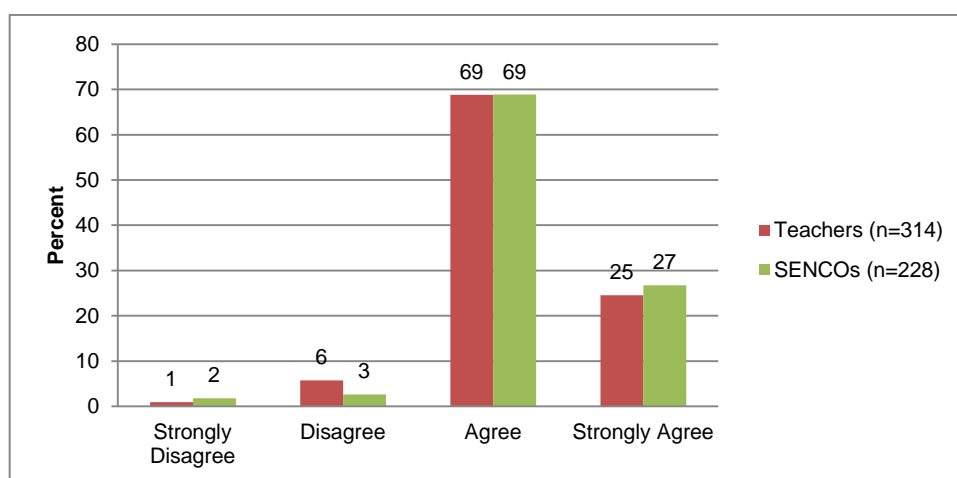
Whilst most of the survey respondents (92%) were in agreement about the clarity of ‘behaviour descriptions’ in the draft flowchart, there was some disagreement among them (8%) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The ‘behaviour descriptions included in the draft flowchart are clear and unambiguous (% of survey respondents).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
1	7	74	18	635

There were no significant differences between mainstream and special school respondents. However, an independent *t*-test found a significantly higher mean score for SENCOs (mean 3.13) than teachers (mean 3.04) regarding the clarity of the ‘behaviour descriptions’. The distribution of responses across agreement levels is presented in Figure 5, which shows a higher proportion of SENCOs than teachers appear in the strongest agreement category.

Figure 5 The ‘behaviour descriptions’ included in the draft flowchart are clear and unambiguous (% of survey respondents).



Although the majority of survey respondents were positive about the behaviour descriptions used, some questioned the clarity, relevance, accuracy and appropriateness of behaviour descriptions in light of their own examples and experiences.

Interviews with teachers revealed similar views, for example, whilst the majority agreed that in general the flowchart was clear, there was some variation in their views, particularly in relation to the behaviour descriptors, with their comments tending to focus on particular areas or items within the flowchart. Some of these referred to the descriptors’ specificity: “*Some descriptions are too stark*” [T5]. However, others referred to lack of clarity.

In the case of items 1,2 and 4 of the flowchart, a pupil's failure to meet the criterion indicates that the child should not sit NCTs. For example, Item 1 states:

1. *Can stay seated continuously on a chair for more than three minutes without a prompt or reward.*

Some teachers considered that this was at too low a level for pupils at this stage.

The early behaviour descriptions on the first page are so extreme - teachers need help on 'borderline' decisions, e.g. rather than "can sit for 3 minutes" what about "can sit for 20-30 minutes"

However, one educational psychologist reported that teachers in several schools with high level of deprivation expressed a different concern, suggesting that *"about 50% of our children can't sit still for more than three minutes!"*

This variation was seen by the educational psychologists as confounding developmental level with behavioural control – the difference between 'can' and 'will' sit for this period. Also, the teachers that reported high numbers of pupils who did not stay seated also commented that they did not think it appropriate for these pupils *not* to sit NCTs: indeed, the school and/or LA policy was seen as requiring all of their pupils to sit NCTs making reference to school league tables. These teachers also noted that the pupils *could* sit NCTs with support:

"Seated on chair for 3 minutes' is very harsh – it excludes many children who should sit the tests and (who) could with in-house provision." [T8]

This comment raises the important issue of the *context* provided by the school as an influence on the child's behaviour. This teacher exemplified this point with reference to another question:

"The concentration/distress/anxiety descriptors (Item 3) need changing – distress which is about needing reassurance requires opportunities for schools to exercise discretion, not to exclude the child from [NCTs]. Schools need opportunities to provide reassurance – not special arrangements as such but an allowance needs to be made." [T8]

The importance of processing speed was also raised:

“Item 12 (and others) doesn’t tap into the issue of processing speed. It focuses on reading accuracy without reference to the question: ‘would extra time improve performance?’ A ‘yes’ in this box excludes the child from the NCT and doesn’t allow for in-house arrangements which could enable the child to sit the tests.” [T6]

Concerns were also raised about the flowchart when used for pupils with hearing impairment:

“We have an IR [integrated resource] for hearing impaired children and when we followed the flowchart to item 4 our hearing impaired children could come out as not being able to sit NCTs, which isn’t the case.” [T1]

There was the possibility that new teachers would exclude many more children from reading, spelling and mental maths tests if they used the flowchart. This, of course, raises the broader question of how the flowchart is to be used: by whom and with what support? Also, the question on persistence (Item 8) was judged to be adequate as a prompt for the teacher to think about attention and motivation but:

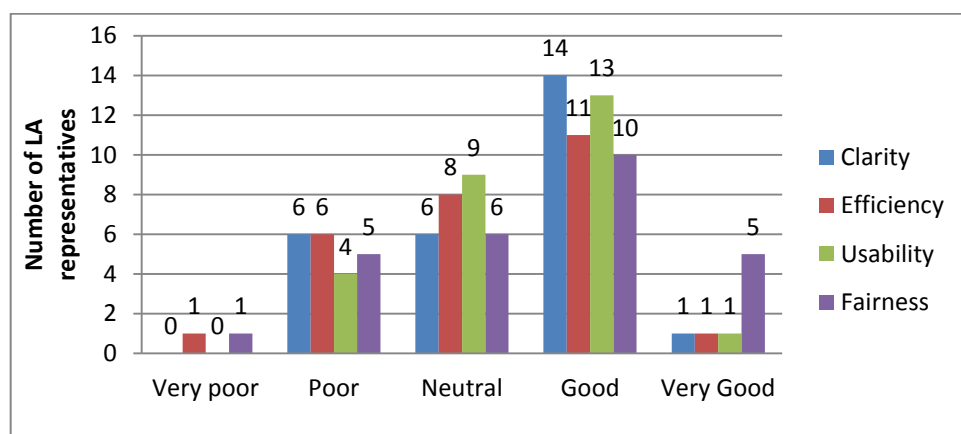
“It doesn’t address the difference between the child who simply lacks motivation or cannot achieve – it doesn’t reflect the element of choice/ability.” [T7]

Also, it was argued that *“Item 11 is confusing as it doesn’t state what the pupil has to write to spell at least 75% of the words correctly.” [T1]*

There were also concerns that “Question 8 [persistence on a task] relates to the majority of our pupils – what type of task is the question referring to?” [T15]

LA officers were generally positive or neutral in their in their rating scores for clarity with 15/27 giving a rating of ‘good’ or ‘very good’ on a 5-point scale; six were neutral and six rated clarity poor (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 LA Officer ratings on clarity, efficiency, usability and fairness components of the draft flowchart (frequency of LA interviewees).



N= 27

However, when asked to elaborate it became apparent that there was some question about the level of guidance that would accompany the flowchart if it were in general use: *“Is there anything to go with it – needs guidance (item 3 and reading out loud etc.). No guidance at present” [LA10].*

Educational psychologists’ perspectives

The educational psychologists agreed that the teachers’ concerns with respect to certain items were justified. Although welcoming the use of behavioural descriptors rather than diagnostic categories, the educational psychologists recognised that being precise (e.g. stay seated for 3 minutes) was problematic. They reported that teachers had typically not been able to provide alternatives for the items about which they had concerns. Similarly, the educational psychologists also did not have alternatives.

In part, at least, this reflects the distinctions raised above, between what a pupil ‘can’ or ‘will’ do. Second, attempts in the flowchart to recognise and respect teachers’ knowledge of classroom behaviour and performance require that items cannot be too specific. Hence, the spelling of ‘75% of words’ does not specify which words, or ‘Can respond to a simple request’ does not specify which request.

In short, the educational psychologists considered that it was important for the behavioural descriptors must reflect a balance between absolute levels of behaviour/performance and a contextualisation of the behaviour. This in turn requires consideration not only of what a pupil can and will do but also the on-going support provided in the classroom to address the child’s needs and reflect this in the assessment of access needs.

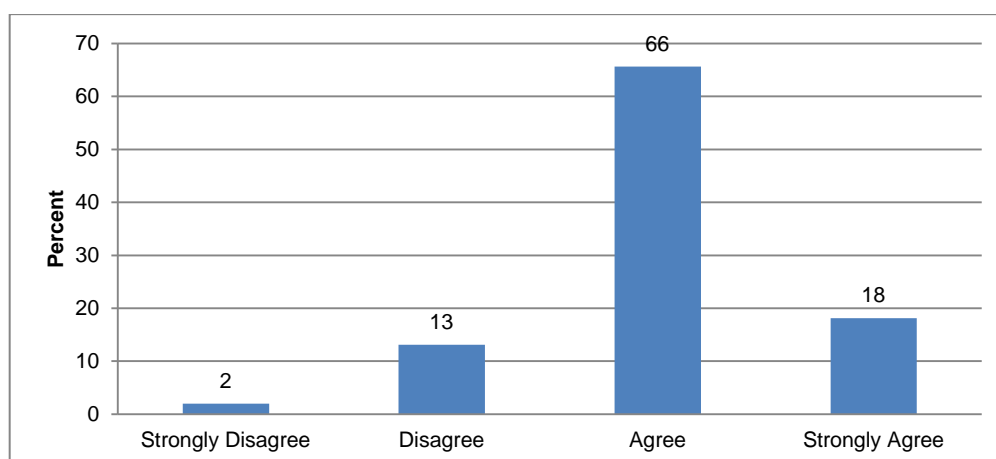
2.4 Usability of the draft flowchart

In order for the draft flowchart to be developed and refined so that it can be a widely used tool, consideration of the feedback from potential users is essential. This section explores opinion on the usability of the draft flowchart and in the main confirms positive views in terms of the process of using the draft flowchart. On the whole it is viewed as a welcome addition to the process of assessment and is considered to respect and draw on existing knowledge and expertise as well as providing opportunity to enhance knowledge in this area.

2.4.1 Ease of use

When asked specifically about the usability of the draft flowchart, the majority of survey respondents were positive in their level of agreement regarding this dimension, with 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was easy to use, compared to 15% who disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Figure 7). For example: *It is clear, informative and very helpful - takes away the guesswork/subjectively and makes things much fairer for all SEN pupils.* There were no significant differences found in ratings according to school type or between teacher and SENCO responses.

Figure 7 The draft flowchart is easy to use (% of survey respondents),



N=636

From the interviews with teachers, it is evident that generally they also thought that the draft flowchart was easy to use. These judgements were made in the context of the various points already reported, and assuming that amendments would be made - in particular, an online version. Teachers liked the fact that it did not rely solely on the SENCO selecting pupils who cause concern: others may be included, or at least considered. The educational

psychologists confirmed that their observations supported the teachers' judgements regarding usability.

LA officer comments about usability specifically tend to reflect the thinking that with clear guidance, time to go through it and with practice, the flowchart should be fairly straight forward to use. In fact, many of them thought that it would be particularly useful for new teachers and those relatively inexperienced in the process.

"Initially feels a lot to get through, but once you have gone through it it's OK." [LA12]

The importance of an online version of the flowchart was stressed:

"They will need a lot of talking through the flowchart, lots of arrows and would need to do a course on handling this. Quite difficult to navigate, will be better if interactive online." [LA03]

As was making teachers consider all possible access needs:

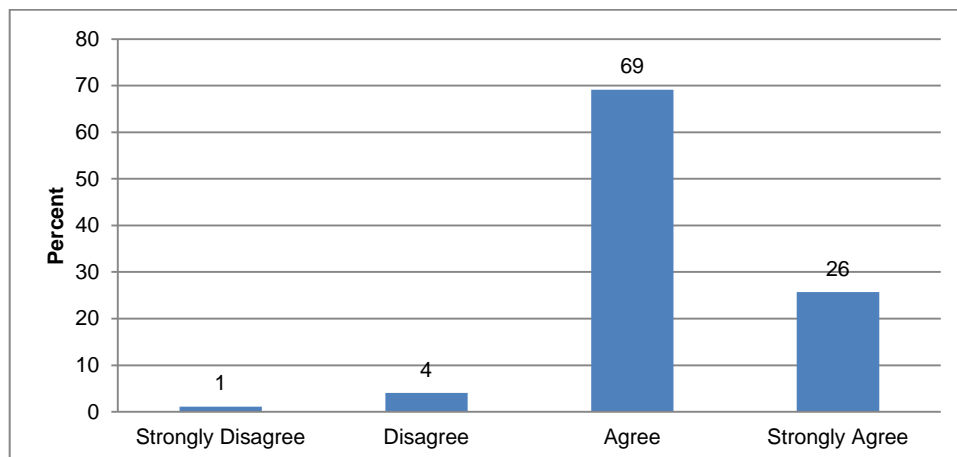
"It is quite big and you have to go through a lot that's not relevant to every child but makes you think about multiple needs (item 3)." [LA11]

Many of the concerns raised about usability will be addressed by an online version where, for example, information on screen can be limited.

2.4.2 Respecting knowledge

Survey data revealed that 95% of teachers and SENCOs agreed that the draft flow chart is suitable in that it draws on and respects the knowledge that teachers and SENCOs have of pupils and their ability to assess pupil levels of corresponding needs (Figure 8). There were no significant differences in levels of agreement between teachers and SENCOs. Likewise, no significant differences were detected according to type of school (mainstream or special) that the survey respondents represented.

Figure 8 The draft flowchart draws on and respects my knowledge of pupils and my ability to assess pupil levels (% of survey respondents).



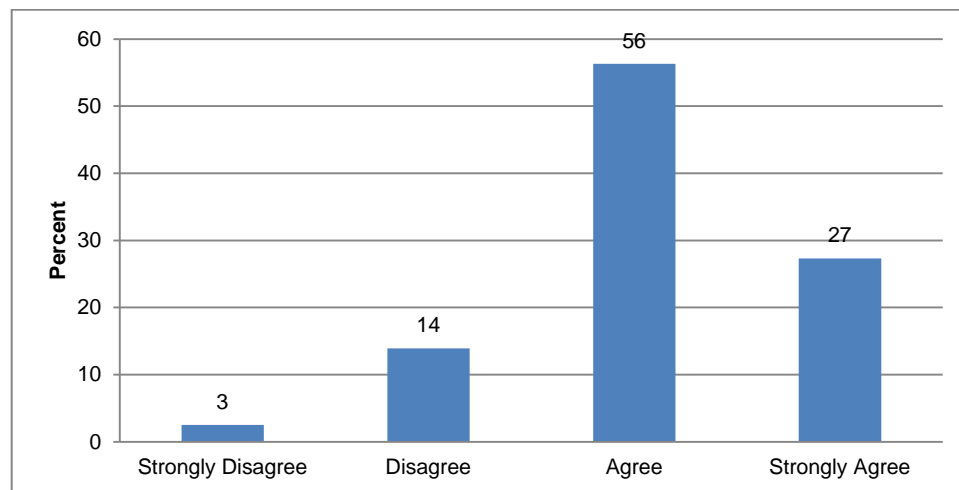
N=638

Teacher contributions from interviews were consistent with those in the survey, where the flowchart was considered, by all except one teacher, to respect teachers' contributions by drawing upon their knowledge of their pupils, and their ability to assess pupil levels and their corresponding needs. *"A lot of it is observation based – you need to know what the child is like in class" [T11]*. The thinking behind the flowchart was welcomed – its focus on behavioural rather than categories of special educational needs for example (see Section 2.5.1), and its emphasis on the evidence from teachers. It was also commented that use of the flowchart relied on the teacher and colleagues getting together more formally than the assessment process currently. The educational psychologists confirmed the positive views of the teachers and agreed that, in their opinion also, teachers' knowledge was clearly respected.

2.4.3 Enhancing knowledge and understanding

Overall, 84% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft flowchart would enhance their understanding of pupils' access arrangement requirements. No significant differences were found between school types or between teacher and SENCO responses (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 The draft flowchart would enhance my understanding of a pupil’s access arrangement requirements (% of survey respondents).



N=641

The survey data show that around one in six respondents (17%) did not feel that the flowchart would enhance their understanding of a pupil’s access arrangement requirements. Likewise, a minority of the teachers interviewed felt that the flowchart did not enhance *their* understanding of the access needs of the children they assessed as they were experienced. There were criticisms of the initial questions:

“We did not find the first part useful – the questions were too obvious and didn’t really help in the assessment – later questions were more useful.” [T11]

However, the draft flowchart was seen as definitely likely to be beneficial for other, less experienced teachers. Mostly teachers did consider the flowchart had enhanced their own understanding, for example, by helping them “*to focus on the fact that extra time is not appropriate for all children*” [T6]. Also, the flowchart filtered out children who were below levels required and the dialogue boxes provided alternatives to extra time, prompting schools to consider these other options as possibly more useful for the pupil. The flowchart was also seen as *simplifying the process*, providing quick evidence and so helpful to less experienced staff: not really an issue of *enhancement* of understanding but important in itself.

The educational psychologists pointed out that a key factor in the differences between teachers was their level of experience. Some teachers/SENCOs were highly experienced in conducting assessments for access arrangements and had a well-developed system, whereas others were new to the task.

2.5 Efficiency of the draft flowchart

The flowchart was generally considered to be efficient in that it provided an easy to use tool that was quick to use. Indeed, one teacher was sufficiently impressed to declare an intention in future to use for the whole class as that would be time well spent.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement that the draft flowchart was efficient to use, the majority (85%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was (Figure 10). No significant differences were found according to type of respondent: teacher or SENCO, or whether they were from a mainstream or special school.

Length was a factor that concerned some teachers:

“I think it’s a bit too long and most of the questions do not apply to all children but you still have to go through the whole thing for all of them, which does not really make sense.” [T10]

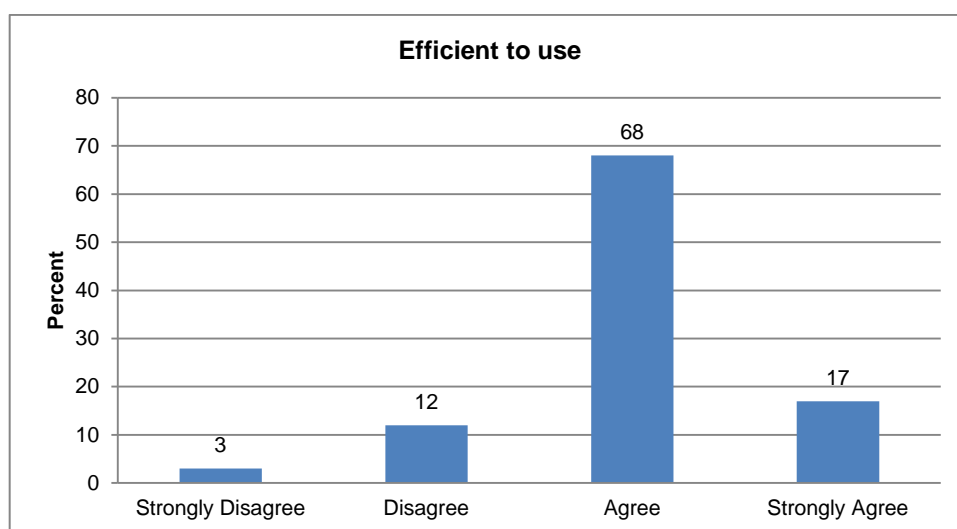
Another teacher commented that: *“Efficiency could be impaired by eliminating the first eight items which are generally already a ‘given’ before access arrangements are considered’ [T3].* This teacher went on to comment that using the flowchart had led to the process taking longer than the existing system.

However, the educational psychologists reported that teachers quickly found that they could often move beyond the first few items, which would not be applicable to most of the pupils under consideration, once they had used the flowchart on two or three children. One teacher commented that using the flowchart *“wouldn’t take long as long as you know the system beforehand [T11].*

Other teachers considered the flowchart to be *“very efficient of time” [T8].* Furthermore, the flowchart was considered to simplify the process and also to direct teachers to consider the range of needs. The step by step approach was said to *‘make life easier (and) make you more confident that you’ve done it ‘by the book” [T5].* One teacher summed up the common view:

“We believe that if the flowchart is used properly then it could definitely be an improvement on the current system.” [T1]

Figure 10 Is the draft flowchart efficient to use? (% of survey respondents)



N=635

Interviews with teachers found that their views on efficiency were often entwined with comments on other topics in relation to the draft flowchart, and as such, comments on efficiency have also been reported in the other sections of this report.

LA officers gave views that supported the notion of efficiency, especially in terms of time taken to make an assessment:

“It ought to be quick to work through, children either demonstrate these abilities or they don’t – what is difference between 4 minutes or 5, if they don’t agonise and go through it – it can be arbitrary sometimes and lead to debate.” [LA07]

However, the need to see evidence in support of an application was also stressed:

“Yes, currently it’s very quick (but) I would need to see where the evidence is”. [LA25]

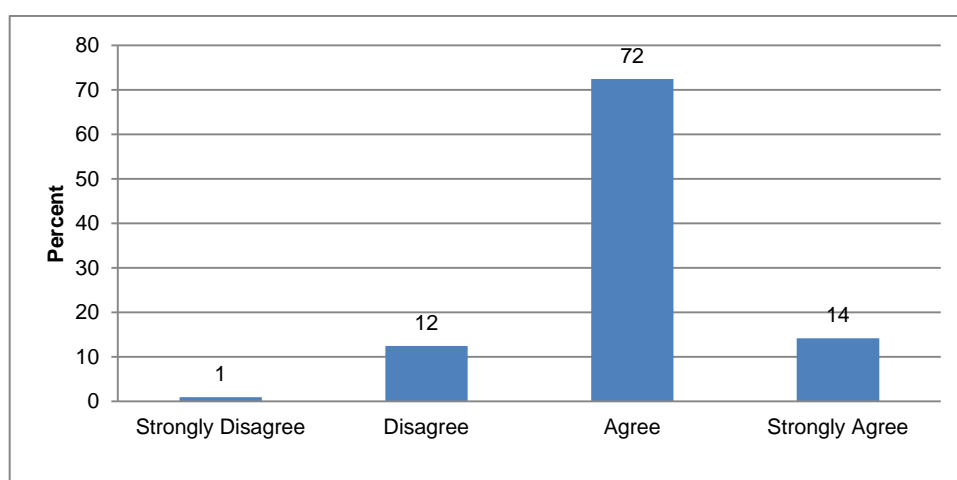
Furthermore, the need for written guidance was also noted:

“Hard to say really, if they use this appropriately and have the document in front of them it should be clear and succinct, it should reduce them [administrative demands].” [LA12]

2.5.1 A fair and equitable process

In terms of the draft flowchart providing a fair and equitable process of assessment for KS2 access arrangements, 86% of survey respondents were in positive agreement that the draft flowchart would aid this process while 13% disagreed (see Figure 11). No significant differences were found between teachers' and SENCOs' responses, nor were there any significant relationships according to school type.

Figure 11 The draft flowchart would help to ensure that the process for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements is fair and equitable (% of survey respondents).



N=627

Teachers in their interview responses agreed that the flowchart would, in principle, ensure that the process for identifying pupils who are eligible for access arrangements was fair and equitable, but with some caveats. One caveat was to amend the items considered to be ambiguous or inappropriate. There was also concern that the needs of pupils with EAL were not sufficiently addressed. One teacher commented, *“Are we really thinking about true levels if we don’t assess in the home language?”* [T8]. Also teachers again considered that the flowchart could lead to pupils *not* being required to take NCTs when this was not appropriate: *“This would rule out children who could access the tests”*. [T7].

However, there was a small concern among some LA interviewees that using the draft flowchart might, lead to some having an unfair advantage. For example, some commented on how the draft flowchart could be used in borderline judgements to give pupils a “leg up”, thereby improving a school’s results.

2.6 Accuracy of the draft flowchart to assess pupils' eligibility for access arrangements

In this section we also consider whether the flowchart will enable teachers also to identify which pupils do and those that do *not* require access arrangements. This ability to distinguish between pupils is a basic requirement of a measure. If children who should have access arrangements are not identified (false negatives) then those children will be disadvantaged. Also important is to ensure that children that do not require access arrangements are not incorrectly identified by the flowchart as being eligible. Over-identification (false positives) may also have an undesirable effect. In this case, over-identification may not adversely affect the pupil but could inappropriately improve a school's results in KS2 NCTs.

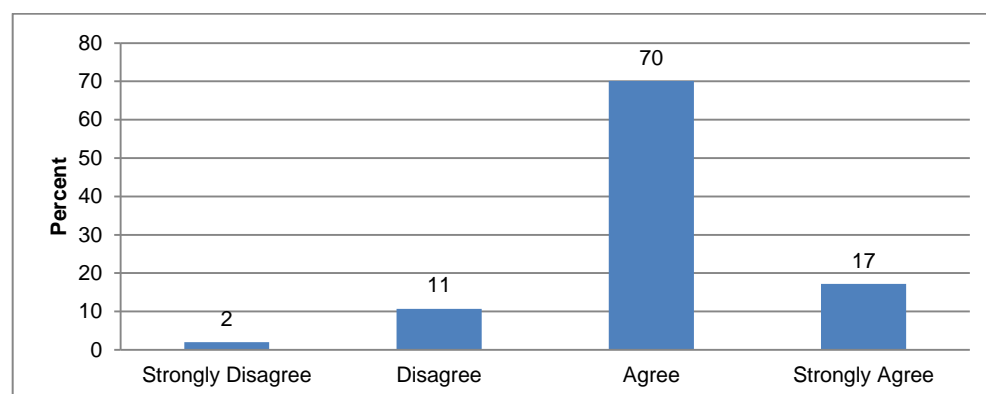
Furthermore, the flowchart must be accurate for different types of access arrangements. As teachers had been monitoring their pupils over time they were able to comment on the match between their judgements based on normal classroom practice and the evidence previously collected and discussed with colleagues, compared with the judgements indicated by the flowchart.

2.6.1 Distinguishing between pupils that are and those that are not eligible for access arrangements

Identifying pupils who are eligible

The survey results confirmed that an 87% majority of respondents positively agreed that the behaviour descriptions in the draft flowchart would enable them to assess pupil eligibility for access arrangements accurately (see Figure 12). No significant differences were found between school types or between teacher and SENCO responses.

Figure 12 The behaviour descriptions in the draft flowchart would enable me to accurately assess pupil eligibility for access arrangements (% of survey respondents).



N=635

The teacher interviews provided an opinion which was generally supportive of the flowchart, for example it *“identified correct arrangements for two students with behavioural difficulties”* [T11]. However, they also made a number of important points concerning the issues outlined above. These results complement those presented above in the sections on clarity of the flowchart and the use of behavioural descriptors. One teacher commented:

“Overall, the behaviour descriptions were good and respected all children and they did help us to identify pupils who do need access arrangements. We did have to keep referring back to the standardised tests for English and maths levels. When we trialled the flowchart on the pupils that are not applying for access arrangements, it surprised us as they came out needing help with their writing and reading. This has given us a sense of uncertainty about our current system.” [T1]

This was echoed by another teacher who gave the following examples of a child:

“The flowchart leads to the outcome expected in the majority of cases but for some children it suggests they should not sit (NCTs) when in fact the child could. For example, Item 11 posed dilemmas – [the child’s] spelling was very poor but legible and the teacher assessment suggested level 3 overall although spelling alone would be less than level 3.” [T7]

Examples of other concerns include:

- The item on writing speed does not reflect motor skills issues
- English as an Additional Language needs are not always addressed by the flowchart, which is more about literacy or learning difficulties.

- The criterion ‘distress at least once a week’ is a very strict criterion and excludes many children who are anxious or lack confidence.

LA officers showed a general level of agreement that the draft flowchart would enable accurate identification of most types of need. For example, typical comments were:

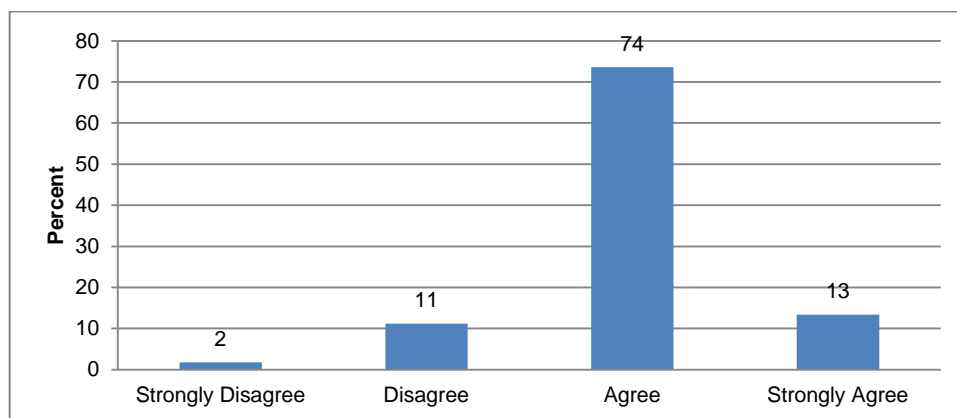
“I can see most of the types of arrangements here”. [LA03]

“Yes I think so, very clear about different types of arrangements for different kinds of children”. [LA11]

Identifying pupils who are *not* are eligible

As shown in Figure 13, an 87% majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft flowchart would accurately identify pupils who should *not* sit KS2 NCTs. There were no significant differences found between school types or between teacher and SENCO responses.

Figure 13 The ‘behaviour descriptions’ included in the draft flowchart would identify those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit the KS2 NCTs (% of survey respondents).



N=626

The teachers interviewed at the case study schools were content that the flowchart did enable teachers to correctly identify children who should not sit NCTs as their level of performance was too low. The large majority of LA officers agreed. One commented that it was necessary to include items which would allow the identification of pupils who should not sit NCTs:

“When I first read it I thought, do we need these? But then I thought, yes.” [LA25]

However, some LA officers and teachers reflected upon the wider issue of pupils not being entered, making the point discussed earlier that teachers expect pupils *should* be entered for NCTs:

“A tough question. A lot of time teachers are looking for verification that they will [be entered] and they will still put children forward for whom access arrangements are not appropriate, but if they... go through it with care then they should be able to make the decision... it should be obvious which children are not eligible for access arrangements.”
[LA05]

Some LA officers that were unsure raised particular queries, for example:

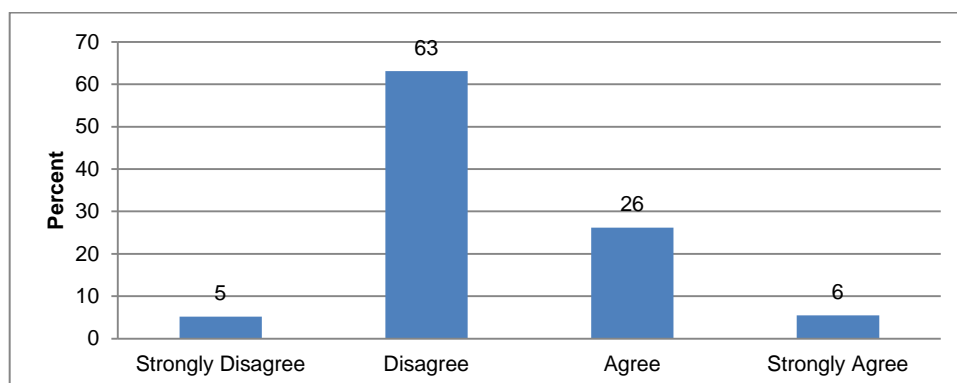
“There may be other areas that aren’t there. If a child has had a particular trauma or bereavement and the school feels they’re not ready, for example. Item 3 is more a chronic than an acute need.”
[LA21]

However, this LA officer then went on to comment that. *“There’s enough to give most teachers guidance on the type of relevant need.”*

2.6.2 Erroneous judgements

Over two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents disagreed with the statement regarding teachers making erroneous judgements about pupil eligibility for access arrangements and thereby *not* submitting some pupils who *should be* eligible. However, this leaves almost a third who thought the flowchart might lead to incorrect judgements in this respect (Figure 14). No significant differences were found between school types or between teacher and SENCO responses.

Figure 14 Using the draft flowchart might lead to some teachers not submitting applications for access arrangements for some pupils who should be eligible (% of survey respondents).



N=618

Teachers generally did not consider it likely that using the flowchart would lead to teachers choosing not to submit applications for pupils who should be eligible for access arrangements. However, the point was made that: *“some pupils do not get to demonstrate what they can achieve in the reading comprehension, who may not qualify for extra time – these would be high achieving EAL pupils” [T3].*

On the other hand, half of the LA officers interviewed considered that using the flowchart would lead to teachers identifying some pupils as being eligible for access arrangements who they would previously have thought (based on classroom knowledge) did *not* require them, therefore also introducing the risk of erroneous judgements: *“There is a danger of that due to the vagueness and lack of precision in some statements in the boxes [of the flowchart].” [LA17]*

There was also concern that the benefits of the flowchart might, perversely, increase this risk as teachers would not need to read the SAT guidance¹²:

“Yes it might do – over the last few years teachers have sought not to look to access arrangements as they feel it is too complex.” [LA04]

However, the flowchart was seen as potentially useful for borderline judgements:

“It may help teachers to say ‘Yes, they are entitled’. It will help the children too as they have children who are very borderline.” [LA15]

¹² Standards and Testing Agency (2012). op cit

Over a third of LA officers did not think that pupils considered not to require access arrangements would be judged eligible if teachers used the flowchart, although one also commented, *“Unless they are encouraged to do that”*. [LA26] The reason was because teachers already have this list firmly in their heads: *they would go to the flowchart to check.*” [LA20]. However, the need to gain experience was recognised: *“No, not unless they were really inexperienced.”* [LA05]

Overall, three quarters of LA officers considered that the flowchart would enable teachers to accurately identify all pupils who are *not* eligible for access arrangements, for example:

“Better chance than the system we have at the moment.” [LA25]

“It’s good, if they follow it through logically in the correct order. It tells them about levels, spells it out quite clearly.” [LA15]

As noted above, teachers in some socially disadvantaged schools were keen to stress that they expected all pupils to be entered for NCTs. Interviews with LA officers confirmed this expectation:

“I think that people tend to work on the basis, because LAs work on this basis, that all children should be able to take NCTs. There may be relatively few who can’t. It should apply to relatively few who can’t, otherwise something is wrong with the whole system.” [LA21]

An addition could help enhance the flowchart.

“Yes pretty clear. One thing though, it should stress ‘you must follow normal classroom procedure’ right at the top [of the flowchart].” [LA14]

This point was also stressed by teachers and by the educational psychologists.

Some LA officers had concerns, including the flowchart being *“too prescriptive”* [LA08], or referred to other pressures to make particular judgements, independent of the accuracy of the flowchart. It was suggested that teachers might over-identify in order to ‘help’ some pupils:

“Interesting. The presumption is... this flowchart might encourage some teachers to consider every single child who has a nervous tic for some other emotional disability who is otherwise of average ability, to think

that I will work through this to see if there is anything that might give them a leg up. This is a possibility but not a substantial one.” [LA07]

The educational psychologists echoed this concern: schools varied in the extent to which they were influenced by an expectation that securing access arrangements for pupils would lead to higher levels of performance and, as a consequence, better results for school performance tables.

A further issue concerns the possibility that there is a misfit between the judgements developed by teachers on the basis of classroom knowledge and the indications made by using the flowchart. As normal classroom practice is the basis for judging eligibility for access arrangements, it is important that the flowchart is pitched at the correct level. LA officers were almost evenly divided on this issue with many comments indicating uncertainty, even when the interviewee gave a yes or no response.

Some saw benefits in such a discrepancy by increasing analysis.

“Anything that makes them think more about what they’re doing must be a good thing.” [LA25]

Or by refining judgments:

“I think, being optimistic, it will help teachers identify minor alterations to practice for pupils as opposed to going the whole hog and asking for additional time.” [LA26]

Others thought that experience of using the flowchart would reduce the different judgements as, *“It might then hone down.” [LA11]* However, it was also recognised that the possibility of differences remained.

“Perhaps, for example point 8, just having an adult, a prompt sit with them rather than to keep them calm. If the average test is 45 minutes, if a pupil needs more than 2 prompts, that is quite a high standard.” [LA24]

2.6.3 Types of access need and eligibility

It was clear from discussions with teachers and LA officers that the most common access arrangements made for pupils is additional time. This may well be appropriate but an objective of the flowchart was to ensure that teachers considered *other* access needs that might be more appropriate. We

therefore asked LA officers their views on whether the flowchart would be helpful in this respect.

LA respondents were overwhelmingly of the view that by using the flowchart teachers would accurately identify all possible types of access arrangements required by all the pupils that may arise.

“It might help to consider the broader range of arrangements – yes. You often find they (teachers) haven’t considered things they don’t need to apply for – like rest breaks and so on, they are very focused on extra time. If the flowchart was central to the process it will serve as a good reminder.” [LA08]

“Looks very comprehensive.” [LA16]

Most LA officers also considered the flowchart would be suitable for those pupils with and those without statements although some questioned whether it was necessary for the former, as exemplified by the comment; *“Those stated already have arrangements so there’s no need to assess them.” [LA02]*. However, another LA officer noted that: *“Yes, because they automatically get extra time but other access arrangements have to be thought about.” [LA11]*. And another commented: *“Yes, the statement may not be for one of those needs.” [LA23]*

2.6.4 Identification of more than one type of access arrangement

The large majority of LA officers considered that using the flowchart would enable teachers to accurately identify all pupils who require more than one type of access arrangement. One LA officer commented:

“This is one of the real pros about it. Some people can be quick to jump to additional time and not think about other options such as breaks etc.” [LA26]

Others commented that the flow chart covered the different areas of need; *“It picks the appropriate areas” [LA21]*, or that *“It’s really good at identifying types.” [LA20]*

The need to get used to the flowchart in order to prompt teachers to consider all access needs was also stressed:

“It is quite complicated but if teachers take their time to work through it, then I think it’s good.” [LA06]

Only two disagreed that the flowchart would enable identification of more than one access need. A further six were not sure, and wanted to see it in action:

“Difficult to tell until you’re actually using it.” [LA10]

2.6.5 Different access arrangements for different subjects

Pupils do not necessarily have the same access needs for all subjects. We therefore asked whether the flowchart enables teachers to accurately identify pupils who require access arrangements for a KS2 test in one subject but do not require the same access arrangements in another subject. The LA officers considered the flowchart was appropriate for this purpose:

“It’s good. If they follow it logically in the correct order. It tells them about levels, spells it out clearly.” [LA15]

There were just two dissenters, one of whom commented:

“Not particularly well. The criteria which are given are very inflexible, short and sharp. I suspect many teachers won’t plough through the whole thing, especially if they have a lot of children with issues.” [LA08]

Although this is a comment about the flowchart as a whole, the point about specificity of criteria was also picked up by other LA officers, but they were positive about the flowchart being useful for this purpose. For example, one LA officer had a concern about the third item.

“(I would) query item 3 – ‘shows panic and extreme distress... at least once a week’. There are children who find it very stressful but you can obviously make it less stressful quite easily (e.g. place in a separate room with a couple of invigilators instead of a large hall).” [LA05]

This comment is less about the flowchart as a tool than the criteria themselves. This tension ran through the interviews and is perhaps inevitable. Some LA officers specifically commented on the current guidance and how the flowchart must complement this.

“There needs to be a set of positives to say all [pupils] working at level 3 or above sitting this test are not allowed to have this arrangement, e.g. you are not allowed to read the reading test to them, whereas, of

course, you could read the maths test to them. Don't want the flowchart to contradict what is in the current guidance. [It] might lead you to conclude the opposite of that." [LA07]

To ensure teachers considered different access needs for different subjects it was suggested that: *"Perhaps it should say at the top you should do this for every subject." [LA10]*

2.7 Comparison of the flowchart with present guidance and practice

In this Section we considered the benefits and limitations of using the flowchart compared with the present system¹³.

LA interviewees were asked to compare use of the flowchart with previous guidance and practice. This presented some difficulties as interviewees only had the flowchart but no supporting guidance on its use, or how using the flowchart would fit into the overall system for assessing applications for access arrangements. Some answers reflected these difficulties. Nevertheless, the majority of LA officers were positive about the flowchart, describing it as *"Much better, even if only for the simple introduction of objectivity." [LA01]; "Easier" [LA05]; "More comprehensive" [LA06]; "Much better – the step by step approach" [LA25]; and "A lot better – user friendly" [LA26].* The majority considered that the teachers' use of the flowchart would improve the system.

An important consideration was the relationship between the flowchart and the current guidance, which LA officers found helpful and comprehensive. However, some also had concerns about whether teachers actually read it.

"Well, I don't think I would rely on this – I would go back to the ARA or web page and check, as you have quite good and more complete information on the web page. Will this still be there?" [LA11]

The flowchart was considered *"Quicker for teachers – I don't think we can do away with the full guidance though" [LA14]. It was felt to "provide a scaffold which will improve teacher confident" [LA15]* because it simplifies the process. Some LA officers had concerns about the format and would prefer an online version (which is the intention). Nevertheless, overall a small but significant

¹³ Standards and Testing Agency (2012). National curriculum assessments: Assessment and reporting arrangements: Key Stage 2. <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213221/2013-assessment-and-reporting-ks2>

minority of about one fifth did not think the flowchart would improve the system. One LA officer said that, *“I think the previous guidance is far superior – before that it was too vague but now the system is good.”* [LA04]. The view also reflected that some LA officers felt very comfortable with the method they knew and were not keen on changes to the system.

Another had questioned the accuracy of the flowchart relative to the current ARA and commented, *“If it was accurate it would be a positive addition.”* [LA24]. Another interviewee gave a fuller critique, building upon their comments throughout the interview.

“Much worse. The previous guidance in itself was very clear and succinct... When you do find it hard to know if you have found all of it, whether you have followed all the links that there are, because they are hidden all over the pages. It is difficult to know what is statutory and what is guidance. The actual quality of the content of the guidance is much better.” [LA08]

Teachers were generally in favour of the flowchart compared with the present system. One commented that:

‘It would be easier for me and my colleagues as it would be a more methodical process of applying for access arrangements.’ [T16]

However, some teachers preferred to stay with the system they knew. For some this reflected a positive view of the current system whereas for others this was related to concerns about the number and frequency of changes to the education system in general.

2.8 Anticipated impact of the draft flowchart

The impact of introducing the flowchart will differ for teachers compared with LA officers. For the former, the difference will be a practical tool, for the latter the introduction was seen as having implications for the system as a whole. This could increase or decrease demands on them, either in the short or longer term.

LA officers were asked to comment on what they believed the likely overall impact of the draft flowchart would be, in particular, with regard to their own administrative burden and that of teachers’. The large majority of LA officers judged that the flowchart would have a positive overall impact: it was clear and *“would be received well”* [LA10]; would provide greater accessibility as

“Teachers and heads are not good at reading papers of guidance” [LA20]; and “Will make people think about additional arrangements.” [LA22]

The need for *training* in order to ensure teachers were introduced to the flowchart was stressed

“I would need to go through it at network meetings to say this is how it will be done from now on.” [LA05]

Although, in one LA officer’s view: *“If it was used in training, most experienced teachers would think it is too long and complicated” [LA19]*, indicating the need for careful introduction. However, other LA officers were more positive:

“I think it would be another tool to help schools in their identification and we could use it in our meetings and in our training and is another aid. It will improve and can’t hinder – it won’t put barriers in the way.” [LA06]

With respect to impact on the LA and themselves the officers we interviewed thought that there could be an initial increase in requests for support and other administrative demands:

“I would expect more phone calls asking for clarity and guidance.” [LA04].

There was also concern that the workload could be dependent upon the confidence of teachers and how carefully they read the flowchart.

“They will just call us instead of working through it and we will have to be explaining it to people.” [LA03]

This could increase the burden on LA officers:

“In its present form my job would potentially be more difficult, if we continue to authorise the access arrangements. Currently there is a fair amount of clarity. This has the potential to take far more time.” [LA17]

Another LA officer was very negative:

“It would be a nightmare. Would have too many access arrangements coming through.” [LA13]

However, with the support of good training and ‘settling down’, the flowchart could help to improve the system:

“Once circulated and in use, and people had spoken and seen how it works, it might in the longer term reduce the number of people making enquiries ...because the enquiries are about the procedure not about the child’s needs.” [LA07]

Overall, therefore, LA officers either predicted a reduction or no change in the demands placed on them as a result of the introduction of the flowchart. Some referred to temporary increases followed by reductions, or uncertainty because it was difficult to predict whether the numbers of applications would change.

“Depends – if we get more applications it will use more of my time, but I don’t anticipate a huge swell just because of the flowchart. It might cut down the questions I get asked.” [LA14]

However, some LA officers raised a separate issue. They wondered whether the use of the flowchart would reduce their involvement and that this would be detrimental to their oversight:

“There would be tasks that we would no longer have to do so we’d lose an overview. Looks as though it is efficient and saves time but we lose knowing all children are being treated fairly or the same.” [LA09]

Impact on teachers

Overall, LA officers considered that teacher workload would either reduce or remain the same. Reduction would occur because of the usefulness of the flowchart:

“It will reduce demands on teachers because it is simple and easy to use. There will be no need to look things up unless they want to, and I think many will in the beginning, until they are confident in it – especially new teachers who will want to look things up for personal or developmental reasons.” [LA01]

“If they use this appropriately and have the document in front of them it should be clear and succinct – it should reduce [workload].” [LA12]

A minority of LA officers, however, thought the demands on teachers would increase:

“There is some sort of delusion that teachers have a lot of time to sit on the internet doing things like this. They can’t easily look something up

with this as was the case in the past. They have to find their username, password and log in details and then navigate to the right part – very time consuming.” [LA03]

Another was concerned about the need to gather evidence:

“Will add to demands, because it’s long and complicated, asking very precise questions that they will have to get evidence for, perhaps without having the proper tests available.” [LA08]

However, teachers overall thought that the flowchart would be a benefit:

‘We believe that if the flowchart is used properly then it could definitely be an improvement on our current system.’ [T2]

2.9 Improvement suggestions

Many improvement suggestions related to the *format* of the flowchart, as a 6 page document, and many suggestions for improvement were relevant to this format. These are not reported as the STA intention is to produce an online version and, indeed, an online version was one of the suggestions to improve the flowchart. Other improvement suggestions addressed specific items in the flowchart. These have been highlighted throughout the report. A full list of *all* suggestions from the survey and interviewees has been made available to the STA to inform the development of the online version of the flowchart. The main points are considered in Section 3.

2.10 The perspectives of the educational psychologists

The views of educational psychologists have been reported throughout Section 2. They were able to provide comments on the perspectives of the teachers acquired during the use of the flowchart to assess pupils’ needs for access arrangements and also during the interview after the observation session. In addition, the interviews with the educational psychologists themselves provided an opportunity for both an overview of the evidence from the teachers and also their own professional judgements.

The flowchart

Overall, the educational psychologists concluded that the flowchart was a positive development. They supported the views of the teachers on its overall strength but also supported their concerns about the clarity of certain items.

The main concern was the possibility that the early items in the present draft flowchart would determine that some pupils should not sit NCTs. They agreed with the teachers that this would not be appropriate and that these items should be reconsidered. However, they advised that the answer was not to amend the criterion per se, e.g. to change the number of minutes a pupil could stay seated. There was no absolute time that was 'right'. Rather, the approach could be to amend 'Should not sit NCTs' to 'Consider whether the pupil can sit NCTs with appropriate support.' This would reflect current classroom practice.

The educational psychologists also considered that there remained a need for guidance as well as the flowchart itself. This could include advice on the use of standardised tests, which teachers had requested. A benefit of the flowchart was that it stressed the need for standardised tests for the assessment of some access needs. The educational psychologists reported that schools varied in their use of, and their awareness of the need to use standardised tests, but guidance on *which* tests were appropriate would be helpful.

Educational context

The educational psychologists stressed that the evaluation of the flowchart as a technical instrument was only one part of the task. Their work with teachers had shown that the flowchart was very well received, easy and very efficient to use, and generally accurate. But the wider context was also important. The schools in the sample included those in rural and urban settings and with different levels of social disadvantage. Two important factors, therefore, were: first, the interpretation of behaviours in the context of the school norms, and second, the degree to which schools carried out assessments for access arrangements for the benefit of the pupils, as opposed to optimise the school's performance in NCTs.

The first point requires interpretation of what is normal for the school. This is a *relativistic* judgement and schools therefore differ in their judgement of what is normal for them. The second point concerns the pressures on schools, in areas of social deprivation in particular, with generally lower levels of achievement. The educational psychologists reported that schools in these areas in particular were very concerned about their performance in NCTs and the impact on school reputation. Indeed, the research study itself was affected as a number of SENCOs were willing, and indeed keen, to contribute to the study, but their head teachers did not give their support. This reflected current pressures on the schools common in such areas of deprivation, including the adverse impact of recent negative Ofsted inspections on the wider community of schools in socially disadvantaged areas.

In summary, the educational psychologists welcomed the flowchart; confirmed that the teachers were generally very positive, albeit with specific concerns about some items; but stressed the need to regard access needs as relative not absolute, reflecting both a pupil's level of performance and difficulties, and the support provided normally by the school to meet needs as part of normal classroom practice.

3: Conclusions

The research presents a clear case in favour of the development of an online version of the flowchart, based on modifications to the current draft, informed by the issues raised and improvement suggestions made by our participants.

The results from all three research strands indicate that teachers, LA officers and educational psychologists generally considered that the flowchart will improve the process whereby teachers identify access needs of pupils who sit Key Stage 2 NCTs. On all four criteria – clarity, usability, fairness, and efficiency – the flowchart was rated positively by over 80% of teachers in the national survey, and by similar proportions of the teachers and LA officers that we interviewed, as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them sufficient access.

Furthermore, the evidence indicates that the flowchart is generally accurate as a tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible and pupils who should not sit KS2 NCTs because the arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

Improving the flowchart

There are areas for improvement. This section summarises those made by teachers and LA officers, and supported by the educational psychologists.

An online version would be preferred by the participants in our study and this is the STA intention. This should address many of the criticisms of using a paper version. There are also aspects of the flowchart's *content* that require attention. Some items are not as clear as required. Furthermore, there is a danger of some items indicating that pupils are *not* eligible to sit NCTs because of their behaviour or performance, whereas teachers would find this outcome inappropriate and unacceptable.

Items 1-4 of the draft flowchart were identified by teachers and LA officers as problematic for one or more of the following reasons, a view supported by the educational psychologists:

- The items are at such a low level that they are clearly not appropriate for a Year 6 pupil who would sit NCTs.

- Pupils functioning at this level would have a statement of SEN which would specify support to meet their needs.
- Although item 1 is intended to be an indicator of cognitive development, (what a pupil *can* do) it was also interpreted in terms of behavioural competence (what a pupil *will* do). In some schools, failure to stay seated for more than three minutes was reported to be very common.
- In some schools especially in areas of high social disadvantage, extreme distress was reported to be common, reflecting adverse personal circumstances.
- Schools had policies and practices in place to address the behaviours described in items 1-3 and to support pupils as part of normal classroom provision, including the support of teaching assistants.

We found that teachers in our study were committed to the view that pupils *should* sit NCTs unless this was completely impractical or inappropriate, and that this was school and/or LA policy.

- The phrase 'SHOULD NOT SIT NCT'S' should be replaced as it would lead to pupils not sitting NCTs who their teacher consider should sit them. [NB. Removal of items 1-4 would mainly deal with this.]
- Where other items include this instruction, they should be modified to indicate that "consideration should be given as to whether the pupil should not sit NCTs'.

It is important that the assessment of access needs is made in the context of normal classroom practice.

- Guidance for completing the checklist should stress that the assessment access needs for sitting NCTs should be made in the context of normal classroom practice to support the pupil's education.

Item 9 refers to a test of writing speed but gives no further guidance.

- Where the flowchart includes requirements for evidence from a 'test', guidance should be given as to the nature of this test, e.g. that it is standardised and is approved by the STA.

The reference to 'age appropriate' content in items 12 and 13 requires more guidance to avoid large numbers of pupils not sitting.

- Guidance on age appropriateness should take into account the wide range of normal development. The aim should be to avoid a pupil inappropriately being excluded from sitting the reading NCT.

Variations in assessment of access arrangements

We found variations in numbers of pupils per school and between LAs, for whom applications for access arrangements were made, which raised the question of the variability – and hence fairness – of the present system. Indeed, both teachers and LA officers raised questions of equity and fairness and this was also highlighted by the educational psychologists. The flowchart should help improve fairness but it cannot be the only method. Monitoring of the applications for access arrangements by school and LA would indicate variations that may require further examination.

4: Recommendations

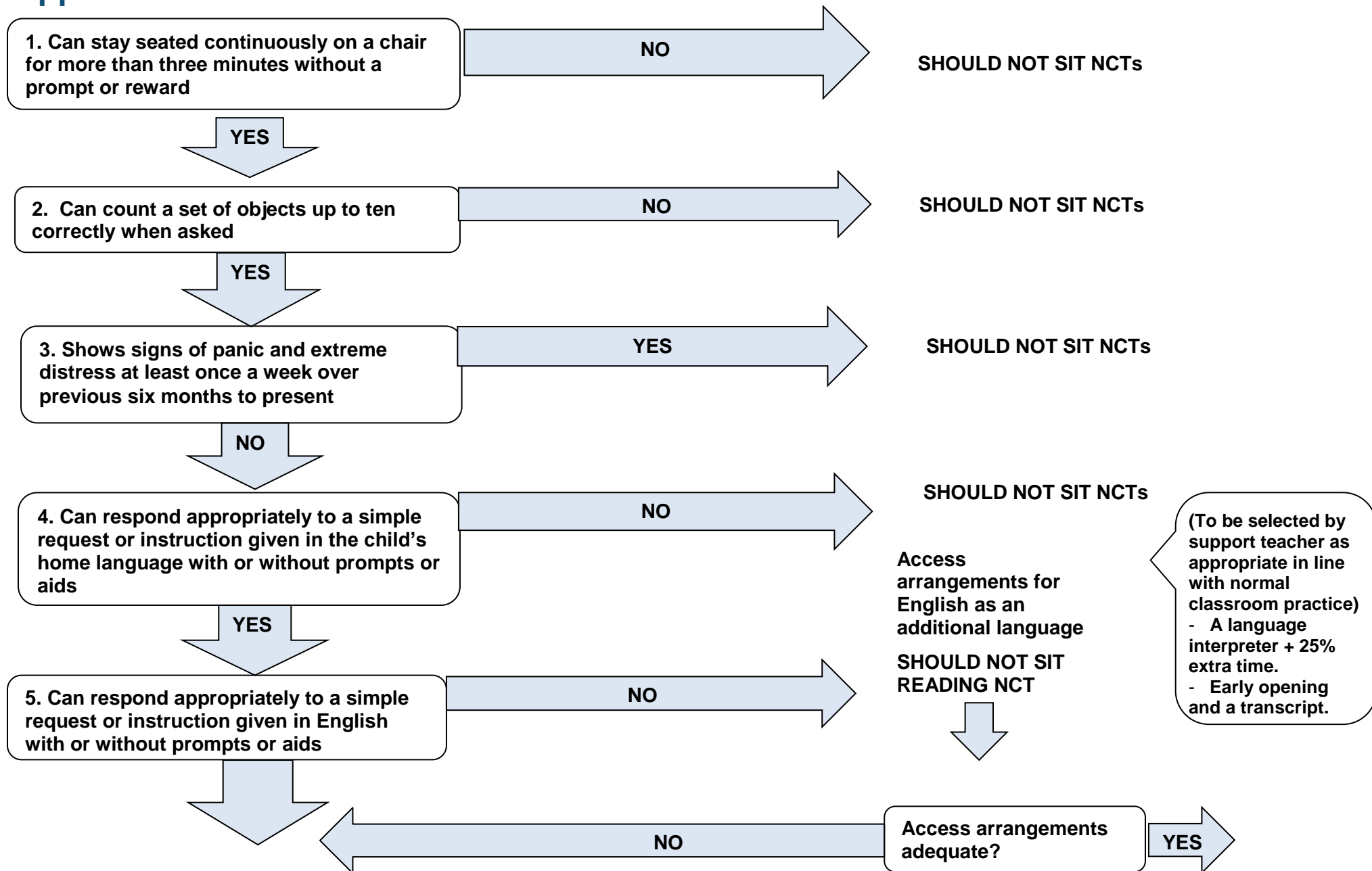
The research presents a clear case that the large majority of teachers, SENCOs, LA officers and educational psychologists rated the draft flowchart positively for suitability, clarity, usability, and efficiency as a new tool for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, pupils who are not eligible, and pupils who should not sit NCTs because arrangements cannot provide them with sufficient access.

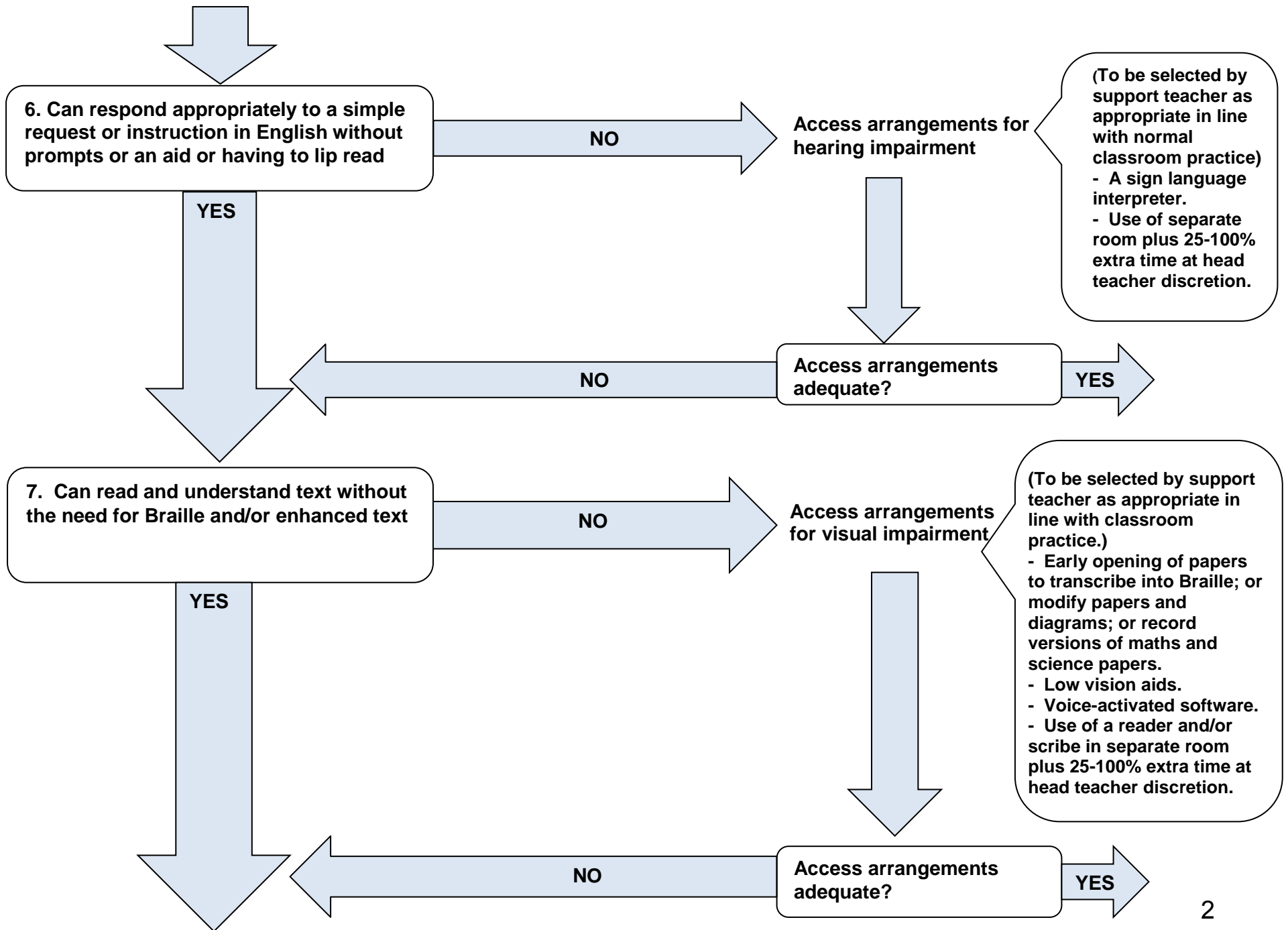
Furthermore the large majority of respondents judged the draft flowchart to be generally accurate but respondents did also identify specific aspects of the draft flowchart that could and should be improved.

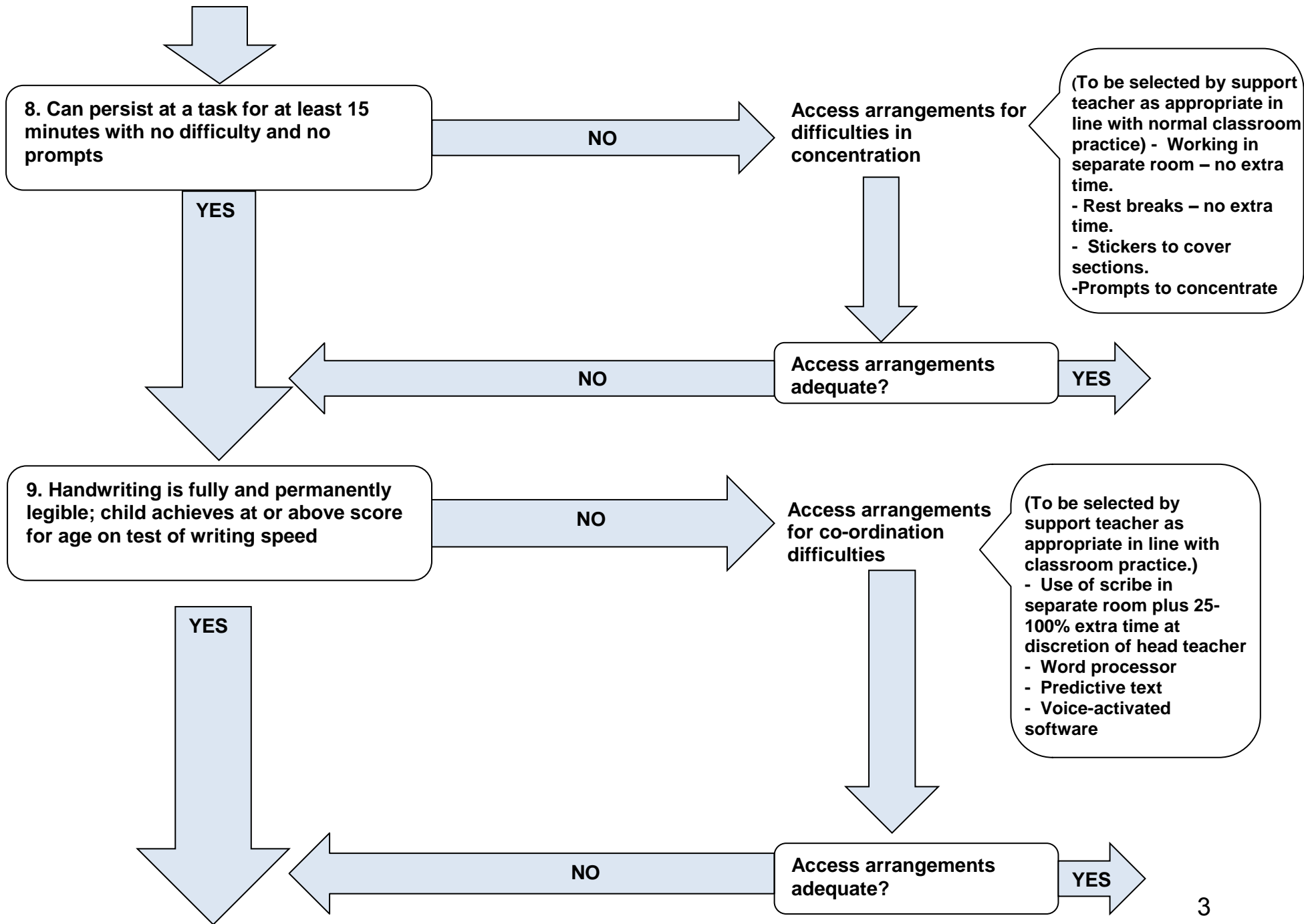
Recommendations

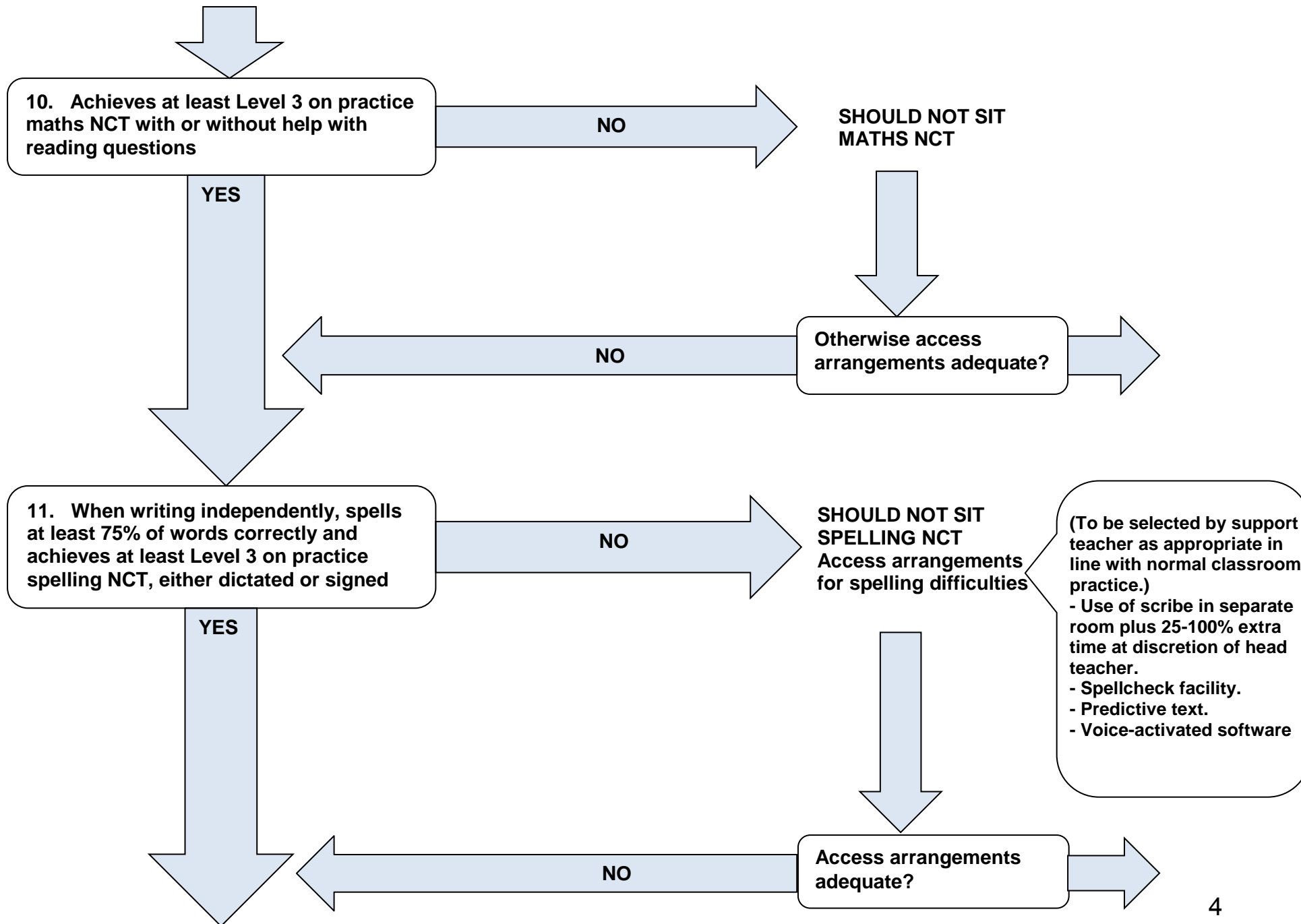
- An online version of the draft flowchart should be developed to aid teachers undertaking assessments of pupils for access arrangements for Keys Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests.
- The development of the online version should be guided by the evidence from the research contained in this report and the full range of specific suggestions from the research participants. In particular, the STA should consider that:
 - Guidance should be produced to advise on the completion of the online flowchart.
 - The Guidance should stress at the start the importance of considering all pupils' access needs in the context of normal classroom practice.
 - Items 1-4 of the draft flowchart be omitted as they are confusing, or inappropriate.
 - Any statement that a pupil should not sit NCTs be replaced by stating that *consideration should be given* to the pupil not sitting NCTs.
 - More guidance be provided on the use of 'age appropriate' in order to stress the wide range of normal development.
- The Guidance should include advice on tests to be used by schools where evidence from standardised assessments is required.
- The new system be kept under review.

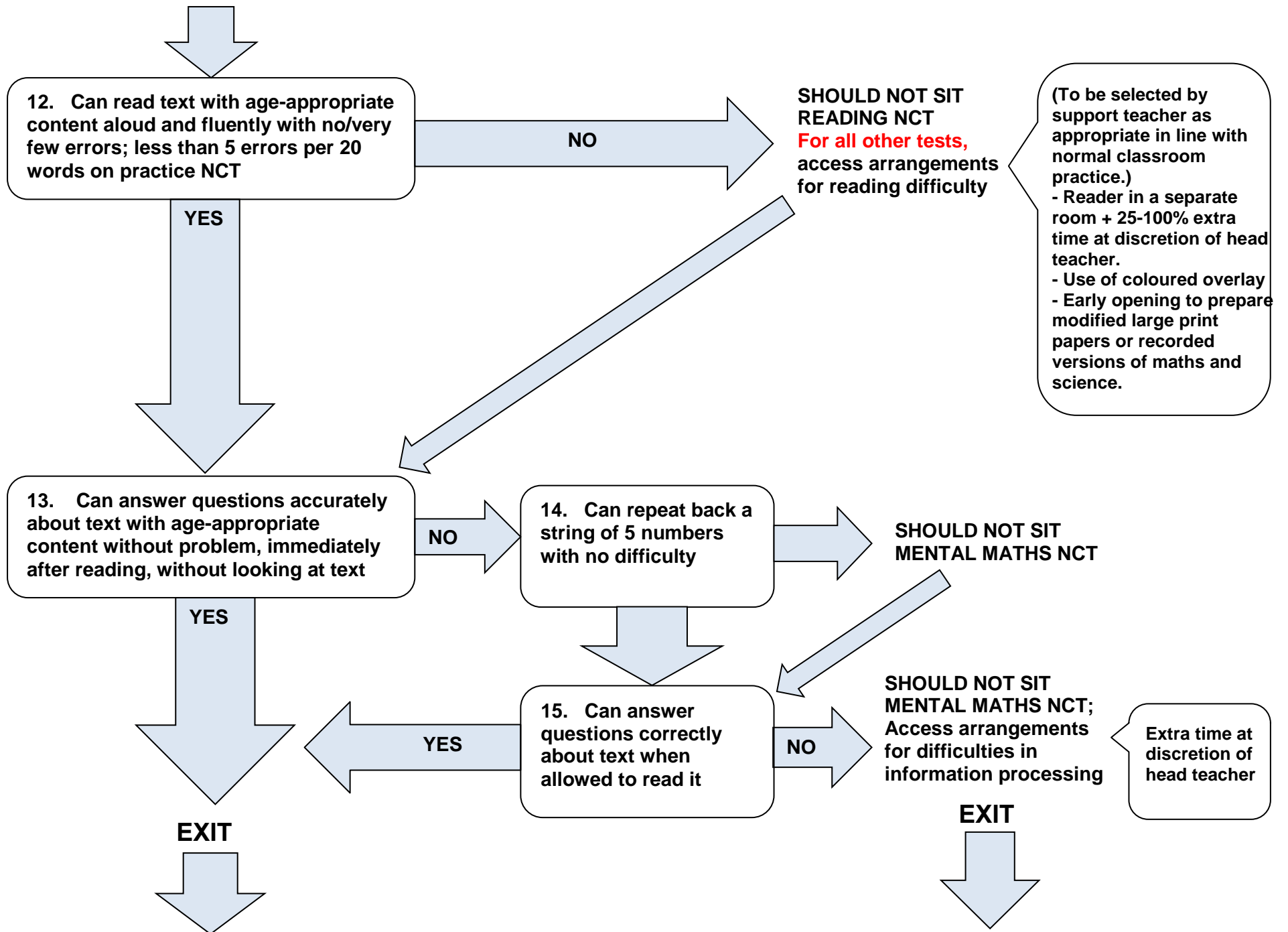
Appendix 1: Draft flowchart

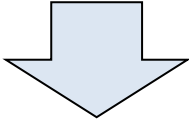






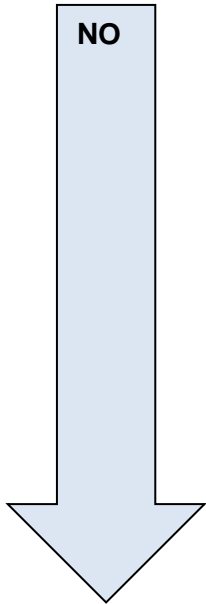






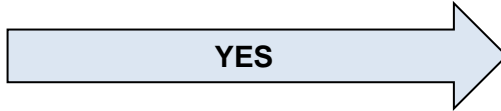
Do you wish to appeal for a special consideration?

NO



EXIT

YES



Select appropriate grounds for special consideration at discretion of head teacher, using close knowledge of child and circumstances

- Domestic crisis in week before NCTs eg acrimonious parental split; incidence of domestic abuse
- Death of significant other (eg parent, grandparent, main carer, sibling, pet)
- Injury to child requiring hospitalization
- Sudden onset of debilitating illness or physical condition during test

Appendix 2: Methodology

The investigation of Key Stage 2 Access Arrangements procedures employed a combined methods approach comprising three strands, utilising a combination of questionnaires, face-face and telephone interviews, observations, and assessments. Every consideration was given to limit demands and minimise the burden on schools in terms of data collection. Data have been analysed to produce both quantitative and qualitative findings. The evidence from each strand has been combined in order to strengthen the findings and identify implications and actions.

The procedure for each of the three strands is detailed below.

Strand 1 – Survey

A representative, random sample of all mainstream primary schools in England, including state-maintained schools and primary Academies was selected for a postal survey. The survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4. The sample of mainstream schools was drawn from an up-to date extraction from Edubase. Our sampling strategy assumed a 25% response; hence an initial representative random sample of 1,925 mainstream primary schools was selected with the expectation that it would yield an achieved, minimum sample of 385 schools. A reserve sample of 500 was drawn at the same time to enable the main sample to be replenished in the event of a lower than anticipated response. In addition, a census of all 238 special schools that had offered KS2 NCTs in each of the last 4 years was surveyed, with the expectation that this would yield a minimum sample of 50. The list of special schools was provided by DfE.

A survey questionnaire was designed and subjected to an in-house, pre-pilot exercise before being piloted in the field to eradicate any potential problems with questions at an early stage. The field pilot, prior to the launch of the survey was used to assess comprehension, flow of questions, timeliness and technical structure of questions to ensure it would deliver data as intended for analysis.

An explanatory letter, along with a project information sheet, the survey questionnaire and draft flowchart were sent to schools with clear guidelines so that the most appropriate Year 6 teacher/SENCO could complete the survey and return it to CEDAR in a pre-paid envelope. The hard copy questionnaire also contained a hyperlink to enable those who preferred to complete the

survey electronically to do so.¹⁴ Schools were given a 4 week period to return completed questionnaires.

The survey exceeded its minimum target of 385 mainstream schools and 48 special schools. On closing there were 648 valid responses: 589 mainstream schools and 59 special schools.

Strand 2 – Case study visits

Our aim was to select a sample of schools for case study visits that met our primary criteria: those that had offered KS2 NCTs in each of the last four years; and could provide a sample of 25 or more pupils across the various type of access arrangements needed. The main focus for Strand 2 was on research questions 11-16 (see Appendix 3 for a list of research questions). We worked with the DfE to agree an appropriate distribution across the implicit cells and we worked with our school sample to populate a grid that, across the sample, provided sufficient range and numbers for each of the variables in question.

In order to enhance efficiency and cost effectiveness we created a sub-sample of schools from a range of LA contexts to ensure that a cross-section of schools was sampled, including two cities, one county, one unitary authority and three London boroughs. Schools were recruited on the likelihood of them having pupils enrolled that fit the sampling criteria. This approach was intended to balance the benefits of concentrating research activity (e.g. cutting costs) and ensuring coverage of a range of local contexts.

Where appropriate, we sought the advice of the head of the local educational psychology service (EPS) for guidance on any relevant local factors. However, the formal approach to schools was from CEDAR to ensure it was clear that the study was independent and commissioned by the DfE.

Prior to the fieldwork commencing, a sample of pupils was constructed to ensure that the draft flowchart could be trialled in relation to: pupils with different types of SEN; pupils with and without statements of SEN; pupils from mainstream and special schools; pupils who were eligible for each type of access arrangement; pupils who were not eligible for access arrangements; and pupils for whom access arrangements would not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs. The actual selection of pupils for the study was developed with the schools on an iterative model.

¹⁴ Of the 648 valid survey responses received, nine were returned online.

Case study visits were conducted with 15 schools (14 mainstream primary LA-maintained schools and 1 special school). Case study visits were conducted with 15 schools (14 mainstream primary LA-maintained schools and 1 special school: 1 was in a London borough, 4 were in the Midlands County, 5 were in a Northern City, and 5 were in a Midlands City).

This strand of research comprised two elements: *the accuracy* of the teachers' judgements and the *teachers' views* on the use of the flowchart. To address the former, an observation of the teacher assessing the pupil using the draft flowchart took place; and to address the latter, in-depth interviews with the teachers and educational psychologists were conducted. Pro-forma sheets were developed and approved by the DfE to enable the psychologist and the teacher to record their decisions for each pupil, and the evidence upon which those decisions were made (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 5). The data recorded:

1. Evidence on which parts of the draft flowchart produced clear and accurate assessments (as determined by an agreement between the educational psychologist and the teacher over a given pupil's access arrangement eligibility);
2. Which parts of the draft flowchart produced contestable assessments and why (where the teacher's assessment using the draft flowchart has differed from the educational psychologist's assessment);
3. Which parts of the draft flowchart were unclear in terms of the evidence to be used to answer the question posed by the draft flowchart, or the meaning of the question itself.

In order to ensure an appropriate level of independence, our aim was to ensure that educational psychologists did not undertake research in schools with which they had a current relationship.

The teacher observation was followed by an in-depth interview conducted by the educational psychologist with the teacher (the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5). The interviews included questions on the accuracy and use of the draft flowchart when assessing individual pupils, and any overarching comments on the draft flowchart as a tool for assessing the eligibility of a whole class of pupils. An in-depth interview was also conducted with each educational psychologist involved in the fieldwork to gather similar data on their views of the draft flowchart in an attempt, where necessary, to

ensure the teacher data on the accuracy of the draft flowchart was professionally verified by educational psychologists.

Strand 3 - LA interviews

Local authority (LA) officers are responsible for approving access arrangements in maintained primary schools. We created a random sample of 30 LAs (1 in 5 of all LAs in England) to reflect the demographic variation – geographic, socioeconomic and distribution of minority ethnic groups. We also selected a second random sample so that we could replenish our first sample in the event of a lower than anticipated response. However, we exhausted both samples without achieving our target of 30 interviews which necessitated the generation of a third sample. These efforts were sufficient to enable 27 interviews to be conducted.

Semi-structured interview schedules were designed to gather evidence from the perspective of LA officers, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 6.

The interviews were to be set up through initial contact with the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) in each LA to verify which LA officer was the most appropriate to participate. However it became clear that this was going to be difficult as PEPs began to report. Apart from issues that we expected, whereby people were out and about in schools much of the time, we found that many LAs were operating with reduced staff and that there was often no obvious LA officer with the task of reviewing applications. In these cases this task had been allocated to others who had various other duties. Consequently because an LA was often unable to readily identify the correct person we found it extremely time consuming and difficult to access the correct person for interview. In addition, in some cases these people were not permanent staff but were contracted in for the purpose of reviewing applications, which made the process of identification even more difficult.

Appendix 3: Research questions

1. Is the draft flowchart efficient, clear and easy to use?
2. What methods do schools currently use when identifying pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs, including special consideration, and those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs, and how does the draft flowchart compare?
3. Does the draft flowchart draw on and respect teacher knowledge of pupils and their ability to assess pupil levels and corresponding needs?
4. Does the draft flowchart enhance teachers' understanding of a pupil's access arrangement requirements?
5. Are the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart clear and unambiguous?
6. Do the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart accurately enable pupil eligibility for access arrangements to be assessed and identify those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs? Would other behaviour descriptions be more appropriate?
7. Do the 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart avoid the use of 'labels' that compartmentalise pupil behaviour?
8. Does the draft flowchart influence the likelihood of some teachers choosing not to submit applications for pupils who are eligible for access arrangements? If so, why?
9. Will the draft flowchart help to ensure that the process for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements is fair and equal?
10. How do head teachers decide whether to provide pupils with access arrangements when those access arrangements are provided at the head teacher's discretion?
11. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all possible types of access arrangements required by all pupils (including those with and without statements of SEN)?

12. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who are not eligible for access arrangements, or are some pupils identified who shouldn't be?
13. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who require more than one type of access arrangement and those pupils for whom access arrangements will not provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs?
14. Does the draft flowchart accurately identify all pupils who require access arrangements for a KS2 test in one subject but do not require the same access arrangements for another subject?
15. Does the draft flowchart identify any pupils as being eligible for access arrangements who their teacher(s) previously thought (based on classroom knowledge) did not require them?
16. Does the draft flowchart identify any pupils as not being eligible for access arrangements who their teacher(s) previously thought (based on classroom knowledge) did require them?

Appendix 4: Strand 1 questionnaire

Centre for Educational Development

Appraisal and Research

School ID No.

KS2 Access Arrangements Questionnaire

Dear Colleague

The Centre for Education and Research Development (CEDAR), University of Warwick has been contracted by the Department for Education to examine the suitability, clarity, usability, and efficiency of a draft flowchart **developed to assist schools** in the assessment of pupils who may require access arrangements in order to undertake Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests (NCTs: Year 6, age 11 years). The Information Sheet provided will tell you more about this work.

Your school has been selected as one of the mainstream primary schools that we are inviting to participate in a survey of Year - 6 Teachers and SENCOs.

We would like you as the relevant Year 6 teacher or SENCO to provide feedback on how suitable, usable and efficient you think the draft flowchart will be as an identification tool for the assessment of pupils who you identify as requiring access arrangements.

All information will be treated in confidence and kept securely. None of the information you provide will be used to identify you or your school. If you wish you can access our privacy statement here:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/about_us/privacy/

We thank you very much for taking the time to help with this work.

Please return completed questionnaires to the evaluation team at the University of Warwick in the **reply paid envelope** supplied **before the deadline of Friday 14th December**.

It is very important that this work includes all access needs for pupils. For example, the need may result from temporary problems, e.g. broken writing arm, or longer term special educational needs or disability (SEND). Please bear this in mind when considering your response to the questions about the flowchart. **A copy of the flowchart is provided. Please go through the flowchart carefully and consider how you would use it in conducting assessments for access arrangements for children in your school, then complete this questionnaire.**

There are no right and wrong answers to these questions, please use your own professional judgement. The questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Alternatively you may use our online version of the questionnaire. Please go to <http://warwick.ac.uk/~eishbd/ks2aa/ks2aa.htm>

1. Please indicate if you are a teacher or a SENCO

- I am a teacher* *I am a SENCO*

2. Thinking about your previous experience, how many years have you been conducting assessments for KS2 Access Arrangements?

- Less than 1 year 2 Years 3 Years 4 Years 5 Years or more

3. Please indicate which methods your school currently uses when identifying pupils who are eligible for access arrangements for KS2 NCTs?

a) Teacher assessments

- Through normal classroom practice*

b) Teacher assessments using standardised tests

- Reading accuracy*
- Phonological processing speed*
- Quantitative ability*
- Reading comprehension*
- Verbal reasoning*
- Non-verbal reasoning*
- Writing speed*
- QCA's 'A Language in Common' for the assessment of English as an additional language*

If other, please specify.....

c) Reports from other professionals

- Doctor*
- Educational Psychologist*
- Clinical Psychologist*
- Speech and Language Therapist*
- Occupational Therapist*
- Physiotherapist*
- Qualified teacher of visually impaired*
- Qualified teacher of deaf/ hearing impaired*

If other, please specify.....

d) Reports from Parents/Carers

- Reports from parents/carers

4. How does your head teacher decide whether to provide pupils with access arrangements when those access arrangements are provided at the head teacher’s discretion?

.....

.....

5. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the draft flowchart. (Please tick one box for each question):

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) The draft flowchart draws on and respects my knowledge of pupils and my ability to assess pupil levels and corresponding needs.				
b) The draft flowchart would enhance my understanding of a pupil’s access arrangement requirements.				
c) The ‘behaviour descriptions’ included in the draft flowchart are clear and unambiguous.				
d) The ‘behaviour descriptions’ included in the draft flowchart would enable me to accurately assess pupil eligibility for				

access arrangements.				
e) The 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart would identify those pupils for whom access arrangements will NOT provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs.				
f) The 'behaviour descriptions' included in the draft flowchart avoid the use of 'labels' that compartmentalise pupil behaviour.				
g) Using the draft flowchart might lead to some teachers not submitting applications for access arrangements for some pupils who should be eligible for access arrangements.				
h) The draft flowchart would help to ensure that the process for identifying all pupils who are eligible for access arrangements is fair and equitable.				
i) The draft flowchart is...				
1. Efficient to use				
2. Easy to use				
3. Clear to use				

6. Do you have any other views or comments about the draft flowchart?

.....

.....

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please ensure that you return your completed questionnaire to the evaluation team at Warwick in the **reply paid envelope provided.** Please post in good time to ensure that we receive your response before the deadline of **Friday 14th December 2012.**

Return to Mrs Jean McElroy, CEDAR, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.

Appendix 5: Strand 2 teacher interview schedule

Key Stage 2 Access Arrangements Research

Interview Schedule for School Staff

Talk through confidentiality and anonymity (Information sheet).

[NB. Information about the project will have been sent in advance and an introductory overview of the observation and interview will have been given before the session]

The status of the draft flowchart will be made clear, but during the interview the term 'flowchart' will be used.

Past and current experience

1. What prior experience have you had assessing pupils for access arrangements?
 - Years involved
 - Average N pupils per year
 - Main types of access need

2. How do you currently assess pupils for access arrangements?
 - What methods do you use?
 - Evidence built up over time e.g. from practice NC tests
 - Current classroom knowledge
 - Standardised tests
 - Discussion with colleagues
 - When do you normally carry out these assessments?
 - What are the typical access arrangements needs?
 - What less common access needs have you assessed?
 - What about special considerations?

3. How do you currently assess pupils for whom you think access arrangements will **not** provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs?

- Monitoring data over time
 - Current classroom knowledge
 - Specific arrangements
 - Reports from e.g. EPs, SLTs
4. How do you currently make judgements about pupils' needs for special considerations?
5. Some access arrangements are provided at the head's discretion. How does this process to decide whether to provide access arrangements at the head's discretion operate in your school?
- Delegated to you/colleagues?
 - Role of Year 6 teachers/SENCO?
 - Head actively decides using teacher(s) evidence?

The flowchart

6. Does the flowchart draw on your and colleagues' knowledge of pupils, their ability to assess pupil levels and the corresponding needs?
- Does the flowchart respect this knowledge and these abilities?
7. Did the flowchart enhance your understanding of the access needs of the pupils you assessed?
- Would it do so for other teachers?
8. The flowchart uses 'behaviour descriptions' rather than categories such as 'hearing impaired' or 'specific learning difficulties'. Did you find these were clear and unambiguous?
- What was unclear?
 - Did the behaviour descriptions in fact avoid the use of labels that compartmentalise pupils' behaviour?
9. Did the behaviour descriptions help you to accurately assess your pupils' eligibility for access arrangements?

- Did they help you to identify pupils who do need access arrangements?
- Did they enable you also to identify pupils for whom access arrangements will **not** provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs?
- Did the flowchart identify pupils as needing access arrangements that you would not have expected?
- Were there pupils that you thought would need access arrangements that were **not** identified using the flowchart?
- What different behaviour descriptions would be better (most appropriate)?

10. Would using the flowchart lead to some teachers choosing **not** to submit applications for pupils who **should be** eligible for access arrangements?

- Did you feel that you were being influenced in this way?
- Why?

11. From your experience of using the flowchart do you think its use would help to ensure that the process for identifying pupils who are eligible for access arrangements is **fair** and **equitable**?

- why?

12. Thinking about your experience, how would you judge the flowchart in terms of:

- Its ease of use?
- Its clarity?
- Its efficiency?
 - E.g. use of your time and that of colleagues
- How does it compare with your current system?

13. Finally, would you say that the introduction of the flowchart would be helpful to you? and to other teachers?

- How could it be improved?

Thank you very much for your time and contribution

Appendix 6: Strand 3 LA officer interview schedule

Key Stage 2 Access Arrangements Research

Interview Schedule for LA officers

[NB. An information sheet and the draft flowchart will be sent prior to the interview. A preliminary discussion will be held to ensure that the project objectives and tasks are clear]

Talk through confidentiality and anonymity (Information sheet).

Current systems

Please describe how the current system of access arrangements applications works in your LA.

- What are the main issues you encounter?
 - Range of applications?
 - Number last year?
 - Positive aspects of your current system?
 - Problems/areas for development you have identified?
- Does anyone use a flowchart type of tool?

Specific issues concerning types of access need, eligibility

1. Do you think that by using the draft flowchart teachers will accurately identify all possible types of access arrangements required by all the pupils they may assess?
 - Is this the case for pupils with statements and those without statements?
 - *If not: which access needs would not be identified?*
2. How well do you think that the draft flowchart enables teachers to accurately identify all pupils who require **more than one type** of access arrangement?
3. How well do you think that the draft flowchart enables teachers to accurately identify all pupils for whom access arrangements will **not** provide sufficient access to enable them to sit KS2 NCTs, i.e. those who should **not** sit NCTs?
4. How well do you think that the draft flowchart enables teachers to accurately identify all pupils who require access arrangements for a KS2 test in one subject but do not require the same access arrangements for another subject?

Overall reliability and validity of the draft flowchart

5. Will the draft flowchart enable teachers to accurately identify all pupils who are **not** eligible for access arrangements,
 - Do you think that some pupils may be identified as **not** eligible who should be eligible?
6. Will using the draft flowchart lead to teachers identifying some pupils as being eligible for access arrangements who they would previously have thought (based on classroom knowledge) **did not** require them?
7. On the other hand, will using the draft flowchart lead to teachers identifying some pupils as **not** being eligible for access arrangements who they would previously have thought (based on classroom knowledge) **did** require access arrangements?

Efficiency and overall impact on the LA.

8. What would be the overall impact of the flowchart?
9. Do you think that the draft flowchart will reduce or add to the administrative demands
 - on teachers? If so, how?
 - On yourself? If so, how?

Overall judgement of the usefulness of the flowchart

10. Overall, what are your views of the draft flowchart in terms of:
 - Clarity of guidance?
 - Efficiency?
 - Usability?
 - Optimising fair and accurate assessments

[Ask the interviewee to rate each]

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Clarity					
Efficiency					
Usability					

Fairness					
----------	--	--	--	--	--

11. Overall, how does the flowchart compare with previous guidance and practice?

[Comments on each and ratings on 5 point scale]

- Do you think that it will improve the system overall? Why?

Suggestions for improvements

12. Is there anything in the flowchart that you think can be improved?

- If so, please explain

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to the study.



Department
for Education

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at Michele Weatherburn, Level 4, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT email:

michele.weatherburn@education.gsi.gov.uk

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