

SNSA and MCNG Survey Results June 2023



SNSA and MCNG Survey Results June 2023

Background

The 2022 EIS AGM passed the following resolution:

“That this AGM is deeply concerned at the Scottish Government’s decision to proceed with further significant investment in SNSAs in spite of sustained EIS challenge to this assessment approach and OECD advice that SNSAs are of limited value.

“Further, this AGM resolves to:

- a) seek fresh evidence of the views of EIS members on the administration and educational worth of SNSAs, based on their professional experience of using the assessments and the associated data;
- b) use this evidence to inform any further development of EIS assessment policy, as appropriate; and
- c) use the information gathered from members to shape relevant future dialogue and campaigning around SNSAs and wider assessment approaches, with Scottish Government, local authorities, parents’ organisations and relevant national agencies.”

Methodology

This report is a summary of a survey that was issued to members between 12th May and 2nd June 2023. In total 1,827 responses were gathered from EIS members teaching P1, P4, P7 and S3 year groups. It was also open to members who teach at least one of these year groups as a composite class.

The survey questions for this survey were adapted from a previous Scottish National Standardised Assessments, and the Measaidhean Coitcheann Nàiseanta airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig, (SNSA and MCNG) survey that was issued to members on June 2018. The questions within this survey report differ from those asked in 2018 so direct comparison is not possible. However, the Committee may wish to read the 2018 report alongside these findings for completeness of reporting.

The final section of this report is a summary of responses gathered from a separate survey of Head and Depute Headteachers. In total 83 responses were gathered from Head and Depute Headteacher members surveyed between 19th May and 6th June 2023.

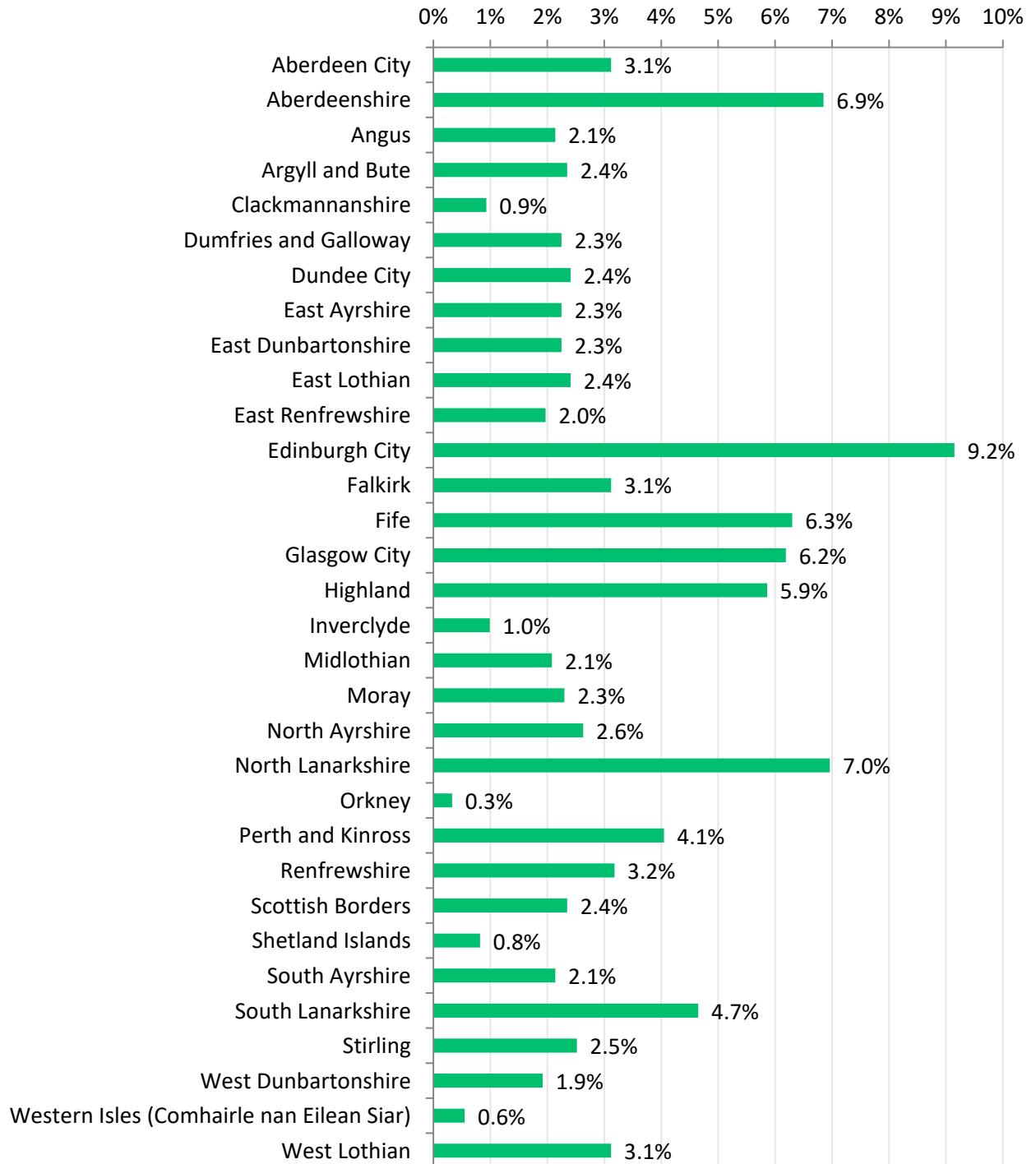
None of the questions asked were mandatory, and there is variation between the number of responses gathered for each question. The total number of responses gathered is highlighted at the bottom of each graph.

The information within this report has not been disaggregated by the year group that members taught or by local authority. This is because the small sample size could create a large margin of error.

Respondent Information

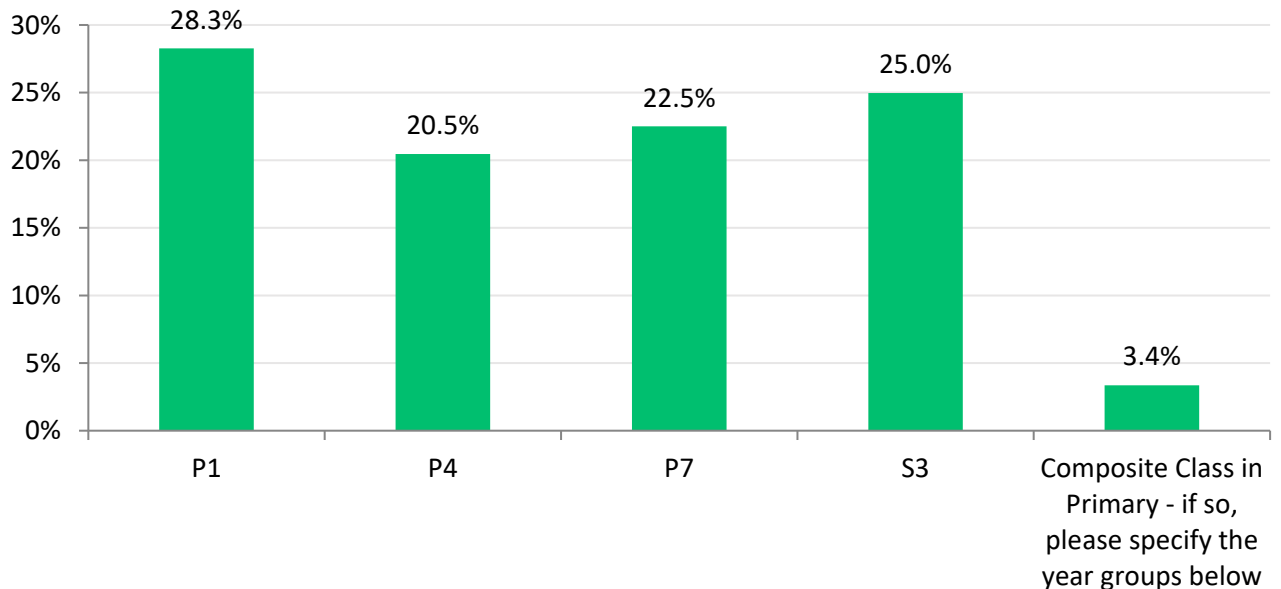
The first two questions asked members which local authority area they worked in, and which year group they taught. Figures 1 and 2 below show the breakdown of member responses under these two questions.

Figure 1: Question 1 - Which local authority area do you work in? (tick more than one if applicable)



Total responses: 1,826

Figure 2: Question 2 - Which year group do you teach?



Total responses: 1,810

As we can see from Figures 1 and 2 responses have been gathered from all local authority areas and all year groups are fairly represented. The vast majority of responses collected from those who indicated they taught composite classes were from Primary school teachers. Some members also indicated they worked in Support for Learning (SfL), Additional Support Learning (ASL) or in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) groups.

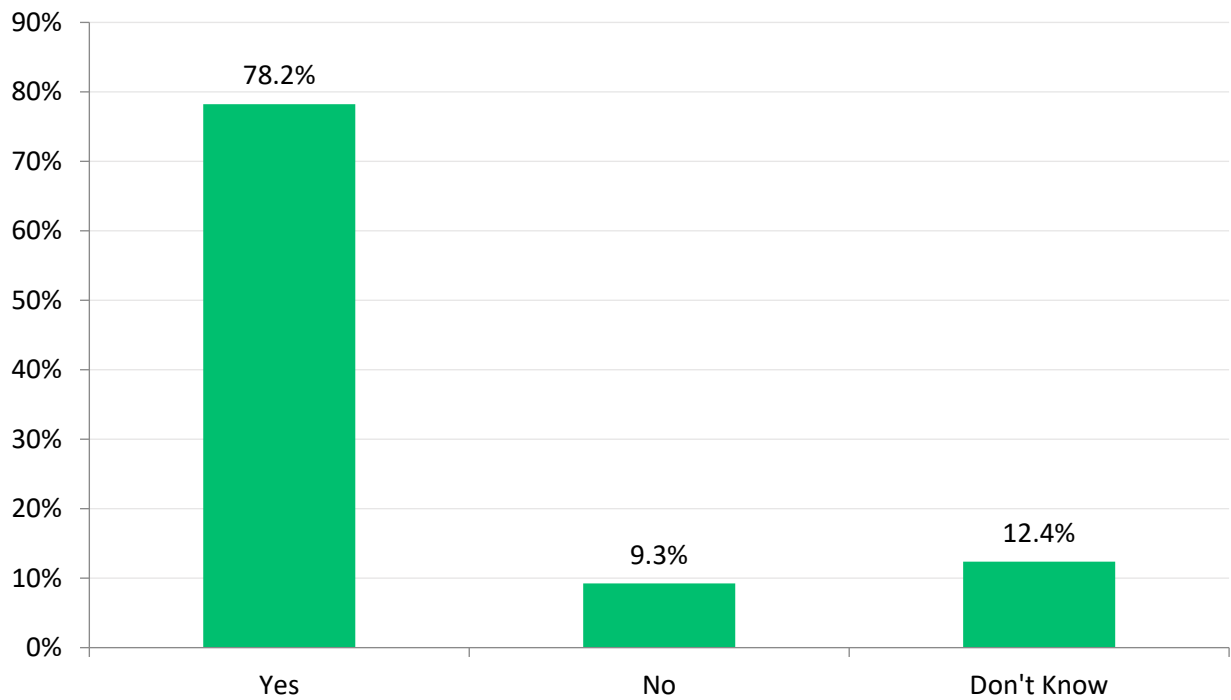
Timing of Assessments

Members were asked two questions on the timing of when SNSAs are carried out in the school year. Figure 3 shows how members responded when asked if their local authority or senior management team set a deadline or a window of time during which the assessments take place.

Almost 80% of responses gathered from EIS members said that their local authority or senior management team did set a deadline, or a window or time that assessments are to take place. 332 comments were received under this question. From the responses gathered there is a variation in when the assessments were expected to be done. Some highlighted May, others November, January or February as the month to complete the tests. Others said they had a narrow window to complete them in the final 2 weeks before the end of term 3 in the school year. One member said they were to be completed 2 weeks before their HMIe Inspection. Some suggested that the dictated time frame changes from year to year, and others commented that only the P1 assessments in their school had a mandated timeframe with all other years

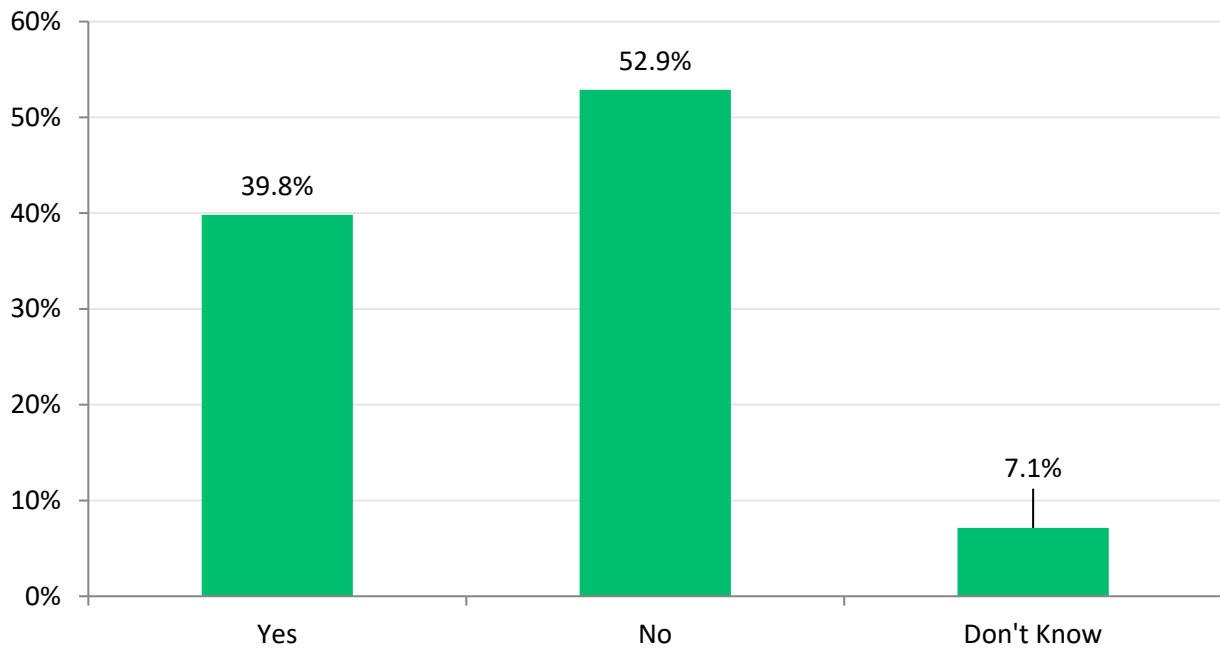
being open to teacher discretion. One member reported that their S3 SNSA deadline clashed with S3 exams. Many of the comments received said they felt the window was too narrow or too early in the school year with not enough of the curriculum covered at the point of testing.

Figure 3: Question 3 - Has your local authority or senior management team set a deadline or a window of time that the assessments are to take place?



Total responses: 1,824

Figure 4: Question 4 - Are you able to use professional judgement to determine the timing of the assessments, in the interests of supporting the learning of individuals in your class?



Total responses: 1,820

Figure 4 above shows the responses gathered when members were asked if they are able to use their professional judgement in determining the timing of assessments. Over half of respondents said "no", they are not able to use their professional judgement, with 40% saying "yes".

There were 297 comments left by members under this question. Many of responses echoed those given to question 3 as members repeated their frustration that assessment timings are largely dictated by the local authority or their school. Some said they received last minute notifications telling them that assessments were to be done that day, disrupting planned teaching and learning. However, some respondents did outline the ways in which their professional judgement had been respected when setting out the timing of SNSAs. Below is a small, but representative, sample of responses:

- "Due to lack of technology and a large school, we have a timetable given to us when we can use the laptops during the SNSA period. This is the only logical way to get through them all and attempt to minimise disruption to the rest of the school."
- "Whilst there is a windows for SNSA assessments which only form one assessment judgement, all other assessments are within my autonomy based on the young people's progress."
- "This is limited as my authority also requires me to complete GL assessments in literacy and maths. As each of my pupils have to complete 5 separate assessments, it has been a race to complete them before tracking data is required by the authority, reports are due and STINT planning is to be completed."
- "I have a composite class so I had supply cover for one day to complete all of the P4 assessments. It's too much for them to do in one day."

- "I am an ASN teacher working with all ages of primary children. SNSAs are often left until as late as possible in order to gain better results- rather than done early to highlight gaps and target learning."
- "I choose which part of the day however it normally takes all day most days to get the kids through them with log in, user error and amount of assessment they have to do. This year will be trickier as we have had the number of Chromebooks reduced significantly in infant classes."

Practical Delivery of Assessments

Question 5 asked members; "How has the practical delivery of SNSAs or MCNGs impacted on classroom management, the deployment of additional support staff/ teachers and availability of ICT?"

In total 1,666 comments were recorded next to this question.

Within these comments members highlighted the disruption to accessing support staff as a key problem. Some also said the test themselves are too long and put a strain on the pupils whilst completing them. There was also concerns noted that ASN Teachers and Teaching Assistants are pulled from classes to support the children and young people to complete the test. ICT was also noted as a considerable challenge in the delivery of assessments. Some respondents noted that their pupils had their own IT hardware which made the delivery process easier, whereas others noted that a lack of ICT provision in the school required considerable planning to allow the tests to take place. It should also be noted that a small proportion of the responses gathered reported no, or very minimal impact on their classroom management.

Below is a small number of the comments received under this question:

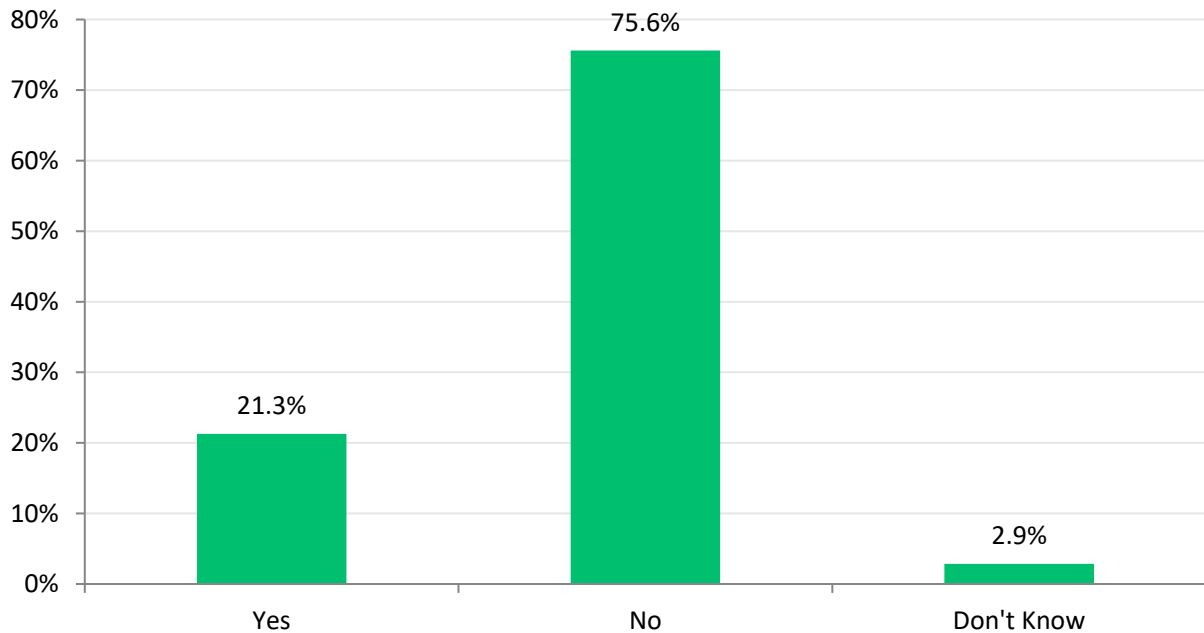
- "Very rushed at the end of year so coordinated delivery of additional needs for specific pupils did not happen."
- "The children have their own iPads therefore it did not impact the classroom management in that way. There was no additional support staff and only one teacher."
- "ICT has to be timetabled across the school so hasn't been available for every day teaching until assessments are completed across the stages. Support staff have been removed from class support for 1-1 support in assisting with completing assignments."
- "Class management deteriorated as some completed tasks faster than others and there was no additional support to work/supervise or to allow technical support for those taking the assessments."
- "For P1 it requires 1-1 as chrome books are not touch screen. Ideally you would be administering within normal classroom environment with the resources to hand e.g. number lines and sounds etc on walls but with multi-composite it would not be practical."
- "I planned for the children not doing SNSAs to be doing a similar subject area e.g. maths and the P7s doing maths assessment. Planning ensures

it's a quiet independent task so that I can be available to help all. When necessary, some children will have more one to one support. These children will leave the room and have a space with no distraction and either a manager or PSA will support this."

- "It hadn't changed anything, they have no impact in my class at all regardless of results as they are usually taken in May/June."
- "Assessment completed with class teacher while other children are completing independent tasks and continuous provision opportunities. This is very time consuming and we do not have extra staff to cover this so class teaching time is lost."
- "None really, we plan to use laptops when other classes are not using them. Also plan round support staff being able to take small groups for support."
- "We just have to stop what we are doing and administer this within the window given. It is very disruptive as not all children can get online which means increased teacher workload as we have to continuously try getting the ones online who haven't managed to do it due to internet issues."
- "All pupils in our school have laptops so ICT isn't an issue. Classroom management isn't an issue regarding this and no additional staff need to be deployed."
- "I am currently mentoring a student teacher. I have been out of class for 3 days solid and I am still not finished. If I didn't have a student teacher, I would be without PSA time for over a week which would mean children would miss out on valuable daily programmes and lessons would need to be simplified to account for lack of support."

Question 6 then asked respondents if they had been able to conduct SNSAs or MCNGs without disrupting pupils planned learning. Only 21% of members who responded said "yes" they have been able to conduct the national assessments without disruption to planned learning. Over three quarters, 75%, of members said that it hadn't been possible to deliver the assessments without disruption.

Figure 5: Question 6 – Have you been able to conduct SNSAs or MCNGs without disrupting pupils' planned learning?



Total responses: 1,819

Under this question 572 comments were received from members. Within these comments members have shared their experiences of having to scale back some of the planned activities to accommodate the tests. Overwhelmingly, members reported on how long the assessments took to complete which put a strain on the pupils themselves and required additional support to the class teacher to deliver. There were also repeated claims of the tests being scheduled, or rescheduled last minute which further disrupted the planned learning for that week.

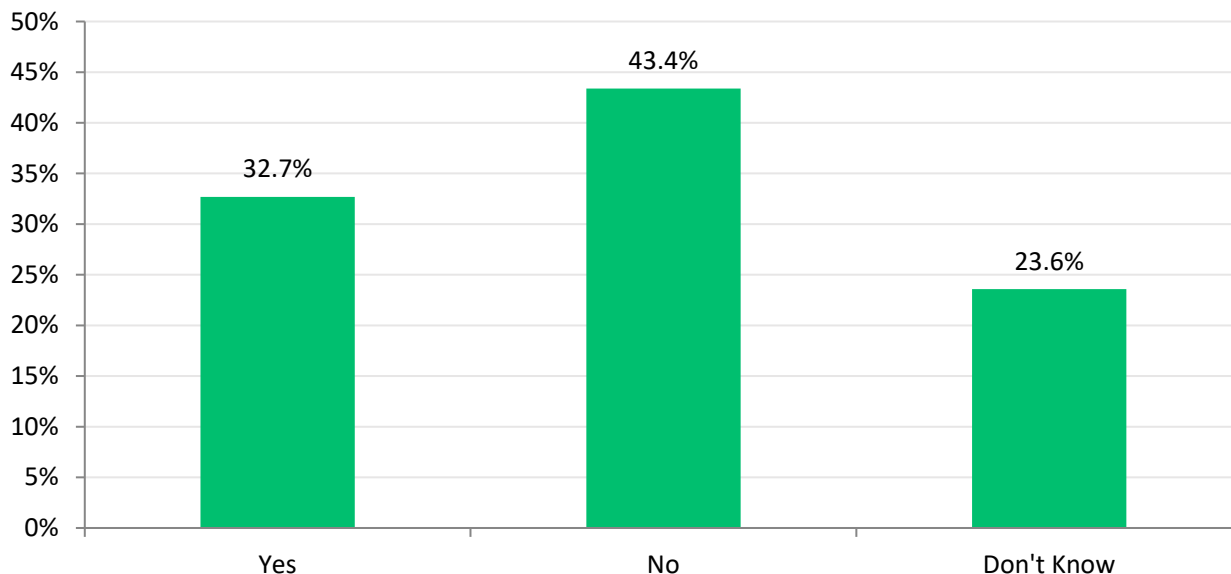
- "Many pupils aren't ready for the stage they're being forced to be assessed at and therefore require much more support to complete. PSAs sometimes give too much support so it becomes a CT responsibility."
- "Children have been pulled away from classroom learning to complete SNSA testing."
- "Pupils requiring support can take a full school day to complete their assessments so missing out on a few lessons. Limited staff availability for carrying out the assessments with pupils (1 or 2 members of staff) and can only take small groups of 4 or 5 pupils at a time."
- "We timetable it in advance and opt in at a suitable slot for our class."
- "From start to finish, each NSA test took a full learning block - from around 8:50-10:25. This was for three days. So other learning had to be scheduled around this and taking into account that the children would be mentally exhausted after each test."
- "If these are to be completed then planned learning for these sessions just has to be moved, can't do 2 things at once so if completing the assessments I can't be teaching something else."

- “Occasionally some assessments have to be rescheduled depending on other adults available to support. Assessments take an incredibly long time and require smaller groups to complete which means pace of teaching and learning is significantly slower.”
- “I had already planned my week’s lessons when we were informed of the SNSA at late notice.”
- “I wouldn’t say it has impacted learning majorly but we are told when the assessments are to be carried out so it does mean that we have to come out of subject teaching for two or three days so it can take a while to get back into our stride. Absentees also create a tailback with mopping up.”
- “This year it happened right in the middle of assessment prep for S3 exams.”
- “Absolutely not. Spent 4 days doing nothing but tests. Each child was to do 1 test per day. Left class in groups of 5 to 6 at a time and tests overseen by a class teacher released from her class to support this alongside a classroom assistant who had to read the questions to non-readers. In class, I did not do whole class lessons as children out in groups to begin with then on a one in, one out basis so “lessons” this week were mop up activities and booklets and individual tasks. No whole class teaching took place until Friday morning (tests commenced Monday in a class of 32.). They are not all completed due to children’s absence and term time holidays.”

SNSAs/MCNGs and the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap

The next question put to members asked if the national assessments had affected the progress of closing the poverty-related attainment gap, or impacted on meeting the needs of those with Additional Support Needs. Figure 6 below shows the responses gathered.

Figure 6: Question 7 - Has SNSA or MCNGs activity impinged on the progress of interventions that were already in place to address the poverty-related achievement and attainment gap and/ or to meet the needs of children and young people requiring additional support? (If yes, please give examples)



Total responses: 1,808

As seen above, a third of all respondents said that the SNSA or MCNG activities had impinged on efforts to close the poverty related attainment gap and/ or help meet the additional needs of pupils. 538 comments were gathered underneath this question. The vast majority of the comments received mentioned how often Teaching Assistants and ASL staff are used to help administer these tests, meaning that pupils are not getting the routine support that they need whilst they are taking place in their school. Some members also highlighted that some pupils are not getting the level of support they need to complete the tests themselves, which can be very upsetting for the children and young people involved. This included pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) as well as those with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Many also highlighted that Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) staff have been taken out of their timetabled roles to support the delivery of SNSAs/MCNGs.

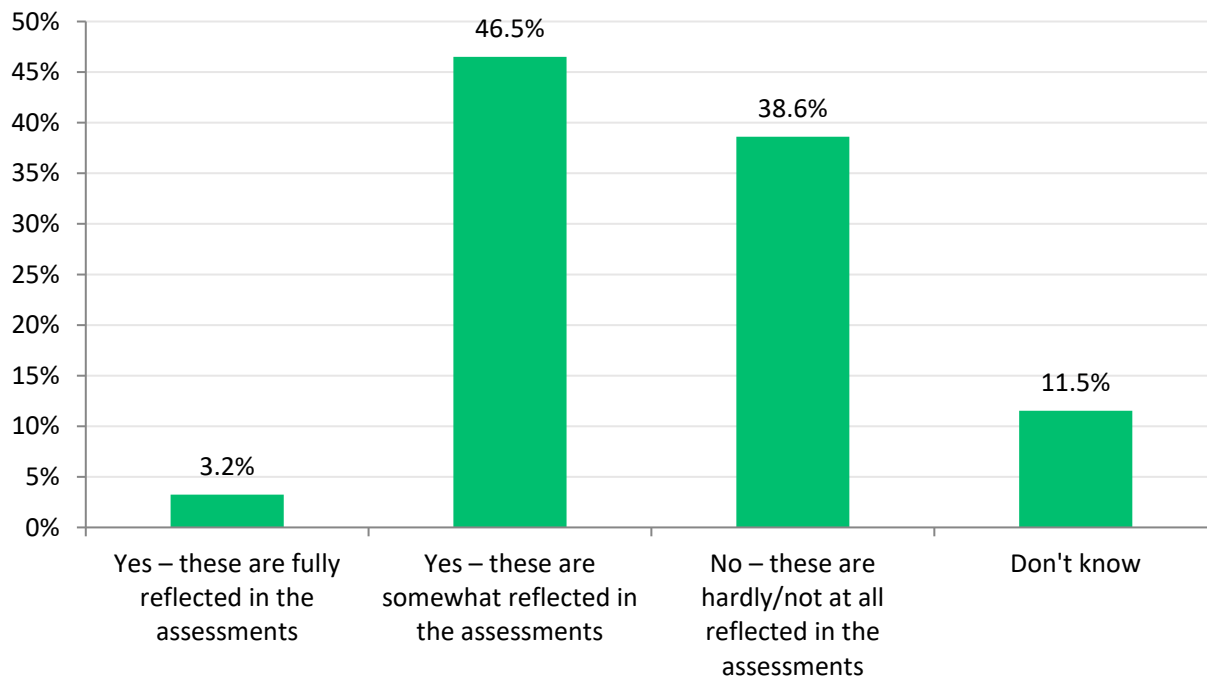
- "Support staff are being used to essentially babysit the class while I support the children with their SNSAs, instead of them being able to target the children who really need it."
- "The children in my class are used to the adults providing help, support and opportunities for learning. The SNSAs don't allow for this and some of the children find this difficult."
- "Time taken to conduct the SNSAs means the person doing them, who should be teaching either groups or 1-1 inputs, is taken away to do these tests. Instead of relying on the professional judgement of the staff and their thorough assessments."
- "Some of the results were not accurate as well as it affected children's mental health as they felt they did not do well even if they did not know the results."

- "Additional support is not available for these pupils due to staff having to help get through all SNSAs for around 80 P1 children, plus similar numbers of P4 and 7."
- "We use chrome books for pupils to access the SNSAs in P7. However for P1s it's a lengthy process - pupils are taken out in small groups or as individuals using iPads and or chrome books - I believe it to be more disruptive for them and very challenging and similar for P4 so in terms of their normal routine, it is fairly disruptive and yes, those who receive supports, their time is 'suspended' as support staff are busy conducting the SNSAs so cannot take their intervention groups."
- "Mixed views on this. The test is a good indicator of progress within different strands of maths but many of my pupils require additional support and this was not available to them as an option for the assessment. They questioned the value and validity of the assessment having not received a score for their efforts. It was a battle ensuring focus was on the test and not being rushed through."
- "SFL staff, including PEF funded numeracy support, have been taken off-timetable to administer SNSAs."
- "Groups who receive targeted support in small groups for literacy and numeracy have missed this while SNSAs being completed as staffing for this has to be used to support completion of SNSAs instead."
- "It's completely detrimental and contradictory to a nurturing approach to insist that all young people sit a standardised test that sits separately from the curriculum. This has a particularly negative impact on young people at schools like mine where 94% are FSM and a large proportion have ASN or ACEs."
- "For some of our EAL pupils, these assessments are utterly meaningless."

SNSAs/MCNGs, Curriculum for Excellence and the Four Capacities

The next set of questions posed looked at how SNSAs/MCNGs fit in with the skills and learning outcomes which are expected within the Curriculum for Excellence frameworks.

Figure 7: Question 8 - From your experience, do the assessment tasks within SNSAs and MCNGs reflect CfE Experiences and Outcomes, and the Four Capacities, as appropriate to each age and stage of pupils?



Total responses: 1,819

Figure 7 above shows that only 3% of members surveyed thought that the national assessment tasks “fully reflected” the CfE Experiences, Outcomes and the Four Capacities for the age and stage of the pupils undertaking them. A further 47% said they were “somewhat reflected” in the assessments, and more than a third (39%) said they were “hardly” or “not at all” reflected in the SNSAs/MCNGs.

Within the 492 comments received, many members shared that they had not been involved in the direct administration of the tests, or did not know what questions were put to pupils. Those that were involved gave numerous examples of questions that were put to pupils that were beyond their expected level of education for their age and stage. Others commented that the national assessments are not appropriate for pupils with Additional Support Needs or those who need additional English Language Support. It was again raised in the comments section of this question that the tests are not compatible with the play-based learning approach of P1 Experiences and Outcomes. Below is a selection of the comments received:

- “The reading that is required sometimes seems to be assessing the reading level of the child rather than the comprehension or a maths skill.”
- “Does not take into account children with ASN - e.g., EAL, those who can read but not write and vice versa. Passages are too long for those with low attention span. Certain children would benefit with the P1 option of the read aloud button.”
- “Some P1 questions are poorly worded and include things that are not covered in the CfE benchmarks (for example there is a question about sorting animals into Birds or Brown Animals and children have to identify

which animal could be in both categories. This is essentially a Venn diagram which is not covered in P1).”

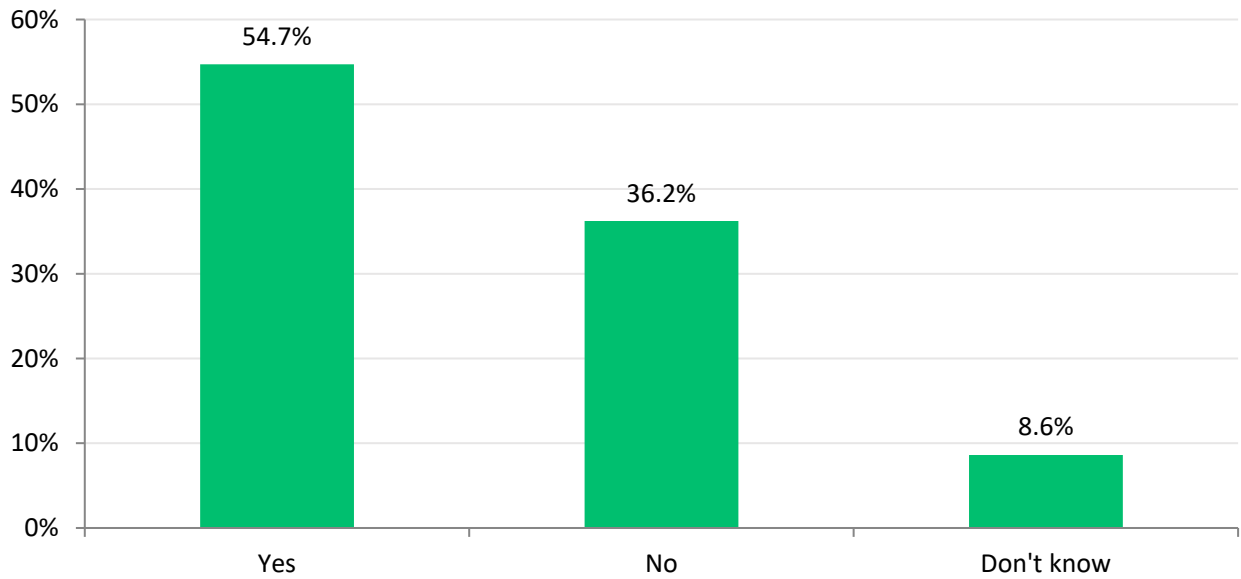
- “They don’t reflect the type of work or tasks pupils are asked to do in class. Pupils often find them very stressful and get frustrated when they don’t get to see their results or the correct answers to tricky questions. Although it may reflect some Experiences and Outcomes the pupils don’t receive any educational benefit or learn anything from the experience.”
- “We teach in P1 through play and practical materials but the child can't do this on the test.”
- “I wish I could have seen the tests in full. I wanted to know how aligned they were, but only saw brief snippets of questions as I was going around supporting the class. Could previous tests be released so teachers could see what exactly is being tested?”
- “Only partly. Due to all pupils answering different questions it is not easy to identify whole class gaps in learning to support planning. The writing one has a huge focus on spelling and not much on other aspects of writing.”
- “The SNSAs do NOT reflect the 4 CFE capacities at all. There are no skills, learning, understanding or knowledge gained while completing these that would make a child a Responsible Citizen or Effective Contributor. The very process of these assessments, the ridiculous questions and length of these assessments hinders and damages children's confidence instead of making them a Confident Individual. It could be argued that a child is a Successful Learner if they get a good score and a high level in the SNSA- but what is to be said for the child that has guessed the answers and been lucky enough to get a high score with just random selection. I think it is a narrow representation of the CFE Experiences and outcomes. I hold the above views in relation to P1, P4 and P7 assessments as I have carried out all 3 over a number of years.”

Question 9 asked members if they thought the levels of digital and keyboard skills required are appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed. Only half (55%) of members who responded answered “yes” with a third (36%) saying they did not think the assessments were appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed as shown in Figure 8.

There were 535 comments noted under this question. Within these comments members highlighted their perceptions of where the tests were inappropriate for their pupils as well as commenting on where some improvements had been made over the past few years. The vast majority of the comments left from members also continue to highlight the level of teacher input required to administer the tests as well as the additional support required for some pupils. There was also general agreement that the tests were easier for pupils in the later years (P7 and S3) as pupils became familiar with the format of the assessments and had improved digital and keyboard skills from earlier years. Below is a small, but representative, sample of the comments collected:

- "It was good that it no longer allows the children to skip questions because they have double tapped the 'next' button."
- "I have some children who are challenged with reading - therefore I have put someone in testing who can read the question to the pupils. In P1 we have a dedicated member of staff who reads the question and supports the children with inputting their answer - a PSA who is normally in class supporting groups of children."
- "For my class of P7 yes however when I was in P1 some children found it tricky using the iPads especially since you needed to scroll down for some questions."
- "Not for children with ASN or those who can't read."
- "Some of the Gaelic was not very clear."
- "For P7 yes - not so for P1 and only for some in P4? P1s are heavily supported and it takes up an inordinate amount of time- it is incredibly stressful actually to witness and in all honesty I feel so sorry for them - quite often they can get upset when they struggle to understand what they are being asked - and quite often with P4. In P7, the majority cope but there are a minority who just hope for the best and take a guess at the question - some get lucky and score highly when we as teachers, looking at their work over the year, know that they have scored much higher than their work evidence reflects."
- "My youngest pupils who are able to navigate a Google classroom and already familiar with keyboards and mouse mats (which wasn't the case in previous years) still found these tests hard to understand what was being asked of them. If the tests were more easily set out like Education City or Sumdog platforms I think children would cope and understand better."
- "I have seen p4 children with dyslexia extremely distressed by the SNSA. Teachers predicted they would be."
- "Many of the S3 pupils remember carrying out the assessments in P7 and before. They don't take long to settle down to doing the tasks."
- "Appropriate to most pupils in S3. If they are not, this is usually due to an identified ASN that would be supported."

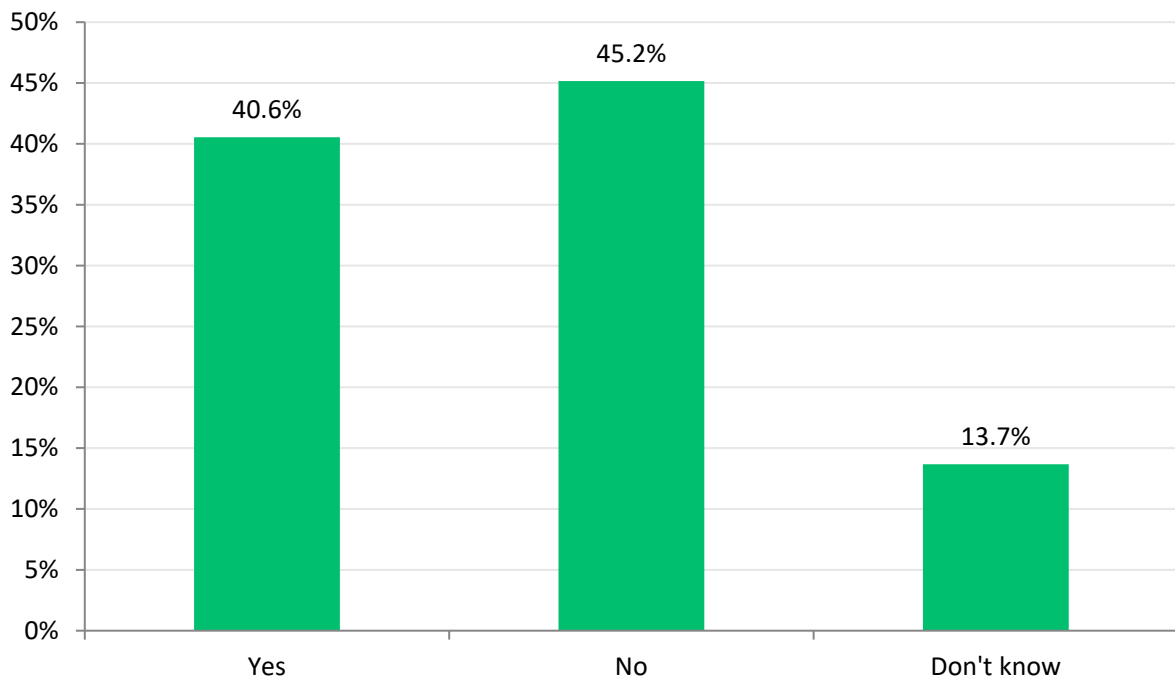
Figure 8: Question 9 - Do you think the level of digital and keyboard skills required are appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed?



Total responses: 1,814

Further to this, members were then asked if they thought the accessibility of language, font, layout is appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed. This time only 41% of members agreed and 45% disagreed as shown in figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Question 10 - Do you think the accessibility of language, font, layout is appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed?



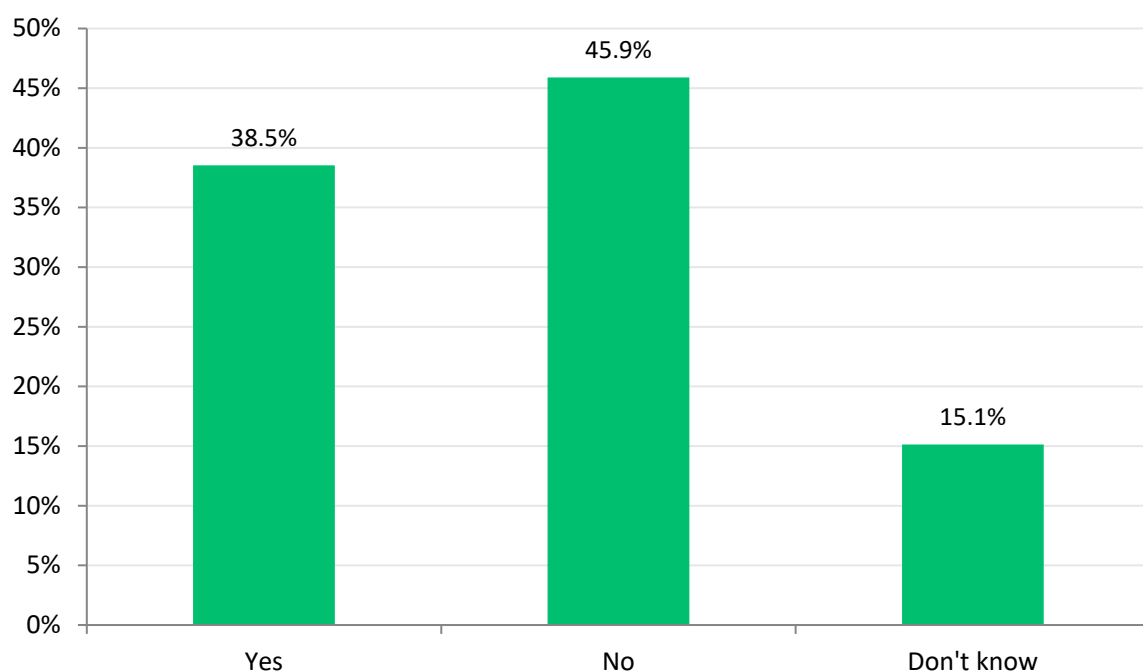
Total responses: 1,809

Again members were given the opportunity to give more detail under this question, with a total of 547 comments received. Again there were concerns raised, especially for the lower primary assessments of their suitability. Members reported that the overly wordy questions were difficult for some pupils and perhaps unnecessary in non-literacy or reading assessments. From the comments received, members generally thought the S3 assessments were accessible to their pupils, unless they also had an ASN or EAL requirements.

- "Quite a lot of text for some of the maths questions. Backstory with lots of names to explain a sharing scenario. The layout of coins was confusing as 1p and 2p were the same size on the screen."
- "I have only been involved in S3 and they have no issue that I have seen in accessing the SNSA assessments."
- "Too much reading required on non-reading tests. Language confusing for many as not in terms familiar with. Layout of some tests e.g. table in reading test very difficult to navigate along with questions."
- "It is good that the children can listen to the questions and answers, particularly in P1, as they are unable to read the question. However, I have felt some questions are a little too wordy."
- "For S3, yes. I can't comment on primary school as I haven't seen the layout out of their assessments and if it is different. If layout and format is the same then it is not appropriate for P1/P4."
- "There is no accompanying audio for the questions on p4 (or p7) assessments which means EAL and dyslexic learners rely on staff to read and explain questions and answer options. This is frustrating for pupils and time consuming for staff."
- "Again, similar to above - for P7 it's okay but for P1 and P4 - the test is nothing like anything they complete throughout the year so it's very unfamiliar and the language very formal."
- "The system appears to have been updated since last year and it is not as user friendly for P1 compared to previous years. Text is smaller and it is more difficult to click on the listen option as it is smaller."
- "Sometimes there's a lot of text but when they click the words in the questions that's useful in highlighting the correct areas to look in. The assessments are stressful for pupils with ASN or EAL needs."

Members were then asked if they thought the tasks within the assessment themselves were appropriate for the age and stage of their pupils. Only 39% said "yes", they were appropriate, with 46% saying they were not appropriate for the age and stage of their pupils.

Figure 10: Question 11 - Do you think the assessment tasks themselves are appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils being assessed?



Total responses: 1,809

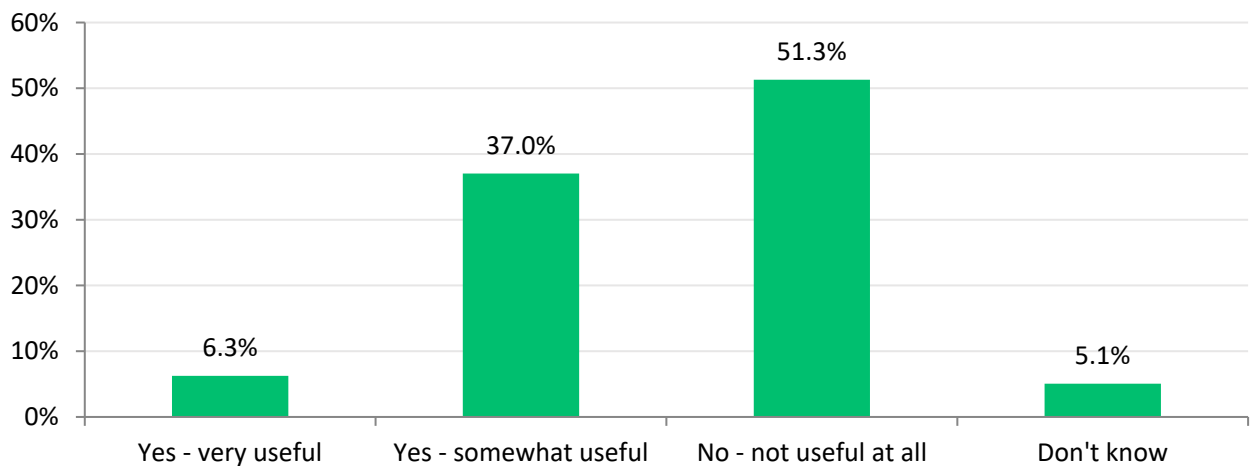
Within the 574 comments that members left under this question the issues around accessibility for younger pupils, and those with ASN and EAL needs were repeated. Members also repeated their concerns that some of the assessments are testing pupils on content that they haven't yet been taught, and that the full assessment is overly burdensome on children and young people. Below is a snapshot of the comments gathered under this question.

- "The children felt the assessments were challenging, but fair."
- "The assessments are much more in line with what is taught at early level this year, whereas previous years it seemed to be assessing early and first level. Thankfully the long text about wild cats and hummingbirds has been removed along with the three page book that the children had to listen to. This has reduced the time it takes for the children to complete the assessment."
- "The test does not marry up with the phonics programme used in our school.... we haven't taught ee/ ch/ th yet these are assessed quickly in the test."
- "Mostly. The reading sometimes does not allow the task to be completed even if the child knows the skill."
- "Assessments are too long and the children struggle to pay attention for the duration of the test. The less able children are demoralised when they struggle. Some of the questions are poor. Many able children are doing worse than less able as the less able are able to logically deduce an answer (for reading comprehension) but more able children become fixated on trying to read passages that are beyond early level."
- "Literacy assessment is very challenging for most P1s."

- “The reading assessment in particular is inherently inappropriate for this age and stage of children, especially post-Covid where Literacy levels have declined.”
- “Certainly not P1 - most children have to do them 1:1 and even then, get very distracted and occasionally distressed. They take a long time to administer to any children with ASN.”

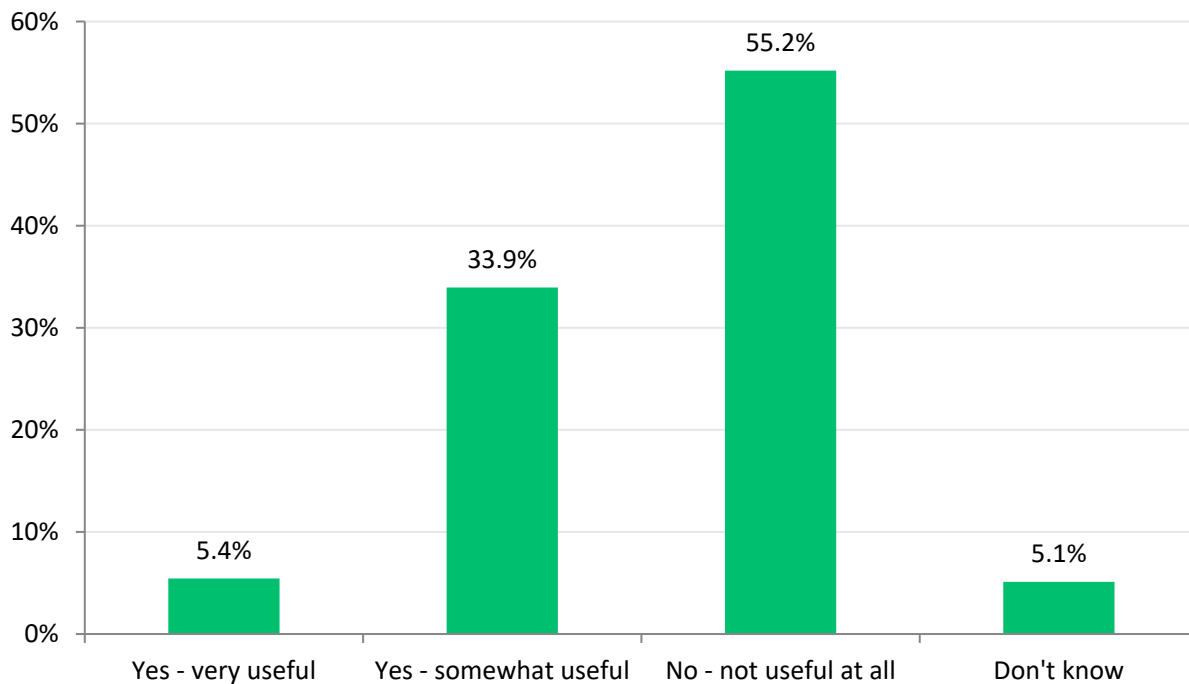
The last two questions asked members if they thought the data from learner reports had been useful in providing information on progress on the achievement of CfE, and on identifying next steps to inform professional judgement, on the achievement of CfE levels, as shown in Figures 11 and 12.

Figure 11: Question 12 - Do you think the data provided in SNSA or MCNG learner reports has been useful to you in providing reliable information on progress on the achievement of CfE levels?



Total responses: 1,816

Figure 12: Question 13 - Do you think the data provided in SNSA or MCNG learner reports has been useful to you in identifying next steps in learning and informing professional judgement on the achievement of CfE levels?



Total responses: 1,815

Figure 11 shows that only 6% of members thought the data provided in SNSA or MCNG learner reports has been “very useful” in providing reliable information on progress on the achievement of CfE levels. A further 37% thought they were “somewhat useful”, with 51% saying they were not useful at all.

Figure 12 shows that only 5% of respondents thought the data provided in SNSA or MCNG learner reports has been “very useful” in identifying next steps in learning, and informing professional judgement on the achievement of CfE levels. A further 34% said the learner reports were “somewhat useful”, and 55% said they were “not useful at all in identifying the next steps in learning and informing professional judgement on the achievement of CfE.

There were 715 comments gathered under question 12 and 461 comments under question 13. The comments from both of these questions covered much of the same concerns. From the comments received from both of these questions, it is clear the learner reports did not contain any information that wasn’t already known to the class teacher from their own professional judgements and ongoing assessments of their class. Some members said the information was helpful in relation to certain topics covered in class or highlighting areas for consolidation of learning.

Some members found there was not enough detail reported back in order to tailor the next steps in learning. Members repeated the same concerns that have been raised throughout this survey about the length of time that the assessments take, their unsuitability for some ages, stages and those with additional needs. Below is a summary of the responses given under questions 12 and 13:

- "I don't think it is completely accurate as sometimes children guess the answer and just get it right accidentally. It would be good to have a don't know option in the answers so that children don't accidentally get it right and so skew the results."
- "Good to get a confirmation of teacher judgement however if someone performed better than I expected I would still go with my teacher judgement. Very possible for children to just guess the answer and quickly pass through each question."
- "Every year the data from these tests tells me I have all my learners in the right groups and it confirms the gaps in learning that I have already highlighted through our schools progress tracking systems (assessing through observations of play). The data does not tell me anything I don't already know about my learners."
- "When completed 1:1 with an adult the assessments can highlight areas where children have not got a full understanding or may have forgotten previous learning. Good for highlighting areas for revision and consolidation."
- "It's pointless. This is in no way at all a tool for teachers. It is government data collection. I find it incredibly insulting that this is being dressed up as being for my benefit. It certainly is not for the benefit of learners either."
- "Pupils often don't take tests seriously because they don't see the value of them. If there was something in it for the pupil then they would be less likely to rush through and click any answer."
- "Yes it's a useful tool in addition to my formative assessment, in case, in class tests, learning conversations etc. I would not use it as my only indicator of a child's progress or achievement as it is very academic based."
- "I had already provided tracking information for CfE levels. Although I scanned this data to support my decisions I felt the data was unrepresentative of my children's abilities. Some children became bored with the SNSA due to length and did not put in their full effort. Therefore, were getting questions wrong even though I am confident that they knew the correct answer."
- "Results taken with a pinch of salt. Multiple choice doesn't reflect actual knowledge."
- "I would like to see a breakdown of what benchmarks they were successful with and which ones they struggled with - I just see an overall score and that has limited helpfulness."
- "It's useful in terms of indicating topics that are strengths or areas for improvement. It's not typical of classroom assessment so it's more difficult to say whether it would inform judgements on achieving CfE levels."
- "Not really - the levels were so poorly conceived from the outset, with no exemplars given at all for English. Exemplars published later by Education Scotland varied so widely in standard they were effectively useless. The idea of a 'holistic' assessment without grading individual pieces has led to

the crazy situation of teachers assigning grades for pieces in 'secret markbooks'. You couldn't make this up!

- "Again as a professional I know what the child's next steps are in their learning."
- "Would be much more useful if the data was condensed in an accessible way so the data could be easily extrapolated. Another school had done this for maths which was very helpful."
- "Class teachers do not have access to the detailed learner reports therefore do not inform the next steps in learning at all."
- "Somewhat useful for Numeracy."
- "SNSA data is exceptionally helpful to both curricular classroom teachers and PTGs in giving a standardised level of literacy and numeracy for advice for next steps and understanding capabilities."

Finally, members were asked; "Is there anything further about your experiences of Phase 2 SNSAs or MCNGs that you would like to share?" 771 comments were gathered at the end of this survey to classroom teachers. Some members did highlight the benefits of some of the data that they received, however, the vast majority of respondents shared their frustrations at how the SNSAs are delivered in schools, and the considerable workload that is created in delivering them.

Below is a small sample of these final remarks:

- "Have been 'advised' three times to 'consider' changing my tracking and monitoring spreadsheet to look more favourable by only considering SNSA results which are inaccurate and do not reflect what I know about the pupils. Mild threats of external people coming in to look at my evidence. They don't consider children guess or copy. Also don't move children down a level if results are low. These tests are a big headache and of no use to anyone. My P1 daughter got terrible results in March, but everything clicked into place in April and now she is achieving. No test can pick up on that."
- "Situation has been worse with and since Covid. Current S3 and S4 appear to have suffered most having fallen behind and putting further pressure on teachers and pupils."
- "Very time consuming to complete and not reflective of play pedagogy in P1."
- "I would wish for pupil-friendly explanations of bands, and reassurance on whether pupils/families will receive these automatically. Where the teacher needs to manually download these, I wonder if the interface could be modified to allow for easier downloads; it can be found "clunky". Also I wonder if the web pages would be made available to teachers even if they are off-site."
- "Very time consuming & disrupts usual routines & teaching time. Takes away at least a week of teaching time that could be used more productively."
- "I think the tests are really quite long. If we are doing standardised tests, I think there should be a basic set of questions that cover the Experiences

and Outcomes that are expected by end of early level e.g. pattern time etc. we have questions about half past when that wasn't covered but every child in our class was confident with o'clock. Some children didn't get to answer a question with o'clock. I do appreciate being able to do it especially with shy children as I was able to encourage them to give it a go if they were hesitant. If they had done it with someone they didn't know I know some children would have shrugged and been less likely to give it a go. I liked watching how children approached the questions. E.g. methodical and determined even when they weren't the highest attaining pupils."

- "Raises pupil anxiety, stops flow of teaching. Struggle to manage IT rooms for access."
- "Contrary to popular view I feel SNSA's are important to gain a snapshot of education across Scotland, back up teacher assessment and are very useful for ascertaining explicit next steps for pupils. I have never seen any pupil who is stressed by them."
- "I believe they are useful in second level both to inform future steps in learning and to expose pupils to a more formal assessment situation. However, I do not believe the balance is right yet in early and first levels."
- "Some kids just click through the questions at random and it's a totally pointless exercise."
- "The data is very useful but we are not allocated time to analyse it properly so that is disappointing."

Head and Depute Headteacher Views on SNSAs/MCNGs

The final section of this paper looks at the experiences captured from 4 questions posed to Head and Depute Headteachers. In total 84 responses were gathered from this survey. The first question put to these members was whether their school has continued with other forms of standardised assessment other than SNSAs or MCNGs? Figure 13 below shows that two thirds of Head and Depute Headteacher member said "yes" they do continue with other forms of standardised testing or assessment.

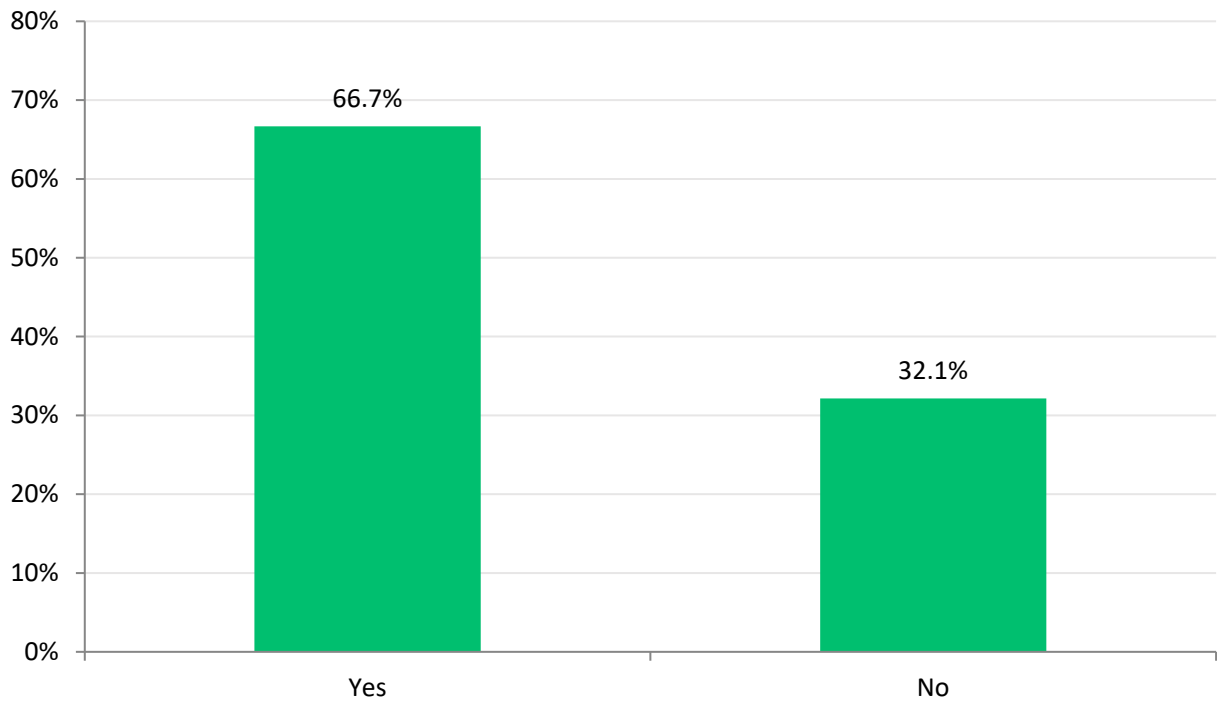
When asked what assessments they used alongside SNSAs, 56 responses were gathered. Other forms of assessment listed included:

- "PIPS"
- "INCAS"
- "MALT maths test"
- "PIRA"
- "Ready Steady Read"
- "HAST"
- "Salford"
- "Burt"
- "Local authority standardised tests in reading and mathematics in P3, P5 and P7"
- "PUMA"
- "CEM"
- "GL - RAPID/Cops/LASS"

- "Dyslexia Screener and Portfolio"
- "SWST"
- "SOFA"
- "MIDYIS"
- "YARC"
- "NGRT"
- "PM Benchmarks"
- "Accelerated Reader"
- "Sundog Diagnostic"
- "Leckie and Leckie diagnostic"
- "Big Writing"
- "SEAL"

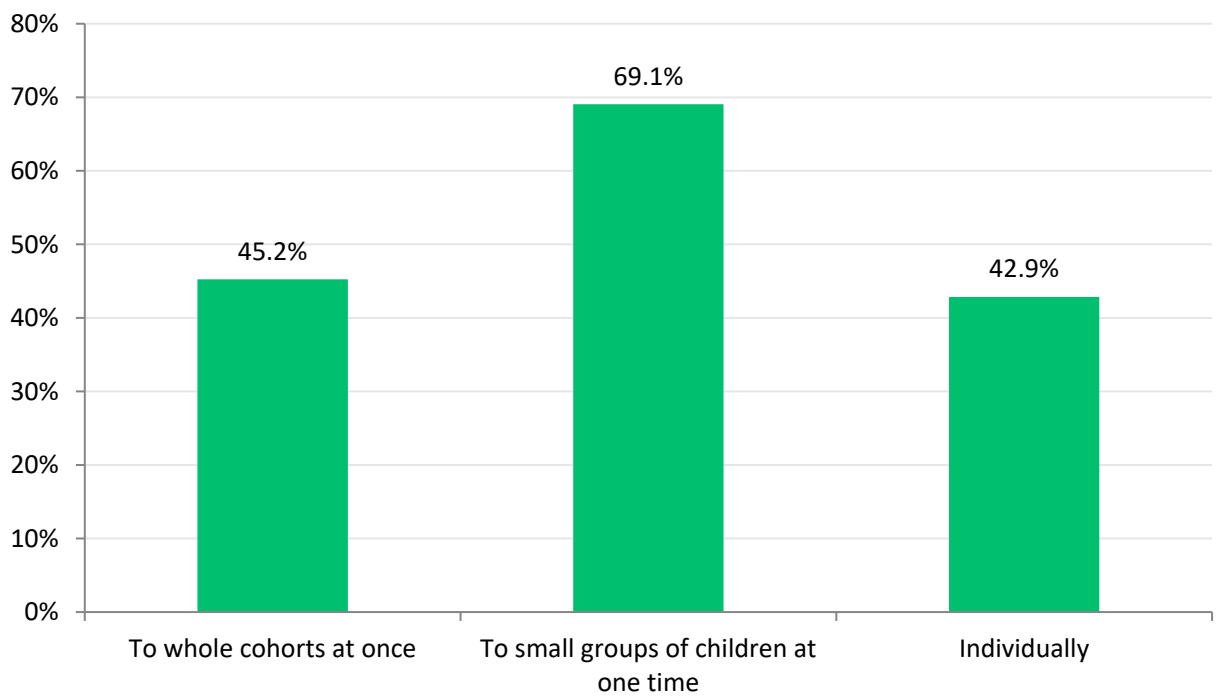
Members were then asked how standardised tests were administered in their schools. This question allowed for multiple responses with 46% saying they are administered to whole cohorts at once, and 69% saying they are also administered to small groups of children at one time. In total 43% said tests were also administered individually as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 13: Question 1 - Other than SNSAs or MCNGs, has your school continued other forms of standardised testing/ assessment? (if so, what?)



Total responses: 83

Figure 14: Question 2 - How are SNSAs or MCNGs and/ or other standardised tests administered in your schools?



Total responses: 83

44 comments were received from Head and Depute Headteachers on how tests are administered in their schools. Most of these comments highlighted the different approaches taken in different year groups or based on the needs of the pupils themselves.

- "Sometimes we have glitches with certain computers so small groups are easier to manage. P1 is done individually as you need to be there to support them and keep them on task. We are all about Play in P1 so children are not used to spending such a long time on a computer. Also most children have tablets with touchscreens at home- culture shock when they have to use an 6 year old computer with no touchscreen and a mouse! The novelty of clicking a mouse is too easy- ending up with inaccurate data."
- "Our P1 pupils we do individually. P4 we do either as a whole class or small groups or individually - depending on the needs of the pupils. P7 we do either as a whole class or small groups or individually depending on the needs of our pupils."
- "We are a small island school with one class so has to be individual - also have 80% children with ASN so has to be individual."
- "Teachers have found administering individually to P1's very useful, taking notes on pupil responses and difficulties. Due to IT equipment limitations we administer P4 and P7 s as small groups or whole cohorts if we have enough devices."
- "Depending on pupil support needs."
- "Depending on the age/stage and the individual needs of each child/group of children, we have used a variety of methods to administer tests including within a classroom setting, small group or individually. Not all children will sit these (e.g. ASN children)."
- "It varies - teacher has discretion on administration. The administration method should suit the child/group of children undertaking the assessment."

Question 3 asked Head and Depute Headteachers; "Does the administration of SNSAs or MCNGs require the deployment of additional staff/teachers and the use of additional IT equipment?"

Almost all respondents said "yes", with only a handful of the 84 comments saying "no". Below are some of the comments left detailing the additional IT or staff support required to administer the assessments.

- "We have to book out the ICT suite for the administration of SNSAs which means the NCCT for Digital Literacy has to find somewhere else to teach with limited equipment. We use a Pupil Support Assistant to administer the tests as well as the Digital Literacy teacher. We can't expect our class teachers to carry them out due to class sizes and the amount of ASN pupils unsupported in these classes."

- "We already have 1-1 iPads so there is no additional IT needed in our school. For ease members of the SLT support the admin of SNSAs."
- "Yes, all of our children are EAL. This takes up a lot of time. Guidance still not clear re administration for EAL I feel."
- "Our P1 requires more staff as it is delivered 1-1 so can be very time consuming. P4 and P7 are timetabled to have laptops and access it via their GLOW launchpad."
- "We use English and Maths teachers to supervise with significant input also required by PSAs. All ICT suites are used, displacing classes at those times to other rooms to do written work."
- "DHT administers to P4 and P7. Class teachers administer to P1 and additional teachers support."
- "Some additional teachers who normally support learning will assist class teachers. Management support if required to complete by deadline."
- "Yes - we do not have 1-1 devices across the school - only for P6 and P7 pupils so the administration of tests needs careful timetabling and can be very challenging to organise. Additional staff are needed to ensure the tests are carried out fairly. You cannot administer the tests in a busy P1 classroom with only a teacher in class and children with needs. The administration of the assessments in P1 in particular is challenging and I would argue impossible for GM pupils. The fact my staff carry these out is a credit to them."
- "Not usually - although we sometimes direct other staff to support to make the process easier to administer."

The final question put to Head and Depute Headteachers was: "How is SNSA or MCNGs and other standardised testing data used?" 82 members responded to this question highlighting that these assessments are used to support teacher judgement, to track attainment and to identify any gaps in learning or patterns within cohorts. Some of the comments left by members suggested that the testing was not useful to the school, or had very limited impact. Below is a small selection of the comments received.

- "Teachers have instant access to reports generated. Used in professional dialogue along with local authority standardised assessments and evidence from teachers ongoing assessments to support professional judgements of attainment. SLT use data to compare with national data."
- "We don't find the information provided by the P1 SNSA to be useful in supporting teacher judgement of pupils achievement. At P4 & P7 the data is used along with teachers' assessment records and summative assessment results to judge achievement of a level. It informs the meeting between class teachers and member of SLT where we talk through all the information and make a judgement of pupil progress."
- "Usually to confirm teacher judgement. Robust procedures are already in place."
- "We have debated it's use since its inception. Mostly to see where gaps are."

- “Standardised assessment results support our confirmation of pupils on track within a level. SNSA data not really used.”
- “Data is analysed to identify gaps for learners or patterns within groups. We explore these further and it can inform our improvement priorities for the next session. We use SNSA data to explore discrepancies between TPJ and SNSA bands alongside benchmarks during the end of year tracking meetings.”
- “Limited analysis as we already have significant TPJ data by end of S3 which has already been used in options and coursing process (Jan/Feb).”
- “Used to help ensure appropriate groupings, level of work and also in the shaping of manageable classes.”
- “Used by local authority to compare with CfE levels for judgement of achievement of a level.”
- “We prefer to use our own assessment evidence and professional judgment rather than SNSA data.”
- “In a very limited way by English staff, but otherwise not at all.”
- “To improve teaching. I would like to say though, that SNSA assessments are not of the same quality as other standardised assessments that are peer-reviewed and use psychometric standards that are much more reliable.”
- “The data is shared with teachers and used as part of attainment and progress meetings. It’s really valuable data for this discussion. It’s not perfect, but definitely adds something to the overall picture. The final decision on achievement of a level is based on teacher judgment. Where there is any doubt (pupil is borderline, teacher is unsure etc) then this is discussed with colleagues and with me as the Head Teacher before a final decision is made.”

Conclusions

These two surveys issued to members highlight the same concerns and observations that were reported in the 2018 EIS member survey. Whilst there are some comments from members highlighting some small changes to the layout of the assessments, there continues to be scepticism about the usefulness of these assessments as well as worries about their suitability for younger pupils and those with ASN or EAL needs.

Members continue to report that the information presented in the learner reports is not detailed enough to offer additional insights beyond their own professional judgements and continued assessments of their class.

It is also very concerning to note that many ASN, PEF and support for learning staff are taken away from their scheduled duties to support in the delivery of these tests. At a time when there is already significant under resourcing for ASL, further disruption to this support is likely to have an impact on pupils learning.

