

Access Arrangements

**Information for Parents
2021/22**

CYPS: SEND Implementation Team

“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best they can be”



What are Access Arrangements?

- ▶ Access arrangements are made for students who have a disability, a special educational need or a temporary injury that ***significantly*** affects them in assessments.
- ▶ They are the principal way that the awarding bodies make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a candidate who is disabled is not substantially disadvantaged compared to a candidate who is not disabled.
- ▶ The process is usually managed in school by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).



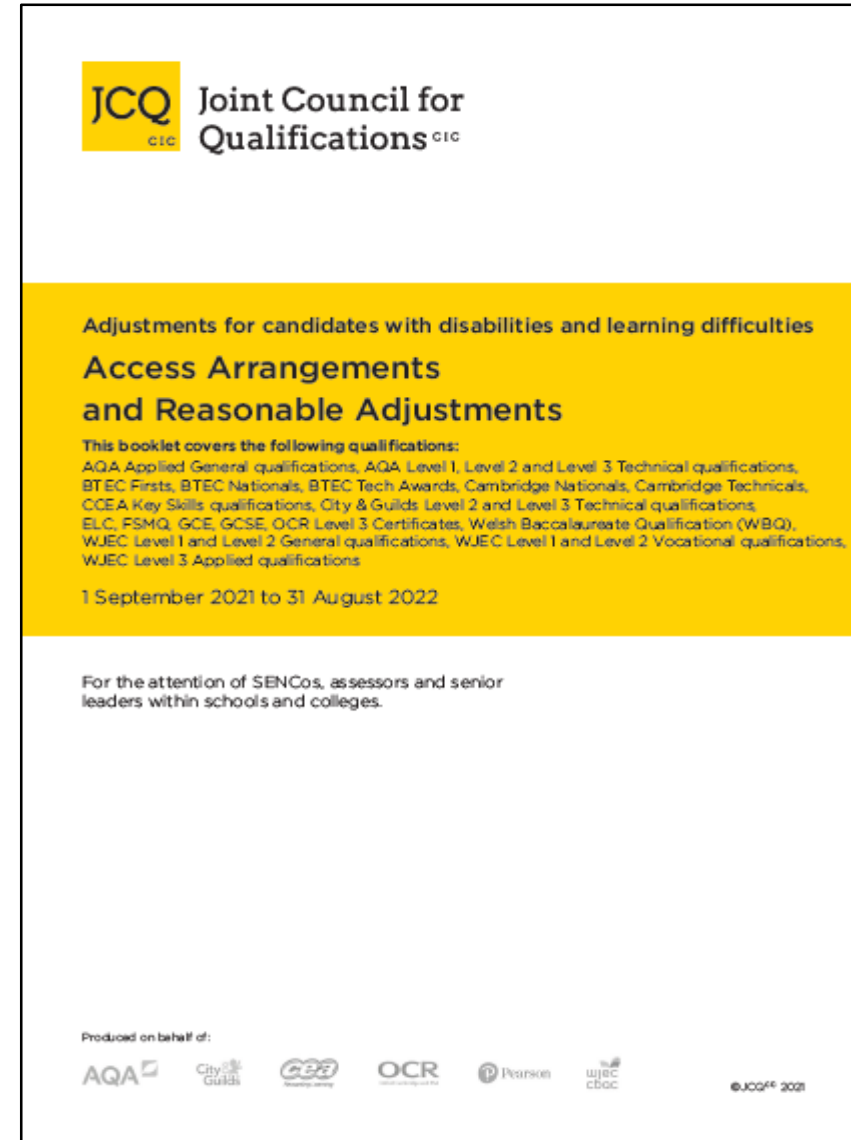
How are Access Arrangements allocated for External Exams?

- ▶ The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publish regulations every year, for schools and colleges, to make sure that access arrangements are appropriate and consistent.
- ▶ Pupils identified as having significant learning difficulties are normally assessed by the SENCo in school to determine if an application can be made for access arrangements.
- ▶ SENCos who can conduct assessments have undergone rigorous specialist training and are qualified to carry out the required JCQ assessments.
- ▶ Test evidence is needed for some access arrangements that need to be applied for and approved before they can be used in external exams (GCSE & A Levels).

JCQ does not accept the scores of private reports, solely to apply for access arrangements.

When are Access Arrangements organised?

- ▶ Access Arrangements must be agreed before assessments and exams.
- ▶ JCQ issues deadlines for schools having arrangements processed and approved.



Guidance that governs Access Arrangements for schools

- ▶ Access arrangements do not change the skills or knowledge being tested.
- ▶ Access arrangements must not give an unfair advantage to those who receive them.
- ▶ There are a variety of access arrangements that can be provided.
- ▶ Any access arrangements that are used in exams are based on need and must *reflect the pupil's normal way of working* in the classroom on a regular basis and/ or in tests and exams as observed during their time in school to date.

Year 8 tests and exams

- ▶ P7 AQE & GL Transfer Tests are not regarded as regulated exams so access arrangements given to a child during these exams do not automatically continue to apply in post primary.
- ▶ A private educational psychologist's report submitted for transfer purposes cannot be used as evidence to support access arrangements in post primary.
- ▶ Schools employ a robust method of identifying children who require access arrangements and this documentation is inspected.

Accountability

- ▶ JCQ state that schools must be able to demonstrate a detailed history of need and consistent use of reasonable adjustments to support a formal application for a pupil's access arrangements.
- ▶ Teachers observe the pupil's normal way of working in class and note any difficulties, putting in support strategies as required.
- ▶ Both data and teacher observation helps to inform the SENCo of pupils who may have a special educational need (SEN) and need to be placed on the school's SEN register and/or pupils who may require access arrangements.
- ▶ The SENCo may then conduct further assessments to provide evidence to support an application for access arrangements.

Specialist evidence

In order to apply for some access arrangements:

- ▶ The SENCo's detailed information will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability.
- ▶ The specialist evidence is not required to recommend the access arrangement e.g. 25% extra time but to simply confirm the candidate's disability.

Exam Stress

- ▶ It is normal for most children to feel nervous or anxious about exams.
- ▶ Solely having “exam nerves” would not be an appropriate justification for applying for access arrangements.
- ▶ School may provide advice and support to all children prior to exams on how to cope with stress and use it positively.
- ▶ As parents, please endorse your child’s sense of resilience and support their use of taught strategies to limit exam anxiety.
- ▶ Encourage a “can do” attitude and a positive mind set in your child.

Useful websites for exam stress

- ▶ [AQA—Student and parent support: managing exam stress](#)
- ▶ [Childline UK— Preparing for exams](#)
- ▶ [NHS—Coping with exam stress](#)