



# Developing Preliminary Support Levels with SIS-A 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Data

June 2026  
Presentation to SDAB

# Review of support budget development tasks

Today's focus will be on the status of Task #2

1

## Data collection and analysis

- SIS-A data collection
- Population data analysis
- Through March 2026

## Level framework development

- Support needs data analysis
- Preliminary level framework determination
- Verification process development
- Through June 2026

2

3

## Support budgets development

- Service use and spend data analysis
- Preliminary budgets determination
- Through August 2026

Record review  
In November 2026

4

# Brief Background on the Supports Intensity Scale - Adult (SIS-A) 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

- SIS-A has three overarching sections (see figure)
- Extensive research supports its validity and reliability
- Used across multiple jurisdictions in the US and worldwide for resource allocation

## Support Needs Index (SNI)

- Standardized score created from seven subscales: Home living, community, health/safety, lifelong learning, work, social, and advocacy

## Exceptional Medical Support Needs

- 24 questions including “other”
- Asks how much support is needed (none, some, extensive)

## Exceptional Behavioral Support Needs

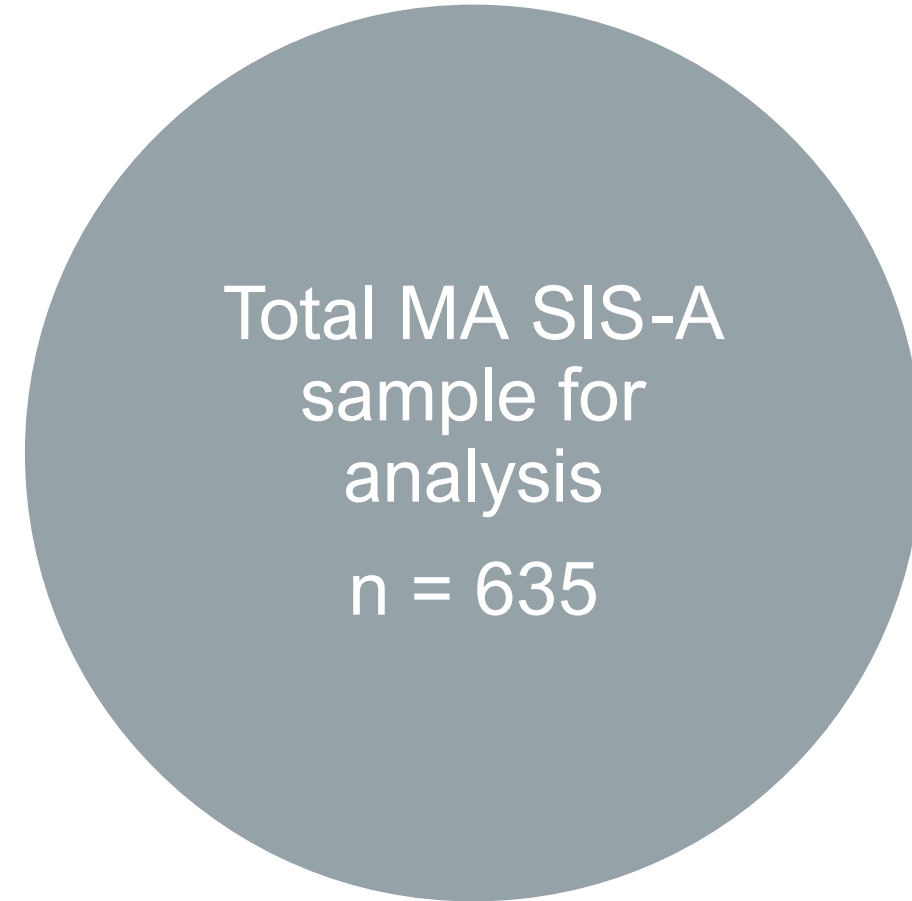
- 14 questions including “other”
- Asks how much support is needed (none, some, extensive)

# SIS-A Sample Used in Data Analysis

Assessments conducted  
2023 – 2026

Target sample  $n = 1,106$

Changes to analysis plan  
necessary due to not  
reaching target sample



# Support range framework development approach



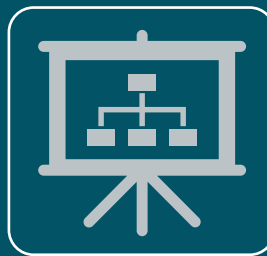
## Explore MA SIS-A sample data

- Learn about support needs in sample
- Determine ways in which sample data look different between traditional and SD



## Explore SIS-A 2nd edition multi-state sample

- Determine ways in which sample data look different across states
- Determine best data to use for support level framework development

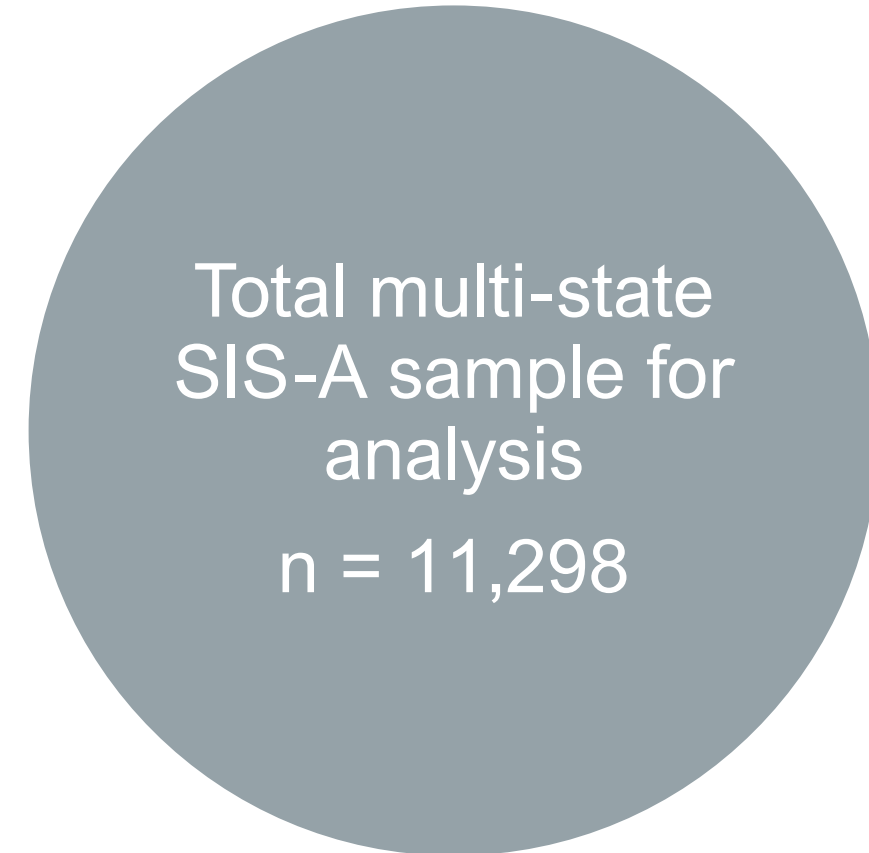


## Create best approach to conduct analyses to based on findings of exploration

- Number of support ranges and overall composition of support ranges
- Specific criteria for assigning adults to a support range

# Multi-state SIS-A sample

- HSRI has access to SIS-A assessment data across multiple states
- Created a de-identified dataset across 7 states (including MA)
- Represent mix of people using self-direction and traditional services, living settings, and other demographics
- Many states have assessments for entire service population



# Dataset exploration and framework approach

- Explored trends across states and identified areas of differences and similarities
- MA sample skewed toward slightly lower than average need in comparison with multi-state dataset, but not out of the range of scores across states
  - Differences may be attributed to data collection process in MA rather than anticipating that people receiving services in MA have lower need
- Hybrid approach for analysis selected:
  - Multi-state data used for statistical modeling
  - MA data continuously explored throughout analysis for follow-up analyses and checks to ensure framework developed fits MA's population
  - SD and traditional samples also considered throughout analysis

# Framework requirements

Considerations and criteria for recommending a framework

Explainable and understandable

Statistically sound

Defensible

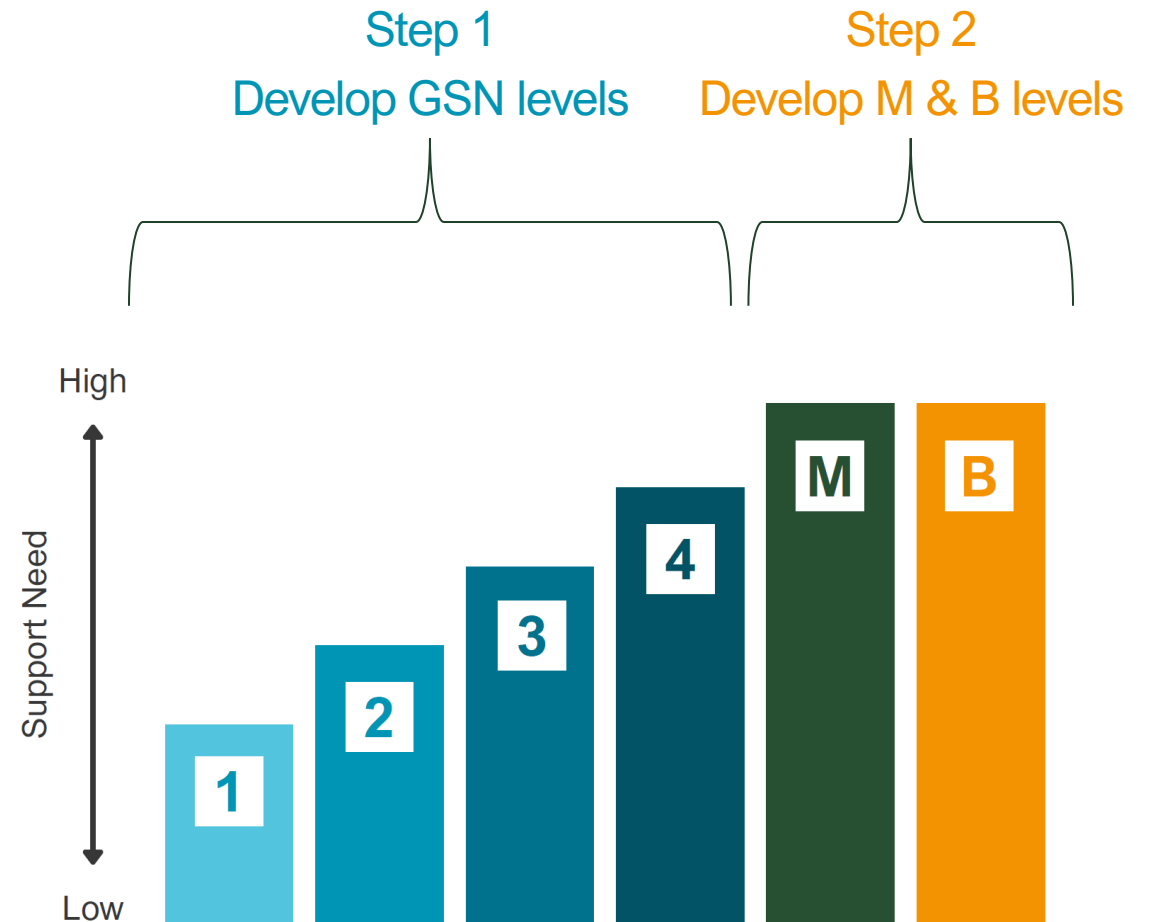
Levels account for lowest to highest needs

Amount of support need is unique to each level

Responsive to improvements based on new data

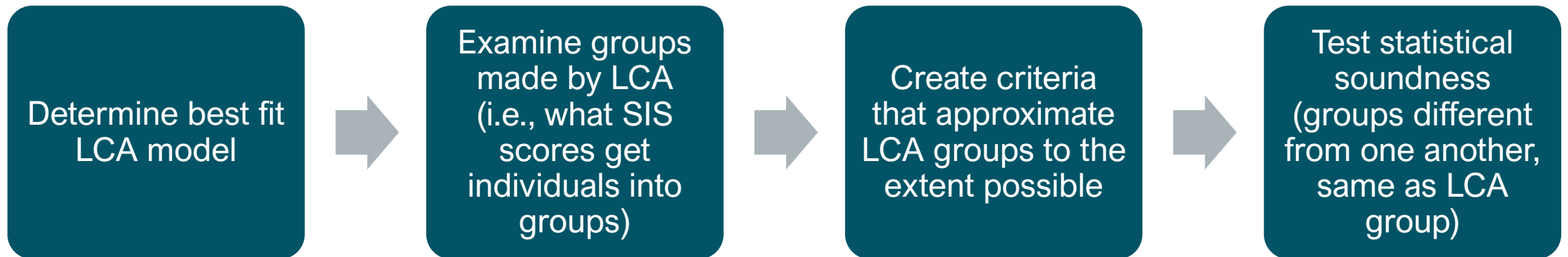
# Components of the framework

- Aligning with the SIS-A 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, we consider three components of the support level framework:
  - General support need (GSN) as measured by the Support Needs Index (SNI)
  - Medical need
  - Behavioral need
- Due to differences in the ways the data work in these sections, we analyze GSN separately from Medical and Behavioral



# General Support Need Criteria Development

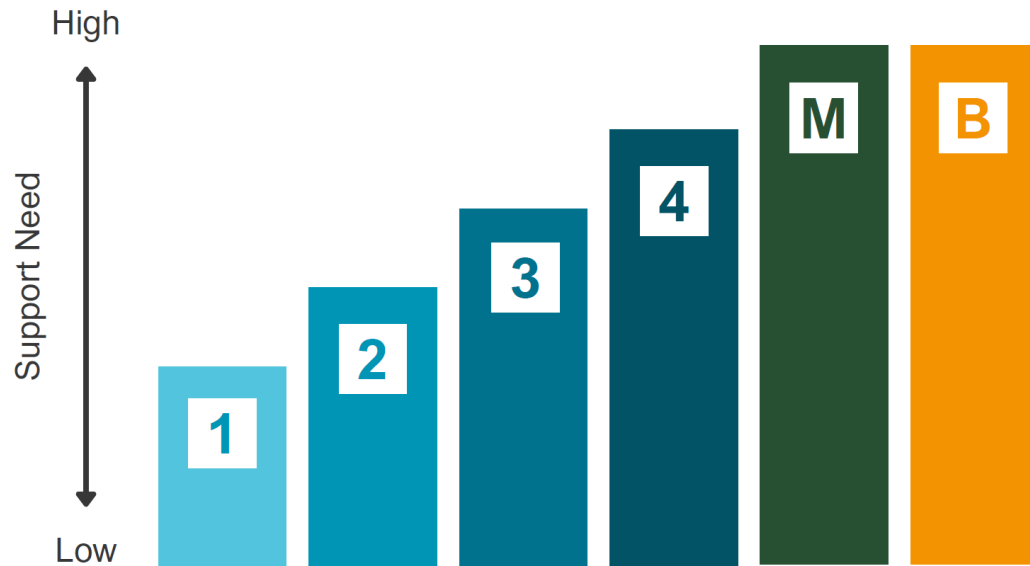
- LCA is a statistical procedure that can be used to classify individuals into homogeneous subgroups using a set of data
- Multiple models are tested with LCA and compared to one another with “fit indices” and other diagnostics that point to which model(s) best fit the data
- Once a model is selected as best fitting, the classes (subgroups) found in the LCA will be converted into levels for framework(s) in the state



# Medical and behavioral criteria

- Explored descriptives for medical and behavioral items across states
- Compared criteria used across states for assignment to “M” (extraordinary medical needs) and “B” (extraordinary behavioral needs)
  - Most states use the same criteria for assignment to M and B except for explainable differences among states (e.g., one state’s criteria include a higher threshold for M due to uncertainties with sample at the time and wanting to avoid stress on the system related to more people assigned to higher levels than needed)
- Compared proportion of populations across states assigned to M or B based on thresholds
  - States typically assign an M or B level to approximately 5% to 15% of their population
- Determined appropriate threshold for scores in MA based on data exploration
- Verification processes that will impact (increase) assignment to levels M and B discussed later

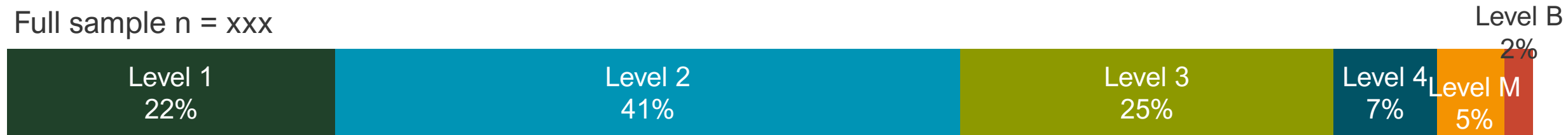
# Preliminary 6 Support Level Framework



| Level | Level description               |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1     | Low general support needs       |
| 2     | Moderate general support needs  |
| 3     | High general support needs      |
| 4     | Very high general support needs |
| M     | Extraordinary medical needs     |
| B     | Extraordinary behavioral needs  |

# Percent of people in each level in MA SIS-A sample

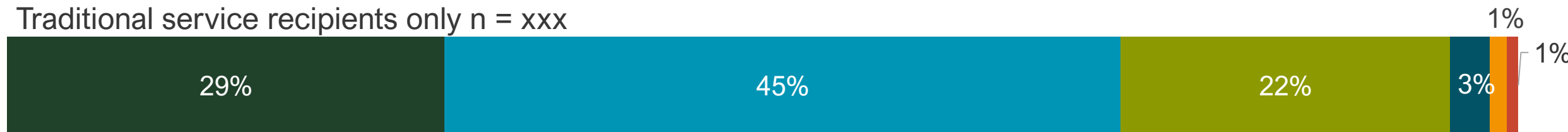
Full sample n = xxx



Self-direction only n = xxx

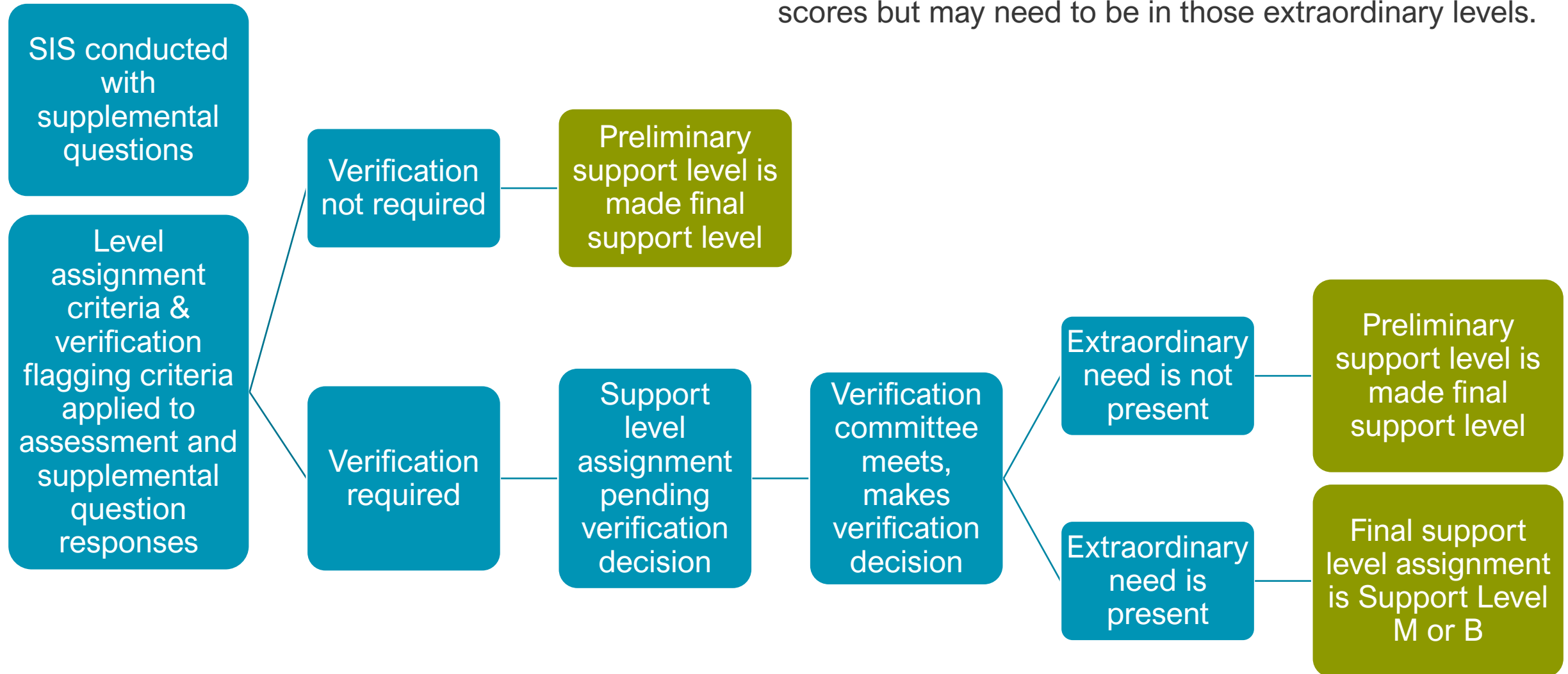


Traditional service recipients only n = xxx



# Verification

The verification process is in development to flag and review people who are not assigned to M or B automatically from SIS-A scores but may need to be in those extraordinary levels.



# Reminder

Levels are preliminary, upcoming data collection activities (i.e., record review) may impact framework criteria



Additional testing and  
refining forthcoming!

## Next steps & Discussion

Do you have questions about anything presented or next steps?

