



Qualification Specification



Qualification summary

Qualification title	NCFE CACHE Level 2 Technical Specialist for Designated Safeguarding Officers in Early Years (Award)
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	610/4504/4
Guided learning hours (GLH)	60
Total qualification time (TQT)	75
Minimum age	16
Qualification purpose	<p>This qualification has been developed for early years professionals who are working in the role of designated safeguarding officer or who are interested in finding out more or preparing to take on this role.</p> <p>This is an additional specialist qualification. It provides learners with the knowledge and skills regarding welfare and safeguarding requirements for babies and children in line with the early years statutory framework.</p>
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	Learners must be working within an early years setting to be able to meet the assessment requirements of this qualification.
Occupational standards	<p>This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Practitioner occupational standard (ST0888).</p> <p>The specialist duties have been written to build upon the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Early Years Practitioner standard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. challenge practice where it is weak and make recommendations to improve safeguarding and welfare practice in line with statutory requirements 2. maintain and model best practice to support the safeguarding and welfare of children in accordance with the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework and policy and procedures within own setting 3. co-ordinate and deliver safeguarding intervention strategies to promote children's welfare and wellbeing, including partnership working and signposting
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/4504/4.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.



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Section 1: introduction

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of the role of the designated safeguarding officer in an early years setting
- explore best practice in safeguarding and welfare in accordance with statutory framework

The objectives of this qualification are to:

- provide opportunities for early years professionals to learn about safeguarding and welfare requirements for holistic health, development and wellbeing of babies and children in an early years setting
- gain an understanding of the role of the designated safeguarding officer in line with statutory requirements, policies and procedures
- discover how to create a safe and enabling inclusive environment in relation to safeguarding and protecting babies and children
- work in partnership with others for child-centred practice

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the Support Handbook.

Guidance for entry and registration

This qualification is designed for early years practitioners and early years educators. This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Practitioner occupational standard (ST0888).

It may also be useful to learners studying qualifications in the following areas:

- teaching and learning
- early years
- special educational needs

Registration is at the discretion of the centre in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the NCFE Portal.

Learners must be aged 16 or above to undertake this qualification and be working within an early years setting. There are no specific prior skills/knowledge a learner must have for this qualification. However, learners may find it helpful if they have already achieved a level 2 qualification.



Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the learning outcomes (LOs) and complying with the relevant literacy, numeracy, and health and safety requirements.

Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level, or with the same/a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification, learners are required to successfully achieve **three units** from the mandatory units.

Please refer to the list of units in appendix A or the unit summaries in section 2 for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification. A partial certificate may be requested for learners who do not achieve the full qualification but have achieved at least one whole unit; partial achievement certificate fees can be found in the Fees and Pricing document on the NCFE website.

Age range covered by the qualification

This qualification relates to working with children in early years settings, between the ages of birth to 5 for early years practitioners.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
 - early years designated safeguarding officer
 - safeguarding trainer
 - early years educator
 - teaching and learning practitioner
- further education:
 - safeguarding
 - early years education
 - teaching and learning

Resource requirements

There are no mandatory resource requirements for this qualification, but centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all the appropriate LOs.

Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation

The assessment of competence-based criteria should ideally be conducted within the workplace. However, in instances where this is not feasible, learners can be assessed in a realistic work environment (RWE) designed to replicate real work settings.



It is essential for organisations utilising an RWE to ensure it accurately reflects current and authentic work environments. By doing so, employers can be confident that competence demonstrated by a learner in an RWE will be translated into successful performance in employment.

In establishing an RWE, the following factors should be considered.

The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence requirements being assessed:

- the work situation should closely resemble the relevant setting
- equipment and resources that replicate the work situation must be current and available for use to ensure that assessment requirements can be met
- time constraints, resource access and information availability should mirror real conditions

The learner's work activities reflect those found in the work environment being represented, for example:

- interaction with colleagues and others should reflect expected communication approaches
- tasks performed must be completed to an acceptable timescale
- learners must be able to achieve a realistic volume of work as would be expected in the work situation being represented
- learners operate professionally with clear understanding of their work activities and responsibilities
- feedback from colleagues and others (for example customers, service users) is maintained and acted upon
- account must be taken of any legislation, regulations or standard procedures that would be followed in the workplace

Work/industry placement experience

Learners must be working within an early years setting to be able to meet the assessment requirements of this qualification.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner's skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of one component:

- an internally assessed portfolio of evidence, which is assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by NCFE (internal quality assurance must still be completed by the centre as usual)

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the Level 2 Technical Specialist for Designated Safeguarding Officers in Early Years (Award).

Learners who are not successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply in cases where additional external quality assurance visits are required.



Unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.

Internal assessment

We have created some sample tasks for the three internally assessed units, which can be found within a separate document in the member's area of the NCFE website. These tasks are not mandatory. You can contextualise these tasks to suit the needs of your learners to help them build up their portfolio of evidence. The tasks have been designed to cover some LOs for three units and provide opportunities for stretch and challenge. For further information about contextualising the tasks, please contact the Provider Development team.

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. The assessment tasks should allow the learner to respond to a real-life situation that they may face when in employment. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this.

If a centre needs to create their own internal assessment tasks, there are four essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

- ensuring the assessment tasks are meaningful with clear, assessable outcomes
- appropriate coverage of the content, LOs or assessment criteria (AC)
- having a valid and engaging context or scenario
- including sufficient opportunities for stretch and challenge for higher attainers



Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification.

The types of evidence listed are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes (LOs) are covered, and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally quality assured. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact your external quality assurer (EQA).

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the unit content are applied to this qualification. This can be found in section 3.



Unit 01 Understanding safeguarding for child protection (A/651/2481)



Unit summary			
This unit provides knowledge and understanding of child protection in an early years setting.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	12 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand child protection in an early years setting	1.1 Outline areas of abuse
	1.2 Describe signs and indicators of potential abuse
	1.3 Identify safeguarding risk factors in an early years setting
	1.4 Explain processes to follow if an early years practitioner is concerned about the welfare of a baby or child
	1.5 Discuss ways the early years practitioner keeps themselves safe in relation to safeguarding and protection
2. Understand partnership working for child-centred practice	2.1 Identify professionals that may be involved in collaborative partnership working for child protection in an early years setting
	2.2 Explain the importance of working in partnership with others to ensure best possible outcomes for children

Range
1. Understand child protection in an early years setting 1.1 Areas of abuse <p>Learners must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical • emotional • sexual • neglect • female genital mutilation (FGM) • county lines and other forms of criminal exploitation and gangs • child sex trafficking • modern day slavery • financial or material abuse • domestic abuse • radicalisation • grooming • online abuse • non-recent/historical abuse 1.3 Safeguarding risk factors <p>Learners must consider safeguarding high-risk factors, for example:</p>



Range

- learning and communication differences
- disabilities – students to know about medical and social models of disability in the context of safeguarding and welfare
- cultural identity – students to know about food restrictions and any medication influence in relation to cultural diversity
- history of abuse
- children with care experience

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO1 (AC1.3) Learners should also be aware of the importance of maintaining policy requirements when working with visitors to the setting, as well as extended adult ratios during trips and visits. Learners should be aware of the safeguarding responsibilities they have in the role of designated safeguarding officer to students on site, being mindful that some students may be under 18 years of age.

LO1 (AC1.5) Learners must discuss at least three ways the early years practitioner keeps themselves safe in relation to safeguarding and protection. Learners must be aware of procedures in place to protect them if an allegation is made. Learners could refer to [safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations](#).

LO2 (AC2.2) Learners must explain from a child-centred approach.



Unit 02 Understanding safeguarding and welfare requirements for best practice in an early years setting (D/651/2482)



Unit summary			
This unit will explore best practice in safeguarding and welfare in adherence with the statutory framework requirements in an early years setting.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	24 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand how safeguarding and welfare requirements protect babies, children and others in an early years setting	1.1 State the relevant areas of statutory guidance supporting the safeguarding and welfare of babies and children
	1.2 Outline the safeguarding and welfare requirements in line with the statutory requirements for early years
	1.3 Explain how the safeguarding and welfare requirements keep babies and children safe in the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> indoors outdoors offsite visits medication
2. Understand policy underpinning protocol in relation to safeguarding in an early years setting	2.1 Outline the safeguarding policy in an early years setting with regard to safeguarding and welfare requirements
	2.2 Explain the role of professional supervision for staff involved in safeguarding and welfare in an early years setting
3. Understand welfare requirements for holistic health, development and wellbeing	3.1 Describe how an early years setting meets the food and drinks requirements of individual children
	3.2 Summarise the role of the key person for emotional health and wellbeing in babies and children
	3.3 Explain the importance of qualified staff when maintaining standards for a high-quality setting

Range
1. Understand how safeguarding and welfare requirements protect babies, children and others in an early years setting
1.1 Statutory guidance Learners must consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework Keeping children safe in education Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales Working together to safeguard children



Range

1.3 Medication

Learners must consider:

- administration
- storage
- notification responsibilities where a staff member is taking specific medication

2. Understand policy underpinning **protocol** in relation to safeguarding in an early years setting

2 Protocol

Learners must consider:

- policy and procedures that underpin practice
- safeguarding and welfare policy to include steps to take in relation to visitors including:
 - parents/carers
 - students
 - volunteers
 - other professionals

2.2 Professional supervision including regular meetings with line manager to talk through any challenges, share experience and plan for improved outcomes.

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO2 (AC2.1) Learners must be aware of the impact of local authority processes and how these may vary in each local authority and therefore impact the local offer.

LO3 Learners must refer to section 3 of the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#). When considering qualified staff, learners must:

- appreciate rationale for child:adult ratios
- show regard to staff qualification levels and age range of children
- recognise the processes involved for safer recruitment, including undertaking enhanced police checks prior to working in an early years setting
- appreciate the significance of establishing and maintaining professional relationships with families to achieve the best possible outcomes for the child
- explore potential complexities and challenges to effective partnership working and ways these can be overcome



Unit 03 Following safeguarding and welfare requirements in an early years setting (F/651/2483)

Unit summary			
This unit will provide an opportunity for early years professionals to learn about safeguarding and welfare requirements in practice.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	24 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand the role of the designated safeguarding officer in an early years setting	1.1 Explain key responsibilities of the designated safeguarding officer in an early years setting 1.2 Describe the role of the designated safeguarding officer in relation to partnership working
2. Be able to implement policy and procedures in line with safeguarding and welfare requirements in an early years setting	2.1 Demonstrate collaboration with others to review policy and procedural processes in an early years setting making recommendations for improved practice 2.2 Demonstrate the ability to promote best practice through role modelling 2.3 Demonstrate collaboration with others to achieve a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for babies, children and others 2.4 Explain the significance of coherent reports and record keeping 2.5 Discuss food and drink provision in an early years setting and how this promotes holistic health for babies and children
3. Be able to facilitate a safe and enabling inclusive environment in an early years setting	3.1 Outline ways the early years practitioner maintains a safe and enabling inclusive environment 3.2 Explain the role of the key person in promoting safeguarding and welfare requirements in an early years setting 3.3 Demonstrate how to meet individual needs of young children in relation to safeguarding and welfare requirements
4. Be able to advocate for children in an early years setting	4.1 Demonstrate how to advocate for a child in relation to safeguarding for child protection

Range
1. Understand the role of the designated safeguarding officer in an early years setting 1.1 Key responsibilities in line with statutory framework and to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of the designated safeguarding officer at key times, including new staff inductions and sharing updates with colleagues how to support individual members of staff impacted by safeguarding concerns; including issues arising from the whistleblowing policy the benefits of mentoring and supervision
3. Be able to facilitate a safe and enabling inclusive environment in an early years setting 3.1 Safe and enabling inclusive environment



Range

Learners must consider:

- indoors
- outdoors
- online and security

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO1 (AC1.1) Learners must consider key responsibilities of the designated safeguarding officer, such as how to challenge weak practice and signposting families to other agencies to ensure required standards in safeguarding practice are maintained. Protocol for safeguarding involving child protection must always be followed. The designated safeguarding officer must keep their own knowledge up to date through continuing professional development (CPD) and cascade this to colleagues in a timely manner, ensuring policies and procedures are reviewed in line with any changes.

LO2 (AC2.2) Learners should demonstrate at least three examples of when they have role modelled best practice in different situations.

LO2 (AC2.3) Learners could consider sustainability implications and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals in the [NCFE early years sustainability resource](#). Learners may also consider goal 4 (quality education) of the [UNICEF Sustainable Development Goals](#).

LO2 (AC2.5) Learners to be knowledgeable of individual food and drink requirements with regard to race, religion, medical need, preference.

LO3 (AC3.1) Learners could refer to the following guidance:

- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales](#)
- [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations](#)
- [NSPCC](#)



NCFE assessment strategy

The key requirements of the assessment strategies or principles that relate to units in this qualification are summarised below.

The centre must ensure that individuals undertaking assessor or quality assurer roles within the centre conform to the assessment requirements for the unit they are assessing or quality assuring.

Knowledge LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions
- internal quality assurers (IQAs) will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions

Competence/skills LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent and qualified to make assessment decisions
- IQAs will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions

The centre with whom the learners are registered will be responsible for making all assessment decisions. Assessors must be **contracted** to work directly with the centre, contributing to all aspects of standardisation. The centre must ensure a process of training is followed, including during induction and quality assurance activities. Occupationally competent and qualified assessors from the centre must use direct observation to assess practical skills-based outcomes.

For this qualification, the centre must use the further information relating to adult care, childcare and health principles, which can be found within the mandatory Support Handbook.



Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 2** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Apply	Link existing knowledge to new or different situations.
Assess	Consider information in order to make decisions.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail looking at similarities and differences.
Define	State the meaning of a word or phrase.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding of the subject or how to apply skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information.
Differentiate	Give the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write an account giving more than one view or opinion.
Distinguish	Show or recognise the difference between items/ideas/information.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge.
Explain	Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Some responses could include examples.
Give (positive and negative points)	Provide information showing the advantages and disadvantages of the subject.
Identify	List or name the main points. (Some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
Illustrate	Give clear information using written examples, pictures or diagrams.
List	Make a list of key words, sentences or comments that focus on the subject.
Perform	Do something (take an action/follow an instruction) that the question or task asks or requires.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram, an illustration or other suitable format.
Provide	Give relevant information about a subject.
Reflect	Learners should look back on their actions, experiences or learning and think about how this could inform their future practice.



Select	Choose for a specific purpose.
Show	Supply sufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences.
Use	Take or apply an item, resource or piece of information as asked in the question or task.



Section 4: support

Support materials

The following support materials are available to assist with the delivery of this qualification and are available on the NCFE website:

- Sample Assessment Tasks
- Qualification Factsheet

Useful websites

Centres may find the following websites helpful for information, materials and resources to assist with the delivery of this qualification:

- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [NCFE safeguarding rules](#)
- [NCFE safeguarding toolkit](#)
- [NCFE early years sustainability resource](#)
- [UNICEF sustainable development goals](#)

These links are provided as sources of potentially useful information for delivery/learning of this subject area. NCFE does not explicitly endorse these websites or any learning resources available on these websites. For official NCFE-endorsed learning resources, please see the additional and teaching materials sections on the qualification's page on the NCFE website.

Other support materials

The resources and materials used in the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Products to support the delivery of this qualification may be available. For more information about these resources and how to access them, please visit the NCFE website.



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Appendix A: units

To simplify cross-referencing assessments and quality assurance, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each unit.

 Knowledge-only units are indicated by a star. If a unit is not marked with a star, it is a skills unit or contains a mix of knowledge and skills.

Mandatory units

Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	GLH
Unit 01	A/651/2481	Understanding safeguarding for child protection	2	12
Unit 02	D/651/2482	Understanding safeguarding and welfare requirements for best practice in an early years setting	2	24
Unit 03	F/651/2483	Following safeguarding and welfare requirements in an early years setting	2	24

The units above may be available as stand-alone unit programmes. Please visit the NCFE website for further information.



Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
v1.0	August 2025	First publication.