



# Qualification Specification



## Qualification summary

|                                           |                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Qualification title</b>                | <b>NCFE CACHE Level 1 Award in Awareness of Substance Misuse</b>                                                             |
| <b>Ofqual qualification number (QN)</b>   | 603/1924/0                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Guided learning hours (GLH)</b>        | 18                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Total qualification time (TQT)</b>     | 20                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Minimum age</b>                        | 14                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Qualification purpose</b>              | This qualification is designed to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of substances and their misuse.              |
| <b>Grading</b>                            | Achieved/not yet achieved                                                                                                    |
| <b>Assessment method</b>                  | Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.                                                    |
| <b>Work/industry placement experience</b> | Work/industry placement experience is not required.                                                                          |
| <b>Regulation information</b>             | This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 603/1924/0.                                |
| <b>Funding</b>                            | 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 substance misuse
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills.

The objective of this qualification is to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of substance misuse and its potential effects on individuals and others.

### 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 learners in school or college as part of their personal and social development, and at those employed in sectors where a general understanding of substance misuse will support their job role.

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

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 an entry level qualification.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the units and 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 **one** mandatory unit.



To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the unit 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.

## Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- further education:
  - level 1 or level 2 qualification in health
  - level 1 or level 2 qualification in health and social care.

## 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.

## 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 NCFE CACHE Level 1 Award in Awareness of Substance Misuse (603/1924/0).

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 Qualification 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 internally assessed unit, 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 knowledge LOs for the unit 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. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this. Examples of suitable evidence for the portfolio for the unit are provided in Section 2.

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, including level and guided learning hours (GLH).

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 Develop an awareness of substance misuse (H/615/8263)



| Unit summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| This unit enables the learner to develop a knowledge and understanding of the misuse of substances, including alcohol. Learners will also consider risk-taking behaviours associated with substance misuse that impact on health and wellbeing, whilst exploring prevention and support with substance misuse issues. |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |        |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |        |
| This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |        |
| Mandatory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Achieved/not yet achieved                                                                                                                                                                                   | Level 1 | 18 GLH |
| Learning outcomes (LOs)<br>The learner will:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Assessment criteria (AC)<br>The learner can:                                                                                                                                                                |         |        |
| 1. Know what substances are commonly misused and why                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1.1 Identify substances that are often misused                                                                                                                                                              |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1.2 State reasons why people might misuse substances                                                                                                                                                        |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1.3 Identify factors that influence an individual's attitude towards the use of substances                                                                                                                  |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1.4 Outline some of the <b>risks</b> involved with the misuse of substances                                                                                                                                 |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1.5 Outline how the following factors can influence the effects of substances:                                                                                                                              |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>age</b></li> <li>• <b>gender</b></li> <li>• <b>a person's mindset at the time of use</b></li> <li>• <b>the setting in which a substance is taken</b></li> </ul> |         |        |
| 2. Understand the personal and social effects of substance misuse                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1.6 Identify <b>signs and symptoms</b> that may indicate the use of substances and how these could potentially be misleading/misinterpreted                                                                 |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2.1 Identify the impact of substance misuse on individuals, communities and society                                                                                                                         |         |        |
| 3. Understand perceptions of and responses to substance misuse                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2.2 Describe some of the wellbeing and health issues associated with substance misuse                                                                                                                       |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 3.1 Identify some of the stereotypes associated with substance misuse                                                                                                                                       |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 3.2 Explain how these <b>stereotypes can be misleading or discriminatory</b>                                                                                                                                |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 3.3 Give examples of how the <b>media</b> portrays substance misuse                                                                                                                                         |         |        |
| 4. Understand ways to promote wellbeing in relation to substance misuse                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3.4 Identify <b>information</b> about the extent and types of substance use and misuse in the UK                                                                                                            |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.1 Identify <b>types</b> of prevention programmes for substance misuse                                                                                                                                     |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.2 State factors that may help to <b>prevent individuals</b> from misusing a substance                                                                                                                     |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.3 Outline treatment and recovery support available for substance misuse                                                                                                                                   |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.4 Identify self-care and healthy habits for individuals in recovery from substance misuse                                                                                                                 |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.5 Identify <b>local and national organisations</b> that can support individuals with substance misuse issues                                                                                              |         |        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4.6 Outline the support each identified local and national organisation can provide to promote an individual's wellbeing                                                                                    |         |        |



| Range                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. Know what substances are commonly misused and why</b></p> <p><b>1.4 Risks</b> must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical health risks</li> <li>psychological health risks</li> <li>risks associated with an individual's social life</li> <li>impact on an individual's financial circumstances.</li> </ul> <p><b>1.5</b> Must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>age:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all substances can be more harmful for young people because their bodies and brains are still developing</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>gender:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effects of drugs can vary due to different body chemistry and hormones</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>a person's mindset at the time of use:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a person's mood, health, circumstances and surroundings all contribute to the effect of the substance</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>the setting in which a substance is taken:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some places where substances may be used are inherently more dangerous, such as lonely out-of-the-way places where help may not be easy to access should something go wrong</li> <li>using or taking substances into school may lead to being expelled with lasting effects on future education and career prospects</li> <li>driving a car, riding a bicycle or operating machinery whilst intoxicated greatly increases the risks of accidents.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>1.6 Signs and symptoms</b> could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical</li> <li>behavioural</li> <li>emotional</li> <li>social</li> <li>drug related debris (paraphernalia).</li> </ul> <p>Signs and symptoms can be misleading/misinterpreted.</p> <p>Many signs and symptoms can be attributed to factors other than substance misuse. For example, underlying medical conditions, <del>normal adolescent behaviours</del>, stress or bullying at school.</p> |
| <p><b>3. Understand perceptions of and responses to substance misuse</b></p> <p><b>3.2 Stereotypes can be misleading or discriminatory</b>, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some legitimate health conditions can cause people to exhibit behaviours that are similar to someone who is under the influence of drugs</li> <li>some people may use a substance for medical purposes, for example medical marijuana within the confines of their home, and have families, jobs and relationships.</li> </ul> <p><b>3.3 Media</b> could include examples from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newspaper or magazine articles</li> <li>news stories from television or radio</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



### Range

- scenarios seen in films or on TV programmes, for example, soaps
- lyrics from songs
- online:
  - websites
  - blogs
  - social media.

The learner should give a simple outline of the type of people involved, the situation and how the substance use was portrayed (for example, good, bad, fun, criminal, harmful).

Both negative and positive examples of media-generated perceptions must be included.

### 3.4 Information:

Learners must identify reputable/reliable sources of information.

Some information, depending on the source, might not be accurate or correct due to:

- collection method used
- personal prejudice
- unrecorded use (of drugs)
- illegal use
- who funded/organised the research
- who was asked to take part
- answers not clearly recorded
- types of questions asked
- inaccurate reporting
- sensationalising the issue
- glamorising the issue.

## 4. Understand ways to promote wellbeing in relation to substance misuse

### 4.1 Types could include:

- education
- family
- computer technology
- phone lines/help lines
- community.

### 4.2 Prevent individuals

There are many potentially preventative factors that have been identified in **three** domains:

- individual
- family
- community.

### 4.5 Local and national organisations



### Range

Learners must provide examples, with a brief outline of the service provided. Local and national service provisions must be covered to encourage learners to explore the range and purpose of provision in their area.

### Delivery and assessment guidance

This unit could be assessed through a workbook, learner reports, oral or written questioning or information leaflets.

Group discussions used as evidence should be supported by peer or tutor witness testimonies detailing the key learning points raised and contribution of each learner.

#### LO1

Tutors should ensure the widest possible range of substances are discussed, from the most common to the less common and including alcohol and tobacco (with the tutor filling in the gaps for those that are not mentioned by learners).

Tutors to ensure that the following types of substances are covered:

- new psychoactive substances (NPS)
- over the counter (OTC) drugs that are/may be misused
- prescribed drugs (that are/may be misused).

**1.1** Learners must identify three substances which are often misused. Learners could identify any type of substance affecting the mind, body or perceptions.

**1.2** Learners must state three possible reasons why people might misuse substances.

It is important that tutors include the positive reasons for use, as opposed to simply stressing the negatives.

**1.3** Learners must identify three factors that might influence an individual's attitude towards the use of substances.

**1.4** The risks involved fall into four main categories and learners should be able to give examples from each:

- physical health risks
- psychological health risks
- risks associated with an individual's social life
- impact on an individual's financial circumstances.

#### LO2

Tutors should ensure that the use and misuse of alcohol and other substances are covered, with particular reference to the many and various longer-term health consequences of excessive drinking as well as shorter-term consequences.

**Delivery and assessment guidance**

It is helpful to enable learners to explore the services provided locally for people who may need advice, guidance or help with their substance use and often these agencies and organisations will be available to have some input to the learning journey.

**3.1** Learners must identify three stereotypes associated with substance misuse including typical and atypical.

**4.1** Learners must identify a minimum of three types of prevention programmes.

**4.2** Learners must state **a minimum of one factor** that may help to prevent individuals from misusing a substance from each domain: individual, family, community.

**4.3** Learners must outline a minimum of three types of treatment and recovery support available for substance misuse.

**4.4** Learners must identify a minimum of five self-care and health habits for individuals in recovery from substance misuse.

**4.5** Learners must identify a minimum of two local and two national organisations.



## 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 which 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.



## Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 1** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

|                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Define</b>             | Give the meaning of a word or phrase.                                                                                                         |
| <b>Demonstrate</b>        | Show an understanding of the subject.                                                                                                         |
| <b>Describe</b>           | Provide details about the subject or item.                                                                                                    |
| <b>Explain</b>            | Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why.                                                                            |
| <b>Give (examples of)</b> | Provide relevant examples to support the subject.                                                                                             |
| <b>Identify</b>           | List or name the main points.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Indicate</b>           | Point out or show using words, illustrations or diagrams.                                                                                     |
| <b>Locate</b>             | Find or identify.                                                                                                                             |
| <b>List</b>               | Make a list of words, sentences or comments.                                                                                                  |
| <b>Outline</b>            | Set out the main points.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Plan</b>               | Think about, organise and present information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram or an illustration. |
| <b>State</b>              | Give the main points in brief, clear sentences.                                                                                               |
| <b>Use</b>                | Take an item, resource or piece of information and link to 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:

- Learner Workbook
- Qualification Factsheet.

### Useful websites

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

- [Alcohol Change UK](#)
- [NHS Live Well](#)
- [DrugWise](#)
- [Change Grow Live](#)
- [Addiction Helpline](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [New Psychoactive Substances \(NPS\) resource pack](#)
- [NHS Statistics on Drug Misuse](#)
- [Gov UK - Alcohol and drug misuse and treatment statistics](#)
- [Talk to Frank](#)
- [Adfam](#)
- [Family Lives](#)

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 centre'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     | H/615/8263            | Develop an awareness of substance misuse | 1     | 18  |

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



## Change history record

| Version | Publication date | Description of change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| v3.1    | February 2020    | Information regarding the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners added to Resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| v3.2    | June 2022        | Information regarding registration and entry requirements and the language of assessment evidence added to section 2.<br><br>References to Public Health England replaced by UK Health Security Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in section 3.<br><br>Information about the Support Handbook added to section 5.                                                                                                                                              |
| v3.3    | September 2022   | Assessment method updated. This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured via a portfolio of evidence.<br><br>Learners are no longer required to complete a mandatory workbook.<br><br>Qualification specification template information has been updated throughout. There have been no changes to the unit content.                                                                                                                                        |
| v3.4    | September 2026   | The wording in Learning outcome (LO) 4 has been updated from 'Understand ways to promote healthy choices and build resilience' to 'Understand ways to promote wellbeing in relation to substance misuse' in order to ensure the LO is up to date with current phrasing, emphasising prevention rather than resilience. The Assessment Criteria (ACs) for LO4 have also been updated to reflect this, and an additional AC4.6 has been added to promote learning around organisations. |