



**NCFE Level 3 Award for the Independent
Sexual Violence Adviser**
QN:610/7532/2



Qualification Specification



Qualification summary

Qualification title	NCFE Level 3 Award for the Independent Sexual Violence Adviser
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	610/7532/2
Guided learning hours (GLH)	64 hours
Total qualification time (TQT)	72 hours
Minimum age	18
Qualification purpose	This qualification supports progression towards a role as an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA). However, achieving this qualification alone does not fully qualify or prepare a learner to practise as an ISVA. It is expected that to be considered fully qualified and ready for independent practice, learners must complete additional relevant employer training and gain supervised practical experience. Learners will develop an understanding of the role of the ISVA, trauma-informed and victim-centred practice, safeguarding, risk assessment, referral pathways in and out of ISVA services, and the criminal justice process in relation to supporting victims of sexual violence. The qualification also supports learners to develop the practical and professional skills required to provide appropriate support within multi-agency environments.
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved.
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	Work/industry placement experience is not required.
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/7532/2
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.



Contents

Qualification summary	2
Section 1: introduction	4
Aims and objectives	4
Support Handbook	4
Guidance for entry and registration	4
Achieving this qualification	5
Progression	5
Progression to higher-level studies	5
Staffing requirements	6
Resource requirements	6
Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation	6
How the qualification is assessed	7
Internal assessment	7
Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance	8
Unit 01 The role and principles of an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) (M/652/1857)	9
Unit 02 Understanding sexual violence and trauma-informed approaches when providing support (D/652/1860)	12
Unit 03 Assessing risk and support needs when supporting victims of sexual violence (F/652/1861)	15
Unit 04 Safeguarding in independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) practice (H/652/1862)	18
Unit 05 Understanding the criminal justice process and legal frameworks in sexual violence cases (J/652/1863)	20
Unit 06 Referral pathways and service provision when supporting victims of sexual violence (K/652/1864)	23
NCFE assessment strategy	25
Section 3: explanation of terms	26
Section 4: support	28
Support materials	28
Other support materials	28
Reproduction of this document	28
Contact us	29
Appendix A: units	30
Mandatory units	30
Change history record	31



Section 1: introduction

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

Throughout this Qualification Specification, the term 'victim' has been used in line with Ministry of Justice (MoJ) guidance and criminal justice terminology. However, NCFE recognises that individuals affected by sexual violence may identify with different terminology, including 'survivor'.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) role within sexual violence support services and the criminal justice process
- develop learners' understanding of trauma-informed practice, safeguarding, risk assessment, referral pathways, multi-agency working, and criminal justice processes when supporting victims of sexual violence
- provide opportunities for learners to develop practical and professional skills relevant to supporting victims of sexual violence within ISVA services.

The objective of this qualification is to:

- support learners to develop the knowledge, understanding, and skills to progress towards the ISVA role
- prepare learners to provide appropriate support to victims of sexual violence in line with professional and statutory guidance.

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 looking to progress towards a role as an independent sexual violence adviser. This qualification does not qualify learners to practise as an ISVA and should be undertaken in conjunction with further relevant employer training and supervision.

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

- victim support services
- sexual violence support services
- safeguarding
- criminal justice
- social care.



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 a level 2 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 **6 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.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
 - ISVA roles
 - senior/specialist ISVA
 - ISVA management
- further education:
 - safeguarding
 - trauma-informed practice
 - risk assessment
 - leadership and management
- higher education:
 - social work
 - criminology
 - psychology
 - counselling
 - domestic and sexual violence, or related fields.

Progression to higher-level studies

Level 3 qualifications can support progression to higher-level study, which requires knowledge and skills different from those gained at levels 1 and 2. Level 3 qualifications enable learners to:

- apply factual, procedural and theoretical subject knowledge
- use relevant knowledge and methods to address complex, non-routine problems



- interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas
- understand the nature of the area of study or work
- demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives and approaches
- identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills
- use appropriate research to inform actions
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of their own methods.

Staffing requirements

Staff delivering this qualification should have substantial experience within sexual violence support services and a sound understanding of the independent sexual violence adviser role, including the wider context in which ISVA services operate. Centres should also refer to the assessment strategy which can be found in Section 2 of the specification.

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 or 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.



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)

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

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. Examples of suitable evidence for the portfolio for each 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 grading, 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 The role and principles of an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) (M/652/1857)

Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of the role of an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA). The learner will explore how to work effectively with other agencies while maintaining the independence of the ISVA role and keeping the victim at the centre of support. The learner will also develop the skills to work within professional boundaries and apply a whole-person approach when supporting victims of sexual violence.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	12 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand the role of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA)	1.1 Describe the purpose of the ISVA role
	1.2 Explain the key elements of the ISVA role
	1.3 Explain the importance of providing accurate and impartial information to victims of sexual violence
	1.4 Explain how an ISVA maintains independence within their role
2. Be able to work alongside other agencies while maintaining the independence of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) role	2.1 Explain the importance of multi-agency working while maintaining the independence of the ISVA role
	2.2 Demonstrate how an ISVA works alongside other agencies to support victims of sexual violence
3. Be able to work within the professional boundaries of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) role	3.1 Describe the professional boundaries of the ISVA role and how to maintain them in practice
	3.2 Demonstrate how to maintain professional boundaries when supporting victims
	3.3 Explain the importance of maintaining confidentiality when handling sensitive information relating to victims
4. Be able to adopt a whole-person approach when supporting victims	4.1 Explain the importance of adopting a whole-person approach when supporting victims
	4.2 Explain how individual victims' characteristics and circumstances may influence their needs
	4.3 Demonstrate how a whole-person approach can be applied when supporting victims

Range
1. Understand the role of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA)
1.2 Key elements
For example:



Range
• independent support • providing specialist emotional and practical support to victims, regardless of reporting • having knowledge of the law and provide accurate information • having additional skills for working with victims with specific/vulnerable needs • helping victims access services • understanding the court system • supporting victims who choose to engage with the justice system • being up to date on current legislation • assessing risks and needs.
3. Be able to work within the professional boundaries of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) role
3.1 Professional boundaries Learners must consider professional boundaries that relate to the role of the ISVA and the way in which they interact with the client. Examples may include, but are not limited to: • remaining within level of competence • maintaining independence • hours of work • physical touch • personal safety.
4. Be able to adopt a whole-person approach when supporting victims
4.2 Characteristics Examples may include, but are not limited to: • age • gender • disability • neurodivergence • cultural background • communication style • intersectionality. 4.2 Circumstances Examples may include, but are not limited to: • reporting status • trauma response • immigration status • sex work • addiction and substance misuse • homelessness • offending history.

**Delivery and assessment guidance**

AC2.2 Assessment may include professional discussions, observations via case study analysis, multi-agency scenario exercises, or simulated meetings.

AC4.1 Learners must consider the victim in a holistic way, considering their life experiences and individual circumstances. This includes recognising the person as an individual and considering any intersectional factors, for example, age, gender, disability, culture, or other aspects of identity that may influence their experience and needs.

AC4.3 Assessment may include scenario-based exercises, role-play activities, or case study analysis where learners demonstrate how a whole-person approach can be applied when supporting victims. Professional discussion or reflective accounts may also be used here.



Unit 02 Understanding sexual violence and trauma-informed approaches when providing support (D/652/1860)

Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of trauma, its impacts, and how to apply a trauma-informed approach when supporting victims of sexual violence. The learner will also develop skills in adapting communication to meet the needs of victims and gain an understanding of the wider social context of sexual violence.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	12 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Apply trauma-informed approaches when supporting victims of sexual violence	1.1 Describe what is meant by a trauma-informed approach in the context of the independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) role
	1.2 Explain how trauma responses experienced by victims of sexual violence may influence a trauma-informed approach when supporting victims
	1.3 Explain how vicarious trauma may impact an ISVA and their practice
	1.4 Demonstrate how to apply a trauma-informed approach when working with victims of sexual violence
2. Be able to communicate effectively with victims when providing support and information	2.1 Explain the importance of effective communication when supporting victims of sexual violence
	2.2 Describe how communication may be adapted when supporting victims of sexual violence
	2.3 Demonstrate effective communication when providing support and information to victims of sexual violence
3. Understand the social context of sexual violence	3.1 Define what is meant by the term ' sexual violence '
	3.2 Analyse how social attitudes affect the reporting of sexual crimes
	3.3 Explain the impact sexual violence legislation has on reporting of sexual crimes
	3.4 Explain common assumptions and misconceptions about sexual violence
	3.5 Explain factors that create barriers to disclosure

Range
1. Apply trauma-informed approaches when supporting victims of sexual violence
1.1 Trauma-informed approach
Learners must understand what is meant by trauma and how trauma may affect victims of sexual violence. Learners must also recognise that there is no single agreed trauma-informed approach and may refer to relevant government guidance.
1.2 Trauma responses



Range

Learners must consider the immediate responses (including the fight, flight, freeze, fawn, and flop responses, also known as the '5 Fs') and the longer-term impacts on victims, and how these may influence a trauma-informed approach when supporting victims.

2. Be able to communicate effectively with victims when providing support and information

2.2 Adapted

Learners must consider what an ISVA has agreed with the victim after completing the risks and needs assessment, including frequency of contact or agreed contact methods.

3. Understand the social context of sexual violence

3.1 Sexual violence

The definition must capture the fact that the incident is sexual and without consent. Learners must recognise that sexual violence can take different forms, which may include:

- rape
- sexual assault
- sexual harassment
- online sexual offences
- child sexual abuse.

3.3 Impact

Learners must consider how legislation has influenced the recognition and reporting of sexual violence, including, but not limited to:

- online sexual offences
- coercive and controlling behaviour
- protections for victims.

3.4 Common assumptions and misconceptions

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- appearance
- behaviours
- past experiences
- lifestyle
- gender
- intoxication.

When considering common assumptions and misconceptions, learners must consider both the victim and the perpetrator.

3.5 Factors

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- psychological barriers
- social barriers



Range

- cultural barriers.

Delivery and assessment guidance

AC1.4 Assessment could include role play or scenario-based exercises where learners demonstrate how a trauma-informed approach might be applied when responding to victims. For example, learners might consider how they would respond to a distressed or withdrawn victim and show how their approach supports safety, trust, and empowerment. Assessment may also include professional discussion, use of witness testimonies, or learner reflection.

AC2.3 Learners could take part in role play or simulated support scenarios where they demonstrate how communication might be adapted when supporting victims of sexual violence. This could include considering tone, clarity of information, and how communication may need to be adjusted depending on the victim's need.



Unit 03 Assessing risk and support needs when supporting victims of sexual violence (F/652/1861)

Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of the risks affecting victims of sexual violence and how these can be identified. The learner will develop the skills to assess risks, identify needs, and create support plans. The learner will also develop the ability to manage caseloads effectively as well as understand the importance of accurate note taking to ensure appropriate and timely support for victims.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	12 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand risks affecting victims of sexual violence	1.1 Explain the key areas of risk affecting victims of sexual violence
	1.2 Describe signs of domestic abuse when assessing risks and supporting victims of sexual violence
	1.3 Explain the purpose of risk assessment tools and when referrals should be made
2. Be able to assess risks and needs and plan support for victims of sexual violence	2.1 Explain the purpose of risks and needs management when supporting victims of sexual violence
	2.2 Explain the key elements involved in carrying out a risks and needs assessment
	2.3 Demonstrate how a risks and needs assessment may be conducted when supporting victims of sexual violence
	2.4 Develop a support plan based on the risks and needs of the victim
3. Be able to manage independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) caseloads to support victims effectively	3.1 Explain the importance of managing caseloads when supporting victims of sexual violence
	3.2 Discuss factors that may impact the management of caseloads
	3.3 Demonstrate how to manage caseloads to support victims of sexual violence effectively

Range
1. Understand risks affecting victims of sexual violence 1.1 Key areas Learners must consider risks that sit at the organisational, evidential or individual level. They could include areas such as: • health • mental health • financial • social.



Range

Learners must also ensure they cover impacts in these four main categories:

- physical
- emotional
- psychological
- practical.

1.3 Risk assessment tool

Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- DARA (Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment)
- DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-Based Violence).

2. Be able to assess risks and needs and plan support for victims of sexual violence

2.2 Key elements

For example:

- identifying risks and needs
- assessing level of risk
- managing and reviewing risk
- communicating information appropriately
- reviewing and updating support needs.

Learners must understand how each of these elements may be considered and applied when carrying out a risks and needs assessment.

2.4 Support plan

Learners must understand that the support plan is a collaborative and ongoing process. Its purpose is to address both the risks and needs of the victim. The plan must be co-created, with actions shared between the client, the ISVA, and, where appropriate, specialist agencies. The support plan must be reviewed regularly and updated at each contact.

3. Be able to manage independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) caseloads to support victims effectively

3.2 Factors

The factors learners must consider include, but are not limited to:

- risk
- capacity
- complexity.

Learners must also consider how each of these factors may influence how an ISVA manages their caseload.

**Delivery and assessment guidance**

AC2.1 Learners must recognise that risk and needs management is a methodical process used to identify risks, assess needs, and inform the development of a support plan in collaboration with the victim.

AC2.3 Learners could take part in role-play or simulated support scenarios where they demonstrate how a risks and needs assessment may be conducted.

AC2.4 Assessment may include professional discussion and the use of a support plan developed from a case study or scenario. Learners might consider demonstrating how the plan reflects identified risks and needs, and how actions are allocated between the client, the ISVA, and other relevant agencies.

AC3.3 Assessment could include short case study or scenario-based activities where learners identify factors that may influence how an ISVA manages their caseload. For example, learners might consider factors such as risk level, urgency of support needs, safeguarding concerns, or complexity of the case, managing last-minute changes.



Unit 04 Safeguarding in independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) practice (H/652/1862)

Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of safeguarding responsibilities when supporting adults and children in an independent sexual violence adviser role. The learner will explore how to recognise safeguarding concerns and apply appropriate procedures. The learner will also develop the skills to respond to safeguarding situations, work with other agencies, make appropriate referrals, maintain professional boundaries and operate within the limitations of their role.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	6 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand how to recognise safeguarding concerns affecting adults and children	1.1 Define the term 'safeguarding'
	1.2 Describe the key guidance and legislation which underpins the safeguarding of adults and children
	1.3 Explain the concept of ' mental capacity ' and the implications this may have on providing ISVA support
	1.4 Explain indicators of safeguarding concerns affecting adults and children
2. Be able to apply safeguarding procedures when concerns arise	2.1 Outline actions that should be taken in response to immediate safeguarding risk
	2.2 Explain the role of the ISVA when working with other agencies to respond to a safeguarding concern
	2.3 Describe the process for making safeguarding referrals to appropriate services
	2.4 Explain when it is appropriate, necessary and legal to breach confidentiality when supporting victims
	2.5 Demonstrate how safeguarding procedures must be followed when concerns arise

Range
1. Understand how to recognise safeguarding concerns affecting adults and children
1.2 Key guidance and legislation Learners must consider the most current safeguarding guidance and legislation relating to adults and children.
1.3 Mental capacity Learners must understand the professional boundaries in relation to mental capacity and the limitations of their role. Learners must understand that making a diagnosis in relation to a victim's mental capacity is beyond the remit of an ISVA. Learners must also understand when to refer to specialised services and consider any adaptations to communication and/or support that may be required. This should be informed by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its key principles.



Range

1.4 Indicators

Learners must consider physical, environmental, behavioural and emotional signs.

2. Be able to apply safeguarding procedures when concerns arise

2.1 Actions

Learners must consider their service and/or organisational and statutory requirements when taking action and should escalate concerns to a manager or service manager where appropriate.

2.2 Role

Learners must consider:

- understanding the roles of different agencies
- how ISVA independence is maintained
- victim-centred decision-making
- collaborative working with other professionals.

2.3 Process

Learners must consider service, organisational, and statutory requirements when making safeguarding referrals to appropriate services.

Delivery and assessment guidance

AC2.5 Assessment may include scenario-based exercises, role-play activities, professional discussions, or case study analysis where learners demonstrate how safeguarding procedures should be followed when concerns arise.



Unit 05 Understanding the criminal justice process and legal frameworks in sexual violence cases (J/652/1863)

Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of the criminal justice process in relation to sexual offence cases. The learner will explore the legal frameworks, the roles of key prosecution agencies, and how cases progress from disclosure through to post-sentence outcomes. The learner will also develop the skills to respond appropriately to a first disclosure and gain an understanding of civil and family law proceedings relevant to victims of sexual violence.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	16 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand the legal frameworks for sexual offences	1.1 Describe key offences defined within sexual offences legislation
	1.2 Define 'consent' within sexual offence legislation
2. Understand the role of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the police in sexual offence cases	2.1 Explain the meaning of the Full Code Test used in the Code for Crown Prosecutors
	2.2 Explain the role of the police in sexual offence cases
	2.3 Explain the role of the CPS in sexual offence cases
	2.4 Explain how decisions can be challenged under the Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme
3. Understand Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) processes within investigations	3.1 Explain the purpose of ABE interviews within sexual offence investigations
	3.2 Describe the role of an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) when supporting a victim through the ABE process
4. Understand how sexual offence cases progress through the criminal justice process	4.1 Explain the key stages of the process from disclosure to post-sentence outcomes
	4.2 Describe the role of the witness when giving evidence in sexual offence trials and how this influences ISVA support
	4.3 Explain the term 'pre-trial therapy' and its implications
	4.4 Explain the restrictions on previous sexual history under Section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999
	4.5 Explain the purpose of Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 and who can grant it
	4.6 Explain the purpose of special measures
	4.7 Describe the range of special measures a victim of sexual offences could obtain
	4.8 Outline how an ISVA could support a victim in applying for special measures
5. Be able to respond appropriately to a first	5.1 Describe what is meant by the term 'first disclosure'
	5.2 Explain how an ISVA should manage a first disclosure



Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
disclosure of sexual violence	5.3 Explain the impact of taking a first disclosure upon the ISVA's ability to support a victim
	5.4 Demonstrate how an ISVA should manage a first disclosure
6. Understand civil and family law proceedings relevant to victims of sexual violence	6.1 Explain the purpose of civil and family law proceedings relevant to victims of sexual violence
	6.2 Explain how civil and family law proceedings differ from criminal justice processes

Range
1. Understand the legal framework for sexual offences
1.1 Legislation
Learners must refer to the most current sexual offences legislation.
2. Understand the role of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the police in sexual offence cases
2.4 Challenged
Learners must consider:
• police and CPS review processes • No Further Action (NFA) outcomes • timescales for submitting review requests.
3. Understand Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) processes within investigations
3.2 ABE process
The ABE process is a formal and legally defined interview process used in sexual offence cases. Learners must ensure their response sets out the role and limitations of the ISVA during the ABE process.
4. Understand how sexual offence cases progress through the criminal justice process
4.1 Key stages
Learners must understand the main stages of the criminal justice process, which may include, but are not limited to:
• decision to report • reporting to the police • police investigation • police carry out threshold test • referral to the CPS • CPS charging decision or NFA outcome • magistrates' court proceedings • plea hearing • transfer to Crown Court • trial • verdict • sentencing • post-verdict or post-sentencing processes, for example, appeals or probation.



Range

Learners must recognise that sexual offence cases will not always progress through the criminal justice process in a linear way, and not all stages will apply in every case.

4.7 Special measures

Range could include those set out in Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 or The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (Victims' Code), but this is not exhaustive.

6. Understand civil and family law proceedings relevant to victims of sexual violence

6.2 Differ

Learners must understand how civil and family law proceedings differ from criminal justice processes in relation to sexual violence cases.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- different court stages and types of hearing
- civil and private family law proceedings including:
 - non-molestation orders
 - occupation orders
 - child arrangement orders
 - divorce
- police investigations
- the role of the CPS within criminal justice proceedings.

Delivery and assessment guidance

AC2.1 Learners should understand that the Code for Crown Prosecutors is CPS guidance used to support charging decisions in criminal cases.

AC4.2 Learners must understand that, in sexual offence cases, the victim may also be a witness within criminal justice proceedings and may require support when giving evidence.

AC4.3 Learners must consider any applicable guidance around pre-trial therapy, for example, CPS, or organisational.

AC5.2 Learners must understand the implications for both the ISVA and the victim if the ISVA takes a first disclosure.

AC5.4 Assessment may include professional discussions, witness testimonies, scenario-based exercises, role-play activities, or case study analysis where learners demonstrate how an ISVA should manage a first disclosure.



Unit 06 Referral pathways and service provision when supporting victims of sexual violence (K/652/1864)



Unit summary			
In this unit, the learner will develop an understanding of referral pathways into and out of independent sexual violence adviser services and how victims access appropriate support. The learner will explore the role of different agencies and how to support victims in engaging with appropriate services. The learner will also gain knowledge of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) and the roles of professionals involved.			
Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 3	6 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand referral pathways into and out of independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) services and how to enable victims to access appropriate support	1.1 Explain referral pathways into and out of relevant agencies
	1.2 Describe the differences between 'referrals' and 'signposting'
	1.3 Differentiate between a self-referral and a professional referral
	1.4 Explain what information should be recorded when making referrals or signposting from the ISVA service to other relevant agencies
	1.5 Demonstrate how an ISVA may support victims to access a relevant agency
2. Understand the role of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs)	2.1 Explain the role of SARCs
	2.2 Explain the differences between adult and child SARC services
	2.3 Describe the roles of the key professionals involved within SARC services

Range
1. Understand referral pathways in and out of independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) services and how to enable victims to access appropriate support
1.1 Agencies Examples could include: • SARC • police • statutory sector organisations (including health) • third-sector organisations. Learners are expected to consider statutory and non-statutory agencies. Learners must also consider how an ISVA may support victims in accessing relevant agencies.



Range

2. Understand the role of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs)

2.3 Roles

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- crisis worker
- forensic medical examiner (FME)
- police officer
- counsellors
- ISVAs.

Delivery and assessment guidance

AC1.1 Learners must consider referrals into the ISVA service from relevant agencies, and from the ISVA service to relevant agencies.

Learners are expected to include relevant agencies that support clients with identified risks and needs. This may include health services (for example, GP), mental health and substance misuse services, sexual health services, housing, financial support, and specialist services for individuals with no recourse to public funds or insecure immigration status. Both statutory and third-sector services should be considered, where appropriate.

Learners must consider the individual needs that come with each case and advise accordingly.

AC1.4 Learners must consider how this may vary from agency to agency.

AC1.5 Assessment may include professional discussions, scenario-based exercises, role-play activities, or case study analysis where learners demonstrate how an ISVA may support victims to access a relevant agency through referral or signposting.



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 3** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Apply	Explain how existing knowledge can be linked to new or different situations in practice.
Analyse	Break down the subject into separate parts and examine each part. Show how the main ideas are related and why they are important. Reference to current research or theory may support the analysis.
Clarify	Explain the information in a clear, concise way.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Collate	Collect and present information arranged in sequential or logical order.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail and consider the similarities and differences.
Critically compare	This is a development of 'compare' where the learner considers the positive aspects and limitations of the subject.
Consider	Think carefully and write about a problem, action or decision.
Create	Make or produce an artefact as required.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding by describing or applying knowledge in a practical context.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information in a logical way.
Develop (a plan/idea)	Expand a plan or idea by adding more detail and/or depth of information.
Diagnose	Identify the cause based on valid evidence.
Differentiate	Identify the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write a detailed account giving a range of views or opinions.
Distinguish	Explain the difference between two or more items, resources, pieces of information.
Draw conclusions	Make a final decision or judgement based on reasons.
Estimate	Form an approximate opinion or judgement using previous knowledge or considering other information.



Evaluate	Examine strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences. Judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Reference to current research or theory may support the evaluation.
Explain	Provide detailed information about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Responses could include examples to support these reasons.
Extrapolate	Use existing knowledge to predict possible outcomes that might be outside the norm.
Identify	Recognise and name the main points accurately (some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
Implement	Explain how to put an idea or plan into action.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of something.
Judge	Form an opinion or make a decision.
Justify	Give a satisfactory explanation for actions or decisions.
Perform	Carry out a task or process to meet the requirements of the question.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way using an appropriate format.
Provide	Identify and give relevant and detailed information in relation to the subject.
Reflect	Learners should consider their actions, experiences or learning and the implications of this for their practice and/or professional development.
Review and revise	Look back over the subject and make corrections or changes.
Select	Make an informed choice for a specific purpose.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences or paragraphs.
Summarise	Give the main ideas or facts in a concise way.
Test	Complete a series of checks utilising a set procedure.



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:

- Qualification Factsheet

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	M/652/1857	The role and principles of an independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA)	3	12
Unit 02	D/652/1860	Understanding sexual violence and trauma-informed approaches when providing support	3	12
Unit 03	F/652/1861	Assessing risk and support needs when supporting victims of sexual violence	3	12
Unit 04	H/652/1862	Safeguarding in independent sexual violence adviser (ISVA) practice	3	6
Unit 05	J/652/1863	Understanding the criminal justice process and legal frameworks in sexual violence cases	3	16
Unit 06	K/652/1864	Referral pathways and service provision when supporting victims of sexual violence	3	6





Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
v1.0	July 2026	First publication