

Safety & Support (SAS) Assessment for Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) Toolkit

Published March 2017

Acknowledgements

LimeCulture Community Interest Company (CIC) is very grateful to the individual ISVAs and the ISVA Services who supported the development of the Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment and this accompanying toolkit.

LimeCulture CIC would like to thank everyone who shared their existing resources, documentation, client assessments and risk scoring templates. These have been instrumental to this development of this work.

LimeCulture CIC are extremely grateful to the ISVAs who attended the two consultation events to share their ideas and provided feedback on draft versions of the assessment during development. This included ISVAs from the following organisations:

Amethyst SARC, Colwyn Bay, North Wales
Doncaster Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Service (DRASACS)
East Kent ISVA Service
Family Matters
Horizon
IDAS
Lancashire Teaching Hospital
Manchester Rape Crisis
National Ugly Mugs
North London Rape Crisis, Solace Women's Aid
Pathway Project
Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) Cheshire & Merseyside
Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) Guildford
Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) South London
Rape Crisis Cambridge
Respond
RSVP
SAFE Place Merseyside
Safeline
Savanna
South Essex Rape & Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)
Support After Rape & Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL)
Survivors Manchester
Survivors Network Brighton
Victim Support (West Yorkshire)
Victim Support (East Yorkshire)
Women & Girls Network
Yellow Door

Pathfinder Sites

LimeCulture Community Interest Company (CIC) would like to thank the five ISVA Services who volunteered to become Pathfinder Sites. During the testing phase, the Pathfinder Sites tested the SAS Assessment and the toolkit with their clients to ensure that it is an effective resource for use by ISVAs with their clients. The five Pathfinder Sites were:

DRASACS (Doncaster Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Service.)
FreeVA - Free from Violence and Abuse (formerly DVIRP)
Safeline
St Marys SARC, Manchester
Support after Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL)

Funding

The development of the SAS Assessment and this accompanying toolkit was funded by the Home Office Support for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Abuse (SVSSA) Fund.

Part One

Background, the case for the assessment and it's development.

Benefits of the SAS Assessment

Who can use the assessment?

- Using the assessment
- Recording information
- Communication and Information Sharing

Key considerations in undertaking the SAS Assessment

- Embedding risk and needs assessment in everyday practice,
- Client Involvement,
- Recognition of the fluidity of risk,
- Confidentiality and disclosure,
- Diversity

Assessment, Review and Reassessment

- Understanding the Safety and Support Assessment
- Defining Risk and Needs
- Scoring
- Actions Taken

Using the Assessment to create a Sample Safety (SAS) Planning Template

Part Two

Domain 1	Personal & Individual Requirements
Domain 2	Harm from Other(s)
Domain 3	Health & Medical
Domain 4	Mental Health & Psychological Wellbeing
Domain 5	Coping Mechanisms, Social & Cultural Support
Domain 6	Alcohol & Drug Use
Domain 7	Safeguarding
Domain 8	Criminal Justice
Domain 9	Employment & Education
Domain 10	Finance
Domain 11	Accommodation & Housing
Domain 12	Immigration & Residence
Domain 13	Risk to Professionals & Services
Domain 14	Professional Judgment

Appendix

Sample Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment Template

Sample Safety and Support (SAS) Planning Template

1. Background

- 1.1. The Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment is a domain-based risk and needs assessment developed to support Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) identify and manage their clients' individual risks and needs.
- 1.2. Risk & need identification and management are an essential element of the ISVA role. Effective support from an ISVA will include an awareness of their client's overall needs as well as an awareness of the degree of risk that they may face or present to themselves and/or others.
- 1.3. The support offered by an ISVA should be tailored to the individual client, and will vary from case to case depending on their needs and risks. Therefore, the outcome of a risk and need assessment should form the basis of the support that the ISVA provides to their client.
- 1.4. The SAS Assessment is based on the principle that risk and needs assessments carried out by ISVAs should be structured, and approached as consistently as possible across different settings and different ISVA service providers. A consistent approach to risk and needs identification (and their management) will enable better understanding of the clients needs and assist in case management and prioritisation of needs.
- 1.5. The SAS Assessment is recommended for use in all ISVA Services – whether in the voluntary and community sector, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) or within a statutory service (such as NHS, Police or Local Authority) provider of ISVA Services.
- 1.6. This toolkit is intended to guide ISVAs on how to complete the SAS Assessment in order to identify the individual support needs and risks of harm to their clients or others.

2. The Case for a Standardised Tool

- 2.1. LimeCulture CIC has provided training to more than 350 individual ISVA's since 2011. Through their work involving training and supporting ISVAs, it is apparent that there is currently no commonly available standardised risk and needs assessment that is specific to victims of sexual violence. This has meant that in many cases, ISVAs are carrying out informal risk and needs assessments with their clients, which may not be easily reviewed or managed, and in some cases, ISVAs are not carrying out any risk and needs assessment at all.
- 2.2. While it is clear that some ISVA services have developed their own risk and needs processes and documentation, generally the assessment of risk and needs amongst the ISVA workforce as a whole is anecdotal and inconsistent. Prior to the development of the SAS Assessment, in many ISVA services risk and needs assessments have been based on a mostly unstructured approach which may result in an ad hoc approach to the support required by the client and lack of identification of risks associated with the client, the ISVA or the organisation. Largely, information collected by ISVAs has not been gathered systematically, and any information considered relevant is not entered into the formulation of risk in a consistent and/or standardised way.
- 2.3. As a result of this inconsistency, many ISVAs have reported concerns about their general approach to risk and needs assessment, which could be leading to potentially unsafe practice with little or no documentation of rationale and mitigation of risks and needs.
- 2.4. LimeCulture CIC has frequently received requests from ISVAs and their Managers to assist them with undertaking risk and needs assessment and have been asked to develop a risk and needs assessment tool that could be used by ISVAs.
- 2.5. LimeCulture CIC was awarded funding from the Home Office Support for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Abuse (SVSSA) Fund in Autumn 2016 to develop a Risk and Needs Assessment Tool for use by ISVAs working across England and Wales to support victims and survivors of sexual violence.

3. Developing the SAS Assessment

Consultation with ISVAs

- 3.1. The development of the SAS Assessment has included consultation and feedback from more than 50 ISVAs (and their Services) who assisted in the design of the tool. This consultation included workshop discussions with ISVAs: on how a tool should operate (including look and feel), learning from other risk & needs assessment tools (such as domestic abuse tools, drug and alcohol tools), where they work well or not so well, suggestions for domains, risks and need inclusion and their views on previous draft versions.
- 3.2. Consultation - During October 2016, LimeCulture held 2 consultation workshops (in London and Manchester) with over 40 ISVAs to provide the opportunity for ISVAs to tell LimeCulture what they thought would best assist their practice in terms of the tool.
- 3.3. Feedback – The attendees at the consultation workshops were invited to comment on the draft version of the SAS Assessment, and an invitation to comment was also put on the Network of ISVAs forum, which has a membership of over 235 ISVAs. LimeCulture considered in detail all comments on the draft versions and sought to incorporate them in developing a final version of the SAS Assessment.

Testing the SAS Assessment

- 3.4. Testing has been undertaken by 5 ISVA Services¹ who volunteered to become 'Pathfinder Sites' in order to establish the effectiveness of the SAS Assessment, ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of both ISVAs and their clients.
- 3.5. An evaluation system enabled Pathfinder Sites to report on progress (including the number of uses of the tool) and provide feedback on the SAS Assessment to influence its further development, including on quality, design and operational use (including look and feel).
- 3.6. The Pathfinder Sites have also reviewed and tested this guidance to ensure that it provides the right level of information to assist ISVAs in undertaking the SAS Assessment.

¹ DRASACS (Doncaster Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Service), FreeVA - Free from Violence and Abuse (formerly DVIRP), Safeline, St Marys SARC, Manchester, Support after Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL).

4. Benefits of the SAS Assessment

- 4.1. The benefits of using the Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment will be wide-ranging for clients, individual ISVAs, ISVA Managers, ISVA Services (at an organisational level) and Commissioners.

Benefit to Clients

- 4.2. As it is intended to be a dynamic tool, that captures individual risk and needs on an on-going basis through regular review, the main benefit of the SAS Assessment will be to the clients themselves, who will be provided with support from their ISVA that is tailored to their individual needs and that takes account of any risk of harm to themselves or others.
- 4.3. In addition, where clients move between ISVA and other services, the standardised collection of information will allow a more seamless transfer of support for the individual client.

Benefits to ISVAs

- 4.4. The SAS Assessment will be of principle benefit to ISVAs who will have the option of using a standardised format to identify and record their client's individual risk and/or needs. The information collected can be gathered systematically and used to determine the support provided by the ISVA, which can be tailored to the individual client.
- 4.5. The ISVAs that were consulted during the development of the tool agreed that a structured risk and needs assessment provides a clear starting point for discussion with clients. Although carrying out the full SAS Assessment will require dedicated time with the client, this process will increase the confidence of ISVAs who can be assured that they have thoroughly and systematically discussed individual risks and needs with the client, and this has determined the support that they have put in place.
- 4.6. Home Office Guidance (currently in development) states that ISVA are responsible for completing the following for each client:
- Needs Assessment- conduct a thorough needs assessment which is reviewed on an on-going basis;
 - Risk Assessment- conduct a thorough risk assessment which is reviewed on an ongoing basis;
 - Support Plan - develop a support plan to meet the identified risks and needs.
- 4.7. Use of the SAS Assessment will enable ISVAs to meet the performance criteria of the Skills for Justice National Occupational Standards which require individuals to "Carry out an assessment to identify the needs of and risks to victims/survivors of sexual violence. Full details available at <http://nos.ukces.org.uk/PublishedNos/SFJSV3.pdf>

Benefit to Service Managers

4.8. Additionally, the tool will be of benefit to Managers of ISVA Services, who will be able to ensure effective risk management of cases and that support needs are being identified and delivered by their ISVAs. Feedback from the consultation showed that ISVA Managers were highly in favour of this approach.

4.9. The SAS Assessment will also enable ISVA Managers to monitor the intensity of staff case loads, helping them to reduce the risk to their ISVAs and the organisation by providing a measure to allocate caseloads. The SAS Assessment will also enable ISVA Managers to put in place effective and appropriate escalation processes.

Benefit to ISVA Services (organisational level)

4.10. ISVA Services should aim to build a culture of safety that supports clients and staff to ensure risk and needs assessments are an integral aspect of service provision. This in turn will provide a more effective organisation, providing effective and safe support to its clients.

Benefits to Commissioners

4.11. The SAS Assessment will enable ISVA services to be better able to report on activity demonstrating where the risks and needs add delivery pressures. This will mean that Commissioners should be better able to judge the resources required to meet demand and therefore allocate resources more effectively.

5. Who can use the SAS Assessment?

- 5.1. The Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment has been developed for use by Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs).
- 5.2. It is available for all ISVAs to use free of charge. The SAS Assessment and Support Plan sample template and this toolkit are available on the LimeCulture website (www.limeculture.co.uk) and can be downloaded at no cost.
- 5.3. LimeCulture has arranged a series of regional workshops intended to support the implementation of the SAS Assessment.
- 5.4. All ISVAs involved in undertaking SAS Assessment should receive relevant training around risk and needs assessment and management, and it is recommended this should be updated at least every three years.
- 5.5. The SAS Assessment is not mandatory for ISVAs. However, it is strongly encouraged that all ISVAs adopt it as part of their routine practice to support effective and consistent risk and need identification and inform the support put in place for clients.
- 5.6. The ISVA workforce is expanding year on year due to the increasing recognition of the vital services provided by ISVAs in support of victims and survivors of sexual violence. As the ISVA workforce continues to grow in professionalism, it is critical that this professionalism is maintained by each individual ISVA and across all ISVA services. The introduction of standardised practices amongst ISVAs will ultimately create equity of provision of ISVA Services, by ensuring standards are raised and maintained in all services.
- 5.7. Crucially, the SAS Assessment is not intended to stifle innovation amongst ISVA services seeking to develop new approaches to delivery. Instead, it is intended to provide a framework for the standardisation of good practice to enable the ISVA workforce to advance while maintaining its professionalism.

6. Using the SAS Assessment

- 6.1. The Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment has been developed as a standardised approach to documentation across ISVA services.

Recording information

- 6.2. All relevant information collected as part of the SAS Assessment should be recorded in the appropriate domain sections and stored confidentially. The process of documentation will provide an audit trail of decision-making, but should not become bureaucratic in itself.
- 6.3. While a template format for the domain-based assessment has been included, it is recommended that organisations will need to develop their own ways of collecting and recording the information. This may include developing service specific templates and/or incorporating it into electronic databases.
- 6.4. It is recommended that the SAS Assessment and Support Plan template can and should be customised to include service specific information requirements, that may include:
- Specific prompt questions including those highlighted in the toolkit or where additional information is required for specific client groups supported by the ISVA or Service e.g. Children and Young People ISVAs may be prompted to record further parent and carer details,
 - Local processes and contact details e.g. MARAC referral processes, Child Exploitation Protection Teams etc.
 - Confidentiality, consent and safeguarding statements and signatures (Further details in Section 6.7)
 - Service escalation arrangements. Services may wish to detail thresholds for escalation to Senior ISVAs e.g. specific risk and/or needs identified.
 - Outcome measures required by funders. Services may wish to use the domains to support outcome monitoring or existing outcome monitoring areas should be added.
- 6.5. A written record of the SAS Assessment allows ISVAs to track changes in the level of risk and to note factors that have previously been considered important. This is particularly important when people have complex needs and are in contact with several agencies. Documentation also helps to protect ISVAs in the event of a case review.
- 6.6. Documentation must be managed in accordance with the relevant legal requirements (e.g. the Data Protection Act and Information Governance).

Communication & Information-sharing

- 6.7. Once the SAS Assessment has been undertaken or reviewed, it will become a live document and should be communicated to the client.
- 6.8. The client should have the opportunity to contribute to this process and can be provided with copies as part of this process. The information collected in the SAS Assessment should form the basis of the client's support plan and should be used collaboratively with the client.
- 6.9. The SAS Assessment may contain information that the ISVA may wish to, or be required to share with others, such as other members of the ISVA Service, or other agencies or services. The client's consent for sharing information should be sought, although the duty of confidentiality can be overridden where there is a clear risk of harm. The ISVA Service policy on information-sharing should govern this process and should be clearly explained to the client.

Key considerations in undertaking the SAS Assessment

- 6.10. The ISVA should consider the following key points in relation to undertaking the SAS Assessment:
 - Embedding risk and needs assessment in everyday practice,
 - Client Involvement,
 - Recognition of the fluidity of risk,
 - Confidentiality and disclosure,
 - Diversity.

Embedding risk and needs assessment in everyday practice

- 6.11. Carrying out and recording regular risk and needs assessments should not be viewed as an 'add-on' to practice, but should produce a structured and documented version of the professional judgments that ISVAs make everyday.

- 6.12. The SAS Assessment has been developed to enable the everyday practices of ISVAs to be formally recorded, and this should increase the confidence of ISVAs when making decisions about the support they provide for clients with complex or multiple needs.

Client Involvement

- 6.13. As with all aspects of ISVA support, the key to effective risk and needs assessment is a good relationship between the client and the ISVA. Negative and judgemental labels must be avoided, as they are barriers to effective collaboration.
- 6.14. Full engagement of the client in the risk and needs assessment is sometimes not possible, but the potential for it should always be considered. This means that the

process of risk and needs assessment should be explained to clients at the earliest opportunity. The findings of the SAS Assessment, and the subsequent development of a support plan itself, should be carried out in an atmosphere of trust, openness and transparency.

- 6.15. Each step in the process of developing a support plan should be based on discussions between the client and the ISVA. The client should be offered the opportunity to take a lead role in identifying the risks and needs from their point of view, developing plans for dealing with difficult situations, offering strengths and solutions where they feel have them and indicating the sort of support that they would prefer. Clients are often in the best position to comment on the robustness and practicality of the support plan and should be empowered to take on some actions in the plan where appropriate.
- 6.16. Where there is a parent or carer involved, they are a vital source of support for the client and may also be a key person in helping to manage the risks identified. ISVAs should be sensitive to the relationship between the client and the parent or carer, as there may be risks within this relationship and different points of view about the best actions to be taken.

Recognition of the fluidity of risk

- 6.17. Risk can change – sometimes over very short timescales. Given the fluidity of risk, there should be an established procedure to formally review the full SAS Assessment at regular intervals.
- 6.18. The timeframe to reassess using the SAS Assessment should be agreed between the ISVA and the client at the outset of the support provided by the ISVA. However, these timescales should not be rigidly applied. It is important that the procedure has some flexibility so that, in particular circumstances, an earlier or more timely reassessment can be undertaken. This also guards against a 'tick box' mentality in completing the SAS Assessment.
- 6.19. ISVAs will need to be familiar with previous SAS Assessment identification of risk and needs (including scores if used) so that they can be alert to changes in the level of risk and/or need.

Confidentiality and disclosure

- 6.20. ISVA services should have in place clear agreed policies on information-sharing, which advises on the 'need to know'. For example, if the client is at risk or if someone other than the client is at risk, safeguarding procedures may be invoked. The rationale for any disclosure without consent, e.g. to prevent harm, should be clearly documented. It will be important for the ISVA to discuss this with the client before the SAS Assessment is undertaken.

Diversity

- 6.21. Professional judgement is based on perceptions that can be biased without the ISVA being aware. Therefore all staff involved in risk and needs assessment must be capable of demonstrating an appropriate level of cultural sensitivity and competence. This competence applies to diversity in terms of race, faith, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Assumptions about any of these aspects may influence perceptions of risk and/or needs.
- 6.22. The ISVA should reflect on their assumptions about people from diverse groups within society and think about any judgments of risk that they are making about people from these groups. Assumptions about gender can also frame the way that risk is assessed in women and men. It is essential to stay open-minded about the client's needs and risks – regardless of race and gender – and not to expect clients to conform to basic stereotypes. The structured nature of the SAS Assessment will help with this. Reflective practice, clinical supervision and a collaborative approach are also crucial.

7. The process of Assessment, Review and Reassessment

- 7.1. Due to the fluidity of risk and the possibility of rapidly changing needs, it is recommended that the SAS Assessment is used by the ISVA at **every contact** with the client.
- 7.2. It is suggested that a full SAS Assessment is conducted at the initial meeting, then reviewed at each contact with the client with a focus on the domains where risk and/or need is identified. It is recommended that scheduled times are identified throughout the journey of support provided by the ISVA where the SAS Assessment is reviewed in full.
- 7.3. **Initial assessment** - It is suggested that ISVAs carry out the full SAS Assessment **at the initial meeting** with their client.
- 7.4. ISVAs should ensure that enough time has been allocated to undertake the SAS Assessment, recognising that some of the domains could prompt significant discussions with the client.
- 7.5. During the development of the SAS Assessment, some ISVAs raised concern about carrying out the full SAS Assessment at the initial meeting due to the potential of preventing rapport building between the client and ISVA. While this can be true of tick-box style risk assessments, this should not be the case for the SAS Assessment.
- 7.6. The defining characteristic of the SAS Assessment is that it is a domain-based risk and needs assessment, meaning that it does not prescribe a form of words to be used or set of questions to be asked. Instead, the domains provide areas for consideration and prompts, meaning that the risk and needs are identified in a conversational style, collaboratively between the ISVA and the client.
- 7.7. **Review** – it is suggested that the SAS Assessment is reviewed **at each contact** with the client.
- 7.8. Importantly however, unless the client has identified risks and needs in each of the domains, it will not be necessary to review the full SAS Assessment at each contact. Instead, it is suggested that the ISVA review the domains where risk and needs have been previously identified at each contact.
- 7.9. In addition to reviewing the relevant domains where risks and/or needs have been identified previously, the ISVA will need to discuss with the client whether there has been any other changes to the client's circumstances at each contact. This approach will highlight the need to discuss any other domains where risks and needs have not been previously identified, but have developed since the last contact.

- 7.10. **Reassessment** - While remaining flexible, support plans should include **scheduled dates for reassessment** of the full SAS Assessment, so that they are not simply amended as a reaction to a crisis or other events.
- 7.11. The client should be involved in the decision making around scheduling dates for the reassessment of the full SAS Assessment. The scheduled dates should form part of the support plan.
- 7.12. From discussion with the client, the ISVA should seek to identify what circumstances would trigger a reassessment outside the scheduled dates. There should be scope for the client to request a reassessment.
- 7.13. In addition, the SAS Assessment should be reassessed before and during time periods that are recognised to be associated with increased risk, for instance that coincide with anniversaries or court dates.

Figure One : The process of Assessment, Review and Reassessment



8. Structure of the Safety and Support Assessment

Understanding Risk and Needs

- 8.1 It is important that the ISVA and the client have a clear idea about what risks and needs they are assessing and why they are carrying out a risk and needs assessment.
- 8.2 **Risks** are those elements of the assessment that present a risk of harm or distress to the client or others. These are the elements ISVA will need to manage or escalate further in order to decrease the likelihood of harm. This can be done by working with the client and others to identify ways of reducing the likelihood of the risk(s) occurring.
- 8.1. Risk assessment should be used to identify the circumstances in which a particular harmful situation or behaviour could possibly take place, and this information can then be used to focus efforts and expertise on dealing with the most relevant triggers.
- 8.2. Risk management should be done through an individual support plan to reduce the risk of harm occurring and increase the potential for a positive outcome for the client.
- 8.3. A support plan must be developed with an awareness of the potential for changes in the level of risk over time. This requires a particular emphasis on the fluidity of risk, as well as attention to regularly review risks and their management.
- 8.4. **Needs** relate to elements of the assessment that the ISVA will want to consider in order to tailor the support that they provide for the individual client.
- 8.5. These could include:
- needs to support the management of identified risks
 - any specific support needs that must be taken into consideration when working with a client e.g. a need for an interpreter, a need to pray/worship at specific times, a need to have childcare arrangements in place.
 - identifying any practical and emotional support required by the client e.g. letters to employers or dispelling rape myths
 - identifying the need for additional services and facilitating access via signposting or direct referral e.g. counseling services
 - any specific needs before, during and after criminal and civil court proceedings.
- 8.6. The SAS Assessment allows ISVAs to capture any information or detail about the identified risks and needs in the domain to which it relates. The ISVA should provide the level of detail that is useful to determine the individual client's SAS plan.

Scoring-System

8.7. The information below is a summary of the Scoring System that can be used as part of the SAS Assessment.

Scoring	Description	Associated Action
No concerns about current risks or needs (score of 0)	No risks or needs are identified by the ISVA and the client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassess domain following any significant change in circumstances. Reassess all domains at scheduled agreed dates
Mild concerns about current risk or needs (score of 1)	Mild concerns about risk or needs identified by the ISVA and client but these can be managed by the client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review domain at next contact with the client Reassess all domains at scheduled agreed dates
Moderate concerns about current risk or needs (score of 2)	Moderate concerns about risks or needs identified by the ISVA and client but these can be managed by the ISVA's support plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Support Plan to include action taken/ required to manage risks or needs Review domain at next contact with the client Reassess all domains at scheduled agreed dates
Significant concern about current risk or needs (score of 3)	Clear indication that client is at significant risk of harm or has significant needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to other (relevant) agency or support service. Escalate to Manager for support, advice or assistance Develop Support Plan to include action taken/ required to manage risk Review domain at next contact with the client Reassess all domains at scheduled agreed dates review risk following any significant change in circumstances

8.8. It is important to note that the use of scoring systems in risk assessments is contentious and can be problematic. The main problem associated with scoring is the difficulty in ensuring scores are consistently applied by professionals. This is particularly important where the main outcome of the tool is to provide an 'overall score' for an individual.

8.9. Despite the challenges of scoring systems, many ISVAs reported that they would find it useful to have some kind of rating attached to their risk and needs assessment to enable monitoring, benchmarking and prioritisation. Therefore, the SAS Assessment has been developed with a scoring element included for the purpose of complementing the qualitative information recorded in the risk and needs assessment tool domains.

"The scoring allows me to clearly see areas of support that are needed – this then helps to prioritise actions in the client's support plan"

Feedback from Pathfinder Site

- 8.10. It is an important principle that the SAS Assessment is a domain-based assessment, which is not intended as a 'list of questions' to complete in order to create an 'overall score' for an individual. Unlike other Tools, the scoring element of the SAS Assessment is not intended as the main outcome or main purpose for completing the tool.
- 8.11. On that basis, a scoring system has been included to complement the information collected and recorded in the domains. However, it is not a requirement of the SAS Assessment, which can be used with or without the scoring system.
- 8.12. Crucially, the scoring system should not be used in isolation. That is, a score should not replace the information recorded in the relevant domain sections. The exception to this will be where the individual client has no risks and/or needs identified, a score of 0 could be added in a domain noting "No Further Information"
- 8.13. ISVAs should discuss with their Managers whether they should use the scoring system as part of the assessment. Managers who intend to use the scores to monitor the caseloads of their staff should try to ensure that the scoring system is understood across the ISVA service to allow for consistent scoring to take place.

"The scoring system is very useful as it allows me to see in what domain the client is most at risk and then give a clearer picture of where I can support or where the issues needs to be escalated."

Feedback from Pathfinder Site

- 8.14. ISVA's should use their professional judgment to determine which of the summary statements best represents the client's current risk and needs. It is recognised that determining a value will be subjective (based on the ISVA's interpretation of risk and need from the information provided) and it is therefore important to ensure that scoring is frequently reviewed by managers to ensure that it is being consistently applied by ISVAs.
- 8.15. A score of more than 2 in any single domain indicates a requirement for development of a support plan (or inclusion in an existing support plan) and actions required or taken should be identified.

- 8.16. In light of the challenges of using numeric scoring systems, Alexis Jay in her report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham, observed that practitioners using a CSE risk assessment tool *“reported difficulty in reconciling the outcome of the numeric scoring system with their professional judgements of risk”*. In recognition of this challenge, SAS Assessment provides a domain for 'professional judgement'. This domain will allow for the ISVA to capture any professional judgements - or 'gut-feelings' - about the individual client's risk and/or needs that are not identified in previous domains. These may often be derived from non-verbal cues, or what is not said to the ISVA but lead the ISVA to have concerns that do not fit into any of the other domains.

9. Actions Required/Taken

- 9.1. The SAS Assessment provides space for the ISVA to capture any information or detail about the Action Required and/or Taken in relation to each domain.
- 9.2. These are the actions required to be taken either by the ISVA or the client to meet the client's needs or to mitigate the risks identified. The actions that are required or taken will be dependent on the client's willingness to access other services and support, as well as the ISVA's own knowledge and expertise in relation to the support they can provide. For example, this may include a referral to additional services for in-depth assessment, a safeguarding referral or other service e.g pre-trial counselling. ISVAs will therefore need an awareness of availability of local services, access criteria and/or thresholds. Timescales for actions should be recorded.
- 9.3. The ISVA will need to discuss and agree the appropriate options to meet the client's needs, advising the client fully of the available options and the impact of choosing a particular option. Clients should wherever possible be supported and empowered to address their own risks and needs, for example to improve their wellbeing by accessing counselling or social support.
- 9.4. The client's strengths should be recognised alongside the possible problems that they might encounter and with which they might present. Every time an issue is identified, an action should be suggested and discussed, building on the positive skills of the client or their support network. The emphasis should always be on a recovery approach and on the next stage in developing the client's ability to cope when they are feeling vulnerable or having difficult demands placed on them. Consideration should also be given to the level of support that an ISVA can offer to clients who have identified risks and/or needs but who do not wish to be referred to other services. The ISVA must be aware of the limitations of the support they can personally provide, paying particular attention to the need to maintain professional boundaries.

10. Using the Assessment to create the Safety and Support (SAS) Plan

- 10.1. A fundamental principle of the ISVA role is that the support put in place by the ISVA should meet the individual needs of the client.
- 10.2. The support offered and provided by the ISVA should be proportionate to the degree of risk and needs that the client presents at the time. Therefore, the SAS Assessment will be integral to deciding on the right level of support for a client.
- 10.3. When the SAS Assessment is carried out properly – with the ISVA and their client working together to identify risk and needs – the assessment is empowering rather than disempowering for the client and can be a vital part of their recovery.
- 10.4. Following completion of the SAS Assessment, the ISVA should draw up a safety and support (SAS) plan to meet all of the individual client's risks and needs. This will involve agreeing specific interventions or actions to manage the risks and/or needs identified. This plan should be developed with the client, and should be regularly reviewed.
- 10.5. The use of the scoring-system may assist the ISVA and the client to monitor whether the individual client's risk and needs increase or decrease over the journey of support provided by the ISVA.

"The SAS Assessment is very useful in creating a structured and focused support plan, this allows the client to be very clear what the ISVA can offer and also where the client can take action to meet their own needs".

Feedback from Pathfinder Site

11. Support planning in the 'real world'

- 11.1. It is important to recognise that the increase of risk and/or needs during the time that support is provided by the ISVA may be an inevitable result of the client's journey through a challenging process or difficult time (for example, going through the criminal justice process). Increasing numbers of risks and/or needs should not be regarded as ineffective support provided by the ISVA.
- 11.2. The key driver for the SAS Assessment and Plan is not an attempt to reduce the numbers of risk and/or needs of an individual client, but attempts to more robustly identify, monitor and manage the individual risks and/needs of the client over time.
- 11.3. Safety and Support (SAS) planning by ISVAs is complex and is affected by many factors that are specific to the individual ISVA, such as their personal values, their expertise and training, their own attitude towards risk, their workload and the time that they have available to address the matters in hand.
- 11.4. It is important for ISVAs to be aware of and reflect on the factors that influence their decision-making in relation to putting in place the support plan, to ensure that their values are enhancing the process rather than distorting it. Working as part of an effective ISVA team, individual supervision and good communication with their manager will all support these processes. Feedback from the client on the effectiveness of the support plan is a useful part of reflective practice.

"The more I use the SAS Assessment, the better I think the resources (assessment and support plan) work together as it allows a very clear plan that both myself and the client can see...the client has full involvement in the development of the plan this way".

Feedback from Pathfinder Site

1. About the Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment Domains

- 1.1. The SAS Assessment is a domain-based risks and needs assessment that allows the ISVA to identify their client's individual risks and needs in a structured approach using discussion themes.
- 1.2. There are 14 domains included in the SAS Assessment. It is important to note that the domains are not numbered in order of importance or priority. The domains can be discussed in any order and it is suggested that they are considered in the order that is most suitable to the ISVA and the client.
- 1.3. It is important to recognise that some clients will have risks and/or needs in more than one domain. For example, a change in circumstance could impact on a number of domains. It is therefore important that ISVAs do not to consider each domain in isolation. Instead, recognising that a single domain is part of the wider SAS Assessment.
- 1.4. The information contained in this section of the toolkit provides a description of each of the domains and the rationale for their inclusion in the SAS Assessment. Areas for consideration and prompts have been included that might be useful to the ISVA in their discussions with clients when assessing their risks and/or needs.
- 1.5. It is important to note that the areas for discussion/prompts are not to be regarded as an exhaustive list, nor are they to be regarded as a checklist. They are included simply to aid and facilitate discussions between the ISVA and the client with regard to the specific domain.

Part Two : Safety and Support (SAS) Assessment Domains

D1 Personal & Individual Requirements	D2 Harm from Other(s)	D3 Health & Medical	D4 Mental Health & Psychological Wellbeing	D5 Coping Mechanisms, Social & Cultural Support
Age Communication Gender Identity Sexuality Religious/Cultural Needs Physical disabilities Learning disability Involvement in Sex Work	When abuse took place About the perpetrator (Unwanted) contact Those connected to the perpetrator Domestic abuse Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Violence Against Women & Girls Previous abuse Client concern	Urgent medical attention Forensic medical examination Sexual & Reproductive Health Medical Appointments Medicines	History of mental health problems Current mental health conditions Self harm Suicide	Positive coping skills Negative coping skills Social Networks Cultural Support
D6 Alcohol & Drug Use	D7 Safeguarding	D8 Criminal Justice	D9 Employment & Education	D10 Finance
Drug/alcohol abuse Coping mechanisms Substance misuse services	Presence of children/vulnerable adults Client concerns Pregnant client Involvement of adult/children's services	Reporting Options Support during Investigation Preparing for court Support at Court After the trial CICA	Employment Status Education Status Employer/Education Provider Awareness Special/Mitigating Circumstances	Sources of income Welfare benefits Debts Financial Assistance NRPf
D11 Accommodation & Housing	D12 Immigration & Residence	D13 Risk to Professionals & Services	D14 Professional Judgment	Scoring
Adequate Housing Safe & Secure Housing Homelessness NRPf	Immigration Status Undocumented Migrant NRPf Trafficking Detention/Deportation	Physical safety of ISVA Lone Working arrangements Other service providers Refusal of service provision	Any other information Client perception of risk Non-verbal communication Gut instinct or suspicion	0 - No risk or needs identified. 1 - Mild Risk or Needs identified that can be managed by the client 2 - Moderate Risk or Needs identified that can be managed by the ISVA Service 3 - Significant Risk or Needs identified that require support from other services

Rationale - Domain 1 relates to any of the client's personal and individual requirements that the ISVA Service should be aware of when providing support. This may also relate to support needs in other areas for example court attendances and referral to other organisations. Identifying whether the client has any specific individual or personal risks or needs will allow the ISVA to provide support tailored to meet the individual. For example, there may be certain times or days that are not suitable for appointments, or the client may prefer a specific gender of ISVA or other professional.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether there is anything specific the client requires to assist them to continue to access the ISVA service, places them or others at risk or means that they have specific needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Age

It is important to establish the client's age as this can prompt discussions on areas of parental responsibility and education. In addition in some areas age will determine the services available for onward referral including counseling and sexual health services.

Communication

It will be important for the ISVA to establish whether their client has any specific requirements regarding communication needs. For example language needs whether an interpreter or translator is needed? Client's level of understanding or comprehension? Hearing impairment or use of sign-language?

Gender Identify

It is important that the ISVA does not make assumptions about the gender of a client, instead the ISVA should discuss with the client which gender they identify with.

It is important to recognise that some people do not identify with the gender they were born as, or may not consider themselves to be the gender they 'appear' to be. The gender that the client identifies with might have an impact on how ISVA or other services can be best delivered for the client. The client may have specific requests based on their gender identity, such as a preference for a specific gender of ISVA or other professional.

Sexuality

The sexuality of the client may be an important factor when providing support for the client. For example, discussing the sexual orientation of the client can prevent the ISVA from making incorrect assumptions about their sexual orientation. Knowledge around the client's sexuality may also mean that other services are available to the client, such as LGBT Support services.

Religion/Cultural beliefs

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether they have any religious or cultural beliefs that will impact on their ability to engage with the ISVA Service. For example, if the client prays at certain times of the day it will not be appropriate to have appointments booked at those times.

Physical Disabilities

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether they have any physical disabilities that will impact on their ability to engage with the ISVA or other services, means they have specific needs in relation to a disability or that their disability may put them at risk if not appropriately support. For example, do they require wheelchair access to attend appointments or court attendances?

Learning Disabilities or Cognitive Impairments

The ISVAs should discuss with the client whether they have any learning disability or cognitive impairment that will impact on their ability to engage with the ISVA Service, means that they have specific needs in relation to their learning disability, or puts them at risk because of their learning disability. For example, the ISVA will need to try to understand their client's level of comprehension and understanding.

Not all clients have previously been identified as learning disabled. In order to establish the level of learning disability or difficulties the ISVA should ascertain if the client needs any support with reading or writing or if they had any help/support with their learning in school e.g classroom support. The ISVA should establish what, if any support, is already provided.

Involvement in Sex work

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether they are involved in sex work as it could have an impact on their ability or willingness to engage with the ISVA service or other service. An individual's involvement in sex work may also put them at risk. Knowledge around the whether the client is involved in sex work may also mean that other services are available to them, such as support groups for sex workers or specific projects.

Important note – This is not an exhaustive list of areas for consideration or prompts to be used by the ISVA when completing the SAS Assessment. Clients will have individual and personal needs that are not outlined above, and therefore it is suggested that ISVAs might find it useful to use open questions to identify whether there are any needs or risks specific to the individual client that should be captured in Domain 1.

Rationale - Domain 2 relates to identifying whether the client is at risk of harm from another person or people. It is important to note that this domain is not limited to risks of sexual violence. It should be used to identify any harm that the client may be facing, for example, physical, sexual, emotional harm.

Identifying whether the client is at risk of harm from the perpetrator or anyone else, will allow the ISVA to tailor the support they provide to ensure the safety of the individual, wherever possible. This may mean that other specialist services are required, for example, where there is domestic abuse occurring, or stalking or harassment.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether there is anything specific the client requires to assist them to continue to access the ISVA services, places them or others at risk or means that they have specific needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

When did the abuse take place?

It will be important for the ISVA to establish when the abuse took place in determining whether the client is still at risk of harm from the perpetrator. For example, where the abuse is non-recent the risk of to the client may be lower than if the abuse is ongoing currently.

About the Perpetrator

In identifying whether the client is at risk from the perpetrator(s) it will be important to discuss whether the perpetrator is known to the client or whether the perpetrator was a stranger, or a family member, a work colleague, teacher, community member, gang member etc.

(Unwanted) Contact

It will be important for the ISVA to discuss whether the client is in contact with the perpetrator and how frequent that contact is. For example, does the perpetrator know where they live or have access to their home? Does the perpetrator contact them on social media, send text messages, emails etc.

It will also be important to identify whether the client is receiving unwanted contact relating to their abuse. For example, are they being harassed on social media, are videos, images being posted online etc.

Those Connected to the Perpetrator

In identifying whether the client is at risk of harm from other(s), ISVAs may find it useful to discuss with the client whether there are others that are connected to the perpetrator who they may be at risk of harm from, this could include connections such as their family members, friends, or gang members

Domestic abuse

It will be important for the ISVA to identify whether their client is at risk of, or currently experiencing domestic abuse. Where the ISVA is concerned about domestic abuse, a DASH Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) will need to be undertaken and it may be necessary to refer the client immediately to a MARAC and/or a specialist domestic abuse service or IDVA service.

Child Sexual Exploitation

It will be important for the ISVA to identify whether their client is at risk of, or currently experiencing sexual exploitation. Where the ISVA is concerned about sexual exploitation from groups or gangs, it may be necessary to refer the client immediately to a local specialist sexual exploitation service. In some local authority areas, a bespoke sexual exploitation risk assessment has been introduced and it may be necessary to ensure this is carried out.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The ISVA should discuss with the client other forms of violence against women and girls, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence (HBV), in order to identify whether they are at risk of, or already have already experienced these types of violence against women and girls. For example, a client who has experienced FGM may have physical, sexual and/or reproductive health problems that require attention.

Previous abuse

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether they have experienced previous abuse to determine whether there are any risks or needs for the individual. For example, it may be that previous abuse took place a long time ago but the client now wishes to report it, or that the client has been the victim of abuse from a range of perpetrators and is still at risk due to the location in which they live or work etc. Research also suggests that those who have previous abuse increases the risk of future abuse and or exploitation.

Client Concerns

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether there are any other individuals or groups that the client feels they are at risk from or that they could potentially become at risk from. For example, if a decision is taken to report the allegation to the police, they may be at risk of retribution.

Rationale - Domain 3 relates to identifying whether the client has any health or medical risks and/or needs.

Identifying whether the client has any risks and/or needs in relation to their health or medical requirements will allow the ISVA to ensure that any physical or sexual health needs of the client are addressed, and referrals or appointments made with relevant health services.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any health or medical risks and/or needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Urgent Medical Attention

It will be important for the ISVA to discuss with the clients whether they have any immediate medical needs, such as injuries, bruising or open wounds to determine whether there is a need for urgent medical care. Where there is an urgent need for medical attention, it is an important principle that the physical welfare of the client must be a priority.

Forensic Medical Examination

The ISVA should discuss the options for undergoing a forensic medical examination following sexual assault with the client. It is important to note that there is often confusion about timeframes for when a forensic medical examination can take place. ISVAs should not make assumptions about whether a forensic medical examination is appropriate, or seek to advise on timeframes. Instead, ISVAs should provide information about local Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), the options that are available to the client to undergo a medical examination and retrieve forensic samples. The ISVA may contact the local SARC on their behalf to seek advice. The ISVA will also want to discuss with the client whether they have already accessed a SARC.

Sexual & Reproductive Health

Given the nature of sexual violence, the sexual and reproductive health of the client may be a very important aspect of their support. For example, the ISVA will want to discuss with the client their options for their sexual health, including any unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, emergency contraception and any post-exposure prophylaxis treatments that are recommended.

It is important to recognise that clients who have accessed a SARC may have already had their sexual health needs assessed. However, those who chosen not to access – or have not yet accessed - a SARC may not have considered their sexual and reproductive health needs.

If the assault was recent and the client has yet to or chosen not to seek support from a SARC then the ISVA **must** advise that the client seeks sexual health advice at the earliest opportunity.

Medical Appointments

It will be important for the ISVA to discuss with the client whether they have any medical appointments scheduled to take place or whether there is a need to assist the client to access medical appointments.

Medication

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they are using any medication (prescribed or otherwise). A client who takes medication may have needs that the ISVA should be aware of. For example it might be necessary to avoid scheduling appointments at certain times when medication causes drowsiness etc.

Some medication is required to be taken at certain times or within certain timeframes to be effective which the ISVA may need to be aware of, for example, emergency contraception.

Some medication will have side effects that might have an impact on the client's ability or willingness to engage with the ISVA or other services, such as post-exposure prophylaxis medication, which can cause extreme sickness.

Rationale - Domain 4 relates to identifying whether the client has any mental health or psychological wellbeing risks and/or needs.

Sexual Violence can have a significant impact on mental health. It is, however, important to recognise that victims/survivors of sexual violence do not all respond in the same way. For example, for some the aftermath of sexual violence will manifest itself in short-term psychological problems, while others may experience much longer-term psychological trauma, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is important for the ISVA to discuss this with the client and identify any risks and/or need to the client relating to their mental health and psychological well-being.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any mental health and psychological well-being risks and/or needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

History of Mental Health Problems

Mental well-being makes up an integral part of an individual's capacity to lead a fulfilling life, including the ability to form relationships, study, work or pursue leisure interests, as well as to make day-to-day decisions and choices. Therefore, the ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they have a history of mental health problems, whether they have sought help for their previous mental health problems and whether they agree with any diagnosis previously provided?

Current Mental Health Condition(s)

The ISVA should identify whether the client is currently experiencing a mental health condition. Has it been diagnosed? Does the client agree with the diagnosis? What is the diagnosis? Whls it a common mental health problem (such as depression and anxiety) or a severe and enduring mental health condition (such as psychosis or a personality disorder)?.

The ISVA should seek to identify whether the client is being treated for the mental health condition, and if so, what is that treatment? What professional support do they currently have in place e.g community mental health team, community psychiatric nurse

It might be useful for the ISVA to discuss with the client whether they are experiencing any of the following types of symptoms , which would point to an increase risk to the client.

- Low mood
- Palpitations
- Hallucination
- Sleeping problems
- Flashbacks
- Intrusive thoughts
- Poor concentration

Self harm (intentional or unintentional)

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is self harming, either intentionally or unintentionally. For a client who is **intentionally** self harming, it may be a coping mechanism, that allows them to manage their feelings.

The client may be **unintentionally** self harming by engaging in risky behaviours (such as drug taking or engaging in risky sexual relationships or getting into fights).

The client may be neglecting to properly care for themselves, which could result in them causing harm to themselves (such as not eating).

Suicide

Although it is important for the ISVA to identify whether the client is at risk of suicide, it is important to recognise the difference between suicidal ideation and suicidal intent. For many suicidal ideation (i.e., thinking about suicide) is common for people who have experienced a trauma or difficult situation. However, they may never go on to act on their thoughts.

It is crucial to identify whether the client actually intends to commit suicide. To assess this risk, the ISVA will want to discuss with the client what their level of intent is. For example, whether they have any plans to commit suicide, whether they have taken any actions to make this happen, etc.

It will be important to discuss and record any previous suicide attempts, such as when, how and what happened, as this can support the assessment of current risk and support planning. This outcome of these discussions may prompt an urgent referral for crisis intervention/assessment

Rationale - Domain 5 relates to identifying whether the client has any coping mechanisms, or social or cultural support that are in place, or can be put in place to assist them in dealing with their abusive experience(s).

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs, in relation to their coping mechanisms, social and culture support, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Positive Coping Skills

Coping skills or mechanisms are the strategies and activities that the client may use to help them deal with, or work through, or process their emotions. The ISVA will want to identify whether they have any activities that can be used to assist them in managing. Examples of positive coping mechanisms are exercise (walks, biking, and going to the gym), healthy eating habits, regular sleep, hobbies, etc. Prescription medications can also be a positive coping mechanism if they help manage mental health symptoms.

Negative Coping Skills

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is using or likely to use negative coping skills, which might include drinking too much alcohol, abusing drugs, problem gambling, doing something illegal. Further detail on Drug and Alcohol can be collected within Domain 6 and some services may choose to combine these domains. It can also involve not knowing how to control the levels of emotion by, for example, being too loud and verbally abusive towards others or smashing things.

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client the possibility of positive coping skills becoming negative skills. This might include, exercising too much, eating too much or too little food etc.

Social Networks

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is being supported by other people, such as family or friends. Are they aware of the abusive experience(s)?

This kind of support might also include other support organisations for example counselling or psychological therapies or some kind of support group to help them manage.

The ISVA will want to identify whether there is any social support that is not being accessed by the client, and whether it would benefit the client to do so.

If it is not possible for the client to access social support, the ISVA will want to discuss with the client the barriers to access, and whether anything can be done either by the ISVA, the client or others to remove those barriers.

Cultural Support

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is accessing any cultural support, or whether they have needs around their cultural beliefs that could be addressed. For example, the client may be part of a specific community that can provide advice or support conversely or the client may be at risk of isolation from their culture or cultural support where they perceive a negative response.

Other areas of life

The ISVA should seek to identify whether the abusive experience(s) are impacting on any other aspects of the client's life. For example, they may be going through a divorce, or family court proceedings that mean that they have risks or needs that impact on other areas of their life.

Rationale - Domain 6 relates to identifying whether the client has any risks and/or needs that relate to their drug and alcohol use. This may relate to negative coping skills identified in Domain 5.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs that relate to drug and alcohol use, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Drug/alcohol dependency

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is abusing drugs (prescribed and/or recreational) or alcohol. It will be important to identify whether the client believes they have developed a dependency. If so, are they seeking help or would they like to access support?

The ISVA will also want to identify whether they have any specific needs that relate to their drug and/or alcohol use. For example, is there a better time of day to make contact etc.

Coping Mechanisms

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client, whether they are using drugs and/or alcohol as a coping mechanism (e.g. when they are feeling low). If so, how often? Are there certain triggers? Does the client want to access specialist support to manage their drug/alcohol use?

Substance Misuse Services

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is already accessing a substance misuse service or accessing specialist support from professionals in relation to drug or alcohol use.

The client may be at risk of 'relapsing' or going back to drug and alcohol abuse, and the ISVA will want to identify whether they are at risk or have any specific needs that relate to this.

Rationale: Domain 7 relates to identifying whether there are any safeguarding risks or needs that relate to the client, this is particularly relevant for children and young people, any children or vulnerable adults. It is important for the ISVA to discuss their obligations to share information where they have a safeguarding concern.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any safeguarding risks and/or needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Presence of children/vulnerable adults

The ISVA will need to identify whether there are any children or vulnerable adults who are at risk of harm. For example, were they present during the abuse? Are they at risk of abuse now? Does the perpetrator have access to children or vulnerable adults? Do they currently live with the client? What are the arrangements?

Client concerns

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they have any concerns about themselves, any children, vulnerable adults or anyone else. The ISVA should record any information that is provided to enable it to be shared with other agencies as appropriate.

Pregnant Clients

Pregnancy is a significant risk to women who are in domestic abuse situations, so will need to be carefully considered by the ISVA to determine whether there are any safeguarding risks to the client or their unborn child.

The ISVA should identify whether a pregnant client has access to or is currently attending maternity services (midwifery or antenatal services).

Involvement of Adult or Children's Services

The ISVA will want to discuss whether Adult or Children's Services are involved or have previously been involved with the client. For example, do they have a social worker? Are they the subject of a child protection plan? Are they or have they been a Looked After Child?

Rationale - Domain 8 relates to the criminal justice process and identifying whether the client has any specific risks or needs that relate to the reporting, investigation or court process and beyond.

The key element of the ISVA role relates to supporting clients through the criminal justice process, which will include providing independent advice and support on all aspects of the process, including reporting options, the investigation, the court process and beyond.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs, the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Reporting options

The ISVA will need to identify whether the client has already reported their abusive experience(s) to the police, and if so what stage of the process are they at? If they have not already reported to the police, the ISVA will need to ensure the client understands the options available to them which may include

Anonymous intelligence

In some areas there are agreed protocols with the police for the client to provide anonymous intelligence and /or have forensic samples submitted anonymously.

The ISVA will need to be clear about what level of anonymous reporting is available in their area in order to provide the client with accurate information and enable them to make an informed choice about this process

Should the client (and local protocol supports it) wish to have forensic samples submitted anonymously the ISVA will need to seek advice and support from the police lead and SARC. If forensic samples are submitted anonymously they should be accompanied by anonymous intelligence (information). The ISVA will be guided by the police lead and the SARC.

Should the client opt to provide anonymous intelligence only without the submission of forensic samples then the ISVA should seek the support and advice of the police lead prior to obtaining the information.

Previous Crimes

The ISVA may wish to discuss with the client whether they have experienced previous crimes. This may have an impact on the way they perceive their own risks and needs and should be considered by the ISVA in the context of the client's own experiences.

Support during an investigation

If a report has been made to the police, the ISVA will want to identify whether the client has any needs or risks relating to the investigation. (Note, the ISVA must ensure their professional boundaries are maintained, and take steps not to become aware of the evidence). Support needs during an investigation may include:

- Providing single point of contact for client with police or CPS
- Arranging progress meetings with criminal justice agencies
- Decision making by other agencies (Police – No crime , CPS- NFA)
- Ensuring Special Measures are put in place

Preparing for court

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they have any risks or needs around preparing for court. This could include:

- Awareness of court dates
- Pre-court visit arrangements
- Practical arrangements (travel, confirming times, location etc.)

At court

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they have any risks or needs around the actual trial. This could include:

- Expectations, process and order
- Practical arrangements (where to go at court)
- ISVA Support at court
- The role of others (Witness Support, Ushers etc)

After the trial

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they have any risk or needs that relate to after the trial has taken place, such as:

- Jury's Decision
- Sentencing
- Bail conditions

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether there is an opportunity to submit a claim for compensation. There are strict requirements that must be in place for an application to be accepted, so the ISVA will need to discuss with the client:

- Whether CICA is an option (taking consideration of timeframes of abuse, same-roof rule, 2-year time limit etc.)
- Support to make the claim (on the clients behalf?)
- Application process (if a decision has been made)
- Any previous applications and the results

Rationale - Domain 9 relates to the client's employment and/or education and whether there are any risks and/or needs that relate to the client's employment and/or education.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs relating to employment and/or education the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Employment Status

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client their current employment status, whether the abusive experience(s) has had an impact on the client's ability to work. If so, what is the client's current status relating to work (e.g. off on sick leave, not attending, resigned, looking for alternative work) and is there anything that can be put in place to support the client to return to work/ability to stay in work.

Education Status

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they are currently in education. If so, is this school, sixth form, college, university or other.

The ISVA will want to identify whether the abusive experience(s) has had an impact on the client's ability to study. If so, what is the client's current status relating to study (e.g., not attending, attending but struggling etc) and is there anything that can be put in place to support the client's return to education/ability to stay in education.

Employers/ Education Provider's Awareness

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client, whether their employer or education provider (e.g., school, college, university) is aware of the abusive experience(s). If not, does the client want to make them aware and or require support in making employers/educators aware?

It might be useful for the ISVA to discuss with the client whether there is a point of contact at their work or their school, college or university who is aware of the abusive experience(s) and working with them to provide support (such as Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) within a university) or pastoral care /school nurse within a school.

Special or mitigating circumstances

The ISVA may need to discuss with the client whether there is any need to inform the employer or education provider to allow them to consider special or mitigating circumstances for time off for court, appointments, missed exams etc.

Rationale - Domain 10 relates to the client's risks and needs in relation to finances.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs relating to their finances the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Sources of Income

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client their income and whether there are any risks and/or needs in relation to this aspect of their life.

Welfare benefits

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client has access to welfare benefits or whether they should be in receipt of benefits.

The ISVA will also want to identify whether there are any risks to the client's benefits, perhaps due to changing circumstances.

Debts

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client has any concerns about debts, such as unmanageable loans etc.

Financial assistance

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client whether they require financial assistance. This might be due to changing circumstances such as a loss of a job or the need to move home incurring expenses.

No recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

The ISVA will need to identify whether the client has no recourse to public funds, this applies to migrants who are 'subject to immigration control' and as a result of this have no entitlement to certain welfare benefits, local authority housing and homelessness assistance. This will also apply in the Accommodation and Housing (11) and Immigration and Residence (12) domains.

Rationale - Domain 11 relates to the client's risks and needs in relation to accommodation and housing.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs relating to their accommodation and housing the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Adequate housing

The ISVA will need to identify with the client whether their current housing accommodation is appropriate. For example, does it meet the client and their families needs? If not, why not? What can be done about this?

Safe & secure housing

The ISVA will need to identify whether the client's housing is safe. For example, are they safe from violence and abuse? Are the client's children safe? Does the perpetrator know where they live?

If not, the ISVA will need to discuss with the client what measures can be put in place. For example, can the local authority assist, should they go to a refuge? Do they need additional security within the house such as an alarm and or panic buttons?

Homelessness

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. What are the circumstances? Can anything be done to change this situation?

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

The ISVA will need to identify whether the client has No recourse to public funds, which applies to migrants who are 'subject to immigration control' and as a result of this have no entitlement to certain welfare benefits, local authority housing and homelessness assistance

Rationale - Domain 12 relates to the client's risks and/or needs in relation to immigration and residence.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any risks and/or needs relating to immigration and residence the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Immigration status

The ISVA will want to discuss with the client their immigration status and whether there are any restrictions or implications of their immigration status.

Undocumented Migrant

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is an undocumented immigrant, which is somebody who may have been unsuccessful in an asylum application, have overstayed their visa or entered the UK irregularly.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

The ISVA will need to identify whether the client has No recourse to public funds , which applies to migrants who are 'subject to immigration control' and as a result of this have no entitlement to certain welfare benefits, local authority housing and homelessness assistance.

Trafficking

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client has been trafficked into the country and if so, are they at risk from traffickers or organized crime groups.

Detention or Deportation

The ISVA will want to identify whether the client is at risk of detention or deportation in relation to their being in the UK.

Rationale - Domain 13 relates to whether the client poses (or potentially poses) any risks to professionals or others.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client is a risk to others the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Physical safety of ISVA

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether the ISVA will remain physically safe while providing the support to the client. For example, the ISVA will want to discuss whether there are certain locations to meet that are not safe.

Lone Working Arrangements

The ISVA will need to discuss with the client the ISVA Services arrangements in relation to lone working, and whether this is appropriate for working with the client.

Other service providers

The ISVA should explore with the client whether there are any risks to other professionals or services to which the client may be referred or signposted to.

Refusal of service provision

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether they have ever been refused a service, or whether another professional has refused to work with them. If so, the ISVA should discuss the circumstances of this with the client.

Rationale – Domain 14 has been included to allow for an ISVA to record their professional judgment in relation to a client's risks or needs. There will be cases where the ISVA has concerns about the client even where the client is unable to disclose or refuses to provide information that would highlight their risks or needs more clearly.

Areas for consideration/Prompts – In order for the ISVA to identify whether the client has any other risks and/or needs that have not been identified in any of the other domains the following areas could be discussed with the client:

Any other information

The ISVA should discuss with the client whether there is any other information that has not been discussed previously, which would be useful for the ISVA to be aware of in relation to risks to the client and/or their needs.

Client's perception of risk

The ISVA's perception of risk and needs might differ from the perceptions of the client. For example, the client might not consider themselves to be in a dangerous situation, although the ISVA has significant concerns.

Non-verbal communication

The ISVA should consider whether there is anything about the client's body language that might indicate that there are risks and/or needs that have not been disclosed during the discussions about other domains. For example, where a client says that there is no risk and/or need, but their body language suggests otherwise.

'Gut instinct' or 'suspicion'

This relates to where the ISVAs discussions with the client do not identify any specific risks and/or needs, yet the ISVA has a 'gut instinct' or a 'suspicion' that all is not as it seems, or something is not right, or that the client is not aware of the risks they face

Domain 1 : Personal and Individual Requirements

Age Communication Gender Identity Sexuality Religious/Cultural Needs Physical disabilities Learning disability Involvement in Sex Work	Information Summary	Risks Identified	Actions
		Needs Identified	

[illegible]

Notes:

Copies of this toolkit and editable Support and Safety (SAS) Assessment and Planning Templates are available to download from
www.limeculture.co.uk

For more information please contact

Tel: 0203 633 0018

info@limeculture.co.uk



Learning • Innovation • Management • Excellence

SUPPORTING A PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE