



SQA Equality Mainstreaming Report 2013–15



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Foreword

I am pleased to present SQA's second Equality Mainstreaming Report covering the period since our first Equality Mainstreaming Report was published in April 2013. At that time we set out our commitment to meet and go beyond our statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Specific Duties).

We place equality at the heart of our work and are deeply aware of our responsibilities towards our staff, all our customers and, most importantly, individual learners. Education and training are at the core of Scotland's heritage and culture. They unlock potential, and bring benefits to all of us and to the communities we live in.

Our equalities work is driven not only by legislative requirements but also by recognition of the diverse needs of the communities across Scotland. We aim to ensure these needs are taken account of and reflected in all our activities.

This is what mainstreaming equality means in SQA – equality as part of our day-to-day decision making and applied to our daily practice. SQA's values – Progressive, Trusted and Enabling – govern how we operate; SQA's Corporate Plan 2015–18 commits us to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. Equality impact assessment of any business proposals sits alongside business and information risk assessments.

This report records our journey so far towards achieving our goal since our first Equality Mainstreaming Report.

Dr Janet Brown

Chief Executive

SQA's commitment to equality

SQA and its predecessor bodies share a long history of commitment to fairness for all, including learners, and of considering carefully how best to ensure that it is made a reality.

As both a regulator and awarding body, SQA is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. We believe that, as an employer and public body, we can play a leading part in the promotion of equality and diversity more widely. We recognise that equality of access to education is crucial in unlocking many significant opportunities in life, and we are acutely aware of our responsibility to uphold both fairness for learners and the credibility of Scotland's qualifications system.

SQA's commitment to fairness and equality is enshrined in its values which set out the way that SQA's staff members are expected to work together and with others. We call these values:

- ◆ Trusted
- ◆ Enabling
- ◆ Progressive

SQA has carried out a number of activities to promote awareness and to mainstream equality. These include:

- ◆ Steps to improve data collection, monitoring and reporting.
- ◆ Raising awareness of equality through our internal and external communications.
- ◆ Increasing dialogue with our staff and other groups in particular to monitor progress towards SQA's Equality Outcomes.
- ◆ Improving processes to mainstream equality in policy development and review as part of our equality impact assessment work.

Our commitment to fairness as demonstrated in our Equality Strategy, continues to guide our drive to make improvements, where needed, in the qualifications and services we offer. Our Equality Strategy has guided our efforts over the last two years to integrate equality further into our planning and decision-making.

This report sets out how far we have travelled on our journey to mainstream equality.

Equality in SQA

SQA is Scotland's national body for qualifications (other than degrees). Our main functions are set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996. We are a non-departmental public body, and are sponsored by the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate.

The core purpose of SQA is to set and maintain standards in education and training through the qualifications and assessment that are delivered in schools, in colleges, and in workplace learning. Our accreditation function sets and maintains standards for awarding bodies offering the accredited qualifications in Scotland, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

SQA is committed to integrating equality across all its functions. Its approach includes all of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. Our Equality Strategy 2013–17 explains our commitment and actions to meet, and go beyond, our statutory obligations.

Governance and responsibilities

As illustrated in appendix A, a structure is in place to support SQA in meeting its equality duties.

SQA's Board of Management exercises its duty to ensure compliance, and governs the implementation of the Equality Framework, Strategy and action plans. SQA's Audit Committee oversees the fulfilment of our equality duties on behalf of the Board. SQA's Chief Executive is accountable for the fulfilment of SQA's equality duties, and is supported in this by SQA's Equality Steering Group. Its key responsibilities include:

- ◆ Considering implications for SQA of relevant legislative developments.
- ◆ Approving ongoing development of SQA's Equality Framework and Strategy.
- ◆ Promoting and advocating increased organisational understanding of SQA's equality commitments.
- ◆ Ensuring consistency across the organisation in SQA's approach to delivering these commitments.

Our Equality Steering Group met four times over this reporting period.

There are Equality sub-groups covering each of SQA's Directorates, and these report to the Equality Steering Group. These sub-groups provide guidance and support for meeting the equality duties, as well as sharing good practice and solutions to common issues across business teams.

The sub-groups met six times over this reporting period. The main focus of their work during the period was reviewing evidence and monitoring progress to achieve the Equality Outcomes set out in SQA's Equality Strategy.

Equality and Inclusion Key Partners Group

SQA's Equality and Inclusion Key Partners' Group provides a strategic forum for stakeholders to provide advice to SQA on issues of access to SQA qualifications for learners from all equality groups. The Equality and Inclusion Key Partners Group continues to meet twice a year.

The annual Equalities Monitoring Report, which summarises the progress made on equality work undertaken by SQA in 2013–14, will be submitted to SQA's Qualifications Committee in November 2015. This report reflects the role of SQA's Equality and Inclusion Key Partners Group in monitoring this work.

SQA is also committed to advancing equality of opportunity between male and female learners. To this end, a wider research project to investigate the impact of different assessment approaches in new National Qualifications, including impact on male and female learners, has been undertaken.

SQA Advisory Council and Committees

SQA's Board is also assisted in its role by an Advisory Council, Qualifications Committee and Accreditation Committee. These bodies are established in statute to ensure that SQA is able to draw on a range of stakeholder views when making strategic decisions.

Monitoring legislation and good practice

We continue to monitor changes in legislation on equality, and good practice in other organisations, to ensure that our processes and policies keep pace with developments.

SQA is one of the leading members of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum. This is a Scotland-wide group which meets three times a year to discuss equality issues and to share experience and good practice.

SQA's Equality Outcomes 2013–17

SQA is committed to integrating equality across all its functions. Its approach includes all of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Our Equality Strategy 2013–17 explains our commitment and actions to meet, and go beyond, our statutory obligations and presents SQA's Equality Outcomes.

These Equality Outcomes are:

Equality Outcome 1

SQA understands and takes appropriate action to address any discrimination, potential to promote equality, or opportunity to foster good relations in its policies and practices for recruitment, development, promotion, dispute resolution and exit of its employees, in relation to the protected characteristics.

Equality Outcome 2

SQA understands and takes appropriate action to address any discrimination, potential to promote equality, or opportunity to foster good relations, in its policies and practices for appointment, training, and performance management of its appointees in relation to the protected characteristics.

Equality Outcome 3

SQA's strategic suppliers are inclusive and diverse organisations.

Equality Outcome 4

Eliminate unlawful treatment, and advance equality of opportunity for particular groups, by improving access to qualifications and attainment through reducing or removing barriers within qualifications and assessments in relation to the relevant protected characteristics. Foster good relations between candidates who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by ensuring that people represented in assessment materials reflect the full diversity of Scottish society.

Equality Outcome 5

Eliminate unlawful treatment and advance equality of opportunity for disabled candidates through promoting and implementing effective procedures and processes for the provision of reasonable adjustments in SQA assessments.

Equality Outcome 6

Advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between male and female learners, by encouraging non-traditional subject choices for SQA qualifications offered in schools, colleges and in vocational training. In the longer term, working with our partners, we aim to increase the representation of female and male learners in non-traditional courses.

Equality Outcome 7

Access to, and experience of, customer-facing activities and services will advance equality of opportunity.

Equality Outcome 8

Advance equality of opportunity for all candidates undertaking qualifications regulated by SQA Accreditation by working with the approved awarding bodies to ensure that the policies and practices of the approved awarding bodies give due regard to equality of opportunity in relation to the protected characteristics and, where appropriate, take appropriate regulatory action to address any discrimination.

Oversight and monitoring

SQA's Equality Steering Group met four times during the reporting period. Our Equality sub-groups met six times over the reporting period to monitor and record SQA's progress. The sub-groups for each of SQA's Directorates reported to the Equality Steering Group on all occasions. We continue to share good practice and solutions to common issues across business teams.

SQA has a framework in place to oversee compliance with its equality duties. We used the expertise available within this existing framework to build on the work from previous years. Our equality sub groups identified ambitious and meaningful actions and measures to help SQA to demonstrate that it is working towards compliance with the public sector equality duty. Our Equality Strategy details SQA's [Equality Outcomes for 2013–17](#) and is available on the SQA website.

Our Equality Outcomes are statements of the results we aim to achieve in mainstreaming equality.

The detail in the next section records our progress against achieving these outcomes.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a process to ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in decisions that are being made across the organisation. It is also important to ensuring that due regard is given to the need to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations — the general equality duty.

Following external training on equality impact assessments, to targeted staff in SQA, changes have been made to our equality impact assessment templates/practice to simplify the process. Guidance and support for staff is currently being reviewed as part of our general update of Equality Training.

SQA's Equality Impact Assessment timetables are reviewed as required and reported on as part of the Equality Action Plan updates. The full range of SQA frameworks, strategies, plans, procedures, processes and guidance, continues to be considered and timetabled for equality impact assessment. Finally, as part of SQA's business planning process equality impact assessment of any business proposals sits alongside business and information risk assessments.

Progress in Mainstreaming Equality in SQA 2013–14

SQA's Equality Strategy (2013–17) sets out the equality outcomes that would form the framework for business areas across SQA to work towards integrating equality thinking into their day to day decision making and applied to daily practice.

This section of the report details our progress to date.

Equality Outcome 1: SQA as an employer

Outcome 1 SQA understands and takes appropriate action to address any discrimination, potential to promote equality or opportunity to foster good relations in its policies and practices for recruitment, development, promotion, dispute resolution and exit of its employees, in relation to the protected characteristics.

Substantial progress has been made in this outcome and it continues to be reviewed through the sub-group meetings.

SQA expects all members of SQA staff to practice our core values and principles, to be treated fairly, and to treat others with respect and without bias.

SQA's staff opinion survey provides an opportunity for all members of staff to express their views on working for SQA. The survey invites staff to indicate their degree of agreement with statements about SQA's commitment to promoting equality and diversity.

The statements are:

- ◆ SQA demonstrates it is an equal opportunities employer
- ◆ SQA demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity in its work

The recent staff survey (September 2014) highlighted that 80% of staff agree SQA demonstrates it is an equal opportunities Employer, with 83% also agreeing that SQA demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity in its work.

Partnership Group and policy improvements

Our Head of Human Resources chairs the SQA Partnership Group. This brings together SQA management and trade union representatives from Unite and Unison on questions relating to staff matters, policies, and to consult on collective bargaining agreements.

SQA's Partnership Policy Working Group has recently reviewed a number of staff policies, taking into account feedback from interested parties. These include SQA's:

- ◆ Disciplinary Policy
- ◆ Grievance Guidelines

- ◆ Attendance Management Policy
- ◆ Flexitime Policy
- ◆ Flexible Working Policy
- ◆ Staff Leave Policy
- ◆ Performance Management Review Policy
- ◆ Pay Policy

Building staff awareness and understanding

SQA's Equality Awareness e-learning training was initially designed to raise awareness of equality in the workplace, the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, and the effect this legislation has on employees. We launched our equality and diversity training module to staff, board members and committee members in 2011 and we have continued to promote the completion of this training.

In December 2013, SQA received access to the content of online training developed in partnership between the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Improvement Service and Renfrewshire Council. The training programme 'Public Sector Equality Duty Training for Managers' covers in detail the requirements of the general and specific equality duties, and presents useful case studies to demonstrate good practice. SQA has piloted this training and after the evaluation decided to review and update their existing e-learning training to incorporate the specific duties. This e-learning training is in the process of being reworked to allow us to create a more interactive session for learners. It is hoped that increasing the interactivity in this training and changing the emphasis more towards how SQA is mainstreaming equality across the different business areas will help our staff continue to embed the equality and diversity information into their day to day thinking and work practices.

SQA's Equality Steering Group is considering the potential to organise regular events on a smaller scale in future.

Disability Two Ticks Scheme

The 'Two Ticks' Employment Scheme is a free accreditation scheme awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. The scheme is widely used by other public bodies, who demonstrate their commitment and approach to employing and retaining people with disabilities. In response to staff feedback following SQA's Equality and Diversity weeks, our HR team explored how SQA could work towards Two Ticks accreditation.

Working with colleagues from Jobcentre Plus, SQA received full accreditation to the 'Two Ticks' Disability Employment Scheme in August 2013. The scheme is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. These commitments are:

- 1 To interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.
- 2 To discuss with disabled employees, at any time but at least once a year, what both parties can do to make sure disabled employees can develop and use their abilities.
- 3 To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment.
- 4 To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work.
- 5 To review these commitments each year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees know about progress and future plans.

SQA was re-assessed in 2014, and we have secured our accreditation for another year.

Stonewall Scotland

In March 2012, SQA joined Stonewall Scotland's Diversity Champions programme. The programme promotes good practice for employers. It develops a good working environment for all existing and potential staff and helps ensure equal treatment for those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

SQA invited staff to complete Stonewall Scotland's staff survey to gather feedback and provide support to SQA's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff (LGBT) staff. There were 14 employees who responded. Staff members were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a number of statements.

The results of the survey were very positive. As an example, it highlighted that:

- ◆ 86% agree that SQA's workplace culture is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people
- ◆ 100% of respondents would feel confident reporting anti-gay bullying and
- ◆ 93% agreed with the statement 'I feel able to be myself in the workplace'

One member of staff has completed Stonewall's Authentic Role Model training and is keen to utilise these skills to build awareness and understanding of LBG issues and to foster good relations.

SQA made its first submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in September 2013. The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is an annual benchmarking exercise conducted by the lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights charity Stonewall to determine and showcase the UK's top employers for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual staff. The feedback on our results was welcomed as a guide to develop our equality and diversity commitments around sexual orientation.

Our second submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index was made in September 2014. The criteria were changed for this submission and we debated whether to continue with the submission. The focus of the questions moved from detailing the policies and procedures we had in place recognising the protected

characteristic of sexual orientation to evidencing how we have implemented these policies. SQA is committed to integrating equality across all its functions. Its approach includes all of the protected characteristics and this is reflected in our approach to mainstreaming equality. Therefore we found it difficult specifically to evidence actions relating to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation. Our aim in completing the Workplace Equality Index was to set the benchmark for future submissions and more specifically to apply the criteria to our equality work across all the protected characteristics.

Improving our diversity data

SQA recognises how important it is to understand the composition of its workforce, to take advantage of the benefits that a diverse workforce offers. We can only ensure our policies are applied fairly to all staff if we have the right information to help us check that this happens in practice. Effective monitoring is not only a legal requirement for SQA, to ensure a truly inclusive workplace, but it is also an important foundation for achieving our Equality Outcomes.

SQA recognised the need to develop ways to encourage current employees to provide their equality and diversity data, to improve analysis and reporting. SQA's self-service HR system was launched to all staff in January 2011. The service allows staff to manage and update their personal information to support monitoring, statutory reporting and policy improvement in SQA.

As at the end January 2015, 70.37% of staff had volunteered their personal data in relation to gender, disability, ethnicity, religious/philosophical belief, sexual orientation and marital status. This is a substantial increase from 51% in December 2013. A further 12.25% of staff have indicated that they decline to disclose their personal data. This information is stored confidentially and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

SQA produces an annual breakdown of employment monitoring information gathered on the recruitment, development and retention of employees. This data can be used to understand the impact of our employment policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics and to prioritise our activities. In addition we are working towards analysis of pay information in relation to the protected characteristics of disability and race as well as gender required by the specific duties for 2017.

Equality Outcome 2: Appointee training

Outcome 2 *SQA understands and takes appropriate action to address any discrimination, potential to promote equality, or opportunity to foster good relations in its policies and practices for appointment, training, and performance management of its appointees in relation to the protected characteristics.*

We reviewed our training for appointees and revised SQA's e-learning training module to meet the needs of our appointees. The aim of the module was to raise awareness of the Equality Act 2010, SQA's responsibilities as an organisation

and how this impacts on appointees. Appointees were encouraged to complete the training programme.

Equality presentations were delivered as part of our Induction Programme to all new senior appointees who were appointed to assist us with the development and delivery of the new National Qualifications.

Equality Outcome 3: Procurement

Outcome 3 *SQA's strategic suppliers are inclusive and diverse organisations.*

Procurement continues to require suppliers to complete probity statements and include equality policies or statements when submitting tenders.

In 2014 SQA awarded a contract to the Edinburgh Braille School, a supported business.

Having awarded their first contract to a supported business, Procurement are now following up internally with Business Systems regarding the possibility of contracting a supported business for IT refurbishment.

Equality Outcomes 4–6: Qualifications

Outcome 4 *Eliminate unlawful treatment and advance equality of opportunity for particular groups by improving access to qualifications and attainment through reducing or removing barriers within qualifications and assessments in relation to the relevant protected characteristics. Foster good relations between candidates who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by ensuring that people represented in assessment materials reflect the full diversity of Scottish society.*

Outcome 5 *Eliminate unlawful treatment and advance equality of opportunity for disabled candidates through promoting and implementing effective procedures and processes for the provision of reasonable adjustments in SQA assessments.*

Outcome 6 *Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between male and female learners through encouraging non-traditional subject choices for SQA qualifications offered in schools, colleges and in vocational training. In the longer term, working with our partners, we aim to increase the representation of female and male learners in non-traditional courses.*

Substantial progress has been made in these outcomes and they continue to be reviewed through the sub-group meetings.

SQA Equality Review of Qualifications

SQA's Equality Review of Qualifications process provides the mechanism to ensure that SQA fully considers any equality issues identified in its qualifications for learners on grounds of any of the protected characteristics. All consideration

given to the issues identified, the conclusions reached, and the reasons for those conclusions, are recorded on the Equality Review Form (ERF).

The equality review process for the new National Qualifications, developed under Curriculum for Excellence, is complete and equality review is now an integral part of the qualifications design process.

SQA's Equality and Inclusion training for staff and appointees

Ongoing equality and inclusion training, including training on the Equality Review of Qualifications process, for Qualification Directorate staff is being delivered through the Qualifications Directorate Integrated Staff Development Programme.

SQA is also committed to ensuring that all staff and appointees (Principal Assessors, Principal Verifiers, Item Writers and Item Checkers) involved in the design of SQA assessments are trained in developing assessment materials that are as accessible as possible to all learners. To this end, training has been delivered and detailed guidance has been developed which exemplifies best practice in the design of inclusive assessments.

Monitoring impact of specifications published under s96 (7) of Equality Act 2010

Section 96 (7) of the Equality Act 2010 contains provisions that allow SQA (and the regulators in England and Wales) to put limits on assessment arrangements that might otherwise be considered reasonable adjustments to assessments in certain National Qualifications.

SQA published its specifications under Section 96 (7) of the Act in January 2013 and they can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64698.html>.

In making the specifications, SQA took account of:

- ◆ the need to minimise the extent to which disabled candidates are disadvantaged in attaining the qualification because of their disabilities
- ◆ the need to ensure that the qualification gives a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of a person upon whom it is conferred
- ◆ the need to maintain public confidence in the qualification

SQA is committed to monitoring the implementation of the specifications and the actual impact of the specifications on individual learners. To this end, SQA continues to undertake a planned programme of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

SQA continues to promote and provide the appropriate use of assessment arrangements for disabled candidates to increase access to SQA qualifications. We work in partnership with centres to identify and deliver assessment

arrangements for candidates who need them. We carry out a review of Assessment Arrangement provision each year to identify lessons learned and any recommendations for improvement

2014 was the first year of certification of the new National Qualifications. This has resulted in changing entry behaviour in schools — for example, schools entering learners for new National Qualifications instead of Standard Grade and Intermediate courses in the previous years. This change in entries across National Qualifications is an important backdrop when considering Assessment Arrangement figures this year.

The total number of Assessment Arrangement (AA) requests for diet 2014 was 43,344, submitted on behalf of 14,214 candidates. This represents a decrease of 18,336 in the total number of requests (down 29.7%) and 3,049 candidates (down 17.7%) on the previous year.

Number of candidates and requests for AA, 2013–14

Year	Candidates requesting AA	Number of AA requests
2013	17,263	61,680
2014	14,214	43,344

The main reason for the overall decrease in AA requests is likely to be due to the removal of Standard Grade. Learners who in the past would have taken Standard Grade Foundation/General Level assessments, would now most likely take the new National 3 or National 4 courses. There is no external examination for these courses, and the inherent flexibility of these new courses mean that many candidates do not require assessment arrangements.

Analysis by primary difficulty

Difficulty	2013		2014	
	Requests	% of total AAs	Requests	% of total AAs
Dyslexia	24,598	39.9%	17,490	40.4%
Other Specific Learning Difficulty	8,902	14.4%	5,751	13.3%
Physical Health Problems	4,454	7.2%	3,944	9.1%
Autistic Spectrum Condition	5,018	8.1%	3,563	8.2%
Physical or Motor Impairment	3,856	6.3%	2,715	6.3%

Other Moderate Learning Difficulty	3,966	6.4%	2,478	5.7%
Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulty	4,048	6.6%	2,135	4.9%
Mental Health Problems	1,387	2.3%	1,739	4.0%
Visual Impairment	2,127	3.5%	1,658	3.8%
Learning Disability	1,723	2.8%	830	1.9%
Language or Speech Disorder	767	1.2%	493	1.1%
Hearing Impairment	687	1.1%	458	1.1%
Deaf	70	0.1%	53	0.1%
Blind	48	0.1%	26	0.1%
Deaf & Blind	29	0.1%	11	0.0%

As in 2013, the primary difficulty stated in most AA requests was Dyslexia; 40.4% of requests cited this as the primary difficulty of the learner in 2014. In most cases, the actual number of requests per difficulty dropped, as would be expected. However the number of requests which stated Mental Health Problems as the primary difficulty increased from 1,387 in 2013 to 1,739 in 2014.

This and other evidence indicates that some learners experiencing mental health issues face barriers in assessments. To investigate this issue more thoroughly, and to develop further guidance on acceptable supportive assessment practices, SQA is working with Equality Challenge Unit to:

- ◆ gather evidence of the barriers learners experiencing a range of mental health difficulties may face in relation to assessment arrangements
- ◆ gather evidence of what effective solutions/alternative assessment methods are currently used by centres to overcome these barriers

Assistive technologies

The number of requests for SQA external examination Question Papers to be provided in digital format continues to increase reflecting the increase in the use of assistive technologies. We received 3,540 requests for their use in the 2014 diet.

SQA continues to work collaboratively with CALL (Communication, Access, Literacy and Learning) Scotland to promote the use of communicative and assistive technologies to enable disabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills more independently in assessments.

This has included working with CALL to:

- ◆ ensure that SQA's adapted Digital Question Papers continue to meet learners' needs
- ◆ develop guidance and training for practitioners on the use of ICT to support learners with reading and writing in the new National Literacy Units
- ◆ undertake research into the use of particular types of assistive technologies in SQA assessments, for example the emerging use of speech recognition software for a range of disabled learners who have difficulty with writing

Equality Outcome 7: Customer Relations

Outcome 7 *Access to, and experience of, customer-facing activities and services will advance equality of opportunity.*

Substantial progress has been made in this outcome in terms of data gathered through our customer feedback processes. Please see the example given below of our response to an identified need.

SignVideo Service



Users of British Sign Language (BSL) who wish to communicate directly with someone at SQA using sign language can now do so by using the SignVideo service. Run initially as a pilot between March and June 2014, this service has been extended for a further year when a full evaluation will be carried out.

The SignVideo Service offers a simple, fast and secure connection to an online interpreter who will then interpret between the user and an SQA advisor.

The service is available from 8.30 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and is free. Users need three basic requirements:

- ◆ PC or Mac with a webcam
- ◆ Microsoft Internet Explorer, Chrome (PC only) or Safari
- ◆ Bandwidth of at least 256 kbp/s upload and download (384kbp/s recommended).

Using a simple link, users connect to a SignVideo interpreter. The user informs the interpreter that they are calling SQA's Customer Contact Centre. The interpreter will discuss any preparation needed before the live call with SQA. The

user will then be connected to an SQA advisor and can direct queries to the advisor using BSL.

The SignVideo service is accessed through the 'Contact Us' page on www.sqa.org.uk, which also has instructions for use and where to get support and technical guidance.

The service has been promoted widely to the deaf community and also through SQA's website, social media and e-bulletins. Response has been good and, at the time of this report, 15 people have used this service.

Equality Outcome 8: Accreditation

Outcome 8 *Advance equality of opportunity for all candidates undertaking qualifications regulated by SQA Accreditation by working with the approved awarding bodies to ensure that the policies and practices of the approved awarding bodies give due regard to equality of opportunity in relation to the protected characteristics and, where appropriate take appropriate regulatory action to address any discrimination.*

Substantial progress has been made in this outcome, with several actions now successfully completed.

All awarding bodies' policies have been reviewed, and a small number were found to be non-compliant. This was fed back to the relevant awarding body and they were advised that we would monitor progress at the next scheduled audit. Those awarding bodies affected have now reviewed and amended their policies and resubmitted. All are now compliant.

Workforce equality monitoring

As of January 2015, SQA had 881 employees, which equates to 816.39 full time equivalent (FTE) posts.

Gender

We recorded in January 2015, 556 (63.11%) female staff and 325 (36.89%) male staff.

Recruitment

11,352 individuals applied for vacancies with the organisation between January 2014 and January 2015. Of this total, 6,890 (60.69%) were from females, 4,462 (39.31%) were from males. Of these applicants, SQA appointed 182 (60.26%) female and 120 (39.74%) male applicants during the period.

Development

Training: Approved training applications

Gender	Number of staff
Female	693
Male	356

Training: staff who attended training courses

Gender	Number of staff
Female	336
Male	188

Training requests are approved by SQA's Organisational Development department where it is clear that the request is in line with the individual's job role, PMR objectives or expressed aspirations which have been agreed by the line manager.

These approved requests may not convert into actual activity for a number of reasons. These include:

- ◆ availability of external training
- ◆ suitability of dates or location for the candidate

- ◆ number of candidates requesting internal training and the viability of running such a course
- ◆ change in circumstances since the request was made
- ◆ performance issues which supersede the training need
- ◆ employee long term absence

Retention

For the rolling 12 months (January 2014 to January 2015) staff turnover (excluding fixed term contracts) average is 10.98%.

Within this figure the gender split for retention is:

Male Leavers = 11.69% of Male staff as at 31 January 2015,

Male Retention = 88.31%

Female leavers = 9.89% of Female staff as at 31 January 2015

Female Retention = 90.11%.

SQA Equal Pay Statement

In line with SQA's commitment to achieve equal opportunities for all staff, the organisation supports the principles that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or like work or work rated as equivalent or of equal value.

We aim to eliminate any sex bias in our pay system. We understand that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under both domestic and European law.

Summary of SQA's Equal Pay Audit as at 31 January 2015

Each year, SQA is required to carry out an equal pay audit in order to identify any pay gaps which may exist between male and female employees. The Equal Opportunities Commission recommends that further investigation be carried out on any pay gaps that are + or - 5%. The current percentage ratio of males to females across SQA is 37:63. Below is a summary of the equal pay audit as at January 2015.

The average female salary (including Chief Executive) is 93.1% of the average male salary. The pay gap has closed slightly (2.3%) since the last equal pay audit carried out in January 2014. The average female salary is £28,203 and the average male salary is £30,297.

The average female salary (excluding Chief Executive) is 92.5% of the average male salary. Again, the pay gap has closed slightly (2.4%) since the last equal pay audit. The average female salary is £28,025 (the average male salary is unchanged).

The pay gap between male and female salaries can be explained by the fact that there are proportionately more female staff at the lower grades within SQA.

To identify any pay gaps of + or -5% between staff performing work of equal value, a breakdown of grades has been analysed across the organisation. This has been split into full-time staff and part-time staff by grade.

There are currently no equal pay issues amongst full-time staff by grade or part-time staff by grade. The number of staff working part-time has increased since January 2014, although the number of part-time males has reduced. The highest number of part-time staff are in grade 8, followed by grade 4.96% of part-time staff are female.

There are no part-time Heads of Service.

Occupational segregation

For the purposes of this report, occupational segregation is the distribution of people based on gender in different types of jobs and grades across the organisation.

Horizontal segregation refers to the numbers of men and women in different types of jobs across the same grade, eg in a public authority this might mean that there are more women working as cleaners and more men working as maintenance workers. Vertical segregation refers to the clustering of men and women in different grades, eg where more men than women may be working as senior managers and more women than men may be working in administrative grades.

There are many different factors that underlie occupational segregation, including stereotyping about men and women's capabilities and skills, the culture associated with different types of work, and access to training and development opportunities.

As can be seen from SQA's equal pay audit:

- ◆ 71% of SQA's grade 1 staff are female (grade 1 includes modern apprentices)
- ◆ 66% of administration staff (grades 3 & 4) are women.

In addition:

- ◆ 67% of staff in grades 5 & 6 and 58% of staff in grades 7 & 8 are women.
- ◆ This trend reverses when we look at Heads of Service — 38% of staff at this level are women and 62% are men.
- ◆ At Executive Team level, however, 66.67% are women and 33.33% are men.

On examining the gender split by business area:

- ◆ There are more females than males in nearly all business areas, with the exception of IT Operations, IT Software Development and Operations – Business Change.
- ◆ In the largest of these, IT Operations, 73% of staff are male.
- ◆ The highest percentage of females can be found in Procurement (100%), Quality Systems & Planning (100%), People & Services (81.5%), Specialist Awards & Services (75.5%), Humanities, Arts & Business (74.3%), HN & VQ (73.6%), Operations – Logistics & Customer Engagement (72.7%) and HR (72.2%).

The grade split by gender and business area shows:

- ◆ There are more female than male administration staff (grades 3 and 4) in all business areas, with the exception of IT Operations where the split is 60% male, 40% female.
- ◆ There are also more grade 5 and 6 females in the majority of business areas, with the most notable exceptions being: IT Operations where 76% are male and 24% female; and IT – Software Development where 87.5% are males and 12.5% are female.
- ◆ At grades 7 and 8, there are more females than males in the majority of business areas, although some of those with higher numbers of males at grades 7 and 8 include IT Operations (78.6% male), IT – Software Development (80% male) and Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (66.67% male).
- ◆ There are more male Heads of Service than females. The split is equal in the Qualifications Directorate, 100% are female in Corporate Services, 80% are male in Business Development, 75% are male in Operations and 66.67% are male in Business Systems.

This data will enable the organisation to look in more detail at whether there are any underlying issues with SQA policies which may be having an impact on the gender breakdown across SQA.

The next equal pay audit is due in January 2016.

Equal Pay: Breakdown of Average Salaries as at 31 January 2015

All staff (FTE)

Body	Date	Total Staff (FTE)	No. Female (FTE)	No. Male (FTE)	%age Female	%age Male	Average Salary (£)	Average Salary Female (£)	Average Salary Male (£)	Female Salary as a %age of Male Salary
All staff incl CE	01-Jan-15	816.39	513.99	302.40	63.0%	37.0%	28,953	28,203	30,297	93.1%
All staff excl CE	01-Jan-15	815.39	512.99	302.40	62.9%	37.1%	28,841	28,025	30,297	92.5%

All staff by Grade (FTE) up to Head of Service

Grade	Date	Total Staff (FTE)	No. Female (FTE)	No. Male (FTE)	%age Female	%age Male	Average Salary (£)	Average Salary Female (£)	Average Salary Male (£)	Female Salary as a %age of Male Salary	Range Minimum	Effective Maximum
1	01-Jan-15	*	*	*	71.3%	28.7%	13,977	13,977	13,977	100.0%	13,977	13,977
2	01-Jan-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14,435	14,992
3	01-Jan-15	106.40	69.40	37.00	65.2%	34.8%	16,580	16,634	16,472	101.0%	15,912	17,597
4	01-Jan-15	127.33	85.33	42.00	67.0%	33.0%	19,033	19,115	18,854	101.4%	18,174	20,128
5	01-Jan-15	78.84	48.84	30.00	61.9%	38.1%	22,618	22,450	22,908	98.0%	21,610	23,742
6	01-Jan-15	169.83	117.83	52.00	69.4%	30.6%	27,706	27,765	27,565	100.7%	26,214	30,063
7	01-Jan-15	121.90	74.90	47.00	61.4%	38.6%	34,173	33,977	34,494	98.5%	31,998	36,600
8	01-Jan-15	170.36	94.96	75.40	55.7%	44.3%	40,804	40,679	40,968	99.3%	38,236	42,715
HoS	01-Jan-15	21.00	8.00	13.00	38.1%	61.9%	53,958	54,318	53,737	101.1%	47,960	55,227

Full-time staff by Grade (FTE) up to Head of Service

Grade	Date	Total Staff (FTE)	No. Female (FTE)	No. Male (FTE)	%age Female	%age Male	Average Salary (£)	Average Salary Female (£)	Average Salary Male (£)	Female Salary as a %age of Male Salary
1	01-Jan-15	*	*	*	60.00%	40.00%	£13,977	£13,977	£13,977	100.0%
2	01-Jan-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	01-Jan-15	101.00	64.00	37.00	63.4%	36.6%	16,534	16,569	16,472	100.6%
4	01-Jan-15	118.00	76.00	42.00	64.4%	35.6%	18,964	19,025	18,854	100.9%
5	01-Jan-15	75.00	45.00	30.00	60.0%	40.0%	22,629	22,443	22,908	98.0%
6	01-Jan-15	162.00	110.00	52.00	67.9%	32.1%	27,602	27,620	27,565	100.2%
7	01-Jan-15	117.00	70.00	47.00	59.8%	40.2%	34,159	33,934	34,494	98.4%
8	01-Jan-15	161.00	87.00	74.00	54.0%	46.0%	40,819	40,682	40,980	99.3%
HoS	01-Jan-15	21.00	8.00	13.00	38.1%	61.9%	53,958	54,318	53,737	101.1%

Part-time staff by Grade (FTE) up to Head of Service

Grade	Date	Total Staff (FTE)	No. Female (FTE)	No. Male (FTE)	%age Female	%age Male	Average Salary (£)	Average Salary Female (£)	Average Salary Male (£)	Female Salary as a %age of Male Salary
1	01-Jan-15	*	*	*	100.0%	0.0%	13,977	13,977	0	N/A
2	01-Jan-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	01-Jan-15	5.40	5.40	0.00	100.0%	0.0%	17,100	17,100	N/A	N/A
4	01-Jan-15	9.33	9.33	0.00	100.0%	0.0%	19,542	19,542	N/A	N/A
5	01-Jan-15	*	*	0.00	100.0%	N/A	22,499	22,499	N/A	N/A
6	01-Jan-15	7.83	7.83	0.00	100.0%	0.0%	28,991	28,991	N/A	N/A
7	01-Jan-15	*	*	0.00	100.0%	N/A	34,404	34,404	N/A	N/A
8	01-Jan-15	9.36	7.96	*	85.0%	15.0%	40,640	40,657	40,532	100.3%
HoS	01-Jan-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*In line with its data protection obligations, to protect individuals' personal information we have replaced the information relating to groups below 5 with an asterisk.

Disability

13 staff have declared themselves as having a disability in our HR system.

29 individuals who applied for vacancies between January 2013 and January 2014 declared their disability.

Based on this data, the pay gap between staff who identify as disabled and non-disabled is +1.89%.

Age

The age profile of SQA staff is:

Age	Number of staff
Under 20	15
21-30	109
31-40	224
41-50	237
51-60	243
61-65	48
Over 65	5

Next steps for equality in SQA

- [SQA Equality Strategy 2013–17](#)

Substantial progress has been made across the eight Equality Outcomes set out in 2013. Now is the time to review them — some are already complete; others require updating; and new areas are emerging as equality is further mainstreamed within SQA. Two key areas that are emerging are:

- ◆ accessibility to our web resources
- ◆ working with our centres to ensure wider accessibility to SQA Qualifications

Appendix A: Governance and responsibilities for equality

