

## SQA EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please read the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance on assessing impact.](#)

### 1. Name of policy/procedure/proposal/project/decision\*

\*Referred to as 'policy' hereafter.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>POLICY NAME</b>                | Dignity at Work                          |
| <b>COMPLETED BY</b>               | Equality Impact Assessment Working Group |
| <b>HEAD OF SERVICE</b>            | Head of Human Resources                  |
| <b>DATE</b>                       | 10 August 2021                           |
| <b>NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE</b> | TBC in line with policy schedule         |

### 2. What is main purpose of the policy?

To outline the responsibilities of managers and staff in the achievement of environmental initiatives and targets.

This policy describes our commitment to providing a working environment free from bullying and harassment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and everyone takes responsibility for their actions.

SQA's Dignity at Work policy aims to ensure managers and employees understand:

- ◆ acceptable behaviour, and fair and inclusive treatment
- ◆ how to recognise inappropriate behaviour and take appropriate action to address it
- ◆ informal and formal procedures to address bullying or harassment in the workplace
- ◆ roles and responsibilities (to prevent and address complaints)
- ◆ consequences relating to a breach of SQA's Dignity at Work policy
- ◆ the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and SQA's responsibilities as an employer to eliminate discrimination, victimisation, and harassment, promote and advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between different groups of employees

The policy also covers bullying or harassment by third parties or bullying or harassment by social networking (for example cyber bullying). And forms part of a suite of policies including SQA's Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunities, Disciplinary, Grievance, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Probation and Fair Work Framework.

### 3. What information, and evidence, is being used to evaluate the impact of this policy on people who share protected characteristics?

In order to evaluate the impact of this policy on employees who share protected characteristics, and in addition to members from Human Resources and Equality & Diversity, we have included representatives from our two recognised unions, Unite and Unison, who can feedback on behalf of their representatives' and members' experiences.

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

We have also included representatives from SQA's employee networks – ACE (Appreciate Culture & Ethnicity), Disability, Rainbow, Women's, who are able to provide valuable feedback from a significant part of the organisation.

SQA's revised draft Dignity at Work policy has been developed in consultation with Brodies and best practice benchmarking from other organisations. Consideration has also been given to good practice guidance from ACAS.

## PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

SQA is required to have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This section provides the opportunity to capture how the policy will contribute towards the three aims of the general equality duty, and to consider if there is anything more we need to do to meet our responsibilities.

**4. How might this policy impact on people who share protected characteristics? Please consider positive or negative impacts. (At the beginning of the process, you may want to record perceived impact — ongoing monitoring of the policy will allow you to measure the actual impact of the policy). Please copy this symbol into the applicable boxes: ✓**

| Protected Characteristic   | Neutral impact | Positive impact | Negative impact | Please provide more information  |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Age                        | ✓              |                 |                 | Research undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions’ (DWP) found that younger employees under the age of 25 were at least twice as likely as all other age groups to have experienced age prejudice. |
| Disability                 |                | ✓               |                 | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.   |
| Marriage/civil partnership | ✓              |                 |                 | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.  |
| Race                       | ✓              |                 |                 | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.  |
| Religion/belief/non-belief | ✓              |                 |                 | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.<br><br>We must be mindful of religious commitments and festivals when planning meetings. |
| Sexual orientation         | ✓              |                 |                 | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.   |

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
|  |   |  |  | Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.   |
| Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender) | ✓ |  |  | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.<br><br>We must be mindful to use the correct pronouns.  |
| Pregnancy/maternity                                    | ✓ |  |  | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.<br><br>Ensure that those employees on maternity know that they can raise concerns under this policy while on maternity. |
| Sex  | ✓ |  |  | Advocates a zero-tolerance policy across all groups.<br><br>Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.   |
| Care experience (where relevant)                       | ✓ |  |  | Reasonable adjustments can be made through the process.   |

**5. What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?**

Take steps to ensure managers are aware of the policy and their responsibilities (consider separate guidance or training for managers?) As part of this guidance or training – explore how we can take steps to proactively promote equality and foster good relations (better meet our responsibilities under the general equality duty in relation to the protected characteristics including care experience). Consider adding in a bullet point in managers responsibilities regarding reasonable adjustments.

This should also consider their responsibilities regarding reasonable adjustments, interpretation, and application of the policy. Consider a compulsory eLearning module on the SQA Academy.

SQA to consider how we educate staff in general on protected characteristics and the potential bullying/harassment concerns we may come across.

SQA must be mindful that people with protected characteristics are more likely to be bullied/harassed and this may impact on their physical and/or mental wellbeing.

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

As with other policies, a separate reasonable adjustments doc would be useful to assist line managers and staff going through the process (different formats, different text sizes, accompaniment, extra time for digesting, different settings, etc)

Thought could be given to where staff could be bullied due to the reasonable adjustments, they have in place for them being seen as favourable (flexible working, kit, etc).

**6. If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact despite the mitigatory arrangements identified in Step 5, are you satisfied that this is objectively justified, ie a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim? Please provide explanatory details.**

N/A

**7. Could this policy be revised or changed to better meet the general equality duty?**

As outlined above – SQA has a duty to ensure that all staff work in a safe environment, and that they are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

The policy aims to have a positive impact on each equality groups however the examples only relate to disability. It would be helpful to have varying examples which cover other protected characteristics.

SQA is committed to taking pro-active steps to ensure bullying and harassment is taken seriously and that incidents are dealt with fairly and consistently.

SQA doesn't capture monitoring information relating to care background. Ensure we consider ways to raise awareness of the impact of care experience in the workplace.

The external evidence gathered provides information on equality groups that potentially experience, or are exposed to higher levels of, bullying and harassment. SQA has a responsibility to take this into consideration as internal data and evidence sources are considered in more detail.

Consider using 'consent' instead of unwelcome or unwanted.

Policy section 4 – Support – perhaps we could add in Mental Health First Aiders.

Policy section 5.3.1 – 'Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic' – only seven of the nine protected characteristics have been listed.

Procedure section 2.4 – Possible Outcomes – more clarification on what support is available which would not result in victimisation.

**8. Has there been consultation/is consultation planned with people who will be affected by this policy/procedure/project/decision? Please detail below how this has affected your decision making.**

Consultation with union representatives, employee networks and members of SQA Equality & Diversity team has been completed which represents a significant part of the workforce within SQA.

**9. How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?**

The policy owner will be responsible for reviewing and monitoring this policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is fit for purpose and in line with relevant legislation.

## ACTION PLAN

| Action:   | Owners:                                    |
|---|--|
| Consider further analysis of SQA’s employment monitoring data for example data on grievances disaggregated by protected characteristics.  | Policy Review Group                        |
| Take steps to ensure managers are aware of the policy and their responsibilities (consider separate guidance or training for managers?) As part of this guidance or training – explore how we can take steps to proactively promote equality and foster good relations (better meet our responsibilities under the general equality duty in relation to the protected characteristics including care experience). | Policy Review Group/Human Resources        |
| Take appropriate measures to ensure every employee is aware of the options available, and that processes and procedures for dealing with cases of bullying or harassment are clear and consistent.  | Human Resources/Organisational Development |
| Explore steps required to build a workplace culture of effective management and response to bullying or harassment complaints.  | Human Resources                            |
| Review considerations outlined in Section 8 of this assessment.   | Policy Review Group                        |

Signed: Julia Welsh and Zoey Marshall (EIA Working Group Leads)

Date: 10 August 2021