

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.

POLICY NAME	Grievance
COMPLETED BY	Equality Impact Assessment Working Group
HEAD OF SERVICE	Head of Human Resources
DATE	29 June 2021
NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	TBC in line with policy schedule

2. What is main purpose of the policy?

The purpose of this policy is to address occasions where an employee has concerns about their work, working conditions or their relationships with colleagues, and this policy aims to support them in seeking a resolution to their concerns fairly and without unreasonable delay. This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with the Grievance Procedure document and sets out the process we will follow. This policy (and accompanying procedure) complies with the ACAS Code of Practice and meets all current, relevant legislation.

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. 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. Once available, we will also review and consider any data trends relating to grievances which include protected characteristics.

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	✓			No concerns.
Disability		✓		Reasonable adjustments positive, eg being accompanied at meetings. Mental health impact of both informal and formal meetings and proceedings.
Marriage/civil partnership	✓			No concerns.
Race	✓			No concerns.
Religion/belief/non-belief	✓			When scheduling meetings, SQA should be mindful of religious commitments, for example. Support for employees to chat through policy if English is not their first language. They may also require support to present their case at a grievance hearing, for example.
Sexual orientation	✓			Reasonable adjustments positive.
Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender)	✓			No concerns.
Pregnancy/maternity	✓			When scheduling meetings, SQA should be mindful of other medical commitments and pregnancy-related health conditions, if applicable. Give option of face-to-face meetings.
Sex	✓			Depending on the circumstances, may be more comfortable with an investigating manager of a particular gender.

Care experience (where relevant)	✓			Reasonable adjustments positive.
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5. What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?

Once live, consider making the investigating manager training mandatory and ensure Organisational Development include reference to this in their line manager courses.

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?

Consider text or wording in the reasonable adjustments section around line managers/investigating managers would consider a reasonable adjustment and how it will be non-judgemental. Also, an example of what these reasonable adjustments could be for a variety of protected characteristics, a non-exhaustive list.

Throughout the policy there is a lot of reference to employee disability. We suggest including more inclusive language which takes into consideration all nine protected characteristics and perhaps include examples relating to other protected characteristics that are not disability related. (for example, policy 5.2, procedure 1.1 & 2.3)

Consideration given to 3 working days' notice of meetings and whether someone may need more time to prepare for a formal meeting. It may be that the person a grievance has been raised against had no idea that the grievance was lodged therefore may need time to prepare for an investigation meeting.

Policy section 5.2 states 'learning disability' consideration to be given to not be so specific.

Procedure 1.1 states 'recognised disability', consider removing the word recognised or perhaps replace with 'physical and/or mental disability'.

Procedure 2.1 Additional Information – refers to medical report in paragraph two then refers to Occupational Health in paragraph three which reads as two different things. An employee may be concerned that we will seek two different reports.

A more general point across the policy is around having the same time period. For example, employees will be given 5 working days' notice of a formal meeting and appeals should always be lodged within 10 working days. This could be applied to all policies under review.

Accessibility considerations could include reference to documentation being released to employees in larger font size or braille, for example.

Equalities Policy to be added to Associated Policies (Policy Section 6).

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

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:
When available, monitor grievance data in relation to protected characteristics.	HR Shared Service/HR Analytics & Systems
Ensure all investigating and hearing managers have the appropriate training and support throughout all grievance proceedings.	Human Resources
Consider wording amendments and additions in section 6 of this assessment.	Policy Review Group
Accessibility considerations.	Policy Review Group
Equalities Policy to be added to Associated Policies (Policy Section 6).	Policy Review Group
Consider bringing all meeting notification and appeal timescales in line with other policies.	Policy Review Group

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

Date: 29 June 2021