

# Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

## Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. Due to the importance of embedding equality in SQA through our actions the Action Plan will be the focus and record of ongoing actions.

<b>Agreed Schedule Review Date</b>	30 April 2024	<b>Additional Schedule Review Date</b>	
------------------------------------	---------------	--	--

Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

<b>Required Actions</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment &amp; Review</b>
Actions taken to <b>monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups</b> (evidence and consultation).			<b>[ONGOING RECORD]</b>
Add to introductory communications a request for information from centre contacts on any potential barriers to participating in QA or QV activities and log these and required adjustments put in place as a result to monitor impact.	Senior Operations Managers	30 June 2023 and ongoing	
Add question on any impact of QA and QV activities on equality groups to the online feedback form on QA activities and monitor responses.	Senior Operations Manager	30 June 2023 and ongoing monitoring	
Add EQIA to SEV update and Operational Update to raise awareness and highlight importance on any barriers to appointees and collate any feedback.	Senior Operations Manager	August 23	

<b>Identified Actions</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment &amp; Review</b>
Verifiers to ensure that if they are interviewing younger candidates they are in groups or accompanied by an adult and that they use age-appropriate language and explain clearly anything that the young people may not understand.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010  Foster good relations	Senior Operations Manager	Ongoing	
Add to initial notification emails questions about any barriers which centre staff and candidates might have in engaging with the process and required adjustments and implement these adjustments where possible in virtual or physical visits.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	30 June 2023 and ongoing	
Continue to use the option of virtual approval and verification events where this would be more appropriate to meet the needs of centre staff, candidates or our appointees with disabilities.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	30 June 2023 and ongoing	

Continue to ensure that the selection of candidate sample for QV activity is in line with the Risk model and any unlawful discrimination or bias is prevented.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	30 June 2023 and ongoing	
Review our guidance documents and revise formatting where required to ensure that they meet all accessibility standards.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	Ongoing	Guidance documentation due for review by August 2023.
Ensure that all our guidance documentation and other information on the website is written in Plain English and as clearly as possible.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	Ongoing	
Ensure that our qualification approval and verification reports are written in Plain English and as clearly as possible. Training is currently available for all appointees.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager Lead/Depute Lead and Senior Verifiers		

Training for appointees on avoiding bias and stereotyping at SEV update, Operational Update and EV Induction and introduced as standing agenda item on standardisation agendas.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager		
Introduce an EQIA area on HNVQ Appointee Hub to raise awareness of the Act for all appointees.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager		
Ensure that our staff and appointees have awareness of religious events and holidays, particularly in the countries in which international centres are based and accommodate these when arranging approval and verification activities. Highlight awareness of this via visit planning in guidance documentation for EVs.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Senior Operations Manager	Ongoing	

<p>Current training at EV induction advises of SQA policy in relation to Lone workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage appointees to ensure some else knows where they are going on any particular day and likely times of departure and return, and location of overnight stays.</li> <li>• If in any concerns about location of a centre (eg office is in head of centre's home or remote location) consider arranging the visit to take place in SQA offices or a public space (eg hotel foyer) or arrange to conduct the meeting virtually or request a double bank activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>Senior Operations Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Make any necessary adjustments, including the option of virtual approval and verification events where this would be more appropriate to meet the needs of centre staff, candidates or our staff and appointees who are pregnant or have young children.</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>Senior Operations Manager Qualification Verifiers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

## Policy Aims

<b>Name of Policy or practice</b>	HN&VQ: Qualifications Approval and Verification processes
<b>New Policy or Revision</b>	Existing processes
<b>Name of Policy Owner</b>	Head of Operations: HN&VQ
<b>Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion</b>	24 April 2023

<b>What is the rationale for this policy or practice?</b>
<p>Part I of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996, as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002, established SQA as “a body corporate” and set out its statutory functions. SQA’s general functions include:</p> <p>(d) to approve education and training establishments as being suitable for presenting persons for SQA qualifications</p> <p>The Act also sets out SQA’s quality assurance responsibilities. These are to ensure:</p> <p>(1) the quality of the procedures used by such establishments for assessing the standards of attainment of such persons (and, in particular, such persons with special educational needs) in relation to SQA qualifications.</p> <p>(2) the quality of the internal arrangements adopted by such establishments for monitoring and controlling the effectiveness of such procedures; and</p> <p>(3) the suitability of such establishments for presenting persons for SQA qualifications.</p> <p>Systems approval combined with qualification for at least one qualification initially, constitutes centre approval allowing an employer or training provider – in Scotland, rest of the UK or internationally - to be recognised as an SQA centre and thereby allowed to offer our qualifications.</p> <p>Once approved to deliver SQA qualifications, centres can subsequently apply for approval to add additional qualifications to their portfolio through the <u>Qualification Approval</u> process.</p> <p>Qualification approval is the process through which SQA confirms that centres have the staff, reference materials, learning materials, assessment materials, equipment and accommodation needed to deliver, assess and internally verify the qualifications listed on their application.</p>

SQA subsequently carries out Qualification Verification in centres to ensure that they are assessing qualifications to the national standard.

These requirements of the Act are expressed through SQA Governing Principles, specifically those relating to quality assurance:

5: ensure that any centre offering SQA qualifications has the systems, resources and expertise to deliver and assess these qualifications to the defined standard.

6: work in partnership with its appointees and centres to ensure that all assessments used in its qualifications are valid and reliable;

7: all qualifications and assessments are as fair and accessible as possible and that the needs of candidates are met

8: quality assure centre assessments and assessment judgements to ensure that they maintain the defined standard;

9: work in partnership with centres to ensure that all quality assurance processes are fair, open and proportionate;

10: ensure that candidates receive accurate results in the stated timeframe;

Governing Principle 5 relates specifically to Qualifications Approval and Governing Principles 6 and 9 relate specifically to Qualification Verification but there are links to the others listed above through the implementation of the processes and some of the Quality Assurance Criteria used.

The Governing Principles apply to SQA's self-regulated qualifications, but there are also principles and conditions which SQA adheres to in relation to qualifications regulated by SQA Accreditation, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales. These include the responsibilities of SQA as the awarding body for ensuring that centres approved to deliver its qualifications have the necessary resources in place, including suitably qualified staff, and effective processes for quality assurance of assessment.

[SQA Accreditation - Regulatory Requirements](#), including:

12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment

13. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have systems and processes which ensure the effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook>

#### **What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?**

Education Act

SQA's Governing Principles

SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles

Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition

Consultation on last major review of the QA criteria and approach for 2015-18.

Qualification Approval Guidance for Centres

[https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/Systems\\_and\\_Qualification\\_Approval\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Systems_and_Qualification_Approval_Guide.pdf)

Qualification Verification Guidance for Centres

[SQA - Qualification verification guidance for centres](#)

[Qualification Verification Criteria: guidance for centres \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

### **What are the aims of this policy or practice?**

Qualification approval is the process through which SQA confirms that centres have the staff, reference materials, learning materials, assessment materials, equipment and accommodation needed to deliver, assess and internally verify the qualifications listed on their application.

Qualification verification is SQA's process for ensuring centres delivering our qualifications are assessing candidates in line with national standards, and that assessment decisions comply with our quality assurance criteria.

Qualification verification focuses on:

- ensuring the validity of assessment instruments
- verifying the reliability of assessment decisions
- verifying assessment instruments are used correctly
- verifying assessment instruments are used in line with assessment specifications
- ensuring the appropriate resources are in place to support the delivery of the qualification

Qualification Approval and Verification are undertaken by Qualification Verifiers who are experienced subject experts appointed by SQA.

## How is the content of these aims relevant to equality groups?

The aims of these processes are positive in relation to equality groups in terms of seeking to ensure that centres delivering our qualifications have appropriate resources procedures in place and implemented effectively and treat their candidates fairly and equitably.

Any negative impacts on equality groups would arise in relation to the implementation of the qualification approval and verification processes, not the aims. These negative impacts could be on our appointees who conduct the qualification approval and verification visits, the centre staff whom they engage with and any candidates that they may interview during these visits to check on the implementation of policies and procedures and their effect on the candidates.

All candidates must have equal access to assessment while undertaking SQA qualifications at any SQA approved centre. SQA Qualification Approval and Verification quality assurance criteria are in place to ensure there are no discriminatory barriers in the way for anyone wishing to undertake a qualification. Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

There are a variety of different ways in which this is done and different approaches for National Qualifications (NQ) and Higher National and Vocational Qualifications (HN&VQ).

### **Qualification approval**

Approvals can be carried out remotely using virtual technologies or through physical visits to centres. Desk approvals can also be carried out eg where a centre is applying for approval at a different level for a subject which they are already approved to deliver.

Auto-approval takes place in line with SQA policy for centres within the relevant centre types.  
Devolved approval for centres who have devolved status with SQA in line with SQA policy.

### **Qualification verification**

Selections for qualification verification are made by SQA on an intelligence-based, risk-based basis, focusing on previous verification activities in the centre and the outcomes of these. Centres delivering a qualification for the first time will be selected for verification.

There are three main types of verification for Higher National and Vocational Qualifications: virtual, visiting, central and remote verification.

The role of verifiers is not to re-assess candidates' work, but to consider if the centre's assessment approach is valid and if assessment judgements have been made reliably. If the finding of verification is that the centre is not assessing correctly to the national standard the certification of candidates may be put on hold by SQA until the issue is resolved, which may involve re-assessment. However, the candidates who were picked for

the sample are not discriminated against in relation to their peers, as any hold on certification or required action must be applied across the whole cohort of current candidates.

Prior verification is a free service available to all centres or local education authorities that develop their own unit assessments or significantly amend SQA's unit assessment support packs (UASPs). The purpose of the service is to ensure that assessments used by centres are valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. Prior verification requests can be submitted for any unit. This gives centres flexibility in approach, and the needs of their candidates can be fully considered.

Unannounced QA activity is undertaken for taxi and street works qualifications; this is undertaken in line with current process of centres providing a 5 day notification of assessments taking place. SQA deploy, without notification to centres, appointees to monitor live assessments to ensure they are undertaken in line with qualification requirements. Verifiers will observe practical assessment activities while the candidates are undertaking them.

For visiting verification, verifiers will liaise with centres to arrange a visit to the centre and look at verification evidence from a sample of candidates and documentation to meet the requirements of the SQA Quality Assurance Criteria. This is to confirm that an appropriate approach to assessment has been used, and that consistent assessment decisions are being made in line with national standards. Visits will always be arranged in advance and centres can select the candidates and consider their needs. Some visits for HNVQ subjects are conducted virtually and some by physical visits to centres, particularly for practical subjects or performance components or based on risk.

Candidates may be directly involved if the verifier speaks to candidates as part of the verification process. The needs of candidates with protected characteristics must be taken into consideration in these circumstances.

For central verification, SQA will request materials from the centre at specified points in time and these will be reviewed at subject events organised by SQA. As with visiting verification, verification evidence from a sample of candidates will be looked at and documentation to meet the SQA Quality Assurance Criteria. This is to confirm that an appropriate approach to assessment has been used, and that assessment decisions are being made in line with national standards.

For virtual verification, verifiers will liaise with the centre to provide an appropriate sample of candidate evidence and materials to meet the requirements of SQA Quality Assurance Criteria and arrange a follow up virtual feedback session to provide support, guidance, and feedback. This is to confirm that an appropriate approach to assessment has been used, and that consistent assessment decisions are being made in line with national standards.

Appointees are expected to complete training on SQA Academy. Courses available include 'Equalities for appointees' which raises awareness of the Equality Act (2010).

## Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

<b>What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?</b>
<p>SQA/College Quality Focus Group – terms of reference includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• help identify and explore issues, making recommendations on ways forward, including those which may require further consultation with the sector/and or stakeholders and learners</li><li>• help develop approaches to quality, ensuring compatibility with other appropriate quality frameworks in the sector</li></ul> <p>College Quality Manager and SQA Coordinator annual events</p> <p>College Quality Forum Working Group</p> <p>Employer and Training Providers Forum</p> <p>Scottish Training Forum (STF) Forum and annual conference</p> <p>Appointees – through annual training, standardisation activity, Operational Updates, HNVQ Appointee Hub and ongoing training throughout the year.</p> <p>Training events for centres for various qualification types.</p>

<b>What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<p>Ages of candidates whose assessment evidence is sampled for qualification verification will be recorded through the date of birth of the candidate, but not retained or used for any purpose.</p> <p>Qualification verification may involve interviews with either young or mature learners. When there is a significant age difference between the verifier and younger candidates, it could create an intimidating atmosphere that may negatively impact on the witness's ability to respond to questions and how they are perceived. In terms of mature learners, there is also the potential for bias in the form of ageism.</p>

<b>Disability</b>	<p>SQA also does not hold any information regarding whether centre staff or candidates involved in qualification verification identify as having a disability. However, we acknowledge that people with disabilities could face barriers in participating in interviews as part of approval and verification activities and that we must make reasonable adjustments to address these.</p> <p>People with disabilities may face significant barriers that can make it difficult for them to participate fully in an interview. For example, a deaf person may require a sign language interpreter or assistive technology to effectively communicate, while someone with a physical disability may experience discomfort or pain during prolonged interviews.</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>Information on the race of individuals involved in qualification approval and verification will not be sought or recorded. However, some HN&amp;VQ qualifications are delivered in international centres, so the country in which the centre and candidates are based will be known, although that will not necessarily define the race of individuals.</p> <p>While language is not a characteristic protected in the Equality Act, there can be a relationship through nation of origin between language and the protected characteristic of race. people with English as a second or alternative language experiencing difficulties in understanding our guidance or engaging in interviews as part of the verification process. This could arise in centres in the UK as well as international centres.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived and affect decision making.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<p>Information about the religion or belief of individuals involved in systems verification will not be sought or recorded.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived or evaluated, and impact decision making. Cultural, religious or belief differences may contribute to misunderstandings. Consideration should be given to religious events and holidays when arranging systems approval and verification visits.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>Female appointees could be more at risk through travelling and visiting centres alone.</p> <p>No information will recorded about the sex of centre staff or candidates interviewed for qualification verification.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived and affect decision making.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>Information about the sexual orientation of individuals involved in qualification approval and verification will not be sought or recorded.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived and impact decision making.</p>

<b>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</b>	<p>Information about the gender identity or gender re-assignment of individuals involved in qualification approval and verification will not be sought or recorded.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived and impact decision making.</p>
<b>Marriage/Civil Partnership</b>	<p>Information about the marital or civil partnership status of individuals involved in qualification approval and verification will not be sought or recorded.</p> <p>Stereotypes or assumptions may impact how individuals are perceived and impact decision making.</p>
<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	<p>Information about pregnancy or maternity would only be known if this applied to an apointee (QV) carrying out qualification approval and verification. No information on centre staff or candidates is sought, but this could be included in information asked for in the visit planning stage about any barriers to participation that might be experienced. Appropriate adjustments should be made to address any barriers or difficulties that might be experienced in participating in qualification approval or verification. Medical appointments and maternity leave may also need to be taken into consideration, when scheduling visits.</p> <p><b>Supporting evidence:</b>          “It is common to feel tired, or even exhausted, during pregnancy, especially in the first 12 weeks”. <i>Common Symptoms in Pregnancy, National Health Service (NHS), Health A to Z</i> <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/related-conditions/common-symptoms/tiredness/">https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/related-conditions/common-symptoms/tiredness/</a> (accessed 15 March 2023).</p>
<b>Care experience (where relevant)</b>	<p>Information about care experience of individuals involved in qualification verification would not be sought or recorded.</p> <p>Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that all young people are treated appropriately in the verification process. SQA is a proud corporate parent and acutely aware of the unique challenges that care experienced people face. Our approach is, as with all learners, to protect the learner wherever possible and minimise any disadvantage/distress.</p>

## Impact and Opportunities for Action

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and this requires to be recorded. The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

Each section contains questions for each equality group. These questions are here to support consideration; however, you can provide further detail. Focus initially on the equality groups that would be affected by this policy. If you do not consider that certain equality groups would be affected by this policy, you may leave these sections.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.
	All appointees are subject to Disclosure Scotland registration before deployment for QA activity.
	There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. Candidates undertaking Higher National and Vocational Qualifications could be under 18 and potentially a verifier will interview them as part of the process or observe them undertaking assessments. The process could be difficult for them if not handled correctly.
	Action: Verifiers to ensure that if they are interviewing younger candidates they are in groups or accompanied by an adult and that they use age-appropriate language and explain clearly anything that the young people may not understand.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Foster good relations	
The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.	

	<p>There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. Candidates undertaking Higher National and Vocational Qualifications could be under 18 and potentially a verifier will interview them as part of the process or observe them undertaking assessments. The process could be difficult for them if not handled correctly.</p> <p>Action: Verifiers to ensure that if they are interviewing younger candidates they are in groups or accompanied by an adult and that they use age-appropriate language and explain clearly anything that the young people may not understand.</p>
<p><b>Protected Characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>General Equality Duty</b></p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>The aims of the processes should have a neutral impact.</p> <p>There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. People with disabilities could face barriers to participating in interviews if suitable adjustments are not put in place. Appointees with disabilities might face difficulties in travelling to centres to conduct physical visits.</p> <p>Action: Add to the initial notification emails questions about any barriers which centre staff and candidates might have in engaging with the process and required adjustments. The number and nature of such requests and how they were addressed to be logged and monitored.</p> <p>Action: Add to the online feedback form a question about whether any required adjustments were discussed and suitably addressed and monitor responses.</p> <p>Action: Use the option of virtual approval and verification events where this would be more appropriate to meet the needs of centre staff, candidates, or our appointees with disabilities.</p> <p>Action: Review our guidance documents and revise formatting where required to ensure that they meet all accessibility standards.</p>

	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	The qualification approval and verification processes should have a positive impact on this equalities group. Qualification Approval process ensures that centres have the potential to deliver SQA qualifications and Qualification Verification will ensure the effective implementation of the equalities and assessment arrangements policies, the content of which are checked through systems approval and verification.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Race</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.
	There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. This could be due to bias against or stereotyping of people of a different race or due to people with English as a second or alternative language experiencing difficulties in understanding our guidance, writing documentation that meets our requirements or engaging in interviews as part of the QV process. This could particularly, but not exclusively, affect staff in international centres. It should be noted that it is a requirement for international centres delivering SQA qualifications to assess them in English and to have assessment evidence and quality assurance documentation available in English.
	Action: Ensure that all our guidance documentation and other information on the website is written in Plain English and as clearly as possible.
	Action: Ensure that our qualification approval and verification reports are written in Plain English and as clearly as possible.
	Training for appointees in Clear and Confident Writing is currently available.
	Translation for interviews where required would be discussed and although SQA cannot provide translators, it is an opportunity for the centre to do so.

	<p>Action: Training for appointees on Equality Impact to ensure the avoidance of bias and stereotyping.</p> <p>Action: HNVQ Appointee Hub to be updated with an area on Equality Impact and our legal requirements.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>The aims of the systems approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.</p> <p>There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when arranging physical or virtual visits to our centres. This is mostly likely to be due to proposed dates for these visits coinciding with religious events or holidays. This could particularly, but not exclusively, affect staff in international centres.</p>
	<p>Action: Ensure that our staff and appointees have awareness of religious events and holidays, particularly in the countries in which international centres are based and accommodate these when arranging visits.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<b>Sex</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.
	There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly for female appointees undertaking visits to centres, as they could be at higher risk through travelling and staying overnight alone and going into centres.
	<p>Ensure that all appointees, consider the risks of every physical visit to centres and take mitigating action, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend appointees advise someone else knows where they are going on any particular day and likely times of departure and return, and location of overnight stays.</li> <li>• If any concerns about location of a centre consider arranging the visit to take place in SQA offices or a public space or arrange to conduct the meeting virtually.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-work">https://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-work</a>  <a href="https://www.suzylamplugh.org/policy-writing">https://www.suzylamplugh.org/policy-writing</a></p> <p>Action: This is currently highlighted at EV induction and training.</p>
	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

	<p>The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.</p> <p>There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. This could be due to bias against or stereotyping of people because of their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.</p> <p>Action: Training for appointees on Equality Impact to ensure the avoidance of bias and stereotyping.</p> <p>Action: HNVQ Appointee Hub to be updated with an area on Equality Impact and our legal requirements.</p>
	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>The aims of the qualification approval and verification processes should have a neutral impact.</p> <p>There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres. This could be due to bias against or stereotyping of people because of their gender identity or because they are transgender.</p> <p>Action: Training for appointees on Equality Impact to ensure the avoidance of bias and stereotyping.</p> <p>Action: HNVQ Appointee Hub to be updated with an area on Equality Impact and our legal requirements.</p>
	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	<b>Foster good relations</b>

	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Marriage/Civil Partnership</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The impact of the aims and implementation of the processes should be neutral.
	SQA staff and appointees would not be aware of the marital or civil partnership status of any centre staff or candidates, unless they made them aware of this.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The impact of the aims of the processes should be neutral.
	There could potentially be some negative impact through the implementation of the procedure, particularly when engaging with staff and candidates in our centres and appointees who are pregnant or have young children might face difficulties in travelling to centres to conduct physical visits.
	Action: Add to the initial notification emails questions about any barriers with centre staff and candidates might have in engaging with the process and required adjustments and implement these adjustments where possible in a physical visit. This could include adjustments relating to eg breast-feeding or fatigue experienced during pregnancy. The number and nature of such requests and how they were addressed to be logged and monitored.

	<p>Action: Add to the online feedback form a question about whether any required adjustments were discussed and suitably addressed and monitor responses.</p> <p>Action: Use the option of virtual approval and verification events where this would be more appropriate to meet the needs of centre staff, candidates or appointees who are pregnant or have young children.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
<b>Considered by SQA</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Care experience (where relevant)</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The impact of the aims of the process should be neutral.
	Any impact from the implementation of the processes and actions to mitigate this would be the same as for all young people (see under Age above).
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.

**Rationale**

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.

Not applicable.