

# Responsible Business Annual Review 2018



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# Introduction

I am delighted to introduce SQA's Responsible Business Review for 2018. Responsible Business is so much more than a business department at SQA — it's a way of working that threads through all our internal and external business activities.

We are learning that our responsible business strategy — 'Giving Something Back' — is not only key to personal fulfilment and wellbeing, but also that it has a significant positive impact on our staff and business performance overall.

This review shines a light on the talent, energy, and generosity of SQA colleagues. I am struck by the sheer breadth of creativity and commitment from SQA colleagues and the many ways they have given back to the communities in which we live and work. These pages detail some incredible endeavours and celebrations, from our very special Results Day with Who Cares? Scotland to the many charity fundraising events that took place throughout the year.

SQA celebrates the determination and achievements of young people every day, and we were in a unique position to do so in this very special Year of Young People. This was an apt context in which to launch our wonderful SHINE exhibitions, which showcased National 1 and 2 artwork, and our *Write Times 2* book, which highlighted the imagination and writing talent of some of our National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher learners.

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to realise their potential, whatever their start in life, and whatever the challenges along the way. We are pleased that Stonewall has recognised the work of SQA's employee-led Rainbow Network on LGBT inclusion and are delighted to have moved up 133 places on their Workplace Equality Index. As corporate parents, we are demonstrating our commitment to care-experienced young people with some very tangible and practical initiatives — we're 'stepping up', as we say in our *Proud Corporate Parent* leaflet.

I extend a huge 'congratulations and thank you' to all SQA colleagues for their support and enthusiasm, and to all the partners and businesses we have been privileged to work with over this past year.

**Janet Brown**  
Chief Executive



# SQA's responsible business vision

SQA makes a difference to the communities it serves through a shared understanding and sense of being a responsible business that delivers and sustains a positive impact on its customers and communities, environment, and people.

## Giving something back

SQA realises that to succeed in what we do, we need to engage with the wider community. As a responsible business, our objectives are to create positive changes and make valuable contributions that support our local communities, environment, customers, and staff.

We are working to make everyone in SQA part of our responsible business vision. We encourage all colleagues to make a difference in their communities by taking practical action to tackle pressing social and environmental issues. Whether it is charity fundraising, minimising our carbon footprint, ensuring young people reach their full potential, or empowering our people — we aim to 'give something back'.

Read about our endeavours in these areas in the following pages, and learn how we work actively with public and private businesses, voluntary organisations, schools, colleges, charities, and others. We learn and gain experience from them — and some seek our advice and support in return. Developing and implementing responsible business strategies and activities is a 'benefits all' situation.

There are three main areas where responsible business has an impact:

- Customers and communities
- People
- Environment



# Bringing our vision to life

## Responsible Business steering group

The steering group covers policy and governance, and consists of experienced colleagues from across the business who promote a strong and effective social conscience. The group actively promotes and monitors our responsible business strategy — 'giving something back'.



**Maidie Cahill**  
**Director of Corporate Services**  
 Leads on Responsible Business activity



**Agnieszka Davren**  
**Head of Human Resources**  
 Leads on Our people



**Rosemary Mooney**  
**Responsible Business Manager**  
 Leads on Customers and communities



**Simon Parsons**  
**Facilities Manager**  
 Leads on Environment

### Responsible Business team (direction/delivery)

Our Responsible Business team looks after the operational delivery of the responsible business strategy and associated 'giving something back' initiatives across our business operations, staff, local communities, and stakeholders.

### Responsible Business volunteers (community engagement)

Our SQA staff get involved in volunteering throughout the year across a variety of activities and initiatives to 'give something back' to our local communities.

# Business in the Community Scotland



The Responsible Business team works in partnership with Business in the Community Scotland (BITC Scotland), of which SQA is a member. BITC Scotland believes that the prosperity of business and society is inextricably linked.

BITC Scotland helps businesses put the creation of healthy communities and a healthy environment at the centre of their strategies. It encourages them to use the BITC Scotland Responsible Business Map to navigate and make progress towards their goals, while ensuring long-term financial value. It tackles critical societal issues and drives change in workplaces and communities by unlocking the ambitions of business for a fairer society through programmes, events, and research.

In Autumn 2018, SQA joined 79 other businesses in a benchmarking pilot to test BITC Scotland's Responsible Business Tracker®, which organisations can use to measure their responsible business performance. Created in consultation with over 200 businesses, NGOs, government and international partners, and aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, BITC Scotland's Tracker® provides a robust validation process and feedback for a company's responsible business policies.

**“SQA is a longstanding member of Business in the Community, and in that time has made great progress on its responsible business journey. Its strategic focus — and investment of resources — has allowed SQA to make real changes to benefit its team, the communities in which it operates, and the environment. We look forward to continuing to work together. — Alan Thornburrow, Director, Business in the Community Scotland**





## Our people

Nurturing talent and helping people to fulfil their potential is at the heart of what we do at SQA. We recognise that people work at their best when they feel at their best, so our colleagues' mental and physical health is very important to us. In this section we look at how SQA looks after its staff, what our staff do for others, and outline some of our wellbeing initiatives.

Pictured — Elaine McFadyen, Muriel McGuigan and Kirstie Casson at the 2018 Long Service Awards

## Let people flourish

Our people are our most valuable resource. We recognise their humanity as well as their hard work, and know that they have other obligations, worries, and interests beyond their role in SQA. Overlaying our HR procedures and organisational development policies are a wide range of programmes and initiatives that enable us to support, advise, and reward our colleagues.

In this way, we are creating a workplace in which people are treated with dignity and respect, where they can build on their skills, realise their ambitions, and achieve a good 'work/life balance'.

SQA offers its staff a considerable range of benefits, including these highlighted below:

**93%**  
of SQA use SQA  
Lifestyles discount  
website

**£48,800**  
saved by staff using  
SQA Lifestyles

**61**  
travel  
season tickets  
and **12** bike loans  
issued

**18%**  
of staff benefit  
from SQA's flexible  
working options

**ALL** staff can  
access the  
Employee  
Assistance  
Programme

**550**  
staff enjoyed  
in-house therapies,  
like massage and  
chiropractic

# New induction programme

## Starting off on the right foot

### Local induction

We are currently piloting a fresh take on local induction, and have provided line managers with team induction packs. These will help to ensure that new colleagues are given all the relevant business information they need to embark on their new role.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have been reviewing our corporate and local induction programmes with colleagues from across the organisation. This work has highlighted a need to improve how we engage with new team members, and how we communicate our remit, culture, values and ways of working effectively – both at an organisational and local level.

**“ We want our corporate induction process ‘to provide a welcoming, professional introduction to the culture, values and activities of our organisation, providing new starts with knowledge and tools to fulfil their role and contribute to our corporate goals’. – SQA Corporate Induction Vision**

### Corporate induction

The new *Understanding SQA* programme gives new colleagues the chance to learn about SQA: our history, purpose and the benefits of working with us. It also gives them an opportunity to network with other people across the organisation.

New starts will also receive an *About Us* welcome pack, which will give them information to help them settle in.

A working group developed the new programme to ensure that SQA’s responsible business vision is being shared with new staff members.

A recent participant in the new induction programme provided feedback:



SQA modern apprentices Lindsey Burke and Cameron Marshall

**“ I’ve attended many induction programmes over the years, this was simply one of the best. The opportunity to learn and gain insight into SQA through the induction is an invaluable tool that can and will build stronger engagement, loyalty, and team work. I thoroughly enjoyed it and highly recommend it.**

# MACtastic

SQA's Make a Change (MAC) Group brings colour and dynamism to our health and wellbeing ethos. MAC Group volunteers meet regularly to develop and deliver creative, innovative, and informative health and wellbeing activities and initiatives, which are eagerly anticipated from one year to the next. From frivolous and fun to seriously supportive, this year these have ranged from our Chief Executive (among others) cycling herself up a smoothie, to an in-house workshop on living with Coeliac disease.



“It's about little changes that can turn into big ones. If you take care of yourself, you can make a bigger difference in and beyond work.”  
— Gemma Law, Responsible Business Officer and MAC Group volunteer

## A year in the life of the MAC Group

**150**  
free water bottles given to staff during Healthy Eating Week



**500**  
colleagues enjoyed in-house therapies and classes



120 steppers clocked up 4,127 miles — an average of 19,159 steps taken per person in one month



**50**  
pints of blood donated in November



**180**  
colleagues given free flu vaccinations



Brighter smiles advice for all staff on World Oral Health Day



## Investing in good mental health

As a responsible employer, SQA has taken significant steps to identify and signpost support for the health, wellbeing, and safety of all our employees. As part of our commitment to the Fair Work Framework, SQA is encouraging staff to invest in their own good mental health through a series of events, including mental health first-aid training.

“Mental health does not equal mental illness.



### Scottish Mental Health First Aid training

SQA staff began their Scottish Mental Health First Aid training in October and November, with training set to continue into 2019. The courses comprise interactive presentations and a short group discussion, and are delivered by mental health training providers who have extensive knowledge of mental health and wellbeing. SQA staff are not being trained to be mental health workers, but rather to develop related knowledge and understanding, which in turn helps to remove stigma and fear, and gives them confidence to help others.

Workshops on mindfulness and yoga were also available to staff to help support mental health through physical activities.



### Mental Health Awareness Week

During Mental Health Awareness Week (14–20 May), the MAC Group organised a ‘Lunch and Learn’ workshop presented by representatives from the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). Speakers explored the concept of good mental health, stigma, discrimination in the workplace, and how to nurture your own mental wellbeing.

## Take a Break campaign

Studies have shown that taking short breaks during the working day can lead to a boost in creativity, both in and out of the office. Our thought processes aren't built to be continuous; they need a breather as much as the rest of our body. The average adult attention span ranges from 15 to 40 minutes, and it benefits from being 'rebooted' at several points throughout the day.

**Better use  
of time**



**Refocused  
attention and  
concentration**



**Increased  
efficiency and  
productivity**



**Reduced  
stress**



**Fewer  
fatigue-related  
accidents**



**Healthy  
and  
happy eyes**



## Meet a guide dog

During Guide Dogs Week, 6-14 October, staff spent time with guide dogs and their owners, who visited SQA's offices. They learned about the benefits a guide dog can bring to a blind person, and how the dogs are trained. The stress-relieving benefits of petting dogs and cats are well established: it helps lower blood pressure, promotes a release of the the relaxation hormone oxytocin, and cuts down on levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

**“I don't think I have ever enjoyed a working day as much, and it was all down to 15 minutes with the dogs!**

— Ellie Macdonald, HR Analytics and Systems Analyst, Human Resources, Corporate Services



Three of our visitors during Guide Dogs Week

## Walking Challenge

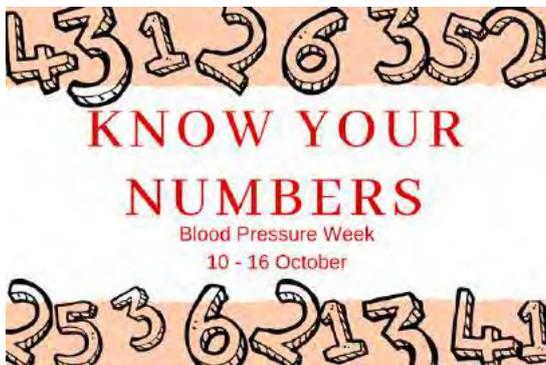
This year's SQA Walking Challenge focused on hearts and minds. We asked staff to walk 115,200 steps – the number of heartbeats in a regular day. If that wasn't enough, teams were then asked to complete additional challenges: team selfies, treasure hunts, and to walk a route that would result in an entertaining GPS outline.



The Pacemakers Walking Challenge team



The Storm Poopers completed the greatest number of challenges



## Blood Pressure Week

We joined Blood Pressure UK in their October Blood Pressure Week, by explaining to our staff what different blood pressure numbers mean, and how some simple lifestyle changes can prevent high blood pressure.



## Eye right

Just like a visit to the dentist or a check-up with your GP, an eye test should be part of your regular health checks. To coincide with World Sight Day on Thursday 11 October, MAC invited Optical Express to carry out free in-house eye checks.

# Healthy Eating Week

## Five daily health challenges

1.  
Enjoy a healthy  
breakfast



2.  
Eat five portions  
of fruit and  
vegetables



3.  
Drink plenty of  
water



4.  
Get active every  
day for 60  
minutes



5.  
Make a healthy  
lifestyle change



## Golden opportunities

Riding the slipstream of the new year’s good intentions, the MAC Group hosted a variety of activities in Lowden and Optima during the MAC Gold Health Days in February and March. Many of these were an opportunity to think about an idea differently or to try something new – from self-defence classes to a new food and reflexology.



Over the year, the MAC Group ran several staff-focused events and themed weeks, including No Smoking Day and IBS Awareness Day. Some of the events and themes involved external speakers and organisations, and many were in response to staff suggestions and interests.



## Putting the fun in fundraising

SQA's informal committees in both Optima and Lowden organise a colourful calendar of social events throughout the year. These events offer opportunities to see new sides to our talented, dedicated, and quirky colleagues. They also raise an extraordinary amount of money for causes close to SQA people's hearts.

### Charity fundraising

Every two years, SQA colleagues vote to decide which Scotland-based charity their office would like to support. Since July 2017, the Optima office has been supporting the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), while the Lowden office has been supporting the British Heart Foundation (BHF). The informal committees on both sites plan specific fundraising events for these charities, and money is also raised from general events — like the Book People visits, where 5% of the profits are donated to our supported charities — and donations from colleagues.



Raffle winners



Enjoying extra prizes at a quiz night



Optima informal committee

### Soccer stars

Lowden and Optima teams, comprising volunteer players from across the organisation, competed in the Business Fives winter five-a-side tournaments in November to raise funds in support of our two corporate charities.



SQA Lowden fives team



SQA Optima fives team



## Fundraising for SAMH

Founded in 1923, The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) provides mental health social care support across Scotland, tackling homelessness, addiction, and unemployment. The Glasgow Informal Committee have raised over **£8,000** for SAMH since summer 2017.

### Quiz nights

Optima quiz nights are hotly anticipated events. Guest presenter Liam Priest returned in August to give everyone's brain a workout, along with lots of laughter and anecdotes about his time working at SQA.



Hallowe'en quiz night organisers

### In it for the long run



Martin Boyle took on the Simplyhealth Great Stirling Run – his first ever marathon. He has since gone on to complete two and a half more.



Edward Smyth joined the Optima Informal Committee this year to support the team with more fundraising ideas.



Gail Thomas ran the Boston Marathon in April. Conditions were very challenging this year, with low temperatures, rain and a strong headwind.

“ I started with Couch to 5K ... it's a wonderful way of making time and space for myself.

— Martin Boyle, Head of Sport, Creative and Hospitality

“ I decided that the Great Scottish Run would be a good way of raising funds for Optima's Corporate Charity, SAMH.

— Edward Smyth, Administrator

“ Running helps me to stay positive and clears my mind of day-to-day worries.

— Gail Thomas, Operations Officer

## Fundraising for BHF

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) is the UK's largest independent funder of cardiovascular research. Lowden's choice of charity for 2017-19 was particularly meaningful, following the sudden loss of our colleague Gordon Mealyou in 2017. The Lowden Informal Committee has raised almost **£3,000** for BHF so far.



## Someone else's treasure

The Lowden Informal Committee organised their third BHF 'Bag It Bin It' collection in October, with colleagues' donations filling a van twice over. Proceeds from the sale of these donated items in the Dalkeith BHF shop will all go to the charity.

## Smooth operator

Stephen Lloyd in the e-Marking department decided that, after tending his beard for nearly six years, he would shave it all off to raise funds for BHF. The 'big reveal' took place in the Lowden office in November.



Before



After



## Supernova 5km

Tracy Walkingshaw and Judith Blackadder took part in the Supernova 5km under the watchful eye of the Kelpies in November. Together, their team raised **£530** for BHF. Participants and spectators wore bright or fluorescent clothing to enhance the visual spectacle.



## Hearty evening

Karen Lynch and Gordon McCubbing attended BHF Scotland's Annual Parliamentary Reception at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 31 January. Attended by fundraisers, researchers, politicians, and volunteers, the event highlighted the work of BHF in funding cutting-edge research, informing policy, and promoting public awareness of its activities. Karen said of the day, *'It was a great night – very insightful!'*

## Remembering Gordon

Gordon Mealyou was a Data Services Senior Manager with SQA. An engaging, likeable man, he was well known throughout the organisation, and held in particularly high esteem by his Lowden colleagues.

In tribute to him, colleagues commissioned The Gordon Mealyou Memorial Cup, to be awarded to the winning Quiz Night team. A bench has also been erected in his memory.



## Other charitable endeavours

Although SQA dedicates most of our fundraising to our staff-nominated charities, we have also raised money for many other organisations over the period covered by this review.



### Think pink

Lowden staff joined many other people around the country on Breast Cancer Now's 'Wear it Pink' day to raise awareness and much needed funds for research into breast cancer prevention.

## Toilet twinning

One in three people worldwide — 2.3 billion individuals — do not have somewhere safe to go to the toilet. Tearfund's toilet-twinning initiative provides toilets in several countries across the developing world. These benefit a community's overall health and wellbeing by avoiding contamination of fresh water supplies.

We have raised funds to twin eight toilets in SQA offices with Tearfund toilets.

[www.toilettwinning.org](http://www.toilettwinning.org)



## Remembrance Day

In support of Poppy Scotland and on this very special 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Remembrance Day, our Lowden office joined many other public buildings in lighting up red between 5 and 11 November. A heartfelt 'thank you!' to our 'Knutty Knitters', who once again created beautiful poppies to raise funds for Poppy Scotland. This year's sale yielded an incredible **£1,547** taking the past five years' total to an amazing **£4,688**.



SQA's Knutty Knitters



SQA's Lowden office 'lit up red'

## Trussell Trust foodbank collection

The Trussell Trust works with local communities to help stop UK hunger. SQA partnered with two of their local foodbanks to help provide a minimum of three days' emergency food and support to people experiencing crisis. This year, SQA staff responded generously to a request for donations to Trussell Trust foodbank, with some volunteering their time to help out at the foodbanks themselves.

“Often we can feel dissatisfied with a situation or decision in the workplace, volunteering helps to give a fresh perspective on what is important. — Tracey McCorkell, Head of Service Delivery



Tracey McCorkell, Fiona Maclean and Heyley Slade help out at Trussell Trust

## Working towards greater equality

We continue to provide equality of opportunity, and a respectful and inclusive culture across all our activities, building on an already-established momentum. Underlying all our initiatives are our values: Progressive, Trusted, and Enabling.

SQA's re-formed Equality Steering Group met in June to review the group remit. The group monitors progress against SQA's Equality Outcomes to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, and to share good practice. It hopes to illustrate the purpose and benefits of equality monitoring, using case studies that demonstrate good use of data.



### SQA Disability Network

SQA's Disability Network was formed in 2018. The group's objectives are to provide a welcoming, confidential and safe environment to raise and discuss issues, and to share ideas, information and knowledge relating to disability equality in the workplace and wider society. It aims to foster disability-smart practice in internal and external relationships.

### Rainbow Network

Our Rainbow Network promotes the inclusion and visibility of the LGBTQI+ community within SQA and beyond, bolsters links with other LGBTQI+ organisations, and aspires to make SQA Scotland's foremost LGBTQI+ employer.



A year on from its inauguration, SQA's Rainbow Network reviewed and implemented a formal network structure. Members have now assumed specific roles to lead, guide, and act as network ambassadors.

### SQA rises through Stonewall WEI

Stonewall is the UK's foremost LGBT rights charity and campaigning organisation.



The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) identifies and showcases the UK's top employers in terms of LGBT inclusion. The Index assesses organisations against specific equality and diversity criteria. Final scores allow Stonewall to create a league table of organisations who are committed to LGBT inclusion, to focus on good practice and to highlight areas for improvement.

The Rainbow Network supported work to make SQA's submission to the WEI 2018. In January 2018, Stonewall announced that SQA had climbed 133 places, to 212 out of 434 UK companies.

## Striding with Pride

After the roaring success of the 2017 Rainbow Week, the Rainbow Network eagerly anticipated Glasgow Pride 2018. Pre-Pride events tied in with the Year of Young People and our ongoing theme of mental health and wellbeing, with information stands in both Optima and Lowden, and videos from LGBTQI+ students about their school experiences.



## Queer Champions photography exhibition

Lisa Charlwood-Green, from Organisational Development and Change Management, visited the Scottish Parliament in February to view artist Ajamu's portrait of her in the Queer Champions exhibition. The series of portraits, which was commissioned for LGBT History Month, captures the richness, diversity, and contribution of Scotland's LGBT community.



“It was a real pleasure and honour to be pictured alongside such well-loved individuals from across Scotland, singer Horse, politician Alyn Smith, and founder of Pink Saltire Stuart Duffy.

— Lisa Charlwood-Green

## The Herald Diversity Awards

SQA once again sponsored the Diversity in the Third Sector award category at the Herald Diversity Awards. Steve Borley, Head of Strategic Change and Governance, presented the award to The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety.

Steve described the finalists as *'ambassadors of the benefits that can be realised when everyone in our society has the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions, aspirations, and potential.'*

Lisa Charlwood-Green was also a successful finalist in the Diversity Hero of the Year award.





## Customers and communities

‘Giving something back’ is what being a ‘responsible business’ at SQA is all about. Over the past year, we have reinforced existing relationships and embarked on new ones, and have been in a unique position to celebrate the Year of Young People.

SQA continues to initiate and reinforce relationships — both nationally and internationally — with our customers and our local communities.

We have acknowledged and rewarded ambition, promoted equality, improved more young people’s chances of employment, and actively supported local charities.

Pictured: A Royal High School pupil with Bartek Bartosiak, SQA Business Analyst

# Celebrating our young people

## Year of Young People

We were delighted to celebrate the Year of Young People 2018. This Scottish Government initiative gave young people a platform from which they gave voice to the issues that affect their lives, showcased their ideas and talents, and challenged other generation's perceptions of them.



year of young people  
bliadhna na h-òigridh  
2018

## Write Times 2

What better way to start off the Year of Young People than with young people's creative achievements. In January, we published *Write Times 2*, which shows the ability, imagination, and talent of National Qualifications candidates from across the country. Their diverse contributions demonstrate wit, insight, compassion, and understanding, in poetry, prose, non-fiction, and drama.

We launched this very special book in early February 2018 at the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow, in the company of John Swinney MSP, Secretary for Education and Skills, and John Loughton, former chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

The Responsible Business team worked with a young author from Eastwood High, Tram Direct Theatre, and Isabel Barrett, Director of Tron Theatre, to prepare a piece of drama that was performed on the night.

Glasgow artist, Adrian B McMurchie, created illustrations to accompany the writing of Michelle Musyoka, Mahee Mustafa, and Hannah Cowieson, who each read from their works of poetry at the launch. Copies of *Write Times 2* are being issued to every school and college in Scotland.



Three young writers sign copies of *Write Times 2*

“It is heartening to see the young writers in *Write Times 2* engaging with the issues facing us, and giving their views with such thoughtfulness, intelligence, and sensitivity.

— Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister

“... a fantastic testament to the effort of these young authors, and the work they have put into achieving their qualifications. They are also a fabulous learning resource. — Dr Janet Brown, SQA Chief Executive

# Supporting our young people

## Reading partners

Following specialised training from Business in the Community Scotland, 16 volunteers have been spending an hour each week helping primary school children to learn to read at Blackfriars Primary School in Glasgow and Lasswade Primary School in Midlothian. Research has shown that paired reading has a significant impact on children's reading, communication skills, and confidence.



## Employability skills workshop

During National Care Leavers week (24–31 October), SQA volunteers ran an Employability Skills workshop with S5/6 pupils at King's Park Secondary School, some of whom are care-experienced. Using materials developed with MCR Pathways — a mentoring organisation working with care-experienced young people in Glasgow — volunteers focused on application writing and mock interviews, which helped the pupils to identify their skills and experience.

The Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce programme aims to dramatically reduce youth unemployment, and as an employer and the National Qualifications body, SQA is well placed to help prepare young people for the world of work.

“The mentors were open and enthusiastic, and the pupils responded so well to this. I genuinely believe this is one of the best events I have put on at the school. — Niamh Egan, King's Park Secondary School Teacher

“I learned a lot about myself ... I got to have fun and learn a lot at the same time ... I enjoyed learning about all the techniques for interviews. — S5 Pupils, King Park Secondary School

“As a corporate parent, we are always looking for opportunities, such as the workshop at King's Park, to have a positive impact on the lives of care-experienced young people. — Maidie Cahill, Director of Corporate Services, SQA



## Work Experience Programme

Our Work Experience Programme (WEP) offers secondary school pupils week-long placements in specific roles tailored to their professional aspirations. This year, we have supported 19 placements in Optima and Lowden.

Thanks to the wide variety of departments offering placements, we can provide a bespoke, flexible, and engaging choice for pupils. We continually improve the programme to meet the changing demands of schools and those facing us as an employer. We also ensure that our WEP is aligned to the strategic goals of the Scottish Government – to encourage social inclusion and raise attainment.



“I’m so impressed to find out about the extent of SQA’s support for work experience candidates – it’s absolutely brilliant. – Marilyn Waters, Qualifications Manager, SQA

“I learned a lot about how the company works and how a lot more goes on than what people think. – Alexander Waters, Largs Academy

## Modern Apprenticeship Programme

SQA’s Modern Apprenticeship programme, Pathways, celebrated its sixth year in 2018 by welcoming four new apprentices, ready to learn about the world of work, to our structured two-year programme. Pathways offers young people opportunities ranging from an SVQ in Business and Administration at level 3 to an HNC in Business, as well as experience in four different business areas.

This year, we involved our second-year apprentices in the recruitment campaign and the interview process for our new apprentices.

We work in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce at training and recruitment events, with Skills Development Scotland at career development events in local secondary schools, and with the Scottish Training Federation to highlight the value and talent young people bring to our organisation.



CEO Janet Brown and SQA’s modern apprentices

Our apprentices have been involved in helping to shape the future of assessment, developing standards for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and supporting their local community through voluntary work with King’s Park Secondary and Glasgow Children’s Hospital.

## SHINE exhibitions

In November, SQA celebrated the creativity, determination, and imagination of Scotland's National 1 and 2 learners by hosting the SHINE exhibitions, which showcased a selection of their powerful and dynamic artwork.

SQA provides a fully inclusive framework of qualifications for the young learners of Scotland, and allows opportunities to recognise the attainment of every young person. The Shine exhibition extended the opportunities to engage with and celebrate the achievements of all our learners.



“Great experience and very inspiring.”  
— Lochaber High school

“This is a unique and wonderful opportunity for our young people to show the work they have been doing. I cannot thank SQA enough for this exhibition.”  
— Anne Healy, Staff member, Ashton Secondary School



“The work was displayed so well and there was consideration for space for our wheelchair users too — a real celebration.”  
— Shine Exhibition visitor

## Learning Disability Awards

The annual Learning Disability Awards are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate, on a national level, the rarely heard stories and achievements — from sporting success to creative talent — of people with learning disabilities and those people who support them.



SQA was delighted to attend the event in Edinburgh as sponsor of the new Enterprise category, which shines a light on the innovative business ideas of people with learning disabilities. SQA proudly presented the Enterprise Award to Shetland-based COPE Ltd. COPE is a well-established and successful social enterprise and charity, which provides employment and skills development to adults with learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorders.

“**The Enterprise Award is a fantastic opportunity to recognise the dynamic, inspiring work of people with learning disabilities. The finalists have shown great initiative and inventiveness in their achievement of business success. The benefits of their efforts are felt widely, and it is a privilege for SQA to give the learners the recognition that they deserve.** — Gemma Law, Responsible Business Officer, SQA

## Recognising our volunteers

This year’s Midlothian Volunteer Annual Awards Ceremony took place during National Volunteers’ Week at Newbattle Abbey College.

The event praises the individuals who give their time and talent for others, across Midlothian. Over 40 nominations were received in a variety of categories, with 11 awards presented on the night. SQA sponsored and presented the Volunteer Manager of the Year Award to Paula Jackson (pictured in the centre below), who is dedicated to improving the confidence of young volunteers at Midlothian’s Transform Project.



“**It’s an opportunity to celebrate the individuals, like our inspirational finalists, who help people to volunteer, giving them the confidence to make a difference in their community.**

— Laura Gemmell, Responsible Business Officer, SQA

# Customer engagements

## Star Awards 2018

SQA's 2018 Star Awards, hosted by Kaye Adams, gathered 300 guests from Scotland and beyond in the splendour of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum for an inspiring evening of personal and education success stories.

The annual event recognises the outstanding achievements of those working towards SQA qualifications, and of the schools, colleges, training providers, and employers and their staff who help to deliver them.

This year's event marked the inaugural presentation of our new award — Young Person of the Year — to celebrate individuals who have embraced the themes of the Year of Young People in their pursuit of SQA qualifications.

John Swinney MSP, Minister for Education and Skills, presented the award to Jason McIlroy of Inverclyde Academy. Jason has worked with Inverclyde Council's Youth Work Services team since his first year, and has demonstrated commendable skills through a range of wider learning qualifications and community placements.



Pride o' Worth Award winner Nicola MacKenzie of Glasgow Clyde College



Young Person of the Year Jason McIlroy of Inverclyde Academy

## Supported businesses

We seek to work with suppliers who have a socially responsible approach to their employees, and in 2018 we exceeded all our Procurement Department's targets. SQA is actively involved with Scottish Procurement's Supported Business Steering Group, and we continue to work closely with supported businesses, such as the Scottish Braille Press for the printing of our braille question papers, and Haven Products for the recycling of our IT equipment.

**2**  
contracts were  
awarded to  
supported  
businesses

**88%**  
of SQA's total  
spend was with  
SMEs and local  
suppliers

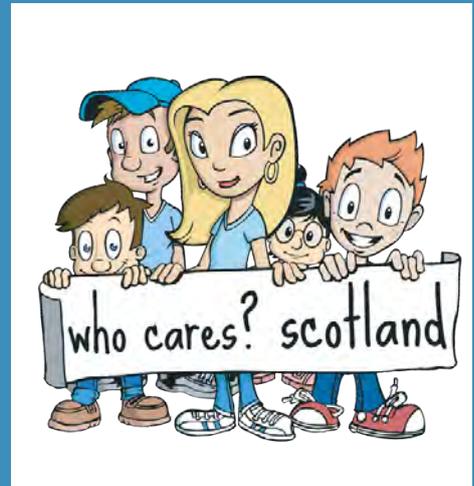
All service  
contracts pay  
the living wage  
to staff on SQA  
contracts

# Community engagements

## Who Cares? Scotland

SQA has a very special partnership with Who Cares? Scotland — a national voluntary organisation providing a range of advocacy, advice, and support services for care-experienced children and young people aged 25 or under.

*'SQA is a big part of the work we do, if it wasn't for our amazing corporate parents, young people wouldn't be achieving and believing in themselves.'* — **Laura Mullarkey, Fundraising and Partnership Support Officer, Who Cares? Scotland**

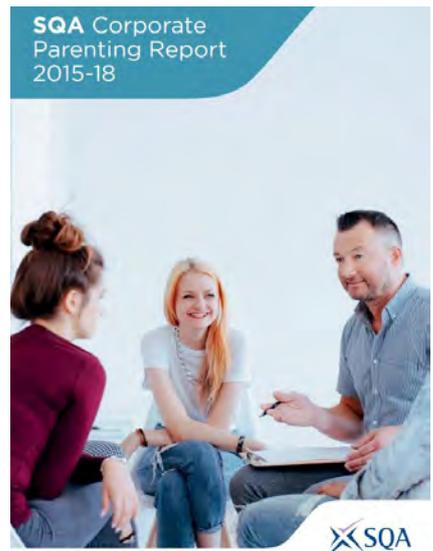


## Proud corporate parent

SQA was named as a corporate parent in April 2015 and since then we have worked extremely hard, not just to meet our statutory responsibilities, but also to make real change.

In April 2018, we published SQA's Corporate Parenting Report 2015-18, which details what we are doing to support Scotland's care-experienced young people, and presents our corporate parenting commitments for 2018-21.

A friendly version of the report — *SQA is proud to be a corporate parent* — was inserted into every Who Cares? Scotland *Speak Out* magazine in June, and we received lots of reader feedback:



“It's given me encouragement and made me feel that I'm not alone trying to get where I want to be.

“I like how positive you have made this leaflet and I liked reading the little things that people have said.

“... sounds like you're smashing it and doing an amazing job!

## Results Day

As a proud corporate parent, SQA wants the ambition and achievements of care-experienced young people to be acknowledged and supported. We were delighted to host our fourth Results Day celebration, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways. John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, joined us at Saint Luke's — Glasgow's newest music and arts venue — to award certificates to 20 aspiring young people.

“A young person's background should have no bearing on their opportunity to succeed. — John Swinney, Deputy First Minister

“It was nerve wracking, but really exciting. I'm really pleased with what I've got! I'm hoping to join the police, and I'm going to volunteer as a Special Constable for the next couple of years to build some experience. — Morgan Jeffrys, former Linlithgow Academy pupil



“We have been incredibly supportive of SQA's continued attempts, as part of their corporate parenting role, to act like all loving parents would and to celebrate their children's success. We are delighted that they are doing this again in 2018. — Kevin Browne-MacLeod, Director of Care-Experienced Membership at Who Cares? Scotland

“Today's celebrations are a real reminder that what we do enables young people to realise their ambitions. Our qualifications provide a variety of routes to success, but it is the drive and commitment of our candidates, no matter their background, that delivers their goals.

— Janet Brown, SQA Chief Executive

## Mentoring for future success

MCR Pathways connects disadvantaged, often care-experienced, young people with volunteer mentors to help them find, grow, and use their talents. For these youngsters, it can be difficult to do well in school when home life is chaotic. Several SQA staff are currently mentoring a young person for one hour a week, providing the extra support and encouragement to help them reach their full potential.

## Beyond Corporate Parenting

SQA's special relationship with Who Cares? Scotland goes beyond corporate parenting responsibilities. Our staff look for regular opportunities to volunteer, help out, and fundraise for this amazing organisation.

### Kiltwalk

A group of SQA staff joined the Who Cares? Scotland team on the Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh Kiltwalks this year to raise both money for and awareness of care-experienced young people across Scotland. The Glasgow Kiltwalk alone raised more than **£55,000** for Who Cares? Scotland.



“ I really enjoyed the Kiltwalk on Sunday. It was lovely to see all the people wearing the Who Cares? Scotland t-shirts and to feel part of their team.

— Gail Thomas, Events



“ It was a great day, to see so many people raising money for charity and to be part of such a well-organised event. I'm glad I was able to support one of SQA's charities too.

— Stuart McLaren, Head of Marketing & Communications

“ Thank you so much for all your efforts. We are still buzzing...what a great day.

— Gavin Sinclair, Fundraising and Partnership Manager, Who Cares? Scotland



## Care Experience Week/ Lifetime of Love Rally

As part of Care Experience Week, a number of SQA colleagues joined the Lifetime of Love Rally on 26 October 2018 at St Enoch Square in Glasgow to support Who Cares? Scotland in a public display of support for care-experienced people.



## Christmas campaign

For the third year running, SQA staff from Optima and Lowden came together to support the fantastic work that Who Cares? Scotland does at Christmas. Staff donated gift vouchers, while volunteers printed and wrote Christmas cards and packed parcels.

### Christmas by numbers for Who Cares? Scotland

**65**  
SQA volunteers  
coming  
together

**£140**  
donations

**1800**  
handwritten  
Christmas  
cards

**1**  
strong SQA  
and Who  
Cares?  
Scotland  
partnership

**86**  
Voucher  
donations

# Volunteering

SQA employees can use 21 office hours each year for practical volunteering activities. We encourage staff to volunteer by acknowledging individual efforts in staff performance management reviews. In 2018, over 300 staff made great use of their designated time to volunteer for a wide range of activities. These efforts amounted to 1,360 volunteering hours, totaling 195 days – almost double the volunteering hours carried out in 2017.

## Bethany Christian Trust

Based in Edinburgh, the Bethany Christian Trust aims to prevent or alleviate homelessness, and currently supports over 7,000 people across Scotland. SQA has developed a strong relationship with the Trust, and is keen to help break down the stigma surrounding the homeless and those who need support.

Regular SQA volunteers Morag Williams and Agnes Melrose helped to organise donations and then distribute these from the lunchtime care van, which offers food and drinks and friendly conversation to dozens of homeless people in Edinburgh three days each week.



Morag Williams and Agnes Melrose

Agnes said, *'This time we served tea and coffee from a folding table on the road, which allowed us to interact more with service users, and we heard some great (and some sad) stories.'*

SQA colleagues Laura Gemmell and Sara Lech volunteered for the first time with the Bethany care van in August, serving lunch to around 60 homeless people in Edinburgh.

**“A warm and heartfelt thank you to all of the volunteers and donors who have supported Bethany Christian Trust this year with their time, talent, prayers and donations. It’s your generosity that makes our work possible. – Bethany Christian Trust Annual Report 2018**

## Environmental volunteering

As part of our commitment to the environment, we ask staff to consider using some of their 21 volunteering hours to head outdoors and give something back to our local communities. An opportunity to get away from your desk, learn some new skills, and feel good – everybody benefits!

Staff can volunteer:

- on their own
- with colleagues and friends from across the business
- as part of a team volunteering day



## Tree planting day

SQA colleagues from the Environmental Working Group joined a group of pupils to plant more than 200 trees at the Royal High School, Edinburgh. The aim was to improve the scenery and biodiversity of the area, while also providing a teaching opportunity for the pupils. The event enabled SQA to offset 200 tonnes of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by our business activities.

Allan Dunbar, Appointee Management, said of the experience, *'It was good to be able to do something that has multiple benefits – the environment contributes to the community, involves school children, and offsets our carbon emissions.'*

Sara Jefford, Communications and Engagement, was keen to recommend the opportunity, *'It's a really great way to get to know other colleagues, to give something back and to develop new skills. Thank you.'*



## Applefield Gardens

SQA colleagues got together for two days of volunteering at the Applefield Gardens at Gartnavel General Hospital in Glasgow's West End. The Gardens offer a beautiful, secluded, and safe outdoor space for hospital patients and their carers, and for local groups working to help people with mental illness. Local nursery children, accompanied by nursery staff, grow food and flowers in one of the raised beds.

**“Another marvellous day with a fantastic group of folk... how do you manage to recruit such consistently friendly, committed, and interested and interesting people?”**

— Fiona Sinclair, Volunteer Services Manager/lead of 'Art in the Gart'

## The Hidden Gardens

The Hidden Gardens is a unique, award-winning, public green space and community development organisation on the south side of Glasgow. It exists to promote understanding between people of all cultures, faiths, and backgrounds. SQA Process Improvements Officer Patricia Clapham was particularly inspired by her volunteering day.

*Patrick and I on an autumnal day,  
Went volunteering to the Tramway.  
The 'Hidden Garden' was our destination,  
Where we presented ourselves in great anticipation.  
'Would you like to garden?' we were asked,  
And thus 'composting' was our first assigned task  
With secateurs we cut leaves and shoots,  
Adding grass and cardboard but not rotten fruits  
(It attracts vermin so best leave those aside,  
We were advised by fellow volunteers,  
our peers and guides.)  
For an hour or so we chatted and worked,  
Until our tea-break inside a fantastic yurt.  
Drinking refreshments with other volunteers,  
Discovering what had brought them here:  
Social, physical, mental wellbeing,  
Belonging, included, soulful healing.  
From all walks of life, young and old,  
Each had a story that needed to be told.  
After our break to the kitchen we departed,  
Where chutney and jam-making had already started.  
With aprons on we got stuck right in,  
Making chilli jam and chutney and bottling them.  
But best of all was kept to last,  
When at last we finished our task.  
'Would we like to taste the food?'  
We couldn't wait, it smelled so good.  
The chutney and jam were so nutritious,  
And certainly did taste delicious!  
All there now remains to say,  
Is that we thoroughly enjoyed our volunteering day!*



## The Midlothian Community Hospital Gardens

SQA's Peter Currie and Emil Zacharczuk spent a day volunteering at NHS Lothian's Midlothian Community Hospital Gardens, which aims to make good food and healthy lifestyles accessible to local communities. Started in July 2012, the site has been transformed from a large field into a beautiful garden. Peter and Emil spent a very physical day moving earth and transplanting flowers to create a more striking display.

*'The garden manager explained that this task had been meant for a group of ten', said Peter, 'so we were suitably tired by the time we got home!'*



Peter Currie and Emil Zacharczuk

## Scottish Waterway Trust

Scotland's only national waterways charity creates brighter futures for people, communities, and wildlife across Scotland's canals. By connecting people with the heritage, wildlife, and green open spaces of our canals through its innovative projects, Scottish Waterway Trust inspires people to get active and improve their health and mental wellbeing.

In August, the full Human Resources team embarked on a canal clean with the Scottish Waterway Trust.

**“It was a very successful day. We managed to have fun as a team, with plenty of business and non-business conversations, relax and do something good for the planet. — Agnieszka Davren, Head of Human Resources**

**“A day in the fresh air also did the world of good for all the team — a chance to refresh. — HR team volunteer**

**“It was a great way to deal with day-to-day stress and give something back to the community. — HR team volunteer**



## Individual volunteering initiatives

Our staff are passionate about volunteering and giving something back to their communities. Some have been involved in a project for years; others have rediscovered a latent talent. Among us are football coaches, Scout and Guide leaders, sports championships volunteers, and at least one Buddhist centre cook.

### Drama workshops

Chris Hill, Quality and Compliance Manager, couldn't keep his talent a secret. *'My local primary school, which my three boys attend, had been pestering me for years to come in and "do something". (I had inadvertently let it slip that, in a past life, I used to run drama workshops for a local amateur dramatic group). I finally gave in and used 7 of my 21 hours to run drama workshops for 7 classes of primary 1-3 children.'*



*'To say that I felt rusty was an understatement — I was terrified! The school invited me to talk to the children about peer pressure, as part of their health and wellbeing week. I challenged some of the children to 'be bad' for a while — to cajole others into doing naughty things. It was nice to see so many of the other children standing their ground and making strong decisions.'*

*I really enjoyed it and have a newfound respect for teachers who have to deal with the cheek, tears, and dramas every single day.*

*I would encourage everyone to do what they can and use the 21 hours allocated to them. My tagline for the day was well received by the children, but it can be broadly applied: It's easy to make bad decisions. But good decisions are made by those strong enough and brave enough to do so.'*

“ **Make the good decision — volunteer, and give something back!** ”

## TED Talks

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TED has created TEDx — a programme of local, self-organised events to help share ideas in communities around the world.



TEDx Glasgow has been running since 2013, and for the past two years, Lynne Malcolm, Opportunity Appraisal Manager, has been one of the 100 volunteers needed to run the event.

*'The best part was listening to the speakers rehearse, which meant I heard the talks first-hand and had the opportunity to comment on their delivery. I was also able to ask questions about their careers, what motivates them, who inspires them, and their visions for the future.'*

## A Titanic experience

In November, David Kettle and Anna-Mariya Skrupska joined an emboldened Chris Hill to lead an exciting drama workshop based on the Titanic at St Francis Xavier RC Primary School in Falkirk. They encouraged two classes of primary 6 pupils to build on what they learned in class, to assume the roles of different people on board the ship, and to react to developing events. The workshop was filmed to produce a ‘fly-on-the-wall’ view of the unfolding disaster.



*‘The children were brilliant, there was a really nice 50:50 split of those wanting to be in front of the camera and those wanting to be behind,’* said Chris.

David Kettle, Learning Technologist at SQA noted, *‘We tried to give the kids as much opportunity to use the equipment themselves as possible, with close supervision of course, so they all had a chance to have a go acting or helping with the recording.’*

## Marie Curie

Lyndsey Riach uses some of her volunteer hours to sell badges during the charity Spring Daffodil appeal. *‘My manager and Handsup were very supportive, and I collected £175 in two hours, which will fund nearly 14 hours of a Marie Curie nurse’s time.’*



Lindsay Riach said *‘I hugely admire the way Marie Curie nurses walk into stressful family situations with little knowledge of what to expect, and treat all with the utmost compassion and dignity.’*

## Making new connections...

We continue to work closely with the Glasgow Children’s Hospital, and are looking for a group opportunity to help children within the hospital. Meanwhile, the Responsible Business team visited Glasgow and Midlothian foodbanks with the Trussell Trust to explore new volunteer opportunities.

## Taster session

We are encouraging more teams to use their volunteering time as part of their team building days — it’s a win-win. The HNVQ team ventured into the streets of Glasgow to offer a little kindness to people whom they met.

Denise Monteith, Head of HNVQ, said, *‘This was a great opportunity to give something back — a little kindness goes a long way... I know it’ll be a talking point amongst the team for quite some time!’*





## Environment

Images of polythene-choked oceans and sea creatures killed or maimed by plastic waste have brought home to us all the reality of our impact on the environment. Protecting the environment continues to be a priority for SQA, and we are stepping up a number of year-round initiatives which promote sustainable working, and aim to reduce any harmful impact on the planet.

## Looking after our world

As we explore ways to reduce SQA’s carbon emissions, we also find ways to make financial savings through more efficient ways of working. As part of our drive to protect the environment, our staff are encouraged to use some of their 21 volunteering hours to head outdoors and give something back to our local communities, as you can see in the Communities section of this review.



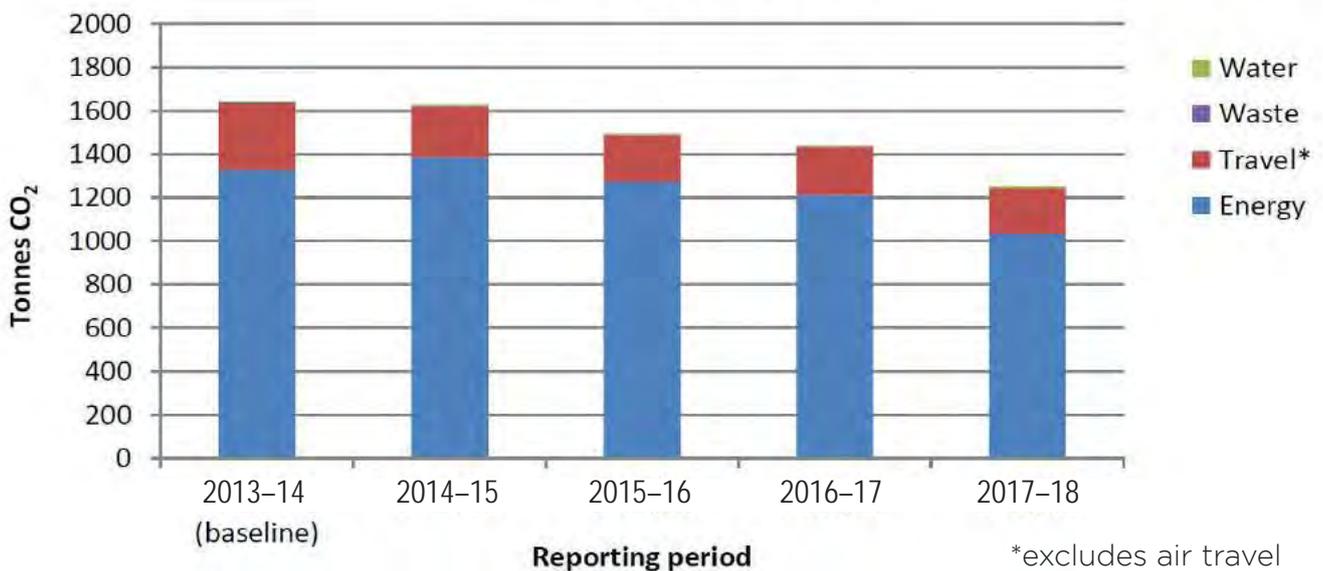
## Environmental Working Group

Inspiring good and informed decisions at work and at home, SQA’s Environmental Working Group organises a variety of measures, promotions and campaigns throughout the year. This year in particular, it has demonstrated how we can all lower our consumption of resources, limit carbon emissions, and reduce the amount of waste we generate.

## Reduced carbon emissions

In 2017-18, we once again reduced our carbon emissions, this time by 13% over the previous year. At 1,252 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), these were down from the 1,440 tCO<sub>2</sub>e that SQA was responsible for in 2016-17, and a whopping 23.7% below our target level. \*

Yearly CO<sub>2</sub> statistics



## Carbon Management Plan

We launched our Carbon Management Plan in 2015, and published the latest review in April 2018. The review assesses our progress in reducing emissions levels against targets, explains how our carbon management efforts bring other benefits to SQA, and details the progress of projects under consideration. The actions in our Carbon Management Plan aim to reduce overall consumption and provide value for money.

## Climate change reporting

SQA has voluntarily submitted an annual Climate Change Report to the Scottish Government since 2014. In November 2017, such reporting became mandatory for public sector bodies, to monitor progress against government climate change targets. SQA is one of 180 public sector bodies that submits such a report.



## How does SQA calculate its carbon emissions?

In common with other environmentally responsible organisations, we measure the gas and electricity that we consume in our offices, the road and rail mileage that we clock up for business purposes, and the amount of waste that we generate (separated by stream, eg paper, mixed recycling, and water and waste water). We then multiply each of these figures by the applicable emissions factors, as produced by the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. These factors indicate the typical amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent produced, for example, in the generation of a kilowatt hour of electricity, or in the supply of a cubic metre of clean water.

## Climate Week

In September, SQA joined in the nationwide response to the Scottish Government's Climate Week, which this year focused on waste reduction.

Climate Week raises awareness of the challenge of adapting to a changing climate, and seeks to inspire appropriate action. Visiting experts from Home Energy Scotland, Scottish Water and the RSPB gave tips on saving energy and water, and on providing a safe habitat for wildlife. Staff were encouraged to enter a recycling competition, enjoy eco-friendly giveaways, and take advantage of advice on household recycling, sustainable travel, and the effects of plastic waste on nature.



## Zero Waste Scotland

We throw out some 600,000 tonnes of food and drink from our homes each year, which is bad for the environment and our pockets! It was no surprise, then, that there was much to learn at the Love Food Hate Waste workshop, delivered as part of Climate Week, by Zero Waste Scotland in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust. The event reflected on the scale and impact of food waste in our country, and provided advice (including recipes) on avoiding food waste at home.



## Recycling IT equipment

SQA recycles all its old electrical and electronic equipment. During Climate Week, staff were encouraged to bring in old and disused laptops, PCs, printers, scanners, mobile phones and smartphones. These were then recycled by SQA's contractors in an environmentally friendly, safe and secure manner, which is guaranteed to involve zero landfill and minimal environmental impact.



## Earth Hour

WWF's Earth Hour is a chance to be part of global change. We invited staff to make a personal promise to the planet, and join WWF's big 'lights out' at 8.30 pm on 24 March.

SQA joined hundreds of organisations and millions of individuals around the world in switching off non-essential lights in our office buildings for an hour, to show support for action to combat climate change and ever-increasing carbon emissions.



Of course, the event in itself won't solve climate change, or halt the staggering loss of biodiversity that threatens the planet. It does, however, highlight the issues facing our world, and the amazing variety of living things we share our planet with. Taking part in Earth Hour reminds us that, together, we have the power to make change happen.

### How to celebrate Earth Hour

- Host a candlelit dinner
- Go stargazing
- Organise a storytelling night

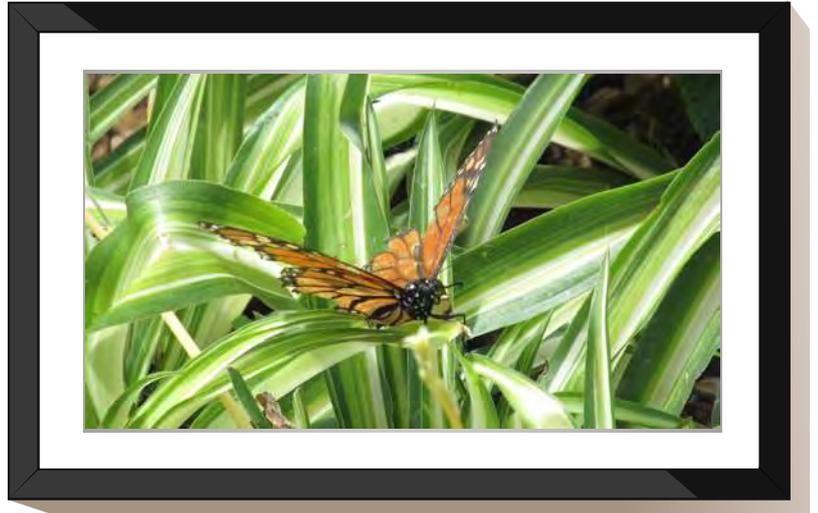


## Celebrating nature through photography

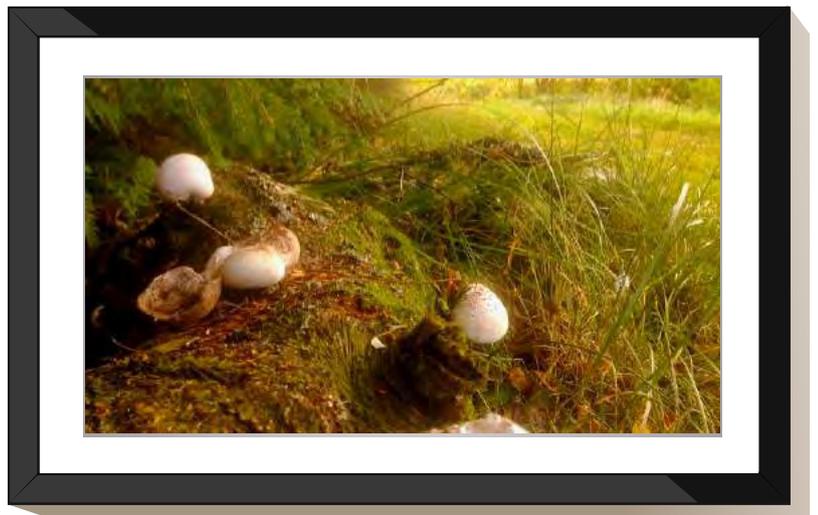
Budding shutterbugs have been encouraged to share stories and photographs of the wonders they have found in nature's landscape this year. We feature these in our online newsletter *Social Inform* every month.



Rachael Thomson captured the drama of 'an extremely cold and windy trip to North Berwick'.



Andrew Crosbie took this stunning picture of a butterfly in Madeira, Portugal.



Martin Migal spotted these puffball mushrooms growing on a log. 'These are amongst the "free edibles" that are perfectly safe to eat at a young stage, if you know how to identify them — a staple of the survivalist's autumn diet.'

## RoSPA Gold Award winners

For the fourth consecutive year, RoSPA recognised SQA's health and safety ethos with a RoSPA Gold Award.

The RoSPA awards scheme acknowledges achievements in health and safety management systems, including in leadership and workforce involvement, in organisations all around the world.



## World Environment Day

'Beating plastic pollution' was the theme of this year's World Environmental Day on 5 June 2018. This annual UN initiative encourages awareness and action for the protection of the environment. The theme sat well with SQA's own focus on reducing waste in general, and plastic waste in particular.

## Mugs for life

Following the success of two previous campaigns, we reintroduced our 'mugs for life' in February 2018, and distributed more than 500 reusable mugs to SQA staff. Since February, those people who have 'made the mug switch' have prevented thousands of disposable cups from going into the waste stream.



### Green up your vocabulary

- ◆ **Plogging** *noun* Swedish environmentally conscious fitness pastime, combining running with litter-picking. **plog** *verb*. [blend of 'jogging' and Swedish *plocka upp* (pick up), or *plocka skräp* (pick up litter)]
- ◆ **Reverse vending machine** *noun* Device which returns money when empty drinks containers (cans and bottles) are inserted. Money raised from recycling the containers can be used for general environmental hygiene purposes.

## The road less travelled

SQA launched its business travel campaign in March to promote travel alternatives for business travel or commuting like remote working, walking, cycling, using public transport or car-sharing.



## Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge

A big thank you to everyone who participated in the Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge in March. Colleagues were encouraged to reduce single-passenger car journeys, and to explore alternative travel methods.

Well done to top eco-commuters Judith Blackadder and Bryan Magill who logged 45 and 66 journeys respectively on the Scottish Workplace Journey website.

Some 33 staff members logged work journeys made by active or sustainable means. SQA staff logged a total of 774 active and sustainable journeys to, from and for work – a total of 8,736 miles – and saved more than 887kg of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere.



## Green wheels

As part of our Carbon Management Plan, SQA has replaced two of its fleet vehicles: one of its diesel vehicles by an electric alternative, and one of its old hybrid vehicles for a newer, more fuel-efficient model. These high-performance, environmentally friendly vehicles will contribute to reducing SQA's overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and vehicle running costs.

The 100% electric-powered Nissan e-NV200 Combi boasts zero driving emissions and reduced operating costs. Meanwhile, the Toyota Auris Hybrid's two engines – one electric and one petrol – work together to recycle energy, save fuel, and reduce emissions. It also recharges the car's battery without using electricity.



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## Future endeavours

SQA's responsible business strategies are currently the strongest they have ever been. By strengthening our relationships in our local communities, expanding our volunteering opportunities, and increasing staff involvement, we will ensure that the positive influence of SQA's responsible business practice grows.

We will maintain a pivotal role in supporting Scotland's flourishing education and training system and will always support Scotland's learners, teachers, lecturers and trainers as effectively and efficiently as we can in the delivery of our core business operations. Our ambition is to be one of the best public sector organisations in Scotland.

In the spirit of the Scottish Government's Year of Young People 2018, we will continue to highlight and recognise the achievements of young people across Scotland, and support them through initiatives in our local communities, such as work placements and volunteering, and through our Corporate Parenting endeavours.

We will continue to take our responsibility for SQA's environmental impact very seriously, and focus on reducing emissions, cutting waste and making green business decisions.

**Support our  
young people to  
reach positive  
destinations**

**Deepen SQA's  
relationships  
with local  
communities**

**Drive down  
emissions in line  
with our Carbon  
Management  
Plan**

**Nurture our  
colleagues'  
health and  
wellbeing**

**Build on our  
corporate  
parenting  
achievements**

