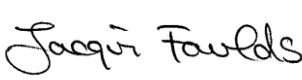


General Equality Duty:

Eliminate discrimination
Advance equality
Foster good relations

Equality Impact Assessment

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

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Name of policy/procedure/proposal/project/practice/decision*: | (Short Life Working Group) Reopening of the SQA offices project |
| Completed by: | Anne Andrew |
| Head of Service: | Jacqui Faulds |
| Date: | 15 October 2021 |
| Signature: |  |
| Next scheduled review date: | 31 January 2022 |

| |
|--|
| 2. Name of policy/procedure/proposal/project/decision*: |
| SLWG Reopening of the SQA offices project |

| |
|---|
| 3. What is main purpose of the project? Please consider the questions below: |
| <p>The SLWG Reopening of the SQA offices project was established after the sudden closure of our buildings due to the COVID 19 pandemic in March 2020.</p> <p>The group was established to allow SQA to return to office working in a safe and structured way that allowed our business to function and provide colleagues the opportunity to return to a healthy work environment. This will be carried out following the advice and guidance of Scottish Government.</p> <p>The aim of the group was to develop the following for all colleagues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A FAQs document to answer all aspect of questioning from colleagues in relation to return to offices during a pandemic situation• Assess the impact of the changes on stakeholder groups and how to address their concerns whilst operating in a pandemic situation• To provide guidance for all managers on identifying/selecting appropriate people to undertake roles that have been identified as business critical which need to be carried out in the office environment whilst in a pandemic situation• To develop methods and templates that enable effective resourcing and management of business-critical roles which also support our business functions• To ensure Internal communication plans and associated updates were in place, meet business needs and provide clear support advice and guidance to all colleagues. |

*Referred to as just "policy" hereinafter

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- To prepare guidance for field colleagues to allow safe return to travel and visit our centres

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

Internal evidence sources:

- feedback from SQA colleagues
- feedback from Union colleagues
- feedback from SQA networks

External evidence sources:

- feedback from stakeholder groups
- specific update from external contractors
- collaboration with Scottish Government
- collaboration with benchmarking group doing similar activity

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Public Sector Equality Duty

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

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

5. How might this policy impact on people who share protected characteristics? Please consider positive or negative impact. Are the needs of people with different characteristics met? Does the policy, procedure, or practice affect some groups differently? (At the beginning of the process you may want to record perceived impact – ongoing monitoring of the policy will allow you to measure the actual impact of the policy)

| Protected Characteristic | Neutral Impact | Positive Impact | Negative Impact | Please provide more information |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Age | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different age groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of age. |
| Disability | | X | | Due to the pandemic and all but essential staff working from home several colleagues indicated that after 18 months of home working, they would prefer to return to office working to support their personal health & wellbeing. Arrangements have been put in place to allow approx. 30 colleagues to work safely in our offices. |
| Marriage / Civil Partnership | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different marriage/civil partnerships groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless marital/ civil partnership status. |
| Race | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different race groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of race. |
| Religion / Belief / non-Belief | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different religion/non-Belief groups of colleagues. The project applies |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | equally to all colleagues regardless of religion or belief. |
| Sexual Orientation | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different sexual orientation groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of sexual orientation. |
| Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender) | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different gender reassignment groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of gender. |
| Pregnancy / Maternity | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different pregnancy/maternity/paternity groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of pregnancy or maternity or paternity leave |
| Sex | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different sex groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of sex. |
| Care experience (where relevant) | X | | | There is no differential impact identified in terms of different care experienced groups of colleagues. The project applies equally to all colleagues regardless of care experience. |

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

Where it is determined that a colleague is shielding or cannot attend work in the office environment for health and wellbeing issues then consideration will be taken to review the arrangements to mitigate any adverse or negative impact. This will also be reflected in another project – Smarter Working Programme.

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

N/A

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

Project is reviewed monthly to consider areas of improvement, current Scottish government guidance and business need. We will continue consider the general equality duty as we progress through the project when any changes are made to the arrangements, policies or procedures. The EqIA will be reviewed quarterly until offices are reopened.

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

Internal consultation has taken place with colleagues across the business via internal communications on our Intranet pages and colleagues have the opportunity to contact union representatives as well as the names project lead. Consultation has supported decision making in relation to timelines and the partial reopening of our office to support Health and Wellbeing of several of our colleagues.

10. How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

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SQA Facilities lead and Chair of the SLWG will be responsible for determining and dealing with submitted issues and escalate as required. The project sets out the steps and timelines to reopen our offices with all advice and guidance from Scottish Government taken.

Action Plan

| Ref: | Action: | Owners: | Dates: |
|------|---------|---------|--------|
| | | | |
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Approval and publication

Completed equality impact assessments will be published on SQA’s website.

- As such, EqlAs must be discussed and approved
- Following completion, please send the electronic copy to equality@sqa.org.uk
- Actions identified will be recorded and monitored as part of SQA’s equality action plan.

Sign off: _____

Date: _____

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Summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010

| Components | Due Regard |
|--|--|
| A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: | Having due regard specifically involves taking steps to: |
| a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act. (Fairness) | |
| b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. (Opportunity) | a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic * b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. |
| c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. (Respect) | a) Tackle prejudice. b) Promote understanding. |

*'Due regard' comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. The weight that public authorities give to equality should be proportionate to how relevant a particular function is to equality. In short, the more relevant a policy, procedure or practice is to equality and people, then the greater the regard that should be paid.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership *
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

* Although Marriage and Civil Partnership applies to section a) in employment only, this will be considered for all stakeholders.

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