



# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## REVIEW 2012<sup>13</sup>

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# Introduction

The past year has been a busy and productive time at SQA as we move forward significant initiatives that will support and develop Scotland's learners and unique education and training system. But it has been a difficult year too. Reducing expenditure across the public sector has affected SQA as we deal with maintaining services and quality as budgets constantly reduce around us.

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A bright light for us has been our corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and the uplifting and motivational impact these have had on colleagues across SQA. Our Giving Something Back activities have significantly developed in the past year. Colleagues across SQA have embraced, supported and added enormous value to community-based projects and other initiatives.

The details are provided in this Annual Report. I hope you agree it's impressive. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the past year. I admire and respect the effort you have made to engage with our CSR plans.

Enjoy reading this report and let's look forward to another successful year in 2014.



**Janet Brown**  
Chief Executive

# How CSR works at SQA

Our Giving Something Back strategy uses a 'four pillar' model. This helps us to integrate and embed our social conscience across our business operations.

The four pillars are our:

- Community
- People
- Environment
- Customers, Products & Suppliers

Governance and control are important. To ensure the effective deployment, monitoring and evaluation of our strategy, we have engaged with key people across SQA to support the roll-out and achievement of activities.

Executive Team

Corporate Social Responsibility Steering Group

Giving Something Back Champions

Maidie Cahill,  
Director of Corporate  
Services, is responsible  
for leading the Corporate  
Social Responsibility  
Steering Group.



Four senior members are responsible for the strategic direction and management of each corporate social responsibility pillar:



**NEIL MACGOWAN**  
**HEAD OF OPERATIONS**

Responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of all corporate social responsibility activities and is responsible for the Community pillar.



**HELEN DUNHAM**  
**HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Responsible for the People pillar



**SIMON PARSONS**  
**FACILITIES MANAGER**

Responsible for the Environment pillar



**ALASDAIR MACRAE**  
**HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

Responsible for the Customers, Products and Suppliers pillar

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# Working in partnership

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## Giving Something Back Champions



Our Giving Something Back Champions work across SQA to engage staff and promote our activities. Much of our progress over the past year has been achieved due to the commitment, passion and hard work of our Champions.

Tracey Curran, *GSB Champion*

**'Helping and supporting our young learners means a lot to me — that is why I love being a CSR Champion. Just knowing that the tips and techniques that we have provided may some day help a young person secure a place in college or employment makes me feel that I have contributed to making a difference in the life of our young learners.'**

**Being part of this is very rewarding and I would encourage anyone if they have not already volunteered to do so. Go on 'Give Something Back' and see what you get in return!'**

## SQA AND Scottish Business in the Community



Over the last 12 months Scottish Business in the Community Glasgow has continued to work with SQA and has facilitated and supported a range of activities designed to enhance the skills of young people across Glasgow.

In addition to continuing to work with young people studying Business Studies at Hillpark Secondary School, SQA volunteers have been working at Tinto Primary School, helping the pupils to improve their reading skills.

SQA as an organisation takes an active role in SBC's Glasgow Leadership Group and SQA staff support SBC's programmes to enhance the employability skills of young people in Glasgow and Midlothian.

**Ciara Duffy**  
Employability Co-ordinator,  
Scottish Business in the  
Community

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# Community

We strive to be a public body that truly 'Gives Something Back' to our local communities and the work undertaken in 2012–13 has helped us move towards this aim. From charity fundraising to engaging young people and improving their employability skills, the breadth of work has been outstanding. You can read about some of it here.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

- One-to-one reading and number-partnering support for primary 1–4 pupils at schools in Glasgow and Dalkeith
- Student mentoring programme with a focus on employability skills at a Glasgow School
- Supporting charities
- Outdoor activities with schools and community centres
- Competitions engaging young people and the community

## EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

We are now in our third year of our staff volunteering 'Hands up' scheme, which is steadily growing. All our permanent staff members have 21 hours a year to devote to volunteering in our local communities. We support volunteering activities linked to our corporate values in the following areas:

- Young people and social inclusion
- Enterprise and employability
- Environment and sustainability
- Human health and wellbeing

Led by our Giving Something Back Champions, our volunteering scheme has been hugely successful. A total of 152 staff members have registered to undertake voluntary work.

Since February 2011, our staff have devoted 1,021 hours to supporting our local communities through a range of practical activities.

We are very conscious that supporting volunteering opportunities brings advantages to SQA, our staff, and the people and organisations being supported. As well as acting as ambassadors for SQA, our staff volunteers are learning new skills which they bring back into our business.

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Here are some examples of the work they have done.

## HILLPARK SECONDARY – EVENTS MENTORING

We have worked closely with Hillpark Secondary School in Glasgow for three years. This year we focused on some specific learning — events planning.

The events mentoring involved two S3 pupils from the Business Management class and staff from SQA's Events team. The pupils were taken through the process of planning an event from start to finish, with a tour of a city centre venue to teach them what to look for when choosing a venue for an event. The one day of mentoring gave the young people a real-life experience of how you deliver an event in the workplace. They both left with a better understanding of events management.



**'I found it to be a really rewarding experience.'**

**I would love to see them start a career in events planning as they were both very enthusiastic.'**

Joanna Hendry, SQA staff member

**'Our trip to SQA has been inspiring. We have learned so much and have enjoyed ourselves and the company of the office staff. Joanna and Maria have been so informative and a great help. They have also been so lovely and kind. We did not realise there was so much to do in planning an event.'**

Lisa Piacentini and Tierney Mclethie, S3 pupils from Hillpark Secondary School

**'Our two S3 girls thoroughly enjoyed their one-day work experience visit to SQA's offices. Their experience allowed them to put the theory learned in school into practice where they were involved in organising a 'real' event. It has given them a true flavour of what working life is about and helped prepare them for the world of work.'**

Pauline Cairns, PT Hillpark Secondary School



## MENTORING AND EMPLOYABILITY

We have worked with Hillpark Secondary School in past years to create mock interviews. This project has now progressed to taking pupils through the full process of applying for a job and interview types. We worked with the pupils over a four week period, ending with a visit to SQA for a face-to-face interview with feedback.

The pupils learned about

- Job application writing skills
- Telephone interviews
- How to make the most of feedback
- Face-to-face interviews

The school thought this was a great life experience for the pupils.

**'The pupils enjoyed the experience. They gained a lot of insight into the job process from preparing a CV through to the interview and feedback. They enjoyed the time they spent with their mentor and valued the insights that they shared with them. It was a very valuable experience and one which every one of the pupils enjoyed - and something which they say should continue with other pupils.'**

**Frank Dixon**, Principal Teacher Hillpark Secondary



**SQA staff mentors and pupils from Hillpark Secondary School**

**'Leading on the Hillpark mentoring project was very motivating, from developing the programme and encouraging colleagues to take part, to meeting and working with the students.'**

**My student was a bit of a challenge — in a good way! He didn't attend clubs, group activities or have any clear hobbies, so preparing his personal statement was more of a challenge for him. His interests lie in Biology and Computing and he has his sights set on a Computing Science and Physiology course at Glasgow University.**

**I worked with him to show him how to recognise his skills, how to include them within his personal statement and how to talk about them at interview. He is a confident student and I'm sure he will do well - hopefully I helped him along the way.'**

**Tracy Walker**, SQA GSB Champion



## MOCK INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL STATEMENT

Supporting young people with personal statement and mock interview skills that they will need for the world of work is an important volunteering activity for SQA volunteers. In October, nine of our volunteers attended Hillpark Secondary to assist over 50 pupils with employability skills. We hosted workshops on 'How to complete a personal statement', 'Prepare for an interview' and 'Skills for group selection interviews'. Each pupil also had a mock interview.

It is important that young people are encouraged to write a personal statement that highlights all their positive experiences, hobbies, sports, work experience — including part-time jobs or voluntary work — as well as their qualifications. In this opportunity, volunteers worked on preparing a personal statement and what to include to make it stand out.



**'By offering help and guidance to young people, I feel that SQA is putting skills of mine to good use doing something different. Just getting out of the office, away from the desk for a few hours in a different environment can do wonders for employees' energy levels and outlook. I always feel refreshed and energised after 'Giving Something Back!'**

**Jenna Cameron, SQA GSB Champion**



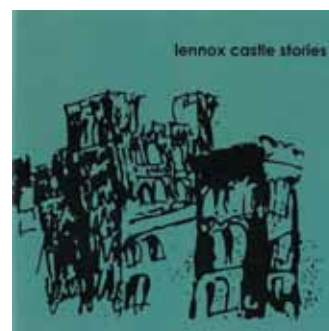
## PROJECT ABILITY

Project Ability is a leading visual arts organisation that enables people with disabilities and mental health issues to discover their artistic expression, develop their artistic practice and achieve their creative potential. It provides weekly art classes and a specialist programme of workshops in subjects such as woodcarving and ceramics.

Lennox Castle Stories (pictured above) is a project led by a group of ex-residents of Lennox Castle Hospital, which was on the outskirts of Glasgow and home to people with learning disabilities.

SQA has supported the charity in their project by printing 500 copies of the book *Lennox Castle Stories* so that they can sell and distribute them in order to raise funds for Project Ability.

**Tracy Gorman,**  
Volunteer Co-ordinator, Project Ability



**'SQA's support in printing our 'Lennox Castle Stories' books has been a fantastic contribution to our organisation, Project Ability, and to our partners in this project, C-Change. The book idea came from all the participants involved and as such we had to seek additional funds/help to support this idea. The donation, in kind, of the printing of these books has been very much appreciated by everyone involved.'**

## CROSS ARTHURLIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SQA has recently become a partner of Cross Arthurlie School in Barrhead. A small corner of their vast grounds was used for storytelling outdoors when the weather was good. However, in recent years this corner has been left unused and overgrown (pictured).

A group of volunteers visited the school on several days over a three week period to bring the story garden back to life again! The school staff and pupils are 'over the moon' and storytelling groups have been back in action thanks to our volunteers.

The work on the story garden took a couple of days. However, the hard work has not yet finished. More volunteers are due to go back to the school to plant flowers and start work on other areas of the school.

*Pictured, The Story Garden,  
Before >> During >> After*



**'It was lovely to be able to do something for my local primary school. It was hard work but very rewarding when the garden started to take shape at the end of the day. This was also an excellent opportunity to work with colleagues and pick up a few gardening tips from them.'**

**Jacqui Faulds,**  
SQA Volunteer

## ANNETTE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLASGOW

We have supported Annette Street Primary for three years with a number-partnering scheme. The pupils and teachers at the

school love to see the volunteers every week.

**'I enjoy going along as I think it's important that pupils are learning with number skills in everyday life for counting, managing money etc.'**

**Joan Morris,**  
SQA Volunteer

**'We all really enjoy going out and we know that the school appreciates our time and support as it is such a help for them having other adult helpers in the classroom.'**

**Jacqueline Campbell,**  
SQA Volunteer

**'I believe the students love the SQA staff going along to the school as they seem to be excited when they see them. I think as an employer in the local area SQA is doing a great job helping schools to improve the skills of young people.'**

**Teacher,**  
Annette Street Primary

## HAWTHORNDEN PRIMARY, MIDLOTHIAN

Hawthornden Primary has been a school that we have supported for three years with our paired-reading scheme. SQA staff continue to attend the school fortnightly to offer one-to-one tutoring to pupils to encourage their confidence in reading.

Staff have found this opportunity hugely rewarding and there has been a strong relationship built between the volunteers and the school.

## ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BONNYRIGG, MIDLOTHIAN

Our relationship with St Mary's has grown over the years with our different activities. We have created welcoming spaces, painted and decorated rooms, created light and bright spaces to play — and even created vegetable beds for classes to grow their own plants and vegetables.

We are currently looking into building more vegetable beds using old palettes that we have collected at our offices. These palettes were to be thrown out but we are pleased that they will be well used at St Mary's school.

### TINTO PRIMARY SCHOOL -

#### Staff Volunteer Reception with Tinto Primary

Tinto Primary hosted a volunteer reception to celebrate the work SQA has given to its local community. The reception showcased performances from the school which were prepared and delivered at their official opening ceremony in June. Our staff were also kindly given tours of the school by some senior pupils.



### PAIRED READING

Our paired-reading programme at Tinto Primary is working well with volunteers returning weekly to the school to support pupils. Throughout the last six months,

volunteers and pupils have built a trusting bond that allows the pupils to become confident and enjoy reading.

**'The paired-reading support is extremely helpful for the children involved. They benefit greatly from the regular input and their engagement with books has increased. They are now happy to talk about the kind of books they like and enjoy choosing books to read with their volunteers. Many of our children who struggle with literacy have low self-esteem and this programme gives them the opportunity to see themselves as successful learners.'**

**Lesley Baird, Deputy Head Teacher,**  
Tinto Primary School

**'We love it when the ladies come to visit. It is fun and they are really nice.'**

**Dale, P2 Tinto Primary School**

**'We go to paired reading on a Thursday afternoon and the ladies help us to get better at reading.'**

**Rory, P2 Tinto Primary School**

**'Tinto pupils have greatly benefited from having the regular support from SQA volunteers and our assessments show great improvements in the children's confidence in reading.'**

**Monique Kirkwood, Head Teacher,**  
Tinto Primary School



## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

SQA staff across our sites, including China, are working together to raise funds to support an orphanage in Hebei Province in Beijing.

The orphanage looks after children and young adults with disabilities. Their ages range from 3 to 26 and they will all need medical treatment throughout their lives. The resources of the orphanage are sparse and education is inconsistent and limited.

We have started a partnership with Tinto Primary School and the orphanage to allow exchanges of culture, language and

learning, supporting development and knowledge.

During a recent visit to China our staff visited the orphanage with 'Tinto Tiger' the mascot for Tinto Primary. The mascot was the symbol for the inauguration of the partnership and can be seen in these pictures with the children at the orphanage and with the children at Tinto.

Top, Tinto Tiger in China

Bottom, Tinto Tiger at Tinto Primary



## SPORTS DAY

This year we supported Tinto Primary with their sports day. SQA staff arrived early to help set up the sporting activities and to help the children with the sports, instructing each group of the aim of the activity and taking them through the course. The entire primary school attends this sports day in the Kelvin Hall, which amounts to around 450 children!

Here are some thoughts from our volunteers -

**'I really enjoyed helping out with the sports day — the level of work the deputy had been doing on her own was overwhelming and you could tell she was thrilled with the help she received. The kids were fantastic too and although there were so many of them they were actually well behaved!'**

**Moira Stenhouse,**  
SQA Volunteer

**'I really enjoyed this volunteering activity. It was great working with the children, a mix of trying to keep the more excited calm and encouraging the quieter. Some were very competitive and that was fun to watch.'**

**It is always a great opportunity to work with teachers of local schools and to be able to contribute and support the work they do and get involved with the children's learning.'**

**Tracy Walker,**  
SQA Volunteer



## PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

One of the opportunities available for staff is to organise their own volunteering so that they can work with projects that mean a lot to them. It allows them freedom to use their skills more widely and to learn new skills in a different environment.

Many SQA staff have had great success with different activities. Here are some of the inspiring opportunities that staff have supported.

### VOLUNTEERING AT COMMUNITY CATERING

Chryston Church is a large community-based church just outside Glasgow. It places a lot of emphasis in getting involved with people within the community and holds groups which meet weekly — from young mums to coffee mornings for the elderly. There are also groups for children of all ages and young adults.

Hilary was involved in organising a community week during the summer. She co-ordinated all the catering needs for the

week, which involved asking people to volunteer to help cook and clean up after each event, arranging for some volunteers to bake for various events, and organising ingredients (including over 1000 rolls!). The highlight of the week was a BBQ and ceilidh where Hilary cooked a whole roast pig! The community came out in force and we fed about 500 people.

Let's hear what Hilary had to say:



**'I got a huge sense of satisfaction from being able to help within the community by providing a catering service. I love a challenge and have developed many skills including managing and training a team, organising and planning skills. There tends to be a real sense of fun as everyone pulls together. It's a lot of hard work but when you provide a young mum with a couple of bacon rolls, and there are tears in her eyes because she hasn't eaten for two days to ensure her children have had food, then it makes it all worth it.'**

**Helping others can often lead to friendships and a lasting 'feel good' factor – get involved you will love it!**

**Hilary Cuthbertson,**  
SQA Volunteer

### SUPPORTING CHARITIES

With the hard work from our Informal Groups and the generosity of our staff at SQA, we have raised extraordinary sums of money for our nominated charities, Beatson Oncology Unit at Gartnavel hospital and Marie Curie Cancer Centre. We have exceeded sums from last year, for both sites, with Beatson receiving £10,000 and Marie Curie receiving £5,500.

We are very proud of our staff who go that extra mile to improve themselves and the lives of others.

Celia Thompson, SQA member of staff, personally raised over £750 for breast cancer.

**'I joined SQA Jog Club as I wanted to get fit. I never thought 10 months later I would be running a 10k. Joining the jog club has been the best thing I have done. The encouragement that everyone gives each other makes you feel so relaxed and welcome. If it wasn't for SQA having a jog club I would never have taken up running again.'**

**The benefits I have gained have been phenomenal and I'm ready for my next challenge!**



**Celia Thompson,** SQA Volunteer



## TEACHING ABROAD

SQA Volunteer — Linn Van Der Zanden

I had always wanted to try teaching and fancied a bit of an adventure travelling abroad at the same time, so I researched several organisations and chose one I felt comfortable with. Think Pacific ([www.thinkpacific.com](http://www.thinkpacific.com)) is a small organisation which takes 18–35 year-olds on expeditions solely to the South Pacific islands as they have built strong links there with the government and education authorities. The villages are off the beaten track and are accessible only by invitation of a village chief! I applied for a 6-week position and got offered a placement, leaving myself two weeks to sort flights, backpack, vaccinations and lesson plans.

Our first stop was a couple of days on an uninhabited island to familiarise ourselves with customs, language and each other. We then arrived on Moturiki Island, where we were allocated a Fijian family to stay with in the village of Nasauvuki. There was no electricity or running water, it was back to basics and cold-bucket showers. The diet was very limited too.

My time there was split between the island primary school and the kindergarten. The contrast between the two was incredible. The toddlers were completely undisciplined and from the minute they arrived at 8am until they left in a stampede at noon, they jumped on the tables and communicated

through shouting in Fijian. So we soon learned some Fijian words such as 'down' and 'enough'! On the opposite side of the spectrum, the routine for the primary pupils was very regimented.

The teaching was done in partnership. There were two volunteers per class and teaching involved a combination of study from their books in English, Maths and Science as well as a few 'free for all' periods to talk about our home country or special interests. As part of this I invited various volunteers and the team leaders in front of the class over the period of a week to interview them about their careers back home and how they got there. Every day after school all the volunteers also coached a sport of our choice in various teams — a great way to end the day and blow off some steam (including for us)! Sports and church were both an important part of village life so much of our limited free time was spent on either the pitch or the pew!

It was a great opportunity to build on team working and leadership skills but beyond gaining experience in front of the class and meeting new people, I returned with revived energy and a sense of achievement and would recommend this type of experience to anyone — a change is as good as a rest, as they say...



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# Competitions & Open Days

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## SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

We are committed to promoting a fair and inclusive Scotland. This is the fourth year we have provided support to the annual creative competition for schools and colleges run by Show Racism the Red Card.

Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racism charity that produces educational resources such as films, education packs, magazines and posters. The aim of the campaign is to combat racism using professional footballers as anti-racism role models.

We provided support to promote the competition across Scotland's schools and colleges and delivered the prize-giving ceremony.

2013 was a successful competition— with over 1,700 entries received from 118 centres. Schools from 27 local authorities

in Scotland, and 14 further education colleges, participated. The most significant statistic is that 1,760 young Scots learned about anti-racism. Their powerful and emotive competition entries showed their overwhelming commitment to saying that racism has no place in Scotland.

Prizes were presented to finalists in six categories, but there was no overall winners as the judges felt it was inappropriate to select a winner from powerful and evocative entries spanning a wide age range.

The awards ceremony was held on 21 March 2013 at Hampden Park, Glasgow, and was hosted by TV personality Sanjeev Kholi. Over 250 guests, including a host of football stars from Scottish football clubs, were present to see the prizes handed out.







## China

SQA's presence in China is continuing to grow from strength to strength through our quality of education and customer service.

This year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of our partnership with the Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE). To mark this occasion we held an awards ceremony at Renmin University of China in Beijing for the teachers and students in SQA centres who have contributed to this success.

Since 2003, over 16,500 students have achieved an SQA HND. The qualifications have enhanced their future prospects and are making a real difference to their careers, their communities and the economic development of China.

Awards conferred were: HND Top Student; HND Top Teacher; HND Alumni Awards; and HND Champion Awards.

There were performances by students from universities in China that deliver HNDs and by HND students from The National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland.



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# People

SQA is committed to developing a supportive, enjoyable and inclusive work environment. We are delighted to report on progress being made to support and engage staff through our CSR activities

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## HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES



### MAC Group retain Gold Award for a further year

SQA's Make a Change (MAC) group takes the lead in promoting health and lifestyle choices to all staff.

MAC members are all volunteers who meet monthly to develop a range of creative and innovative health promotion activities and life style options. SQA has held the Healthy Working Lives Gold

Award since 2010 and this year, after a full review process, we have been granted the award for a further year! The award recognises the achievements of our health promotion activities and our commitment to helping staff make effective lifestyle choices.

Group volunteers have been a great help in SQA retaining the award — as have all the SQA staff across both sites who took part in initiatives or joined fitness groups. Thank you to everyone who has helped us gain the award for a further year.

This year the group agreed to focus on family health.

## MAC ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEAR...

### Saturday Kitchen — Lowden

SQA held a Saturday Kitchen event to support the National Childhood Obesity Week as part of our MAC Group Healthy Living campaign.

For the children, we had drawing stations and recipe book making, together with zumbatomic dancing and treasure hunts. They even had their fill of new healthy treats at the food tasting table.

Everyone who attended said that they went away with some useful healthy tips for feeding the family!



### Step Challenge

This year's Step Challenge was a great success with 13 teams across the SQA competing to win one of three categories. The challenge was set over five weeks and resulted in 22.5 million steps from all the teams. The theme this year was to walk between the two SQA offices, Lowden and Glasgow. Together, staff walked just over 195 times between the two sites!

Winners:



**Skinny Minnies,**  
Most Improved Team



**Steptony and Daughters,**  
Most Steps Walked (Team)



**Celia Thompson,**  
Most Steps Walked (Individual)

### Man v Jog Club

The SQA Jog Club challenged our top athlete staff member Robert Quinn to a 10k race by the River Clyde. Robert ran 12 laps of the 1 kilometre course and 12

Jog Club runners all completed one lap each on a relay. We had official course marshalls, time keepers, lap counter, fancy dress, music and a crowd of spectators

who came along during their lunch break to support this event. Staff raised £470 for Beatson Cancer Centre.





## Classes and Therapies

This year has proved successful across all exercise classes and therapies, with new members and new classes.

Bootcamp and Jog Club are popular with the Jog Club expanding to include over 40 members of staff. Tony Hamilton is our newest jog leader



'When a staff member departed SQA last summer, I suddenly found myself becoming an SQA jog leader. The thought of becoming a jog leader had not entered my head prior to this but the other jog leaders believed I could do it and encouraged me to take on the role. In six months I had gone from struggling to run for the bus to SQA jog leader then on to running my first ever 10k. That really sums up the Jog Club; it's about encouragement and support for whatever goals you have, whether it's simply getting active for 20-30 minutes of gentle jogging and walking, or training for a half marathon, it's great to have friends to train with and who provide each other with moral support.'

**Tony Hamilton,**  
SQA Jog Leader

### BeneFit

BeneFit was a new concept to include people who have had no experience of fitness and to allow them to gain confidence in exercising. These classes go back to basics, teaching beginners how to do exercises the right way.

Kirstie was one of the 'pioneers' of the first BeneFit Class and has never looked back since. She progressed to joining the Jog Club, which she never thought that she would be able to accomplish.

'I was never really a fan of running having been forced to do cross country at school many years ago!

I wanted to get fit but was stuck in a rut and didn't know where to start. I saw BeneFit advertised and liked the sound of it, plus by doing it at lunchtime, I didn't feel lazy when I went home and didn't do anything.

The SQA trainer is fab, it made the sessions really enjoyable. Each session we do different exercises so we can learn different ways to exercise with and without equipment. I think it gives you more energy so you are ready to start work in the afternoon!

I would highly recommend it!

**Kirstie Casson,**  
SQA Jog Club member

### Men's Health event

SQA hosted an event aimed at men's health which provided tips, information and demonstrations on how to gain, improve and lead a healthy lifestyle. Many factors contribute to health and the event reflected this by having a range of exhibitors from personal trainers to physiotherapists and martial art instructors to nutritionists.

Run4it did gait analysis and provided training and running shoe advice. Men International haircare also attended and gave free haircuts and shaves as well as advice.

We had over 40 staff attend the event and their feedback was very positive.



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## Ladies Night

Ladies Night took place in February, with more than 40 people attending the event. Exhibitors included a nutritionist, the SQA Wine Club, a nail technician and Run 4 It. The feedback from the exhibitors was very positive with a lot of them enjoying the atmosphere and the informality of the event.

- 89% of people said they would lead a healthier more active lifestyle now
- 93% will use the information and tips that they learned



## Dental event

In promotion for National Smile Month, SQA held an event for staff to encourage the key messages that the campaign was supporting.

- Visit the dentist regularly
- Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time
- Cut back the times you consume sugary food and drinks

Students from the Dental School in Glasgow provided a drop-in session for staff to visit over their lunch breaks. Although the event was based around the key messages of National Smile Month, advice was on hand for any dental issues that staff had.

The Dental School runs two events a year, and we were fortunate to be able to host one of them in our own offices! This mutually beneficial and exciting opportunity was the first of its kind for both SQA and the Dental School — and Bruce Oxley from Scottish Dental Magazine was there to document it.

Nearly 80 members of staff attended, and they left with lots of advice and useful tips.



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## Long Service Awards

Long Service Awards were held in November 2012 for 23 members of staff, one of whom received recognition for 35 years of service! In addition, 12 people were recognised for 25 years' service and 10 people for 15 years' service. Altogether, the awardees had given 485 years of service.



## Work experience

As part of our commitment to youth employment initiatives, SQA pledged to provide 20 work experience placements for school pupils for the session 2012–13. We met this target with the dedicated support of the organisation and, in fact, provided work experience for 25 pupils. We had a 100% success rate with the pupils rating their overall experience at SQA as excellent/very good.

Some comments from the pupils were:

**'I learnt lots about SQA, how it works, and how to use different software.'**

**'I learnt to be confident in myself and that I can work well and effectively with others.'**

## Stonewall

In March 2012, SQA joined Stonewall Scotland's Diversity Champions programme which promotes good practice for employers. The programme develops a good working environment for all existing and potential staff and helps ensure equal treatment for those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

SQA invited staff to complete Stonewall Scotland's staff survey to gather feedback and provide support to SQA's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff. There were 14 employees who responded. Staff members were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a number of statements. The results of the survey were very positive. As an example it highlighted that:

- 86% agree that SQA's workplace culture is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people
- 100% of respondents would feel confident reporting anti-gay bullying and
- 93% agreed with the statement 'I feel able to be myself in the workplace'

In August 2012, SQA supported Stonewall Scotland's 'Scottish Business in the Community' event. We also had SQA representation at Stonewall's Workplace Conference in November 2012 and hosted Stonewall's Good Practice Programme Seminar: 'Equality Outcomes — Sharing Good Practice' in February 2013.

We continue to work with Stonewall Scotland to achieve SQA's equality and diversity commitments around sexual orientation.



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## Pathway Apprenticeship Scheme

SQA, as part of the government's drive to help increase youth employment, has appointed two Modern Apprentices, Alex and Zak to work in the Lowden office. SQA plans to take on a further two Modern Apprentices each year in both Optima and Lowden, with the first two in Optima due to start in August 2013.

The two-year apprenticeship in Business Administration in SQA will see the apprentices experience working in four

different departments. They will continue in their academic learning by undertaking day release at a local college, studying for an HNC in Information Technology and Administration. Each apprentice has a mentor who is on hand to provide informal advice and support throughout the apprenticeship.



**Alex & Zac hard at work**



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# Environment

The team responsible for the environmental aspects at SQA continue to strive for improvements and to implement new initiatives to further improve our environmental standing.

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‘Connections’ (the new corporate communication tool) is being used as a means of promoting environmental information to help colleagues make informed choices, in the office or at home. This is proving a popular and easy way to keep colleagues informed.

Green travel promotions for the benefit of staff have been the main focus during the last 12 months.



- Travel surgery — provided an opportunity for our Glasgow-based staff to book a 15 minute one-to-one consultation with a consultant from ‘A Better Way to Work’. Advice was available on sustainable travel, cycle and walking routes to and from work. All slots were fully booked and proved popular with staff, many of whom went on to change their daily commute.

- Bike loans — this interest-free loan facility has continued for another

year. Over 50 people have made use of this scheme since it commenced.

- Bike Shed — provided an opportunity for staff to receive a free maintenance ‘MOT’ check for their bikes.

- Lothian Bus — a Lothian bus attended the Lowden office to promote bus travel. This was a very popular event with staff.

- Electric Car Project — this project has continued in partnership with Edinburgh College. Our new Peugeot vehicle can often be seen in and around Dalkeith or on the frequent journeys it makes into Edinburgh.

A ‘Love Food Hate Waste’ event was held over a two week period. Tips and ideas on how to avoid wasting food with daily recipes and further ideas were available to staff. The two week event cumulated in three days where other organisations came to our Dalkeith office to provide further information on re-cycling and to run cooking demonstrations.



Recycling figures across both sites continue to be very high, with an average of only 4% of total waste going to landfill.

Our first year in the new Lowden building has seen a significant reduction in emissions from gas used for heating. This, however, is always subject to how cold it is in winter — and how long it is cold for.

International air travel has increased during 2012–13, which resulted in a 4% increase in our CO2 emissions. This increased travel pattern is directly related to the growth in our international business activities. However, we have still achieved a 22% reduction from our baseline year of 2009–10 and already achieved our target of a 20% reduction by March 2014.

The coming year will present further challenges on the environmental front. We recognise that air travel is required to support our international activities. However, we will continue to promote and maximise use of other means of communication, eg web conferencing, to minimise the impact on the environment.



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# Customers, Products & Suppliers

Our customers have high standards, and they expect us to act in a socially responsible way. Our products need to be sustainable to meet customers' expectations. Equally, we expect our suppliers to have similar expectations to our own. This section describes our activity in this area throughout the year.

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## Commonwealth Games legacy



In 2011, we promoted our newly validated Volunteering Awards. The target audience for these awards is the large number of voluntary and other third sector organisations who use volunteers to support their work, and as part of the campaign we asked voluntary organisations around the country to identify how SQA staff and customers can help to support their activities.

Activities have been expanded in the current year with the additional focus on the upcoming Commonwealth Games.



The 20th Commonwealth Games in 2014 will be held in Glasgow and will run for 12 days from 23 July to 3 August 2014. It will be the largest multi-sport event ever held in Scotland.

SQA engages in Sport your Trainers Day, an event aimed at improving health and fitness and promoting Scotland's Commonwealth Games. SQA has also extended the number of volunteering days available to staff through our Hands Up initiative to allow them to participate in a greater way to support the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Staff are

already contributing in many ways, such as supporting the World Youth Netball Championships.

SQA has worked closely with the 2014 Games Legacy Committee to ensure the learning opportunities available before, during and after the Games add real value to learners of all ages, including the 15,000 volunteers needed to deliver a successful event. SQA has a wide number of qualifications across many sectors that will enhance visitors' experience of Scotland, develop people's skills, training and learning opportunities, and help deliver the most successful Commonwealth Games ever. Areas covered include volunteering, spectator safety and Personal Best which contributes and supports the Scotland's Best programme launched this year by the First Minister.

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## Star Awards

Star Awards is our annual event which celebrates achievements, commitments and successes.

The 2012 Star Awards ceremony was held in November at Anniesland College, Glasgow.

Hosted by media personality Kaye Adams, the glittering evening rewards and recognises individuals, schools, colleges and training organisations across Scotland. Entertainment was provided on the night by individuals and groups from schools and colleges across Scotland.

Our premier award, the Fellowship of SQA goes to individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to education and training in Scotland. The award for 2012 was presented to Brian Lister OBE, former Principal of Stevenson College, Edinburgh for his substantial and significant contribution to education and training in Scotland.



Brian Lister, SQA Fellow



Entertainment from students at Edinburgh College.



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## SQA's Leadership Award

Armadale Academy

Teaching staff were looking to formally recognise some of the learning and activities their students were undertaking outwith the traditional school day, including the great work young people were doing in Scouting.

SQA's Leadership award brought many benefits to individuals involved and to the wider community. The young people who took part became more aware of the skills they had developed and were ably

demonstrating, the school could further develop other young people as part of their Recognising Wider Achievement agenda and many in the community benefitted from the role models that many of the young people became. It is intended that an extended pilot involving young leaders from different regions will be carried out in the next academic year.

**Andrew Sharkey,**  
Deputy Head Teacher,  
Armadale Academy

**'The leadership qualification and the associated learning help build students' confidence and clearly enhances learning and social skills, impacting positively upon classmates, the school environment and, of course, their own futures. It rewards them for what they do to help others and shows the value society on the voluntary sector.'**

## Supply chain

SQA is dedicated to ensuring our supply chain allows fair and transparent engagement for all suppliers, including SMEs and local businesses. SQA is also committed to working with suppliers who have a strong ethical and social responsibility to their employees and within their own supply chain.

In 2012–13, the Procurement team worked to ensure the continued development of SMEs engaged with SQA.

The following actions and measurements have been achieved:

- The Procurement Strategy was updated to include a measured requirement to award a minimum of one contract per year to a supported business.

- 79% of suppliers engaged by SQA were classed as SMEs.

- Almost half of all SQA contracts with a value greater than £25,000, were awarded to companies either in the local area or who are classed as small or medium sized companies.

- 95% of invoices received by SQA were paid within 10 days of receipt of their invoice.

- The Procurement Manager attended events organised by Scottish Business in the Community to promote the engagement of SMEs within the public sector.

SQA is a long-standing, active 'collaborator' within several of the Scottish Government's framework agreements. Virtually all of our externally-sourced services are procured through these frameworks. They include: marketing services; media planning and buying; and media services.

In order to win a place on the framework, suppliers must confirm in their tender that they will meet, where appropriate, the Scottish Government's objectives on sustainability in the delivery of the service they are to provide.

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# Conclusion

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Our corporate social responsibility activities have continued to grow and develop in 2012–13, and this review has highlighted many of the initiatives that we have implemented and delivered during this past year.

However, we have lots of exciting ideas for 2013–14 and as a socially responsible company we are looking forward to working with the community and supporting the young people of Scotland as we strive to become an increasingly positive leader in the area of CSR.



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