

Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Action Plan

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

Agreed Schedule Review Date	July 2026	Additional Schedule Review Date	
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Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to monitor the implementation of practice and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)			[ONGOING RECORD]
[LIST]			
Continue to review and assess on an annual basis the findings of SQA's People survey	Senior Internal Communications Manager	October 2023 onwards	
Continue to review and assess feedback from SQA Community Networks and engage regularly with network leads	Senior Internal Communications Manager	Ongoing	
Continue to engage with HR and Organisation Development (OD) Business Partners	Senior Internal Communications Manager	Ongoing	
Continue to support and engage with Internal Communications Steering Groups and use these as sounding boards for relevant issues	Senior Internal Communications Manager	Ongoing	

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
[LIST]	[CROSS REFERENCE]			

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	Internal Communications and Engagement
New Policy or Revision	Revision
Name of Policy Owner	Senior Internal Communications Manager
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	August 2023

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?

It is essential that SQA carries out effective internal communications and engagement with its employees. By implementing good internal communications practices, SQA aims to enhance transparency, promote a positive organisational culture and foster an inclusive environment where all staff members feel valued, informed and engaged.

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

Established channels for communications and engagement are in place:

- Intranet homepage
- Intranet articles
- All-colleague-emails
- Staff information programme: Events to present information on a topic and an opportunity for colleagues to ask questions
- Ask EMT: Online events for all staff with SQA's Executive Management Team and an opportunity to ask questions and discuss topics of interest
- Intranet Digest: Weekly round up of news and information from the intranet, sent to all colleagues via email
- Live events: Live online events organised for everyone within SQA, to communicate and discuss important updates.
- Employee Staff Networks: Groups of colleagues coming together to support and raise awareness of specific areas in a 'community' - representing areas including disabilities, LGBT+, race and ethnicity, and environment.
- Viva Engage: Microsoft-based social media platform for all SQA employees (previously known as Yammer).
- Lockscreen and desktop wallpapers
- Inform newsletter: Month staff eNewsletter
- Team takeovers: Opportunity for teams to be showcased on SQA's intranet to raise their profile
- The Box: Question/suggestion form which is featured in the monthly Inform newsletter.

Metrics are in place to measure use of these channels, including - Intranet views and likes, attendance and engagement numbers for Ask EMT and live events; Inform views and likes; Viva engage engagement stats.

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

The practice focuses on a number of elements related to good internal communications and engagement:

- Keep staff informed
- Give staff more holistic view of SQA
- Help to build a positive organisational culture
- Engage staff and give them a voice
- Provide channels for staff to highlight key work-related news and developments
- Empower staff with knowledge and support
- Motivate staff to deliver business strategies
- Promote a shared understanding of business values, goals and guidelines
- Create channels for feedback, debate and discussion
- Use Plain English to communicate as clearly as possible with staff

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

It emphasises the importance of inclusivity and creating an environment where all staff members feel valued. By promoting effective internal communications and engagement, the practice aims to ensure that information reaches all individuals, regardless of their characteristics or backgrounds.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?

SQA staff
Executive Management team
SQA Senior Leadership Team
Human Resources team
Organisational Development team
Internal Communications Steering Groups
SQA Community Networks

Recognised Trade Unions

This engagement includes:

- Formal staff feedback such as People Survey results, in-person research (such as staff engagement events) and engagement with Internal Communications Steering Groups
- EMT feedback on Internal Communications practices (for example – Ask EMT refresh proposals designed in co-operation with EMT – and informed by staff feedback)
- Regular engagement with HR and OD business partners
- Alignment of Internal Communications staff across all directorates – link to management teams and Internal Communications Steering Groups
- Engagement with recognised Trade Unions
- Community network engagement (representation across groups and engagement with network leads)

What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?

Age

- Guides for plain English say that text should be written so that somebody with the reading ability of a 9-year-old can understand it. [Plain English | Readability Guidelines](#)
- Plain English is mandatory for all of gov.uk websites and provides information on the positive impact on using plain English for all audiences - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design/writing-for-gov-uk#plain-english>
- More people will understand your message and there is less chance that your document will be understood - <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/benefits/>
- Plain language benefits all users, including people who are encountering an unknown topic - <https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/use-plain-language>
- The most basic writing techniques when writing for the general public are: use short sentences; try not to use words that are three syllables or more - <https://resources.mygov.scot/content-standards/content-delivery/creating-content/readability/>
- More people will understand your message and there is less chance that your document will be understood - <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/benefits/>

The practice promotes and supports the work of SQA's Young Talent Network, which gives colleagues aged 16-24 a platform where they will be heard, recognised and supported to influence change and ensure SQA fulfils its commitment to developing all of the young workforce. This includes initiatives such as the Young Talent Strategy:

Young Talent Strategy 2022



Sourcing and Recruiting Talent

- Inclusive work-based learning opportunities
- Consider if a young person could benefit before going to market
- Offer above the national living wage and fixed term contracts to offer security
- Provide a fair salary for the level of responsibility
- Engage and support government agencies to develop Scotland's young workforce
- Work with schools, colleges and universities to learn about the world of work
- Actively encourage applications from the right candidate regardless of age



Developing Talent

- Establish career pathways
- Encourage ownership of own development
- Offer a Career Development Mentor
- Provide relevant and accessible learning opportunities
- Prioritise access to Coaching and Mentoring qualifications
- Promote the benefits of having young talent in the organisation

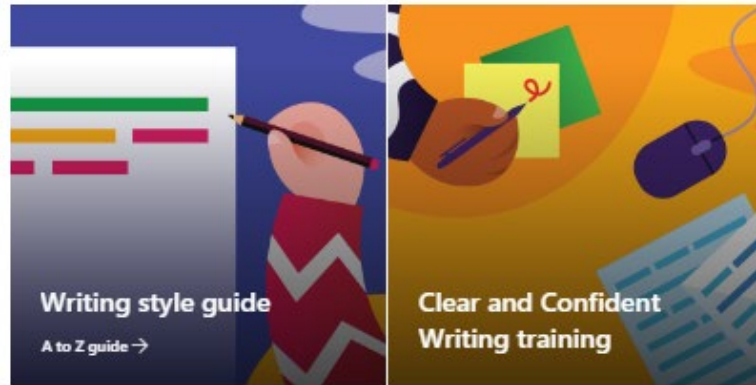


Retaining Talent

- Ensure the voice of young people is heard
- Prioritise young talent with the right skills and behaviours
- Implement a learning programme for aspiring leader development
- Consider work experience in terms of work activity
- Engage with and actively encourage young talent to take ownership of their development
- Directly promote learning and development available at SQA

Disability

SQA staff are encouraged to write using plain English and follow SQA's style guide for writing. Many resources are promoted internally, and training provided to encourage clear, confident and approachable writing. There is a section dedicated to this on the intranet:



Ask us anything...

What are you working on?

For my my first challenge to change my mindset from PDF to HTML, this accessibility blog post from UK Gov highlights that HTML is also more environmentally friendly.
<https://accessibility.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/12/making-a-positive-change-pdf-to-html/>

If you are interested in seeing how 'dirty' websites can be this carbon calculator <https://www.websitecarbon.com/> will calculate how much CO2 is produced every time someone visits a web page - SQA.org.uk does not do well...

Show 5 previous replies

News

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New SQA Academy course: Writing for the web
 Writing May 26
 222 views



Writing accessible emails
 Lynday Clelland May 23
 44 views

In-person proofreading workshop in Lowd...

In-person proofreading workshops in Opti...

Proofreading The Nutcracker

How Plain English stole Christmas

Grammar lessons hidden in Christmas songs

The Twelve Days of Clear and Confident Wr...



Update: workshop full In-person proofreading...
 Writing March 3
 130 views



Accessibility at SQA — what's been happening
 Angela Flannagan February 13
 20 views

Quick links

About us

Accessibility

Business Glossary

Join our Viva Engage (Yammer) community

Policies

Resources

Training

User experience testing also regularly takes place and design updates made to the intranet to reflect feedback from employees.

	<p>Digital Accessibility Guidelines are promoted to all SQA staff, in particular around how to create content and write accessibly on the internet. Accessibility has become an important part of digital communications and something that can no longer be ignored.</p> <p>At least 1 in 5 people have a long-term illness, an impairment, or a disability. Many more will have a temporary or situational disability. Health conditions can impact a person’s ability to understand a message, either because of a cognitive impairment, or because they are unable to see, hear or otherwise access the information. Accessible intranet content can be more effective because it can be accessed and understood by the widest possible audience – regardless of whether people have a visual, hearing, speech, motor, cognitive or other combination of impairments</p> <p>SQA's Internal Communications service follows best practice outline by The Government Communications Service (GCS).</p> <p>The practice promotes and supports the work of SQA’s Disability Network, which provides a welcoming, confidential and safe environment to raise and discuss issues, share ideas, information and knowledge relating to disability equality in the workplace and wider society. This includes the promotion of initiatives such as the Disability Survey 2023, to gauge how disabled staff were feeling on some key issues; Disability History Month; and personal stories from SQA Disability Network members highlighting disabilities.</p>
Race	<p>The use of plain language translates more easily into other languages - https://www.aucd.org/docs/phe/PracticalStrategiesforWritinginPlainLanguage.pdf</p> <p>The practice promotes and supports the work of the Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity (ACE) community network, including highlighting SQA’s commitment to race equality during Race Equality Week; and Black History Month (recognition of individuals' achievements and personal stories, celebrating Black culture, looking at what SQA is doing to support race equality within Scotland, exploring what we mean by 'action' and the importance of allies and what it's like to be a member of the ACE Network).</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>The practice supports and promotes a new Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Calendar which is available to employees. This has details of all the main religious festivals, major national and international days of celebration or memorial which reflect the diverse population of our community and the communities we serve.</p>
Sex	<p>The practice promotes and supports the work of the community networks for both men and women, proving safe and inclusive spaces for discussion.</p>

Sexual Orientation	The practice promotes and supports the work of SQA's Rainbow Network, which exists to connect, develop and support LGBT+ people and our allies across SQA.
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	The practice promotes and supports the work of SQA's Rainbow Network, which exists to connect, develop and support LGBT+ people and our allies across SQA.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No evidence of an impact has been identified.
Pregnancy / Maternity	No evidence of an impact has been identified.
Care experience (where relevant)	The practice promotes and supports activity including Care Experience Week and communications around results day experiences for Care Experienced children.

Impact and Opportunities for Action

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

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

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct
	SQA's internal communications are clear, readable and follow internationally recognised standards which can have a positive impact in terms of reducing discrimination.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	As all staff are encouraged and trained to write using plain English, SQA's internal communications should be accessible to all staff, regardless of age, widening access to information and opportunity.
	Foster good relations
<p>By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group, including the Young Talent Network • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>	
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty

Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this practice, or that this practice could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>As all staff are encouraged and trained to write using plain English, SQA's internal communications should be accessible to all staff, including those with learning disabilities, widening access to information and opportunities.</p> <p>SQA's Internal Communications service follows best practice on accessibility outlined by The GCS. This broadens access to SQA's communications, and enables all staff, including those with access needs, to better participate.</p> <p>Providing our messaging in a clear, concise and relevant way allows all audiences (including those with a learning disability) to access information.</p> <p>A weekly 'news digest' email is provided for employees to round up key information from the past week in a succinct and readable format, sent directly to their mailboxes – which may help neurodiverse readers met with a large amount of content on the intranet.</p>
	Foster good relations
<p>By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>	
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty

Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	By using Plain English in internal communications, SQA's comms are to be more easily translated to other languages, removing barriers for those with a different country of origin, who may speak English as an additional language.
	Foster good relations
By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>	
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Religion or Belief	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.
	Foster good relations

	By promoting initiatives such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Calendar, SQA Internal Comms raise awareness of, and promote good relations for religious holidays that SQA staff may be celebrating.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.
	Foster good relations
	By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group, including the Women's Network, and the Men's Shed • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

	<p>There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group, including the Rainbow Network • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>By enabling and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives such as staff community networks, human resources campaigns etc, the practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a platform for staff to highlight matters important to a given group, including the Rainbow Network

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases visibility on key issues • Facilitates community campaigns • Gives a megaphone to the organisation <p>This fosters relations between people who share a characteristic or don't.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.
	Foster good relations
	There is no indication that this practice fosters good relations on the basis of this protected characteristic.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.

	Foster good relations
	The practice signposts to relevant guidance and key information for this characteristic to ensure staff are aware of it.
Considered by SQA	General Equality Duty
Care experience (where relevant)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	There is no expected or evidence of discrimination either as a result of this policy, or that this policy could effectively eliminate.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence that this practice would enhance equality of opportunity based on this characteristic, nor is there evidence of a disparity of opportunity.
	Foster good relations
	There is no indication that this practice fosters good relations on the basis of this protected characteristic.

Rationale

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.
No negative impacts have been identified