

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	By September 24	Additional Schedule Review Date	By September 23
------------------------------------	------------------------	--	------------------------

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
Review and assess monthly establishment management information packs containing fundamental employment data on SQA employees	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	Commencing monthly from October 2022	
Review on a quarterly basis of employment law, case law and legislative changes, and equalities updates (including reviewing EHRC website).	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	
Review and assess feedback on a quarterly basis from joint trade unions (Unite and Unison) through SQA's Joint engagement forum and Policy review group.	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	
Review and assess feedback on a quarterly basis from each of SQA's staff community network groups	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	

Equality Impact Assessment – Adoption Policy V1.0

Continue to review and assess on an annual basis SQA's engagement People survey	OD Manager	Commencing annually from October 2023	
Review and assess on an annual basis all SQA employee lifecycle data	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	Commencing annually from January 2024	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's equality mainstreaming report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Commencing every 2 years from May 2023	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's workforce equality monitoring report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Commencing every 2 years from May 2023	

Equality Impact Assessment – Adoption Policy V1.0

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
<p>All protected characteristics Specific to Age, but applicable to all, we advise that SQA captures data for applications for Adoption leave and all other family/parental related leave.</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination</p>	<p>Director, People</p>	<p>September 24</p>	
<p>General It may also be useful to include this policy in with a suite of related parental/family related policies when published on the intranet to help people access all relevant information in one place.</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity Foster good relations</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>September 23</p>	
<p>General The linked statutory legislation referred to in the policy needs to be reviewed to check it is up to date.</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination</p>	<p>HR Shared Services Manager</p>	<p>October 22</p>	
<p>Maternity Include a reference in the policy on surrogacy and how this links to maternity and adoption would be helpful for the reader. We are mindful however that this is an employment policy and needs to focus on internal requirements and processes.</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>HR Shared Services Manager</p>	<p>September 23</p>	

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	Adoption
New Policy or Revision	New (currently Adoption leave is in a section of Staff Leave policy)
Name of Policy Owner	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	Draft

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
<p>This policy sets out legislative rights and explains the internal process to be followed for anyone adopting a child through a UK or overseas adoption agency or are a local authority foster parent who has been approved as a prospective adopter.</p> <p>The policy introduction makes it clear that <u>employment rights</u> are protected while on Statutory Adoption Leave.</p> <p>Different eligibility and notification requirements apply depending on the type of adoption.</p>

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

The policy is developed in line with legislation explained here [Child adoption: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and has been reviewed against the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guide on adoption leave and rights here [Adoption leave and pay: Your adoption leave, pay and other rights - Acas](#) .

We ultimately conclude that the policy closely reflects the ACAS guidelines and covers SQA’s statutory obligations.

As a general point, the linked statutory legislation referred to in the policy needs to be reviewed to check it is up to date.

The policy has a predominately internal focus and is written from the 1st person point of view to help access what is sometimes complex information. The policy is part of a suite of seven other separate related ‘leave’ policies and will, be accessed on SQA’s intranet under a general policy heading.

Local Evidence / Data:

Less than 3 employees have applied for adoption leave in the last 2 years. We therefore conclude that there is no meaningful data sample relating to the use of this policy in SQA and it is equally impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions in respect of Equality impact.

Data from [Home for Good](#) told us in 2021 in England there were **80,850** children in the care system in England and that the average age of a child at adoption is **3 years and 3 months**. At 30 June 2021, **65%** of children waiting for an adoptive family for 18 months or more are under 5 years old, **57%** are male, **22%** are from an ethnic minority background, **8%** have a disability, and **51%** are part of a sibling group.

Statistical information in Scotland from the same source is caveated by the fact that a child who is ‘looked after’ in Scotland includes all children looked after by a local authority, including some who remain living at home with their parents. Scotland is unique in this compared to the other UK nations. Specific to this EQIA we noted that in 2020 there were **10,895** children in care in Scotland, of children who left care in Scotland in 2020, **6%** went on to be adopted, and **73%** of children adopted in Scotland were under the age of five.

This information tells us that there are substantial numbers of children - predominantly under the age of 5 waiting to be adopted in the UK alone, so there is a continued need for up to date easily understood policy for prospective adopters.

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

The policy recognises that when raising a family, individuals have a statutory right to time off work (paid and unpaid).

The policy also aims to ensure easily found appropriate information about time off work for adoption leave is available. There is a stated link to valuing employees and supporting time off for parental responsibilities.

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

Surrogacy:

We noted as a general point that there is no mention of surrogacy in this policy although it is mentioned in the table in version control (1st page) of the draft policy. We considered this to be a general point to consider for policy development however we note that the laws around surrogacy in the UK are to be carefully handled in an employment policy. This would be applicable specifically for sex and gender reassignment. We were informed by these sources:

<https://www.gov.uk/legal-rights-when-using-surrogates-and-donors>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/leave-and-pay-when-you-have-a-child-through-surrogacy>

<https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/help-advice/parenting-rights/%E2%80%8Brights-family-leave-and-pay-employees>

LGBTQ+ Adopters:

We researched externally and noted that now more than ever LGBTQ+ couples are adopting in the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-number-of-children-adopted-by-lgbt-families>

The numbers of same-sex couple families have increased substantially in recent years with an increase of 53.2% from 152,000 in 2015 to 232,000 in 2018. We do feel this policy very clearly defines from the outset, who adoption leave applies to ‘An **adopter’s partner** is the spouse, civil partner or ‘partner’ of the adopter at the date the child is placed for adoption.’ and ‘**A partner is a person of either sex**, who lives with you and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not your child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.’

Noted below, is an action to take this policy to SQA’s Rainbow network and gauge impact and identify development opportunities. For example, if the policy needs to be more overt in it’s definitions.

Adopted and looked-after children - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures (ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk) tells us that in England (we couldn’t find any relevant data in Scotland) children identified as white are 83% more likely to be adopted than the rest of the population in care under age 18. This led us to consider race noting too that a child’s race should not prevent an adoption by adoptees of a different race. Given there is no data in Scotland, the policy is open to all equality groups to access and there is no usable internal data available we concluded that the development of the policy will be enhanced by sharing it with our ACE network.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

This policy is currently being developed in consultation with SQA’s recognised Trades Unions, Unite and Unison, who represent all staff throughout the organisation.

In addition, as this is an internal policy, SQA will only consult with internal groups. These include:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network.
- SQA Disability Network.
- SQA Rainbow Network.
- Women’s Network.

Stakeholder Engagement will be with:

Trade Union Consultation Review Group (PRG):

Members of SQA Human Resources department and trade union representatives from *Unite the Union* and *Unison* meet weekly in SQA via the PRG. This group has been meeting weekly in SQA since July 2020. SQA’s trade union representatives are also given statutory time off to attend relevant training, meetings and other information gathering activities as supported in our union framework agreement.

Evidence of all meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken with the PRG group (including Equality considerations in respect of all policies, activities and functions) is detailed on a dedicated SQA shared resources site.

We advise engagement with community network groups as part of the policy development process as detailed in our actions.

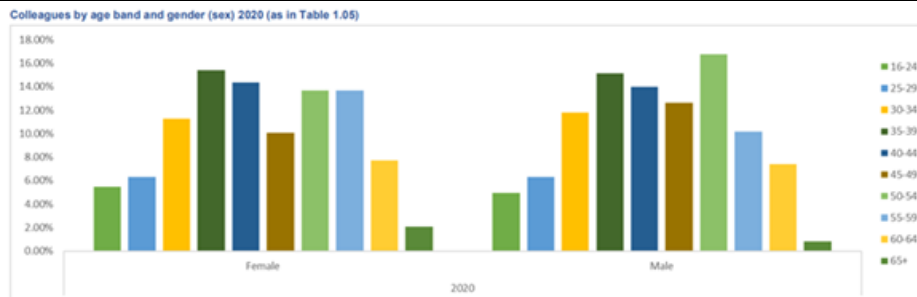
What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?

Evidence of Staff Network Consultation Meetings:

Policy-Name	Review-Date	Women's- Network	(ACE)	Disability-Network	Rainbow-Network
Redeployment	02/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restructure	02/08/2021	Yes		Yes	
Standby-&-Call-Out	23/06/2021		Yes	Yes	Yes
Time-Recording	09/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendance-Management	16/08/2021	Yes		Yes	Yes
Childcare-Voucher	16/08/2021	Yes		Yes	Yes
Dignity-at-Work	10/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disciplinary	01/06/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equalities,-Diversity-&-Inclusion	23/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed-Term-Workers	23/08/2021	Yes		Yes	Yes
Grievance	29/06/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Improving-Performance	07/09/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Probation	06/09/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recruitment-&-Selection	06/05/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Secondment	13/09/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Whistleblowing	22/07/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flexible-Working	18/11/2021	Yes		Yes	Yes
Flexitime	26/10/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pay	09/12/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TOIL	16/12/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Code-of-Conduct	24/02/2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict-of-Interest	10/03/2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pensions-Discretion	29/03/2022	Yes		Yes	Yes
Redundancy	22/03/2022	Yes		Yes	Yes
Relocation	31/03/2022	Yes		Yes	Yes
Retirement	15/03/2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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

Age



Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

In total, 499 colleagues are aged 16–44 and 450 are aged 45–65+. Grades 3 to 6 have the most even spread of colleagues within each age band. The highest proportion of current colleagues are between the ages of 35 and 39, a total of 145 colleagues. The lowest proportion is seen in those aged 65+, with a total of 15 colleagues within this age band. At grade 1 (which includes roles such as Modern Apprentice and Cleaner), the majority of colleagues are either under 30 or over 50, with only 5.56% of colleagues included in the age bands 30–49. A review of higher-level grades would indicate that fewer colleagues hold posts at grade 7 and above within the 16–34 age bands. This is most likely due to the requirement of experience, skills and professional qualifications required for roles at higher grades. The majority of SQA employees are in the mid range age bandings. A total of 79% workers are aged between 30 – 59. Colleagues by age band and gender (sex) 2020 (as in Table 1.05) are shown at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

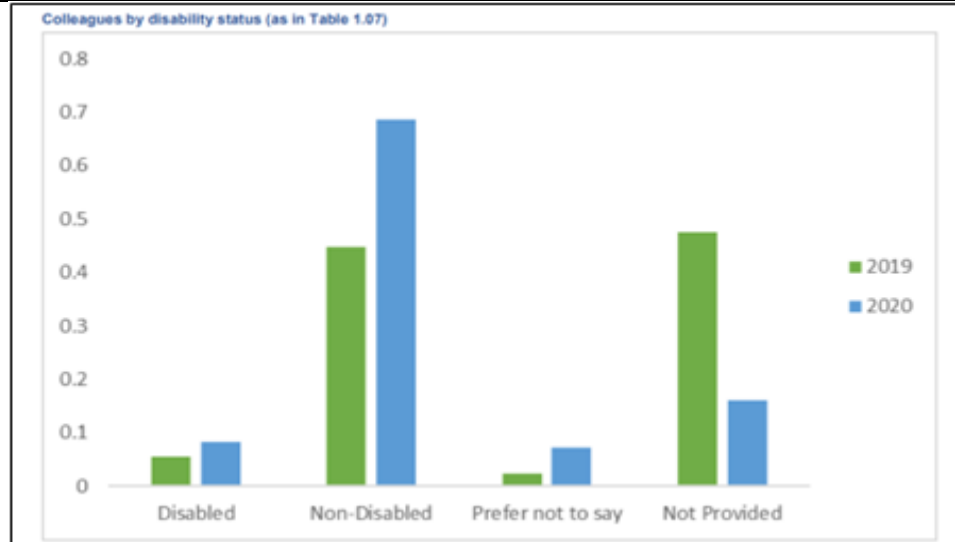
Externally, data on age of adopters is hard to find, we referenced:

[Adoption – the basics – Be My Parent](#)

[Child adoption: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/child-adoption/overview)

You must be over 21 to adopt in the UK and the average age of an adopter in the UK is 38 years old, it is likely therefore that the majority (79%) of SQA’s workforce fall into the most likely age group to be starting on the adoption process.

Disability



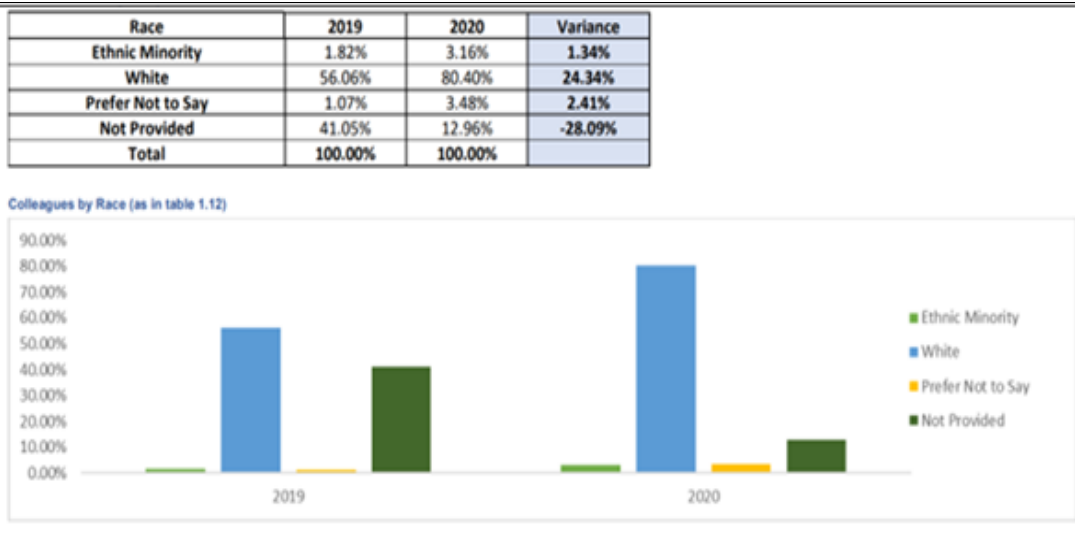
Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

A total of 8% of SQA employees declared a disability last year. Declaration rates have significantly improved from a total response rate under the *Not Disclosed / Prefer not to say* category of 50% in 2019 (roughly half of employees) to a much reduced 23% in 2020.

Colleagues by disability status (as in Table 1.07) can be found at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf) ([sqa.org.uk](https://www.sqa.org.uk)) .

No external data was found to show how many people with a disability are adopters in the UK.

Race



Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

Currently 3% of SQA employees declared themselves as Minority Ethnicity as shown in Table 1.12 Colleagues by Race at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#). This compares to a national (Scotland) average of 5%.

[Child adoption: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) details requirement to have lived in UK for more than 1 year to begin the adoption process.

[Adopted and looked-after children - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](#) Tells us ethnic minority children are less likely to be adopted compared to white children in the UK.

Religion or Belief	Religion or Belief	2019	2020	Variance
	Christian	20.69%	29.82%	9.13%
	Non-Christian	11.47%	17.28%	5.81%
	None	20.69%	29.29%	8.61%
	Prefer not to say	3.75%	10.33%	6.58%
	Not Provided	43.41%	13.28%	-30.13%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	
<p>Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21</p> <p>29.82% declared Christian as their religion or belief in 2020. 17.28% declared non-Christian religion or belief, 29.29% declared no religion or belief. There was an increase of 10.33% declaring they would ‘prefer not to say’. This can be found at Table 1.16 Colleagues by religion or belief workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</p> <p>Externally we were not able to find data to show numbers of adopters with stated religion or belief.</p> <p>Example references Adoption and fostering: matching children to parents from same religion and ethnicity makes for happier families (theconversation.com) informs us that particularly Muslim adopter numbers are low and this may, in part, lead to reduced adoptions for ethnic children and children with stated religious beliefs.</p> <p>Adoption agencies will try to secure a child’s adoption within the same religious belief background where possible.</p>				
Sex	Gender Breakdown	Headcount %		
	Female	62%		
	Male	38%		
	Grand Total	100%		
<p>Source: SQA Equality Mainstreaming Report 2019-21</p> <p>In comparison 51% of Scotland’s population are women, 49% men</p>				

[10 facts about women and caring in the UK on International Women’s Day - Carers UK](#) has an estimate that 58% of carers in the UK are women, falling mainly on women aged 40-60 note: this includes ‘sandwich carers’ who may have responsibility for elderly relatives too. This points towards some evidence that there is a higher likelihood women will be the main or principle adopter.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	2019	2020	Variance
Bisexual	0.96%	1.26%	0.30%
Gay man	1.39%	2.11%	0.71%
Gay woman / Lesbian	0.96%	1.05%	0.09%
Heterosexual/straight	46.20%	70.60%	24.41%
In another way	0.11%	0.21%	0.10%
Not sure	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2.79%	8.01%	5.22%
Not Provided	47.48%	16.65%	-30.83%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

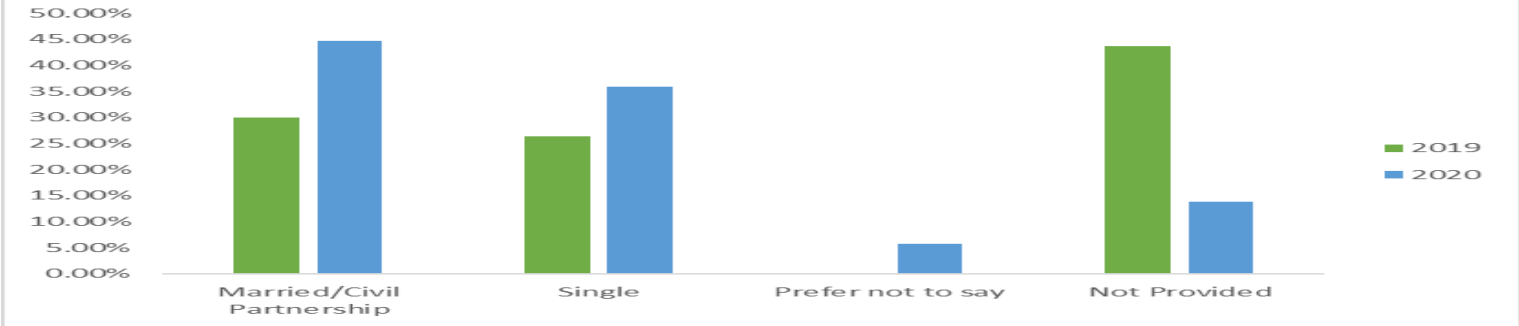
Colleagues identifying as heterosexual/straight are 70.60%, bisexual 1.26%, Gay man, 2.11%, gay woman 1.05%, in another way 0.21%, not sure 0.11% and 8.01% colleagues selected ‘Prefer not to say’. This highlights that there is further work to be done to educate colleagues on the benefits of declaring their equality data. Data can be found at Table 1.18 Colleagues by Sexual Orientation [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

Externally we know people from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ+) characteristic group are increasingly adopters in the UK, estimated at 1 in 7 adopters in England. References used were;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-number-of-children-adopted-by-lgbt-families>

[LGBT+ Adoption Agency | Same-sex Adoption UK | Adoptionplus](#)

[Figures for LGBT+ Adoption and Fostering Week show record rise in same sex adoptions - First4Adoption](#)

<p>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</p>	<p>No equality profiling data is currently captured by SQA.</p>
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership</p>	 <p>Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21</p> <p>86.24% of colleagues declared their relationship status in 2020, an increase of 29.87% compared to 2019. Of those who provided this information, there are more colleagues who have declared they are married or in a civil partnership 44.66% compared to those who have declared they are single 35.87%. 5.71% declared they would prefer not to say in 2020, which is an increase of 3.79%. The increase in the level of data enables more meaningful analysis to be carried out in future reports once trends can be established. Colleagues by relationship status (as in Table 1.10) workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</p>

Equality Impact Assessment – Adoption Policy V1.0

Pregnancy / Maternity	Colleagues			
	Pregnancy Status	2019	2020	Variance
	Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%
	Pregnant	1.75%	1.05%	-0.70%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	
	<p>Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21</p> <p>98.95% of colleagues told us they were not pregnant in 2020, 1.05% told us they were pregnant, found at Table 1.20: Colleagues by pregnancy status workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</p>			
Care experience (where relevant)	No equality profiling data is currently captured by SQA			
Social and economic (where relevant)	N/A			

Impact and Opportunities for Action

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

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

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on people all ages as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of Age discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave. We do however take the opportunity to reiterate that less than 3 employees have applied for adoption leave in the last 2 years in SQA - a very small data sample to work with as part this assessment.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p><u>Specific to Age, but applicable to all, we advise that SQA captures applications for Adoption leave and all other family/parental related leave.</u></p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no specific evidence within the policy to indicate how it fosters good relations between people who share / do not share 'Protected Characteristics'.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>Overall risks of Disability discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of whether they have a <i>Disability</i> or not.

Foster good relations	
Disability	<p>SQA’s Disability network have an overall remit to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1: Promote and enhance disability equality in SQA2: Position SQA as an inclusive employer of choice that welcomes, embraces and celebrates the contribution of a diverse workforce3: Supporting SQA to become a <i>Disability Confident</i> leader in Scotland’. <p><u>Consulting the policy’s aims and processes with this group would both help to check it’s overall impact but also explore opportunities for further development.</u></p> <p>SQA are also a <i>Disability Confident</i> employer so continued promotion and engagement with the objectives of the scheme is also essential in continuing to foster good relations between employees who are disabled / not disabled.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of Race discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of Nationality, Citizenship or Ethnic origin (<i>Race</i>).
	Foster good relations
	<p>The ACE Network exists to foster good relations, provide support, create an overall sense of belonging that may not exist elsewhere in the organisation. It also exists with the aim of sharing experiences, providing feedback and recommendations as to how SQA can promote a more diverse and inclusive workplace.</p> <p><u>Measuring the impact of this policy with the ACE group will help SQA understand if there are any issues and opportunities to raise awareness and improve on the policy generally.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p data-bbox="203 300 450 331">Religion or Belief</p>	<p data-bbox="488 268 2029 331">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p data-bbox="488 400 696 432">Equality Risks:</p> <p data-bbox="488 467 2018 576">This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p data-bbox="488 624 2007 732">However, overall risks of Religion or Belief discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p data-bbox="488 767 1211 799">Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	<p data-bbox="1055 839 1458 871">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p data-bbox="488 906 1973 970">The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an individual's <i>Religion or Philosophical Belief System</i>.</p>
	<p data-bbox="1122 1010 1391 1042">Foster good relations</p>
	<p data-bbox="488 1086 1995 1195">The ACE Network exists to foster good relations, provide support, create an overall sense of belonging that may not exist elsewhere in the organisation. It also exists with the aim of sharing experiences, providing feedback and recommendations as to how SQA can promote a more diverse and inclusive workplace.</p> <p data-bbox="488 1246 1883 1310"><u>Measuring the impact of this policy with the ACE group will help SQA understand if there are any issues and opportunities to raise awareness and improve on the policy generally.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of sex discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an employee’s Sex.
	Foster good relations
	<p>In SQA the Women’s network ‘provides a welcoming space for women across the organisation. Through open meetings and events there are opportunities to get to know one another, offer and receive support, and influence SQA policy development in areas of equality and inclusion. This network is exploring exciting developments such as informal mentoring and liaising with other staff networks’.</p> <p><u>Speaking to members of this network directly will help SQA develop this policy and explore ways we can improve it’s direction and profile in SQA.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an employee’s <i>Sexual Orientation</i>.</p> <p>As previously referenced, the policy clearly acknowledges both same and opposite sex relationships / adopters. The policy states:</p> <p>‘An adopter’s partner is the spouse, civil partner or ‘partner’ of the adopter at the date the child is placed for adoption.’ and ‘A partner is a person of either sex, who lives with you and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not your child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.’</p>

	Foster good relations
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Rainbow Network is SQA's LGBTQ+ colleague network. They are 'part of a vibrant global movement for change made up of LGBTQ+ people and our allies. We play a pivotal role in making sure that SQA is a workplace that embraces LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion'. Speaking to members of this network directly will help SQA effectively develop this policy and explore ways we can improve it's direction and profile in SQA. Specifically appropriate support links can be discussed to help access external advice/guidance.</p> <p><u>Measure potential to improve the development of the policy by speaking directly to the <i>Rainbow</i> network.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an employee’s LGBTQ+ status.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p><u>Measure potential to improve the development of the policy by speaking directly to the <i>Rainbow</i> network.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy details the entitlements and process to be followed for any employee who is applying for adoption leave. This policy should therefore have a positive impact on all employees as the policy clearly defines the links to external legislative requirements and internal processes to be followed.</p> <p>However, overall risks of discrimination in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated nor discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>any</i> related profiling data relating to Adoption leave or any other type of family/parental related leave.</p> <p>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an employee’s marital status.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>No actions identified.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	See SQA’s Maternity policy EQIA.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The policy is accessible to all SQA employees who wish to adopt a child – irrespective of an employee’s Pregnancy or Maternity status.
	Foster good relations
	<p><u>One consideration is to include a reference in the policy on surrogacy and how this links to maternity and adoption would be helpful for the reader.</u></p> <p><u>We are mindful however that this is an employment policy and needs to focus on internal requirements and processes. It may also be useful to include this policy in with a suite of related parental/family related policies when published on the intranet to help people access all relevant information in one place.</u></p>

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
	Nothing to add here.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Nothing to add here.
	Foster good relations
	Nothing to add here.

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.

N/A.