

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 2024	Additional Schedule Review Date	By September 2023
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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 policy and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)			[ONGOING RECORD]
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	

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Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)			[ONGOING RECORD]
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	
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	

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Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
[LIST]	[CROSS REFERENCE]			
There is a recommendation that consideration could be taken of language used, to be more inclusive of parents in same sex relationships where these traditional gender-normative labels are not appropriate.	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Head of HR	By September 2024	

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	Childcare Voucher Scheme
New Policy or Revision	Revision
Name of Policy Owner	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	10/09/2021
What is the rationale for this policy or practice?	
<p>The policy aims to support SQA employees in balancing work and family commitments by providing support with the costs of childcare. The childcare voucher scheme is a salary sacrifice scheme that enables parents to make tax and national insurance savings on their childcare costs.</p> <p>The Childcare Voucher Scheme was a UK government initiative aimed at helping working parents to benefit from tax efficiencies in order to save money on the cost of childcare. The scheme was offered as a salary sacrifice scheme, which means that UK parents who are in the scheme are able to sacrifice part of their salary in order to obtain childcare vouchers (of an equal amount). In doing this the parents do not pay any tax or national insurance on the amount contributed to the childcare vouchers scheme up to specified limits. Due to this tax efficiency, the childcare voucher scheme has limits in place, after which you would pay for childcare in the usual taxable fashion. The scheme operated under UK government legislation.</p> <p>However, as of 4 October 2018, schemes are closed to new members as the system was phased out in favour of the tax-free childcare scheme.</p> <p>The policy applies to members of staff already enrolled in the childcare voucher scheme prior to 4 October 2018.</p> <p>From 4 October 2018 onwards, the government’s new scheme called Tax-Free childcare came into effect and as a result, the childcare voucher scheme was then closed to new entrants.</p> <p>Unlike childcare vouchers, Tax-Free Childcare is a direct arrangement between parents and the government, via National Savings and Investments (NS&I) and does not involve employers.</p>	

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

Childcare vouchers and other employer schemes

The following schemes are closed to new applicants:

- childcare vouchers
- childcare the employer arranges with a provider (known as 'directly contracted childcare')

If employees joined one of these schemes before 4 October 2018, they might be able to keep getting vouchers or directly contracted childcare.

If employees joined a childcare voucher scheme or a directly contracted childcare scheme before 4 October 2018

They can keep getting vouchers or directly contracted childcare as long as:

- their wages were adjusted before 4 October 2018
- they stay with the same employer, and they continue to run the scheme
- they do not take an unpaid career break of longer than a year

They can take up to £55 a week of their wages, which they do not pay tax or National Insurance on.

How much they can take depends on the amount they earn and when they joined the scheme.

There are currently 22 members of staff in the Childcare Voucher Scheme (*2.15% of total staff*) and no other members of staff will be able to join since the scheme has been discontinued by the Government.

Due to the very small number of staff who are currently enrolled in the scheme, no equality data has been analysed due to insufficient sample size.

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

As stated previously, the policy aims to support SQA employees in balancing work and family commitments by providing support with the costs of childcare.

It also aims to inform those employees who are not eligible for the childcare voucher scheme due to the scheme being closed to new entrants as of 4 October 2018, about where they can access more information on the government's Tax-Free childcare scheme by signposting to the relevant government websites.

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

The development, implementation, and analysis of the effects of this policy are relevant only to people with childcare responsibilities who took advantage of the old childcare voucher scheme which is now closed.

SQA acknowledges that employees with parental responsibilities from certain protected groups may have differing needs in relation to childcare access, for example, people with a disability may have differing health issues which could mean that they are more likely to be receiving sick pay, which in turn could affect whether they meet the minimum salary threshold to access the Childcare Voucher Scheme.

SQA also acknowledges that women may be more likely to work part-time and therefore be less likely to meet the minimum salary threshold for the scheme but as the scheme itself is governed by legal statute, has no recourse to remedy this.

In addition, this Childcare Voucher Scheme has now been replaced by Scottish Government as of October 2018, and the policy signposts new applicants to the current scheme which is a direct arrangement between employees and the government with no involvement from employers.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

This policy has been 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 has consulted with all staff network groups – these include:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network.
- SQA Disability Network.
- MAC (Make A Change Group).
- Mental Health First Aiders Forum.
- SQA Rainbow Network.
- Women's Network.
- Parent & Carers Network.

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

Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:

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.

Staff Network Consultations:

In June 2021, we formed a dedicated *Equality Impact Assessment Project Group* (EIAPG) with the aim of reviewing, assessing, and providing feedback from staff on all SQA HR policies from Equality perspectives.

The EIAPG group consists of representatives from each of the SQA staff networks listed on the previous page of this document.

Evidence, feedback, and actions from all EIAPG staff network consultations are recorded on a dedicated SQA *Microsoft Teams* page which was specifically created with the aim of listing potential equality risks that exist in H.R. policies / activities, sharing resources, recording feedback, and scheduling future consultation meetings.

The table below details the evidence of staff network consultation meetings.

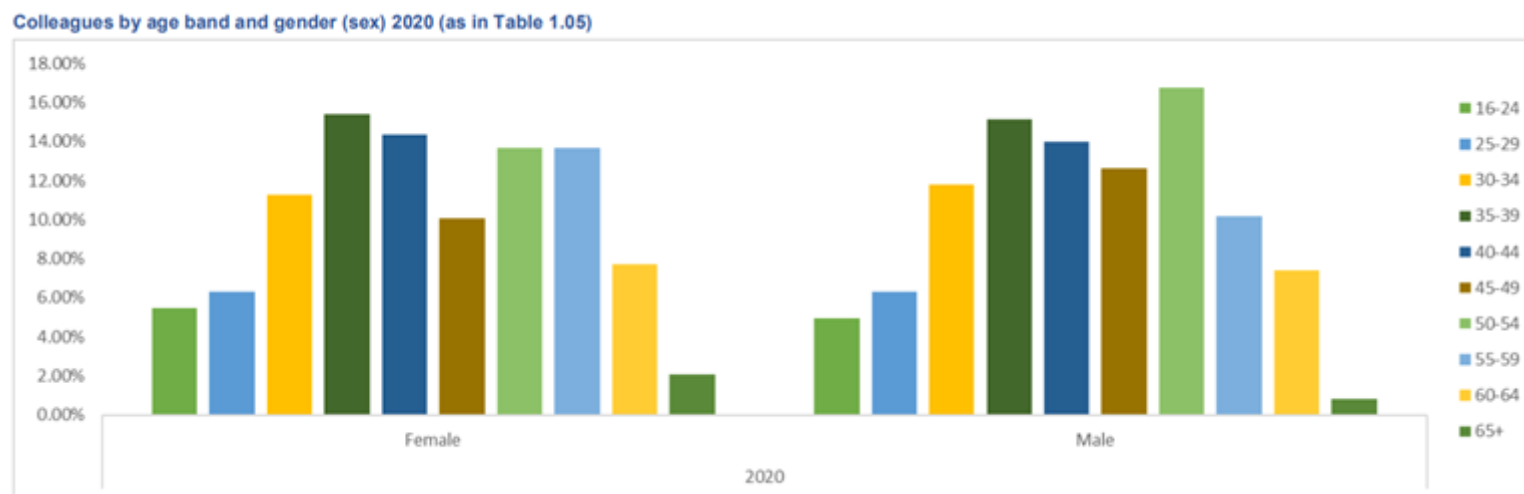
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Evidence of Staff Network Consultation Meetings:

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



The above table shows colleagues by age band and gender as of 2020. This table 1.05 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

The majority of SQA employees are in the mid-range age bandings. A total of 79% workers are aged between 30 – 59. Less than 2% of SQA employees are aged 60+ and the SQA has recently seen a decrease in younger (under 35) employees.

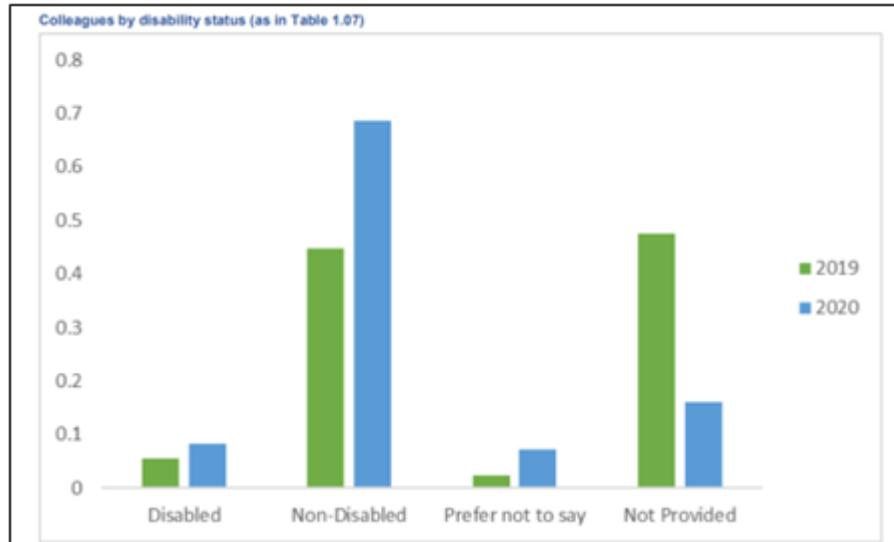
Comparisons between 2019 and 2020 data show that the greatest increase in the proportion of female colleagues is within the 60–64 age band - an increase of 12 colleagues.

The 30–34 age band saw the largest reduction of female colleagues – a total of seven people. Over the same period, there was an increase in the proportion of male colleagues within the 50-54 age band - an overall increase of nine people. The largest decline in the proportion of male colleagues was in the 30-34 age band, with seven fewer people. The largest decrease was seen in the 30–34 age band for both male and female colleagues - with an overall reduction of 14 people.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021

Disability

A total of 8.2% 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 49.9% in 2019 (roughly half of employees) to a much reduced 23.1 % in 2020.



The above table shows colleagues by Disability status. This table 1.07 available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

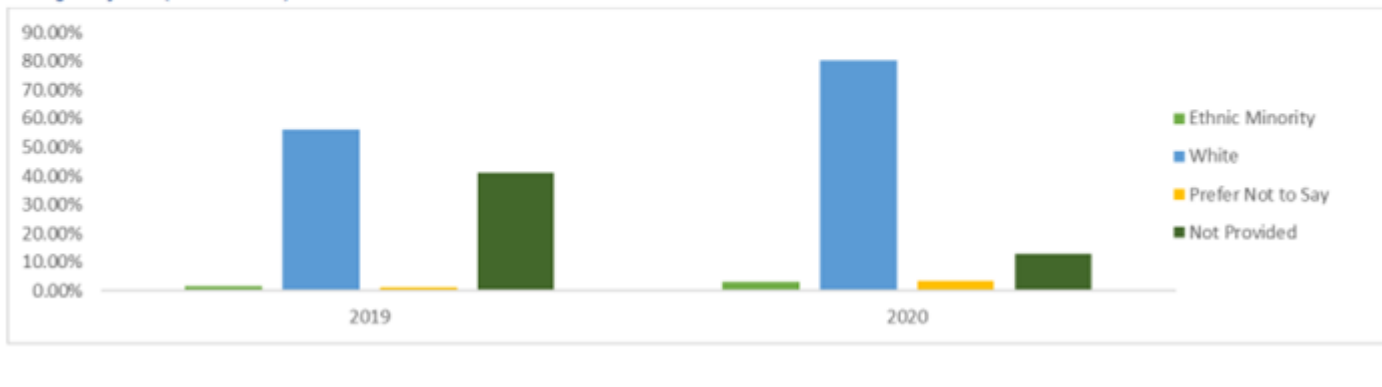
The highest proportion of colleagues who have declared a disability (53%) falls within the lowest age bands (16 – 44) and second highest (47%) within the upper age bands (45–64)

A total of 55% of disabled employees are female and 45% are male. 63% of colleagues who have declared a disability are within the grade range 06 to Head of Service. Head of Service has the largest **percentage** of colleagues declaring a disability (13%) whereas Grade 6 has the largest overall **number** of colleagues declaring a disability at 23%.

Race

Race	2019	2020	Variance
Ethnic Minority	1.82%	3.16%	1.34%
White	56.06%	80.40%	24.34%
Prefer Not to Say	1.07%	3.48%	2.41%
Not Provided	41.05%	12.96%	-28.09%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

Colleagues by Race (as in table 1.12)



The above table shows colleagues by Race. This table 1.12 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

Currently only 3% of SQA employees declared themselves as Minority Ethnicity against a national (Scotland) average of 5%.

A further breakdown of ethnicity (overleaf) indicates that *Chinese, Indian and Mixed Ethnicity* groups are currently the predominant minority ethnicities in the SQA.

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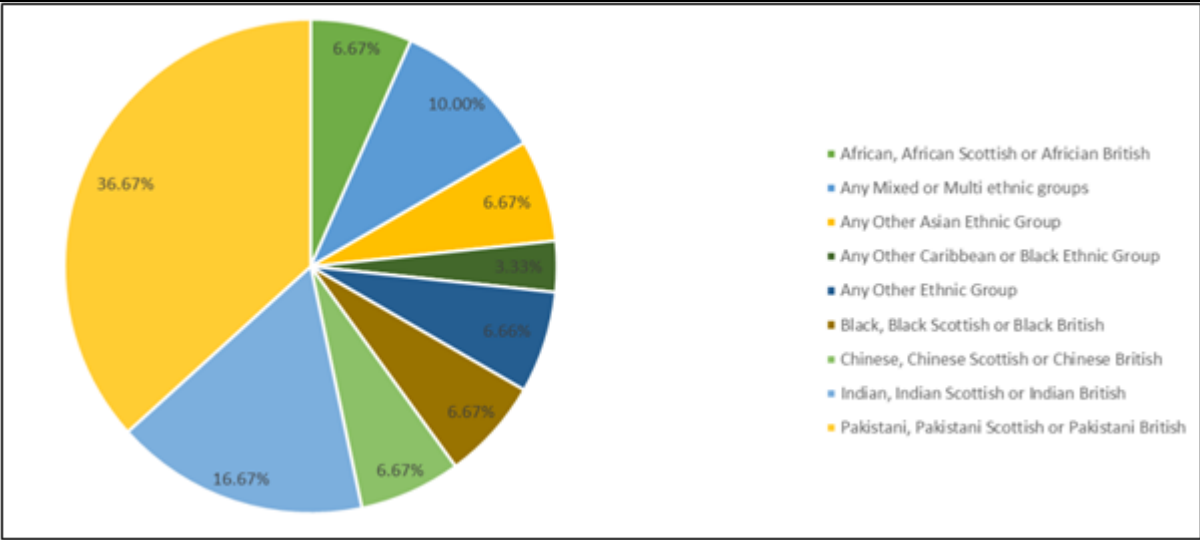


Table 1.15 Race: Colleagues by black and minority ethnicities

Black and Minority Ethnicities	2019	2020	Variance
African, African Scottish or African British	5.88%	6.67%	0.78%
Any Mixed or Multi ethnic groups	11.76%	10.00%	-1.76%
Any Other Asian Ethnic Group	5.88%	6.67%	0.78%
Any Other Caribbean or Black Ethnic Group		3.33%	3.33%
Any Other Ethnic Group		6.66%	6.66%
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	5.88%	6.67%	0.78%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	11.76%	6.67%	-5.10%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	17.65%	16.67%	-0.98%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	41.18%	36.67%	-4.51%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

The above tables show colleagues by Race. This table 1.15 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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%	

The above table shows colleagues who have declared their Religion or Belief. This table 1.16 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

An improved declaration rate was also shown for this characteristic in 2020. *Christian* and *No Religion* account for nearly 60% of all responses.

Sex

Grade	Gender (Sex)					
	Female			Male		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
1	83.33%	66.67%	-16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%
3	65.15%	65.00%	-0.15%	34.85%	35.00%	0.15%
4	63.28%	64.71%	1.43%	36.72%	35.29%	-1.43%
5	58.02%	61.54%	3.51%	41.98%	38.46%	-3.51%
6	69.90%	69.90%		30.10%	30.10%	
7	59.76%	57.89%	-1.86%	40.24%	42.11%	1.86%
8	53.54%	56.34%	2.80%	46.46%	43.66%	-2.80%
HOS	39.39%	40.00%	0.61%	60.61%	60.00%	-0.61%
EMT	57.14%	42.86%		57.14%	42.86%	
Total	61.20%	61.64%	0.44%	38.80%	38.36%	-0.44%

The above table shows colleagues by sex and grade. This table 1.02 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

A greater number of SQA employees overall are female - 62% female versus 38% male. A 60% representation of females across most grades is evident with a decrease to circa 40% for more senior grades.

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%	
<p>The above table shows SQA colleagues by Sexual Orientation. This table 1.18 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf</p> <p>Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021</p>				
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.			
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.			
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>The above table shows colleagues by pregnancy status. This table 1.20 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf</p>				

<p>Care experience (where relevant)</p>	<p>Human Resources currently have no data for SQA that shows how many colleagues are Care Experienced.</p> <p>Nationally Who Cares? Scotland say:</p> <p>Education In 2019/20 64% of all school leavers had 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better, whereas only 14% of school leavers looked after within the last year had qualifications of that level.</p> <p>Care Experienced children are less likely to be in positive destinations nine months after leaving school. Figures from 2019-20 show that 75% of school leavers looked after within the last year were in positive destinations. This is compared to 92% of all schools' leavers.</p> <p>At all levels, Care Experienced students have lower rates of completing courses compared to all students at university and college. Between Care Experienced students and non-Care Experienced students, there is a difference of 5.3% for retention at university, and the largest gap is in successful completion of full-time further education courses at college where the gap is 15.6% (<u>SFC, 2019</u>).</p> <p>Unemployment 9 months after leaving school, 22% of school leavers looked after within the last year people were classed as unemployed, compared to 7% of their non-Care Experienced peers (<u>Scottish Government, 2021</u>).</p> <p>Criminalisation In a Scottish Prison Service survey carried out in 2019, 1/4 of the adult prison population indicated that during their upbringing they had been in care (25%) (<u>Scottish Prison Service, 2020</u>). Around 40% of young people in custody report that they have been in care (<u>Scottish Prison Service, 2021</u>).</p> <p>Health In a study conducted in 2002, among young people aged 5–17 years who were looked after by local authorities in Scotland, 45% were assessed as having a mental health issue (<u>Office for National Statistics, 2004</u>).</p> <p>Homelessness Practitioners estimate that between 30-50% of individuals who are homeless could be Care Experienced.</p>
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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>The scheme is open to anyone with parental responsibilities of children under 16 who were already enrolled in the scheme prior to October 2018. The average age of parents in the UK is 30.7 years - the scheme is only in operation until a child reaches 15, or 16 if the child has a disability. Therefore, the likelihood is that older adults would be unlikely to still be in the scheme.</p> <p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest this policy may impact on people of different ages</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees with parental responsibilities regardless of age are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Childcare Voucher Scheme, if they were enrolled prior to 4th October 2018</p> <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Age</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is little evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different age groups.</p> <p><u>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</u></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>Risks of Discrimination:</p> <p>If an employee enrolled in the childcare voucher scheme, at any time, does not receive sufficient salary to cover the amount agreed as a salary sacrifice, no deduction would be made and therefore no childcare vouchers will be provided. We considered that this may negatively impact disabled employees more than non-disabled employees as disabled employees may be more likely to lose more days to sickness absence and therefore may be pay impacted due to using up SQA’s sick pay allowance.</p> <p>SQA’s 2020 equality data reports that 8.2% of SQA employees declared they have a disability. The ONS reported that in 2021, disabled workers lost an average of 14.2 days to sickness absence compared to 2.8 days for non-disabled employees. As the scheme closed for new applicants on 4 October 2018, any employee must therefore have a minimum of 3 years’ service and therefore a minimum of 22 weeks’ full sick pay allowance and 22 weeks’ half sick pay allowance. Although the possibility of disabled workers being negatively impacted is unlikely, it cannot be discounted.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No equality data currently exists for people using this scheme. It is therefore recommended that consideration is given to an analysis, of all people enrolled in the childcare voucher scheme under this policy to identify if any adverse trends (however unintentional) exist.
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is little evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between disabled and non-disabled employees.</p> <p><u>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</u></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>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different Races or ethnicities and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<i>Advance equality of opportunity</i>
	<p>All SQA employees with parental responsibilities from all <i>Races/Ethnicities</i> are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Childcare Voucher Scheme, if they were enrolled prior to 4th October 2018</p> <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Race or Ethnicity</i>.</p>
	<i>Foster good relations</i>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different ethnicities.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Religion or Belief</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest this policy may impact on people of different <i>Religions</i> or <i>Beliefs</i>.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>All SQA employees from all <i>Religions / Beliefs</i> are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Childcare Voucher Scheme</i>, if they were enrolled prior to 4th October 2018</p> <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Religion or Belief</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Foster good relations</p>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different religions or beliefs. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>If an employee enrolled in the childcare voucher scheme, at any time, does not receive sufficient salary to cover the amount agreed as a salary sacrifice, no deduction would be made and therefore no childcare vouchers will be provided. We considered that this may negatively impact female employees since they may be more likely to work part-time, due to caring responsibilities and therefore could be impacted due to not receiving sufficient salary to continue in the scheme.</p> <p>However, as the Scheme is governed by UK Government Statute, SQA has no remit or scope to remedy this and therefore we recommend no further action on this point.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>All SQA employees who are the parent of or have parental responsibility for any child aged 15 or younger have entitlement and access to the policy although as previously mentioned, anyone not enrolled prior to 4 October 2018, alternatively has access to the government’s Tax-Free Childcare scheme. There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Sex.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
<p>There is little evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between male and female employees.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</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
	The policy references Maternity Leave and Maternity pay but makes no mention of same sex parents.
	<u>There is a recommendation that consideration could be taken of language used, to be more inclusive of parents in same sex relationships where these traditional gender-normative labels are not appropriate.</u>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Childcare Voucher Scheme</i> and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Sexual Orientation</i> , if they were enrolled prior to 4 th October 2018
	Foster good relations
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people based on their Gender Identity and therefore make no further recommendations in this area. Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees with parental responsibilities are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Childcare Voucher Scheme</i> , if they were enrolled prior to 4 th October 2018, and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Gender Identity</i> .
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different <i>Gender Identities</i>

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>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are <i>Married</i> or in a <i>Civil Partnership</i> and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Advance equality of opportunity</i></p>
	<p>All SQA employees who are the parent of or have parental responsibility for, any child aged 15 or younger, have entitlement and access to the policy although as previously mentioned, anyone not enrolled prior to 4 October 2018, alternatively has access to the government’s Tax-Free Childcare scheme. There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Marital Status</i>.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Foster good relations</i></p>
	<p>There is little evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees with differing marital status</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</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
	Where an employee is on unpaid additional maternity leave or not eligible for maternity pay and therefore cannot fund the vouchers as they have no salary, SQA are obliged to provide the childcare vouchers. Positive Equality related impact is recorded in this area
	The above advances the equality of opportunity to ensure no employee is disadvantaged based on their <i>Pregnancy or Maternity</i> .
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The above advances the equality of opportunity to ensure no employee is disadvantaged based on their <i>Pregnancy or Maternity</i> .
	Foster good relations
	The above promotes the understanding of different outcomes due to <i>Pregnancy or Maternity</i> .
	No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.

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
	<p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people with Care Experience and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees with parental responsibilities are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Childcare Voucher Scheme and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of Care Experience. The absence of evidence should be rectified, if possible, by collection of data relating to care experience.
	Foster good relations
	There is little evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees.
	No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.

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.

SQA acknowledges that there is a potential for negative impact on two groups. Disabled people and women – both of these disadvantages are detailed in the relevant sections above. However, even if data was collected and showed that the scheme was in fact discriminatory to any of the 22 people affected by this scheme, SQA cannot remedy that. The scheme was operated and governed by UK government statute, as is the new scheme. SQA as an organisation has no scope to influence or change what is effectively UK taxation legislation and DWP regulations.