



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
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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.



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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	
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	



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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
Gender reassignment Add <i>Gender Identity</i> (i.e. people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality Monitoring reporting.	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	September 24	
Disability Include wording in the policy to highlight that carer's for people with disabilities in particular may need more time off and greater flexibility generally.	HR Shared Services Manager	September 23	
General Gather data and monitor compassionate leave applications by protected characteristic and monitor any trends with leave days taken/leave days refused.	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	September 24	



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Policy Aims

Name of Policy or Practice:	Compassionate Leave Policy
New Policy or Revision?	New Policy (Amalgamating and rationalising content from existing policies).
Name of Policy Owner:	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion:	Draft

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
<p>The stated aims of the SQA Compassionate Leave policy are to:</p> <p>Facilitate time away from work to either care for a dependant or deal with grief when someone close to a colleague dies.</p> <p>These situations can affect colleagues in several ways and impact on our ability to do our work. Colleagues may also experience a range of emotions that are difficult to manage while at work.</p> <p>SQA recognises that life can be complex, so there aren't always restrictions about the relationships or situations SQA give compassionate leave for.</p> <p>SQA do inform colleagues where there are statutory entitlements specifically for dependants and have defined these in this policy.</p> <p>The policy aims to help know what options are available to and employee's rights relating to compassionate leave. The policy states:</p> <p><i>'We will encourage open discussion to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible'</i>.</p>



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

Colleagues have statutory rights to time off in particular circumstances. These include time off relating to dependants and parental leave.

Carers UK state that:

1 in 8 adults (around 6.5 million people) are carers

- Every day another 6,000 people take on a caring responsibility – that equals over 2 million people each year.
- 58% of carers are women and 42% are men.
- 1.4 million people provide over 50 hours of care per week.
- Over 1 million people care for more than one person

Carers save the economy £132 billion per year, an average of £19,336 per carer

- 5 million people in the UK are juggling caring responsibilities with work - that's 1 in 7 of the workforce.
- The significant demands of caring mean that 600 people give up work every day to care for an older or disabled relative.

People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled

- 72% of carers responding to Carers UK's State of Caring 2018 Survey said they had suffered mental ill health because of caring.
- 61% said they had suffered physical ill health because of caring.
- 8 in 10 people caring for loved ones say they have felt lonely or socially isolated.

The policy also aligns with legislation under the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018 and The Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (General) Regulations 2020 which took effect from 6 April 2020 and outlines statutory requirements for paid and unpaid leave as relates to the death of child under 18. Employees can take two (2) weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave, with statutory parental bereavement pay from the first day of their employment for each child who has died or was stillborn, if eligible.

SQA employees who have indicated they have caring responsibilities were at 23.60% in 2020 as shown in the table below.



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Caring Responsibilities	2019	2020
Yes	23.37%	23.60%
No	45.87%	48.16%
Prefer not to say	4.61%	4.64%
Not Provided	26.15%	23.60%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring 2019-21

The policy was developed in line with Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guidance Leave and pay when someone dies: Time off work for bereavement - Acas



What are the aims of this policy or practice?

As previously stated, the aims of this policy are to:

Facilitate time away from work to either care for a dependant or deal with grief when someone close to a colleague dies.

The policy takes into account ACAS on bereavement and carers leave provisions to provide good practice guidance:

[Leave and pay when someone dies: Time off work for bereavement - Acas](#) and [Carer's leave consultation - Acas response | Acas](#)

The policy itself is divided in two discrete sections:

Policy Structure:

1: Part A – Policy detail.

2: Part B – Procedures for SQA managers / employees to follow.

The following SQA policies are also related to the Compassionate Leave policy:

- Adoption
- Attendance Management
- Flexitime
- Flexible Working
- Maternity
- Mental Health, Stress and Well Being
- Paternity Shared Parental Leave
- TOIL

The policy also includes a section for internal and external support for people to consider covering a wide range of circumstances.



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

It is recognised in terms of caring responsibilities, more generous provisions can positively impact some equality groups, for example, **women are more likely to require time to care for others**, and **older people can be more likely to care for older relatives**. We have updated the policy to better reflect the different relationships people may have which can impact positively for people of different equality groups.

The development, implementation and analysis of the effects of this policy are therefore highly relevant to people from all Equality groups as they may risk experiencing disproportionate impacts or outcomes.

The policy wording is developed to assure individuals that specific circumstances will be taken into account and equally applied where possible.

For example in the 'Purpose' section of the policy, the document states:

'We will be sensitive to your needs at the time, considering your physical and emotional wellbeing, including on your return to work. We recognise that personal grief and significant change in your personal life can be a complex process and affect everyone differently. We also have a duty of care to protect the mental health and wellbeing of you and colleagues whilst at work as detailed in our Mental Health, Stress and Well Being at work policy (insert link).'

In the 'Definitions' section, the policy states: 'Someone close to you is widely defined as a dependant, a close friend, a colleague or anyone who has an understood significance to you. Time off for dependants is an entitlement to reasonable time off to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant, or to make any necessary longer-term arrangements for the care of a dependant.'

A **dependant** could be:

- your spouse, partner or civil partner
- your parent or parent in law
- your child (if under 18)
- a person who lives in your household (not tenants, lodgers or employees)
- or any person who is reasonably reliant on you at the time the leave is taken.'



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

The policy also allows for flexibility to return from bereavement leave on a phased return basis. Section 6.5 of the policy – ‘Returning to work’ states:

‘In certain circumstances a full return to work may be difficult for you following compassionate leave. For example, experiencing grief after bereavement of someone close to you is likely to impact on your ability to perform your role fully or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to you.’

On balance, we believe the policy should have a positive impact on SQA employees drawn from all Equality groups. In addition, the enhanced sick pay SQA pays will be a supportive measure for all individuals who need extended time to recover from bereavement and/or some other traumatic event relating to dependants.

The potential exceptions and risks to the above statement are detailed in the later sections of this Equality Impact assessment.

Please also note that no local (i.e. SQA specific equality profiling information was available when completing the Equality Impact Assessment.

SQA does not currently record incidences of compassionate leave by an employee’s ‘Protected Characteristic as it is currently managed more informally / locally by SQA managers. A recommendation from this assessment is that this data is captured in the future to identify any adverse trends that may exist – however incidental



Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

As this is an internal policy, the SQA are consulting with internal 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 within the development of this policy or practice? (continued)

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.



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

Evidence of Staff Network Groups Consultation:

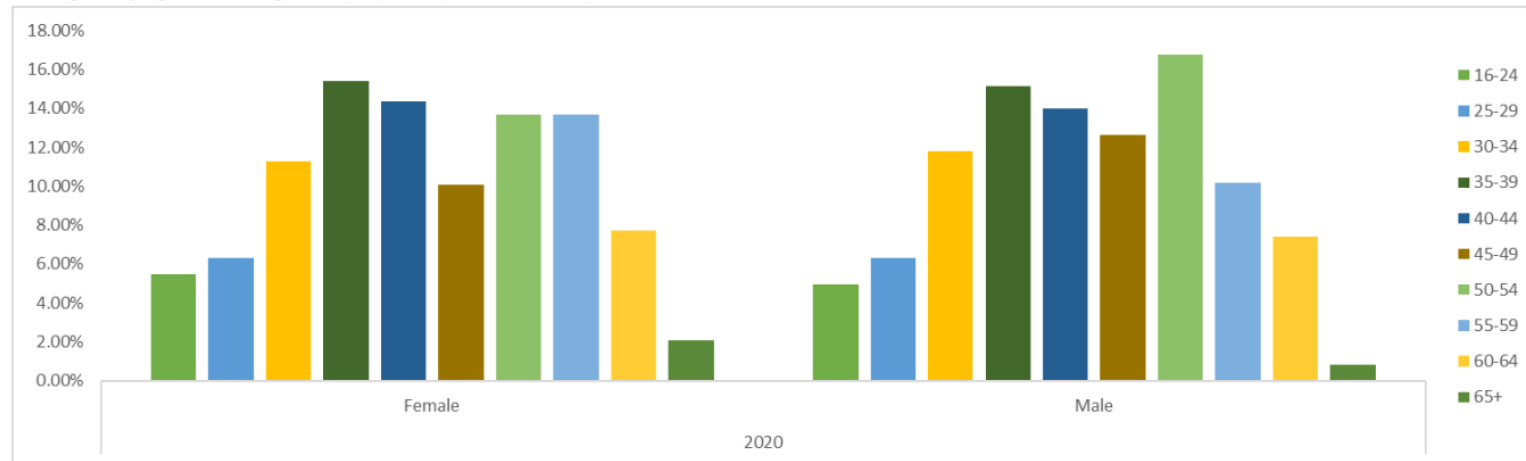
Policy Name	Review Date	Women's Network	(ACE)	Disability Network	Rainbow Network
Redeployment	02/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restructure	02/08/2021	Yes		Yes	
Standby-& Call-Out	23/06/2021		Yes	Yes	Yes
Time-Recording	09/08/2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendance-Management	16/08/2021	Yes		Yes	Yes
Childcare-Voucher	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
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:

Colleagues by age band and gender (sex) 2020 (as in Table 1.05)



Source: SQA workforce equality monitoring 2019-21

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



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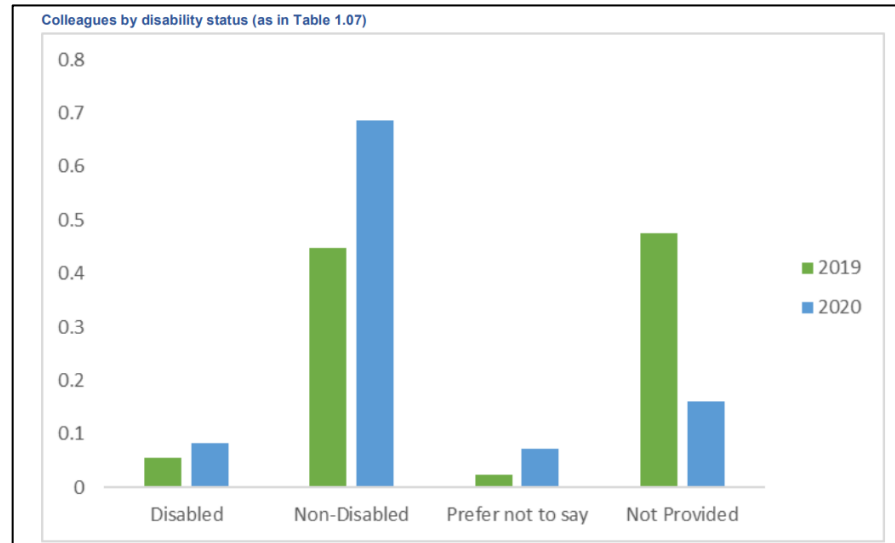
Age:	<p>for both male and female colleagues - with an overall reduction of 14 people. This information can be found at table 1.05 workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</p> <p><u>Carer Positive the standard for employers in creating supportive working environment for carers</u> state:</p> <p>90% of working carers are over the age of 30, with the peak age for caring between the ages of 45 – 64. Almost half of carers (46%) were people aged 46-65. The percentage of carers who are aged 31 to 45 and 66+ increases with greater hours of care. By contrast, the share of carers aged 15 to 30 and aged 46 to 65 falls with weekly hours of care.</p> <p><u>We're here to make life better for carers - Carers UK</u> state:</p> <p>Among those who care for 50+ hours per week, more than 1 in 3 are carers aged 46 to 65 and 66+ (34% and 37% respectively). Caring at this intensity occurs less frequently among those aged 15 to 30 and 31 to 45 (6% and 23% respectively).</p> <p><u>UNISON - the public service union</u> states: It is common that many older workers having caring responsibilities for older relatives or grandchildren.</p>
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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.



Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021

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%. This data can be found in Table 1.07 at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf) .



Disability	<p><u>[Withdrawn] COVID-19: supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u></p> <p>States 32% of Scottish Adults have a long term mental or physical health condition or disability. Around one fifth of Scotland's population have a disability:</p> <p><u>Mental Health Foundation Good mental health for all</u> indicates 1 in 6 adults experience a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression.</p> <p><u>Inclusion Scotland - Inclusion Scotland</u> survey that highlights the impact of covid-19 on carers and people with disabilities in terms of the reduction in social care support and increased pressure on carers to cover gaps in care.</p> <p><u>Carer Positive the standard for employers in creating supportive working environment for carers</u> and - all employees also have the right to take time off for emergencies to respond to unexpected situations involving a dependant (someone they look after). This is regardless of how long they have worked for their employer. Time off is unpaid, but at the discretion of the employer, can be, and often is, paid. A dependant includes a husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with the employee as part of their family. It can also include others who rely on the employee for help in an emergency.</p>
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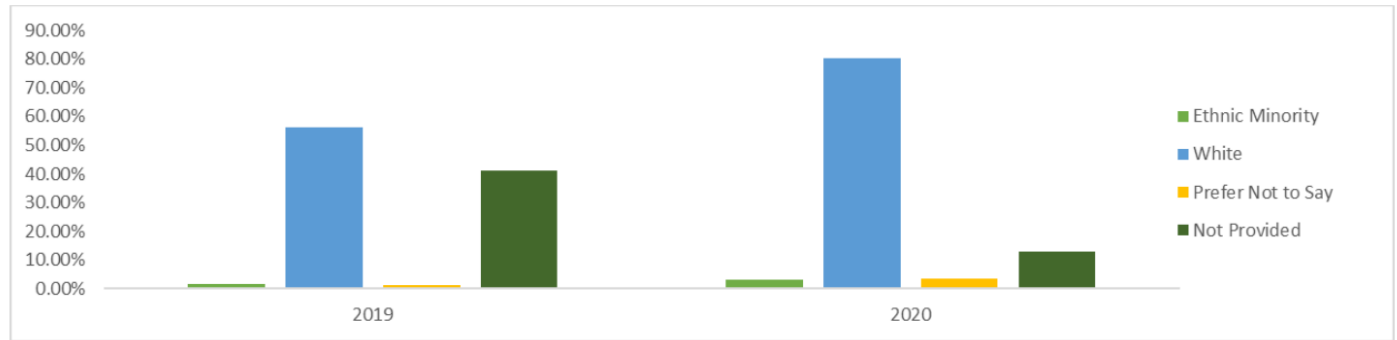


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Race
Ethnicity

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)

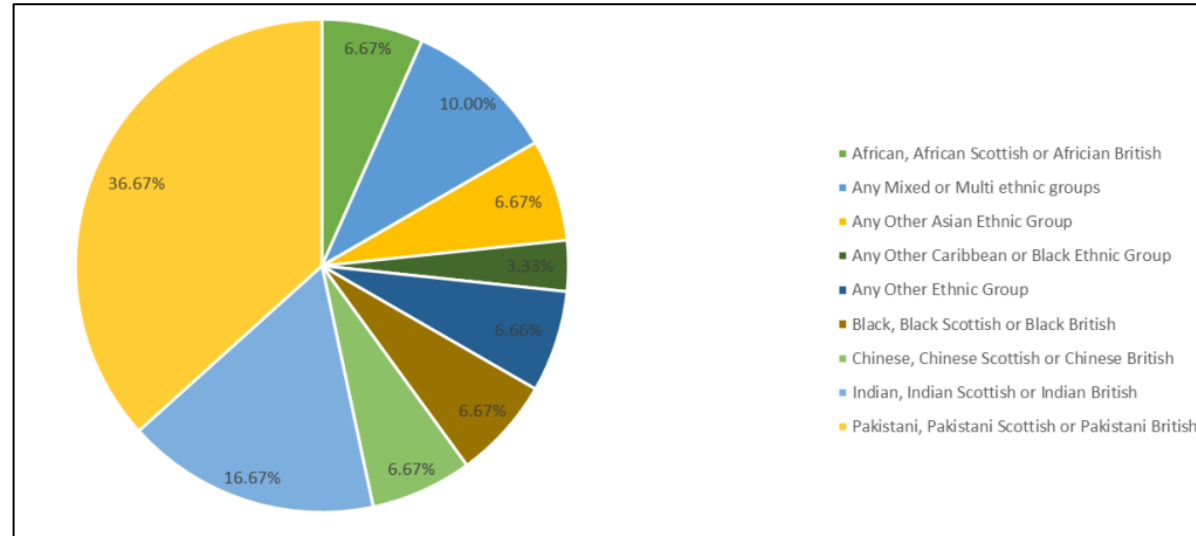


Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021

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.

**Race
Ethnicity
(continued)**



Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021

Data can be found in Table 1.12 and Table 1.15 at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

When someone dies abroad | nidirect we considered the fact that employees with families who live abroad may require some flexibility within the policy to travel to attend to arrangements and a funeral.

There is no data/evidence available (other than some limited research data from USA) that different races will grieve differently and/or have different dependant's needs.



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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%	

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021

29.82% of colleagues said they were Christian, 17.28% non-Christian, 29.29% declared no religion, 10.33% preferred not to say and 13.28% did not provide information, this can be found in Table 1.16 at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sga.org.uk\)](#)

[How people from other cultures cope with grief - Funeral Guide](#)
[Acas guide on religion or belief discrimination | Acas](#)
[Factsheet: Death and funerals in world religions - Religion Media Centre](#)

All point towards employers need to be aware of specific considerations for time off to attend a religious ceremony after a death, balanced against the needs to run a business. It is also important to ensure that such requests are handled in a tactful and consistent manner. Whilst showing some consideration to a religious group during holy days and festivals can be beneficial, it is also important not to disproportionately favour that group to the disadvantage of colleagues with different (or no) religious beliefs. Employers should consider the fact that requests may, depending on the individual circumstances involved, be dealt with by using other forms of leave.



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Sex

Table 1.01 Colleagues by gender

Gender (Sex)	2019	2020	Variance
Female	61.20%	61.64%	0.44%
Male	38.80%	38.36%	-0.44%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

A greater number of SQA employees overall are female - 62% female versus 38% male. This information is in Table 1.01 at [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

From September 21 to September 22, 9 males and 30 females had taken bereavement leave. 13 males and 22 females had taken dependants leave. This data was taken from HR records. This shows us that females took 71% of all compassionate leave taken in SQA over a period of a year, a higher percentage than females to males in general employee grouping referenced above.

Carers UK state: [We're here to make life better for carers - Carers UK](#)

- 1 in 4 women aged 50-64 have caring responsibilities, compared to 1 in 6 men

Women have a 50:50 chance of providing care by the time they are 59; compared with men who have the same chance by the time they are 75 years old. Women are more likely to be sandwich carers (combining eldercare and childcare) are also more likely to give up work to care. [Close the Gap | Blog | Disproportionate disruption: New Close the Gap report shows women will be harder hit by COVID-19 job disruption](#)

Reported emerging evidence that shows women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care. Also that females are more likely to be lower/secondary income earners and may not be given equal access to being able to work.



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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 – 2021

1.26% of colleagues said they were bisexual, 2.11% gay man, 1.05% gay woman, 70.60 % heterosexual, 0.21 % in another way, 0.11% not sure, 8.01% preferred not to say, 16.65% did not provide information, found at table 1.18 of [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

We have no evidence in relation to SQA employees or from wider research that there is a significant impact, positive or negative, for this group in terms of this policy.



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<p>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</p>	<p>No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.</p> <p>One of the recommendations from this Equality Impact Assessment is that the <u>SQA adds Gender Identity (i.e. people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality Monitoring reporting.</u></p>																				
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership</p>	<p>We have no evidence in relation to SQA employees or from wider research that there is a significant impact, positive or negative, for this group in terms of this policy.</p>																				
<p>Pregnancy / Maternity</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="689 746 1928 1042"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="3">Colleagues</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Pregnancy Status</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>Variance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not Pregnant</td> <td>98.25%</td> <td>98.95%</td> <td>0.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnant</td> <td>1.75%</td> <td>1.05%</td> <td>-0.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019 – 2021</p> <p>In 2020, 98.95% of SQA colleagues were not pregnant, 1.05% were pregnant, found at Table 1.20 workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</p> <p><u>Parental bereavement leave and pay: Time off work for bereavement - Acas</u> explains the statutory requirement to have paid parental bereavement leave.</p>		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%	
	Colleagues																				
Pregnancy Status	2019	2020	Variance																		
Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%																		
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Total	100.00%	100.00%																			



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Care experience (where relevant)	Human Resources currently have no data for SQA that shows how many colleagues are Care Experienced.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty



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Age	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>Whilst we accept that on balance, older workers may be at a marginally increased risk of requiring time off work for matters such as caring responsibilities for older relatives or bereavement, there is no evidence to indicate that the policy itself and its subsequent application, could adversely impact (directly or indirectly) employees of different <i>Age</i> groups.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>Advisory comment: SQA does not currently record incidences of compassionate leave by an employee's 'Protected Characteristic as it is currently managed more informally / locally by SQA managers. A recommendation from this assessment is that this data is captured in the future to identify any adverse trends that may exist – however incidental.</p>
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Age	<u>Advance equality of opportunity</u>
	<p>The policy provides/ advances <i>Equality of Opportunity</i> to employees of all ages. All employees, of all ages could technically have dependants. As previously referenced, older workers are more likely to have more dual role in dependants care (for example, a child and parent to care for) and may need more time off. The policy includes paid time off for the care of dependants which will have a positive impact. Although staff of all ages might experience bereavement this is likely to increase with age. To support people experiencing bereavement we have paid leave, flexibility to take into account individual circumstances and have recognised and broadened the range of relationships for whom an employee may need time off.</p>
	<u>Foster good relations</u>
	<p>Whilst this policy may advance Equality of opportunity, it does not necessarily 'Foster Good Relations' for people of different <i>Ages</i>. We make no recommendations as to how the policy could be amended to achieve this at this stage.</p>



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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Disability</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>The <u>Equality Act 2010</u> says that you must not be discriminated against because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you have a disability ▪ someone thinks you have a disability (this is known as discrimination by perception) ▪ you are connected to someone with a disability (this is known as discrimination by association) <p>(Source Equality and Human Rights Commission Website September 2022)</p> <p>We acknowledge that an employee who is a carer of person with a disability, may need more leave and flexibility in respect of dependant's leave. However, Disability caring related absence is not listed at all in the existing policy.</p> <p>We recommend that it should be by amending the policy on page 5 '<i>Leave allowances</i>' and page 8 '<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>' to directly reference disability caring related absence. The policy should state (e.g.) <i>Line managers should give very careful consideration / make all reasonable adjustments to people who care for a dependant with a disability.</i> This will help to mitigate any indirect discrimination.</p> <p><u>Action to include wording in the policy to highlight that carer's for people with disabilities in particular may need more time off and greater flexibility generally.</u></p> <p>Risk of adverse impact / <i>Disability Discrimination By Association</i> which could be mitigated by rewording the policy.</p> <p>(Please see the advisory comment under the <i>Age</i> section of this assessment re the collection of profiling information.)</p>



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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>If the policy is revised as suggested on the previous page, the policy will enable managers to support employees with a disability or where a dependent has a disability.</p> <p>We recommend that the policy should also list the provision of examples where reasonable adjustments may be required, for example flexibility in workplace and working hours.</p> <p>The guarantee of paid leave will promote equality of opportunity for all employees but may particularly benefit people who have, or are related to, someone who has pre-existing mental health conditions and other relevant disabilities considerations .</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>The wording in the policy encouraging flexibility may promote understanding of the differences in experience with regards the leave provided for under this policy. Outcomes of the policy should be monitored for any trends that suggests employees may be disadvantaged directly or indirectly as a result of their disability.</p> <p><u>Action to monitor compassionate leave applications by protected characteristic and monitor any trends with leave days taken/leave days refused specifically but not restricted to disability.</u></p>



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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>We recognise that people of different faiths (therefore indirectly people of different <i>Races</i>) may observe different mourning periods / practices. (Please see page 31 of this document for the direct policy references to this).</p> <p>We do however ultimately conclude that there is no evidence, nationally or locally, to reasonably suggest that this policy and its subsequent application, could adversely impact (directly or indirectly) employees of different <i>Ethnicities, Nationalities or Citizenships (Race)</i>.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>The policy allows for discretion and encourages discussion with managers where employees may need further time off to travel to, for example, attend a funeral. Other leave options will be considered sympathetically which may have a positive impact on employees from minority ethnic groups whose close relatives may be more likely to live abroad (although we have no evidence or feedback from employees to support this).</p>
Race (continued)	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different <i>Races</i> or <i>Ethnicity</i>. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Religion or Belief	<p data-bbox="483 360 2033 419">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p data-bbox="483 496 701 528">Equality Risks:</p> <p data-bbox="483 564 1962 635">As previously stated, the policy recognises that people of different faiths may observe different mourning periods / practices (Please see the next page of this document for the direct policy references to this).</p> <p data-bbox="483 671 1928 778">We equally conclude there is no evidence, nationally or locally, to reasonably suggest that this policy and its subsequent application, could adversely impact (directly or indirectly) employees of different <i>Religions or Belief Systems</i>.</p> <p data-bbox="483 815 1391 847">Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>



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Religion or Belief	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees from all <i>Religions / Beliefs</i> are entitled to use, access and be subjected to <i>the</i> Compassionate Leave Policy</p> <p>The policy acknowledges that different colleagues may respond to death etc in different ways and may have different cultural expectations and requirements in these challenging circumstances. The policy states:</p> <p><i>“We recognise that different cultures respond to death and unexpected changes in significantly different ways.</i></p> <p><i>“Your line managers will check whether your religion, belief or culture requires you to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would require being off work at a particular time. In turn, you should not assume that your line manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to their attention as soon as possible.”</i></p>
	Foster good relations
	<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>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

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>Equality Risks:</p> <p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different <i>Sexual Orientations</i> and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Compassionate Leave</i> policy 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>.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of <i>different Sexual Orientations</i>. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Gender Identity.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Gender Re-assignment</p> <p>Non Binary</p> <p>Gender Fluid</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <hr/> <p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>Please note; absences specifically related to <i>Gender Reassignment</i> would ordinarily be dealt with under the new SQA <i>Transitioning at Work</i> policy and NOT the <i>Compassionate Leave</i> policy.</p> <p>Otherwise, we conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people in this equality group and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
<p>Gender Identity.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Gender Re-assignment</p> <p>Non Binary</p> <p>Gender Fluid</p> <p>(continued)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <hr/> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Compassionate Leave</i> policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (<i>LGBTQ+</i>) status.</p> <hr/> <p>Foster good relations</p> <hr/> <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different <i>Gender Identities</i> or who are <i>LGBTQ+</i>. No further recommendations are identified at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

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
	<p>Equality Risks:</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;">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Compassionate Leave</i> policy and 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;">Foster good relations</p>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different <i>Marital Status</i>.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>Please refer to the separate SQA policy – <i>Maternity</i>.</p> <p>Otherwise, we conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are pregnant or on maternity 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;">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>The policy extends the paid bereavement leave for parents (incorporating other protected groups - <i>Sex, Sexual Orientation</i>) during loss at any of stage of pregnancy.</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 that are Pregnant or on Maternity leave.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>58% of carers are women and 42% are men. (source: Carers UK)</p> <p>A carer is anyone, including children and adults, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. 23.6% of SQA employees stated they currently have some caring responsibilities.</p> <p>There is an increasing prevalence of ‘sandwich carers’ (2.4 million in the UK) – those looking after young children at the same time as caring for older parents. It can also be used much more broadly to describe a variety of multiple caring responsibilities for people in different generations. (Source Carers UK <u>Sandwich generation concern is growing</u>).</p> <p>Whilst we accept that on balance, women may be at an increased risk of requiring time off work for matters such as caring responsibilities there is no evidence to indicate that the policy itself and its subsequent application, could adversely impact (directly or indirectly) employees of different Sexes.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>Advisory comment:</p> <p><u>SQA does not currently record incidences of compassionate leave by an employee’s ‘Protected Characteristic as it is currently managed more informally / locally by SQA managers. A recommendation from this assessment is that this data is captured in the future to identify any adverse trends that may exist – however incidental.</u></p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

Sex	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Compassionate Leave</i> policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Sex.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Sexes. <u>Consultation with the SQA women's network on the practical application of this policy is advised.</u>



Equality Impact Assessment - Compassionate Leave V1.0

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 / indirectly on people who are Care Experienced and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Nothing to add.
	Foster Good Relations
	Nothing to add.



Miscellaneous:

Other impacts identified as part of this EqIA which generally have a positive impact on all SQA employees include:

- A SQA employee assistance programme providing employees with confidential support and guidance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Trade union representatives who can provide members with advice, help and support relating to sickness absences
- Mental Health First Aiders who are available as a first point of contact in the SQA.
- The *Able Futures* service who can be contacted for ongoing professional support for mental health and wellbeing.
- The SQA occupational health provider offers medical advice and support on staying healthy at work.
- Internally, the SQA Human Resources team can provide confidential support and advice to employees.
- The SQA Parent and Carers Network provides support to colleagues. This network aims to provide a safe and confidential space to allow parents and carers to support each other, share ideas, current challenges, knowledge and experiences.

Additionally, the SQA is committed to being a supportive and inclusive employer and is members of and/or accredited by various organisations these include:

- Disability Confident Employer
- Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme Member
- Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion Member
- Happy to Talk Flexible Working Employer
- Accreditation as a Scottish Living Wage Employer
- Business in the Community Race at Work Charter Signatory
- Stonewall Diversity Champion
- Dying to Work Charter Member