

SQA Equality Impact Assessment

Please read the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance on assessing impact](#).

Your policy

1 What is the name of your policy, procedure, proposal, project, or decision*?

*Referred to as 'policy' hereafter.

Policy name	Corporate Induction Programme
Completed by	Jenny Rowell
Head of service	Elaine Gourlay
Date	24/11/2021
Signature	
Next scheduled review date	24/11/2022

2 Main purpose of policy

The Corporate Induction Programme has been created to provide colleagues with:

- a welcoming and professional introduction to the organisation and their team
- an outline of our culture, values, activities and ways of working
- an understanding of how to put our values into action
- networking opportunities and signposting to corporate resources i.e., corporate plan, performance framework, colleague networks

The local induction (You and Your Team) is the responsibility of the line manager and will not be reviewed as part of the programme at this time. The local induction provides colleagues with objectives which align with our corporate goals as per the My Review process. This assessment will focus on the corporate induction engagement session (All About Us) and supporting materials.

Supporting documents and information is available via the OD & Change Management SharePoint site. The site pages have been accessibility checked however the supporting documents (i.e., Word documents, PowerPoint slides will be accessibility checked in the future as part of this review).

The programme is driven by the current performance policy and the My Review process and aligns with Recruitment and Selection and Probation policies – policies and processes owned by Human Resources have not been considered part of this assessment as they are out of scope. The programme applies to all colleagues who join the organisation from external recruitment. Existing colleagues who return from long-term sickness or maternity leave are also invited to attend. Contractors working for the organisation attend a summarised version of the programme which does not include any employee driven activity but does include our culture and health and safety requirements.

3 Information and evidence used to evaluate impact

Internal Consultation with Networks

Consultation with internal colleague networks (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity (ACE), Rainbow, Young Person's and Disability) was carried out during November 2021 to explore the content of the "All About Us" classroom-based activity on those who share protected characteristics. This consultation focused on delivery in the virtual classroom and will be repeated once we have a better understanding of the direction of the Smarter Working Programme within SQA. A proposed return to the physical classroom environment for delivery of "All About Us" will have an impact on people who share protected characteristics.

Rainbow Network (LGBT+)

- Following consultation an amendment will be made to an introduction exercise, in response to advice from the network chair. Colleagues in attendance will be invited to share their preferred pronoun during the introductory icebreaker to facilitate the opportunity to express preferred pronouns. Originally this opportunity was not built into the icebreaker and there was a potential negative impact for colleagues who share the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as colleagues who may not have been provided with the opportunity to express their preferred pronoun.

ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity)

- No gaps highlighted

Young Person's Network

- No gaps highlighted

Disability Network

- No gaps highlighted

Accessibility

The onset of COVID-19 prompted a rapid transition from the physical classroom to virtual training delivery, this change impacted on the engagement session which forms part of the policy. According to the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) virtual learning provides a more flexible provision of learning support and it is expected that as employers turn increasingly to hybrid working the level of change towards digital or blended learning approaches will be maintained (CIPD, Effective Virtual Classroom Practice, Oct 21).

Based on this research the classroom-based activity "All About Us" will continue to be made available through a blended approach, combining online learning with delivery. At the point of this review, delivery is virtual via Microsoft Teams and lasts a maximum of two hours in line with best practice for virtual training delivery. This method of delivery will continue until we have a better understanding of what Smarter Working will look like within the organisation.

As part of the upcoming review as we progress towards Smarter Working, consideration will be given to a calendar of events, both physical and virtual to ensure accessibility for all colleagues with minimal negative impact based on protected characteristics.

The Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) include the following in their diversity and inclusion guidance for learning and development, each point is covered within the induction programme. "Include diversity issues in induction programmes, including raising awareness of employee network groups, so that all new employees know about the organisation's values and policies." The programme achieves this by including information on employee networks, a values-based exercise and signposting to policy as required (CIPD, [Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#), Factsheet – May 2021)

Work is currently ongoing internally in collaboration with the Disability Network to create Autism Awareness training. Once created, this module will become part of the required learning for the Corporate Induction Programme. This learning will be completed ahead of colleagues attending "All About Us" and will provide a foundation of knowledge for consideration by colleagues in the classroom environment.

Around 8% of SQA colleagues currently identify as disabled, this growth highlights the need for additional consideration now and in the future for those who self-identify as having a disability. The consultation with the Disability Network Chair provided valuable insight into aspects of the virtual classroom which may positively or negatively impact on disabled colleagues. The composition of the virtual "All About Us" has scope to impact positively due to –

- During housekeeping colleagues are reminded that they are free to step away from the screen/desk if they need to for comfort reasons
- The maximum time is 2 hours in acknowledgement of mental fatigue
- PowerPoint slides are used minimally (approx. 30% of duration) and are sent via e-mail following the session for review
- SharePoint is used as a resource and is accessibility checked
- Presenter uses their camera when delivering and promotes the benefits of sharing video for the purpose of engagement, this also enables lip reading for colleagues with hearing difficulties
- Colleagues are invited to advise of any special arrangements that they require ahead of attending "All About Us" in the welcome e-mail/calendar invite

Consultation with Disability Network representatives will continue in the future as we transition from remote to Smarter Working as an organisation.

We currently employ 130 colleagues on a part-time basis. To ensure the programme remains accessible the "All About Us" session is scheduled at varied dates and times across the working week to accommodate colleague working patterns. During engagement conversations with the hiring manager which take place before a new colleague start date, the schedule for "All About Us" is shared and adjustments are made to accommodate new colleague working patterns.

Moreover, 111/130 of the part-time colleagues identify as female. The flexibility on date and time also ensures that female colleagues are not disproportionately impacted when working on a part-time basis.

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

Data collected in December 2021 based colleagues who engaged with the induction programme over a two-year period (January 2020-December 2021) highlighted the following; 64.9% identify as female, the largest demographic in terms of age was the 16-24 age group with 40 (19% of overall sample). Equality data will continue to be monitored as part of this review on a quarterly basis. The programme content will not be changed as this is defined by the organisation and overall corporate plan however following significant changes in the data adjustments will be made as necessary to the delivery method/s used.

Public Sector Equality Duty

SQA is required to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This section provides the opportunity to capture how the policy will contribute towards the three aims of the general equality duty, and to consider if there is anything more we need to do to meet our responsibilities.

5 How might this policy impact on people who share protected characteristics?

Please consider positive or negative impacts. (At the beginning of the process, you may want to record perceived impact. Ongoing monitoring of the policy will allow you to measure the actual impact of the policy.)

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive/negative/neutral)	Please provide more information
Age	Neutral	Colleagues aged 16-24 made up 19% of the Induction Programme audience between January 2020 and 7th December 2021.
Disability	Positive	As highlighted above the current virtual delivery has positive impact based on – housekeeping rules, duration, follow up methods, materials used and use of cameras for visual cues. The consultation did not highlight any gaps however we will continue to monitor the data and consult with Disability Network representatives around changes to the delivery

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive/negative/neutral)	Please provide more information
		following Smarter Working Programme implementation.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	There is no current data available or employee networks in place to inform decision making.
Race	Neutral	<p>39 Colleagues identified they were from a BAME background, around 18% of the Induction Programme audience between January 2020 and 7th December 2021.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest we have a gap however we will continue to monitor the data and consult with colleagues.</p>
Religion, belief or non-belief	Neutral	<p>90 Colleagues identified their religious background, around 40% of the Induction Programme audience between January 2020 and 7th December 2021.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest we have a gap however we will continue to monitor the data and consult with colleagues.</p>
Sexual orientation	Neutral	132 colleagues identified their sexual orientation however there is no evidence to suggest we have a gap. We will continue to monitor the data and consult with colleagues.

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive/negative/neutral)	Please provide more information
Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender)	Neutral	<p>Following consultation with the Rainbow Network (LGBT+) an amendment was made to the corporate induction engagement session to avoid mistaking/assuming pronouns. All new colleagues will be invited to share their preferred pronoun if they wish during the introductory icebreaker as per advice.</p> <p>This was the only gap identified by the consultation process, we will continue to monitor the data and consult with colleagues.</p>
Pregnancy/maternity	Neutral	<p>Colleagues returning from maternity leave are invited to attend “All About Us” and the data suggests that these colleagues may be disproportionately impacted due to part-time working.</p> <p>To allow new working patterns to be implemented this invite will be issued around 8 weeks following return to work, rather than immediately. This provision will continue to be reviewed as we transition to Smarter Working.</p>
Sex	Neutral	Where is has been highlighted above female colleagues may be disproportionately impacted due to increased part-time working. This impact is managed by providing flexibility with varied dates

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive/negative/neutral)	Please provide more information
		<p>and times for classroom-based induction activity.</p> <p>Colleagues who identify as female made up 64.9% of the Induction Programme audience between January 2020 and 7th December 2021.</p> <p>The provision will continue to be reviewed as we transition to Smarter Working to allow all working patterns to be implemented.</p>
Care experience (where relevant)	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest we have a gap however we will continue to monitor the data and consult with colleagues.

6 What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?

No negative impacts have been identified during the above review however, with the Smarter Working Programme likely to be implemented early next year there may be potential adverse or negative impacts on colleagues with protected characteristics.

We will be part of the Smarter Working Programme implementation and review, collaborating with decision makers on identifying how any potential impacts can be either mitigated or avoided.

We will review the supporting documents based on the OD & Change SharePoint site and ensure these are accessibility checked in line with current advice and guidance to ensure the impact on disabled colleagues remains neutral or positive where possible.

7 If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact despite the mitigatory arrangements identified in Step 5, are you satisfied that this is objectively justified, ie a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim? Please provide explanatory details.

n/a

8 Could this policy be revised or changed to better meet the general equality duty?

Any updates to government initiatives will be considered. An annual review of programme content and delivery method will be completed. Equality data will be monitored and any significant changes in the number of colleagues with protected characteristics will inform changes to the delivery method as necessary.

9 Has there been consultation/is consultation planned with people who will be affected by this policy/procedure/project/decision? Please detail below how this has affected your decision making.

Further consultation will take place with the Disability Network Chair and SWP representatives around accessibility as part of the plan to implement the Smarter Working Programme.

10 How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

- Data to be requested from HR Analytics and Systems on a quarterly basis to ensure the programme remains accessible to the programme audience
- Feedback forms will be issued to evaluate programme relevance and accessibility
- The programme content and structure will be reviewed 2 months following our return to the physical office to allow working patterns to be implemented
- Content will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure relevance and accessibility
- Continued consultation will employee networks on a 6 monthly basis

Action plan

Action:	Owners:	Dates:
We will ensure the programme remains relevant and accessible to SQA colleagues using continued evaluation and engagement with employee networks and adherence to accessibility best practice	Sarah Anne Rooney	By March 2022
We will continue to monitor the data on protected characteristics by requesting equality data of new colleagues quarterly (to potentially inform the delivery method)	Sarah Anne Rooney	By November 2022
We will review supporting materials and resources provided to hiring managers and new colleagues and ensure all are accessibility checked and compliant with most up to date best practice	Sarah Anne Rooney	By March 2022
Use data when available from Smarter Working Programme to inform the annual content and delivery review. This will be done on a 3-month basis in line with SWP reviews,	Sarah Anne Rooney	Until March 2023

Approval and publication

Completed equality impact assessments will be published on SQA's website. As such, they must:

- ◆ be discussed and approved
- ◆ be sent electronically to equality@sqa.org.uk
- ◆ have actions identified, recorded and monitored as part of SQA's equality action plan

Summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010

Components

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act (**Fairness**)
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Opportunity**)
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Respect**)

Due regard

Regarding (b) **Opportunity**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic*
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of the persons who do not share it
- c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

Regarding (c) **Respect**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Tackle prejudice
- b) Promote understanding

*Due regard comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. The weight that public authorities give to equality should be proportionate to how relevant a particular function is to equality. In short, the more relevant a policy, procedure or practice is to equality and people, then the greater the regard that should be paid.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- ◆ Religion or Belief
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Pregnancy and Maternity
- ◆ Sex

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

- ◆ Gender Re-assignment
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Sexual Orientation

**Although marriage and civil partnership applies to section a) in employment only, this will be considered for all stakeholders.