

Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Action Plan

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

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

Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

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

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

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

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
<p>Sexual orientation Recommended that data is collected on the number of staff actively using flexitime and the relationship to their sexual orientation</p>	Advance equality of opportunity	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	September 24	
<p>Age & Sex It is recommended that consideration be made to include within the policy wording to capture that flexitime can be used for any purpose including leisure pursuits and not restricted to any reason e.g., only for caring.</p>	Advance equality of opportunity	Head of HR	September 23	
<p>Age, Disability, Religion/beliefs Reconsider the business case for having core hours and maximum credit/debit hours – potentially impacting positively on all eligible employees. A review of the policy within community network groups may aid this review and help with raising awareness generally.</p>	foster good relations	Head of HR	September 23	
<p>General We continue to review eligibility of this policy to grades 1 to 5 only, considering the business case for applying this to all grades</p>	Advance equality of opportunity	Head of HR	Ongoing	
<p>Gender re-assignment Add Gender identity (i.e. all people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality monitoring reporting.</p>	Advance equality of opportunity	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	September 24	

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

<p>Care Recommended that data is collected and an analysis, by care experience, be performed of the 'lifecycle' of colleagues to identify any adverse trends.</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager</p>	<p>September 24</p>	
<p>Age Communicate the need (and in some cases rules) for longer rest breaks (30 minutes per 4.5 hours) and a cap on a maximum 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week for workers aged to 17. These requirements should be referenced clearly in the flexitime policy.</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>September 23</p>	
<p>Religion and beliefs Change the policy to reference cultural/religious beliefs to allow for more flexibility around core hours where needed.</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Head of HR</p>	<p>September 23</p>	

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	Flexitime
New Policy or Revision	Revised
Name of Policy Owner	Head of HR
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	Draft

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
<p>To help employees balance their personal and work life. We understand that during the course of a working life, circumstances may often change. This policy is designed to support employees with this.</p>
What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?
<p>Flexitime is an element of Flexible working that is an automatic staff benefit given to people employed in all non-supervisory or management roles. Supervisory and management roles can flex their time through using both Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) or through our Flexible working (see our separate Flexible Working and TOIL policies). Both are also available to all staff.</p> <p>We believe that flexitime can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing, improve performance and productivity, reduce sickness absence and improve employee engagement.</p> <p>The Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported in September 2019 that ‘research has shown that <u>flexible working</u> can improve employee well-being, as well as personal and team productivity and efficiency’.</p> <p>Data extracted from SQA’s Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21 shows that 35.7% of total employees have eligibility for flexitime benefit (Grades 1 to 5) with more females (58%) than males(42%) within this population. This data can be found here Colleagues by Grade (as in table 1.00) <u>workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk)</u></p>

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

SQA has also collected data on employees with caring responsibilities and this shows that 23.60% of employees identify as a carer and this information helps us to understand the different needs of individuals from a carers perspective to better support individuals' commitments and work-life balance

In the Age UK Carers policy position paper, May 2019, they quote women have a greater intensity than men and make up a higher proportion (59%) of family carers

Caring Responsibilities	2019	2020	Variance
Yes	23.37%	23.60%	0.24%
No	45.87%	48.16%	2.28%
Prefer not to say	4.61%	4.64%	0.03%
Not Provided	26.15%	23.60%	-2.55%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

We know from Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) report into flexible working in 2019 that flexitime as an option was widely available in UK companies (57%) [flexible-working_tcm18-58746.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/media/1858746/flexible-working_tcm18-58746.pdf) (cipd.co.uk)

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

To help all employees understand how flexitime works and who is eligible by clearly outlining the policy and process to follow.

The policy aims to explain the Flexitime system of attendance allowing individuals to select their starting and finishing times for their working day within the parameters shown in the policy.

The policy aims to provide employees with flexible options and to foster good working relations. It is noteworthy that as this policy is a benefit, there is no approval process or tracking in place and the provision is based on that of trust except for line management approval for requesting time off work for accumulated credits.

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 Flexible working policy

- ◆ Attendance Management
- ◆ Disciplinary
- ◆ Flexible Working
- ◆ Pay
- ◆ Staff leave policy

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

SQA acknowledges that people who share / do not share, certain 'Protected Characteristics may have different reasons for requiring to work at different start and finishing times

Offering flexitime as a benefit may also mean we have access to a wider talent pool of candidates who may not have otherwise been able to apply for work with us.

Having roles with flexibility will help more people put their skills to use rather than opting to not work with us or must find alternative ways of supporting their needs.

Flexitime will have a positive impact on gender pay discrepancies, career progression and job mobility for women with family responsibilities, and it will also help older workers, carers, and people with disabilities.

There is a systemic approach of trust to our flexitime arrangements where hours worked are recorded manually and only flexi credits taken as leave are recorded on our Business World system.

Our 2021 People Survey showed that 92% of colleagues felt 'trusted to carry out my job effectively'. We therefore conclude this type of approach would seem to encourage positive engagement overall.

Other relevant evidence from our People Survey includes:

- 91% of colleagues agreed that 'My manager is considerate to my life outside of work' pointing towards successful flexible approaches to work
- 84% of people also agreed that SQA 'respects individual differences (e.g. culture, working styles etc)
- 85% of people believe they have a 'good balance between working and personal life'.

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 internal groups. These include:

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

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.

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

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 HR policies / activities, sharing resources, recording feedback and scheduling future consultation meetings.

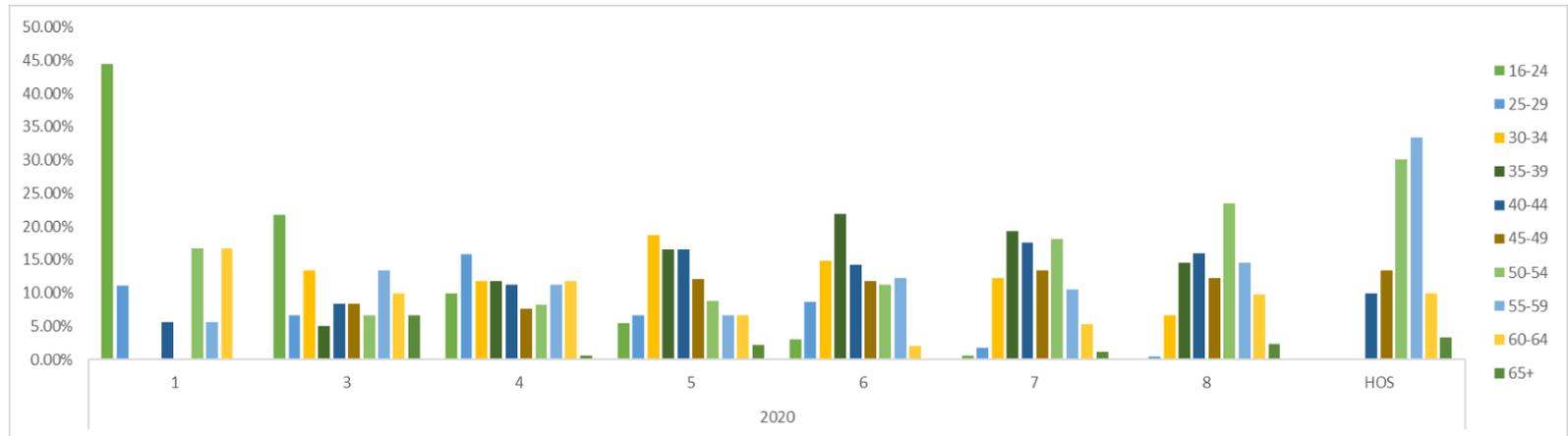
Evidence of Staff Network Consultation:

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	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
TOI	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

Local Data / Evidence:



Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

In total, 499 colleagues are aged 16–44 and 450 are aged 45–65+. Grades 1 to 5 are eligible for Flexitime and overall there is a higher number of colleagues aged 16-44 in these grades though this is less prevalent in Grades 4 & 5. This can be found at Colleagues by age band and grade (as in Table 1.06) [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf) (sqa.org.uk)

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

National Data / Evidence:

National data (AJ2018)					
Ages 18-35		Ages 36-50		Ages 51-65	
FLEXW1 Respondent works flexi-time		FLEXW1 Respondent works flexi-time		FLEXW1 Respondent works flexi-time	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
16,330	115,086	14,428	109,094	14,514	96,702
20,541	135,082	24,199	146,262	20,173	147,909
40,287	346,530	36,333	315,223	26,533	245,155
18,403	175,531	20,727	136,580	19,136	138,286
26,323	340,703	54,741	329,096	38,553	290,765
27,083	154,657	22,690	143,710	23,559	119,989
26,823	298,809	27,389	252,051	28,963	179,203
15,366	189,193	21,308	191,594	21,826	169,634
47,584	548,456	64,128	521,196	63,687	452,955
33,039	366,336	33,287	314,609	19,330	237,374
22,559	350,496	31,919	339,614	35,720	330,736
68,170	711,421	91,656	766,406	64,878	656,844
98,514	611,340	58,378	441,299	26,281	213,066
49,397	642,144	86,293	715,287	53,969	451,405
111,609	1,001,175	149,873	1,080,844	107,408	918,508
75,327	614,994	105,949	595,328	58,277	586,642

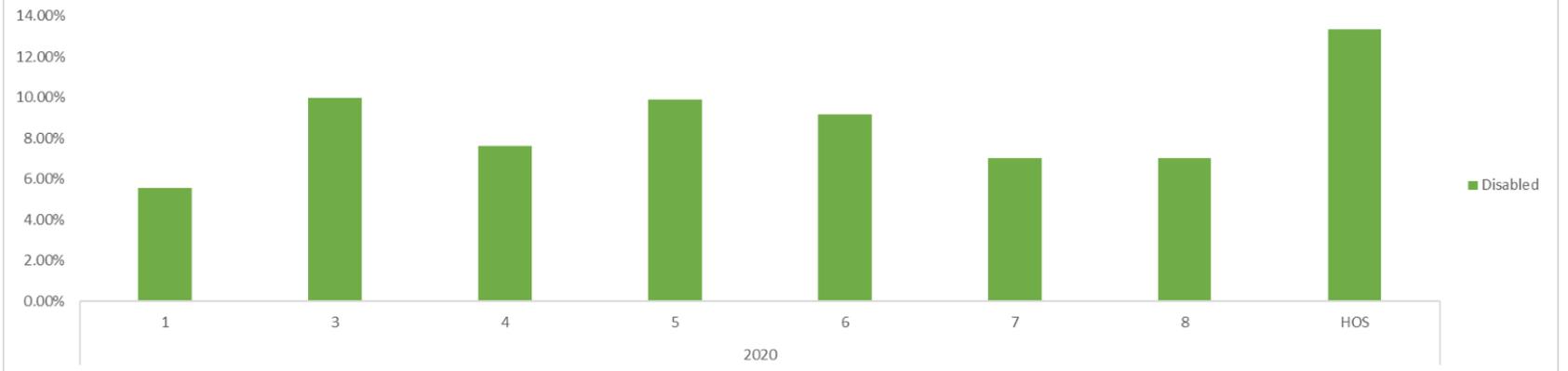
Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

48,469	350,255	54,451	325,016	42,060	297,621
25,403	265,273	19,832	248,077	23,544	223,608
38,813	377,161	42,431	354,908	36,715	317,602
30,009	257,534	45,843	247,189	23,749	167,737
840,049	7,852,176	1,005,855	7,573,383	748,875	6,241,741

Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2018

Externally ONS reporting shows slightly higher number of UK workers in a flexitime scheme will be aged 36 – 50 (approx 13%) with lower likelihood in younger (10%) and older (12%) workers. This does differ from a broad comparison of the numbers of employees in SQA who are eligible for flexitime.

Disability



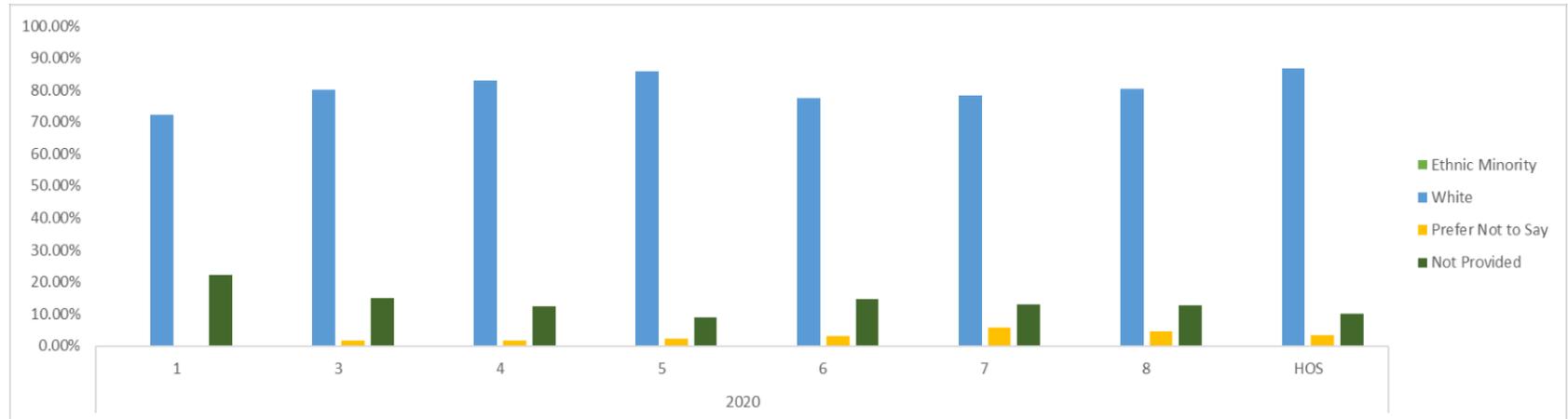
Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

Our disability completion rate is not 100% (currently it stands at 76.82%); so any individuals with an undisclosed disability are excluded from our calculations.

62.82% of colleagues who have declared they have a disability are in Grades 6 and higher therefore not eligible to join the Flexitime scheme, this information can be found at Colleagues by disability status and Grade 2020 (as in Table 1.09) [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#).

Externally, we have not been able to find any sources of data on flexitime and disability to draw wider comparisons.

Race



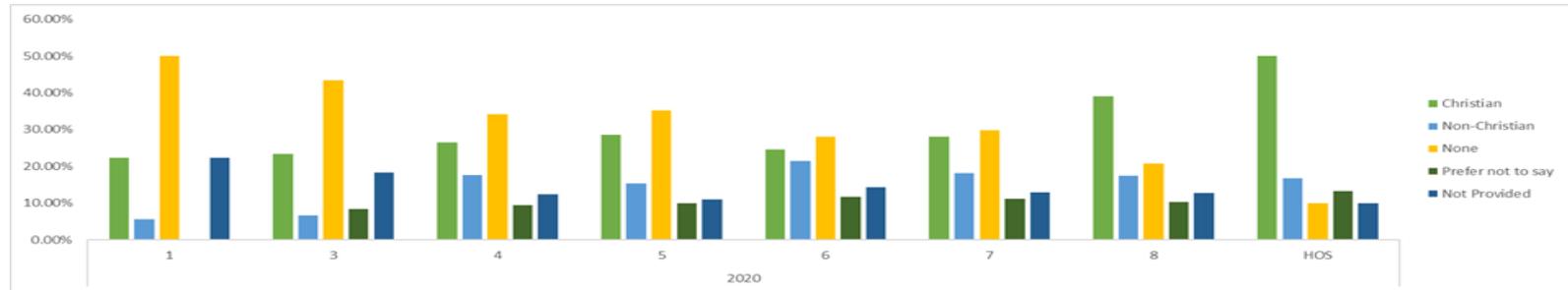
Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

Grades by race (not broken down into specific ethnic minority groupings)

The numbers (3.16% of workforce) of colleagues identifying as from an ethnic minority are low – so the table does not show up the % in each grade, of the 3.16% figure most (70%) are in Grade 1 to 5 and therefore eligible for flexitime, this data can be found at Colleagues by grade and race (as in Table 1.13) [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

Externally, we have not been able to find any sources of data on flexitime and race to compare.

Religion or Belief



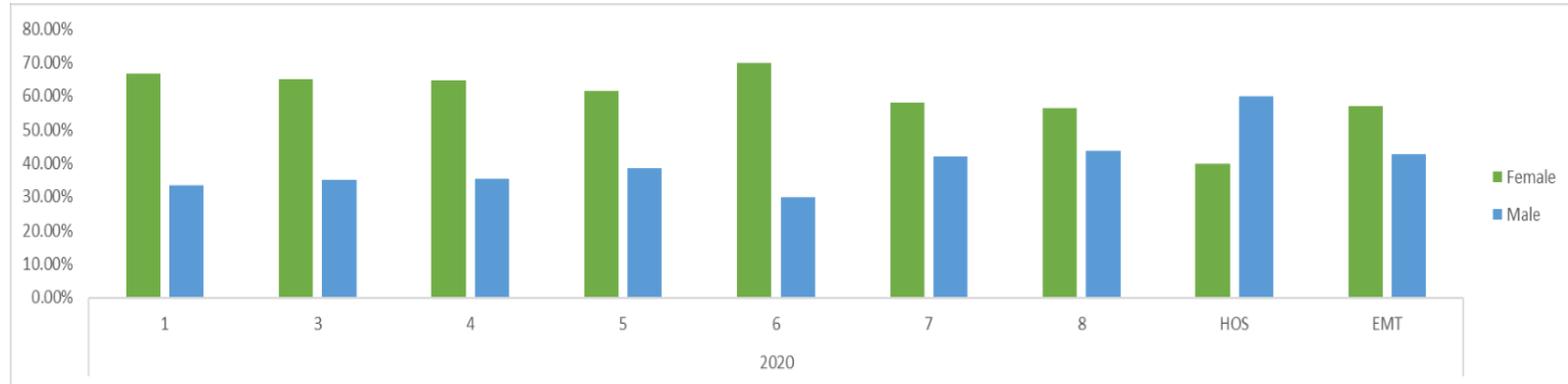
Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

Colleagues by grade and religion or belief 2020

The split of religion/belief by grade is even with Grade 1 to 5 eligibility for flexitime showing no significant variances, this data is found at Colleagues by grade and religion or belief 2020 (as in table 1.17) [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

Externally, we have not been able to find any sources of data on flexitime and religion/belief to compare.

Sex



Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

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. . There are a greater number of females in every grade with the exception of Head of Service grade. Colleagues by Gender (Sex) and Grade 2020 (as in Table 1.02) [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

The population of Scotland in the 2011 Census was split 51.5% female and 48.5% male.

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: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21			
	70.60% of colleagues declared they were heterosexual, 1.26% bisexual, 2.11% gay man, 1.05% gay woman, 0.21% in another way, 0.11% not sure and 8.08% preferred not to say this information is at Table 1.18 Colleagues by Sexual Orientation workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf (sqa.org.uk) .			
	The Scottish 2011 census did not ask a question on Sexual orientation.			
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	No equality profiling data is currently captured by SQA One of the recommendations from the Flexible working Equality impact assessment is for SQA to add Gender identity i.e. all people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality monitoring reporting.			

Marriage/Civil Partnership

Table 1.10: Colleagues by relationship status

Relationship status	2019	2020	Variance
Married/Civil Partnership	30.01%	44.66%	14.65%
Single	24.44%	35.87%	11.44%
Prefer not to say	1.93%	5.71%	3.79%
Not Provided	43.62%	13.76%	-29.87%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

44.66% of colleagues said they were married or in a civil partnership, 35.87% were single, 5.71% preferred not to say and 13.76% did not provide any information, found at Table 1.10: Colleagues by relationship status [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

Pregnancy / Maternity

Pregnancy Status	Colleagues		
	2019	2020	Variance
Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%
Pregnant	1.75%	1.05%	-0.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

Source: Workforce equality monitoring report 2019-21

98.95% of colleagues were not pregnant, 1.05% were pregnant, found at Table 1.20: Colleagues by pregnancy status [workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy V1.0

Care experience (where relevant)	No equality profiling data is currently captured by SQA.
Social and economic (where relevant)	N/A

Impact and Opportunities for Action

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

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

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	<p data-bbox="483 584 2047 687">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p data-bbox="483 687 2047 847">SQA do need to communicate the need (and in some cases rules) for longer rest breaks (30 minutes per 4.5 hours) and a cap on a maximum 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week for workers aged to 17. <u>These requirements should be referenced clearly in the flexitime policy.</u></p> <p data-bbox="483 847 2047 951"><u>Rules on working hours for young workers: Young workers, apprentices and work experience - Acas Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service</u></p> <p data-bbox="483 951 2047 1070">Overall, the flexitime policy benefits a relatively even split of age bands in SQA. ONS research (2019) shows that the majority (66%) of people with carer responsibilities will be aged 50+ therefore the benefits of flexitime will be very useful to this population if there is a need to fit in caring responsibilities around the working day.</p> <p data-bbox="483 1070 2047 1230">In addition, we know from ACAS research: (see link below) <u>Flexibility in the workplace: implications of flexible work arrangements for individuals, teams and organisations Acas</u> that: (quote)</p> <p data-bbox="483 1230 2047 1396">‘ Employees benefit from Flexible Working Arrangements (particularly time flexibility) through improved health and wellbeing. Employers can often consequentially record improved organisational productivity and retention.’</p>

Age	<p>There is very clear evidence nationally to indicate that greater levels of sickness absence occur in older workers. For example, employees in the age range 60+ have an absence rate that is 113% higher than people aged 25 – 34. (See table below:)</p>												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Range:</th> <th>Average Sickness Absence:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16 – 24</td> <td>1.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 – 34</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 – 49</td> <td>2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 -64</td> <td>2.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 +</td> <td>3.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Range:	Average Sickness Absence:	16 – 24	1.8	25 – 34	1.5	35 – 49	2.0	50 -64	2.9	65 +	3.2
	Age Range:	Average Sickness Absence:											
	16 – 24	1.8											
	25 – 34	1.5											
	35 – 49	2.0											
	50 -64	2.9											
65 +	3.2												
<p>Source ONS</p>													
<p>The ability to be flexible with start and end working times while taking time off when flexi credits are built up are therefore likely to have a positive work life balance impact on older employees and improve health and wellbeing.</p>													
<p>Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>													
<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>													
<p><u>It is recommended that consideration be made to include within the policy wording to capture that flexitime can be used for any purpose including leisure pursuits and not restricted to any particular reason e.g. only for caring.</u></p> <p>This may, for example, be useful for younger people who may be more likely to use flexitime to help balance work commitments with external interests. Our People Survey results in 2021 suggest that most colleagues overall see no problems with this however (84 and 85% respectively agree 1. that there is a good work life balance and 2. that SQA respect culture and outside interests.</p>													
<p>Neutral impact from the evidence available.</p>													

Age (continued)	Foster good relations
	<p>The availability for Flexitime to lower grades can clearly be seen as a benefit to allowing individuals overall choose their working patterns within parameters set. Also, a significant change to working practices since the Covid pandemic is likely to result in more permanent hybrid working from home/office locations. This will make core hours referenced in the current policy potentially impractical in many roles that are not customer facing. Reviewing this would appear to be of overall benefit to all eligible employees and the organisation as a whole.</p> <hr/> <p><u>It would be useful to reconsider the business case for having core hours and maximum credit/debit hours – potentially impacting positively on all eligible employees. A review of the policy within community network groups may aid this review and help with raising awareness generally.</u></p>

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>There is a clear reference in the introduction to the policy that SQA supports Flexitime to support personal and work life.</p> <p>We know that people with a disability may need more time off for health-related appointments and are likely to have higher sickness absence rates compared to their non disabled counterparts.</p> <p>Flexibility around taking time to attend appointments and/or start and end your working day depending on individual needs will have a positive impact on colleagues working with a disability, ACAS reference (please see link below) the importance of providing reasonable adjustments and flexibility to help manage and mitigate absences</p> <p><u>Disability-related absence: Supporting disabled people at work - Acas.</u></p> <p>Also, the trust element in the policy where hours are not recorded systematically removes the need to formally apply for time off so reduces any anxiety that may exist if, for instance, someone has a condition they don't want to disclose at work.</p>
	<p>Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>As positive impact is recorded (above) there may be some disabilities / long term conditions - for example, <i>Seasonal Adjustment Disorder</i> or eating disorders that may require more flexibility than is currently provided for in the Flexitime scheme. Core hours to start and have rests may for instance impact negatively if an individual has to eat at regular intervals or start work later in the morning/finish earlier in the afternoon. <u>Some consideration around more flexibility of the core hours would be recommended.</u></p>

<p>Disability</p>	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>The availability for Flexitime to lower grades can clearly be seen as a benefit to allowing individuals overall to choose their working patterns within set parameters. As previously stated, significant changes to working practices since Covid is likely to result in more permanent hybrid working from home/office locations. This will make core hours referenced in the current policy potentially impractical in many roles that are not customer facing. This may impact more on people with disabilities as they may have more limitations on being able to be at work during existing core hours if they have to attend medical appointments during core hours. This is in relation to national pressures on GP surgeries and medical practitioners in general referenced here Pressures in general practice data analysis (bma.org.uk)</p> <p>Reviewing this would appear to be of overall benefit to all eligible employees and the organisation as a whole. <u>It would be useful to reconsider the business case for having core hours and maximum credit/debit hours – potentially impacting positively on all eligible employees. A review of the policy within community network groups may aid this review and help with raising awareness generally.</u></p>
<p>Protected Characteristic</p>	<p>General Equality Duty</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>From our internal evidence we know that most (70%) of the employees who have identified themselves as part of an ethnic minority group currently have eligibility to use Flexitime. We conclude that there are no indicators supporting a significant disadvantage of race within SQA.</p>
	<p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>Neutral Equality related impact is recorded in this area.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is recorded in this area.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Religion or Belief	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>The policy allows flexibility which may have a positive impact on religious/belief observance e.g. Ramadan or Jewish weekly Sabbath. It allows for people to take time away from work without formal requirement to request time off. Core hours requirement may however have a negative impact on some religious/belief practices and consideration mentioned above and <u>a further review is recommended. It is also advisable to reference cultural/religious beliefs in the policy to allow for more flexibility around core hours where needed.</u></p>
	<p>Neutral impact is recorded in this area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>Neutral impact is recorded in this area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Foster good relations</p>
	<p><u>A formal review of the business case for having core hours and maximum credit/debit hours – potentially impacting positively on some employees is recommended. A review of the policy within community network groups may aid this review and help with raising awareness generally.</u></p>
	<p>Neutral impact is recorded in this area.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>In their 2021 paper on Flexible working, the Trade Union Congress <u>TUC report</u> that having flexible working as the default helps to address some of the barriers that exist for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Female and male workers ▪ Disabled Employees ▪ People Experiencing domestic abuse ▪ Carers ▪ Women experiencing the menopause. <p>From our evidence we conclude that there are no indicators supporting a significant disadvantage between sexes within SQA.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p><u>It is recommended that consideration be made to include within the policy wording to capture that flexi-time can be used for any purpose including leisure pursuits and not restricted to any particular reason e.g. only for caring.</u></p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>Continue to promote through internal communication channels that all eligible employees have the right to use flexitime working for any reason – and that it is not only for parents and carers.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>As the benefit does not require to be requested and approved there is more opportunity for individuals to attend appointments, meetings etc they wish to remain private or confidential without having to share the reason for their time off from SQA.</p> <p>We are aware that individuals with this characteristic may not want to disclose their sexuality at work to others or 'out themselves'. We are also aware that there is a higher proportion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ+) individuals that are affected by poor mental <u>health</u>. The provisions of this policy is likely to have a positive effect to an individual's LGBTQ+ status.</p> <p>From our evidence we conclude that there is a positive advantage to sexual orientation within SQA who are eligible to use flexitime.</p>
	<p>Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p><u>It is however recommended that data is collected on the number of staff actively using flexitime and the relationship to their sexual orientation and to gain ongoing feedback from SQA's staff Rainbow network.</u></p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>All eligible SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Flexitime Policy. SQA will continue to promote through internal communication channels that all eligible employees have the automatic entitlement to flexible working.</p>

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
	<p>We recognise that Under Section 16 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (superseded by the Equality Act 2010), trans employees are entitled to take time off work for reasons relating to their gender reassignment. We also consider that the flexi-time policy will have a perceived positive impact, because a Transgender employee will be treated equally to all other members of staff who use flexitime.</p> <p>As the benefit does not require to be requested and approved there is more opportunity for individuals to attend appointments, meetings etc they wish to remain private or confidential without having to share the reason for their time off from SQA, this is likely to have a positive contribution to an individual's neurodiversity.</p>
	<p>Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>Transgender data is not disclosed or shared within this analysis due to the limited sample size and to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation to protect individuals' personal information.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Foster good relations</p>
	<p><u>One of the recommendations from the Flexible working Equality impact assessment is for SQA to add Gender identity (i.e. all people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality monitoring reporting.</u></p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>The ONS report in their 2019 Labour Force survey UK labour market: June 2019 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) noted that, looking after children and/or relatives does affect working patterns, proportionately this characteristic group is more likely to be in this category.</p> <p>However, in the 2011 Scottish Census, the proportion of married people had decreased. 45.2% of people aged 16 and over were married. SQA is broadly in line with this figure at 44.6%.</p> <p>Flexitime provides individuals with this characteristic more control of working hours and increased flexibility and opportunity with an uncomplicated and accessible way to undertake other commitments (e.g. caring) without impacting work commitments.</p> <p>From our evidence we conclude that there is a positive advantage to individuals who are married or civil partners within SQA who are eligible to use flexitime.</p>
	<p>Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>There are no potential disadvantages or lower participation experienced by people with this protected characteristic. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this time.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>All eligible SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Flexitime Policy. SQA will continue to promote through internal communication channels that all eligible employees have the automatic entitlement to flexible working and the benefits of a working a healthy work-life balance.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Flexitime Policy 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
	Please refer to the separate SQA policy – Maternity which deals with Maternity related Flexible working requests.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Nothing to add.
	Foster good relations
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
	Whilst there is currently no evidence to suggest that care experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues it is recommended that data is collected and an analysis, by care experience, be performed of the ‘lifecycle’ of colleagues to identify any adverse trends.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Nothing to add.
	Foster good relations

Rationale

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.

N/A.

Notes: