



## 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	Sept 2023	Additional Schedule Review Date	Sept 2024
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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.



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to <b>monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups</b> (evidence and consultation)			<b>[ONGOING RECORD]</b>
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	
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 – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Identified Actions: General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
1: Add <i>Gender Identity</i> (i.e. people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality Monitoring reporting.	Head of HR	Sept 2024	
2. Considering implementing a Menopause Policy to protect those who see the impacts affect their performance.	HR Shared Services Manager	Sept 2024	
3. Consideration should be given to report more thoroughly on HR case work, informal and formal, in relation to each protected characteristic. This would show if any trends or patterns emerge so that action can be taken.	HR Shared Services Manager	Sept 2024	
4. We recommend that in 2022, SQA considers a proactive publicity campaign to encourage greater understanding and openness in this area	HR Reward and Equality Manager	Sept 2023	
It is recommended that the SQA captures and analyses Age data relating to employee absence and subsequent actions taken as a result of this policy. This is recommended with the specific aim of identifying any disproportionality, risks of discrimination and any actions required to eliminate or mitigate any adverse impact this policy may have on employees of different ages.	HR Shared Services Manager	Sept 2024	
If SQA gather evidence indicating increased risks of absence / sickness in particular age cohorts, then further action should be taken to promote the application of this policy in its use for that age cohort.	HR Shared Services Manager	Sept 2024	



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

**Policy Aims**

<b>Name of Policy or Practice:</b>	Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy
<b>New Policy or Revision?</b>	Revision
<b>Name of Policy Owner:</b>	Head of Human Resources
<b>Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion:</b>	Draft



### **What is the rationale for this policy or practice?**

The stated aims of the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy are to:

Promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work, treating colleagues fairly regardless of their mental health status. SQA are also committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress.

SQA will support colleagues by:

- promoting good mental health and wellbeing.
- encouraging safe and healthy workplace settings
- use policies, training and communication to: (1) promote open conversations about mental health and stress; (2) allow employees to raise concerns about their work or working environment; and (3) help employees understand and recognise the causes of mental ill health and stress, and how to address them.
- provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation. Address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.
- ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related causes of mental ill health and stress.
- carry out performance appraisals which will monitor the suitability of workloads [working hours and use of holiday entitlement].
- facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.

Together with this policy there is also a range of other policies to help SQA to do this. It is intended that this policy will help colleagues and managers find it easier to access support.

If colleagues experience symptoms of mental ill health or stress they will be supported in the workplace by their line manager, have access to initial support from mental health first aiders, occupational health, the employee assistance programme, Able Futures, and Human Resources.



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

The policy links and complies with SQA's obligations under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

SQA ensure that their work environment is productive and engaging for all colleagues with a view to enhancing productivity and reducing sickness absence.

SQA use an independent Employee Assistance Programme. In the 12 months to February 2022:

- there were **28** users of this service (21 female, 7 male)
- 3 users contacted EAP for work related reasons, 5 for work and personal reasons, 19 for personal reasons (the sum of issues reported will generally differ from the number of callers)
- **14 related to Mental health** (Stress/anxiety/depression)

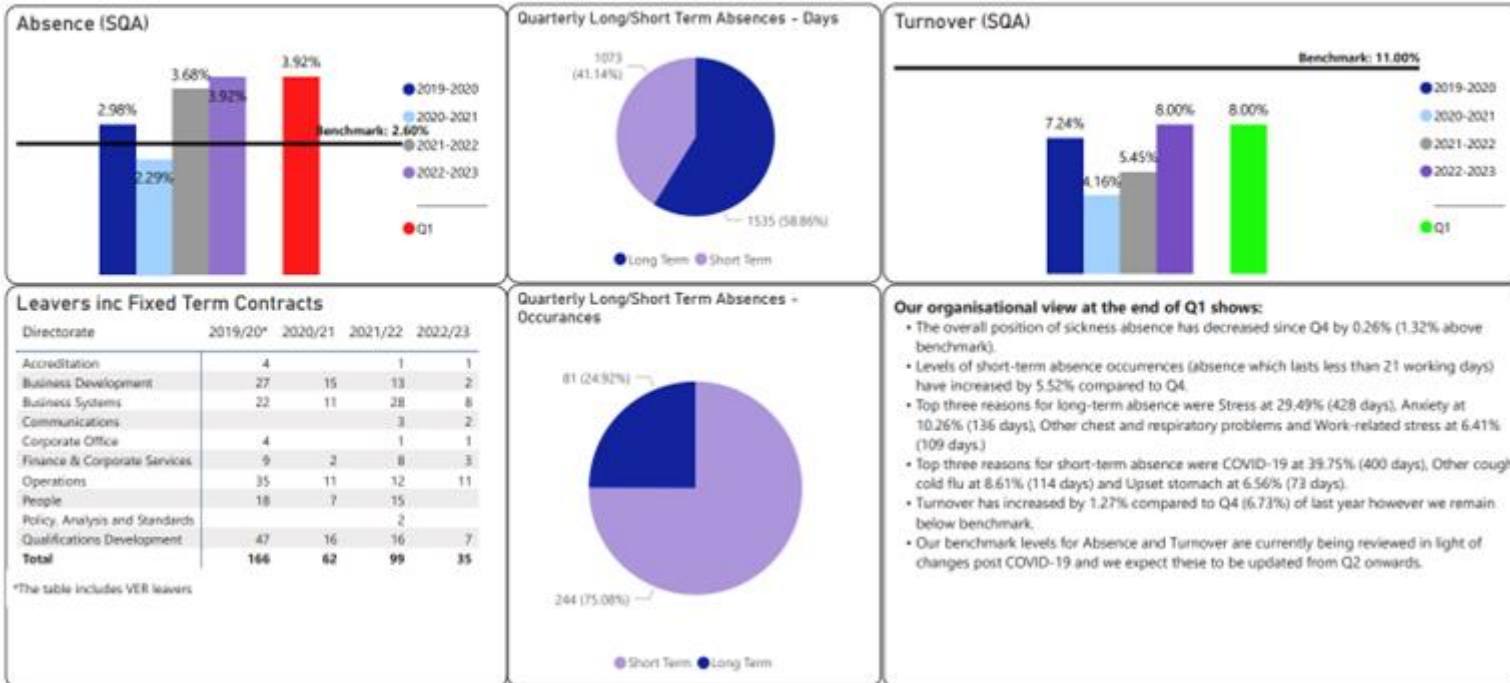
**Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) - Absence Statistics:**

During the years 2020 – 21, the SQA recorded an overall absence rate of 2.2% - identical to the UK average for the same period. A significant increase (+71%) is noted for Q1 in 2022. No national data currently exists to allow a comparative analysis of this figure.



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

**People Dashboard - Absence & Turnover**  
As at 30th June 2022



The table above shows SQA absence and turnover rates from 2019 to June 2022.



**What are the aims of this policy or practice?**

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

Promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work, treating colleagues fairly regardless of their mental health status. SQA are also committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress.

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.

**What are the aims of this policy or practice? (continued)**

The following SQA policies are also related to the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy:

- Alcohol and Substance Misuse.
- Attendance Management
- Dignity at Work
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Flexible working
- Recruitment and Selection
- Transitioning at work





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

The SQA acknowledges that people who share / do not share, certain 'Protected Characteristics' may, on balance:

- Experience different performance outcomes – for example, older workers and disabled workers.
- Experience compound discrimination or intersectionality i.e. where a person has one or more characteristics and may be subjected to consequentially greater levels of disadvantage.
- Have greater difficulties following or complying with the written requirements of a workplace policy e.g. articulating a reason for concerns in writing, taking part in one to one meetings, following a reporting flowchart etc.
- Experience higher levels of anxiety in respect of formal meetings.
- Feel less comfortable discussing their concerns with people of the opposite Sex.

**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.**

**It is important that the SQA identifies and takes action to mitigate or remove any disadvantage identified which is the overall purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment.**



## Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

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

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

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

#### **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.



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

**Staff Network Consultations:**

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

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

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

The table below details the consultation undertaken.



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

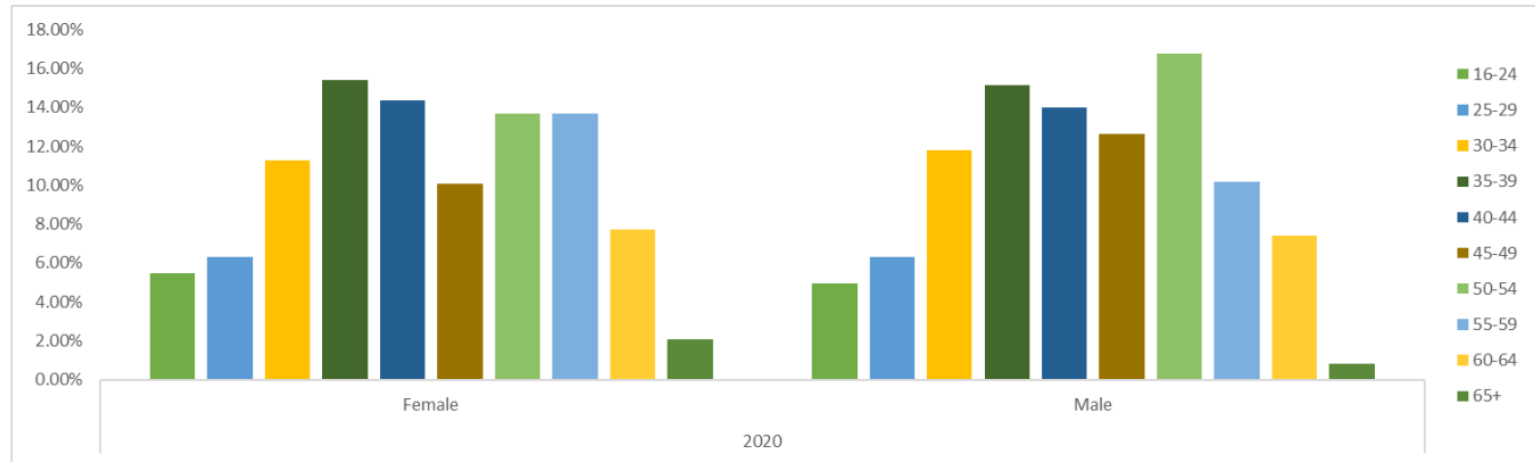
Evidence of Staff Network Consultations

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

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

**Age:**

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



The above graph shows SQA colleagues by age and gender. Table 1.05 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

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

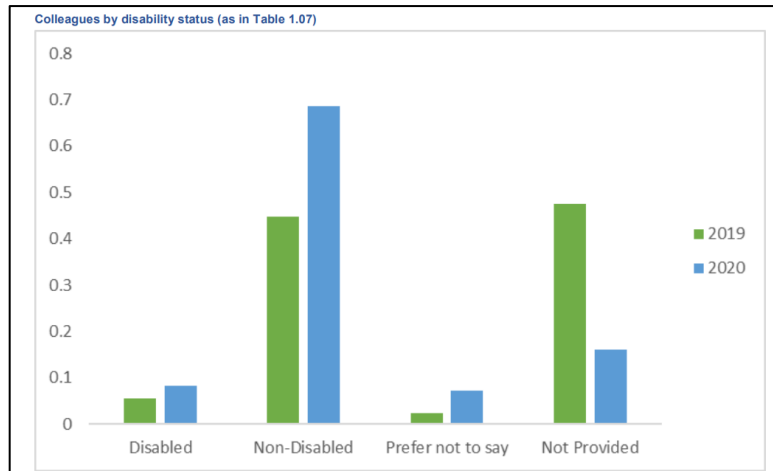
Comparisons between 2019 and 2020 data show that the greatest increase in the proportion of female colleagues is within the 60–64 age band - an increase of 12 colleagues.

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

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

**Disability**

**A total of 8.2% of SQA employees declared a disability last year.** Declaration rates have significantly improved from a total response rate under the *Not Disclosed / Prefer not to say* category of 49.9% in 2019 (roughly half of employees) to a much reduced 23.1 % in 2020.



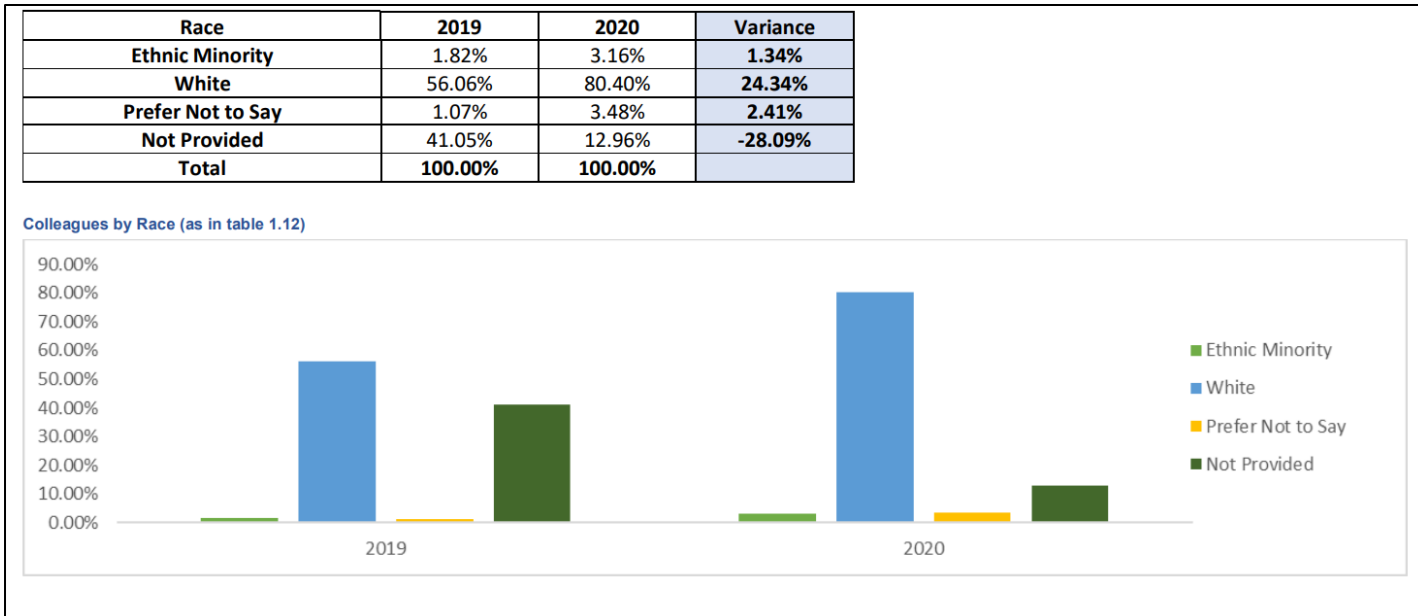
The above graph shows SQA colleagues by disability status. Table 1.07 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

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

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

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

**Race  
Ethnicity**



The above table and graph show SQA colleagues by race. Table 1.12 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

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

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

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

**Race  
Ethnicity  
(continued)**

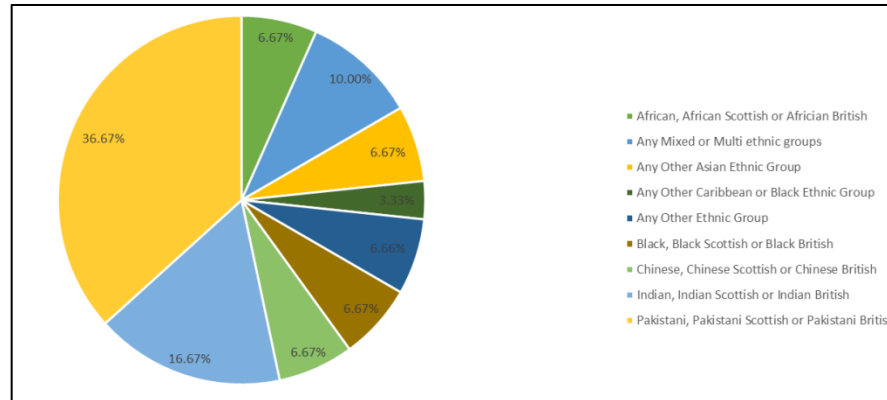


Table 1.15 Race: Colleagues by black and minority ethnicities

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

The above graph and table show SQA colleagues by black and minority ethnicities. Table 1.15 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)





Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

**What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment? (continued)**

**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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

The above table shows SQA colleagues by religion or belief. Table 1.16 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)

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

**Sex**

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

The above table shows SQA colleagues by gender (sex) and grade. Table 1.02 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf).

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



**What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment? (continued)**

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

The above table shows SQA colleagues by sexual orientation. Table 1.18 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf)



**What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment? (continued)**

<p><b>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</b></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><b>Marriage/Civil Partnership</b></p>	<p>No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.</p>																				
<p><b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b></p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="689 778 1928 1075"> <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><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>100.00%</b></td> <td><b>100.00%</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The above table shows SQA colleagues by pregnancy status. Table 1.20 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf</a></p>		Colleagues			Pregnancy Status	2019	2020	Variance	Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%	Pregnant	1.75%	1.05%	-0.70%	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
	Colleagues																				
Pregnancy Status	2019	2020	Variance																		
Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%																		
Pregnant	1.75%	1.05%	-0.70%																		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>																			



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

**What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment? (continued)**

**Care experience  
(where relevant)**

Human Resources currently have no data for SQA that shows how many colleagues are Care Experienced.



### **Impact and Opportunities for Action**

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and needs 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.

### **Use of the term Discrimination:**

Please note that for the purposes of this document we have used the term Discrimination as a generic descriptor which takes into account six discrete elements:

- Direct Discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Discrimination by perception
- Associative discrimination



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p>National Evidence:</p> <p>In 2019, data was collected by Vitality: Britain’s Healthiest Workplace study, which was developed in partnership with RAND Europe and the University of Cambridge. <a href="https://www.vitality.co.uk/business/healthiest-workplace/findings/">https://www.vitality.co.uk/business/healthiest-workplace/findings/</a></p> <p>This data showed that employees below the age of 25 were found to have 3.5 times more incidences of depression compared to older employees (over 55) – the highest of any age group surveyed (<i>13.3 percent younger employees have depression, compared to just 3.8 percent of over 55s</i>).</p> <p>A third (32.3 percent) of younger employees suffer from high levels of stress (two or more stress dimensions) compared to 24.3 percent of older employee (over 55).</p> <p>In the workplace, young staff are more likely to feel that they do not receive respect from colleagues; experience strained relationships at work and have a lack of clarity on duties and responsibilities. The research shows that new entrants to the job market are the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Particularly, employees aged 18-20 are especially vulnerable - reporting the worst outcomes across mental health, work performance, work engagement, cultural perception and shared identity with their employer.</p> <p><u>There is also evidence to suggest older workers are more likely to experience mental health issues: please see:</u></p> <p><a href="https://www.shponline.co.uk/culture-and-behaviours/older-workers-more-stressed-than-younger-colleagues/">https://www.shponline.co.uk/culture-and-behaviours/older-workers-more-stressed-than-younger-colleagues/</a></p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Age</b>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (please see previous page) to suggest <b>people of different age groups may be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of Age discrimination or any adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>Age</i> related profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>
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Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Age	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>Whilst all SQA employees are entitled to use, access, the <i>Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy</i>, whether or not the policy actually <b>promotes / advances</b> the ‘same chance’ to employees of all <i>Ages</i> is unclear. This is again, due to a lack of accurate monitoring of employee absence by <i>Age</i> in the SQA.</p> <p>As previously stated, the object of the policy is to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work, treating colleagues fairly regardless of their mental health status. SQA are also committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress. As highlighted by the policy, SQA have many interventions and support steps available to all staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HR support</li><li>• A 24/7 employee assistance programme</li><li>• Trade union representatives who can provide members with advice, help and support.</li><li>• Mental Health First Aiders are available for 1st point of contact support</li><li>• The Able Futures service can be contacted for ongoing professional support for mental health and well-being.</li><li>• The MAC (Make a Change) Group maintains awareness of workplace mental health through promotional activities, and up-to-date information about these can be found</li></ul> <p><u>If SQA gather evidence indicating increased risks of absence / sickness in particular age cohorts, then further action should be taken to promote the application of this policy in its use for that age cohort.</u></p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>In 2021, SQA added the following statement to their annual people survey:</p> <p><b>SQA provides effective support for my wellbeing at work</b> – just 5% of employees disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.</p>





Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p><b>National Evidence:</b></p> <p>A recent survey published by the <i>Office For National Statistics (ONS)</i> indicated: (<a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/bulletins/disabilitywellbeingandlonelinessuk/2019">https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/bulletins/disabilitywellbeingandlonelinessuk/2019</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disabled people’s average ratings are lower than those for non-disabled people for happiness, worthwhile and life satisfaction measures.</li><li>• Average anxiety ratings are higher for disabled people at 4.27 out of 10, compared with 2.66 out of 10 for non-disabled people.</li><li>• Disabled people with a mental impairment as a main health problem have the poorest well-being ratings.</li><li>• Disabled people whose impairments affect them more severely have poorer well-being ratings than disabled people whose impairments affect them less severely.</li><li>• The proportion of disabled people (13.3%) who report feeling lonely “often or always” is almost four times that of non-disabled people (3.4%), with the greatest disparity for young adults, aged 16 to 24 years old.</li></ul> <p><b>Local Evidence:</b></p> <p>With the exception of the fact that 14 of the most recent referrals to the SQA employee assistance programme were related to mental health, there is no other related internal equality profiling data available in SQA.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Disability</b>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (please see previous page) to suggest disabled people <b>may be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of Disability discrimination or any adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the SQA does not currently collect <i>Disability</i> related profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>
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Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p><b>Disability (continued)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>The Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing policy is proactive in supporting all staff. It states:</p> <p>“We are committed to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work, treating you fairly regardless of your mental health status. We are also committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress. We will support you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging safe and healthy workplace settings,</li> <li>• promoting good mental health and wellbeing,</li> <li>• use policies, training and communication to: (1) promote open conversations about mental health and stress; (2) allow employees to raise concerns about their work or working environment; and (3) help employees understand and recognise the causes of mental ill health and stress, and how to address them.</li> <li>• provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation. Address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.</li> <li>• ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related causes of mental ill health and stress.</li> <li>• carry out performance appraisals which will monitor the suitability of workloads, [working hours and use of holiday entitlement].</li> <li>• facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.</li> </ul> <p>Together with this policy there is also a range of other policies and support mechanisms in place to help us to do this, (see associated/related policies). It is intended that this policy will help you and your line manager make it easier to access support.”</p> <p><b>The policy is accessible to all colleagues and should advance the equality of opportunity for those with disabilities directly or indirectly linked to their mental health.</b></p>

Foster good relations

Disability  
(continued)

There is no clear evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees with disabilities. The policy is however a positive one as highlighted above and combined with the other SQA policies in place should reassure, protect and have a positive impact on those with disabilities and mental health related disabilities in particular.

We recommend that in 2022, SQA considers a proactive publicity campaign to encourage greater understanding and openness in this area (see example below)





Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Nationally, there is evidence that suggests that people of different races may experience different health outcomes. Based on data from the 2011 Scottish Census, the Scottish Government published a paper ‘An analysis of health inequality and ethnicity in Scotland’ <a href="#">link</a></p> <p><i>The analysis revealed the following key findings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Most ethnic groups in Scotland reported better health than the ‘White: Scottish’ ethnic group;</i></li> <li>• <i>Across most ethnic groups, older men reported better health than older women. Older Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women reported poor health, and considerably worse health than older men in these ethnic groups;</i></li> <li>• <i>Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland had by far the worst health, reporting twice the ‘White: Scottish’ rate of ‘health problem or disability’ and over three and a half times the ‘White: Scottish’ rate of ‘poor general health’;</i></li> <li>• <i>‘White: Polish’ people aged under 65 reported relatively good health, whereas those aged 65 or over reported relatively poor health;</i></li> <li>• <i>The age-standardised rates of ‘health problem or disability’ by ethnic group in Scotland followed a similar pattern to the results for England and Wales;</i></li> <li>• <i>Older Bangladeshi men in Scotland were relatively healthier than older Bangladeshi men in England and Wales.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SQA currently does not record sickness absence / wellbeing / stress by Race or Ethnicity.</b> It is therefore not possible to either <b>establish nor discount</b> if any disproportionate rates of wellbeing / stress / mental health absences are experienced by SQA employees drawn from different ethnic groups.</p> <p>The policy (along with the others linked to this one) are intended to remove any barriers that all SQA colleagues may face in performing and attending effectively at work that are linked to mental health / stress / wellbeing concerns.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Race</b>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (please see previous page) to suggest people from different Races/ Ethnicities <b>may be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of discrimination or adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the Authority does not currently collect <i>Race</i> related profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>
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Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Race</b>	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees of Race are entitled to use, access and be subjected to <i>the</i> Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy.</p> <p>There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy impacts employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their race or ethnicity. The policy is accessible to all colleagues and should advance access to support for all SQA colleagues regardless of race or ethnicity.</p>
<b>Race (continued)</b>	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Race or Ethnicity. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

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><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest this policy may impact differently on people of different <i>Religions</i> or <i>Beliefs</i>. The policy (along with the others linked to this one) are intended to remove any barriers that all SQA colleagues may face in performing and attending effectively at work that are linked to mental health / stress / wellbeing concerns and will have a positive impact on any SQA colleague who has mental health / stress / wellbeing concerns.</p> <p><b>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area as it relates to religion or belief, but positive from an ‘all colleague’ perspective.</b></p>
	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> Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy. The policy (along with the others linked to this one) are intended to remove any barriers that all SQA colleagues may face in performing and attending effectively at work that are linked to mental health / stress / wellbeing concerns.</p> <p>There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Religion</i> or <i>Philosophical Belief System</i>. It is positive in the provision of support to all colleagues.</p>
	Foster good relations
	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.





Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty																																																
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010																																																
	<p>A greater number of SQA employees overall are female - 62% female versus 38% male.</p> <p>Table 1.01 Colleagues by gender</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="452 531 889 649"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender (Sex)</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>Variance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>61.20%</td> <td>61.64%</td> <td>0.44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>38.80%</td> <td>38.36%</td> <td>-0.44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The above table shows SQA colleagues by gender. Table 1.01 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf</a></p> <p>Sex may be a factor that contributes to different health / wellbeing outcomes for SQA colleagues. Nationally, sickness absence rates differ between men and women – the difference fluctuating slightly annually. (See table below. Source ONS.)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="439 906 1169 1396"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year:</th> <th>Days lost per worker Men</th> <th>Days lost per worker Women</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2012</td><td>4.2</td><td>4.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>4.0</td><td>4.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>4.1</td><td>4.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>4.1</td><td>4.8</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>4.0</td><td>4.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>3.8</td><td>4.5</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>4.1</td><td>4.7</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>3.9</td><td>4.6</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>3.3</td><td>4.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>4.3</td><td>4.9</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender (Sex)	2019	2020	Variance	Female	61.20%	61.64%	0.44%	Male	38.80%	38.36%	-0.44%	Total	100.00%	100.00%		Year:	Days lost per worker Men	Days lost per worker Women	2012	4.2	4.9	2013	4.0	4.8	2014	4.1	4.6	2015	4.1	4.8	2016	4.0	4.7	2017	3.8	4.5	2018	4.1	4.7	2019	3.9	4.6	2020	3.3	4.0	2021	4.3
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Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	<p>In their 2018 report “Is Scotland Fairer”, <a href="#">Link</a> Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that:</p> <p><b><i>In 2016, 15.4% of adults reported poor mental health and wellbeing, a rate that had not changed between 2010 and 2016. Women were more likely to report poor mental health and wellbeing compared with men (17.3% compared with 13.2%).</i></b></p> <p><b>Mental health problems affect both men and women, but not in equal measure.</b>  <a href="https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/men-women-statistics">https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/men-women-statistics</a>)</p> <p>In 2018, there were 6,507 <b>suicides</b> registered in the UK<sup>2</sup>, and in 2019, there were 5,691 suicides registered in England and Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of these, three-quarters were among men, which has been the case since the mid-1990s<sup>2,3</sup></li> <li>• Three times as many men as women die by suicide.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Men aged 40 to 49 have the highest suicide rates in the UK.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> <p>Men report lower levels of life satisfaction than women, according to the government’s national wellbeing survey, Men are less likely to access psychological therapies than women: only 36% of referrals to NHS <b>talking therapies</b> are for men. Also, men are nearly three times as likely as women to become dependent on alcohol and three times as likely to report frequent drug use.</p> <p>Women between the ages of 16 and 24 are almost three times as likely (26%) to experience a common mental health issue as males of the same age (9%).</p> <p>Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety as men and 25.7% of women and 9.7% of men aged 16 to 24 report having self-harmed at some point in their life.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (please see previous page) to suggest people from different Sexes <b>may be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of discrimination or adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the Authority does not currently collect Sex related profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<p><b>Sex (continued)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to <i>the</i> Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy. This includes employees of both sexes.</p> <p>As stated, nationally there is data that shows women have higher levels of absence and reported poor health so this policy which enables and encourages access to support in dealing with mental health / stress and wellbeing issues is positive and may be of greater benefit to colleagues including women who need support.</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy. This includes employees of both sexes. However, because there is no Sex related profiling data available relating to absence rates in the SQA by sex, it is not possible to conclude with certainty if this policy does effectively advance equality of opportunity between Men and Women.</p>
<p><b>Sex (continued)</b></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 sexes.</p> <p><u>Consider implementing a Menopause Policy to protect those who see the impacts of menopause on their working lives.</u></p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p><b>National Evidence:</b></p> <p>A recent study by <i>Stonewall</i> found that over the previous year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• half of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ+) people had experienced depression, and three in five had experienced anxiety</li> <li>• one in eight LGBTIQ+ people aged 18 to 24 had attempted to end their life</li> <li>• almost half of trans people had thought about taking their life</li> </ul> <p>Source: <a href="#">Stonewall Website</a> – LGBT in Britain</p> <p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (above) to suggest people who identify as LGBTIQ+ <b>may be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of discrimination or adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the Authority does not currently collect equality profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing 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> .
	Foster good relations
	<u>Consideration should be given to report more thoroughly on HR case work, informal and formal, in relation to each protected characteristic. This would show if any trends or patterns emerge so that action can be taken.</u>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<b>Gender Identity.</b>  <b>This includes:</b>  <b>Gender Re-assignment</b>  <b>Non Binary</b>  <b>Gender Fluid</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010  Please see previous section covering LGBTIQ+
<b>Gender Identity.</b>  <b>This includes:</b>  <b>Gender Re-assignment</b>  <b>Non Binary</b>  <b>Gender Fluid</b>	Advance equality of opportunity  Please see previous section covering LGBTIQ+
<b>Gender Fluid</b>  <b>(continued)</b>	Please see previous section covering LGBTIQ+



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Marriage/Civil Partnership</b>	<p data-bbox="488 320 2024 384">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p data-bbox="472 456 1973 488">At a national level there is evidence to suggest that being in a harmonious relationship has a direct link to wellbeing.</p> <p data-bbox="472 533 1980 603">Using the ‘Warwick – Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale’ (WEMWBS), the Scottish Health Survey mental health and wellbeing in 2015 found:</p> <p data-bbox="510 651 1984 759">Scores on the WEMWBS scale are lowest among adults whose relationship status is 'separated', with a mean of 45.8. People who are married (51.2) or living as married (50.4) have the highest mean scores. Scores within each marital status category do not vary significantly by gender.</p> <p data-bbox="472 807 1798 839"><a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-topic-report-mental-health-wellbeing/pages/9/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-topic-report-mental-health-wellbeing/pages/9/</a></p> <p data-bbox="472 884 2024 992">The Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy applies to all staff in a positive and supportive way regardless of marriage or civil partnership. There is no evidence to suggest that this policy could impact negatively 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 data-bbox="472 1040 2009 1110"><b>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area, but it is highlighted that the policy should be beneficial and have a positive impact on all colleagues.</b></p>





Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Advance equality of opportunity

**Marriage/Civil Partnership**

All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their *Marital Status*. It is considered to have a positive impact on all SQA colleagues.

Foster good relations

There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different *Marital Status*.

No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p><b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b></p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Please refer to the separate SQA policy – <i>Maternity, Paternity and Adoption</i></p> <p>The National Health Service (NHS) state that post-natal depression affects more than 1 in every 10 women within a year of giving birth. It can also affect fathers and partners. <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview/">https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview/</a></p> <p>The Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing policy complements the SQA Maternity, Paternity and Adoption policy and will assist any colleague with symptoms of post-natal depression source support.</p> <p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>This policy aims to promote and protect mental health and wellbeing at work and also identify, tackle and prevent causes of work-related stress.</p> <p>This application of the policy itself, should therefore have a <b>positive impact</b> on all employees as the overall aim of the policy is to provide support to employees experiencing mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Whilst there is national evidence (above) to suggest people who are pregnant or, more significantly have had children recently, may <b>be at a greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions</b>, overall risks of discrimination or adverse trends in SQA cannot be accurately identified, eliminated or discounted as the Authority does not currently collect equality profiling data relating to either sickness absence, mental health absence, or use of the employee assistance programme.</p> <p><b>Positive and Potentially Negative Impacts Recorded.</b></p>



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing V1.0

<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees less favourably, on the grounds of Pregnancy/Maternity. It should have a positive impact on some who may benefit from the support that it offers.
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Pregnant or on Maternity.  No recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.



Equality Impact Assessment – Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing 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>Care experienced individuals may be more likely to have missed opportunities to gain qualifications in early life and this may also impact on their ability to thrive in their employed role.</p> <p>Whilst there is currently no evidence to suggest that care experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues (or vice versa), 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 and consider what support for growth and performance is needed.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees less favourably, on the grounds of Care Experience. The absence of evidence should be rectified, if possible, by collection of data relating to care experience.</p> <p>As repeatedly stated above, this policy is intended to have a positive impact on all SQA colleagues.</p>
	Foster Good Relations
	No evidence identified.



**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