

Equality Impact Assessment

Summary

Name of Policy or practice	Recruitment & Selection
New Policy or Revision	Revised
Policy Owner (role)	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	August 2024
Agreed Schedule Review Date	August 2027

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.

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

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)			[ONGOING RECORD]
Review and assess monthly establishment management information packs containing fundamental employment data on SQA employees	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	Commencing monthly from October 2023	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. This action can be closed
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	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. This action can be closed
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	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. This action can be closed
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	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. This action can be closed
Continue to review and assess on an annual basis SQA's engagement People survey	OD Manager	Commencing annually from October 2023	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. The people survey now runs 3 times annually. This action can be closed
Review and assess on an annual basis all SQA employee lifecycle data	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	Commencing annually from January 2024	This work is now considered part of HR's BAU operation. This action can be closed

Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's equality mainstreaming report [next report due April 2025]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	April 2025	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's workforce equality monitoring report [next report due April 2025]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	April 2025	

Identified Actions General Equality Duty

Action	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
1: Add additional <i>Gender Identity</i> options on the diversity tab on <i>Business World</i> for colleagues to disclose and then include this data in all future Equality Monitoring reporting.	People Analytics Governance and Systems Manager	September 2024	The Analytics team are working to add this to BW
2: Develop guidance pack for all candidates invited to interview, of what to expect in a competency-based selection and how to structure appropriate interview question responses. (This pack should, at minimum include the job description, role profile, and competency-based guidance)	HR Recruitment Consultant	September 2023	The guidance pack has been created, and the Recruitment team will continue to ensure that it is up to date. This action can be closed
3: Develop a specific <i>Age Positive</i> policy that supports older workers during their SQA career.	HR Shared Service Manager	September 2025	Policy is in early stages of development as of August 2024

4: SQA should consider whether there is appropriate reference to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for candidates so that they are aware that non-Scottish based qualifications are recognised and what their comparator level is.	HR Recruitment Consultant	September 2023	Complete – action can be closed
5: Further work should be undertaken to encourage SQA staff to declare their protected characteristics to assist SQA to enhance the quality of workforce data.	HR Reward & Equalities Manager	September 2027	There have been data matters campaigns, however, there is always more scope to push for greater declaration
6: SQA should continue to use non-gender specific wording in recruitment adverts and advertise on a range of platforms to ensure diverse audience is reached.	HR Recruitment Consultant	September 2027	Ongoing – there is guidance to underpin this, however we anticipate that this will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
7: SQA should continue to encourage applicants and colleagues to disclose their pronouns whilst going through the application process and their employment with SQA.	HR Recruitment Consultant	September 2027	There have been data matters campaigns, however, there is always more scope to push for greater declaration

8: We recommend that the SQA create a new <i>Gender Identity</i> policy to facilitate and advance equality of opportunity to employees who are LGBTQ+. This may incorporate the SQA Transitioning at Work Policy which is at draft stage.	HR Reward & Equalities Manager	September 2024	Done – Gender Identity and transitioning at working Policy has been published. Action can now be closed.
9: It is recommended that consideration is given to data collection and an analysis, by care experience, be performed of the 'lifecycle' of colleagues to identify any adverse trends.	HR Reward & Equalities Manager	September 2024	ongoing
10: Statistics indicates a slight disparity in applicant success rates for people who are minority ethnicity, and it is recommended that SQA undertakes further work to investigate the potential reasons for this disparity.	HR Reward & Equalities Manager	September 2027	SQA now runs in-house anti-racism workshops, and the line manager fundamentals have a heavy reliance on EDI principles. We will continue to monitor the data
11. Take action to review recruitment platforms to ensure we are attracting a diverse workforce.	HR Recruitment Consultant	September 2027	Ongoing

12. Design and implement a system to collect data relating to applicant success rates by age and grade.	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	April 2025	Ongoing. The data is available, and we will continue to review this.
13. SQA data suggests that comparable percentages of external applicants are hired from Minority Ethnic backgrounds as White. Internal data may be skewed by smaller numbers of applicants. This should be monitored, and any trends investigated, and appropriate action taken if a discriminatory trend is identified.	HR Reward & Equalities Manager	September 2027	Ongoing. The data is available, and we will continue to review this.

Policy Aims

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?

The stated aims of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) *Recruitment and Selection* policy are to:

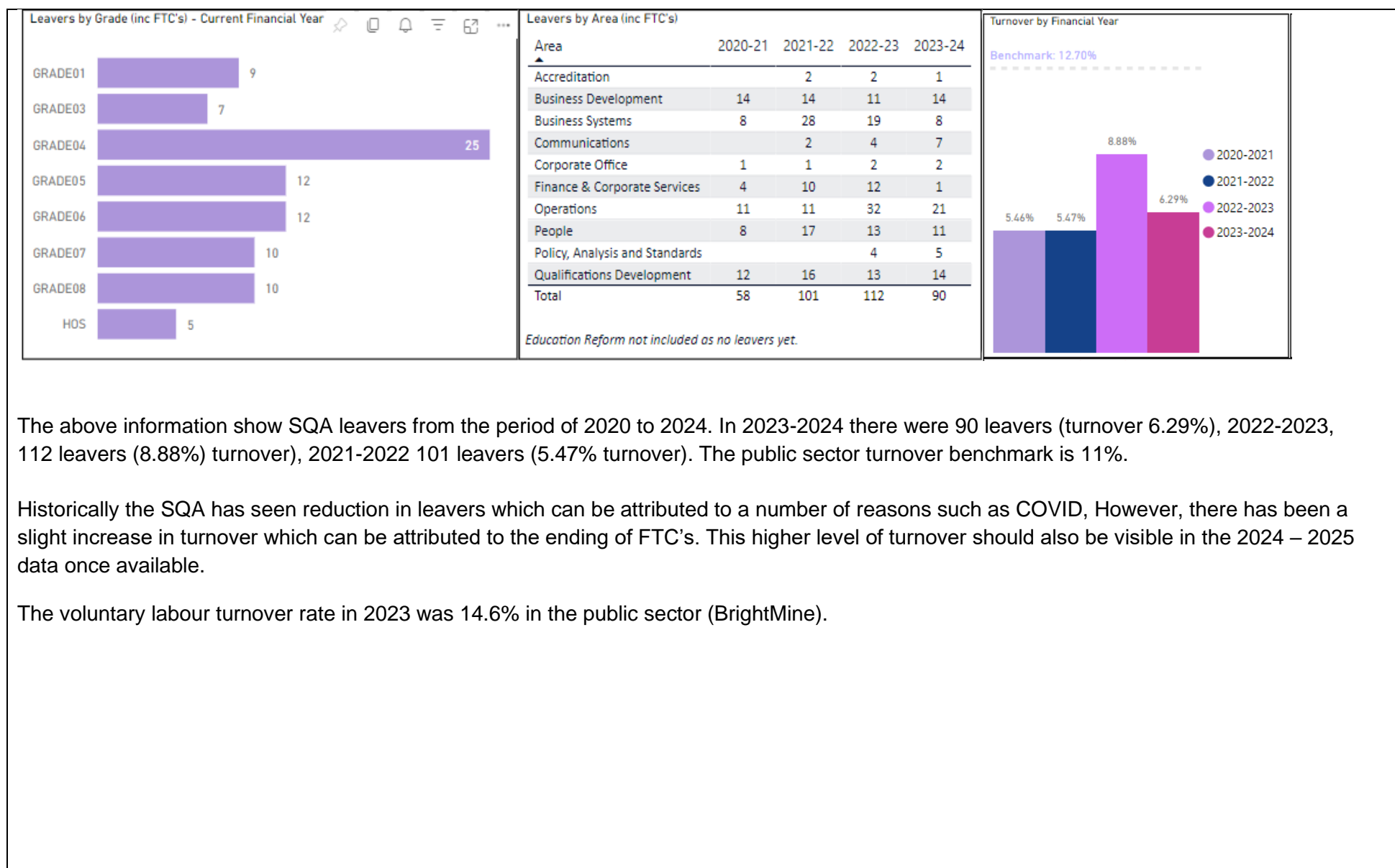
- Ensure a fair, consistent and inclusive approach is taken for internal and external recruitment in line with SQA values of being Trusted, Progressive and enabling and the principles outlined in SQA Equalities Policy.
- Ensure that all recruitment and selection practices are in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and that everyone involved understands their responsibility for the management and security of personal data during recruitment campaigns.
- Provide advice, guidance and support to all managers and staff on the application of this policy.
- Promote Equality and Diversity among our workforce. SQA aims to support a culture that actively values difference, recognising that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights and enhance the way we work.

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

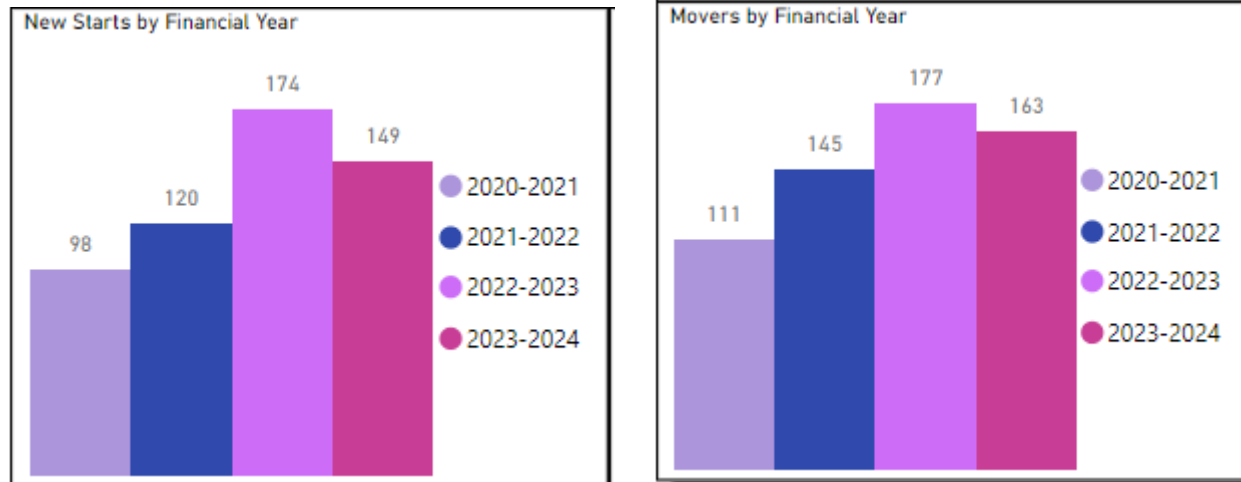
Recruitment stats for SQA

From 2022, SQA received 3376 applications for employment – which is an increase of 166 application from 2022 (3120)

Turnover Stats for SQA (23/24)



Internal & external applicant stats for SQA



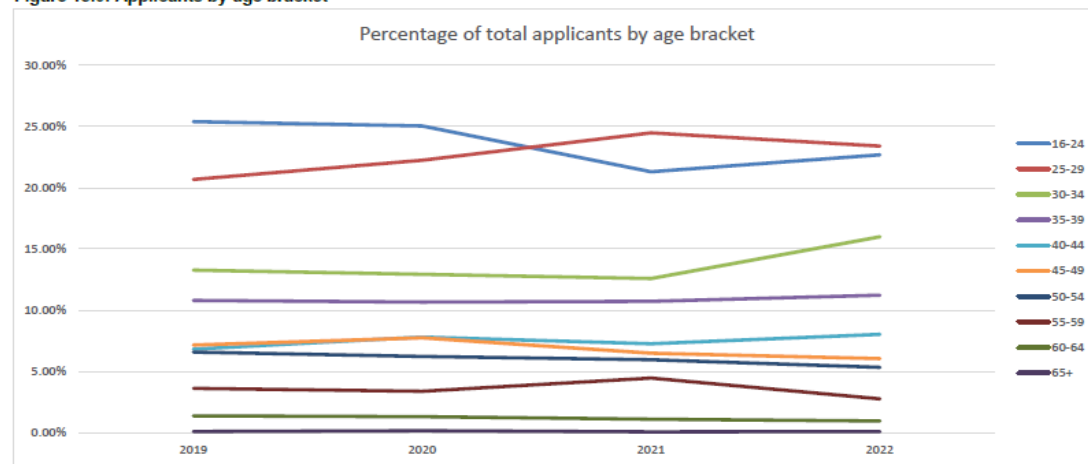
The graphs above show the number of new colleagues in SQA and movers. In the period of 2021-2022 SQA had 120 new starts and 145 internal movers, 2022-2023 174 new starts and 177 internal movers, 2023-2024 149 new starts and 163 internal movers.

Applicants by age

It is clear that the proportion of applicants within each age band has remained stable between 2021 and 2022. 58.86% of applicants were aged between 16 and 34 in 2022. As a percentage of the overall applicant pool, the 55–59 age band had the largest decrease (-1.70%). The sharpest increase was within the 30.34–29 band (3.41%).

Age Band	2021	2022	Variance
16-24	21.31%	22.69%	1.38%
25-29	23.40%	20.17%	-3.23%
30-34	12.59%	16%	3.41%
35-39	10.72%	11.23%	0.51%
40-44	7.26%	8.03%	0.77%
45-49	6.40%	6.04%	-0.36%
50-54	5.95%	5.33%	-0.62%
55-59	4.45%	2.75%	-1.70%
60-64	1.09%	0.95%	-0.14%
65+	0.06%	0.09%	0.03%

Figure 15.0: Applicants by age bracket



The above graph and table show the number of applications by age. Figure 15.00 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Applicants by age and grade

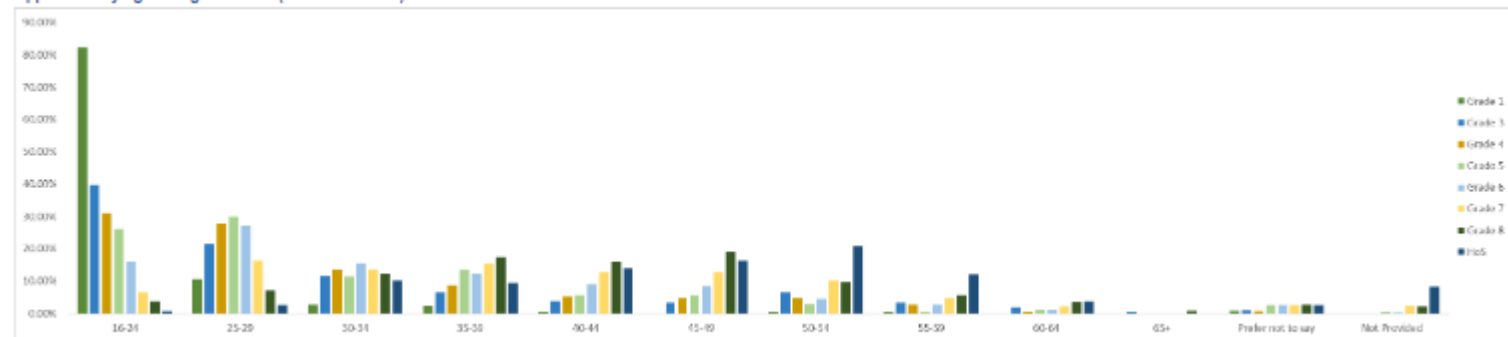
The majority of applications in 2020 were for Grade 4 posts (36.03%) and the highest proportion of applicants were aged 16–24, with 31.01% of applicants from this age band. This trend has continued from the previous mainstreaming report. This can be explained by the fact that roles at grade 4 and below typically have lower qualification, skills and experience requirements. 58.71% of applications (1587) for posts of grade 1 to 4 were aged 16–29.

Table 3.01: Applicants by age and grade

Age Band	Grade											
	1			3			4			5		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
16-24	77.16%	82.28%	5.12%	42.03%	39.91%	-2.12%	33.14%	31.01%	-2.14%	20.63%	26.27%	5.64%
25-29	6.17%	10.63%	4.46%	18.89%	21.48%	2.58%	28.04%	27.71%	-0.33%	26.98%	30.08%	3.10%
30-34	3.09%	2.76%	-0.33%	9.80%	11.71%	1.91%	12.24%	13.69%	1.45%	17.14%	11.44%	-5.70%
35-39	2.47%	2.36%	-0.11%	6.97%	6.51%	-0.46%	7.21%	8.74%	1.53%	14.60%	13.56%	-1.04%
40-44	3.09%	0.39%	-2.69%	4.49%	3.90%	-0.58%	4.21%	5.28%	1.06%	6.67%	5.51%	-1.16%
45-49	1.85%		-1.85%	3.66%	3.25%	-0.41%	4.94%	4.84%	-0.11%	6.35%	5.51%	-0.84%
50-54	1.85%	0.39%	-1.46%	7.56%	6.51%	-1.05%	5.43%	4.89%	-0.54%	5.08%	2.97%	-2.11%
55-59	2.47%	0.39%	-2.08%	3.54%	3.25%	-0.29%	2.43%	2.75%	0.32%	1.27%	0.42%	-0.85%
60-64	1.23%		-1.23%	2.01%	1.95%	-0.05%	0.81%	0.49%	-0.32%	0.63%	1.27%	0.64%
65+				0.12%	0.43%	0.32%	0.16%		-0.16%			
Prefer not to say	0.62%	0.79%	0.17%	0.94%	1.08%	0.14%	1.38%	0.60%	-0.77%	0.63%	2.54%	1.91%
Not Provided											0.42%	0.42%
Total	100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%	

Age Band	6			7			8			HoS		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
16-24	14.87%	16.07%	1.20%	8.97%	6.58%	-2.38%	1.16%	3.66%	2.50%		0.63%	0.63%
25-29	24.49%	27.25%	2.75%	13.79%	16.39%	2.59%	6.26%	7.11%	0.85%		2.52%	2.52%
30-34	15.40%	15.67%	0.27%	18.62%	13.78%	-4.84%	12.53%	12.28%	-0.24%	7.41%	10.06%	2.66%
35-39	14.97%	12.28%	-2.70%	13.97%	15.47%	1.50%	15.78%	17.46%	1.68%	7.41%	9.43%	2.03%
40-44	8.66%	8.98%	0.32%	9.31%	12.71%	3.40%	13.23%	15.95%	2.72%	3.70%	13.84%	10.13%
45-49	7.38%	8.48%	1.10%	9.66%	12.71%	3.06%	17.63%	18.97%	1.33%	29.63%	16.35%	-13.28%
50-54	6.31%	4.49%	-1.82%	7.76%	10.11%	2.35%	9.28%	9.70%	0.42%	14.81%	20.75%	5.94%
55-59	2.99%	2.69%	-0.30%	6.72%	4.90%	-1.82%	5.57%	5.60%	0.04%	18.52%	11.95%	-6.57%
60-64	1.28%	1.20%	-0.09%	1.72%	2.14%	0.42%	1.86%	3.45%	1.59%	3.70%	3.77%	0.07%
65+	0.11%	0.10%	-0.01%		0.15%	0.15%		0.86%	0.86%			
Prefer not to say	1.60%	2.59%	0.99%	2.41%	2.60%	0.19%	2.78%	2.80%	0.02%	3.70%	2.52%	-1.19%
Not Provided	1.93%	0.20%	-1.73%	7.07%	2.45%	-4.62%	13.92%	2.16%	11.77%	11.11%	8.18%	-2.94%
Total	100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%		100%	100%	

Applicants by age and grade 2020 (as in table 3.01)



The above table and graph show SQA applications by age and grade. Table 3.01 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

Applicants by application status and age

An analysis of applicant Age by status shows that in the majority of age bands, the stage reached by applicants is comparable and identifies no prominent age barriers throughout the recruitment process.

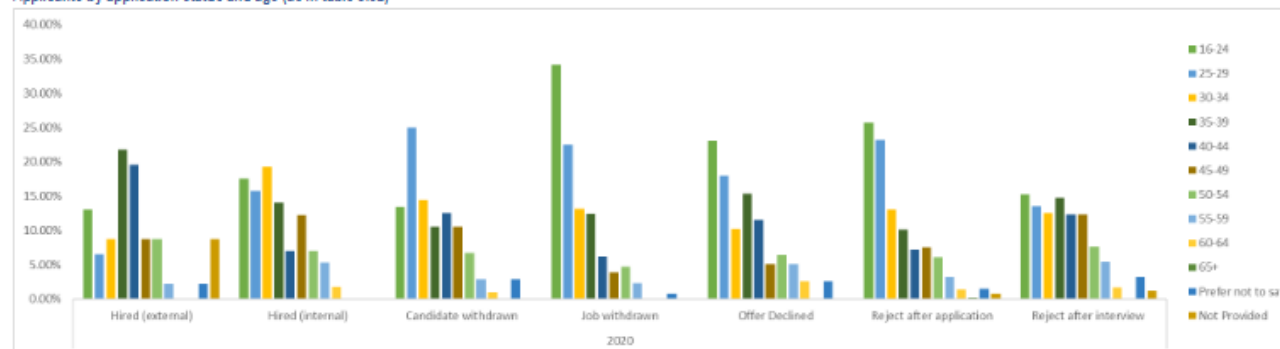
However, in the 65+ age band, no applicants progressed beyond the application stage in either 2019 or 2020. Candidates in this band accounted for only 0.16% (8 applicants) of all 5048 applications made in 2020 (as seen in the table above).

The largest number of applicants (1241) were from the 16–24 age band, of whom 87.59% did not progress beyond the application stage. 748 (68.88%) of these unsuccessful applicants were for posts at grades 3 or 4. SQA receives larger pools of applicants for grades 3 (39.91%) and 4 (31.01%), therefore the unsuccessful rates will be higher due to the limited applications that can proceed to interview stage. SQA will monitor this data going forward.

Table 3.02: Applicants by application status and age

Age Band	Reject after application			Reject after interview			Candidate withdrawn			Job withdrawn			Offer Declined			Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia	2019	2020	Varia
16-24	85.32	87.59	7.82	5.00	-	2.52	1.13	-	0.61	3.55	1.30	1.45	1.22	0.48	-	1.22	0.81	-	1.22	0.81	-
	%	%	2.27%	%	%	2.82%	%	%	1.39%	%	%	2.94%	%	%	0.15%	%	%	0.73%	%	%	0.41%
25-29	81.96	87.84	9.82	4.92	-	4.06	2.33	-	1.17	2.59	0.53	1.25	0.75	0.27	-	1.71	0.81	-	1.71	0.81	-
	%	%	5.87%	%	%	4.90%	%	%	1.73%	%	%	1.42%	%	%	0.72%	%	%	0.48%	%	%	0.90%
30-34	74.04	83.87	15.3	7.78	-	4.33	2.28	-	1.50	2.59	1.00	1.22	1.33	0.61	-	2.50	1.67	-	2.50	1.67	-
	%	%	9.82%	%	%	7.55%	%	%	2.04%	%	%	1.09%	%	%	0.22%	%	%	0.72%	%	%	0.82%
35-39	68.92	78.61	19.6	10.9	-	3.89	2.01	-	1.43	2.93	1.43	2.19	2.25	1.83	-	2.45	1.46	-	2.45	1.46	-
	%	%	9.69%	%	%	8.66%	%	%	1.87%	%	%	1.49%	%	%	0.76%	%	%	0.42%	%	%	0.99%
40-44	72.49	76.57	14.2	12.5	-	4.85	3.27	-	2.91	2.02	1.62	2.27	1.62	2.27	-	2.27	1.01	-	2.27	1.01	-
	%	%	4.08%	%	%	1.65%	%	%	1.58%	%	%	0.90%	%	%	0.65%	%	%	0.65%	%	%	1.26%
45-49	73.15	79.65	15.4	12.5	-	2.78	2.76	-	3.40	1.26	1.54	1.01	1.23	1.01	-	2.47	1.76	-	2.47	1.76	-
	%	%	6.50%	%	%	2.87%	%	%	0.01%	%	%	2.14%	%	%	0.54%	%	%	0.23%	%	%	0.71%
50-54	71.81	81.96	16.1	9.81	-	4.70	2.22	-	1.68	1.90	0.34	1.58	2.68	1.27	-	2.68	1.27	-	2.68	1.27	-
	%	%	10.15%	%	%	6.30%	%	%	2.48%	%	%	0.22%	%	%	1.25%	%	%	1.42%	%	%	1.42%
55-59	70.12	78.95	16.4	12.8	-	1.83	1.75	-	4.27	1.75	1.83	2.34	1.83	0.58	-	3.66	1.75	-	3.66	1.75	-
	%	%	8.83%	%	%	3.60%	%	%	0.07%	%	%	2.51%	%	%	0.51%	%	%	1.24%	%	%	1.90%
60-64	69.35	84.06	16.1	10.1	-	4.84	1.45	-	3.23	-	1.61	2.90	1.61	-	-	3.23	1.45	-	3.23	1.45	-
	%	%	14.70%	%	%	5.98%	%	%	3.39%	%	%	3.23%	%	%	1.29%	%	%	1.61%	%	%	1.78%
65+	100.0	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0%	0%																			
Prefer not to say	80.00	76.19	14.2	15.4	-	1.43	3.57	-	1.43	1.19	2.38	-	2.86	1.19	-	2.86	1.19	-	2.86	1.19	-
	%	%	3.81%	%	%	1.19%	%	%	2.14%	%	%	0.24%	%	%	2.38%	%	%	1.67%	%	%	
Not Provided	65.57	78.57	21.3	11.9	-	4.92	-	-	2.45	-	1.64	-	4.10	9.52	-	5.43%	-	-	5.43%	-	-
	%	%	13.00%	%	%	9.41%	%	%	4.92%	%	%	2.46%	%	%	1.64%	%	%		%	%	
Total	77.36	83.76	12.9	8.04	-	3.60	2.06	-	1.59	2.56	1.10	1.55	1.50	0.91	-	1.94	1.13	-	1.94	1.13	-
	%	%	6.40%	%	%	4.87%	%	%	1.54%	%	%	0.97%	%	%	0.44%	%	%	0.59%	%	%	0.81%

Applicants by application status and age (as in table 3.02)



The above table shows SQA applications by status and age. Table and graph 3.02 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

Applicants by Sex:

In 2022, there was an increase of 2% in applications made from female applicants compared to the previous year. For male applicants, a slight decrease of 0.33% was recorded for the same period.

There may be variances in reporting (as above) compared to the statistics reported in the SQA Equal Pay Audit Summary 31 January 2021 as this report references Gender details held by His Majesty's Revenue and Customers (HMRC). There is currently no option for declaring Gender Identity within the SQA recruitment site.

Table 15.7 Applicants by gender (sex)

Female

Year	Applicants	Shortlisted	Shortlisted conversion	Hired	Hired conversion
2019	52.86%	51.02%	17.33%	58.33%	3.80%
2020	59.90%	59.50%	11.71%	64.08%	2.18%
2021	54.64%	57.95%	30.96%	61.86%	8.32%
2022	56.64%	60.50%	30.13%	57.03%	7.85%
Variance	3.78%	9.48%	12.80%	-1.30%	4.05%

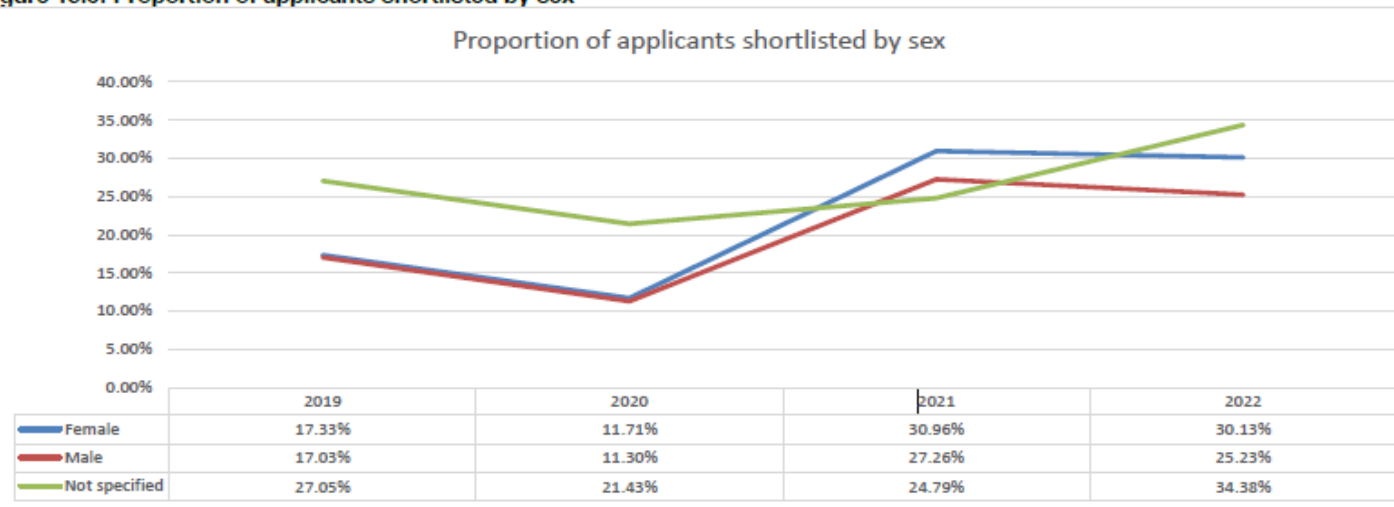
Male

Year	Applicants	Shortlisted	Shortlisted conversion	Hired	Hired conversion
2019	44.45%	44.57%	17.03%	32.04%	2.98%
2020	39.26%	39.46%	11.30%	38.46%	1.66%
2021	41.71%	38.95%	27.26%	34.75%	6.12%
2022	41.44%	37.08%	25.23%	38.78%	7.29%
Variance	-3.01%	-7.49%	8.20%	6.74%	4.31%

Not provided

Year	Applicants	Shortlisted	Shortlisted conversion	Hired	Hired conversion
2019	2.69%	4.41%	27.05%	3.88%	4.10%
2020	0.83%	1.03%	21.43%	3.21%	9.52%
2021	3.64%	3.09%	24.79%	3.39%	6.84%
2022	1.90%	2.31%	34.38%	3.80%	15.63%
Variance	-0.79%	-2.10%	7.33%	-0.08%	11.53%

Figure 15.8: Proportion of applicants shortlisted by sex



Applicants by gender (sex) (as in figure 15.8)

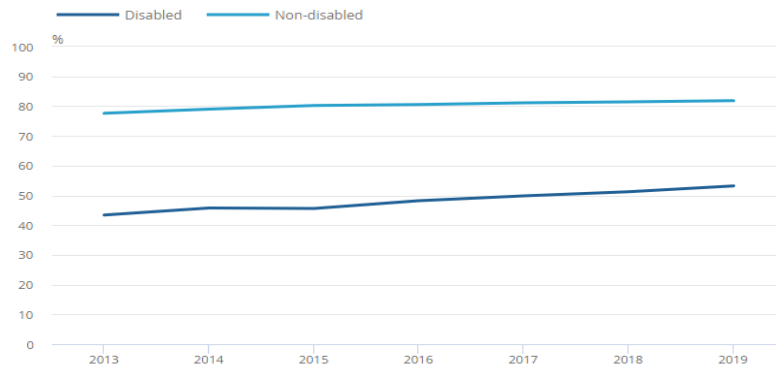
The table and graph above show applications shortlisted by gender. Figure 15.8 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

UK Disability Data

Recruitment and Selection by People Profiles: Disability

Figure 1: Disabled people are 28.6 percentage points less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people

Employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people aged 16 to 64 years, UK, 2013 to 2019



Labour Force Survey (LFS) data revealed that disabled people were over a third less likely to be employed than non-disabled people, with an employment rate for disabled people (aged 16 to 64 years) of 53.2% in 2019, compared with 81.8% for non-disabled people.

The graph above shows Labour Force data on the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people aged 16-64 in the UK. This is available to view on the [Labour Force Survey](#)

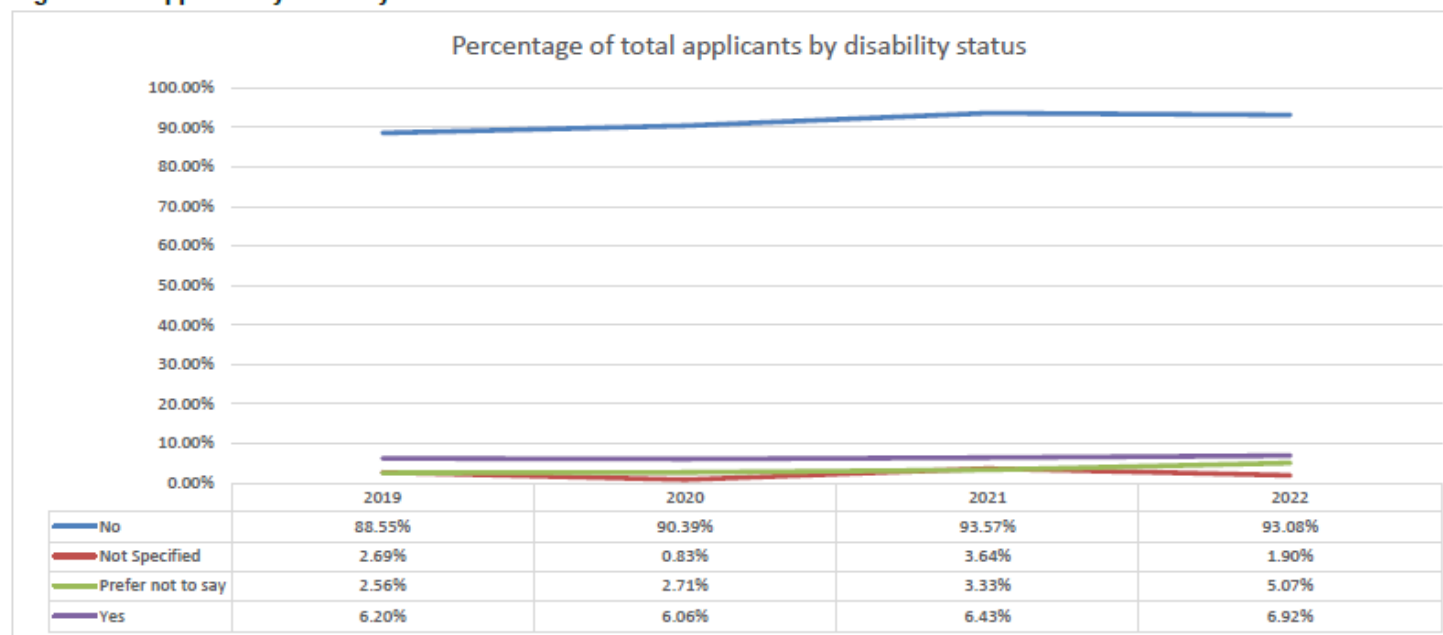
SQA Disability Profiles

Applicants by disability status

SQA received 0.49% more applications in 2022 compared to 2021 which included a response to declared Disability status. Although there was an increase in responses, 2020 saw a reduction of 0.14% in the proportion of applications from those who declared a disability between 2019 and 2020. However, in line with the overall increase in applications, the number of applicants who provided a response in relation to Disability status

increased from 281 in 2019 to 306 in 2020. In 2022, The largest increase was in the Prefer not to say category (5.07%) compared to 2021 (3.33%) between the two years.

Figure 15.1: Applicant by disability



The above table and graph show SQA applications by disability. Table 15.1 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Applicants by application status and Disability status

SQA is accredited as a Level 2 *Disability Confident* employer. We continue to review good practice and identify improvements that can be made and have committed to the achievement of Level 3 status by 2025. There was an increase of six hired candidates who declared a disability in 2020 compared to 2019, four external and two internal. A review of the status of applicants by *Disability* status

tells us that similar proportions of applicants **who declared a disability, progress through the application and interview stages of the recruitment process when compared to applicants who declared no disability.**

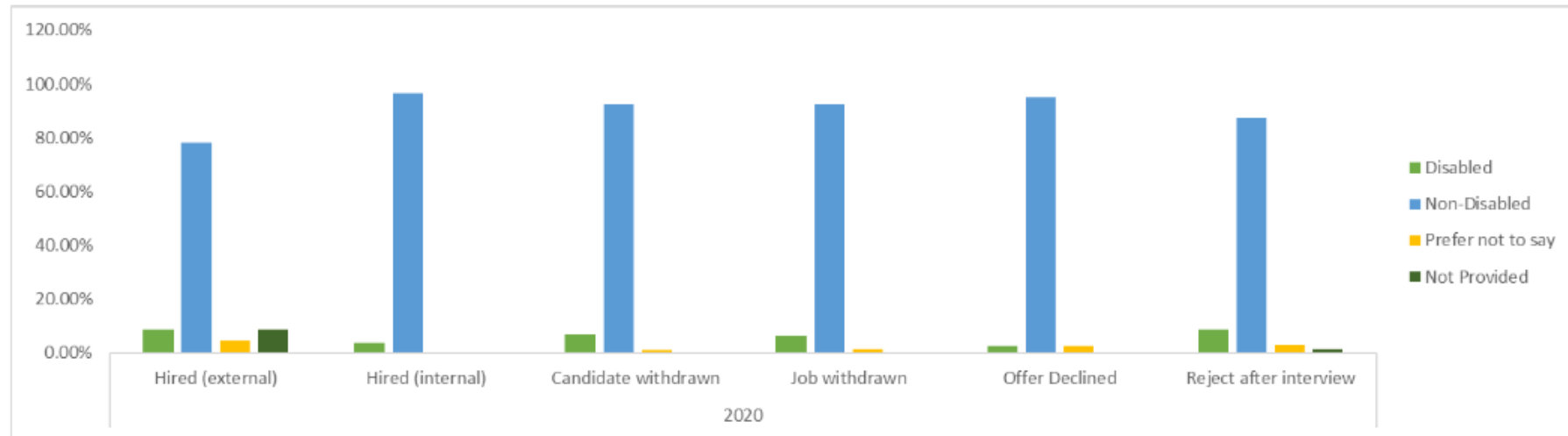
A higher proportion of external applicants who declared a disability were appointed in 2020 compared with 2019, an increase of 0.60% (two applicants).

Table 3.06: Applicants by application status and disability

	Reject after application			Reject after interview			Candidate withdrawn			Job withdrawn		
Disability Status	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Disabled	80.07%	81.05%	0.97%	12.10%	11.44%	-0.66%	3.91%	2.29%	-1.63%	1.78%	2.61%	0.84%
Non-Disabled	77.67%	83.91%	6.25%	12.59%	7.76%	-4.83%	3.54%	2.10%	-1.44%	1.57%	2.61%	1.04%
Prefer not to say	72.41%	86.13%	13.72%	17.24%	8.76%	-8.48%	3.45%	0.73%	-2.72%	0.86%	1.46%	0.60%
Not Provided	65.57%	78.57%	13.00%	21.31%	11.90%	-9.41%	4.92%		-4.92%	2.46%		-2.46%
Total	77.36%	83.76%	6.40%	12.91%	8.04%	-4.87%	3.60%	2.06%	-1.54%	1.59%	2.56%	0.97%

	Offer Declined			Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
Disability Status	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Disabled	0.71%	0.65%	-0.06%	0.71%	1.31%	0.60%	0.71%	0.65%	-0.06%
Non-Disabled	1.10%	1.62%	0.53%	1.50%	0.79%	-0.71%	2.04%	1.21%	-0.84%
Prefer not to say	1.72%	1.46%	-0.26%	0.86%	1.46%	0.60%	3.45%		-3.45%
Not Provided	1.64%		-1.64%	4.10%	9.52%	5.43%			
Total	1.10%	1.55%	0.44%	1.50%	0.91%	-0.59%	1.94%	1.13%	-0.81%

Applicants by application status and disability 2020 (as in table 3.06)



The above table and graph show SQA application status and disability. Table 3.06 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

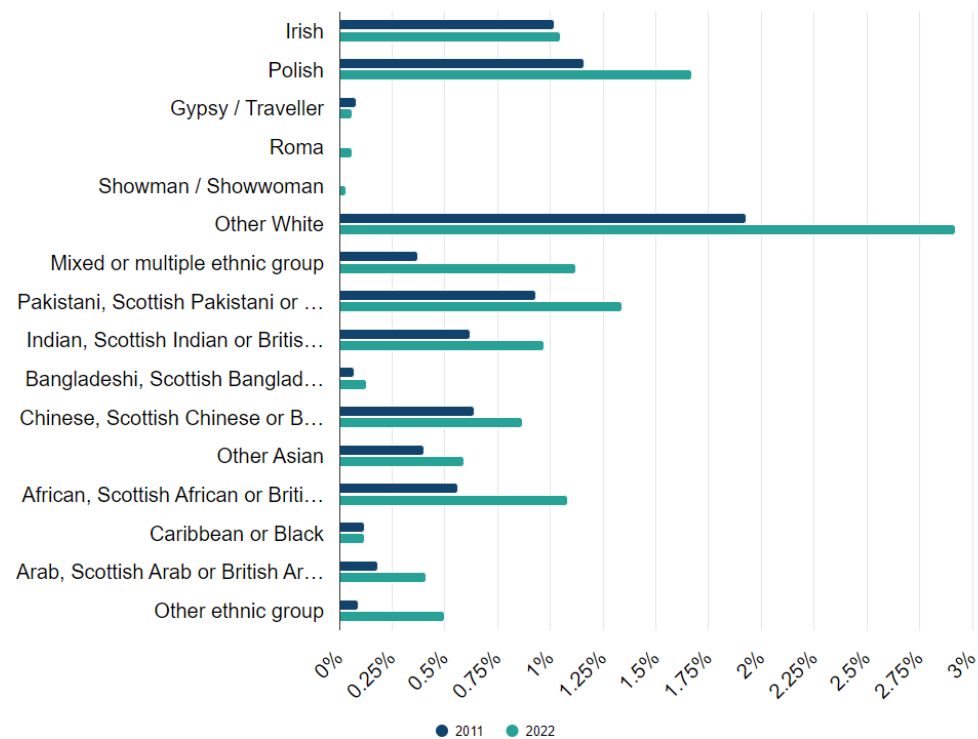
Recruitment and Selection by Race and Ethnicity

Scotland's Census - The 2022 census found that:

- Scotland's population was 92.87% white
- 87.08% of people identified as 'White: Scottish' or 'White: Other British'
- 5.79% of people identified as Polish, Irish, Gypsy/Traveller or 'White: Other'
- the population in Asian, African, Caribbean or Black, Mixed or Other ethnic groups increased to 7.13%

Figure 5: There were increases across several minority ethnic groups

Percentage of population by minority ethnic group, 2011 - 2022, Scotland

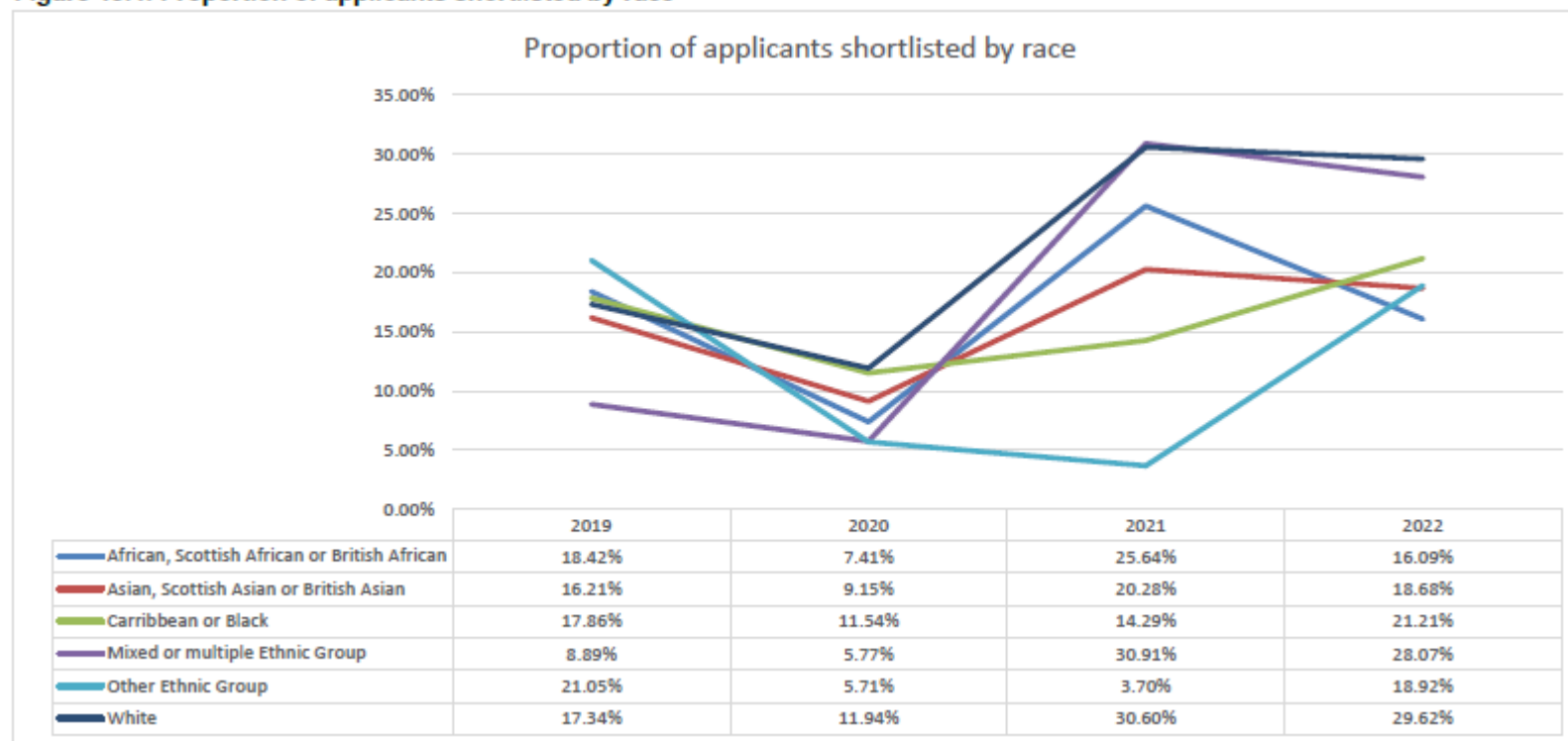


*Data source [Scotland's Census 2022 - Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://scotlandscensus.gov.uk/)

SQA Workforce Equality Report 2021-2023

Ethnic Minority applicants accounted for 11.03% of all applicants (354 individuals) in 2021 and 14.43% of all applicants (487 individuals) in 2022)

Figure 15.4: Proportion of applicants shortlisted by race



The above table shows SQA applications shortlisted by race. Table 15.4 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Applicants by Race	2021	2022	Variance
White	82.96%	81.61%	-1.35%
Minority Ethnicity	11.03%	14.42%	3.39%
Prefer not to Say	2.37%	2.07%	-0.30%
Not provided	3.64%	1.90%	-1.74%

The above table shows SQA applications by race. The table Applicant by race has been created using the published data in SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Applicants by status and race.

Overall, there was a 0.04% decrease in the number of external appointments made to people of minority ethnicity in SQA. **This represents a marginal disparity in the number of overall applications referenced on the previous page of this document.**

One additional person (of minority ethnicity) was appointed in 2020 compared to 2019 (six versus five individuals).

The proportion of external appointments made to people of white ethnicity actually decreased by 0.66% in 2020 versus 2019 (57 to 36 individuals).

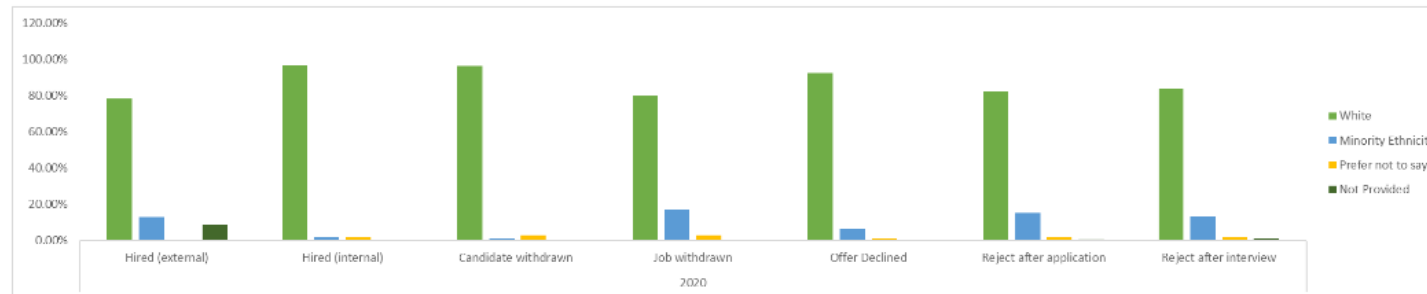
In summary, due to the overall reduction of the number of appointments in SQA, there was a consequential overall reduction in the number and proportion of successful internal applicants across all racial groups SQA will monitor this data and take action to ensure we are advertising on the right platforms which attract a diverse workforce.

Table 3.08: Applicants by status and race

Race	Reject after application			Reject after interview			Candidate withdrawn			Job withdrawn		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
White	77.28%	83.11%	5.84%	12.43%	8.13%	-4.29%	3.65%	2.39%	-1.25%	1.73%	2.46%	0.73%
Minority Ethnicity	79.62%	87.84%	8.22%	14.34%	7.38%	-6.96%	3.28%	0.14%	-3.14%	0.69%	3.01%	2.31%
Prefer not to say	83.33%	82.80%	-0.54%	12.50%	7.53%	-4.97%	1.39%	3.23%	1.84%		4.30%	4.30%
Not Provided	65.57%	78.57%	13.00%	21.31%	11.90%	-9.41%	4.92%		-4.92%	2.46%		-2.46%
Total	77.36%	83.76%	6.40%	12.91%	8.04%	-4.87%	3.60%	2.06%	-1.54%	1.59%	2.56%	0.97%

Race	Offer Declined			Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
White	1.20%	1.72%	0.52%	1.52%	0.86%	-0.66%	2.21%	1.32%	-0.89%
Minority Ethnicity	0.52%	0.68%	0.16%	0.86%	0.82%	-0.04%	0.69%	0.14%	-0.55%
Prefer not to say		1.08%	1.08%	1.39%		-1.39%	1.39%	1.08%	-0.31%
Not Provided	1.64%		-1.64%	4.10%	9.52%	5.43%			
Total	1.10%	1.55%	0.44%	1.50%	0.91%	-0.59%	1.94%	1.13%	-0.81%

Applicants by Status and Race (as in Table 3.08)



The above table and graph show SQA application by status and race. Table 3.08 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

The top table (above) indicates a slight disparity in applicant success rates for people who are minority ethnicity, and it is recommended that SQA undertakes further work to investigate the potential reasons for this disparity.

Scottish Sexual Orientation Data – Scotland

ONS Data gives approximate numbers for sexual orientation by Country (Scotland) as follows

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/datasets/sexualidentityuk>)

The table below shows Sexual Identity by Country, United Kingdom, 2021 to 2022 (thousands)

Heterosexual or straight	2021	2,037
Gay or lesbian	2021	37
Bisexual	2021	36
Other	2021	12
Don't know or refuse	2021	24
Heterosexual or straight	2022	2,054
Gay or lesbian	2022	41
Bisexual	2022	22
Other	2022	6
Don't know or refuse	2022	30

Recruitment and Selection in SQA: People Identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ+)

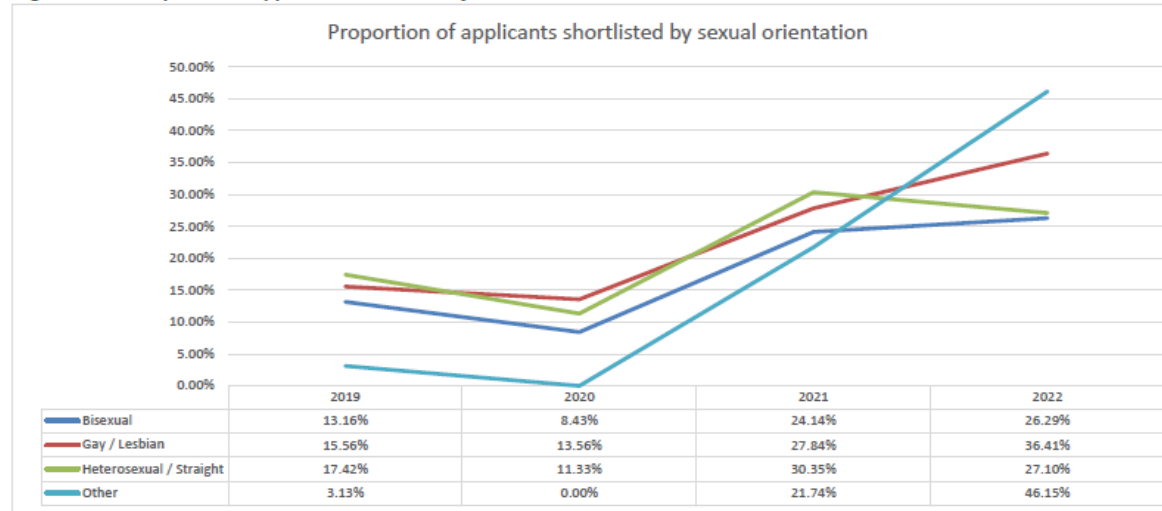
Applicants by Sexual Orientation – This section reports sexual orientation mirroring the 2022 Scottish Census categories for sexual orientation. LGBQ+ applicants collectively accounted for 11.62% of all applicants in 2021 (373 applicants) and 12.53% of all applicants in 2022 (423 applicants).

The proportion of applicants declaring their *Sexual Orientation* in 2022 rose by 50, an increase of 0.91% from 2021.

Applicates Shortlisted by Sexual Orientation - LGBQ+ applicants shortlisted accounted for 10.25% all applicants shortlisted (96 individuals) in 2021 and 14.18% of all applicants shortlisted (135 individuals) in 2022. Analysis of shortlisted applicants' sexual orientation by application stage shows

that the proportion of those shortlisted in each sexual orientation category was relatively similar in each of the four years from 2019 to 2022 with the exception being the bisexual category which had a much lower proportion of applicants shortlisted than any other sexual orientation category.

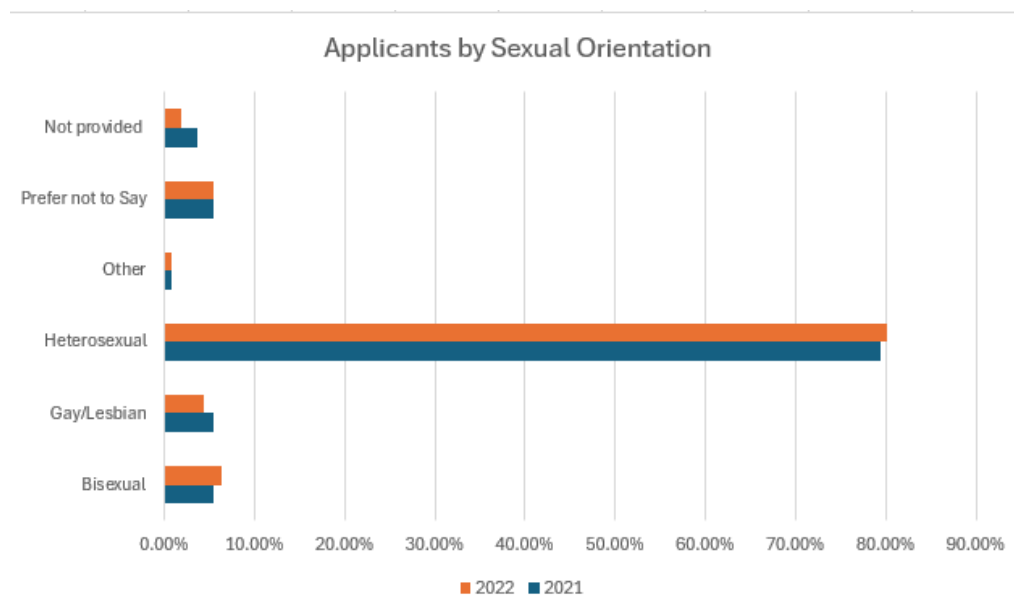
Figure 15.10: Proportion of applicants shortlisted by sexual orientation



The proportion of applicants shortlisted who declared they are bisexual increased by 2.15% and those who declared they are gay/lesbian increased by 8.57% in 2022. This is a result of an increase in jobs advertised and SQA carrying out a recent campaign to encourage colleagues to input their equality data.

Applicants by Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	2021	2022	Variance
Bisexual	5.42%	6.31%	0.89%
Gay/Lesbian	5.48%	4.45%	-1.03%
Heterosexual	79.35%	80.21%	0.86%
Other	0.72%	0.77%	0.05%
Prefer not to Say	5.39%	5.36%	-0.03%
Not provided	3.64%	1.90%	-1.74%



Applicants by application status and sexual orientation

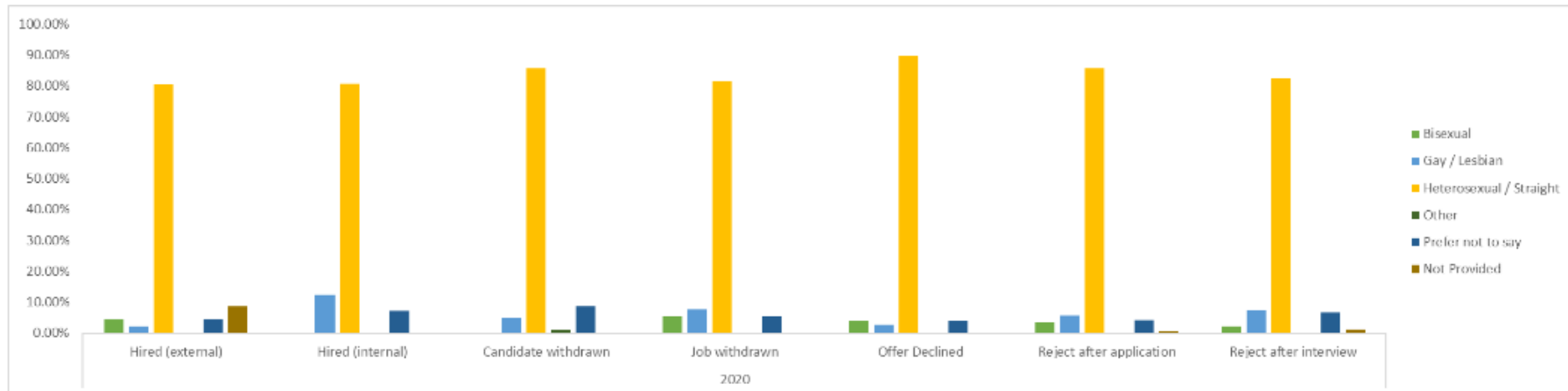
When comparing applicants by *Sexual Orientation* in 2019 and 2020, applicants at each stage have remained stable within each *Sexual Orientation* category. There was an increase in 2020 of 6.89% (636) applicants who had declared as heterosexual not progressing beyond the application stage compared to 2019.

Table 3.12: Applicants by application status and sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	Reject after application			Reject after interview			Candidate withdrawn			Job withdrawn		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Bisexual	85.09%	87.35%	2.26%	8.77%	5.42%	-3.35%	0.88%		-0.88%	0.88%	4.22%	3.34%
Gay / Lesbian	79.11%	81.36%	2.24%	12.89%	10.17%	-2.72%	4.00%	1.69%	-2.31%	1.33%	3.39%	2.06%
Heterosexual / Straight	77.28%	84.17%	6.89%	12.79%	7.78%	-5.02%	3.67%	2.07%	-1.60%	1.63%	2.44%	0.81%
Other	93.75%	91.67%	-2.08%	3.13%		-3.13%		8.33%	8.33%	3.13%		-3.13%
Prefer not to say	76.92%	76.89%	-0.03%	14.20%	12.00%	-2.20%	2.96%	4.00%	1.04%	0.59%	3.11%	2.52%
Not Provided	65.57%	78.57%	13.00%	21.31%	11.90%	-9.41%	4.92%		-4.92%	2.46%		-2.46%
Total	77.36%	83.76%	6.40%	12.91%	8.04%	-4.87%	3.60%	2.06%	-1.54%	1.59%	2.56%	0.97%

Sexual Orientation	Offer Declined			Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Bisexual	2.63%	1.81%	-0.82%	0.88%	1.20%	0.33%	0.88%		-0.88%
Gay / Lesbian	0.44%	0.68%	0.23%		0.34%	0.34%	2.22%	2.37%	0.15%
Heterosexual / Straight	1.09%	1.62%	0.54%	1.55%	0.86%	-0.69%	1.99%	1.07%	-0.92%
Other									
Prefer not to say	1.18%	1.33%	0.15%	1.18%	0.89%	-0.29%	2.96%	1.78%	-1.18%
Not Provided	1.64%		-1.64%	4.10%	9.52%	5.43%			
Total	1.10%	1.55%	0.44%	1.50%	0.91%	-0.59%	1.94%	1.13%	-0.81%

Applicants by application status and sexual orientation (as in table 3.12)



The above table and graph show applicants by application status and sexual orientation. Table 3.12 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

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

As this is an internal policy, SQA has asked for feedback from internal employee network groups in relation to equality impacts groups. These employee network groups include:

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

Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:

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

Age

Table 1.1: Age										
Age bracket	2019 no	2019 %	2020 no	2020 %	2021 no	2021 %	2022 no	2022 %	Variance no	Variance %
16–24	59	6.32%	50	5.27%	49	4.93%	36	3.47%	-23	-2.85%
25–29	65	6.97%	60	6.32%	73	7.35%	105	10.14%	40	3.17%
30–34	123	13.18%	109	11.49%	96	9.67%	95	9.17%	-28	-4.01%
35–39	131	14.04%	145	15.28%	146	14.70%	144	13.90%	13	-0.14%
40–44	129	13.83%	135	14.23%	146	14.70%	150	14.48%	21	0.65%
45–49	116	12.43%	105	11.06%	113	11.38%	124	11.97%	8	-0.46%
50–54	125	13.40%	141	14.86%	131	13.19%	126	12.16%	1	-1.24%
55–59	119	12.75%	117	12.33%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%	3	-0.98%
60–64	53	5.68%	72	7.59%	81	8.16%	102	9.85%	49	4.16%
65+	13	1.39%	15	1.58%	36	3.63%	32	3.09%	19	1.70%
Total	933	100.00%	949	100.00%	993	100.00%	1036	100.00%	103	11.04%

Table 1.1 shows the age profile of the organisation from 2019 to 2022

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Disability

Table 3.1: Disability										
Disability	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %	Variance number	Variance %
No	417	44.69%	651	68.60%	683	68.78%	697	67.28%	280	22.59%
Not Specified	444	47.59%	152	16.02%	152	15.31%	184	17.76%	-260	-29.83%
Prefer not to say	21	2.25%	68	7.17%	76	7.65%	72	6.95%	51	4.70%
Yes	51	5.47%	78	8.22%	82	8.26%	83	8.01%	32	2.54%
Total	933	100.00%	949	100.00%	993	100.00%	1036	100.00%	103	0.00%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Table 3.1 shows the composition of the disability self-reporting categories for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Of those staff who have declared a disability, females made up 58.54% (2021) and 53.01% (2022) of the population, and males 41.46% (2021) and 46.99% (2022). Due to the low number of staff declaring a disability within SQA we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to disability and other protected characteristics.

Race

Table 7.1: Race

Ethnicity	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
African, Scottish African or British African	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	<5	<0.48%
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	13	1.39%	20	2.11%	24	2.42%	25	2.41%
Caribbean or Black	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Not specified	383	41.05%	123	12.96%	101	10.17%	122	11.78%
Other ethnic group	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Prefer not to say	10	1.07%	33	3.48%	34	3.42%	30	2.90%
White	523	56.06%	763	80.40%	825	83.08%	849	81.95%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Table 7.1 shows the ethnic minority background of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022

Just under 3.50% staff declared they were from an ethnic minority background in both 2021 (3.32%) and 2022 (3.38%). However, it is encouraging to note that the percentage of staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority background has increased overall by 3.97% between 2019 and 2022. The percentage of staff within each ethnic minority category has remained relatively stable over the last three years.

Religion or Belief

Table 8.1: Religion or belief

Religion or belief	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
Another religion or body	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	6	0.60%	6	0.58%
Buddhist	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Church of Scotland	91	9.75%	122	12.86%	127	12.79%	125	12.07%
Hindu	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	8	0.77%
Jewish	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Muslim	7	0.75%	11	1.16%	10	1.01%	11	1.06%
None	286	30.65%	421	44.36%	462	46.53%	489	47.20%
Not specified	405	43.41%	126	13.28%	102	10.27%	123	11.87%
Other Christian	26	2.79%	43	4.53%	44	4.43%	44	4.25%
Prefer not to say	35	3.75%	98	10.33%	103	10.37%	103	9.94%
Roman Catholic	76	8.15%	118	12.43%	129	12.99%	123	11.87%
Sikh	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%

Table 8.1 shows the religion, belief or non-belief status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.

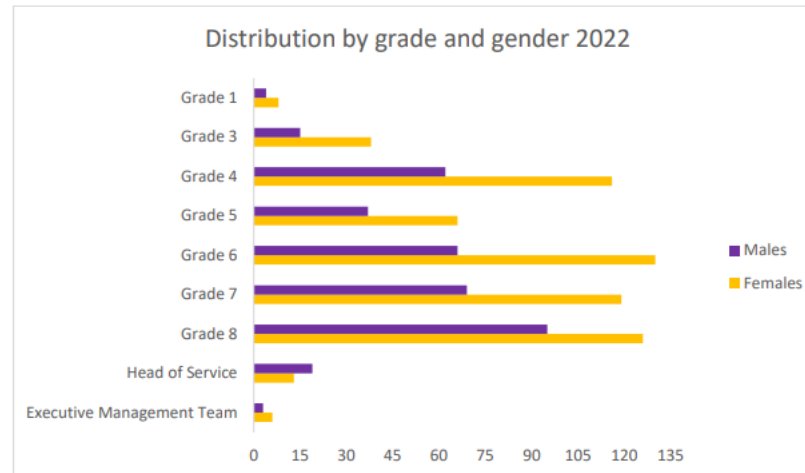
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Sex

Gender

Distribution by grade and gender of SQA grade 1 – EMT



Source: SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023

[Scottish Qualifications Authority \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/)

The majority of the 2.9 million lone-parent families in 2022 were headed by a lone mother (2.5 million, 84%)

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2022>

59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021). Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022)

Source: Carers UK

There are 1.25 million sandwich carers in the UK. These are people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family. 68% (850,743) are women.

Source: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/care-in-crisis/breaking-point-report/>

Sexual Orientation	Table 10.1: Sexual orientation								
	Sexual Orientation	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
	Bisexual	9	0.96%	12	1.26%	15	1.51%	16	1.54%
	Gay man	13	1.39%	20	2.11%	21	2.11%	23	2.22%
	Gay woman / lesbian	9	0.96%	10	1.05%	12	1.21%	12	1.16%
	Heterosexual / straight	431	46.20%	670	70.60%	700	70.49%	702	67.76%
	In another way	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
	Not specified	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	156	15.71%	189	18.24%
	Not sure	26	2.79%	76	8.01%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
	Prefer not to say	443	47.48%	158	16.65%	84	8.46%	88	8.49%
<hr/>									
Table 10.1 shows the composition of staff sexual orientation within the organisation for the period 2019 to 2022.									
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23									
Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23									
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Due to the low number of staff reporting as transgender or describing their gender identity ‘in another way’, we are unable to publish further data in relation to gender reassignment or gender identity. This data is, however, monitored internally.								

Marriage/Civil Partnership

Table 5.1: Relationship status

Relationship status	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %
Civil Partnership	7	0.75%	7	0.74%	8	0.81%	9	0.87%
Co-habiting/in a relationship	80	8.57%	112	11.80%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%
Divorced/Dissolved Civil Partnership	14	1.50%	16	1.69%	17	1.71%	19	1.83%
Married	265	28.40%	370	38.99%	425	42.80%	416	40.15%
Married/Civil Partnership	8	0.86%	12	1.26%	14	1.41%	16	1.54%
Not Specified	407	43.62%	179	18.86%	102	10.27%	127	12.26%
Other	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	9	0.87%
Prefer not to say	18	1.93%	49	5.16%	55	5.54%	59	5.69%
Separated	6	0.64%	12	1.26%	12	1.21%	13	1.25%
Single	122	13.08%	183	19.28%	224	22.56%	239	23.07%
Widowed/surviving partner from Civil Partnership	< 5	< 0.54%	6	0.63%	7	0.70%	7	0.68%

Table 5.1 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Pregnancy / Maternity

Table 6.1: Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy and maternity	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %
Contract ended as planned					1	3.33%		0.00%
Due to return to work					0	0.00%	11	40.00%
Resigned					0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Returned to work	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	29	96.67%	14	56.00%
Total	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	30	100.00%	26	100.00%

	<p>Table 6.1 details the number of staff who have taken maternity leave, whether they are still on maternity leave (due to return to work), have returned to work following maternity leave, resigned following maternity leave, or their fixed-term contract ended (contract ended as planned).</p> <p>Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23 Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23</p>
Care experience (where relevant)	SQA does not currently collect Care Experience data.

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="517 587 2036 651">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p data-bbox="517 655 2036 791">Whilst the policy applies equally to all applicants, there may be a risk that people drawn from certain age profiles may find a recruitment and selection process more difficult than others. For example, older applicants may face prejudicial views regarding their skills, health or future potential, younger people may find providing evidence of work experience (for competency-based selection) more difficult due to less overall time spent in the workplace.</p> <p data-bbox="517 828 2036 900">In the SQA, an analysis of applicant by Age status shows that in the majority of age bands, the stage reached by applicants is comparable and <u>no significant disproportionate impact are recorded</u>.</p> <p data-bbox="517 936 2036 1048">A small exception to this situation exists in the 65+ age band where no applicants progressed beyond the application stage in either 2021 or 2022. The number of applications for those in the 55–59, 60–64 and 65+ age brackets accounted for less than 5.0% of the total applications received in each year over the period</p> <p data-bbox="517 1085 2036 1197">However, candidates in the 65+ age band accounted for only 0.16% of all applications (a total of 5 people) in both 2021 and 2022. We conclude numbers of applicants are too low to analyse to accurately analyse from Equality perspectives.</p> <p data-bbox="517 1233 2036 1273">(For information, the largest number of applicants last year (were from the 16–34 age bands)</p> <p data-bbox="517 1310 2036 1350">Conclusion: neutral impact</p>

	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>SQA should continue to collect and analyse age related data regarding recruitment and selection and act appropriately should any significant age discriminatory trends become emerge. <u>We recommend the future collection and analysis of applicant success rates by age and grade.</u> to ensure we are not unfairly discriminating against the younger workforce. We will also continue our work with the <i>Modern Apprentice</i>, <i>Graduate</i> and <i>Intern Schemes</i> along with the SQA's Young Person's Network to advance Equality of Opportunity towards younger people in SQA.</p> <p>The SQA currently delivers comprehensive training and issues very detailed guidance in respect of recruitment and selection to all managers / recruiting staff prior to conducting any recruitment activities. This includes the exploration of age bias, and discrimination and promoting Age positive recruitment processes.</p>
	Foster good relations
Protected Characteristic	<p>Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share, or may not share, a protected characteristic.</p> <p>This policy does not explicitly reference Age. There is little evidence to indicate that this policy actually fosters good relations between employees of different age groups.</p>
	General Equality Duty
Disability	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>As stated in an earlier section of this document, 10.46% of job applicants in 2022 declared they had a disability.</p> <p>SQA is accredited as a Level 2 <i>Disability Confident</i> employer. We continue to review good practice and identify improvements that can be made, and we have committed to the achievement of Level 3 status by 2025.</p> <p>There was an overall increase in the number of appointments made to candidates who have a disability – the hired conversion rate of 6.80% people in 2022 compared to 4.38% in 2021</p> <p>A review of the status of applicants by disability status tells us that very similar proportions of applicants who</p>

declared a disability go on to progress through the application and interview stages of the recruitment process compared to applicants who declared no disability. In 2022 Applicants who declared a disability had a shortlist conversion rate of 36.26% compared to applications who did not declare a disability who had a conversation rate of 26.94% .

A higher proportion of external applicants who declared a disability were actually appointed in 2020 compared with 2019 - an increase of 0.60% (two applicants).

Risks of Discrimination in the SQA – Direct and Indirect:

Discrimination arising from disability: It would be unlawful for the SQA to treat a disabled applicant less favourably due to something arising from their disability (source ACAS). Therefore, rejecting an applicant under this policy for a reason linked to their disability could risk direct disability discrimination.

Indirect Disability Discrimination: This could occur when the SQA implements this policy to all applicants equally, but it disadvantages certain applicants who declare a disability, therefore risking indirect disability discrimination.

We accept that applicants with a disability may experience barriers during the recruitment process. This includes accessibility to information (adverts and application forms) answering interview questions and physical barriers when attending interviews.

Considerable guidance and training is currently offered to SQA recruiting managers in respect of implementing *Reasonable Adjustments* during the interview process (see appendices).

We also state in the *SQA Recruitment and Selection* policy that, as a *Disability Confident* organisation we have committed to:

- ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicating and promoting vacancies to attract disabled candidates;
- offering a guaranteed interview to applicants with a disability if the minimum role requirements are met
- anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required;
- supporting any member of staff who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work

	Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>SQA's recruitment data shows that all SQA candidates and applicants for roles are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i>, and that outcomes are similar for those who declare themselves <i>Disabled</i> compared to a non-disabled candidate.</p> <p>This recruitment data is critical to ensure that SQA is able to continue to offer equality of opportunity to candidates and is able to attract and appoint the best people. Recruitment data should continue to be gathered and analysed to help confirm that direct and indirect disability discrimination is not taking place and that any issues may be identified and remedied.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share, or may not share, a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Reference to <i>Disability</i> is made in this policy and SQA's Disability Confident Committed organisation status can help to recruit, retain and develop disabled people who will help SQA to succeed. The Disability Confident badge, displayed on our recruitment pages (internal and external) also shows disabled people that SQA recognise the value they can bring to the business which helps in the search for talent.</p>
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>In 2022, there was a 3.39% increase in applications from individuals who declared as minority ethnic compared to 2021.</p>

Applicants by Race	2021	2022	Variance
White	82.96%	81.61%	-1.35%
Minority Ethnicity	11.03%	14.42%	3.39%
Prefer not to Say	2.37%	2.07%	-0.30%
Not provided	3.64%	1.90%	-1.74%

The above table shows SQA applications by race. This table has been created from the data in Table 15.5: Applicant data by race is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

According to 2022 Scotland census, 92% of the population is white ***Data source** [Scotland's Census 2022 - Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](#)

	Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
Race	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
White	1.52%	0.86%	-0.66%	2.21%	1.32%	-0.89%
Minority Ethnicity	0.86%	0.82%	-0.04%	0.69%	0.14%	-0.55%
Prefer not to say	1.39%		-1.39%	1.39%	1.08%	-0.31%
Not Provided	4.10%	9.52%	5.43%			
Total	1.50%	0.91%	-0.59%	1.94%	1.13%	-0.81%

The above table shows applicants by status and race. Table 3.08 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

The Recruitment and Selection Policy emphasises in its 'Introduction' and 'Purpose and Standards' the aim of recruiting without discrimination and states that training will be provided to those managers involved in shortlisting and interviewing candidates which has a positive impact.

	<p><u>SQA should consider whether there is appropriate reference to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for candidates so that they are aware that non-Scottish based qualifications are recognised and what their comparator level is.</u></p> <p>Conclusion: neutral impact</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>Whilst all applicants are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i>, the policy does not explicitly always promote / advance the 'same chance' to employees from different ethnicities which may have a negative impact: We need to ensure that all applicants understand the SCQF levels and how non-UK qualifications can be compared.</p> <p>Dialogue should continue with SQA's internal ACE network for more ways of improving.</p> <p>In August 2020, SQA became a signatory of the Business in the Community (BITC) Race at Work Charter. This is be promoted by reference in the policy.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different ethnicities.</p> <p><u>Further work should be undertaken to encourage SQA staff to declare their protected characteristics including race to assist SQA to enhance the quality of workforce data.</u></p>
Protected Characteristic Religion or Belief	<p>General Equality Duty</p>
	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest this policy may impact unfairly on people of different Religions or Beliefs. The SQA Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy states that "We will ensure throughout this procedure that we do not unfairly discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic</p>

Positive Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.

However, the following advisory comment has been made:

- Consideration should be made of cultural sensitivities – particularly in respect of the need for flexible working to recognise religious commitments, holidays or festivals.

SQA's internal data analysis shows that 2.58% more applications stated that they had no religion 2022 compared to 2021. The largest increase is seen in the other Christian category, with 1.23% more applications in 2022 compared to 2021

Table: Proportion of applicants hired by religion or belief.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Another religion or body	1.96%	2.13%	5.13%	0.00%
Buddhist	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%
Church of Scotland	2.66%	1.78%	8.42%	10.00%
Hindu	0.00%	0.00%	3.92%	5.26%
Jewish	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Muslim	2.16%	1.26%	2.00%	5.26%
None	3.93%	2.21%	9.26%	8.41%
Other Christian	1.82%	1.33%	4.11%	4.62%
Prefer not to say	3.45%	2.23%	4.00%	7.97%
Roman Catholic	3.17%	1.77%	4.10%	5.91%
Sikh	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Not Specified	4.10%	9.52%	6.84%	15.63%

The above table shows SQA proportion of application hired by Religion or belief. Application hired by Religion or belief on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Conclusion: neutral impact

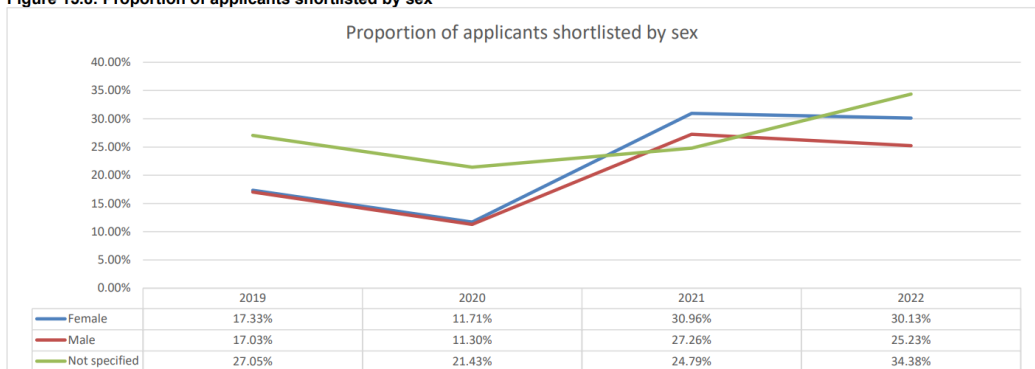
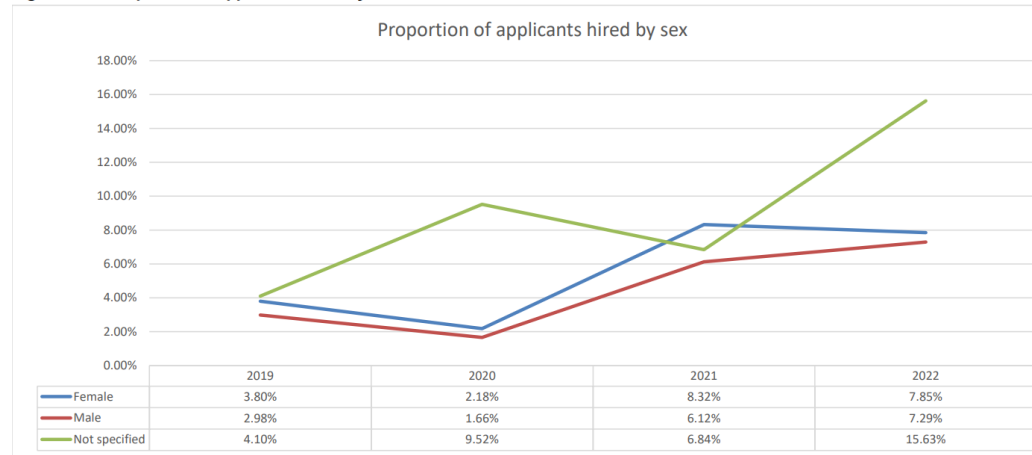
	Advance equality of opportunity																				
	All SQA employees and external candidates from all <i>Religions / Beliefs</i> are entitled to use and access the Recruitment and Selection Policy.																				
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect applicants differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Religion or Philosophical Belief System</i> .																				
	Foster good relations																				
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different religions or beliefs.																				
	Consideration should be given to encourage applicants to disclose their religion or belief as SQA data is incomplete. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.																				
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty																				
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010																				
	Analysis of applicant’s sex by application stage shows that over 50.00% of all applicants, those shortlisted and hired were female in all four years from 2019 to 2022.																				
	The proportion of female applicants who were shortlisted was higher than the proportion of male candidates hired. This trend continues when looking at the proportion of females hired versus the proportion of males hired.																				
	<p>Figure 15.8: Proportion of applicants shortlisted by sex</p>  <table><thead><tr><th></th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>2021</th><th>2022</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Female</td><td>17.33%</td><td>11.71%</td><td>30.96%</td><td>30.13%</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>17.03%</td><td>11.30%</td><td>27.26%</td><td>25.23%</td></tr><tr><td>Not specified</td><td>27.05%</td><td>21.43%</td><td>24.79%</td><td>34.38%</td></tr></tbody></table>		2019	2020	2021	2022	Female	17.33%	11.71%	30.96%	30.13%	Male	17.03%	11.30%	27.26%	25.23%	Not specified	27.05%	21.43%	24.79%	34.38%
	2019	2020	2021	2022																	
Female	17.33%	11.71%	30.96%	30.13%																	
Male	17.03%	11.30%	27.26%	25.23%																	
Not specified	27.05%	21.43%	24.79%	34.38%																	

Figure 15.9: Proportion of applicants hired by sex



The above tables shows SQA proportion of application hired by Sex. Application hired by Sex on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2021-2023 [Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Statistically, women are more likely to be carers than men and may therefore be in part-time employment or require a flexible working pattern. Data extracted from the House of Commons Research Briefing (Women and the UK economy) 2022 tells us that 38% of women in employment are working part-time, compared to just 13% of men.

Risks of Discrimination in the SQA:

Applicant Success Rates:

Table 3.04: Applicants by Application Status and Gender (Sex)

Gender (Sex)	Reject after application			Reject after interview			Candidate withdrawn			Job withdrawn		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Female	78.04%	83.60%	5.56%	12.19%	7.87%	-4.32%	3.38%	2.12%	-1.27%	1.25%	2.58%	1.33%
Male	77.26%	84.11%	6.85%	13.26%	8.22%	-5.03%	3.77%	2.02%	-1.76%	1.94%	2.57%	0.64%
Not Provided	65.57%	78.57%	13.00%	21.31%	11.90%	-9.41%	4.92%		-4.92%	2.46%		-2.46%
Total	77.36%	83.76%	6.40%	12.91%	8.04%	-4.87%	3.60%	2.06%	-1.54%	1.59%	2.56%	0.97%

Gender (Sex)	Offer Declined			Hired (external)			Hired (internal)		
	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance	2019	2020	Variance
Female	1.34%	1.65%	0.32%	1.59%	1.06%	-0.53%	2.21%	1.12%	-1.09%
Male	0.79%	1.41%	0.62%	1.24%	0.50%	-0.74%	1.74%	1.16%	-0.58%
Not Provided	1.64%		-1.64%	4.10%	9.52%	5.43%			
Total	1.10%	1.55%	0.44%	1.50%	0.91%	-0.59%	1.94%	1.13%	-0.81%

The above table shows applicants by application status and gender. Table 3.04 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

The recorded differences in application success rates between Men and Women are statistically insignificant and do indicate evidence of Sex discrimination in SQA recruitment.

For example, *Rejection after Application* is currently 83.6% for women compared to 84.1% for men. *Rejection after Interview* is 7.9% for women versus 8.2% for men.

Conclusion: neutral impact

Advance equality of opportunity

All SQA employees and external candidates are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Recruitment and Selection Policy. Given the breakdown of the SQA workforce and previously referenced applicant success rates, the assessment has identified no obvious actions in this area.

Foster good relations

	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexes.</p> <p>SQA should continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the equality data and take any remedial action if appropriate • Use non-gender specific wording in recruitment adverts • Promote 'Happy to talk flexible working'
Protected Characteristic Sexual Orientation	General Equality Duty
	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different Sexual Orientations and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.
	Conclusion: neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees and external candidates are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i> and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Sexual Orientation</i> .
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexual orientation.
	SQA should continue to monitor the equality data and take any remedial action if appropriate
Protected Characteristic Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	General Equality Duty
	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

It is possible that individuals may feel that the culture of SQA and its acceptance of their gender identity is a hurdle to their use of the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

SQA should encourage all applicants and colleagues to disclose their pronouns whilst going through the application process and their employment with SQA.

There is no evidence however to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people based on gender identity and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.

Conclusion: neutral impact

Advance equality of opportunity

The SQA has a *Gender Identity and transitioning at Work* policy providing background information to SQA managers and employees in respect of:

- People who identify as the Gender they were assigned at birth. (*Cisgender*)
- People who identify with Gender that is different to that assigned at birth. (*Transgender*)
- People who identify with multiple Genders. (e.g. *Non-Binary* and *Gender Fluid*.)

(Note this list is illustrative and is not intended to be definitive.)

People who are LGBTQ+ are more likely to experience workplace harassment (Source: National Government LGBT survey 2019.). This may lead to concerns around their ability to have equal access to career opportunities presented under the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Whilst, with the exception of *Gender Reassignment*, there is currently no legal obligation placed on the SQA to provide Equality of Opportunity to people who identify as different Genders, it is a very relevant modern consideration – particularly in academic environments such as schools, colleges and universities. (Once again, highly relevant to the SQA.)

	<p>We therefore recommend that the SQA create a new <i>Gender Identity</i> policy to facilitate and advance equality of opportunity to employees who are LGBTQ+.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different <i>Gender Identities</i> or who are LGBTQ+.</p> <p>Implementing the actions listed within this section of the document would begin to improve this situation.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are <i>Married</i> or in a <i>Civil Partnership</i> and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p>
	Conclusion: neutral impact
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i> and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Marital Status</i>.</p>
	<p>Foster good relations</p>
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different <i>Marital Status</i>.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>Those who are pregnant or on maternity leave may feel that opportunities are excluded to them.</p>

	<p>The <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy allows colleagues to set up their own notifications when vacancies are posted that may interest them, so remote workers can remain alerted to current opportunities.</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination in the SQA:</p> <p>Women are statistically more likely to have caring responsibilities than men and maternity related gaps in employment. This may result in indirect discrimination if a recruiting manager looks for a continuous relevant employment history.</p> <p>SQA should continue to ensure that managers involved in recruitment and selection complete training which includes Gender bias in recruitment prior to conducting any recruitment activities.</p> <p>Conclusion: neutral impact</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No actions identified.
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexes.</p> <p>SQA should continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the equality data and take any remedial action if appropriate • Use non-gender specific wording in recruitment adverts • Promote 'Happy to talk flexible working'
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
	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 access employment opportunities.

	There is currently no evidence to suggest that care experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues (or vice versa)
	Conclusion: neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees and external candidates are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i> and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of Care Experience. The absence of evidence should be rectified, if possible, by collection of data relating to care experience.
	Foster good relations
	No evidence identified.

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.