

Equality Impact Assessment

Summary

Name of Policy or practice	Retirement Policy		
New Policy or Revision	Revised		
Policy Owner (role)	Head of Human Resources		
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	March 2025		
Agreed Schedule Review Date	March 2028	Additional review date (Action review date)	

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]
Continue to monitor data for any adverse trends	HR Reward	April 2028	
It is proposed that further analysis be conducted for retirees by Ethnicity			

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
[LIST]	[CROSS REFERENCE]			

Policy Aims

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?

SQA is committed to equal opportunities for all colleagues and recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce, including the skills, knowledge and experience older colleagues contribute to the business and to the broader SQA community.

SQA does not operate a fixed retirement age and acknowledges retirement is a choice and aim to ensure colleagues can continue to work until they feel it is appropriate for them to retire.

SQA feel that a policy is required to ensure that a consistent and transparent process is available for all staff.

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

SQA must ensure that all staff must be able to plan for their retirement and their individual circumstances.

We recognise that people with different Protected Characteristics may have different expectations and outcomes which could impact on retirement.

Evidence to support the development/implementation of a Retirement Policy includes the following:

Good financial decision making: having clear processes around retirement can help both organisations and employees make better financial decisions.

Cost Control:

Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) guidance: While Acas may not have specific research on the cost-saving benefits of retirement policies, their guidance on employment rights and best practices can help organisations understand their legal obligations and potential liabilities related to retirement, which can indirectly contribute to cost control. Guidance is available on their website: You can find their guidance on their website: <https://www.acas.org.uk/>

Financial Security:

Pensions Policy Institute (PPI) research: The PPI conducts extensive research on retirement income adequacy and the effectiveness of pension schemes. Their research can provide valuable insights into the financial implications of retirement for employees and the importance of adequate retirement planning. You can find their research on their website: You can find their research on their website: <https://www.pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk/>

For employers, a retirement policy can help to ensure that the workforce is appropriately managed, and that succession planning is in place. It can also help to reduce the risk of age discrimination claims

Career Development:

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) research: The CIPD provides research on career development best practices, including guidance on supporting employees in their career transitions, which can be relevant for retirement planning.

Business Benefits – Succession Planning

CIPD research: While specific studies on the direct link between retirement policies and successful succession planning might be challenging to pinpoint, the CIPD regularly publishes research on succession planning best practices and the importance of workforce planning.

You can find their research on their website:

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/>

Talent Management:

CIPD research: Similar to succession planning, the CIPD provides extensive research on talent management strategies, which often include provisions for knowledge transfer and employee development, crucial aspects of effective retirement planning.

For employees, a retirement policy can provide clarity and certainty about their future employment prospects and help them to plan for their retirement. It can also help to ensure that they are treated fairly and consistently when they reach retirement age.

Legal Compliance – Age Discrimination/Fair Treatment

Equality Act 2010: This Act prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including age.

Reference: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Overall, there are several reasons to have a retirement policy. The below papers summarise many of these reasons.

Employment Relations Occasional Paper: Review of the Default Retirement Age: Summary of Research Evidence

This report provides a comprehensive overview of research evidence related to retirement policies in the UK. The research also highlights the importance of regular reviews of retirement policies to ensure that they remain relevant and effective. You can find this report on the UK Government website at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a78b81c40f0b62b22cbc3ea/10-1080-retirement-age-summary-research.pdf>

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

The stated aims of SQA's *Retirement Policy* are to:

- Assist employees who indicate their intention to retire from the organisation from the age of 55 onwards.
- Assist employees who are forced to retire as a result of ill health
- Ensure that all SQA employees are treated fairly and consistently
- Clearly set out SQA's approach to retirement
- Provide guidance on how employees can retire
- Clarify when pension payments apply
- Ensure that SQA applies retirement arrangements which are fair, transparent, free from bias and based on lawful practices

The policy also details the management of some discretions in relation to retirement under the *Local Government Pension Scheme* (LGPS) administered by the *Strathclyde Pension Fund*. A separate policy outlining all pension discretions under the LGPS is available on the SQA intranet.

The following SQA policies are also related to the *Retirement Policy*:

- Pensions Discretions Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Flexible working policy
- Dignity at Work

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

The Retirement Policy applies to SQA staff, who may or may not share protected characteristics. In particular, the policy affects staff nearing retirement age, and disabled staff whose ill health may prompt them to take early retirement.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:

Trade Union Consultation Review Group (Policy Review Group):

Members of SQA Human Resources department and trade union representatives from *Unite the Union* and *Unison* meet regularly in SQA via the PRG. SQA's trade union representatives are also given statutory time off to attend relevant training, meetings and other information gathering activities as supported in our union framework agreement.

Evidence of all meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken with the PRG group (including Equality considerations in respect of all policies, activities and functions) is detailed on a dedicated SQA shared resources site.

Staff Network Consultations:

As the changes to the Retirement Policy resulting from the 2025 review are minor staff networks have not been consulted on this occasion. However, 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 HR policies / activities, sharing resources, recording feedback and scheduling future consultation meetings.

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

In 2025 the % of SQA employees that will be ages 55 and over is 27.30% and for ages 60 and over the % is 13.55%.

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.

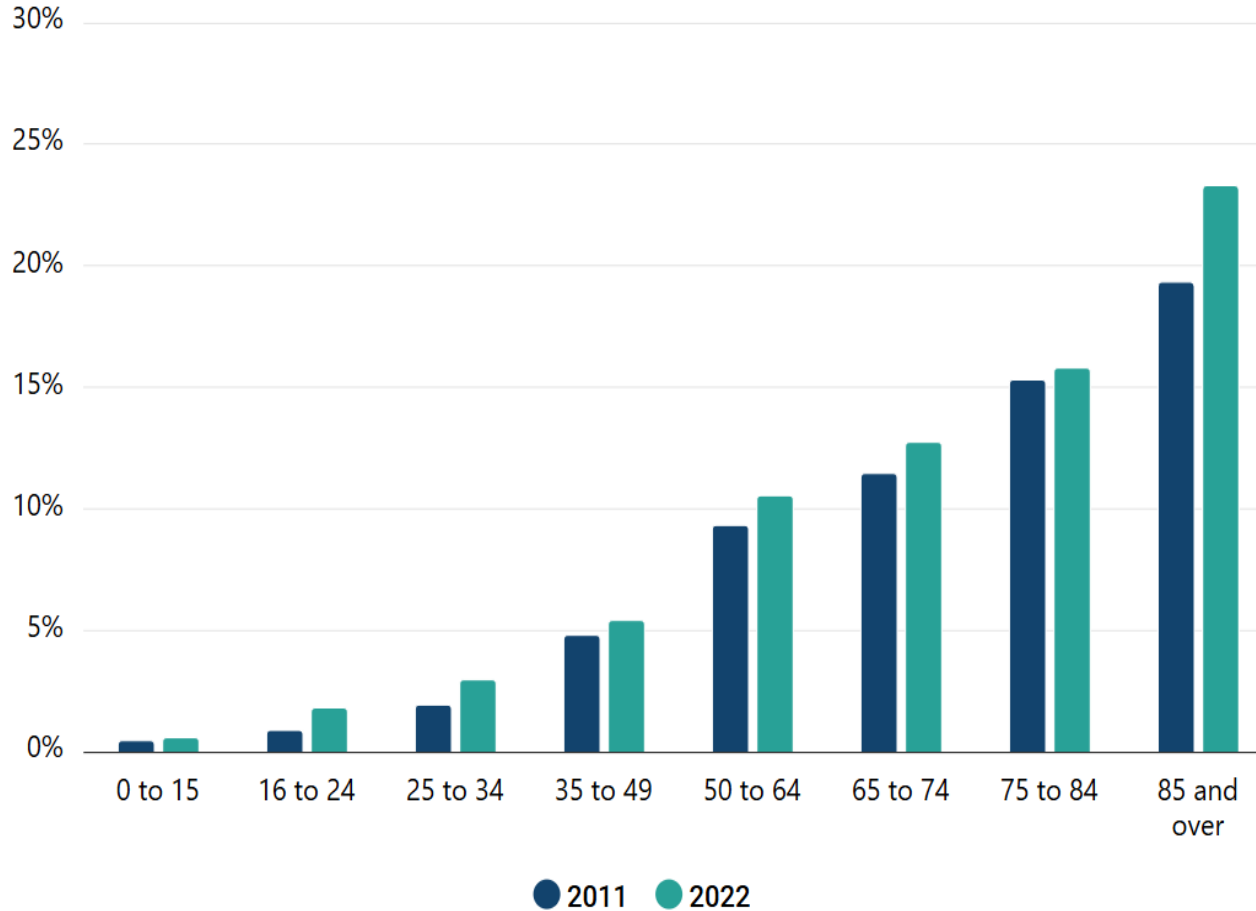
Of those staff who have declared a disability, females made up 58.54% (2021) and 53.01% (2022) of the population, and males 41.46% (2021) and 46.99% (2022). Due to the low number of staff declaring a disability within SQA we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to disability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

Ill health that lasts, or is expected to last, more than 6 months is also covered under the protected characteristic of disability. Data from the Scottish Census reveals trends in ill health and disability in Scotland's populus.

<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-health-disability-and-unpaid-care/>

Figure 4: The percentage of people reporting bad or very bad health increases with age

Percentage of people who reported bad or very bad health by age, 2011 - 2022, Scotland



The chart from the Scottish Census shows that general ill health is closely linked with age, indicating that as people get older, their health tends to decline. We can expect that this will also be true of SQA's workforce, indicating that as SQA's workforce ages, we can expect that more people will suffer with general ill health.

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.

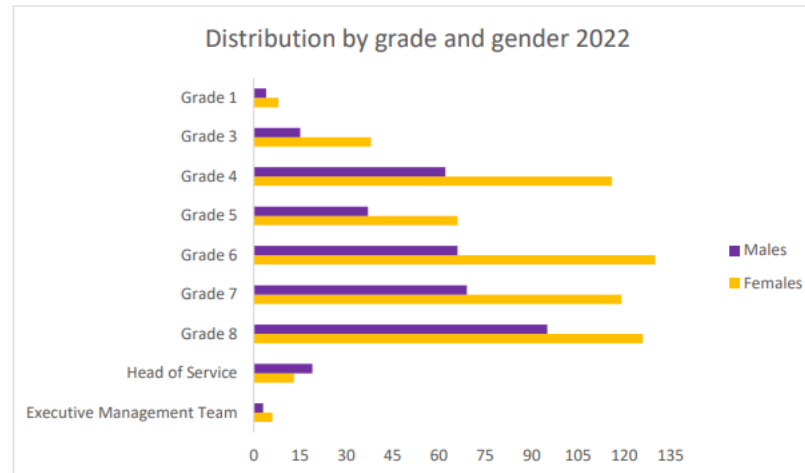
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[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)

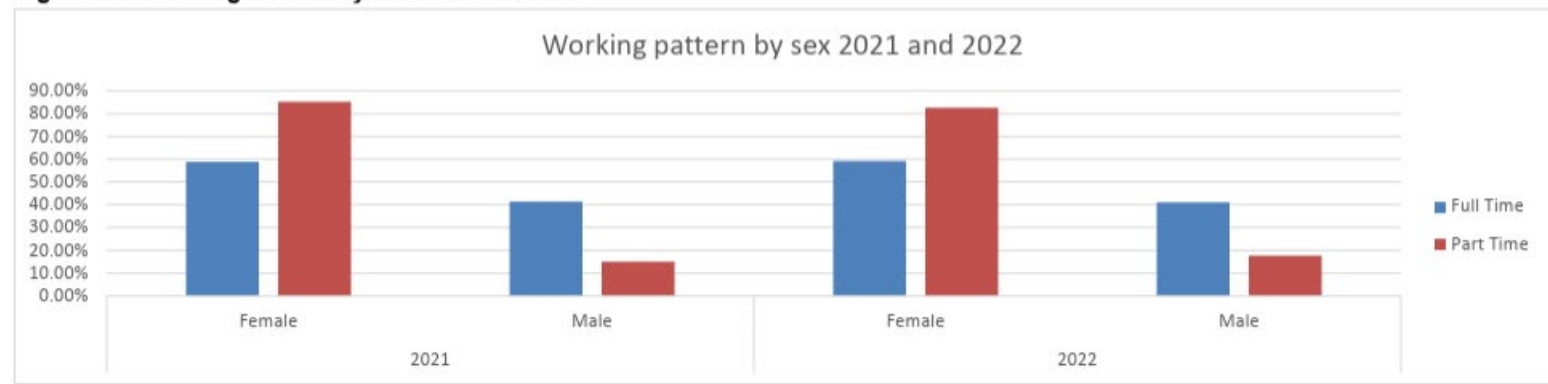
Source: Carers UK

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/>

At SQA, women hold disproportionately more part time posts than men. This is shown in the chart below. As a part time worker, they will earn less than a comparable FTE worker, and so have contributed less into their pension in the same time.

Figure 9.0: Working Pattern by Sex 2021 and 2022



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%

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	<div>Table 5.1: Relationship status</div> <table><tr><th>Relationship status</th><th>2019 number</th><th>2019 %</th><th>2020 number</th><th>2020 %</th><th>2021 number</th><th>2021 %</th><th>2022 number</th><th>2022 %</th></tr><tr><td>Civil Partnership</td><td>7</td><td>0.75%</td><td>7</td><td>0.74%</td><td>8</td><td>0.81%</td><td>9</td><td>0.87%</td></tr><tr><td>Co-habiting/in a relationship</td><td>80</td><td>8.57%</td><td>112</td><td>11.80%</td><td>122</td><td>12.29%</td><td>122</td><td>11.78%</td></tr><tr><td>Divorced/Dissolved Civil Partnership</td><td>14</td><td>1.50%</td><td>16</td><td>1.69%</td><td>17</td><td>1.71%</td><td>19</td><td>1.83%</td></tr><tr><td>Married</td><td>265</td><td>28.40%</td><td>370</td><td>38.99%</td><td>425</td><td>42.80%</td><td>416</td><td>40.15%</td></tr><tr><td>Married/Civil Partnership</td><td>8</td><td>0.86%</td><td>12</td><td>1.26%</td><td>14</td><td>1.41%</td><td>16</td><td>1.54%</td></tr><tr><td>Not Specified</td><td>407</td><td>43.62%</td><td>179</td><td>18.86%</td><td>102</td><td>10.27%</td><td>127</td><td>12.26%</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>< 5</td><td>< 0.54%</td><td>< 5</td><td>< 0.53%</td><td>7</td><td>0.70%</td><td>9</td><td>0.87%</td></tr><tr><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>18</td><td>1.93%</td><td>49</td><td>5.16%</td><td>55</td><td>5.54%</td><td>59</td><td>5.69%</td></tr><tr><td>Separated</td><td>6</td><td>0.64%</td><td>12</td><td>1.26%</td><td>12</td><td>1.21%</td><td>13</td><td>1.25%</td></tr><tr><td>Single</td><td>122</td><td>13.08%</td><td>183</td><td>19.28%</td><td>224</td><td>22.56%</td><td>239</td><td>23.07%</td></tr><tr><td>Widowed/surviving partner from Civil Partnership</td><td>< 5</td><td>< 0.54%</td><td>6</td><td>0.63%</td><td>7</td><td>0.70%</td><td>7</td><td>0.68%</td></tr></table> <div>Table 5.1 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.</div> <div>Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23</div> <div>Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23</div>	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%
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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%
	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).								
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23 Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23									
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	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect: This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees. Equally, we respectfully acknowledge that some forms of early retirement (for example, because of ill-health) may not necessarily be regarded as a ‘positive’ by the person who is retiring. Data shows that a total of 46 people retired from SQA in the last three years. An analysis of retirees by Age is relatively inconclusive and indicates no clear adverse impacts on any specific age groups (people over 57). Conclusion: probable positive impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	This policy does, in principle, promote the ‘same chance’ / equality of opportunity to employees aged 55+ as it promotes equal access to retirement, early retirement or non-retirement.
	Conclusion: probable positive impact
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees between 55 years and over. No further recommendations are made in this respect at this stage

	Conclusion: probable neutral impact
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees. Equally, we respectfully acknowledge that some forms of early retirement (for example, because of ill health) may not necessarily be regarded as a ‘positive’ by the person who is retiring.</p> <p>Although the policy applies equally to all employees aged 55 and over and is accessible regardless of disability, it is, on balance, more likely that an employee with a disability will either be awarded or apply for early health retirement than an employee who is not disabled.</p> <p>Data shows that a total of 46 people retired from SQA between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2024. An analysis of retirees by <i>disability</i> is relatively inconclusive and indicates no clear adverse impacts on any specific groups (people over 57). We will continue to monitor ill health retirements on an annual basis no current trends have been identified.</p> <p>Conclusion: Insufficient response rate from employees to either conclude or discount adverse impact on the grounds of disability. Further work or amendments to documentation required to improve overall declaration rates in this area.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable positive impact</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy in respect of ill health early retirement. There is no evidence to indicate that the policy itself could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their disability status</p> <p>Conclusion: probable positive impact</p> <p>Foster good relations</p> <p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between disabled and non-disabled employees.</p>

	No further recommendations are made in this respect at this stage Conclusion: probable neutral impact
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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees – irrespective of Race/ Ethnicity. Equally, we respectfully acknowledge that some forms of early retirement (for example, because of ill-health) may not necessarily be regarded as a ‘positive’ by the person who is retiring.</p>
	<p>Data shows that a total of 46 people retired from SQA between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2024. An analysis of retirees by <i>Race</i> is relatively inconclusive and indicates no clear adverse impacts on any specific groups (people over 57).</p>
	<p>Therefore, the examples of the equality risks listed in pages 5 - 7 of this document can neither be identified or discounted at this stage.</p>
	<p>Commencing in 2023, SQA records details of retirees by Nationality and Ethnicity. Conclusion: It is proposed that further analysis be conducted for retirees by Ethnicity</p>
	<p>Due to the low number of staff declaring in some categories, we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to protected characteristics.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Race</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</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>Races / Ethnicities</i>.</p>

	No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact

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>As previously stated, this policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees – irrespective of their Religion or Philosophical Belief system.</p> <p>While we can identify no reasonable risks or evidence to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.</p> <p>Due to the low number of staff declaring in some categories, we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to protected characteristics.</p>
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Religion or Belief.</p>
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different <i>Religions or Beliefs</i>.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees –irrespective of Sex. Equally, we respectfully acknowledge that some forms of early retirement may not necessarily be regarded as a ‘positive’ by the person who is retiring.</p> <p>Data shows that a total of 46 people retired from SQA between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2024. Within this cohort, 74% were female and 26% were male. In SQA overall, 62.7% of staff were female and 37.3% were male. Source: SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (sqa.org.uk)</p> <p>A higher number of females retired than males however this is reflective of our organisation.</p> <p>An analysis of retirees by Sex is relatively inconclusive and indicates no clear adverse impacts on any specific Sex or gender identity.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Sex.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Sexes.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>As previously stated, this policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees – irrespective of their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Due to the low number of staff retiring, we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to sexual orientation and other protected characteristics.</p> <p>We can identify no reasonable risks or evidence to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Sexual Orientations.</p> <p>No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees who wish to retire, have to retire, or do not wish to retire – setting out a clear and consistent approach for all employees. This policy could therefore have a positive impact on all employees – irrespective of their Gender Identity or Transgender identity. We can identify no reasonable risks or evidence to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Gender Identity or Transgender identity.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees who have different Gender Identities or Transgender identities.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	We can identify no reasonable risks or evidence to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement 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.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees on the grounds of their Marital Status.
	No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	We can identify no reasonable risks or evidence to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this Protected Characteristic.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees who are pregnant or on maternity leave differently or less favourably.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
Foster good relations	

	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees who are pregnant or on maternity leave. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage</p> <p>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</p>
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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
	We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people who are care experienced and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Retirement Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees who are care experienced differently or less favourably.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees who are care experienced. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact

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.
Not applicable.