



Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Action Plan

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

Agreed Schedule Review Date	By September 2024	Additional Schedule Review Date	By September 2023
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Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.



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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 2022	
Review on a quarterly basis of employment law, case law and legislative changes, and equalities updates (including reviewing EHRC website).	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	
Review and assess feedback on a quarterly basis from joint trade unions (Unite and Unison) through SQA's Joint engagement forum and Policy review group.	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	
Review and assess feedback on a quarterly basis from each of SQA's staff community network groups	HR Shared Services Manager	Commencing quarterly from January 2023	
Continue to review and assess on an annual basis SQA's engagement People survey	OD Manager	Commencing annually from October 2023	
Review and assess on an annual basis all SQA employee lifecycle data	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager	Commencing annually from January 2024	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's equality mainstreaming report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Commencing every 2 years from May 2023	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's workforce equality monitoring report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Commencing every 2 years from May 2023	



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Identified Actions: General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
1: Add <i>Gender Identity</i> (i.e. people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality Monitoring reporting.	People Analytics, Governance and Systems Manager	September 2023	
2: 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+.	HR Shared Service Manager	September 2023	



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Policy Aims

Name of Policy or Practice:	Secondment Policy
New Policy or Revision?	Revision
Name of Policy Owner:	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion:	25-2-22

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
<p>The stated aims of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Secondment Policy are:</p> <p>This policy applies to permanent members of staff. SQA consider a secondment to be a formal arrangement to undertake a temporary assignment to a different post, for a specific purpose and within a timeframe of between 3 months and normally no more than 2 years.</p> <p>This policy is entirely separate from the 'Temporary staff on loan' scheme.</p> <p>SQA believe that secondments both internal and external can bring benefits to colleagues and the organisation. SQA believe that well managed secondments can help meet short and long-term work demands and often offer valuable opportunities for development by giving colleagues the chance to gain new skills, knowledge and experience, and for SQA to develop its workforce.</p>



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

SQA has an **occasional** requirement to fill short term gaps in resources with fixed term employment arrangements. Often, the best person to fill these gaps is an internal colleague, or an employee of another similar organisation, who will benefit from career development in taking on a different role. The Secondment Policy allows SQA to fill gaps in resources with skilled colleagues who in turn, gain development opportunities and certainty about how that secondment will be recruited to, remuneration, management, and the ability to return to their substantive post when the secondment ends. The policy is enforced for both secondments internally within SQA and also externally to someone coming to SQA or moving from SQA to another body.

It is not unusual for approximately 5% of SQA colleagues to be in a seconded post at any one time. This gives the SQA flexibility and colleagues opportunities. The majority of the 5% of colleagues (circa 50 staff) will be on secondments by SQA staff within SQA and all secondments are made available to staff through advertisement of a fixed term post and are subject to this policy along with the Recruitment and Selection policy.

For staff who wish to be seconded into another role the policy is clear (5.1) “These are opportunities to work in a different post for us for a specific purpose and period of time. We reserve the right to advertise any fixed term posts externally as well as internally. Where internal permanent colleagues secure one, this would be processed as a secondment. We will ensure that the length of the secondment is clearly defined and agreed by all parties. Internal secondments will usually be advertised using our normal recruitment portal unless there is a good business reason to narrow the poll for eligible applicants, for example where there is a requirement for very specific experience or knowledge.”

It is important to note that the profile of seconded staff e.g. *Race, Sex, Age, Disability* etc is currently not recorded by SQA - meaning **there is no local equality data to support this assessment**. Also, rather unsurprisingly, there is very little national data relating to employees seconded by their employer.

A key recommendation from this assessment is that SQA does, in 2022, capture details of secondments by:

- 1: Type – voluntary or compulsory
- 2: Duration
- 3: Equality profiles – at least the Age, Disability, Sex and Race of secondees.



What are the aims of this policy or practice?

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

Allow SQA to meet short and long-term work demands and often offer valuable opportunities for development by giving colleagues the chance to gain new skills, knowledge, and experience, and for SQA to develop its workforce.

The policy itself is divided in two discrete sections:

Policy Structure:

- 1: Part A – Policy detail.
- 2: Part B – Procedures for SQA managers / employees to follow.

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

The following SQA policies are also related to the Secondment Policy:

- Attendance Management
- Disciplinary
- Improving Performance
- Pay
- Recruitment and Selection
- Redeployment



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

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

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

The development, implementation and analysis of the effects of this policy are therefore highly relevant to people from all Equality groups as they may risk experiencing disproportionate impacts or outcomes.

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



Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

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

In addition, as this is an internal policy, SQA has consulted with internal groups. These include:

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

Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:

Trade Union Consultation Review Group (PRG):

Members of SQA Human Resources department and trade union representatives from *Unite the Union* and *Unison* meet weekly in SQA via the PRG. This group has been meeting weekly in SQA since July 2020. SQA's trade union representatives are also given statutory time off to attend relevant training, meetings and other information gathering activities as supported in our union framework agreement.

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



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

Staff Network Consultations:

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

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

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

The table below details the consultation undertaken.



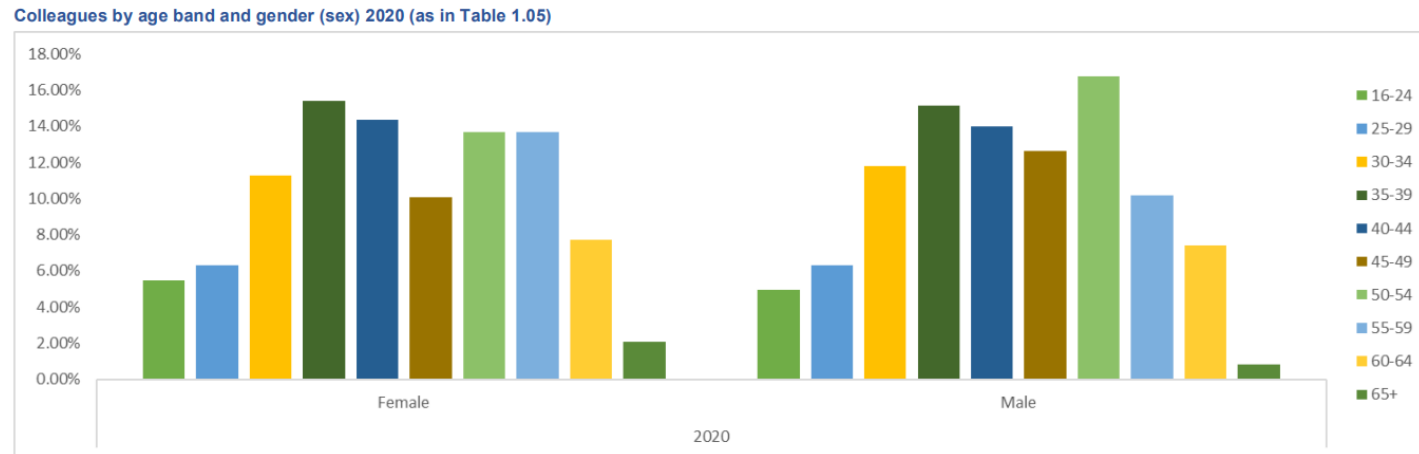
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Evidence of staff network consultation f

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

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

Age:



The above graph shows SQA colleagues by age band and gender. Table 1.05 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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

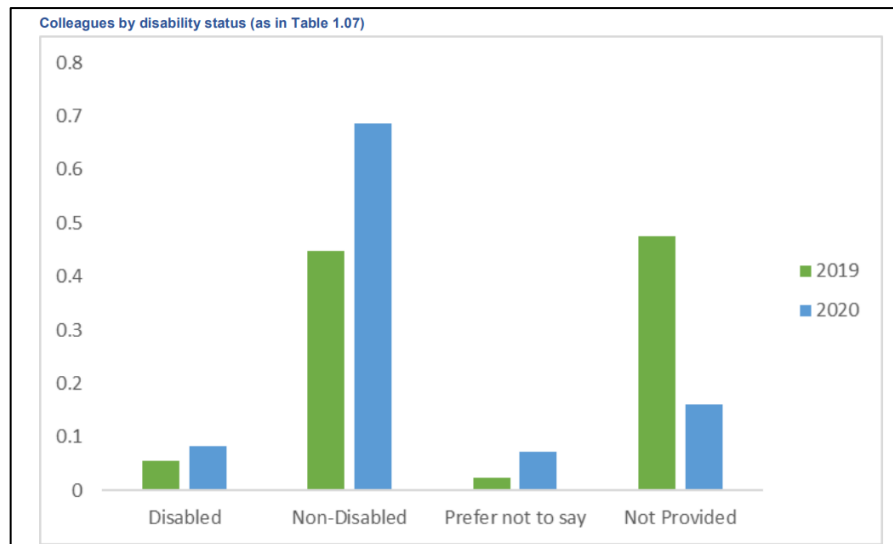
Comparisons between 2019 and 2020 data show that the greatest increase in the proportion of female colleagues is within the 60–64 age band - an increase of 12 colleagues.

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

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

Disability

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



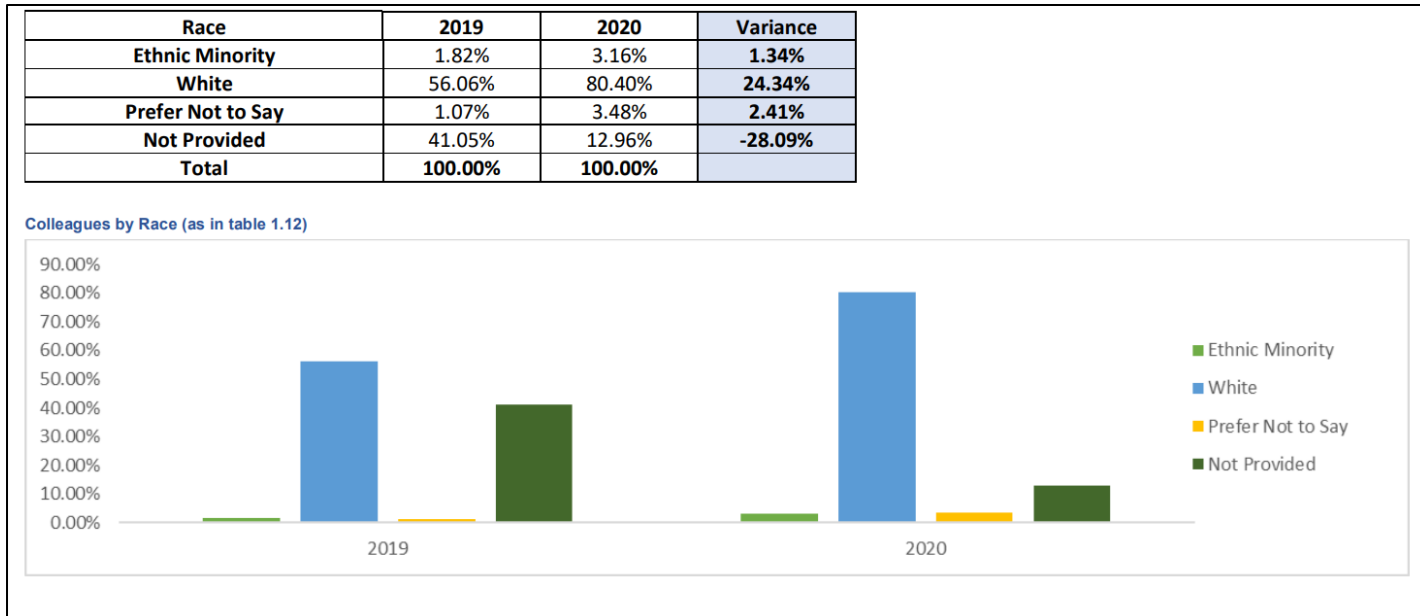
The above graph shows SQA colleagues by disability status. Table 1.07 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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

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

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

**Race
Ethnicity**



The above table and graph show SQA colleagues by Race. Table 1.12 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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

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

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

**Race
Ethnicity
(continued)**

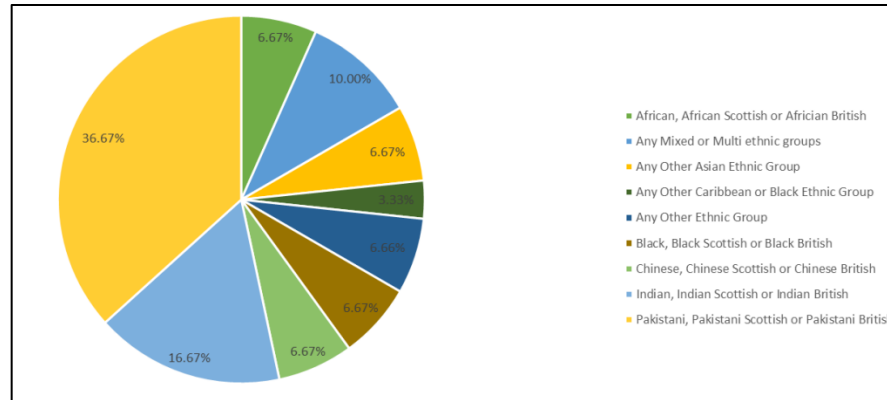


Table 1.15 Race: Colleagues by black and minority ethnicities

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

The above graph and table show SQA colleagues by Race. Table 1.15 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf



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

Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	2019	2020	Variance
Christian	20.69%	29.82%	9.13%
Non-Christian	11.47%	17.28%	5.81%
None	20.69%	29.29%	8.61%
Prefer not to say	3.75%	10.33%	6.58%
Not Provided	43.41%	13.28%	-30.13%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

The above table shows SQA colleagues by Religion or Belief. Table 1.16 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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

Sex

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

The above table shows SQA colleagues by Gender and Grade. Table 1.02 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf

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



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

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

The above table shows SQA colleagues by sexual orientation. Table 1.18 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf



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

<p>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</p>	<p>No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.</p> <p>One of the recommendations from this Equality Impact Assessment is that the <u>SQA adds <i>Gender Identity</i> (i.e. people who identify as more than one gender or none) to all future Equality Monitoring reporting.</u></p>																				
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership</p>	<p>No equality profiling data is currently captured by the SQA.</p>																				
<p>Pregnancy / Maternity</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="689 778 1928 1075"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="3">Colleagues</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Pregnancy Status</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>Variance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not Pregnant</td> <td>98.25%</td> <td>98.95%</td> <td>0.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnant</td> <td>1.75%</td> <td>1.05%</td> <td>-0.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The above table shows SQA colleagues by pregnancy status. Table 1.20 is available to view on SQA workforce equality monitoring report 2019-2020 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf</p>		Colleagues			Pregnancy Status	2019	2020	Variance	Not Pregnant	98.25%	98.95%	0.70%	Pregnant	1.75%	1.05%	-0.70%	Total	100.00%	100.00%	
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Total	100.00%	100.00%																			



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

**Care experience
(where relevant)**

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

Nationally **Who Cares? Scotland** say:

Education

In 2019/20 64% of all school leavers had 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better, whereas only 14% of school leavers looked after within the last year had qualifications of that level.

Care Experienced children are less likely to be in positive destinations nine months after leaving school. Figures from 2019-20 show that 75% of school leavers looked after within the last year were in positive destinations. This is compared to 92% of all schools leavers.

At all levels, Care Experienced students have lower rates of completing courses compared to all students at university and college. Between Care Experienced students and non-Care Experienced students, there is a difference of 5.3% for retention at university, and the largest gap is in successful completion of full-time further education courses at college where the gap is 15.6% (SFC, 2019).

Unemployment

9 months after leaving school, 22% of school leavers looked after within the last year people were classed as unemployed, compared to 7% of their non-Care Experienced peers (Scottish Government, 2021).

Criminalisation

In a Scottish Prison Service survey carried out in 2019, 1/4 of the adult prison population indicated that during their up-bringing they had been in care (25%) (Scottish Prison Service, 2020).

Around 40% of young people in custody report that they have been in care (Scottish Prison Service, 2021).

<p>Care experience (where relevant)</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>In a study conducted in 2002, among young people aged 5–17 years who were looked after by local authorities in Scotland, 45% were assessed as having a mental health issue (<u>Office for National Statistics, 2004</u>).</p> <p>Homelessness</p> <p>Practitioners estimate that between 30-50% of individuals who are homeless could be Care Experienced.</p>
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Impact and Opportunities for Action

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

The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

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

Use of the term Discrimination:

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

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



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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i> .
	<p>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>SQA does not capture secondment data by ‘Protected Characteristic’ and it is therefore not possible to establish if any disproportionate trends or risks of discrimination exist within SQA in the use or application of this policy.</p> <p><u>It is recommended that in 2023, SQA will capture and analyse this data with the aim of identifying any disproportionate trends or disadvantage experienced by different groups of employees in respect of being compulsory placed on, offered or declined an offer of secondment.</u></p> <p>Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>As secondments result from staff applying for a vacant fixed term post, the guidance set out in the Recruitment and Selection policy is key to ensure no discrimination. As part of the Recruitment and Selection process and recommended in the Recruitment and selection EQiA, SQA should continue to collect and analyse age related data and act appropriately should discriminatory trends emerge.</p> <p>Indirect Discrimination: There may be indirect discrimination due to age, however our Recruitment and Selection policy positively offers a fair process to all who apply.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy. However, because there is no protected characteristics related profiling data available for those on secondment, there is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different ages.</p>



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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>Indirect discrimination: Disabled colleagues may be concerned that they may not be considered equally for a secondment. If a disabled employee was to consider a secondment, then the application for the fixed term post will be subject to the SQA recruitment and selection policy which ensures a fair selection process and insists on the employer making reasonable adjustments for a candidate with this PC. (Please see separate EqIA).</p> <p>SQA does not capture secondment data by ‘Protected Characteristic’ and it is therefore not possible to establish if any disproportionate trends or risks of discrimination exist within SQA in the use or application of this policy.</p> <p><u>It is recommended that in 2023, SQA will capture and analyse this data with the aim of identifying any disproportionate trends or disadvantage experienced by different groups of employees in respect of being compulsory placed on, offered or declined an offer of secondment.</u></p> <p>Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
<p>Disability (continued)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the Secondment policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their disability. As in line with the Recruitment and Selection policy we would ensure we do all we can to make reasonable adjustments for any disabled individual using the Secondment policy.</p> <p>Foster good relations</p> <p>Secondments may be a very good way to allow Disabled people to gain additional work experience in SQA and could be an initiative for 2023 ? (Please see next section)</p>



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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>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>All employees applying for a secondment are also applying for a fixed term contract and are therefore protected, as part of their secondment, by the SQA <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy which ensures a fair process.</p> <p>SQA does not capture secondment data by ‘Protected Characteristic’ and it is therefore not possible to establish if any disproportionate trends or risks of discrimination exist within SQA in the use or application of this policy.</p> <p><u>It is recommended that in 2023, SQA will capture and analyse this data with the aim of identifying any disproportionate trends or disadvantage experienced by different groups of employees in respect of being compulsory placed on, offered or declined an offer of secondment.</u></p> <p>Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees of Race are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy. There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Race or Ethnicity.</p>
	Foster good relations
<p>As per the previous comments for Disability, secondments can be an excellent route to gaining additional or broader work experience. It is therefore recommended that SQA considers a small number of <i>Positive Action</i> secondment schemes for 2023 to allow people who are statistically underrepresented in certain SQA departments to gain further work experience. This, we believe would assist in fostering good relations in respect of Race/ Ethnicity.</p>	



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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>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by <i>Religion or Belief</i>. We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different religions and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>All employees applying for a secondment are also applying for a fixed term contract and are therefore protected, as part of their secondment, by the SQA <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy which ensures a fair process.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees from all Religions / Beliefs are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy.</p> <p>There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Religion or Philosophical Belief System. The Recruitment and Selection Policy also emphasises in its 'Introduction' and 'Purpose and Standards' the aim of recruiting without discrimination.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different religions or beliefs. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>As statistically, women are more likely to be carers of children/relatives than men and may therefore be in part-time employment or require a more flexible working pattern, it would be very relevant for SQA to undertake an analysis of secondees by Sex to assess if overall, it is proportionate to the overall male / female employee profile.</p> <p>SQA does not capture secondment data by 'Protected Characteristic' and it is therefore not possible to establish if any disproportionate trends or risks of discrimination exist within SQA in the use or application of this policy.</p> <p><u>It is recommended that in 2023, SQA will capture and analyse this data with the aim of identifying any disproportionate trends or disadvantage experienced by different groups of employees in respect of being compulsory placed on, offered or declined an offer of secondment.</u></p> <p>Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>All employees applying for a secondment are also applying for a fixed term contract and are therefore protected, as part of their secondment, by the SQA <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy which ensures a fair process.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

Advance equality of opportunity	
Sex (continued)	<p>As previously stated, women are statistically more likely to be carers of children/relatives 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 males.</p> <p>Indirect Discrimination: There may be the chance of indirect discrimination when selection an individual for secondment. On the ground of carer responsibilities, working pattern. The second policy positively aims to protect individuals “5.3Employment conditions during secondment. You will maintain your terms and conditions of employment unless expressly stated otherwise. However, where the terms and conditions of the secondment are greater than those of the substantive post, the terms and conditions of the secondment post apply for the duration of the secondment.”</p> <p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy. This includes employees of both sexes. As SQA do not track the secondments within SQA it is not possible to conclude if this policy does effectively advance equality of opportunity between Men and Women.</p>
Foster good relations	
Sex (continued)	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexes. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

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>Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by <i>Sexual Orientation</i>, We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different sexualities (or no sexuality) and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>All employees applying for a secondment are also applying for a fixed term contract and are therefore protected, as part of their secondment, by the SQA <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy which ensures a fair process.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Sexual Orientation</i>.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexual orientation. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Gender Identity.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Gender Re-assignment</p> <p>Non Binary</p> <p>Gender Fluid</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (<i>LGBTQ+</i>) status, we conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different <i>LGBTQ+</i> status and therefore we make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
<p>Gender Identity.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Gender Re-assignment</p> <p>Non Binary</p> <p>Gender Fluid</p> <p>(continued)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>The SQA currently does not have a <i>Gender Identity</i> policy providing background information to SQA managers and employees in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People who identify as the Gender they were assigned at birth. (<i>Cisgender</i>) ▪ People who identify with Gender that is different to that assigned at birth. (<i>Transgender</i>) ▪ People who identify with multiple Genders. (e.g. <i>Non Binary</i> and <i>Gender Fluid</i>.) <p>(Note this list is illustrative and is not intended to be definitive.)</p> <p><u>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+.</u></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>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

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
	<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> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy 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>
	Foster good relations
	<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>



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Risks of Discrimination:</p> <p>Expectant parents may feel concerned if they are on a fixed term contract and the potential for a negative impact on the fixed term contract and maternity pay. However, the SQA <i>Maternity</i> policy along with the <i>Secondment</i> policy should positively protect their substantive post.</p> <p>Once again, as previously stated, SQA does not capture secondment data by ‘Protected Characteristic’ and it is therefore not possible to establish if any disproportionate trends or risks of discrimination exist within SQA in the use or application of this policy.</p> <p><u>It is recommended that in 2023, SQA will capture and analyse this data with the aim of identifying any disproportionate trends or disadvantage experienced by different groups of employees in respect of being compulsory placed on, offered or declined an offer of secondment.</u></p> <p>Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>All employees applying for a secondment are also applying for a fixed term contract and are therefore protected, as part of their secondment, by the SQA <i>Recruitment and Selection</i> policy which ensures a fair process.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of Pregnancy/Maternity.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Pregnant or on Maternity. No recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.



Equality Impact Assessment - Secondment Policy V1.0

Considered by SQA	General Equality Duty
Care experience (where relevant)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>SQA currently does not record secondments filled by care experienced individuals. We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different religions and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.</p> <p>Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p> <p>All applicants for a secondment are applying for a fixed term contract and therefore are protected with the Secondment and the Recruitment and Selection Policy which ensures a fair process.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Secondment Policy 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.</p>
	Foster Good Relations
	No evidence identified.



Miscellaneous:

Other impacts identified as part of this EqIA which generally have a positive impact on all SQA employees include:

- A SQA employee assistance programme providing employees with confidential support and guidance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Trade union representatives who can provide members with advice, help and support relating to sickness absences
- Mental Health First Aiders who are available as a first point of contact in the SQA.
- The *Able Futures* service who can be contacted for ongoing professional support for mental health and wellbeing.
- The SQA occupational health provider offers medical advice and support on staying healthy at work.
- Internally, the SQA Human Resources team can provide confidential support and advice to employees.
- The SQA Parent and Carers Network provides support to colleagues. This network aims to provide a safe and confidential space to allow parents and carers to support each other, share ideas, current challenges, knowledge and experiences.

Additionally, the SQA is committed to being a supportive and inclusive employer and is members of and/or accredited by various organisations these include:

- Disability Confident Employer
- Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme Member
- Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion Member
- Happy to Talk Flexible Working Employer
- Accreditation as a Scottish Living Wage Employer
- Business in the Community Race at Work Charter Signatory
- Stonewall Diversity Champion
- Dying to Work Charter Member