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 April 2027**	**Additional Schedule Review Date**	**By April 2026**

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		**Ongoing**
Review on a quarterly basis of employment law, case law and legislative changes, and equalities updates (including reviewing EHRC website).	HR Shared Services Manager		**Ongoing**
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		**Ongoing**
Review and assess feedback on a quarterly basis from each of SQA's staff community network groups	HR Shared Services Manager		**Ongoing**
Review and assess on an annual basis all SQA employee lifecycle data	People Analytics, Governance & Systems Manager		**Ongoing**
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's equality mainstreaming report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager		**Ongoing**
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's workforce equality monitoring report [next report due May 2023]	People Reward and Equalities Manager		**Ongoing**

Identified Actions: General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
It is recommended that in 2024, SQA will capture and analyse 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.	People Analytics, Governance and Systems Manager	On-going	PAS team looking at possibility of this analysis being achievable

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:	14 March 2024

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
The stated aims of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Secondment Policy are: 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. This policy is entirely separate from the 'Temporary staff on loan' scheme. 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.

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 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?
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:** **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.

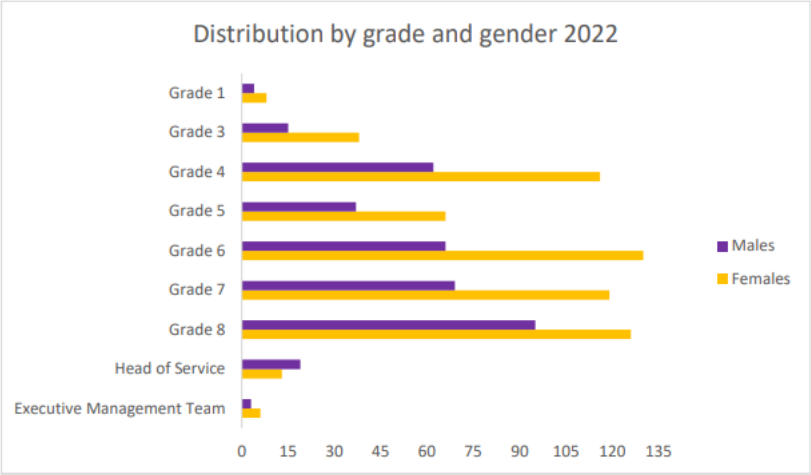
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

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)

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%

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%

	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 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

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: 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. It is recommended that in 2024, 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. **Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.**
	Advance equality of opportunity
	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. 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.
	Foster good relations
	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.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect: 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). 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. It is recommended that in 2024, 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. **Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.**
Disability (continued)	Advance equality of opportunity
	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.
	Foster good relations
	Secondments may be a very good way to allow Disabled people to gain additional work experience in SQA and could be an initiative for 2024 (Please see next section)

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect: 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 *Recruitment and Selection* policy which ensures a fair process. 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. <u>It is recommended that in 2024, 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> **Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.**
	Advance equality of opportunity
	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.
	Foster good relations
	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 *Positive Action* secondment schemes for 2024 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.

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
	Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect: Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by *Religion or Belief*. 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. **Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.** 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 *Recruitment and Selection* policy which ensures a fair process.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees from all Religions / Beliefs 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 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.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different religions or beliefs. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	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. 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. <u>It is recommended that in 2024, 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> **Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.** 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 *Recruitment and Selection* policy which ensures a fair process.

Sex (continued)	Advance equality of opportunity 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. 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." 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.
Sex (continued)	Foster good relations 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.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by *Sexual Orientation*, 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. **Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.** 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 *Recruitment and Selection* policy which ensures a fair process.
	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 their *Sexual Orientation.*
	Foster good relations
	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.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Identity. **This includes:** **Gender Re-assignment** **Non Binary** **Gender Fluid**	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Whilst SQA currently does not record secondments by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (*LGBTQi+)* status, we conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different *LGBTQi+* status and therefore we make no further recommendations in this area. **Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.**
Gender Identity. **This includes:** **Gender Re-assignment** **Non Binary** **Gender Fluid** **(continued)**	Advance equality of opportunity
	The SQA currently does not have a *Gender Identity* 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.) <u>We therefore recommend that the SQA create a new *Gender Identity* policy to facilitate and advance equality of opportunity to employees who are LGBTQ+.</u>
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different *Gender Identities* or who are LGBTQ+.

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 conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are *Married* or in a *Civil Partnership* and therefore make no further recommendations in this area. **Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.**
	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 their *Marital Status.*
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different *Marital Status.* No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Risks of Discrimination: 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 *Maternity* policy along with the *Secondment* policy should positively protect their substantive post. 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. <u>It is recommended that in 2024, 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> **Unknown equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.** 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 *Recruitment and Selection* policy which ensures a fair process.
	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.

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
	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. **Neutral equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.** 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.
	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 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.

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