



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
-----------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------

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



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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	



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Identified Actions: General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
<p>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+.</p>	<p>HR Reward & Equalities Manager</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	
<p>Given the low uptake of the benefits of Shared Parental Leave SQA should explore whether this may be due to poor understanding and communication of the policy and whether action could be taken to raise its profile.</p>	<p>HR Shared Service Manager</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	
<p>Amend the language used in the policy to accommodate two men who are in a same sex relationship and one of the men is the actual biological father of the child. For example, this could read “Mother / Father or Adoptive Parent”. (The policy does not currently reference this and the term ‘Mother’ is instead used throughout.)</p>	<p>HR Shared Services Manager</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or Practice:	Shared Parental Leave Policy
New Policy or Revision?	Revision
Name of Policy Owner:	Head of Human Resources
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion:	Draft

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
<p>The stated aims of the SQA Shared Parental Leave Policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enable eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption• give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for and bond with their child• provide support and time off for parental responsibilities



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

The *Shared Parental Leave (SPL) Regulations 2014* led to the UK Government introducing shared parental leave in 2015 to offer choice to eligible parents when it comes to childcare and allow mothers to return to work sooner if they wish to. The policy benefits employers who can retain talent in their workforce and can contribute to closing their gender pay gap

People Management (2021) reported that 11,200 couples applied to use the scheme nationally between 2020 and 2021 - a 17 per cent fall on the previous year, when a record 13,100 couples applied. In comparison, analysis found that 598,000 women took maternity leave in the last year, indicating that just 2 per cent of women who took some form of parental leave last year used SPL.

SQA currently has a workforce of 1025, 61.64% of which are females and 38.36% of males.

Since this policy has been introduced, as part of a legislation requirement, there has been minimal use with only one employee in 2021 using shared parental leave. SQA's data of low take up mirrors evidence in a poll done by YouGov and Winckworth Sherwood which shows that only 7% of parents currently take advantage of this policy.

We therefore conclude:

- (i) There is a non-existent data sample relating to the use of this policy in SQA.**
- (ii) It is impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions in respect of Equality Impact.**



National Evidence:

Only 2 per cent of eligible couples made use of shared parent leave (SPL) last year, meaning uptake was still “exceptionally low”, according to research by law firm EMW based on HMRC figures.

The use of SPL increased by 23 per cent last year but only 13,100 couples applied to the scheme, the figures showed.

The research revealed nearly 650,000 women claimed maternity pay last year, meaning that only 2 per cent of eligible couples made use of SPL. EMW described the scheme’s uptake as “exceptionally low” given it was introduced five years ago, suggesting the low rate of pay on SPL could be a disincentive for couples.

<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1747108/shared-parental-leave-uptake-still-exceptionally-low>



What are the aims of this policy or practice?

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

- enable eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption
- give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child
- provide support and time off for parental responsibilities

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 Shared Parental Leave Policy:

- Adoption
- Attendance Management
- Flexible Working
- Paternity
- Maternity

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 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. following process and following a reporting flowchart etc.
- Feel less comfortable discussing their circumstances with people of the opposite Sex.

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

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



Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

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

As this is an internal policy, the SQA has only consulted with internal groups. These include:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network.
- SQA Disability Network.
- Mental Health First Aiders Forum.
- SQA Rainbow 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.

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.



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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

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

The table below details the consultation undertaken.



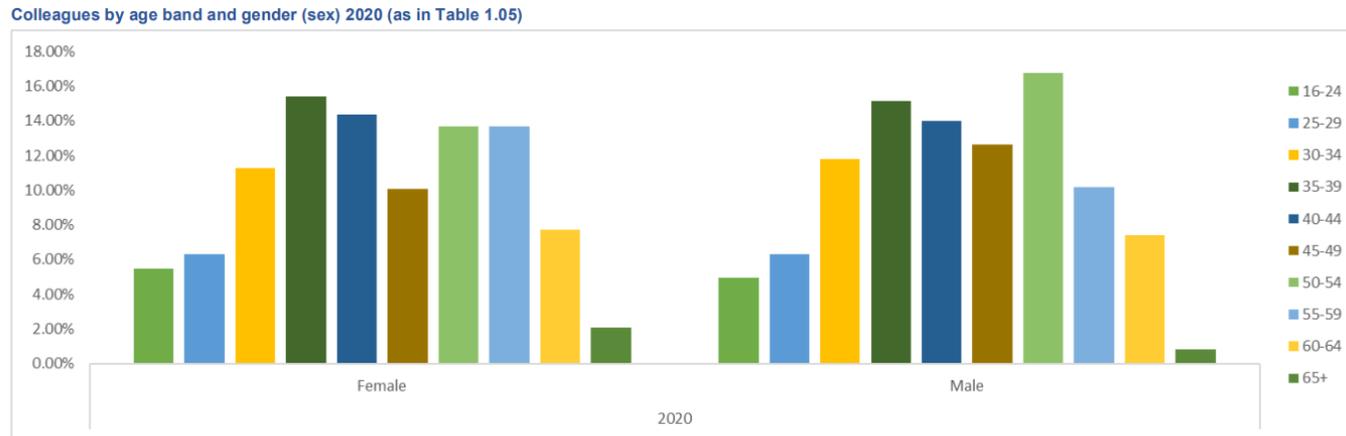
Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Evidence of Staff Network Consultation:

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

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

Age:



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

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

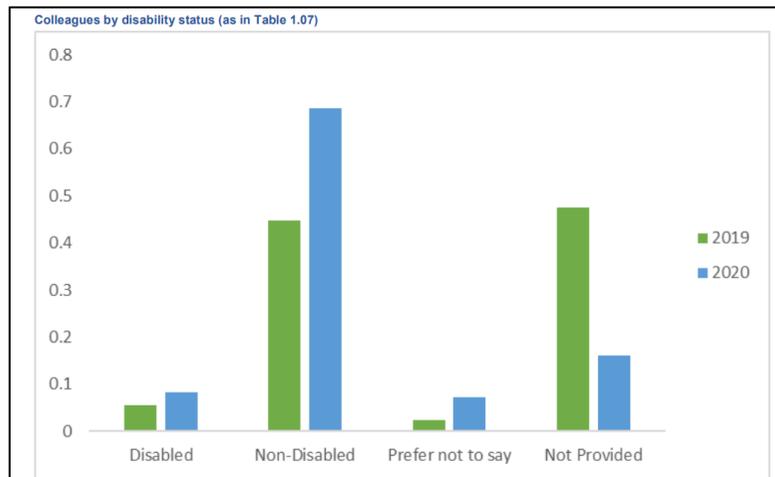
Comparisons between 2019 and 2020 data show that the greatest increase in the proportion of female colleagues is within the 60–64 age band - an increase of 12 colleagues.

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

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

Disability

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



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

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%.



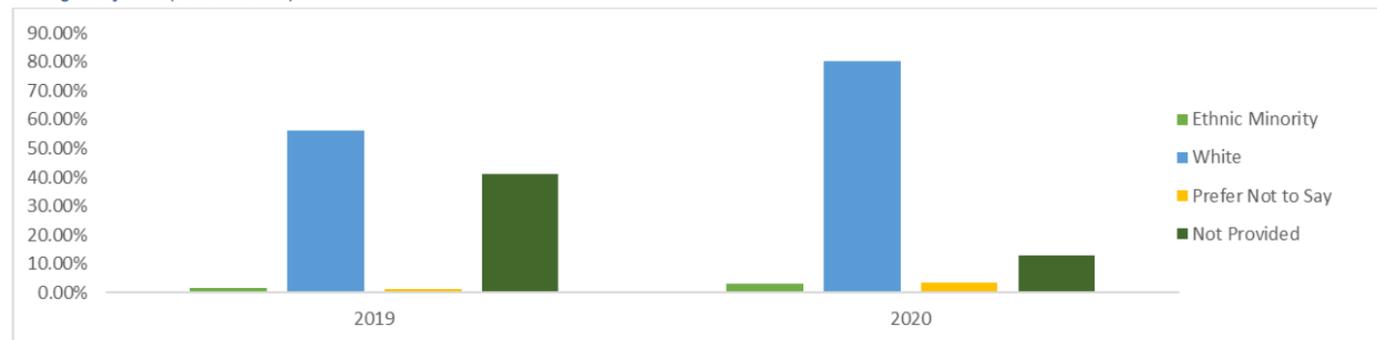
Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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

Race
Ethnicity

Race	2019	2020	Variance
Ethnic Minority	1.82%	3.16%	1.34%
White	56.06%	80.40%	24.34%
Prefer Not to Say	1.07%	3.48%	2.41%
Not Provided	41.05%	12.96%	-28.09%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

Colleagues by Race (as in table 1.12)



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

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

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

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

**Race
Ethnicity
(continued)**

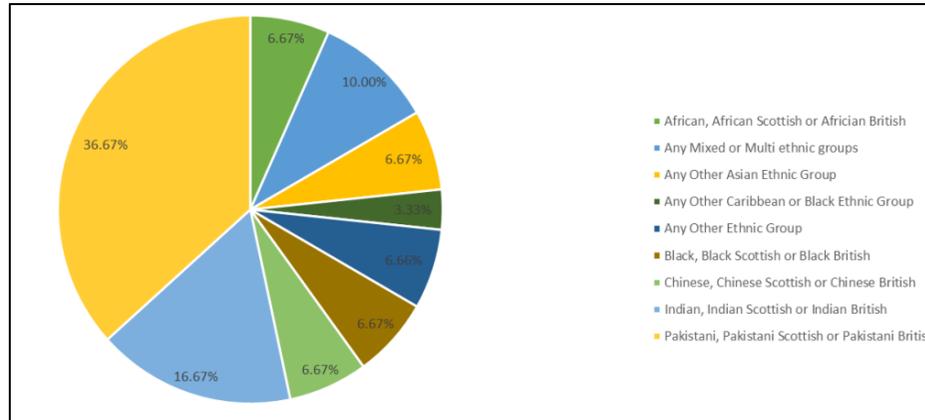


Table 1.15 Race: Colleagues by black and minority ethnicities

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

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



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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

Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief	2019	2020	Variance
Christian	20.69%	29.82%	9.13%
Non-Christian	11.47%	17.28%	5.81%
None	20.69%	29.29%	8.61%
Prefer not to say	3.75%	10.33%	6.58%
Not Provided	43.41%	13.28%	-30.13%
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 2019-2021 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 (sex) and grade. Table 1.02 is available to view on SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2019-2021 https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/workforce-equality-monitoring-report-2019-2021.pdf.



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

	<p>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.</p>
--	--



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 2019-2021 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 Gender Identity (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 2019-2021 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%	
	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%																			



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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

**Care experience
(where relevant)**

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



Impact and Opportunities for Action

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

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

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

Use of the term Discrimination:

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

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



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>.</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees with the aim of allowing eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. For workers meeting this criteria, the policy should generally have a positive on impact on people of all ages. We do however acknowledge that statistically, younger women are more likely to have children than older women. (The average age at which a woman became a mother in 2021 was 31. Reports also indicate that for the first time since records began, half of women in England and Wales haven't had any children by the time they reach the age of 30. (Source ofns)</p> <p>In 2020, a total of 1.05% of colleagues in SQA were pregnant - approximately 10 people. Whilst these colleagues are not spread evenly across the full age demographic of the SQA population, access to the policy and its benefits are not, in any way, restricted by age but only 10% of colleagues accessed this scheme.</p> <p><u>SQA to establish why circa 90% of eligible employees did not access this scheme.</u></p> <p>Positive Impact Recorded.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Age (continued)	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>The policy and the legislation that it is based on, is intended to be beneficial to those caring for a child during the first year of birth or adoption, regardless of age. As stated above, this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child• to give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child• provide support and time off for parental responsibilities <p>The policy provides equality of opportunity to eligible employees regardless of their age.</p>
	Foster good relations

There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different age. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

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>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees with the aim of allowing eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. For workers meeting this criteria, the policy should generally have a positive on impact on people with or without a disability.</p> <p>SQA currently has a workforce of 8.22% who have declared they have a disability. This policy may present a barrier for disabled employees in the form of accessibility or greater difficulties following policy and procedure. However, support and guidance is available for all employees from HR Shared Service, as it is for all SQA policies and procedures.</p> <p>The uptake on this policy is low (one employee since the policy was implemented) therefore it is difficult to identify any trend around those using the policy and disability.</p> <p>The SQA Shared Parental Leave policy is SQA's policy that enables the organisation to adhere to The Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014. The terms and conditions stipulated in the policy are those of the legislation.</p> <p>Positive Impact Recorded.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Disability (continued)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>As previously advised the aim of this policy is to allow parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. The policy also allows for discontinuous blocks of leave. We anticipate this will have a positive impact on parents who have declared a disability, giving them greater flexibility in taking time out of the workplace to care for their child and for parental responsibilities.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Foster good relations	
Disability (continued)	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees with a disability. However, by allowing partners to share leave to care for their child, this may help foster good relations as the leave following the placement/birth is available to both partners. This ability to choose should have a positive impact on colleagues. This is covered in the policy as stated below:</p> <p>“if you are raising a family, you have a statutory right to time off work (paid and unpaid). We want to ensure you can easily find the appropriate information about time off work and our associated procedures and allowances. We value you and have developed entitlements for time off to support you with parental responsibilities”.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>The Shared Parental Leave policy can be utilised by SQA colleagues regardless of their race. There has only been one person who has used the scheme in SQA since its creation, so there is no statistically significant data to show any trend around the use of this policy and race.</p>
	<p>The SQA Shared Parental Leave policy is SQA's policy that enables the organisation to adhere to The Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014. The terms and conditions stipulated in the policy are those of the legislation.</p>
	<p>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p>
	<p>This policy can be utilised by all eligible SQA employees – irrespective of Race.</p>
	<p>We can identify no reasonable risks (national or local) to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this 'Protected Characteristic'.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
Advance equality of opportunity	
<p>All SQA employees from all races are entitled to use, access and be subjected to <i>the</i> Shared Parental Leave Policy. There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Race.</p>	
Foster good relations	
<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Races. No further recommendations are made in respect of this at this stage.</p>	



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Religion or Belief</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>The Shared Parental Leave policy can be utilised by SQA colleagues regardless of religion or belief. We acknowledge that certain cultures may not necessarily consider shared parental responsibilities as a social norm.</p> <p>A reminder however that only one person has used the scheme in SQA since its creation, so there is no statistically significant data to show any trend around the religion / belief profile of those using the policy.</p> <p>The SQA Shared Parental Leave policy is SQA’s policy that enables the organisation to adhere to The Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014. The terms and conditions stipulated in the policy are those of the legislation.</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination – Direct and Indirect:</p> <p>This policy can be utilised by all eligible SQA employees – irrespective of <i>Religion / Belief</i>.</p> <p>We can identify no reasonable risks (national or local) to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this ‘Protected Characteristic’.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
	<p>All SQA employees from all <i>Religions / Beliefs</i> are entitled to use, access and be subjected to <i>the</i> Shared Parental Leave Policy.</p> <p>There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Religion or Philosophical Belief System</i>.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Foster good relations	
Religion or Belief	<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 Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination</p> <p>The Shared Parental Leave policy can be utilised by SQA colleagues regardless of Sex.</p> <p>The SQA Shared Parental Leave policy is SQA's policy that enables the organisation to adhere to The Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014. The terms and conditions stipulated in the policy are those of the legislation.</p> <p>There are some stipulations in the application of the policy that are based on sex such as that mothers must take the first two weeks of maternity leave after the baby is born (compulsory maternity leave). These stipulations are based on legislative requirements and are therefore capable of being justified.</p> <p>Equality Risks:</p> <p>This policy provides clear guidance for SQA employees with the aim of allowing eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. For workers meeting this criteria, the policy should generally have a positive on impact on people of both Sex.</p> <p>Positive Impact Recorded.</p>
<p>Sex (continued)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>The policy and the legislation that it is based on, is intended to be beneficial to those caring for a child during the first year of birth or adoption, regardless of sex.</p> <p>Enabling parents to <u>choose</u> how they access parental leave rather than have it dictated to them based on gender-based bias around who is expected to care for a child is a positive action in advancing equality of opportunity based on Sex.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Foster good relations	
Sex (continued)	<p>There is evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different sexes.</p> <p>The policy allows employees of either sex to choose a parental leave balance that suits their needs. The policy states:</p> <p><i>“We recognise that if you are raising a family, you have a statutory right to time off work (paid and unpaid). We want to ensure you can easily find the appropriate information about time off work and our associated procedures and allowances. We value you and have developed entitlements for time off to support you with parental responsibilities. We have set out your rights and responsibilities, developing the policy in line with the Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014.”</i></p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Risks of Discrimination</p> <p>The Shared Parental Leave policy was introduced to parents (whether by birth, adoption, or surrogacy) the right to share up to 50 weeks leave. SQA's shared parental leave is eligible to all employees regardless of their <i>Sexual Orientation</i> This can be shown in the policy under definitions where its states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother/adoptive parent is either the mother who gives birth to a child or the person who is eligible for adoption leave and/or pay. • Partner is the child's biological father or the partner of the mother/adoptive parent. This can be a spouse, civil partner, or the partner who is living in an enduring relationship with the mother/adoptive parent of the child (man or women). <p><u>Recommended action: Amend the language used in the policy to accommodate two men who are in a same sex relationship and one of the men is the actual biological father of the child. For example, this could read "Mother / Father or Adoptive Parent".</u></p> <p><u>The policy does not currently reference this and the term 'Mother' is instead used throughout.</u></p> <p>Otherwise, we can identify no reasonable risks (national or local) to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this 'Protected Characteristic'.</p> <p>Neutral Equality related impact is therefore recorded in this area.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Sexual Orientation	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Shared Parental Leave Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their <i>Sexual Orientation</i> .
	Foster good relations
	<p>This policy does foster good relations in respect of Sexual Orientation as it is open to all couples (same and opposite sex). Amending the policy as described on the previous page would also contribute to this.</p> <p>SQA's Rainbow Network exists to ensure that SQA is a workplace that promotes, embraces and welcomes LGBTI+ diversity, dignity, inclusion and talents. In practice, the Rainbow Network discusses LGBT+ issues, shares resources, and organises events such as awareness-raising campaigns and charity fundraising days.</p> <p>SQA will continue to promote Shared Parental Leave and the benefits of the policy.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – 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>Risks of Discrimination</p> <p>The <i>Equality Act 2010</i> protects employees against discrimination related to <i>Gender Reassignment</i>. This is defined when a person transitions from one Gender to another. The protection against discrimination includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposing to undergo a Gender transition. ▪ Undergoing the process of Gender transitioning. ▪ As a result of Gender transition. <p>We can identify no reasonable risks (national or local) to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this ‘Protected Characteristic’.</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>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>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

<p>Gender Identity.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Gender Re-assignment</p> <p>Non Binary</p>	<p>Whilst, with the exception of <i>Gender Reassignment</i>, there is currently no legal obligation placed on the SQA to provide Equality of Opportunity to people who identify as different Genders, it is a very relevant modern consideration – particularly in academic environments such as schools, colleges and universities. (Once again, highly relevant to the SQA.)</p> <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 <i>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ+)</i>.</u></p>
<p>Gender Fluid</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 Shared Parental Leave – 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
	Risks of Discrimination: We can identify no reasonable risks (national or local) to indicate how or why this policy could disproportionately impact a person on the grounds of this 'Protected Characteristic'. 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 Shared Parental Leave 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> . The policy contains no language that states or implies that its application is in any way linked to marital status of colleagues.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different <i>Marital Status</i> . No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
<p>Pregnancy / Maternity</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>Please refer to the separate SQA policy – <i>Maternity, Paternity and Adoption</i></p>
	<p>The Shared Parental Leave policy can be utilised by SQA colleagues caring for a child during the first year of birth or adoption. As stated above this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child • to give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child • provide support and time off for parental responsibilities <p>This policy is beneficial to colleagues who are likely to have been recently covered by the provisions of the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy. It is possible that somebody looking to access the benefits of the Shared Parental Leave Policy will do so after accessing benefits from the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy.</p> <p>The SQA Shared Parental Leave policy is SQA’s policy that enables the organisation to adhere to The Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014. The terms and conditions stipulated in the policy are those of the legislation.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Advance equality of opportunity</i></p>
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Shared Parental Leave Policy. The intention of the policy is to positively impact colleagues caring for a child during the first year of birth or adoption. It is likely to be beneficial to those who have recently experienced Pregnancy/Maternity.</p>



Equality Impact Assessment Shared Parental Leave – V1.0

Pregnancy / Maternity	Foster good relations
	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Pregnant or on Maternity.</p> <p><u>Given the low uptake of the benefits of Shared Parental Leave SQA should explore whether this may be due to poor understanding and communication of the policy and whether action could be taken to raise its profile.</u></p>
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>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Shared Parental Leave Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of Care Experience.</p> <p>Whilst there is currently no evidence to suggest that care experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues (or vice versa), it is recommended that data is collected and an analysis, by care experience, be performed of the 'lifecycle' of colleagues to identify any adverse trends and consider what support for growth and performance is needed.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Shared Parental Leave Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of 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