

Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Summary

Name of Policy or practice	Web Filtering 1207		
New Policy or Revision	New Project		
Policy Owner (role)	Head of Strategic Planning and Governance		
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	End October 2025		
Agreed Schedule Review Date	June 2026	Additional review date (Action review date)	N/A

Action Plan

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

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

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)	Information Governance Manager	June 2026	[ONGOING RECORD]
Monitor implementation of web filtering tools to ensure that any user interaction is identified and accessible.	Information Governance Manager	June 2026	

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

Policy Aims

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
SQA must transition to the updated ISO27001:2022 standard by September 2025 to retain its information security certification. A key new requirement, Control 8.23 mandates that “access to external websites shall be managed to reduce exposure to malicious content”. Currently, SQA lacks adequate web filtering measures, posing a significant risk to certification. Loss of ISO27001 certification would jeopardise existing commercial contracts with UK government departments and hinder the ability to secure new contracts. Implementing web filtering measures will ensure compliance, protect sensitive information, and support SQA’s strategic goal of delivering secure, contract-compliant services.
What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?
The project is necessary to ensure SQA retains its ISO27001 certification by transitioning to the updated ISO27001:2022 standard. A review by colleagues in Business Systems identified that SQA does not meet the new web filtering control. SQA currently holds contracts with government bodies that require adherence to robust security standards. Failure to implement web filtering could result in the loss of ISO certification, jeopardising current and future contracts.
What are the aims of this policy or practice?
The web filtering project aims to comply with Control 8.23 in ISO 27001:2022, the purpose of which is to protect systems and data from malicious content and unauthorised access.
How is the content of these aims relevant to equality groups?
Web filtering tools will mainly be in the background and there is likely to be minimal user disruption. This means that users may not be aware that web filtering is happening unless they try to access a blocked site. If this is the case users may see a message explaining that access is denied. If there are any user facing elements implemented as part of this project, training will be provided and will be accessible.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?	
Stakeholders affected by the implementation will include staff, contractors, and agency workers. Consultation with staff networks, unions, and equality groups to gather feedback will be considered depending on the identified solution. The requirement for certification to ISO 27001:2022 is driving the need to implement web filtering measures to reduce exposure to malicious content.	
What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?	
Age	SQA's Workforce Equality Monitoring Report detailed that in 2024, 1.59% of the workforce were over 65. It is unlikely that the introduction of a web filtering solution will have a direct impact on those members of staff, however, they may require additional support as part of the implementation of the solution. To mitigate this potential impact, the project team will ensure that if any training is necessary, it will be accessible to staff of all age groups, enabling everyone to effectively use the solution.
Disability	SQA's Workforce Equality Monitoring Report detailed that in 2024, 10.32% of the workforce identified as being disabled. 4.86% of those individuals identifying as being blind or partially sighted and 19.45% as having a developmental disorder, learning difficulty or disability, all of whom may use assistive technology or that may require extra support in accessing tools and training. Possible impact if tools are not accessible or do not meet accessibility standard (The Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations (PSBAR) 2018 and WCAG 2.2), including where screen readers are used by those that have sight loss or other assistive technology is used. This could result in difficulty for members of staff with a disability and who use assistive technology using the solution and accessing or understanding any alerts that it may generate.

	To mitigate this potential impact, the project team will ensure that – if any user interface tools are necessary - web filtering tools and training materials are compatible with assistive technologies and comply with accessibility standards, incorporating usability testing as part of the tool's implementation."
Race	No specific impact identified.
Religion or Belief	No specific impact identified.
Sex	No specific impact identified.
Sexual Orientation	No specific impact identified.
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	No specific impact identified.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No specific impact identified.
Pregnancy / Maternity	No specific impact identified.
Care experience (where relevant)	No specific impact identified.

Impact and Opportunities for Action

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and this requires to be recorded. The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

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

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. There is unlikely to be an impact on this group, either way.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.

	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
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
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.

	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
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
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	The implementation of web filtering tools will further protect protected groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty

Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
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
	The aim of web filtering tools is to manage access to external websites to reduce exposure to malicious content. This will have a positive impact on this group.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence of impact for this characteristic.

Rationale

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.

The implementation of the web filtering tools is unlikely to result in significant negative equality impacts. However, it is noted that there may be possible impacts on those who have the protected characteristics age and/or disability. The measures identified above to ensure that any tool that requires user interaction meets accessibility requirements, and that appropriate training is available and accessible, should provide sufficient mitigations. This will enable the implementation of a web filtering solution that helps meet the requirements of ISO27001:2022, SQA's security objectives and supports the reduces exposure to malicious content.