

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	August 2025	Additional Schedule Review Date	
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Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

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]

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

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	Quality Policy
New Policy or Revision	4.0
Name of Policy Owner	Chief Executive
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	Dec 2023

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?

This policy is a requirement of SQA's partial certification to ISO 9001 Quality Management System (section 5.2).

This means that SQA is required to establish, implement, and maintain a quality policy that:

- (a) Is appropriate to the purpose and context of the organisation and supports its strategic direction.
- (b) Provides a framework for setting quality objectives.
- (c) Includes a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements.
- (d) Includes a commitment to continual improvement of the quality management system.

The policy must be communicated and applied within the organisation in accordance with the scope (which is currently partial).

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

As indicated above this policy is a requirement under clause 5.2 of the standard. SQA would receive a non-conformance against the ISO standard if a quality policy was not in place.

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

As defined by ISO, the Quality Policy is simply a general statement of SQA's commitment to quality.

It states SQA's commitment to customer requirements, legal requirements, and the requirements of the standard. It also contains SQA's pledge to work toward continual improvement.

The Quality Policy aligns SQA's purpose and strategic direction and creates a framework for future quality objectives, relevant to the existing scope of SQA's ISO 9001 certification.

This is also explained in this [article](#).

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

The policy itself does not directly impact people with protected characteristics. It is SQA's commitment by senior leadership to embed quality in SQA's processes through the identification and implementation of continual improvements.

The policy does not directly affect any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. However, as this policy is applied to other SQA policies, we can reasonably expect those policies to have an impact on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?
As this policy does not directly impact individuals there has not been any engagement with network groups or other individuals. Individual policies that this policy applies to can be expected to have undertaken consultation.

What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?	
Age	<p>This policy acts as a framework for SQA to develop processes that meet customer requirements. Additionally, processes must be designed to meet legal requirements. This means that process owners must consider the impact on protected characteristics in the design of their processes to comply with legislation.</p> <p>As a result, data or wider evidence is not captured, nor is wider monitoring of this policy undertaken on equality groups as the policy itself does not directly impact on equality groups.</p> <p>SQA maintains high quality policy and practice, which works for all. This is evidenced in our EqIA approach to policy, where we consider how policies affect the needs of people based on protected characteristics</p> <p>The Young Talent Strategy EqIA identifies and highlights ways that we can get the highest quality outcome to advance equality of opportunity for young people</p> <p>The Retirement policy EqIA highlights disadvantages faced by older people who are retiring from SQA, and outlines measures put into place to ensure high quality outcomes for those approaching and undertaking retirement</p> <p>The CRWIA undertaken for the rollout of the 2023 assessment underpins SQA’s approach to high-quality assessments for young learners.</p>
Disability	The EqIA undertaken for the rollout of the 2023 assessment arrangements highlights the work taken to ensure high quality, robust but flexible assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments fit for all learners, including disabled learners
Race	<p>EqIAs for policies like Plain English and Language of Assessment and Certification outlay measures that SQA is already taking to ensure removal of barriers to participation for people regardless of race, inclusive of country (and by extension language) of origin.</p> <p>Additionally, the Dignity at Work EqIA examines employee equality data on the basis of race (among other characteristics) to ensure that SQA can effectively eliminate racial discrimination and tackle issues that may affect employee performance.</p>

Religion or Belief	In order for employees to achieve high quality work, we believe that they must be supported in their work. This support may vary from employee to employee. Through the review of the Travel and Expenses policy, we identified within the EqIA that some employees' beliefs may dictate their dietary requirements, including halal, vegan and kosher diets, which can be more costly. We allowed the cap on daily allowance to flex in such cases, to ensure that all employees can eat well.
Sex	In some of SQA's work, staff are required to visit centres, for quality assurance visits. In these cases, it was identified through the EqIA for HN and VQ quality assurance that some women may be vulnerable travelling alone, and identified ways to support women undertaking these quality assurance visits.
Sexual Orientation	SQA maintains high quality policy and practice, which works for all. This is evidenced in our EqIA approach to policy, where we consider how policies affect the needs of people based on protected characteristics.
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	In order to provide a high-quality service that meets the needs of all of SQA's learners, SQA identified that we need to be able to certificate in a way that reflects trans learners' identities. This has been reflected in a number of EqIAs that look at certification, including the HN & VQ Data Management and Certification EqIA .
Marriage/Civil Partnership	SQA maintains high quality policy and practice, which works for all. This is evidenced in our EqIA approach to policy, where we consider how policies affect the needs of people based on protected characteristics.
Pregnancy / Maternity	SQA's commitment to high-quality outcomes extends to its staff policies, including pregnancy and maternity . A thorough review of evidence was undertaken, and policy was updated in order to reflect the findings of the EqIA, in order to achieve as high-quality policy for all who need it.
Care experience (where relevant)	

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
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>A positive impact has been identified – through SQA’s commitment to high quality policy and practice, SQA has demonstrated that it develops high-quality policy and practice that embeds equality of opportunity throughout.</p> <p>There are opportunities to advance equality in process design by SQA’s commitment to build relationships with customers and understanding customer requirements. This would be the responsibility of process owners.</p>
	Foster good relations
Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqIAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don’t.	

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p> <p>A positive impact has been identified – through SQA’s commitment to high quality policy and practice, SQA has demonstrated that it develops high-quality policy and practice that embeds equality of opportunity throughout.</p> <p>There are opportunities to advance equality in process design by SQA’s commitment to build relationships with customers and understanding customer requirements. This would be the responsibility of process owners.</p>
	Foster good relations
	Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don’t.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity
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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
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	<p>Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don’t.</p>
<p>Protected Characteristic</p>	<p>General Equality Duty</p>
<p>Sex</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>
	<p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>
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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
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	Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don't.
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
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	A positive impact has been identified – through SQA's commitment to high quality policy and practice, SQA has demonstrated that it develops high-quality policy and practice that embeds equality of opportunity throughout.
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	Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don't.
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
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity
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	Foster good relations
	Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don’t.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.
	Advance equality of opportunity

	<p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p> <p>A positive impact has been identified – through SQA’s commitment to high quality policy and practice, SQA has demonstrated that it develops high-quality policy and practice that embeds equality of opportunity throughout.</p> <p>There are opportunities to advance equality in process design by SQA’s commitment to build relationships with customers and understanding customer requirements. This would be the responsibility of process owners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Foster good relations</p> <p>Process owners can drive continual improvement in processes through reflections on feedback and lessons learned exercises. As demonstrated by the EqlAs highlighted, this often results in deeper understanding between those who share this characteristic, and those who don’t.</p>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Care experience (where relevant)	<p style="text-align: center;">Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>A neutral impact for this characteristic has been identified as this policy is not responsible for the design or implementation of processes.</p> <p>A positive impact has been identified – through SQA’s commitment to high quality policy and practice, SQA has demonstrated that it develops high-quality policy and practice that embeds equality of opportunity throughout.</p>

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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.
No negative impacts have been identified.