

Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Name of Policy, Strategy or Service	Alternative Venue service
New or Revision of Policy, Strategy or Service? (If revision, what version number?)	New
Approving governance group for Policy, Strategy or Service?	
Policy, Strategy or Service Owner (job title)	Senior Operations Manager, NA QA
EqIA Author (job title(s))	Senior Operations Manager, NA QA
Date of EqIA Completion	Nov 2024
Next Scheduled Review Date	Apr 2025

Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. It is in two parts: monitoring actions and mitigating 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.

Monitoring Actions	Owner	Target Date	Comment & Review
Analysis of number, type, trends or patterns of alternative venue requests.	Assessment Arrangements	Ongoing	
Monitoring of use of the service.	Assessment Arrangements	Ongoing	
Monitoring of use of the service by male and female learners.	Assessment Arrangements	Ongoing	

What actions have you identified through the EqIA to address negative impacts, or to further promote positive impacts?

Mitigating Actions	Owner	Target Date	Comment & Review
Continue to monitor requests and feedback from internal and external stakeholders	Assessment Arrangements	Ongoing	SQA staff will continue to monitor feedback and requests for change from internal and external stakeholders to identify potential areas for improvement to the Assessment Arrangement request service.

Part 1: About the policy, strategy, or service

<p>Why does SQA need this policy, strategy, or service?</p>	<p>The service is in place as SQA’s approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed. The processes are designed to ensure the integrity, security and validity of the examination process.</p> <p>The service demonstrates SQA’s commitment to promoting and facilitating access to our qualifications while also meeting its legal responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).</p>
<p>What are the aims of this policy, strategy, or service?</p>	<p>The aim of the service is to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>
<p>How will you measure how effectively the policy, strategy or service meets its aims?</p>	<p>Current practice involves gathering a range of information and data from various sources. These activities, along with the provision of alternative venues for exams and guidance are linked to the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Focus groups and ongoing feedback from SQA coordinators involved in the process ◆ Focus groups and ongoing feedback with invigilators involved in the process ◆ Review of data collected for the purposes of administering the process. <p>The activities noted above will continue to be used to allow us to monitor the impact (positive or negative) of the policy on learners with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Who will this policy, strategy or service effect? Consider which equality groups might be affected?</p>	<p>This service relates to all learners entered for National Courses with exams who meet the criteria for use of the service outlined in the guidance:</p> <p>Requests for an alternative venue within Scotland may be considered where learners need to sit their exams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a non-presenting centre or education setting • in hospital • in a residential secure unit or prison • at another campus of a college • in their own home • in other suitable accommodation

	<p>As such, it is anticipated the service will have a positive impact on access to National Courses for disabled learners.</p> <p>Requests for venues outside Scotland will only be considered if the learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is representing their country in a major international sporting event. • is participating in an event that is essential for academic or professional advancement and is a critical requirement for their entry qualifications. <p>For overseas events, sensitive and confidential question papers are released to SQA authorised alternative venue invigilators who are required to comply with our secure storage arrangements and facilitate the exam. This arrangement, however, exposes SQA to an increased risk that our examination process is compromised through loss of examination material and failing to adhere to examination standards. Such a risk materialising would have an adverse impact on learners regardless of equality group. To mitigate against this risk, the alternative venue service must therefore be restricted through use of set criteria.</p>
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Consultation and Engagement

Impact assessments must have a basis in evidence. This can include consultation, stakeholder engagement, or reviews of existing engagements. Not all IAs must include engagement, however, it is a rich source of information if used correctly.

Which groups of stakeholders have fed into your work? (This can include staff groups, governance groups, learner groups or groups of the public), and what did they say about potential equality impacts of the policy, strategy or service?

	Group(s) engaged. Describe the engagement	Conclusion/Outcome (as relevant to equality groups)
Internal engagement or consultation (if relevant)	Operations colleagues from the Assessment Arrangement team and Liaison team have been consulted in the review of Assessment Arrangement service. Representatives from across the organisation have been consulted on proposed amendments to the evidence criteria for National Qualification Assessment Management Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance has been updated to clarify the evidence requirements for eligibility for the service with particular regard to sporting events and professional or academic progression ◆ Guidance has been updated for centres and invigilators to ensure that security and integrity of exams is maintained
External engagement or consultation (if relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engagement with SQA coordinators such as focus groups ◆ Engagement with invigilators ◆ Engagement with relevant national sporting body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance has been updated to clarify the evidence requirements for eligibility for the service with particular regard to sporting events and professional or academic progression ◆ Guidance has been updated for centres and invigilators to ensure that security and integrity of exams is maintained

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

This can be internal SQA reports, external reports relevant to the work, census data, or original research, as necessary. What is the source of the evidence (please provide links) and what does it say about equality impacts?

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence	Conclusion about probable impact (positive and/or negative)
Age	<p>In relation to those entered for National Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, SQA's 2024 Equality Monitoring Report provides the following information in relation to learners' age:</p> <p>National 5 Below 15 – 0.2% Aged between 15 and 18 – 99.3% Over 18 – 0.5%</p> <p>Higher Below 15 – 0.0% Aged between 15 and 18 – 99.2% Over 18 – 0.8%</p> <p>Advanced Higher Below 15 – 0.0% Aged between 15 and 18 – 99.6% Over 18 – 0.4%</p> <p>From this information, it is evident that the majority of learners who are entered for National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher courses are aged between 15 and 18. For this reason, the majority of learners are defined as a 'child' under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Under the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, an associated Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has also been completed to reflect the impacts of this policy on the rights of children and young people.</p>	<p>Age is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on eligible learners of all ages.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for learners any age.</p>
Disability (including Neurodiversity, Digital)	<p>SQA do not collect disability data for learners entered for its qualifications. However, Scottish Government data from 2023 show that 40% of learners in secondary schools</p>	<p>This service has a positive impact on people with a disability by allowing learners that face barriers in attending their registered centre to complete exams.</p>

Accessibility, Caring Responsibilities)	<p>have an additional support need. 20% of the total entry for exam-based qualifications have assessment arrangements, which are specially for learners with disabilities.</p>	<p>The service is available for all eligible learners, including those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for disabled learners.</p>
Race (Including nation of origin)	<p>In relation to those entered for National Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, SQA's 2024 Equality Monitoring Report provides the following information in relation to learners' race:</p> <p>National 5 White (including Scottish and non-Scottish) – 87.5% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – 1.6% Asian – Indian – 1.2% Asian – Pakistani – 2.4% Asian – Chinese – 0.9% Asian – Other – 1.0% African/Black/Caribbean – 2.5% All other categories – 1.4% Not disclosed/Not known – 1.5%</p> <p>Higher White (including Scottish and non-Scottish) – 86.2% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – 1.7% Asian – Indian – 1.5% Asian – Pakistani – 3.0% Asian – Chinese – 1.1% Asian – Other – 1.2% African/Black/Caribbean – 2.5% All other categories – 1.5% Not disclosed/Not known – 1.4%</p> <p>Advanced Higher White (including Scottish and non-Scottish) – 84.5% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – 2.1%</p>	<p>Race, or nation of origin, is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>The specific criterion for use of the service around sporting representing their country at international events, is open to learners of all nationalities.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners of all ethnicities.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for learners of all ethnicities.</p>

	<p>Asian – Indian – 2.0% Asian – Pakistani – 2.9% Asian – Chinese – 1.7% Asian – Other – 1.6% African/Black/Caribbean – 2.3% All other categories – 1.7% Not disclosed/Not known – 1.3%</p> <p>SQA do not hold data in relation to race or nation of origin for learners using the alternative venue service.</p>	
Religion or Belief	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner’s religion or belief. This information is also not available as part of Scottish Government’s Pupil Census data.</p>	<p>Religion/belief is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of religion/belief.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for learners regardless of religion/belief.</p>

Sex	<p>In relation to those entered for National Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, SQA’s 2024 Equality Monitoring Report provides the following information in relation to learners’ sex:</p> <p>National 5 Female – 50.2% Male – 49.8% Higher Female – 54.1% Male – 45.9%</p> <p>Advanced Higher</p>	<p>Sex is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>We acknowledge, however, that based on our data females have an increased likelihood of being impacted by the requirements set out in the guidance where they are involved with extra-curricular activities but do not meet our alternative venues criteria for events overseas. Specifically, where they have not met one of the following:</p> <p><i>· are representing their country in a major international sporting event.</i></p>
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Female – 54.9%
Male – 45.1%

The volume of male and female learners approved to use the service in 2023 and 2024 for alternative venues outside Scotland and within Scotland is:

2023 - outside Scotland	
Total no. of candidates	55
No. of Male	10
No. of Female	45
2023 - within Scotland	
Total no. of candidates	62
No. of Male	28
No. of Female	34
2024 - outside Scotland	
Total no. of candidates	70
No. of Male	7
No. of Female	63
2024 - within Scotland	
Total no. of candidates	41
No. of Male	23
No. of Female	18

- *are participating in an event that is an essential requirement for entry to an academic course or for professional advancement.*
- *have relocated outside Scotland between completing course and the exam.*

We recognise that some requests for use of the service outside Scotland in previous years would not be able to meet the enhanced evidence requirement of a letter for the relevant national sporting body and these requests have been more common for female learners. However, the change to the evidence requirement is potentially equally impactful to male learners representing sports clubs or extra-curricular activities females and make learners will, however, continue to have access to the service where our criteria are met and the clarification in the guidance helps adhere to a national standard which ensures equal access for all learners who are selected to represent their country.

Additionally, the requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests.

Taking into consideration extra-curricular activities, this service is designed to make provisions for learners are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed. Its operation must not contravene our governing principles to safeguard the integrity of our qualifications.

For overseas events, sensitive and confidential question papers are released to SQA authorised alternative venue invigilators who are required to comply with our secure storage arrangements and facilitate the exam. This arrangement, however, exposes SQA to an increased risk that our examination process is compromised through loss of examination material and failing to adhere to examination standards. Such a risk materialising would have an adverse impact on learners regardless of sex. To mitigate against

		<p>this risk, the alternative venue service must therefore be restricted through use of set criteria.</p> <p>Despite the guidance not catering for all activities, it intends to protect the security and integrity of the examination process which is in the public interest whilst providing a service that is fair to all learners. By restricting through set criteria that are objective and consistently applied and therefore the number of learners who can access this service, this reduces the security risks and achieves our overall aim of equality of access and material security. We recognise the adverse impact on female learners but have been unable to identify alternative routes that would be less discriminatory in relation to sex.</p> <p>In balancing these factors with our duties under the Equality Act 2010, although females are likely to be more impacted by our alternative venue guidance for overseas events, we consider that this guidance is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Allowing access to our service without stricter controls could undermine this.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner’s sexual orientation. This information is also not available as part of Scottish Government’s Pupil Census data. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 3% of the UK population aged 16 years and over identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2022. For those aged 16 to 24 years, 9% or identified as LGB. No updated data beyond 2022 has yet been published.</p> <p>In LGBT Youth Scotland’s Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People: Education Report 2023, in which 1279 LGBTQI young people aged 13 to 25 participated, 70% of participants felt that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia had a negative effect on their educational experience. The report also states that just only 21% participants saw LGBT+ representation within the curriculum outside of sexual health or mental health-focused lessons, demonstrating a need for further work to</p>	<p>Sexual orientation is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on eligible learners regardless of sexual orientation.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this policy will have a positive impact on learners of any sexual orientation, particularly where there is an intersection with other protected characteristics the learner may have.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests.</p>

	<p>ensure this representation is achieved throughout educational settings in Scotland. The report recommends that inclusive education should be embedded throughout the curriculum, and that LGBTI young people should see themselves represented in the materials they are using.</p>	
<p>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and trans status)</p>	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner's gender identity or trans status. This information is also not available as part of Scottish Government's Pupil Census data.</p> <p>Scotland's Census published data from the 2022 Scottish Census that of all people aged 16 and over who completed the census, 0.44% are trans or has a trans history. It is not possible to determine however how many of these individuals are learners' access SQA's national, vocational or occupational qualifications.</p> <p>SQA will be investigating whether there are opportunities to capture or access this information to allow us to better how our policy impacts on individuals on the basis of their gender identity or trans status.</p>	<p>Gender identity and trans status is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of gender identity.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests.</p>
<p>Marriage/Civil Partnership (Only relevant to employment-related policy, strategy or service)</p>	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner's marriage or civil partnership status. This information is also not available as part of Scottish Government's Pupil Census data. National Records of Scotland's 2023 report shows that there was a 24% increase in marriages in 2022 compared to 2021. 630 civil partnerships were also registered in 2022, the highest number since 2007 and the majority of which are mixed sex (84% in 2022). It is not possible to determine however how many of these individuals are learners' access SQA's national, vocational or occupational qualifications.</p> <p>SQA will be investigating whether there are opportunities to capture or access this information to allow us to better how our policy impacts on individuals on the basis of their marriage or civil partnership status.</p>	<p>Marriage or civil partnership status is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of marriage or civil partnership status.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests.</p> <p>Equality considerations for this protected characteristic apply only to employment-related policies or services and is not applicable in this instance</p>

<p>Pregnancy/Maternity</p>	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner’s pregnancy or maternity status. This information is also not available as part of Scottish Government’s Pupil Census data. However National Records of Scotland’s 2023 report shows that there has been a slight decrease in Scotland’s fertility rate and that births in 2022 was 2% lower than in 2021. It is not possible to determine however how many of these individuals are learners’ access SQA’s national, vocational or occupational qualifications.</p> <p>SQA will be investigating whether there are opportunities to capture or access this information to allow us to better how our policy impacts on individuals on the basis of their pregnancy or maternity status.</p>	<p>Pregnancy/maternity status is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for learners with this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Care experience (Looked after children, Corporate Parenting responsibilities)</p>	<p>SQA do not currently hold any data on a learner’s care experience status. According to Scottish Government’s Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 68.3% of looked after school leavers stayed on in S5 or later compared to 87.6% of all leavers. 31.7% of looked after school leavers left in S4 or earlier ◆ 78.3% of looked after school leavers achieved one or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better, compared to 96.4% of all leavers ◆ 84.8% of looked after leavers were in a positive destination compared to 95.7% of all leavers ◆ 70.4% of looked after leavers were in a positive follow-up destination compared to 93.5% of all leavers ◆ a lower proportion of looked after pupils achieve Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level relevant to their stage compared with all pupils <p>It is important to note that the above data relates to learners looked after at any point between August 2021 and July 2022. Who Cares? Scotland cautions these statistics do not take into consideration circumstances</p>	<p>Care experienced status is not a criterion for learners to access to the Alternative Venue service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of care experienced status.</p> <p>The new requirement for a letter of support for the relevant sporting body, or education/professional organisation, will have no impact on access to the service for legitimate requests for care experienced learners.</p>

	<p>such as informal kinship care. Some learners may have historic care experience even if they are not currently in care.</p> <p>Learners looked after status has been provided by Scottish Government's from the Pupil Census data as part of the data sharing agreement application. Further work will need to be undertaken internally by SQA on how this information can be used ethically and sensitively while allowing us to monitor the impact of this policy on learners with care experience.</p>	
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Impact and Opportunities for Action

The impact that a policy, strategy or service can vary between people, and this can sometimes be based on protected characteristic. This is called differential impact. Where this is the case, the differential impact must be recorded. The differential impact might be positive, or negative – in both cases, it should be noted. Mitigating actions should be taken to address any negative impacts, and actions can also be taken to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between groups.

Most differential impacts on an equality group can be considered either a positive or negative impact against the **three needs of the general equality duty**. These are the columns of the table below. When considering impacts, consider which need of the general equality duty they align with. Detail the impact in the table and note whether the impact is positive or negative.

Protected Characteristic	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	Advance Equality of Opportunity	Foster Good Relations	Mitigating actions or opportunities (if relevant)
Age	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Age is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of age.</p>	<p>The alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	

		centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.		
Disability (including Digital Accessibility, Caring Responsibilities)	<p>The alternative venue supports access to SQA exams for learners with barriers to attending their centre for an exam. This is particularly beneficial to some disabled learners and those with temporary disability.</p> <p>It allows the specific needs of learners to be addressed, solutions implemented and ensures that SQA are treating learners fairly and consistently. The service promotes inclusion, accessibility and actively captures and meets current needs of disabled learners to provide equal access to our examinations.</p> <p>It provides learners an opportunity to sit their exams in a secure environment that they are comfortable with, provided this can be accommodated by the centre, for example at the learner's own home.</p> <p>No differential impact in relation to learners with carer responsibilities</p>	<p>The alternative venues service is a proportionate action to reduce or remove the disadvantages faced by disabled and/or ASN learners and advances equality of opportunity at any age where they are required to sit SQA exams.</p> <p>This service has a positive impact on people with a disability by ensuring those with barriers to attending their centre are able to complete SQA exams in a safe and appropriate alternative venue.</p> <p>The service is available for all disabled learners, including those with caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p> <p>The service demonstrates a commitment to equality for disabled learners and those with ASN to ensure they have fair access to SQA exams.</p>	Ongoing monitoring of use of the service.
Race (Including nation of origin)	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Race, or nation of origin, is not a criterion for learners to access the service.</p>	<p>The alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer</p>	

	<p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners of all ethnicities.</p> <p>Where attendance of an international sporting event to represent their country is the reason for the request the service is open for learners representing any nation.</p>	<p>unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
Religion or Belief	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Religion/belief is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of religion/belief.</p>	<p>The alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
Sex	<p>Sex is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of sex and as explained in the section above, we consider the terms within the guidance are a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of use of the service by male and female learners.</p>

		and importance is confirmed.		
Sexual Orientation	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Sexual orientation is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of sexual orientation.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this policy will have a positive impact on learners of any sexual orientation, particularly where there is an intersection with other protected characteristics the learner may have.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and trans status)	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Gender identity and trans status is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this service will have a positive impact on learners regardless of gender identity.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
Marriage/Civil Partnership (Only relevant to employment-related)	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Marriage or civil partnership status is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges,</p>	

<p>policy, strategy or service)</p>	<p>As this policy covers all SQA qualification types, the policy applies to learners regardless of marital or civil partnership status.</p>	<p>cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
<p>Pregnancy / Maternity</p>	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Pregnancy/maternity status is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>As this policy covers all SQA qualification types, the policy applies to learners regardless of pregnancy/maternity status.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy and importance is confirmed.</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	
<p>Care experience (Looked after children, Corporate Parenting responsibilities)</p>	<p>No differential impact identified.</p> <p>Care experienced status is not a criterion for learners to access to the service.</p> <p>As this policy covers all SQA qualification types, the policy applies to learners regardless of care experienced status.</p>	<p>The Alternative venues service is an appropriate approach to enable access to exams in exceptional cases for learners who are unavoidably unable to attend their centre on the day of the exam, where the learner is unavoidably unable to attend their centre, or they are participating in another activity whose legitimacy</p>	<p>The alternative venue service allows us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.</p>	

		and importance is confirmed.		
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Conclusion, Monitoring, and rationale

Briefly summarise the positive impacts of your work for people who share protected characteristics	The service will allow access to exams for learners with protected characteristics who face barriers to entering their centre. It allows access using the same criteria for all learners regardless of protected characteristic ensuring equal treatment in principle.
Briefly describe how your work might eliminate unlawful discrimination	The service will allow access to exams for learners with protected characteristics who face barriers to entering their centre.
Briefly describe how your work might advance equality of opportunity	The service will allow access to exams for learners with protected characteristics who face barriers to entering their centre. There is also equal access to the service for learners representing their country, regardless of nation of origin or background.
Briefly describe how your work might foster good relations	As detailed above the service helps us to foster good relations with learners, local authorities, schools, colleges, parents, guardians and carer and members of local communities who have an interest in our equality and broader duties as a public body.
How will you monitor the real impacts?	Ongoing feedback and engagement opportunities with key stakeholders.
Have you identified negative impacts against equality groups?	In terms of practical effect, the evidence requirement may be perceived as having a negative impact on female learners.
If yes, have you identified mitigating actions?	N/A
How will you monitor the effectiveness of mitigating actions?	N/A
If you have identified negative impacts, without an avenue to mitigate, how can you justify the rationale to continue with this policy, strategy or service?	SQA has a duty to manage the security and integrity of the examination process, and following consultation, has concluded that there are no clear alternatives to the criteria specified in the guidance to manage access to the alternative venues service. We consider that the criteria are adequately tailored to include only scenarios where alternative venues, both within and out-with Scotland, are justifiable.

Beyond what we have identified through our data, we have limited evidence of the impact this guidance will have on female learners and will keep this under review to consider and develop our approach based on new information becoming available.