Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Name of Policy, Strategy or Service	**Standby and Callout**
New or Revision of Policy, Strategy or Service? (If revision, what version number?)	**Revision**
Approving governance group for Policy, Strategy or Service?	**People and Culture Group**
Policy, Strategy or Service Owner (job title)	**Head of Human Resources**
EqIA Author (job title(s))	**HR Reward Analyst**
Date of EqIA Completion	**June 2024**
Next Scheduled Review Date	**June 2027**

Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. It is in 2 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

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
Further consideration will be given to our Lone Worker policy	HR Advisor, HR Shared Service & Facilities Manager, Facilities	**By September 2025**	
SQA will consider the collection of care experience data to determine any disproportionate impact on this priority group.	Reward Advisor, People Reward & Equalities and Data Analyst, People Analytics, Governance & Systems	**Autumn 2025**	

Part 1: About the policy, strategy, or service

Consultation and Engagement

Why does SQA need policy, strategy, or service?	To ensure that key services can be adequately supported out of normal working hours, according to the needs of the business. We will use standby rotas where there is a demonstrable need to ensure out-of-hours cover for essential services and where it is necessary to ensure that any critical system or service failures are responded to. To ensure fair and consistent payment arrangements for those employees who are required to be on standby.
What are the aims of this policy, strategy, or service?	As previously stated, the aims of this policy are to: • Ensure that key services can be adequately supported out of normal working hours, according to the needs of the business. We will use standby rotas where there is a demonstrable need to ensure out-of-hours cover for essential services and where it is necessary to ensure that any critical system or service failures are responded to. • To ensure fair and consistent payment arrangements for those employees who are required to be on standby. The following SQA policies are also related to the Standby and Callout Policy: • Pay Policy • Home-based workers policy
How will you measure how effectively the policy, strategy or service meets its aims?	• If out-of-hours services are not provided, it could have reputational consequences for the organisation. • If there was not a Standby and Callout policy in place, there may be inconsistent application of standby and callout arrangements and payments across the organisation – the organisation previously relied on the goodwill of staff. For information available, a total of 19 SQA employees (1.7% of the overall workforce) have used this policy in the period 1 April 2023 – 21 March 2024.
Who will this policy, strategy or service effect? Consider which equality groups might be affected?	The development, implementation, and analysis of the effects of this policy are relevant only to people with childcare responsibilities who took advantage of the old childcare voucher scheme which is now closed. SQA acknowledges that employees with parental responsibilities from certain protected groups may have differing needs in relation to childcare access, for example, people with a disability may have differing health issues which could mean that they are more likely to be receiving sick pay, which in turn could affect whether they meet the minimum salary threshold to access the Childcare Voucher Scheme. SQA also acknowledges that women may be more likely to work part- time and therefore be less likely to meet the minimum salary threshold for the scheme but as the scheme itself is governed by legal statute, has no recourse to remedy this.

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.
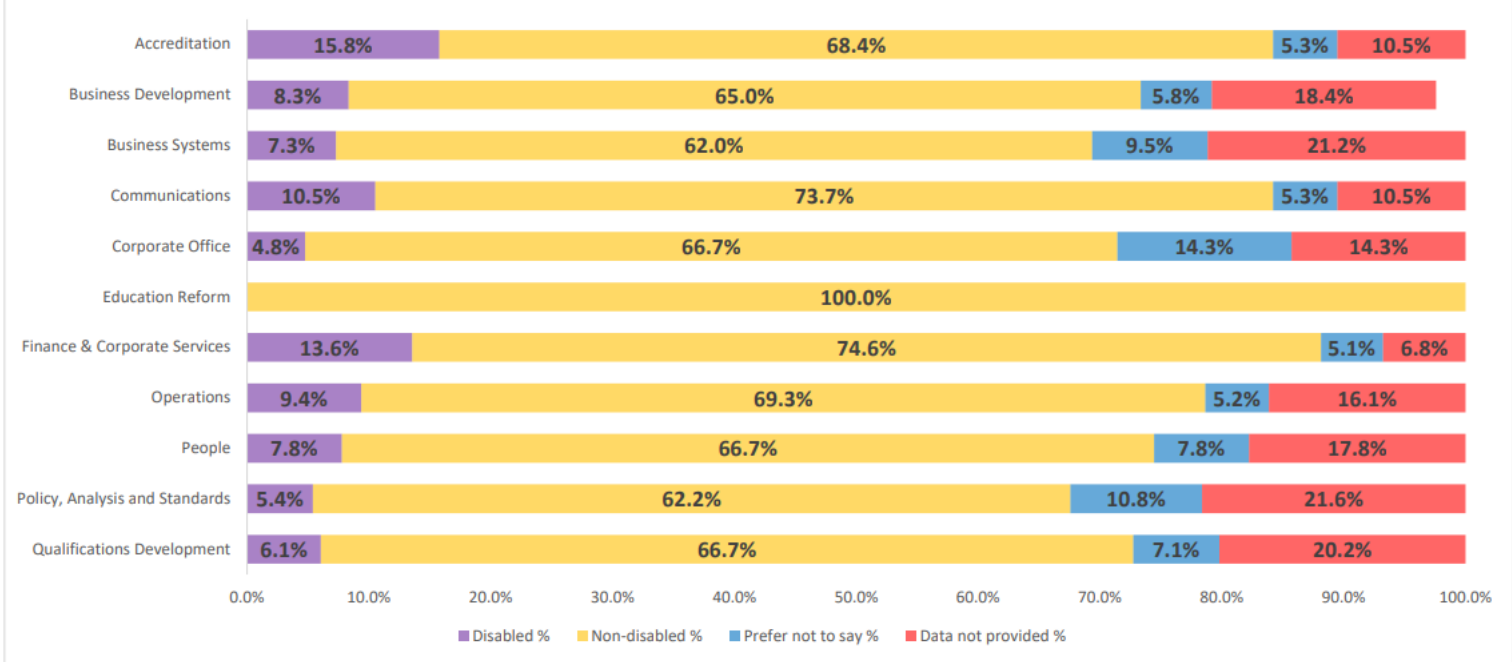
Which groups of stakeholders have fed into your work? (This can include staff groups, governance groups, learner groups or groups of the public), and what did they say about potential equality impacts of the policy, strategy or service?
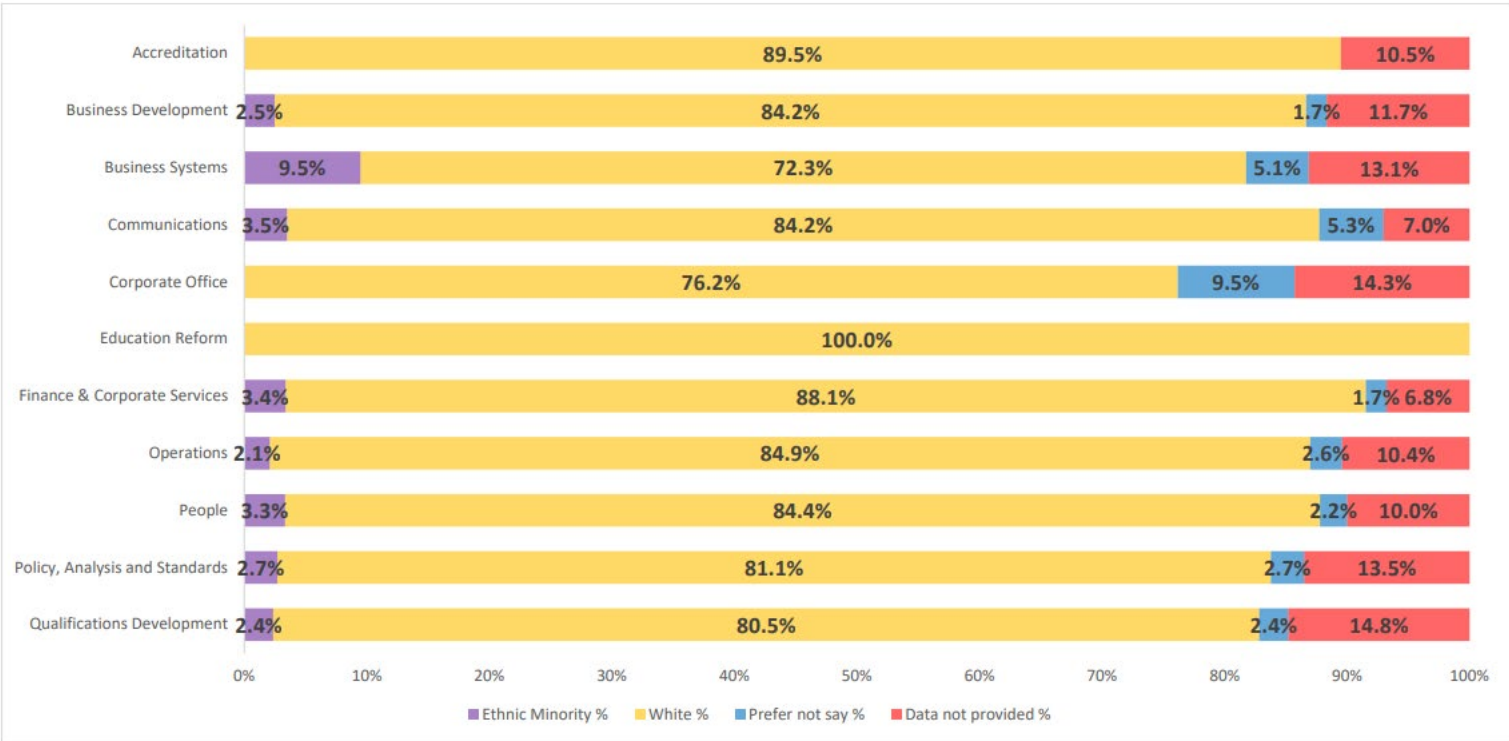
	Group(s) engaged. Describe the engagement	Conclusion/Outcome (as relevant to equality groups)
Internal engagement or consultation (if relevant)	As this is an internal policy, when the policy was being developed in 2021, SQA asked for feedback from internal employee network groups in relation to equality impacts groups. These employee network groups included: ▪ ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network. ▪ SQA Disability Network. ▪ SQA Rainbow Network. ▪ Women's Network. **Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:** **Evidence of all meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken with the PRG (Policy Review Group)**, including Equality considerations in respect of all policies, activities and functions, is detailed on a dedicated SQA shared resources site. In addition, Unison and Unite both sought feedback from their members in relation to the Standby and callout policy as part of the policy review process.	All feedback from stakeholder engagement was taken on board and rolled into the policy review cycle for this policy
External engagement or consultation (if relevant)	External stakeholder engagement is not relevant here.	

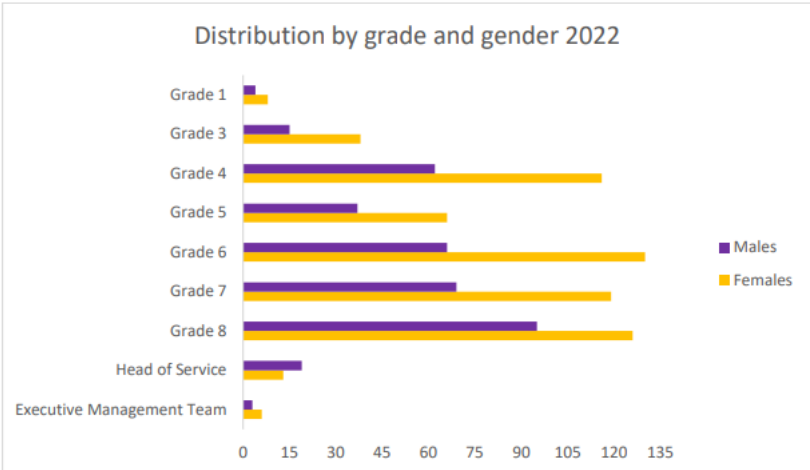**What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?**

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
Age	Table 1.1: Age

Table 1.1: Age

Age bracket	2019 no	2019 %	2020 no	2020 %	2021 no	2021 %	2022 no	2022 %	Variance no	Variance %
16–24	59	6.32%	50	5.27%	49	4.93%	36	3.47%	-23	-2.85%
25–29	65	6.97%	60	6.32%	73	7.35%	105	10.14%	40	3.17%
30–34	123	13.18%	109	11.49%	96	9.67%	95	9.17%	-28	-4.01%
35–39	131	14.04%	145	15.28%	146	14.70%	144	13.90%	13	-0.14%
40–44	129	13.83%	135	14.23%	146	14.70%	150	14.48%	21	0.65%
45–49	116	12.43%	105	11.06%	113	11.38%	124	11.97%	8	-0.46%
50–54	125	13.40%	141	14.86%	131	13.19%	126	12.16%	1	-1.24%
55–59	119	12.75%	117	12.33%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%	3	-0.98%
60–64	53	5.68%	72	7.59%	81	8.16%	102	9.85%	49	4.16%
65+	13	1.39%	15	1.58%	36	3.63%	32	3.09%	19	1.70%
Total	**933**	**100.00%**	**949**	**100.00%**	**993**	**100.00%**	**1036**	**100.00%**	**103**	**11.04%**

Table 1.1 shows the age profile of the organisation from 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23
[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Disability (including Neurodiversity, Digital Accessibility, Caring Responsibilities)	**Disability by directorate — all colleagues, grade 1 – EMT** Accreditation: Disabled 15.8%, Non-disabled 68.4%, Prefer not to say 5.3%, Data not provided 10.5% Business Development: Disabled 8.3%, Non-disabled 65.0%, Prefer not to say 5.8%, Data not provided 18.4% Business Systems: Disabled 7.3%, Non-disabled 62.0%, Prefer not to say 9.5%, Data not provided 21.2% Communications: Disabled 10.5%, Non-disabled 73.7%, Prefer not to say 5.3%, Data not provided 10.5% Corporate Office: Disabled 4.8%, Non-disabled 66.7%, Prefer not to say 14.3%, Data not provided 14.3% Education Reform: Non-disabled 100.0% Finance & Corporate Services: Disabled 13.6%, Non-disabled 74.6%, Prefer not to say 5.1%, Data not provided 6.8% Operations: Disabled 9.4%, Non-disabled 69.3%, Prefer not to say 5.2%, Data not provided 16.1% People: Disabled 7.8%, Non-disabled 66.7%, Prefer not to say 7.8%, Data not provided 17.8% Policy, Analysis and Standards: Disabled 5.4%, Non-disabled 62.2%, Prefer not to say 10.8%, Data not provided 21.6% Qualifications Development: Disabled 6.1%, Non-disabled 66.7%, Prefer not to say 7.1%, Data not provided 20.2% Legend: Disabled %, Non-disabled %, Prefer not to say %, Data not provided % The directorate breakdown of disability shows the following: ♦ The largest concentrations of colleagues declaring a disability are in Accreditation (15.8%), followed by Finance & Corporate Services (13.6%), and Communications (10.5%). ♦ Education Reform is a newly created area within the organisation and currently only has a small number of colleagues. SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (sqa.org.uk)

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Race (Including nation of origin)	**Ethnicity by directorate — all colleagues, grade 1 – EMT** Accreditation: White 89.5%, Data not provided 10.5% Business Development: Ethnic Minority 2.5%, White 84.2%, Prefer not say 1.7%, Data not provided 11.7% Business Systems: Ethnic Minority 9.5%, White 72.3%, Prefer not say 5.1%, Data not provided 13.1% Communications: Ethnic Minority 3.5%, White 84.2%, Prefer not say 5.3%, Data not provided 7.0% Corporate Office: White 76.2%, Prefer not say 9.5%, Data not provided 14.3% Education Reform: White 100.0% Finance & Corporate Services: Ethnic Minority 3.4%, White 88.1%, Prefer not say 1.7%, Data not provided 6.8% Operations: Ethnic Minority 2.1%, White 84.9%, Prefer not say 2.6%, Data not provided 10.4% People: Ethnic Minority 3.3%, White 84.4%, Prefer not say 2.2%, Data not provided 10.0% Policy, Analysis and Standards: Ethnic Minority 2.7%, White 81.1%, Prefer not say 2.7%, Data not provided 13.5% Qualifications Development: Ethnic Minority 2.4%, White 80.5%, Prefer not say 2.4%, Data not provided 14.8% Legend: ■ Ethnic Minority % ■ White % ■ Prefer not say % ■ Data not provided % The directorate breakdown of ethnicity shows the following: ♦ The business areas with the largest concentration of ethnic minority colleagues are: Business Systems (9.5% ethnic minority); Communications (3.5% ethnic minority) and Finance & Corporate Service (3.4% ethnic minority). ♦ Education Reform is a newly created area within the organisation and currently only has a small number of colleagues Source: SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (sqa.org.uk)

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Religion or Belief	**Table 8.1: Religion or belief**

Table 8.1: Religion or belief

Religion or belief	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
Another religion or body	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	6	0.60%	6	0.58%
Buddhist	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Church of Scotland	91	9.75%	122	12.86%	127	12.79%	125	12.07%
Hindu	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	8	0.77%
Jewish	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Muslim	7	0.75%	11	1.16%	10	1.01%	11	1.06%
None	286	30.65%	421	44.36%	462	46.53%	489	47.20%
Not specified	405	43.41%	126	13.28%	102	10.27%	123	11.87%
Other Christian	26	2.79%	43	4.53%	44	4.43%	44	4.25%
Prefer not to say	35	3.75%	98	10.33%	103	10.37%	103	9.94%
Roman Catholic	76	8.15%	118	12.43%	129	12.99%	123	11.87%
Sikh	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%

Table 8.1 shows the religion, belief or non-belief status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23
Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Sex	**Gender** **Distribution by grade and gender of SQA grade 1 – EMT** Distribution by grade and gender 2022 Grade 1, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8, Head of Service, Executive Management Team ■ Males ■ Females 0 15 30 45 60 75 90 105 120 135 Source: SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (sqa.org.uk) The majority of the 2.9 million lone-parent families in 2022 were headed by a lone mother (2.5 million, 84%) Source: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2022 59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021). Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022) Source: Carers UK There are 1.25 million sandwich carers in the UK. These are people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family. 68% (850,743) are women. Source: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/care-in-crisis/breaking-point-report/

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Sexual Orientation	**Table 10.1: Sexual orientation**

Table 10.1: Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
Bisexual	9	0.96%	12	1.26%	15	1.51%	16	1.54%
Gay man	13	1.39%	20	2.11%	21	2.11%	23	2.22%
Gay woman / lesbian	9	0.96%	10	1.05%	12	1.21%	12	1.16%
Heterosexual / straight	431	46.20%	670	70.60%	700	70.49%	702	67.76%
In another way	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Not specified	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	156	15.71%	189	18.24%
Not sure	26	2.79%	76	8.01%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Prefer not to say	443	47.48%	158	16.65%	84	8.46%	88	8.49%

Table 10.1 shows the composition of staff sexual orientation within the organisation for the period 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23
Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and trans status)	Due to the low number of staff reporting as transgender or describing their gender identity 'in another way', we are unable to publish further data in relation to gender re-assignment or gender identity. This data is, however, monitored internally.

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
Marriage/Civil Partnership (Only relevant to employment-related policy, strategy or service)	**Table 5.1: Relationship status** 	Relationship status	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %	|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|	Civil Partnership	7	0.75%	7	0.74%	8	0.81%	9	0.87%		Co-habiting/in a relationship	80	8.57%	112	11.80%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%		Divorced/Dissolved Civil Partnership	14	1.50%	16	1.69%	17	1.71%	19	1.83%		Married	265	28.40%	370	38.99%	425	42.80%	416	40.15%		Married/Civil Partnership	8	0.86%	12	1.26%	14	1.41%	16	1.54%		Not Specified	407	43.62%	179	18.86%	102	10.27%	127	12.26%		Other	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	9	0.87%		Prefer not to say	18	1.93%	49	5.16%	55	5.54%	59	5.69%		Separated	6	0.64%	12	1.26%	12	1.21%	13	1.25%		Single	122	13.08%	183	19.28%	224	22.56%	239	23.07%		Widowed/surviving partner from Civil Partnership	< 5	< 0.54%	6	0.63%	7	0.70%	7	0.68%	 Table 5.1 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022. Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23 Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23
Pregnancy/Maternity	**Table 6.1: Pregnancy and maternity** 	Pregnancy and maternity	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---		Contract ended as planned					1	3.33%		0.00%		Due to return to work					0	0.00%	11	40.00%		Resigned					0	0.00%	1	4.00%		Returned to work	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	29	96.67%	14	56.00%		Total	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	30	100.00%	26	100.00%	 Table 6.1 details the number of staff who have taken maternity leave, whether they are still on maternity leave (due to return to work), have returned to work following maternity leave, resigned following maternity leave, or their fixed-term contract ended (contract ended as planned). Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

Protected Characteristic	Source, and description of evidence
	Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23
Care experience (Looked after children, Corporate Parenting responsibilities)	SQA does not currently collect care experience data.

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	There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different ages and therefore we make no further recommendations in this area. **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact.**	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their age.	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different ages. No further recommendations in respect of this at this stage.	
Disability (including Digital Accessibility, Caring Responsibilities)	SQA employees with certain disabilities may, on balance have more difficulty attending the office for a callout if required. People with certain disabilities may also be	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between disabled/non-disabled people.	

	unable to work additional hours due to their condition. Standby arrangements have only been utilised by 19 individuals in the period from 1 April 2023 – 21 March 2024. In order to mitigate any discrimination in relation to *Disability,* section 2.5 of the revised standby and callout policy states the following: ***2.5 Personal circumstances*** *If any aspect of this policy causes you difficulty including in relation to disability, carer responsibilities or religion/belief you should inform your line manager. We will take any reasonable steps to support your needs while working to these arrangements.* **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact**	policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their disability.	No further recommendations in respect of this at this stage.	
Race (Including nation of origin)	There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different ethnicity and therefore we make no further recommendations in this area. **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact.**	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their ethnicity.	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different ethnicity. No further recommendations in respect of this at this stage.	
Religion or Belief	In order to mitigate any discrimination in relation to Religion or Belief*,* section 2.5 of the revised standby and callout policy states the following: ***2.5 Personal circumstances*** *If any aspect of this policy causes you difficulty including in relation to disability,*	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different religions or beliefs. No further recommendations in respect of this at this stage.	

	carer responsibilities or religion/belief you should inform your line manager. We will take any reasonable steps to support your needs while working to these arrangements. **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact**	the grounds of their religion or belief.		
Sex	In order to mitigate any discrimination in relation to Sex, section 2.5 of the revised standby and callout policy states the following: *2.5 Personal circumstances* *If any aspect of this policy causes you difficulty including in relation to disability, carer responsibilities or religion/belief you should inform your line manager. We will take any reasonable steps to support your needs while working to these arrangements.* In addition, Section 2.10 of the standby and callout policy states: - Lone working refers to situations where it is necessary for you to enter sites without other people present. You should be aware of the risks associated with lone working and know how to minimise the hazards. Familiarisation with the guidance given in the Suzy Lamplugh website: www.suzylamplugh.org will give comprehensive and in-depth details of precautions to take when working alone. There is a general lone working risk assessment available on the intranet that any employees required to work alone should refer to and consider. If you are unsure about any aspect of lone working, you should speak to your line manager	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their sex.	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations by Sex. No further recommendations in respect of this at this stage.	

	While we recognise that women are at greater risk when working in a lone working environment, we recognise that lone working can also impact on people of all genders.

Further consideration will be given to developing a Lone Working policy by September 2025.

Conclusion: Probable neutral impact | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different sexual orientations and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.

Conclusion: Probable neutral impact. | All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their sexual orientation. | There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different sexual orientations. No further recommendations at this stage. | |
| **Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and trans status)** | There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people of different gender identities and therefore make no further recommendations in this area.

Conclusion: Probable neutral impact. | All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their gender identity. | There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different gender identities. No further recommendations at this stage. | |
| **Marriage/Civil Partnership** | There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people who | All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and | There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good | |

(Only relevant to employment-related policy, strategy or service)	are married or in a civil partnership and therefore make no further recommendations in this area. **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact.**	callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their marital status.	relations between people of different marital status. No further recommendations at this stage.	
Pregnancy / Maternity	There is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly on people with the protected characteristic of pregnancy/maternity and therefore make no further recommendations in this area. **Conclusion: Probable neutral impact.**	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access, and of course, be subjected to the standby and callout policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.	There is no additional evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations for those who are pregnant or on maternity leave.	
Care experience (Looked after children, Corporate Parenting responsibilities)	While there is currently no evidence to suggest that care experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues, 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.	All SQA employees are entitled to use, access and be subjected to the Standby & Callout Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this scheme could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of care experience. The absence of evidence should be rectified, if possible, by collection of data relating to care experience.	There is no evidence to indicate that the Standby & Callout Policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Care Experienced.	

Conclusion, Monitoring, and rationale

Briefly summarise the positive impacts of your work for people who share protected characteristics	Neutral impacts identified
How will you monitor the real impacts?	Consider which groups might be affected. Note your strategy in the "Monitoring actions" table at the top of this document
Have you identified negative impacts against equality groups?	No negative impacts identified

If yes, have you identified mitigating actions?	**Not applicable**
How will you monitor the effectiveness of mitigating actions?	**Note your strategy in the "Mitigating actions" table at the top of this document**
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?	Not applicable