



January 2020

PSNC Briefing 004/20: Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Completing your declaration

Community pharmacy contractors will be able to make a declaration for a Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) payment for the 2019/20 Scheme **between 9am on Monday 3rd February 2020 and 11.59pm on Friday 28th February 2020**.

This PSNC Briefing provides further information on how to make a declaration and the validation process for the gateway criteria.

For previous Quality Payments Schemes, contractors had to make a declaration that they met the gateway and quality criteria on a specified 'review date'. In the 2019/20 PQS, there is no specified review date. Contractors can make their PQS declaration at any time during the declaration period and will be required to confirm in their declaration that they:

- meet all the gateway criteria and the domain(s) that they are claiming for; and
- have the evidence that they meet the criteria and domains on the day of their declaration.

The only exception to this requirement is if the contractor is planning to meet the Sugar Sweetened Beverages quality criterion in which case they have until 31st March 2020 to do so.

Contractors wishing to claim a PQS payment will be required to submit their declaration online to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) via the [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#).

Contractors must meet all the gateway criteria to be eligible to claim for a PQS payment; however, meeting the gateway criteria will not in itself earn a PQS payment. Contractors will also be required to answer questions in the PQS declaration on all the quality criteria that make up the six domains, even if they do not intend to claim for all six domains. The answers provided to the domain questions will, therefore, determine the PQS payment that contractors get paid.

Declaration questions

The declaration questions which will be asked in the MYS portal have been published on the [NHSBSA website \(www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pqs\)](#); see the link in the blue alerts box at the top of the page.

Completing the declaration and validation of the gateway criteria

Contractors can start adding data on the MYS portal when it opens at 9am on 3rd February 2020 and they will be able to re-enter the portal to add further information before the deadline. However, contractors must remember to re-enter the MYS portal and submit the declaration before Friday 28th February 2020 at 11.59pm otherwise they will not be entitled to a PQS payment. Late declarations will not be accepted and if contractors claimed an Aspiration payment but fail to claim a PQS payment within the required time, the Aspiration payment will be recovered as part of the reconciliation process.

Contractors should be aware that due to the increase in the number of quality criteria and the requirement to submit summary audit data, completing the PQS declaration will take longer than for previous Schemes.

Contractors are therefore encouraged to ensure they give themselves enough time to complete the process.

Contractors are reminded that once their declaration has been submitted, even if submitted in error, it cannot then be altered. It is therefore imperative that contractors are satisfied that their declaration is complete and can demonstrate that the information they submit is correct.

When a contractor logs into the MYS portal to make their declaration, they should see a 'Pharmacy quality scheme' tab, which should be clicked on to allow them to start their declaration. Once the contractor has pressed the 'start' button and read the introductory information, an assessment of whether their pharmacy has met the three gateway criteria (Advanced Services, NHSmail and NHS website) will be displayed on the MYS portal; national datasets will be used to determine whether a contractor has met these three gateway criteria. There is no national dataset for the safeguarding gateway criterion, as there are different routes for achieving Level 2 safeguarding. Contractors will therefore need to make a declaration on the MYS portal that they meet this gateway criterion, which may be subject to PPV. Contractors should therefore ensure they keep records and certificates of who has achieved Level 2 safeguarding.

Validation of the gateway criteria – contractors who meet the gateway criteria

The automatic verification assessment of whether a contractor has met three of the scheme's gateway criteria (Advanced Services, NHSmail and NHS website) will be confirmed against the latest national datasets which will be updated twice weekly.

If the MYS portal shows that the contractor has met all three of the gateway criteria, for which there are national datasets, they can continue and declare if they meet the safeguarding gateway criterion and the domains, they wish to claim payment for.

Once the declaration has been submitted, the contractor will receive an email from the NHSBSA confirming that the declaration has been successfully submitted and will show if contractors have met the gateway criteria and which domains they have claimed payment for (to ensure receipt of the confirmation email, contractors should add manage.your.service@notifications.service.gov.uk to their safe senders list before submitting). This email should be retained by the contractor as proof that the declaration was submitted and the date of submission.

If contractors do not receive a confirmation email, it could be because they have not submitted the declaration. In such cases, the declaration is not complete, and contractors will **not** be eligible for a PQS payment. Contractors should also check their junk email folder in case the email has been filed in there. If contractors do not receive the confirmation email within one day of submitting their declaration, they should email: nhsbsa.pharmacysupport@nhs.net

Validation of the gateway criteria – contractors who do not meet the gateway criteria

If the contractor does not meet all three of the gateway criteria (for which national datasets exist), this will be stated by the MYS portal. In the first three weeks of the declaration period, if a contractor fails this automatic gateway assessment, they will be unable to make a PQS declaration. This is to enable the contractor to review their gateway data and take the necessary corrective action to meet the gateway criterion/criteria that they have failed. Please note, contractors will not be able to take corrective action to meet the NHS website gateway criterion as contractors were required to meet this criterion between 1st October 2019 and 11.59pm on 30th November 2019. If contractors did not meet the gateway criterion within the required time period, they will not be eligible for a PQS payment.

Once corrective action is taken (to meet the Advanced Services or NHSmail gateway criteria) and this is updated in the relevant national dataset, MYS will be updated to allow the contractor to make their declaration.

Contractors are encouraged to make their declaration early in the declaration period to take advantage of this MYS gateway assessment. Commencing the declaration process at the start of the declaration period will enable

the contractor to then take corrective action, if necessary, and have their compliance with the gateway criteria confirmed by MYS the following week.

Should a contractor need further information regarding their gateway assessment or wish to query the result, they will need to contact the NHSBSA Provider Assurance team at nhsbsa.pharmacysupport@nhs.net ahead of making their declaration.

Validation of the gateway criteria – contractors who do not meet the gateway criteria (final week of the declaration period)

In the final week of the declaration period, MYS will be configured to enable a declaration to be made even when the contractor has been assessed as not meeting all three of the gateway criteria for which national datasets exist. This is to allow contractors who take action to meet either the Advanced Services or NHSmail gateway criterion in the last week of the declaration period to still make a PQS declaration. Where this happens, contractors will be assessed against the final dataset which will be published at midday on Monday 2nd March 2020.

If a contractor makes a PQS declaration and is assessed as not meeting the gateway criteria from the national datasets published on Monday 2nd March 2020, they will not receive a PQS payment unless they are able to demonstrate how they had met the gateway criteria before the closure of the declaration window. These contractors will receive an email to their shared premises specific NHSmail account following the publication of the dataset on Monday 2nd March 2020 advising them to email the NHSBSA Provider Assurance Team (nhsbsa.pharmacysupport@nhs.net) providing evidence demonstrating how they had met the gateway criteria during the declaration window. The deadline for this is **Friday 6th March 2020**.

The NHSBSA Provider Assurance Team will review all evidence provided and where it is sufficient to enable verification, contractors will receive a PQS payment. If the evidence is not sufficient to enable verification, contractors will be informed that no PQS payment will be made. It is the contractor's responsibility to provide the necessary evidence of meeting the gateway criteria by the 6th March 2020 deadline.

PharmOutcomes

If contractors have used PharmOutcomes to record their audit data for all or any of the PQS audits (NSAID audit, sodium valproate audit or lithium, methotrexate, amiodarone or phenobarbital audits), most of the summary information required will be pre-populated into the MYS declaration when contractors come to make their declaration. Please note, the use of PharmOutcomes is optional and not a PQS requirement.

The only information that contractors will be required to enter for these audits on the PQS declaration is the start and end dates of all the audits and the number of patients who declined to participate in the sodium valproate audit or lithium, methotrexate, amiodarone or phenobarbital audits. This information could not be recorded on PharmOutcomes, therefore at the start of each of the audits on PharmOutcomes there is advice to make a separate record detailing this information.

Contractors are also advised that if they have used PharmOutcomes to record their audit data, they should ensure they have finished entering their audit data into PharmOutcomes at least the day before making their PQS declaration. This is because:

- PharmOutcomes data is transferred to MYS overnight so the information from PharmOutcomes will not be available on MYS until the following day; and
- once contractors start their PQS declaration on MYS, the data that is pulled from PharmOutcomes will be auto-populated onto the MYS declaration for the audits. Therefore, if additional audit information is added to PharmOutcomes after the PQS declaration has started, this will not be updated on MYS.
- It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that the information that they are supplying in the declaration is accurate.

Evidence of meeting the criteria and domains

When a contractor makes their PQS declaration they will be required to confirm they have evidence to show that they meet the safeguarding gateway criterion and the domain(s) that they are claiming for on the day of their declaration. [PSNC Briefing 060/19: Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Evidence checklist](#) provides contractors with examples of suggested evidence, in a checklist format, that they can use to confirm they have the necessary evidence ready to make their PQS declaration.

It is important that contractors have this evidence to assure themselves that they meet all the gateway criteria and quality domains that they intend to declare that they meet; as well as to be able to provide this evidence to the NHSBSA Provider Assurance Team (if requested) who will undertake PPV on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure that these requirements are met.

Evidence of meeting gateway criteria from previous QPS declarations will not mean the pharmacy is eligible for a PQS payment.

Where a change of ownership has occurred, contractors must have evidence to demonstrate meeting the PQS requirements since the change of ownership. Evidence from the previous contractor is not eligible, even if the same management team and staff are in place in the pharmacy.

Checking whether a contractor has submitted their PQS declaration

To enable contractors, head offices and LPCs to monitor whether a pharmacy has submitted their PQS declaration, the [NHSBSA weekly validation data](#) (available under the 'PQS datasets' section) will be updated, during the PQS declaration period, each Tuesday and Friday to show which pharmacies have successfully submitted a PQS declaration (this will not show which domains the pharmacy has claimed for, just if they have successfully submitted a PQS declaration).

When a contractor is completing their PQS declaration, they will also have the option of adding in an additional email address, e.g. a head office contact, who will then also receive a copy of the email, that the pharmacy will receive, from the NHSBSA confirming that a declaration has been made and which domains the pharmacy has claimed for.

MYS management information report

Contractors or users with management level access to MYS can access a PQS management information (MI) report directly from the portal for the pharmacies that they have management level access, to provide information about any declarations submitted over a defined period. The MI report will contain a list of these pharmacies (by ODS code) that have completed a PQS declaration, the date it was submitted, who submitted it and the expected points based on the answers provided by the user.

Contact the MYS helpdesk at nhsbsa.mys@nhs.net if you require assistance with management level access.

Reconciliation of Aspiration payment and PQS payment

The Aspiration payment paid to contractors will be reconciled with the PQS payment claimed by contractors, and then contractors will be paid (if appropriate) their residual PQS payment on 1st April 2020.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact the [PSNC Services Team](#).