



July 2021

Pharmacy Quality Scheme 2020/21 Part 1 Archive

Scheme requirements

To meet the requirements of the Part 1 scheme, contractors need to complete all 14 actions set out in the checklist below, all of which relate to the response to the pandemic; many contractors will already have undertaken most if not all of the actions in the checklist over the last few months.

[Download the Part 1 2020/21 PQS Checklist](#)

PSNC has published the following support materials for contractors:

- [PSNC Briefing which provides advice on what evidence should be retained](#) to demonstrate that contractors have complied with the scheme;
- answers to [frequently asked questions](#) on the scheme (these can now be found below);
- a [PSNC 10-minute digital guide](#) to the scheme (this can now be found on the [Pharmacy Quality Scheme – Archive page](#)); and
- a [record sheet](#) to capture staff briefings, or training sessions.

[National Pharmacy Association \(NPA\) resources](#) (Member login required) are also available to support.

Funding and claims

The funding made available for the scheme is **£18.75m** and all contractors meeting the requirements can claim a payment of **£1,630** via the NHSBSA's [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#).

Claims via MYS can be made until **23:59 on 29th January 2021**. Payments will be made by the NHSBSA in line with the following schedule:

Claim dates	Payment Date
14th July 2020 to 5th August 2020	1st September 2020
6th August 2020 to 5th September 2020	1st October 2020
6th September 2020 to 5th October 2020	30th October 2020
6th October 2020 to 5th November 2020	1st December 2020

6th November 2020 to 5th December 2020	31st December 2020
6th December 2020 to 5th January 2021	1st February 2021
6th January 2021 to 29th January 2021	1st March 2021

Any residual funding not paid to contractors within the Part 1 scheme will be distributed as part of payments in the Part 2 2020/21 scheme. Payments will be made by the NHSBSA as soon as possible after a claim has been submitted, with, for example, any claims submitted by 5th August 2020 being paid on 1st September 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions

Background and general

Q. Do I have to engage with the PQS?

No. The scheme is voluntary – contractors do not need to engage with it – but PSNC recommends that all contractors should seek to meet the checklist criteria. There are significant elements of the checklist that will support contractors to additionally comply with elements of Health and Safety legislation. Contractors that successfully meet all the requirements will receive a payment which will be funded from a £18.75m budget. It has been agreed that completion of the Part 1 scheme may be a Gateway requirement for the Part 2 scheme.

Q. Which pharmacies are eligible to take part in the PQS?

All pharmacies on the pharmaceutical list in England (i.e. excluding Local Pharmaceutical Services (LPS) contracts) are eligible to take part in the PQS, including pharmacies that are part of the Pharmacy Access Scheme (PhAS) and distance selling pharmacies.

Q. Are distance selling pharmacies eligible to take part in the PQS?

Yes.

Q. Are pharmacies that qualify for the Pharmacy Access Scheme (PhAS) eligible to take part in the PQS?

Yes.

Q. Are pharmacies that hold local pharmaceutical services (LPS) contracts with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) eligible to take part in the PQS?

No. Pharmacies that hold LPS contracts with NHSE&I are not eligible to take part in the PQS. However, where LPS contracts mirror the contractual arrangements of those of the national contractual framework, NHSE&I may decide to make local payments that are equivalent to the PQS. LPS contractors who are unsure if they would be eligible for such a local payment should contact their local NHSE&I team for advice.

Q. Is this the only requirement for PQS in 2020/21?

No, a second part of the PQS for 2020/21 has also been agreed.

Q. Has NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance on Part 1 of the 2020/21 PQS?

No, this part of the PQS for 2020/21 has been developed as a checklist and declaration, which should be straightforward to complete. Guidance is available in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the PSNC website.

Q. I have recently bought a pharmacy; am I eligible to claim a payment?

Yes, if the ODS (F) code remains the same and provided no previous claim for the current PQS period has been made. To be eligible to claim a payment, contractors must have completed all the actions listed in the PQS 2020/21 Part 1 checklist and declared that all actions have been carried out by the end of the submission window. Only one claim can be associated with the same ODS code (only one claim is allowed per pharmacy).

If the pharmacy has changed its ODS code as part of the sale, then the new contractor (new ODS code) would be able to make a claim, provided the new contractor has completed all the actions listed in the PQS 2020/21 Part 1 checklist and declared that all actions have been carried out by the end of the submission window.

If the change of ownership occurred after 29th January 2021, then the new owner would not be able to participate in either part of the PQS for 2020/21.

Q. I have recently opened a new pharmacy; am I eligible to claim a payment?

Yes, if the new contractor has completed all the actions listed in the Part 1 PQS checklist and declared that all actions have been carried out by the end of the submission window for the Part 1 2020/21 PQS.

If the pharmacy was opened after 29th January 2021, then the contractor would not be able to participate in either part of the PQS for 2020/21.

Q. How do I declare I have completed the actions in the checklist to make my claim?

Contractors can make their declarations on the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) Manage Your Service (MYS) application between 9am on 14th July 2020 and 23:59 on 29th January 2021.

Q. Are there any gateway criteria for the Part 1 2020/21 PQS?

No.

Q. Are there any points associated with each of the checklist criteria?

No. There are no points assigned to the criteria on the checklist, as they all have to be completed before a claim can be made.

Q. Do I need to make a MYS declaration if my pharmacy has not met all the checklist criteria?

No, as you are not eligible to claim a payment.

Q. Who will decide if a contractor meets the checklist criteria at the review point?

The contractor, or their representative, will complete the declaration; therefore, it is for the contractor, or their representative to decide if they have met all of the checklist criteria.

Q. If I was unable to claim a PQS payment last year, can I claim one in 2020/21?

Yes. Participation in a previous scheme does not affect a contractor's ability to be able to claim a PQS payment for the Part 1 2020/21 PQS. Contractors won't be able to participate in the Part 2 2020/21 PQS unless they have first completed Part 1, as that is a Gateway criterion for the Part 2 scheme.

Q. When can I make a declaration for a PQS payment?

The window for claiming a PQS payment on MYS is between 9am on **14th July 2020 and 23:59 on 29th January 2021**. It is important not to miss this deadline, as you will not be able to claim a PQS payment if you do.

Q. Can I submit my PQS declaration while I am still working through the actions to meet the checklist criteria?

No. A declaration should not be made if all criteria have not been completed. Payment is for completion of all the actions in the checklist.

Funding

Q. How much funding has been allocated to the H1 2020/21 PQS?

This scheme has funding of £18.75m.

Q. What is the funding value of this part of PQS to my pharmacy?

Payment for contractors who claim by the deadline (23:59 on 29th January 2021) will be £1,630 per contractor.

Q. Why is the funding envelope less than what was agreed to be the annual funding for PQS in the 5-year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF)?

The PQS for 2020/21 is being agreed in two parts. Therefore, the funding envelope has been split across both parts. The first part is a checklist that contractors will need to declare that they have actioned and have in place all the listed criteria. This component of the PQS for 2020/21 has a funding envelope of £18.75m. The remainder of the £75m PQS annual budget (£56.25m) is being applied to the Part 2 scheme.

Q. What happens to any unclaimed money for the first part of the 2020/21 PQS?

Payments will be paid out of the £18.75m funding assigned to this part of the 2020/21 PQS. Where there are unspent funds, these will be paid out to contractors as part of payments for the Part 2 2020/21 PQS.

Q. Is there an Aspiration payment for the Part 1 2020/21PQS?

No.

Q. What happens if I have not met all the criteria in the checklist when I make my PQS declaration during the declaration period?

Where pharmacies have not met any individual criteria in the checklist, the contractor will not be eligible to receive a payment.

Q. When will I be paid following the submission of a claim on MYS?

Any claims submitted by 5th August 2020 will be paid to contractors on 1st September 2020. Contractors submitting after 5th August 2020 will be paid in line with the payment schedule below:

Claim dates	Payment Date
14th July 2020 to 5th August 2020	1st September 2020
6th August 2020 to 5th September 2020	1st October 2020
6th September 2020 to 5th October 2020	30th October 2020
6th October 2020 to 5th November 2020	1st December 2020
6th November 2020 to 5th December 2020	31st December 2020
6th December 2020 to 5th January 2021	1st February 2021
6th January 2021 to 29th January 2021	1st March 2021

Pharmacy & Premises

Q. Where can I find a COVID-19 infection control risk assessment for the pharmacy premises?

There are a variety of risk assessment tools that contractors can use to assess their premises and their procedures.

PSNC has published a risk assessment template that will help pharmacy teams to identify further potential changes which could be made to their pharmacy environment or procedures during the pandemic to increase the safety of staff and patients.

- [**Social Distancing and Infection Control Risk Review Template**](#)

Risk assessment templates and guidance are also available from:

- [**National Pharmacy Association**](#)
- Pharmacists' Defence Association risk assessment tool '[**Reducing the risk of COVID-19 in community pharmacy**](#)'
- [**Royal Pharmaceutical Society**](#)

Q. I want to install protective screens in my pharmacy. How do I go about it, and will I be reimbursed for this cost?

Contractors who are still looking to install protective screens will need to source their own maintenance contractors to carry out the work.

To support the installation of bollards, physical barriers or screens, NHSE&I made a £300 payment to all pharmacies, except distance-selling pharmacies. This funding came from outside the global sum. The majority of contractors will have received this payment on 1st May 2020. Whilst it was not itemised on the FP34 Schedule of Payments, the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) sent letters to contractors confirming the payment.

Q. What mitigations should I be putting in place to identified risks?

That will depend on the risk identified. Contractors will need to decide based on the risks identified the appropriate actions to take to minimise the risk to their employees and their patients.

Q. How do I demonstrate that I have revised my SOPs or guidance?

SOPs and guidance should indicate their date of issue and future review dates.

Q. Where can I find a poster to display in my window to prevent symptomatic patients from entering the pharmacy?

A poster can be found on the [**Public Health England \(PHE\) Campaign Resource Centre website**](#) to display at the entry points to your pharmacy. Please note that this poster is sometimes updated, so please ensure you are always displaying the most up to date version.

Q. Where can I find appropriate and up to date COVID-19 posters, warnings and information to display?

Posters, warnings and information to display to the public can be found on the [**Public Health England \(PHE\) Campaign Resource Centre website**](#). Please note that these posters, warnings and information are sometimes updated, so please ensure you are always displaying the most up to date version.

Q. How do I demonstrate that I have displayed my posters?

Contractors are recommended to keep photographic evidence of the appropriate posters in place as part of their evidence of compliance with the specific criteria.

See the PSNC PQS Evidence Checklist

Staffing

Q. Where can guidance on staff risk assessments be found?

There are a variety of risk assessment tools that contractors can use to support informing staff of their risk factors for poorer outcomes of COVID-19, individual risk assessment and to support putting in place any appropriate mitigations.

Staff risk assessment templates and guidance is available from:

- NHS Employers [risk assessment](#) for staff – includes links to several examples from NHS Trusts
- [National Pharmacy Association](#)
- Pharmacists' Defence Association risk assessment tool '[Reducing the risk of COVID-19 in community pharmacy](#)'
- [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#)
- [NHSE&I webinar recording and slides](#)

Q. As Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) staff members have been identified to be at higher risk of complications linked to COVID-19 infection, should I just do risk assessments with them?

You must ensure that all staff are informed that a risk assessment is available, the risk factors for poorer outcomes of COVID-19, to help them understand why a risk assessment may be relevant to them and that you wish to conduct one with them to help them understand their risks and work with them to mitigate any identified risks following completion of the risk assessment.

This is a collaborative process and staff members of BAME background as well as those who are classed as at-risk due to an underlying medical condition or pregnancy are all encouraged to have a risk assessment. Staff members should be encouraged to meet with their manager to complete the risk assessment if they wish.

Q. Does the risk assessment mean all BAME staff members should work from home or change their job role?

No, the risk assessment should allow a shared understanding of the level of risk the staff member has. This therefore provides the line manager with a better understanding to consider mitigations that could be put in place to reduce the staff member's exposure. Considerations, where reasonable to implement, may include whether the staff member can work from home, or be redeployed, or used in another part of the pharmacy that may reduce their risk.

Q. What should contractors do if members of staff refuse to have an individual risk assessment?

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have written to NHS providers, including community pharmacy contractors, requesting the urgent completion of staff risk assessments. In light of the new risks to healthcare staff posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, [the letter from NHSE&I](#) outlines the responsibilities of employers as well as the support available to help them.

Contractors are recommended to:

- Communicate to their team members the approach being taken to risk assessment, reassuring them as to the nature of the assessment being undertaken and the support available to them. The contractor's organisational policy regarding confidentiality should be clearly stated (and complied with);
- Share their chosen risk assessment tool or guidance with all team members to help them identify whether they are in an at-risk group; and
- Explain the need for staff to discuss with their manager any concerns as a result of the risk assessment guide or any concern or anxiety they might have (and offer them alternative routes of support prior to these discussions).

If despite all of this a staff member is unwilling to participate in a risk assessment or is unwilling to provide information to support the completion of a risk assessment, then they are within their rights not to have a risk assessment. Contractors in this position are encouraged to document this and request that the staff member complete a declaration to confirm their wishes.

Q. Should I be thinking of carrying out a risk assessment for my staff currently working from home, who will be returning to work in the pharmacy soon?

Yes. All members of staff should be offered a risk assessment.

Q. A member of my staff has told me that they have a medical condition, therefore they are asking for a risk assessment for COVID-19. I did not have any knowledge of their condition and they have never asked for any adjustments to be made to their role or work activities. Can I ask my staff member what their condition is?
The staff member does not need to disclose their condition and only needs to inform you that they have an underlying medical condition which is classed as a vulnerability in respect to COVID19. Contractors and line managers are advised not to ask any questions about the nature of the condition, e.g. the diagnosis, symptoms, investigations, or treatment that may lead to a disclosure of the staff members' medical condition. Their declaration that they have a medical condition that categorises them as vulnerable is adequate to warrant the risk assessment if they wish to have the assessment. If any staff member wishes to disclose what their condition is, you must keep it confidential and there is no need to record it as part of the risk assessment.

Q. What if I do not complete the risk assessment by the end of July – am I no longer eligible for the PQS?

No. Contractors have until the last day of submission (29th January 2021) to offer and complete individual risk assessments with their staff to enable them to declare in relation to Part 1 2020/21 PQS. The submission request in July was to give NHSE&I an overview of staff numbers and the volume of risk assessments completed.

Q. Are pharmacy staff eligible for COVID-19 testing, and if so, how is this accessed?

Yes, frontline workers, including community pharmacy staff in England, can access free testing for COVID-19, via the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) national testing service. Testing will allow those currently unable to return to work because they or a member of their family or household have symptoms of coronavirus to know whether they do have the virus.

A portal for booking COVID-19 tests for key workers, including community pharmacy team members, is available for use by team members and employers: [Essential workers: apply for a coronavirus test \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Q. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should pharmacy teams be using?

Public Health England (PHE) has updated its guidance on the wearing of facemasks in primary and community health care settings. In summary, the recommendation is that all pharmacy staff now wear Type IIR facemasks, unless the pharmacy is COVID-19 secure, including all staff being able to maintain a social distance from one another.

This aligns the PHE guidance with PSNC's guidance to contractors, issued in mid-June.

[**Read the updated PHE guidance**](#)

It is important to note that while pharmacy staff should now wear masks in line with the revised guidance, it is imperative that social distancing and self-isolation (where appropriate) continue to be practised and hygiene measures, such as regular hand washing, continue to be followed.

Q. What should a contractor do if they have no PPE available?

If contractors are close to running out of PPE, in line with DHSC and NHSE&I guidance, they can obtain an emergency supply of PPE from the [Government's PPE portal](#).

Emergency Closures & Business continuity procedures

Q. Where a symptomatic patient presents in the pharmacy and is unable to leave due to their medical condition, but the pharmacy does not have a closed area available for the patient to isolate in prior to the arrival of an ambulance, what should be done?

If, a person is too unwell to return home and there is no closed isolation area, the pharmacy may need to temporarily close to assist the patient and minimise the risk of transmission to other patients. The use of full personal protective equipment (PPE) – Type IIR mask, apron, eye protection and gloves – is necessary as detailed

in the NHSE&I community pharmacy SOP to help to protect the wearer and avoid a close contact for the purposes of Test and Trace. All personal protective equipment should then be disposed of as clinical waste.

Adopting Good Practice and guidance

Q. Is there a minimum requirement as to how many good practice examples during the pandemic are to be implemented?

There is no minimum requirement, but contractors are advised to use the examples on the GPhC website to learn from others and to continuously improve outcomes for people using their pharmacy services. GPhC have [collated examples on their website](#).

Contractors are recommended to keep a record of examples they have reviewed and those they have implemented as evidence of meeting the criteria.

Q. Who are registered staff members?

Registered staff are pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.