

Welcome to the October 2022 CPWY Committee Blog!

The Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) 2022/23

I would like to start this blog by thanking all the people involved in trying to re-negotiate a better deal for community pharmacy with the Department of Health, following the recent announcements by PSNC. We all appreciate how arduous a task that must have been, when there is almost no love shown from our paymasters for the hard work and effort all our pharmacy teams put in day in and day out.

Below is part of PSNC's recent response:

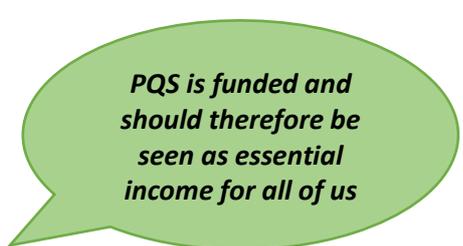
*"In that context, and given Government's resolute refusal to move beyond the five-year deal which they clearly view as set in stone, we are pleased to have improved on the original offer from the NHS and Government as much as we did, getting a crucial £100 million margin write-off and protection of the Transitional Payment to **help compensate for rising pressures, as well as significantly reducing both the scope of the PQS and the pace of rollout of new services.** Rejecting this deal would have lost all of these benefits for contractors, as well as ruining any chance of a more constructive relationship with our new Government, which was simply not an option".*

As we approach entering the fifth year of the pharmacy contract many of us are dismayed at the current level of funding. At the height of flu season and the ever-increasing workload, rising cost of drugs and business overheads, all coupled with a cost of living crisis, many contractors have a genuine concern about their long term sustainability.

The timing of the PQS seems to be another burden for us on the coalface.

However, when we look into the detail, we see that the PQS this time around is not as onerous or complex as previous years. There is nothing new of note, the bulk of it we have all seen and done in previous cycles. As such, time restraints should not be seen as an obstacle.

Another important point to consider is that the PQS is funded and should therefore be seen as essential income for all of us. Contractors who do not participate, miss out on this funding altogether and may find themselves worse off financially. Also, some things that were in the PQS (i.e. funded) are now Terms of Service - so we should seek to access this funding while we still can.

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The PQS highlights the important work pharmacies continue to do and has demonstrated how pharmacies can add value to the NHS. Further information on the outcomes that show how the NHS benefits from the work undertaken in the PQS can be found on the links below:

[PSNC Briefing 021/22: Outcomes of the 2021/22 Pharmacy Quality Scheme Infographic on the Outcomes of the 2021/22 Pharmacy Quality Scheme](#)

The outcomes of the PQS 2021/22 for West Yorkshire are available via the CPWY website here: <https://www.cpw.org/pharmacy-contracts-services/additional-information/pgs/>.

PSNC has produced all the information you need to get started with this year's PQS. You may want to start by watching the [PSNC PQS 2022/23 Digital Guide](#), a 30-minute digital guide that talks contractors and pharmacy teams through the requirements of the scheme.

The PQS officially began on 10th October 2022 and has a declaration period **between 9am on Monday 6th February 2023 and 11.59pm on 3rd March 2023**. Contractors must have evidence to demonstrate meeting the Gateway Criteria and the Domains that they have claimed for **by the end of 31st March 2023**. As with previous schemes, it has £75 million funding available and contractors are able to claim an Aspiration Payment if they wish to **between 9am on 10th October 2022 and 11.59pm on Friday 4th November 2022**.

Even if you have not taken part in the PQS previously, you can all start now. One of the things we have learnt over recent times is that things can change rapidly, for example the COVID-19 regulations. PSNC recommends contractors to focus on Gateway Criteria and training requirements as initial priorities.

The full details of the PQS scheme for 2022/23 can be found at: <https://psnc.org.uk/quality-and-regulations/pharmacy-quality-scheme/>. **As always help is also available for all contractors on the CPWY website:** <https://www.cpwym.org/pharmacy-contracts-services/additional-information/pqs/>.

CPWY has added local Information to the [CPWY PQS website page](#) providing local and relevant information required for the completion of the PQS 2022/23 Gateway and Domain Criteria. The CPWY team are also available to support contractors with the PQS. For further help and advice please contact Phil Wiles via email pcnsupport@cpwy.org or phone 07793 212 080.

Although the PQS comprises additional workload at a time we all feel at capacity, the improvement in quality benefits patients, the NHS and community pharmacy overall. It has led to many funded services being offered through community pharmacy bringing in long overdue and much needed income. Furthermore, taking part in the PQS demonstrates to the wider system that community pharmacy is committed to continually improving, meaning we are ready and able to offer more NHS funded services should they be commissioned.

It is my HOPE that one day we are working inclusively within an NHS structure that values and rewards community pharmacy with an appropriate and FAIR contract that recognises the tremendous efforts of pharmacy teams providing high quality services within the communities that they serve.

Sab Shah

[Committee Member of Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire](#)