

April 2020

Dear Participant,

Re: Qpoint service provision during the COVID-19 NHS crisis.

**Summary: Qpoint will be continuing to run all our EQA schemes.**

All of our schemes will continue to operate at the same frequency with no disruption to distribution and deadline dates. The safety of our participants paramount, so some changes to the HbA1c scheme will be made to ensure the risk continues to be minimal.

**Is EQA still important?**

Absolutely yes. Having confidence your device is producing accurate results is as important in a crisis as it is in normal working conditions. In addition, the use of equipment by a greater range of potentially less-experienced staff means reliance on device performance is even more important. EQA analysis can provide reassurance and help to quickly identify issues which may affect patient care.

**Can Qpoint keep delivering service?**

Qpoint is an NHS operated external quality assessment scheme, and as such, our staff are supporting critical Point of Care Testing services within the NHS. We have however made a commitment to your service and will endeavour to provide quality assessment and fulfil our obligations. We pride ourselves on first class customer support and, while you may experience some delay in our communication responses, we will, as much as possible, continue to be available for advice if you do have any concerns about the performance of your device.

**Are Qpoint samples safe?**

Our glucose and ketone samples do not contain biological material and therefore carry no risk. Our urine hCG scheme utilises donations of human urine obtained before the coronavirus outbreak so we believe there is no risk of infection. In addition, the latest published data has shown urine to not contain any detectable viral load. The HbA1c scheme uses fresh whole blood from human donors. As such we will be altering the sample type until we can be assured that the risk is minimal.

**Will Qpoint be changing the frequency of your schemes?**

One of the key principles of Qpoint is to distribute samples at a frequency which supports prompt follow up of poorly performing devices whilst assisting staff in maintaining competency on devices. We shall therefore be continuing to supply our schemes monthly.

If your organisation has decided to not return EQA in this time, we ask that you email us to inform us of this decision.

For any further information or queries, please contact [office.qpoint@nhs.net](mailto:office.qpoint@nhs.net).

We wish you all strength and well wishes for you and your services in this challenging time.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Katy Heaney  
Scheme Director