

Pharmacy Quality Scheme (2025/26) – Guide for Pharmacy Contractors

The Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) 2025/26 is a program that rewards community pharmacies for delivering quality in areas like clinical effectiveness, patient safety, and patient experience. It's part of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF). This document will act as a guide for contractors who are unfamiliar with the scheme, or contractors wishing to refresh their knowledge. This document is only intended as a short guide, links to full details are provided throughout.

Gateway Criterion for the Service

Pharmacy owners must have signed up to deliver the Pharmacy First Service and the Pharmacy Contraception service by the end of 31st August 2025 and remain registered for both services until the end of the scheme, 31st March 2026. Pharmacy owners will not be required to make a declaration for this gateway criterion as this will be verified by a post payment review of the pharmacy owner's declaration to deliver the service and subsequent registration from 1st September 2025 until the end of the scheme, 31st March 2026.

Training Requirements

Pharmacy owners and pharmacy team members should note that there is a requirement in the 2025/26 Scheme that may mean that staff are required to repeat training and e-assessments that they have completed previously, depending on the stated validity period and when staff completed the training and e-assessments. The table in our [Summary of the training requirements for the PQS 2025/26](#) resource details the validity periods and the dates in which the training and e-assessments must have been completed within.

An electronic certificate of completion of the training will be provided following the completion of each of the e-assessments. Pharmacy owners must keep a copy of the personalised certificate for each member of staff as evidence that the training and e-assessment has been completed.

What are the Quality Criteria in each Domain?

Domain 1 – Medicines Optimisation	Domain 2 – Patient Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Palliative and End of Life Care Action Plan ▪ Consulting with people with mental health problems – CPPE learning ▪ Respiratory: Use of a spacer in patients aged 5–15 years ▪ Respiratory: Referrals for patients using 3 or more short-acting bronchodilator inhalers in 6 months ▪ Emergency Contraception – CPPE learning & e-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Antimicrobial Stewardship – Pharmacy First consultations – Clinical Audit ▪ Sepsis – CPPE learning & e-assessment ▪ Regularising Enhanced DBS checks for registered pharmacy professionals

Full details on each domain can be found in the [PQS section of the CPE website](#). It is important to note you must all the quality criteria in each domain to be eligible to claim payment for the service.

Funding for the Scheme

For the 2025/26 PQS, £30 million funding is available, and pharmacy owners will be able to claim an Aspiration payment if they wish to, later this year. The domain(s) have a designated maximum number of points dependent on the participating pharmacy owner's total prescription volume in 2024/25.

Pharmacy owners, who opened part way through 2024/25, will have their total prescription volume determined as the average number of prescriptions dispensed per month during the full months, they were open in 2024/25 multiplied by 12. Please note that change in ownership for the purpose of the PQS banding only is not treated as a new pharmacy owner.

Band	Band 1	Band 2
Annual items	0-1,800	1,801 and above
Medicines optimisation	1.50	30
Patient safety	1	20
Total	2.50	50

The total funding for PQS 2025/26 is £30 million. The funding will be divided between qualifying pharmacies based on the number of points they have achieved up to a maximum £115 per point. Each point will have a minimum value of £57.50, based on all pharmacy owners achieving maximum points. Payments will be made to eligible pharmacy owners depending on the band they are placed in, how many domains they have declared they are meeting, and hence points claimed.

The total number of points is 250,436 which means £30 million would deliver a value per point of £119.79.

However, each point is capped at a total of £115. So, the pharmacy owner would receive £115 per point they earned. This would mean that around £1.2 million (out of the £30 million) would remain undelivered through the PQS and would be considered in the delivery of the overall Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework funding agreement.

Aspiration payment

Pharmacy owners will be able to claim an Aspiration payment. The Aspiration payment is optional for pharmacy owners and not claiming it will not impact on the pharmacy owner's ability to claim payment for PQS 2025/26.

Pharmacy owners will need to make a declaration to the NHSBSA using [MYS](#) and indicate which domains they intend to achieve before the end of the declaration period. The aspiration payment must be claimed between 9am on 1st May 2025 to 11.59pm on 16th May 2025 for pharmacy owners to receive payment on 1st July 2025. More information on the aspiration payment can be found on the PQS section of the CPE website.

The maximum number of points for which a pharmacy owner can be paid an Aspiration payment is 75% of the number of points available. The value of each point for the Aspiration payment is set at £57.50 (i.e. the minimum value of a point for PQS 2025/26).

An example of payments for the service below:

PQS Band for 2025/26	Band 2
Maximum 'Aspiration points' which can be paid	37.5
Points intended to deliver, as per Aspiration payment declaration	50
Aspiration payment (paid at £57.50 per aspiration point)	£2,156.25
Points actually delivered, as per 2025/2026 declaration (made between 9am on 2nd February 2026 and 11.59pm on 27th February 2026)	50
Reconciliation payment (1st April 2026) (based on final value of £80 per point)	£1,843.75
Total 2025/26 PQS payment	£4,000

The PQS declaration (making a claim)

To receive a PQS payment the pharmacy owner must have met the gateway criterion by the end of 31st August 2025. The pharmacy owner must also declare between 9am on 2nd February 2026 and 11.59pm on 27th February 2026 as having met and have evidence demonstrating meeting one or more of the domains (please note, pharmacy owner must meet all the quality criteria in each domain to be eligible for a PQS payment in respect of that domain).

No PQS payment will be made to pharmacy owners that fail to submit their declaration by 11.59pm on 27th February 2026, even if they have evidence to demonstrate that they have undertaken the work to meet the scheme requirements. The overall level of the PQS payment will depend on how many of the domains the pharmacy owner declares it has met.

Resources for Contractors

- [CPE PQS webpage](#)
- [PQS action log and workbook](#)
- [Summary of the training requirements for PQS](#)
- [Action plan template 2025/26](#)
- [Training record sheet](#)