

October 2020

Dear Participant,

Re: Qpoint service provision during COVID-19 pandemic.

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 participant's paramount, so some changes to the HbA1c scheme will be made to ensure the risk continues to be minimal.

Is EQA still important?

Yes. Having confidence your device is producing accurate results is as important in challenging times 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 and during the coronavirus outbreak however 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 are taking extra precautions to reduce the risk of samples containing coronavirus. This includes mirroring the stringent criteria required for donating blood to the NHS Blood and Transplant service. Our Multiplex Respiratory Panel samples contain inactivated (non-infectious) viral material that can be safely manipulated outside of a microbiological safety cabinet, using local personal protective equipment procedures.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Katy Heaney
Scheme Director