

Cessation of Fortnightly UK NEQAS for Clinical Chemistry from 2026 – 2027 (advanced notice prior to re-registration in January 2026)

Dear Valued Participant,

FAO: Senior Management Team with oversight for Laboratory Quality

In April 2025 we introduced the UK NEQAS Monthly Clinical Chemistry Scheme and since then we have been running the Monthly and Fortnightly UK NEQAS Clinical Chemistry Schemes in parallel. However, owing to the success of the Monthly scheme and after reviewing all the data and taking on board feedback from Participants, we have decided to **only offer the UK NEQAS Monthly Clinical Chemistry Scheme for 2026 – 2027**. The last distribution of Fortnightly UK NEQAS for Clinical Chemistry will be 30/03/2026.

We have demonstrated that monthly External Quality Assessment (EQA) of clinical chemistry analytes provides a robust and convenient alternative to fortnightly EQA. It should allow laboratories scope to re-deploy time and resource to perform more in-depth analytical performance monitoring prompted by their EQA reports, which is highly pertinent.

Some key information about the UK NEQAS Monthly Clinical Chemistry Scheme:

- 3 specimens are distributed 11 times a year.
- The Monthly Scheme is fully ISO/IEC 17043:2023 Accredited.
- Data is sufficiently high powered to allow effective analytical performance monitoring.
- There will be no break in ABC scoring upon moving from the Fortnightly to Monthly scheme since historic data from Monthly distribution 170 will be migrated. Minor changes may be observed in ABC scores since alternate Fortnightly data will no longer contribute to these scores.
- Consolidation of participants into one Clinical Chemistry Scheme may give more robust target values for methods with smaller numbers of users.
- There is a mandatory requirement to return all results for all specimens for all analytes in all distributions, for which you are registered, before the result submission deadline (i.e. 100% participation rate). Late and amended results will be classed as poor performance and will not be accepted. If you are unable to determine a result, please enter XPL and provide an explanation in the comments field. In extreme circumstances, at the Scheme Organiser's discretion, we will accept late/amended results. Please email these, with an explanation, to birminghamquality@uhb.nhs.uk.
- Laboratories are expected to engage with all value-added elements of the scheme e.g. Q&A surveys.
- Automated transfer of results is available for existing "BQ-NPEX" users, with plans for transitioning this onto the new Labgnostic system in 2026.
- Modest cost savings are possible on the slightly lower re-registration price; however, you will release resource within your laboratory, both in reagents/equipment/consumables and personnel time.

We hope that you will opt to re-register with us for the UK NEQAS Monthly Clinical Chemistry Scheme in 2026 – 2027. Some other reasons as to why you might choose this option and other UK NEQAS Clinical Chemistry Schemes are summarised in our UK NEQAS Chemistry Position Paper (available via <https://birminghamquality.org.uk/why-choose-us/>).

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us by email on birminghamquality@uhb.nhs.uk or by phone on 0121 414 7300.

Yours faithfully,

Finlay MacKenzie

Director of Birmingham Quality, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust