

## UK NEQAS for H&I Newsletter October 2021

### CONTENTS

- 1 News
- 2 Scheme Updates for 2022-23
- 3 Distribution Timetable for 2022-23
- 4 UKAS Accreditation

#### 1. News

UK NEQAS for H&I have been very busy over the last few months working on a number of service improvement projects and providing our first virtual meetings.

#### Annual Participants' Meeting 2021

NEQAS host a participant meeting annually which allows us to feedback on performance over the previous year, highlight any issues or interesting trends and to inform participants of any changes for the upcoming distribution year. It also allows us to have open discussions on relevant topics and gives our participants a forum to raise concerns or ideas for improvements. We invite guest speakers to cover relevant scientific content and strive to make the day as interactive as possible. The meeting is usually held at a conference venue in the UK but we acknowledge this means it is difficult for our participants based in the rest of the world to attend. Due to the ongoing pandemic a face to face meeting was not possible in 2021 and as such the decision was taken to move to an online format.

The 2021 Annual Participants' Meeting was held on Zoom Webinar and was free to attend. There was a total of 153 registrations from 29 countries, 77% of those who registered attended the live event.

- 95% of attendees stated the meeting was beneficial for them.



#### UK NEQAS for H&I

**Director:** Dr Tracey Rees

**Deputy Director:** Deborah Pritchard

**Operations Manager:** Amy De'Ath

**Deputy Manager:** Melanie Bartley

**Healthcare Scientist Practitioner:** Geraint Clarke

**QA Officer:** Jack Jefferies

**MLA:** Owain Seldon



Pictured above taken prior to the pandemic (left to right): Geraint Clarke, Melanie Bartley, Amy De'Ath, and Deborah Pritchard

**Email:** [uknegashandi@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:uknegashandi@wales.nhs.uk)

**Website:** [www.uknegashandi.org.uk](http://www.uknegashandi.org.uk)

- 97% of attendees rated the scheme feedback sessions excellent or good.
- 94% of attendees rated the guest speaker excellent or good.
- 99% of attendees rated the education scheme feedback excellent or good.
- 94% of attendees would like to attend more NEQAS for H&I webinars.

There was some very positive feedback from attendees who commented *"All the presentations were of excellent quality - clearly summarising some complex data. Well done to everyone involved."*

All presentations are now available to watch on our website.

**New Website – [www.uknegashandi.org.uk](http://www.uknegashandi.org.uk)**

**Our new website was launched on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021!**



The new website ([www.uknegashandi.org.uk](http://www.uknegashandi.org.uk)) gives us improved flexibility and control over content so we can provide our participants, old and new, with the most up to date information about our services.

The website introduces the NEQAS team, the history of the service (which started back in 1975!), as well as information on the wider NEQAS Consortium, our Steering Committee, the importance of external quality assessment, our mission statement and ethos of sustainability. The website also gives details on each of our schemes to help you navigate which of our services are relevant to your laboratory. The website focuses on our educational remit and includes links to our scientific publications as well as recordings and slides from our annual participant meetings and webinars.

We really hope you like our new website. Let us know what you think!

## EFI/BSHI Conference 2021

The NEQAS team attended the joint BSHI and EFI Conference, which was held virtually, as exhibitors to promote the service.



The conference was held from the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 and had over 1000 delegates from nearly 70 countries.

We hope to see you at a face to face conference again soon!

### Webinar

The first in a series of Webinars planned for 2021-22 was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> September. It presented feedback on the first interpretative Educational Scenario (iED1) sent in the 2021-22 distribution cycle which followed a solid organ case. The Webinar was composed of a presentation, given by Amy De'Ath, summarising the scenario and the responses submitted followed by an open Q&A session with a group of panellists. The panellists included NEQAS Steering Committee members Dr Rommel Ramanan, Dr Tracey Rees, Deborah Pritchard and Dr Arthi Anand as well as Patrick Flynn whose lab provided the clinical case the scenario was based on. There were 140 delegates registered to attend the webinar from 26 countries.

**100% of delegates rated the Webinar as either beneficial or extremely beneficial to them with 97% stating they would be interested in attending more NEQAS Webinars.** Delegates particularly enjoyed the Q&A session with the presence of a Clinician to offer a different perspective.

Look out for an invitation to our next Webinar covering iED2!

## Questionnaire

A link to the biannual Participant Questionnaire has been sent to all Participants. We really hope you can find the time to answer this online survey as it allows us to improve and tailor our services to your needs.

## 2. Scheme Updates for 2022-23

### Scheme 3, 6, 4A1, 4A1i and 4A2 Sample Distribution Frequency

The frequency of sample distribution for Scheme 3 – HLA Antibody Specificity Analysis, Scheme 6 – HLA Antibody Detection, Scheme 4A1 – HLA Typing at 1<sup>st</sup> Field Resolution, 4A1i – Interpretative HLA Genotype and Scheme 4A2 – HLA Typing to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Resolution will be changing.

Samples for these schemes will now be distributed for assessment three times a year. The first distribution for Scheme 3, 4A1, 4A1i and 4A2 will contain three samples, the second distribution will contain four samples and the final distribution will contain three samples. Each of the three distributions for Scheme 6 will contain four samples. This is to ensure EQA samples are representative of laboratory performance by testing more regularly throughout the year and should decrease the burden of testing multiple samples.

## 3. Distribution Timetable for 2022-23

The distribution timetable for the 2022-23 cycle is now available on our website: [www.ukneqas.org.uk](http://www.ukneqas.org.uk).

**UK NEQAS**  
International Quality Expertise

Histocompatibility  
& Immunogenetics

DISTRIBUTION TIMETABLE 2022-23

	Scheme 3A Scheme 2A	Scheme 3B Scheme 2B	Scheme 3 Scheme 4A1/4A1i	Scheme 6A2 Scheme 6	Scheme 5A Scheme 7 Scheme 8	Scheme 9 Scheme 10 Scheme 11	Educational Samples EDM*	ED	SB
2022	April	24-May	10-May	26-Apr	12-Apr	17-May			
	May			28-Jun		07-Jun	21-Jun	21-May	19-Apr
	June								
	July	26-Jul	12-Jul	05-Jul				19-Jul*	
	August				02-Aug				30-Aug
	September	20-Sep	13-Sep	06-Sep					
	October			18-Oct	11-Oct				
	November	08-Nov	01-Nov		29-Nov	04-Oct	15-Nov		
	December								01-Dec
2023	January	31-Jan		17-Jan		24-Jan			
	February		07-Feb				14-Feb	10-Jan	

\* EDM one distribution

Since the introduction of our online portal we have been able to dramatically reduce the days taken to issue your assessment reports. We have seen an impressive 60% reduction in the days taken to issue reports comparing 2018 and 2020 figures we hope this allow you address any issues in a more timely fashion.

## 4. UKAS Accreditation

UK NEQAS for UK&I recently underwent their annual UKAS inspection for accreditation against ISO/IEC 17043:2010 which specifies general requirements for the competence of providers of proficiency testing schemes and for the development and operation of proficiency testing schemes.

NEQAS are happy to report that the recommendation was that accreditation to ISO/IEC 17043:2010 is maintained.

**UK NEQAS**  
Histocompatibility  
& Immunogenetics

## Annual Participants Meeting

Please make a note in your diaries that the UK NEQAS for H&I Annual Participant Meeting, reviewing 2021-22 scheme results, will be held on **11<sup>th</sup> May 2022**.

The meeting will be held at Aston University Conference Venue in Birmingham, UK.

After the success of our online meeting in 2021 we will also provide a virtual meeting, further details to follow.