

## UK NEQAS for H&I Newsletter March 2024

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### 1. News

This Newsletter contains important information about registration and changes to schemes for 2024-25. Please make sure you make all staff involved in testing EQA samples aware of the changes. Full details of all schemes are available in the 2024-25 Participant Manual which is available to download from our website [www.uknegashandi.org.uk](http://www.uknegashandi.org.uk).

### Annual Re-Registration is Open

The registration process can now be completed online using the Participants' Portal. Please log on to the system and complete your registration for 2024-25 as soon as possible. The first distribution in 2024-25 will be Scheme 3/4A1/4A1i on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. The distribution timetable is available on our website: <https://ukneqas.org.uk/calendar>.

### Award Winners!



The UK NEQAS team were the proud winners of the Sustainability Award at the 2023 Velindre University NHS Trust Employee Excellence Awards for the implementation of more environmentally conscious packaging.



### UK NEQAS for H&I

**Director:** Deborah Pritchard

**Operations Manager:** Amy De'Ath

**Deputy Manager:** Melanie Bartley

**Healthcare Scientist Practitioner:** Geraint Clarke

**QA Officer:** Jack Jefferies

**MLA:** Susan Davies



Pictured above (left to right): Former Manager Susan Corbin, Deborah Pritchard, Tracey Rees, Melanie Bartley, Amy De'Ath, Geraint Clarke and Jack Jefferies

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

## Scheme Fees for 2024-25

There will be a slight increase in fees for this distribution cycle. We are facing higher inflation and increased costs. We strive to provide a high-quality service with additional benefits that participant's value, including free educational schemes, webinars and access to experts in the field whilst operating in economically challenging conditions. UK NEQAS for H&I has absorbed some price increasing costs by making savings elsewhere using various improvement initiatives, sourcing competitive pricing for consumables. This has meant UK NEQAS for H&I has only had to increase our fees very moderately for 2024.

We would like to reiterate to our customers that we operate on a not-for profit basis and will always provide our services at the lowest price we can whilst maintaining operations.

Please remember that all invoices must be paid in **UK STERLING (GBP - £) AND FREE OF ALL BANK CHARGES.** We are experiencing more invoices being paid in a foreign currency resulting in outstanding balances being left on accounts. An administration fee will be payable if invoices must be re-issued. Outstanding balances will result in suspension from all services until your account balance is cleared.

## New Director

UK NEQAS for H&I are pleased to welcome our new Director, Deborah Pritchard to the role. Deborah will be very familiar to you as she has worked as both the Manager and Deputy Director since 2013. Deborah succeeds Dr Tracey Rees who retired after providing support and guidance to the service as Director since 2013 and after working in the NHS for over 40 years!



UK NEQAS for H&I will be attending the 37<sup>th</sup> EFI Conference from the 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The theme for the conference is unveiling diversity, nurturing bonds and orchestrating immunity.

Deborah and Amy will be available throughout the Conference. Please come and say hello!

## Annual Participants' Meeting

UK NEQAS for H&I 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 make the day as interactive as possible.



Join us on the **14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Aston Conference Centre in Birmingham, UK.**

We will also be providing a second meeting for rest of world-based labs using an online format (date to be confirmed). This meeting will be recorded and made available on our website.

## 2. Scheme Updates for 2024-25

Please refer to the Participant Manual for full scheme information. It is available to download from our website [www.uknegashandi.org.uk](http://www.uknegashandi.org.uk).

### New for 2024-25

In **Scheme 4A2 – HLA Typing to 3<sup>rd</sup> Field** laboratories reporting cis/trans ambiguities will be penalised.

In **Scheme 8 – HLA Genotyping for Coeliac and other HLA Associated Diseases** we have added the option to report HLA genotypes for one additional pharmacogenetic reactions. For the drug Tebentafusp which is used to treat patients with unresectable or metastatic uveal melanoma who test positive for HLA-A\*02:01.

In **Scheme 11 – HPA Antibody Detection and Specification** you will now have the option to be assessed for specific HPA antibodies only.



### Scheme 3 Reminder

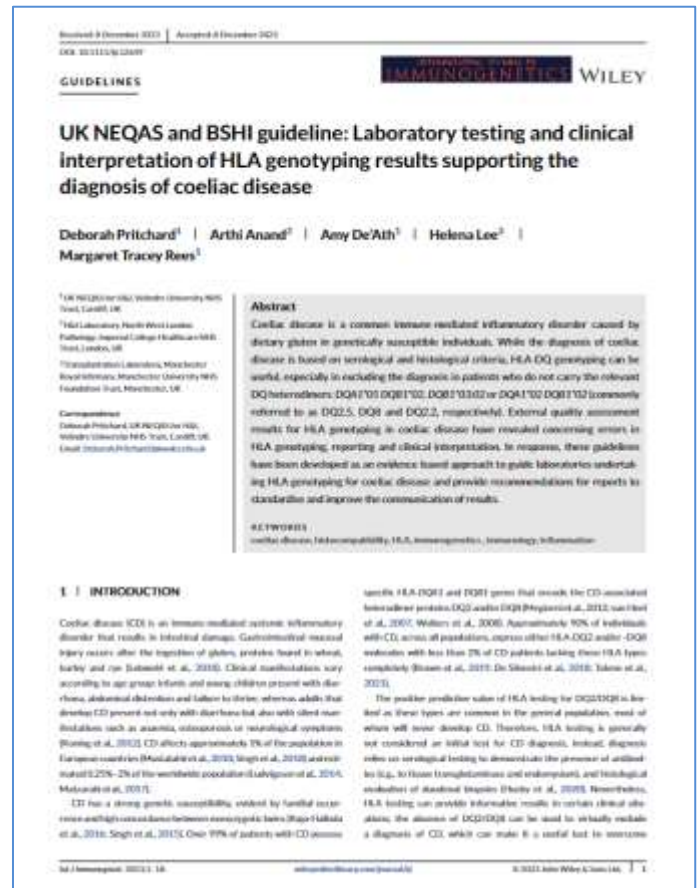
Since 2021 participants of Scheme 3 have had the option to select whether they would like report antibodies specificities at HLA-DQA and / or HLA-DPA. Participants are encouraged to submit antibody results for assessment at HLA-DQA and HLA-DPA.

Follow us on social media for the latest updates and news!



## 3. Coeliac Disease Guidelines

The UK NEQAS for H&I and British Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (BSHI) guideline on laboratory testing of HLA genotyping results in the diagnosis of coeliac disease have been published: <http://doi.org/10.1111/iji.12649>



These guidelines were developed by UK NEQAS for H&I in response to the error rate noted in reporting of HLA typing results in relation to the diagnosis of Coeliac Disease. The hope is that these guidelines provide an evidence-based approach to guide laboratories undertaking HLA genotyping for Coeliac Disease and provide recommendations for reports to standardise and improve the communication of patient results to Clinicians.

Pritchard D, Anand A, De'Ath A, Lee H, Rees MT. UK NEQAS and BSHI guideline: Laboratory testing and clinical interpretation of HLA genotyping results supporting the diagnosis of coeliac disease. *Int J Immunogenet.* 2024 Jan;51 Suppl 1:3-20. doi: 10.1111/iji.12649. Epub 2023 Dec 28. PMID: 38153308.



