# A Guide to Supplier Qualification

## Simplifying how we work with our suppliers

nationwide

# Introduction

**Nationwide Building Society is committed to business practices that make it easier for our suppliers to work with us.**

To support this, Nationwide Building Society is a member of the Financial Services Qualification System (FSQS), which is a community of financial institutions working together to agree a standard set of questions, which can be used to collect and maintain information on a supplier's policies and controls.

Suppliers access the questions online, complete once and the responses are shared with all member organisations. This eliminates the need for duplicate submissions, simplifying the process for suppliers working with multiple institutions.

## Supplier Benefits:

**A simpler/quicker approach**

A single online process that eliminates duplicate assurance requests from Nationwide Building Society and other financial institutions.

Once qualified, suppliers are exempt from resubmitting information for future engagements.

**Resource & time efficient**

One set of questions with response options, which are proportionate to the goods/service being provided.

**Increased opportunity to gain further business**

The system enables Nationwide Building Society and other member organisations, to find pre-qualified suppliers for potential future business.

# How it Works

Suppliers will receive an email invitation from Hellios Information Ltd, who administer FSQS on behalf of Nationwide Building Society and other organisations. The email will include a link to the FSQS online portal, where the qualification questionnaire can be completed.

Suppliers already registered with FSQS need only ensure their information is up to date - no further action is required.

There are 2 stages to the questionnaire:

**Stage 1**

Stage 1 captures key company details and the type of goods/services offered. This stage of the questionnaire takes approximately one hour to complete. Based on the responses, suppliers may be invited to complete stage 2.

**Stage 2**

Stage 2 involves detailed questions and the option to upload supporting evidence. This stage focuses on policies and practices in areas such as (where relevant to the service):

- ✓ Anti-Bribery
- ✓ Business Continuity
- ✓ Customer Treatment
- ✓ Cyber Security
- ✓ Diversity Inclusion
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Health & Safety
- ✓ Information Security
- ✓ Physical & People Security
- ✓ Records Management
- ✓ Responsible Business
- ✓ Technology

**Costs**

All members, including Nationwide Building Society, contribute towards the operational costs of administering FSQS. Organisations completing stage 2 of the questionnaire may be subject to an annual fee payable to Hellios, determined by company size (or the size of their parent company). Click here for more information.

**Timelines for Qualification**

Hellios will communicate the deadline dates for Stage 1 and if applicable, Stage 2 completion via FSQS email notifications.

The qualification process typically takes no more than 6 weeks. However, if an expedited timeline is necessary, Nationwide's Procurement Specialist will advise.

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Why is Nationwide Building Society using FSQS?**

FSQS makes it simpler for suppliers to share policy and control information with Nationwide Building Society and in turn, makes it more efficient for us to assess and manage this information.

Once a supplier joins FSQS and completes the questionnaire, duplicate information requests are avoided, as the data is readily accessible within the system.

We also use FSQS data as a primary source during periodic control testing on key services, reducing the need for suppliers to resubmit evidence.

It is also important that Nationwide Building Society and its suppliers can demonstrate to our members, that we are working together responsibly and efficiently to minimise risk across our supply chain.

**Who are Hellios?**

Hellios Information Ltd is a UK-based company. The team has extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of a number of global and UK companies.
Hellios is an approved supplier of Nationwide Building Society and both they and the FSQS system have been subjected to our due diligence controls.

**What is the role of Hellios?**

In joining FSQS, Nationwide Building Society has appointed Hellios to collect, check and maintain the data provided by suppliers within the online portal.

Hellios validate the information on our behalf, so that we can be confident in the information used in our assessment, however they do not score or pass/fail suppliers. The information gathered through FSQS is used to support our own evaluation of a supplier.

**Why does a supplier have to pay?**

FSQS is a community - suppliers benefit by reducing the administrative burden of responding to multiple requests and by making pre-qualified information accessible to a wide range of potential customers. Member financial organisations, in turn, benefit from shared resource in collecting the information and access to a centralised data source.

The cost of operating the FSQS system is therefore shared across its members. Suppliers contribute based on their size, (or the size of their parent company):

- Revenue > £40m or > 250 employees: £1975 + VAT
- Revenue > £8.5m or > 50 employees: £825 + VAT
- Revenue < £8.5m & < 50 employees: No fee

The supplier fee is proportionately much smaller, than the cost paid by Nationwide Building Society and the other member financial organisations.

**To note** – a supplier will only a pay a fee (if applicable based on the size of company), if they are required to complete Stage 2 of the questionnaire.

**Why is a supplier being asked to complete Stage 2 Qualification?**

Stage 1 of the questionnaire includes targeted questions designed to identify specific risks or areas requiring further detail. Based on the responses, relevant follow-up questions are automatically triggered in Stage 2. As a result, suppliers are only required to complete the sections of Stage 2 that are applicable to the services they offer, rather than the entire questionnaire.

# Frequently Asked Questions

**If a supplier is required to apply for Stage 2 Qualification, how do they pay the fee to Hellios?**

Hellios will provide full details of the payment options available however, we recommend suppliers make an online payment to Hellios for the fastest access to the Stage 2 Qualification process.

**What communication do suppliers receive?**

Hellios sends a welcome email containing a link and username for accessing the portal and completing the questionnaire. The Hellios Supplier Support Team are then on hand to guide suppliers and answer any questions throughout the qualification process.

**What happens if the supplier can't answer a question/can't provide a document requested?**

Nationwide Building Society uses the information from FSQS to assess the risks associated with a supplier relationship. Suppliers should provide whatever documentation they are able to. Any residual risks / gaps in data requirements will be managed by the Nationwide Relationship Manager.

**Does a supplier have to register each of their legal entities separately?**

Yes, an organisation is required to register any legal entity that submits, or will submit an invoice to Nationwide Building Society.

**Can suppliers see each other's information?**

No, suppliers will not have access to the information provided by another supplier.

**Will assurance information be available to other organisations?**

Yes, one of the key benefits of FSQS is that suppliers' assurance information is accessible to all other member financial organisations. This significantly reduces the need for suppliers to respond to duplicate information requests from multiple customers.

Hellios will not share any supplier – provided information outside the FSQS community, nor will it use the information for any other purpose.

**How does Hellios protect the data provide by a supplier?**

The FSQS application, infrastructure and data storage is hosted exclusively in the UK, in data centres that are SSAE18 SOC2 and ISO27001 certified.

Encryption to the latest industry standards is employed, along with cyber security measures such as weekly scans and penetration testing.

Hellios ensures the limited amount of personal data collected is fully compliant with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Hellios is certified to ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus, the National Cyber Security Centre standard backed by the UK Government.

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**Will a supplier be asked to provide pricing information on their company's products and services?**

No, an organisation will not be asked to provide any pricing information.

**How long is qualification valid for?**

Qualification is valid for 1 year and renewed annually thereafter. The renewal date is set at 1 year after Stage 1 Qualification has been granted. Or in the case of Stage 2 Qualification, one year after the Stage 2 questionnaire has been issued.

Hellios will send reminders to suppliers well in advance of the qualification expiry deadline.

Nationwide requires accurate and up to date supplier information, therefore it is essential that suppliers review their information annually.

To simplify the renewal process, previously submitted responses are pre-populated and suppliers are only required to review and confirm the accuracy of this information and answer any new questions since the previous version, significantly reducing the time and effort involved.

**How long does it take to complete qualification?**

Once a supplier has gathered the necessary information for submission, completing the questionnaires typically takes less than a business day. For exact timelines, suppliers should refer and adhere to the deadline dates in the FSQS communications issued by Hellios.

Prompt submission is strongly recommended, as delays in completing the questionnaire may delay contract signature.

**What happens if a prospective supplier to Nationwide Building Society does not agree to join FSQS?**

FSQS is our standard process for qualification and compliance and is a requirement for consideration in new business opportunities.

In exceptional circumstances, a dispensation may be granted through Nationwide's internal governance process. If approved, the supplier must still provide the required information through an alternative manual method, which will be more resource intensive and time consuming.

**What happens if an existing supplier fails to join FSQS within the agreed timescales?**

Suppliers will receive full support from Hellios throughout the qualification process, however failure to complete the FSQS questionnaire will result in the supplier being classified as non-compliant with Nationwide Building Society's internal policy.

FSQS is our standard qualification and compliance process for suppliers and non-compliance may adversely affect future business opportunities with Nationwide Building Society.

**The Hellios Supplier Support Team are there to guide suppliers and answer any questions throughout the qualification process, their contact details are as follows:**

- **Email: fsqs@hellios.com**
- **Phone: 01865 959120**

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