

JOHN LEWIS
PARTNERSHIP

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A GUIDE TO
THE RETAIL SUPPLIER
QUALIFICATION
SYSTEM (RSQS)





RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

The John Lewis Partnership is committed to introducing responsible business practices that make it easier for our suppliers to do business with us.

This is not just something we aspire to, but is in fact written into our constitution. Our commitment is to conduct all of our business relationships fairly and with integrity, in the spirit and letter of the law.

To support this commitment, we've introduced the Retail Supplier Qualification System (RSQS) which is designed to standardise and manage the Partnership's requests for compliance and assurance data and, in time, other retailers that may choose to adopt RSQS in future.

As the legislative environment becomes more complex, it's important that we can demonstrate to our stakeholders that we're working with our suppliers to minimise risk and protect customers, Partners and our reputation as a responsible business. The introduction of RSQS provides a standard and simple mechanism for collecting and managing supplier compliance assurance information across the Partnership.

RSQS is also an integral part of our sourcing process. Our Procurement Team use the system to find pre-qualified suppliers to be considered for new business. Qualified supplier status gives visibility across the Partnership's procurement process and, therefore, creates potential new business opportunities.

BENEFITS FOR SUPPLIERS



A SINGLE ONLINE PROCESS

- A single online process to submit assurance and compliance data with the objective of reducing duplicate requests from the Partnership and, we expect, other retailers that may choose to adopt RSQS in future
- Compliance requirements which are proportionate to the products and services being provided
- An online supplier profile which can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate your ongoing compliance with the Partnership's policies
- Qualification means you won't have to provide assurance information each time you bid for business with the Partnership again, reducing requests for duplicate information

HOW TO GAIN QUALIFICATION

There are two levels of qualification.

Stage 1 Qualification collects basic information about your organisation and is used to determine whether Stage 2 Qualification is necessary, based on the nature of the goods or services being supplied. For example, if a supplier deals directly with the Partnership's customer data, then they will be asked to demonstrate how they comply with relevant legislative requirements and the Partnership's policy.

Stage 1 – Qualification:

Suppliers will receive an email invitation to complete the basic online questionnaire. The invitation will come from Hellios, our external partner, who has been appointed to collect and administer the data on behalf of the Partnership. The questionnaire should typically take around one hour to complete. This information will allow us to determine whether your organisation only requires Stage 1 Qualification, or is required to also complete Stage 2 Qualification.

Stage 2 – Qualification:

Stage 2 requires the completion of a more detailed online questionnaire and, in some areas, may require the provision of supporting evidence. To make the process as efficient as possible, most of the questions have selectable answer options rather than requiring lengthy written responses, and no proprietary, contractual or pricing information will be asked. This stage typically covers your policies and practice in areas such as:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| MANUFACTURING SITES | SUPPLY CHAIN |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | INFORMATION SECURITY |
| FINANCE & LEGAL | CYBER SECURITY |
| INSURANCE | PHYSICAL & PEOPLE SECURITY |
| FRAUD, ANTI-BRIBERY & CORRUPTION | DATA PRIVACY & PROTECTION |
| HEALTH & SAFETY | BUSINESS CONTINUITY & DISASTER RECOVERY |
| ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY | PAYMENT CARD PROCESSING |
| QUALITY | LABOUR STANDARDS & HUMAN RIGHTS |
| PRODUCT SAFETY | |



Funding of RSQS is shared by the Partnership and other retail organisations that will use the system, and larger suppliers. If your organisation is an autonomous small, medium or micro-sized enterprise (SME), then registration on RSQS is subsidised – micro and small organisations are subsidised 100% i.e. there is no charge, medium organisations are subsidised by 50%. For non-SME organisations, if Stage 2 of the process is required then this incurs an annual fee of £795 (plus VAT), which is payable directly to our external partner Hellios, to help fund the operational costs of administering the system. Following Stage 2 qualification, the Partnership may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit.

Timelines for qualification: Existing suppliers to the Partnership are given up to eight weeks to complete qualification for the first time, to allow sufficient time for familiarisation with the new questionnaires and process. However we expect most suppliers will be capable of competing qualification in significantly less time. Suppliers bidding for new business with the Partnership may need to complete the qualification much more quickly in accordance with procurement timescales. Hellios will advise the deadline dates for Stage 1 and, if required, Stage 2 completion in the RSQS email communications issued.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why has the John Lewis Partnership introduced the Retail Supplier Qualification System?

Suppliers have told us that current processes for collecting compliance and assurance information is time-consuming and complex. The introduction of an online system simplifies the process for suppliers to submit information and prevents suppliers receiving multiple requests from the Partnership for qualification data. It is also important that we (your organisation and the Partnership) can demonstrate that we are working together to minimise risk across our supply chain to protect our customers, Partners and our reputation as a responsible business. As the legislative environment we operate in becomes more complex, it is vital that we have a robust system in place to support the collection and maintenance of Supplier Assurance data and respond to legislative changes.

Q: Who is Hellios?

Hellios Information Limited is a UK-based company. They have extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of a number of global and UK companies.

Q: What is the role of Hellios?

The Partnership has appointed Hellios to collect and administer supplier assurance related data on our behalf, and they are therefore acting under our instruction. Hellios will collect and check the data provided by suppliers and ensure the data is maintained on RSQS. Hellios is an approved supplier of the Partnership and both they and the RSQS system have been subjected to our due diligence controls.

Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification or approval. That decision rests with the Partnership.

Q: How does Hellios protect the data we provide?

The RSQS 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.

Q: Do we have to register each of our legal entities separately?

Yes, your organisation is required to register any legal entity that submits an invoice to the Partnership, since we need the assurance that each legal entity is compliant.

Q: Can any supplier apply for qualification?

No, qualification is by invitation only.

Q: Will other suppliers have access to the information we provide?

No, other suppliers will not have access to the information you provide.

Q: Will assurance information be available to anyone else?

Yes, one of the benefits of the RSQS is that suppliers' assurance information will be available across the Partnership and to other retail organisations that may decide to adopt RSQS. This will reduce requests for duplicate assurance information from the different customers you may provide services to. Hellios will not share any information you provide with any other party or use your information for any other purpose.

Q: Will I be asked to provide pricing information on my company's products and services?

No, your organisation will not be asked to provide any commercial information of this nature.

Q: If I'm required to apply for Stage 2 Qualification, how do I 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.



Q: How long is the qualification valid for?

For suppliers that are only required to complete Stage 1 Qualification, the renewal date is set at one year after Stage 1 Qualification has been granted. For suppliers that are required to also complete Stage 2 Qualification, the renewal date is set one year after your Stage 2 questionnaire has been issued. Hellios will issue reminders to suppliers several weeks in advance of their qualification expiry deadline.

Q: How long does it take to complete qualification?

Typically, it takes less than one business day to enter the information in the system (if you are asked to complete both stages). However, the time required to collate the information varies depending on the size of the organisation. Larger organisations often have to source data from a number of internal departments and therefore we're giving existing suppliers up to eight weeks to complete Stage 2 qualification.

Q: As an existing supplier, what happens if I fail to complete RSQS within the assigned timelines?

Suppliers will be fully supported by Hellios throughout the qualification process. However, failure to complete the RSQS will result in a supplier being classified as non-compliant in our internal systems. This will affect new or future business with the Partnership as RSQS is now our standard qualification and compliance process for suppliers.

Q: Who can I contact for further information?

Hellios Supplier Support Team
rsqs@hellios.com
01865 959130
Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)
8.30am-5.30pm

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