

National Tariff Payment System – FAQs

This document presents answers to frequently asked questions about the [National Tariff Payment System](#). We welcome enquiries about any aspect of the payment system. Please contact pricing@england.nhs.uk

Last updated: June 2021

Q: Please clarify the relationship between the aligned payment and incentive approach and Independent Sector (IS) providers?

We can confirm that for independent sector providers, the proposals for the 2021/22 tariff would mean the following. Please note, this would not apply until the 2021/22 tariff is published and takes effect:

1. Under the tariff rules, providers (including IS) and commissioners must use an aligned payment and incentive (API) agreement, including a fixed element, if their annual contract value is over £10 million.
2. If the contract value is below £10 million but the provider and commissioner are members of the same ICS, an aligned payment and incentive agreement is still required.
3. If the contract value is below £10m and the provider and commissioner are members of different ICSs, there is no mandated payment approach and providers and commissioners should agree the approach they wish to use (eg activity-based, block contract, etc). The unit prices published as part of the tariff should be used as the default prices for any activity-based payment agreements.
4. If the activity is covered by the Increasing Capacity Framework, this will be reimbursed using the national and unit prices published in the tariff, as indicated in the [framework guidance](#).

The API variable element supports elective activity and achievement of best practice tariffs and CQUIN criteria. Providers and commissioners may also choose to agree additional variable elements. Where an IS provider is delivering services under a sub-contract from an NHS provider, these rules (and other rules of the national tariff) would not apply.

For more detail on the API rules, see Section 3 of the draft [2021/22 National Tariff Payment System](#) (Part B of the consultation notice) and the supporting document [Guidance on the aligned payment and incentive approach](#).

Q: When will the 2021/22 tariff take effect and should we backdate payments once it is published?

The 2020/21 tariff, and prices, remain in effect until the 2021/22 tariff has been published. When the 2021/22 tariff is published, there will be no requirement to backdate payments to reflect the higher prices.

However, commissioners and providers may choose to use the prices published as part of the consultation on the 2021/22 tariff as part of their local pricing arrangements, in line with the local price setting rules set out in [Section 6.2](#) of the 2020/21 National Tariff Payment System.

Q: Where can the Spinal best practice quarterly report be accessed?

The Spinal Surgery Best Practice Tariff (BPT) reports have had to be temporarily removed from NCDR while some information governance issues are addressed. The GEMIMA portal is also unable to host the full range of reports.

We are working to resolve this and make all reports available. We communicate when relevant reports are back up, and details of future timings, as soon as possible.