















30 October 2018

Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP Secretary of State for Health

**Dear Secretary of State** 

## Request for Urgent Roundtable on Medicine and Device Supply in No Deal Brexit

At the Health Select Committee last week you stressed that it was important that "everyone does what they need to do" to ensure medicines get to patients in the event of a No Deal Brexit.

With much goodwill and hard work, industry has stepped up and responded to your request to put contingency plans in place, to ensure extra stock will be in place by Brexit day. **There is goodwill and commitment to deliver on this for NHS patients across the board.** 

However, information has come into the public domain since then that suggests much of the work needed for the frictionless border between Kent and Calais, the key assumption on which industry medicines contingency planning is predicated, is not on track.

Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington is reported to have told Cabinet that "the normal Dover-Calais route could be at 12 per cent capacity for six months."

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling's backup plan reportedly would move goods via the Ports of London, Tilbury and Liverpool through Government owned and operated logistics.

In addition the National Audit Office reported:

- 11 out of 12 critical IT systems at the border that the Border Delivery Group has assessed as being at risk of not delivering on time and to acceptable quality (rated amber or above) by 29 March 2019.
- That there is a high delivery risk attached to government departments' border programmes for 'day one of no deal' due to their scale, complexity and urgency; this risk is magnified by the degree of interdependence between the programmes.
- That infrastructure identified by government departments cannot be built before March 2019.
- That the additional resources required to operate the border may not be ready by March 2019.
- That businesses do not have enough time to make the changes that will be needed if the UK leaves the EU without a 'deal' and
- That the most complex issues relating to the border in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a 'deal' remain to be resolved.

















A Cabinet Minister has told ITV that all options are on the table "It's the kind of stuff governments do in a time of war. It's as serious as that."

These are factors far beyond the control or remit of industry, patient groups and the NHS. If this is the reality of UK government preparation for No Deal we do not believe that the current medicine supply plans will suffice, and we will have widespread shortages if we do not respond urgently.

Only Government has all of the data, and is the only agent who can take the powers to direct the work that now needs to be done. We urge you to be more transparent and reveal what cover we have by therapy area and where there are gaps. We all stand ready and prepared to engage with our organisations to find further creative solutions to shortages, but we need the data to engage.

Time is very tight. We **support you in your efforts to raise the warning level in Government**. Only when we start to work through options will we all know where we are, but on medicines supply, on what we know and can glean from public information, we **think we are at 'red'**.

Given the sensitivity of this issue, its importance to the public, and its political saliency in the Brexit debate, we request that you convene and chair a roundtable of the key parties to ensure continued public confidence, effective co-ordination between the NHS and broader healthcare system and its suppliers as soon as possible. (Potential solutions as well as cross governmental issues can be pre-worked at official level this week). Well informed political leadership by you on this crucial issue will enable you to champion NHS patients at the Cabinet table.

## Yours sincerely

Steve Bates, BIA
Aisling Burnand, AMRC
Niall Dickson, Brexit Health Alliance
Leslie Galloway, EMIG
Peter Ellingworth, ABHI
Martin Sawer, HDA
Warwick Smith, BGMA
Mike Thompson, ABPI

## Brexit Health Alliance organisations include

Saffron Cordery, NHS Providers
Alistair Henderson, Academy of Medical Royal College
Jeremy Hughes, Richmond Group of Charities (Alzheimer's Society)
Jeremy Taylor, National Voices
Vanessa Young, NHS Confederation Wales