

No Deal Brexit

A statement from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

September / 2019

Following the EU referendum in 2016 the Academy of Medical Colleges identified a series of issues that Government needed to address to minimise risks of Brexit and protect healthcare in the UK.

The issues were

- Workforce Supply – the retention and continued recruitment of EU staff in the NHS and particularly in social care
- The continued supply of medicines and devices
- Regulatory alignment for health technology (medicines and devices)
- Reciprocal healthcare arrangements
- Continued access to funding for research
- Public Health
- Medical regulation and recognition of qualifications
- Funding and sustainability of the NHS

While many of these issues had been addressed under the Withdrawal Agreement, the prospect of a No Deal Brexit means that no provision has been made to address these concerns on a sustainable basis.

Today's ruling by the Supreme Court creates even greater uncertainty over the terms of the UK's departure from the EU. The Academy, however, believes that No Deal presents a serious threat to patient safety and healthcare in the UK.

In the short term this relates to the supply of medicines and devices and consequent safety to patients and in the longer term to the range of other issues

We recognise that assurances have been given to existing EU staff in the NHS and that there has been considerable work in contingency planning on supply issues in the event of No Deal Brexit. But this cannot be a substitute for a sustainable long term agreement to address these and all the other issues. EU staff in the NHS and social care deserve legal guarantees of their rights and patients deserve absolute assurance on continuity of supply of medicines and devices and protection of public health.

The potential impact of leaving the EU without a deal is heightened as we move towards winter when the pressures on the NHS increase and the NHS's use of drugs goes up.

As the professional body for medical royal colleges and faculties representing Britain's 220,000 doctors, we expect the Government to ensure that we do not exit the EU without a deal to protect public and patient safety.