



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

Government 'no-deal'™ EU exit planning - September 2019 update

On 10 September the Government published part of its 'no-deal' Brexit planning documentation, including a section on drugs supplies which says:

'The reliance of medicines and medical products' supply chains on the short straits [Dover to Calais] crossing make them particularly vulnerable to severe extended delays; three-quarters of medicines come via the short straits. Supply chains are also highly regulated and require transportation that meets strict Good Distribution Practices. This can include limits on time of transit, or mean product must be transported under temperature-controlled conditions. Whilst some products can be stockpiled, others cannot due to short shelf lives - it will also not be practical to stockpile products to cover expected delays of up to six months. DHSC is developing a multi-layered approach to mitigate these risks.'

On adult social care, the document says:

'There is an assumption that there will be no major change in adult social care on the day after EU Exit. The adult social care market is already fragile due to declining financial viability of providers. An increase in inflation following EU exit would significantly impact adult social care providers due to increasing staff and supply costs, and may lead to provider failure, with smaller providers impacted within 2-3 months and larger providers 4-6 months after exit. There are also possible concurrent localised risks: transport or staff disruption, severe winter weather or flu that could exacerbate the existing market fragility, and that cumulatively could stretch resources of providers and LAs. Intelligence will continue to be gathered to forewarn of/prepare for any impacts on the sector including closure of services and handing back of contracts which are not part of normal market function.'

The document also mentions some areas which could impact on health, specifically:

Shortages of veterinary medicine could result outbreaks of disease in the food chain.

Regional disruption to roads in Kent resulting in traffic problems around London.

Rising electricity costs.

Low income groups being disproportionately affected by any price rises in food and fuel.

Londonwide LMCs' position

Dr Michelle Drage, our Chief Executive, said of the prospect of 'no-deal':

'Londoners will face seeing the healthcare services which they depend on grind to a halt without a whole range of goods imported across the Channel. Supplies such as drugs are an obvious essential, but many of the other clinical and administrative supplies GP practices rely on would quickly run out in the event of a 'no-deal' exit from the EU. Based on the Government's own assessments, there is the real prospect of harm to care and lives put at risk.'

'It is highly irresponsible to choose to put lives at risk in this way. It also sends a message to our European colleagues that their contributions to health and care services are not appreciated, and deters others from coming to work in London, which is a reckless course of action in the midst of a workforce crisis.'

BMA analysis

The BMA has published information for doctors on what to expect in the event of a 'no-deal' EU exit, covering:

Immigration

Professional qualifications.

Employing EEA doctors.

Access to medicines.

Access to healthcare in the UK and EU.

Medical research.

Local no deal preparations.

[Read the document here.](#)