Healthcare first – a Brexit blueprint for Europe
Message from BMA chair

The challenges posed to our health service by Brexit are considerable: from the workforce and Northern Ireland to regulation and research, there is barely a part of the health service that will be unaffected by the UK’s decision to leave the EU.

The ongoing uncertainty and insecurity arising from Brexit is having a destabilising effect not just on the medical workforce, but on the wider health system, access to established networks, the sharing of best practice and collaborative working. With less than 18 months to go before the UK leaves the EU, we’re calling on negotiators on both sides of the table to agree a Brexit deal that provides certainty for doctors and health services across Europe.
Our manifesto clearly outlines what we believe needs to be achieved during the Brexit negotiations and beyond, so that doctors can continue to deliver the high-quality health services patients deserve.

The BMA intends this document to be useful for all involved in the negotiations as we strive to ensure that the health services of all nations in Europe are at the forefront of the negotiations. Alongside this manifesto, we have published a series of BMA Brexit briefings, to further assist decision makers on both sides to reach the best outcome for the health of our nations.
Health services must be a priority during the Brexit negotiations – it is in everyone’s interest.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul
BMA council chair
– Permanent residence for EEA doctors, medical academic staff and the families of those currently working in the UK
– Continued rights for EEA medical students in the UK to live, train and work in UK health services
– The maintenance of reciprocal arrangements, such as the MRPQ (Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications) to facilitate the ongoing exchange of medical expertise across Europe
– A flexible immigration system, which enables the recruitment into the UK of doctors, medical academics and researchers from both EEA and non-EEA countries
– Retention of existing workers’ legal rights such as the Working Time Regulations, and related employment directives in UK law for the current and future workforce.

45% of EEA doctors say they’re considering leaving the UK
18% have made plans to do so
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Patient care and the public’s health

- The retention, or comparable replacement, of reciprocal healthcare arrangements and access to healthcare for both UK and EU citizens
- Access to the IMI (Internal Market Information) alert system, which enables regulators across Europe to send and receive alerts about doctors’ fitness to practise across the EU
- Ongoing access to and participation in the European Reference Networks, enabling healthcare providers across Europe to tackle complex or rare medical conditions requiring highly specialised treatment
- The retention of measures to protect public health standards, including those affecting food, alcohol, air quality, and tobacco regulations
- An agreement to continue to share data and emergency preparedness planning in relation to cross-border threats.
– Continuation of the existing open border arrangements between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
– Ongoing cross-border co-operation in the delivery of healthcare to patients on both sides of the border
– Freedom of movement for healthcare workers to live and work on both sides of the border
– Ongoing MRPQ to provide doctors the means to move and work between both jurisdictions.
Regulation and assurance

– Ongoing participation by the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency) in the regulatory framework for pan-European clinical trials
– A formal agreement between the UK and European Medicines Agency to continue to support and participate in their assessments for medicine approvals
– Mutual recognition of, and ongoing participation in, the CE-mark scheme for medical devices
– A formal agreement with Euratom to ensure consistent and timely access to radioisotopes for medical purposes.
5 Research and innovation

– Ongoing access to current and future EU research funding programmes, such as Horizon 2020
– Immediate certainty for UK researchers who currently access Horizon 2020 funding about funding and collaboration on existing and future research projects
– Continued access to the European Investment Bank to fund research programmes.
Contact us

For more information on issues raised in this document please contact the BMA public affairs team:

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