



4 June 2019

An open letter to Conservative Party leadership candidates from the British Medical Association

As British Medical Association (BMA) Council Chair, I am writing to all Conservative Party leadership candidates asking you to commit to explicit safeguards for the health service against the dangers posed by Brexit.

First, the BMA is asking all candidates to take every possible step to avoid a 'no-deal' Brexit. We have repeatedly warned that a 'no deal' Brexit will have damaging consequences for patients, the health workforce and health services. From the supply of medicines and medical radioisotopes, to access to reciprocal healthcare and the impact on the NHS and research workforce: no part of the NHS will be left unscathed by a 'no deal' Brexit.

Secondly, we are asking you to commit to excluding the NHS from any future trade agreements if the UK leaves the EU. Patients and NHS staff – indeed, anyone who cares about our health service - will understandably be alarmed by recent comments from the US ambassador that the NHS should be “on the table” as part of a future trade deal. We have an unequivocal message for the next Conservative leader and future Prime Minister: profit should never take priority over the protection of the health service and the healthcare of citizens.

Thirdly, we are asking the incoming Prime Minister to give the public the final say on a decision that will determine the country's future for decades to come. I do not believe that anyone who cast their vote in the EU referendum was voting for an impoverished or weakened health service, or for a situation in which thousands of highly skilled EU NHS staff would consider leaving the NHS. Now that more is known about the impact that Brexit will have on the UK and on health services specifically, it's vital that the public can have the final say.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chaand Nagpaul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA Council Chair