

## **EU-exit planning update**

There have been recent updates from UK Government and DHSC (London) on EU-exit planning.

The advice is broadly the same as before but with greater flexibility for suppliers to balance between stockpiling and re-routing; and the coordination and support from DHSC remains. The Government's patient messaging remains the same see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/medicines-information/getting-your-medicines-if-theres-no-deal-eu-exit/>.

**Advice and guidance to the community pharmacy sector across the UK remain unchanged.**

The main points contained in the documents accessible via the links below are as follows:

**(1) A Ministerial statement by David Lidington, Cabinet Office:**

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-06-26/HCWS1661/>

Key aspects include:

*Guaranteeing the supply of critical 'category 1' goods, including medicines, medical products, veterinary medicines and chemicals remains an essential element of the Government's No Deal contingency planning. The Government is therefore undertaking steps to secure freight capacity for suppliers of these goods in a No Deal scenario.*

*The Department of Health and Social Care is starting the process of setting up an express freight contingency arrangement to support continuity of supply of medicines and medical products. This will be an urgent contingency measure for products requiring urgent delivery, within a 24-48 hour timeframe, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. This express freight contingency arrangement forms part of the Department's multi-layered approach, which includes rerouting medical supplies from the short strait crossings, extra warehouse space, stockpiling, buffer stocks, clarifying regulatory requirements, supporting traders to have all necessary paperwork in place at the border, and strengthening the processes used to deal with shortages to ensure that patients have uninterrupted access to medicines and medical products if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. Government will only pay for capacity as and when it is needed and used. This will be designed to cover all of the UK. The Department will be writing to industry to set out further details of these preparations.*

**(2) An updated letter to suppliers:** [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medicines-and-medical-products-continuity-of-supply-update?utm\\_source=5c694f6e-25af-4b62-b3a1-b961fcbb3355&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medicines-and-medical-products-continuity-of-supply-update?utm_source=5c694f6e-25af-4b62-b3a1-b961fcbb3355&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

Key aspects include:

### ***Medicines suppliers***

*Government's aim is to achieve at least the same level of assurance as before, but to give suppliers greater flexibility in terms of the balance between their stockpiling and re-routing plans to ensure a continuity of supply of their products.*

*All no-deal preparedness plans should therefore contain a mix of the following, depending on each company's specific situation:*

- Secured capacity for rerouting freight away from the short straits after no-deal exit day, in order to avoid the worst restrictions on flow outlined above.*
- Stockpiling product above and beyond business-as-usual inventory levels; as a default, this is recommended as six weeks' stock above business as usual inventory, the same as last time.*
- Assurance on the readiness of a company's logistics and supply chains to meet the new customs and border requirements for both import and export (sometimes referred to as "trader readiness").*

*While the above advice and guidance is primarily aimed at suppliers of prescription only medicines (POMs) and pharmacy medicines (Ps) with an EU touchpoint, we have also been considering the implications of the latest border planning assumptions on suppliers of other categories of medicinal product, including critical general sales list medicines, unlicensed medicines, 'specials', and parallel imports and exports, as well as on UK manufacturers of products where raw materials may come from/via the EU/EEA. While a combination of stockpiling and re-routing, together with trader readiness, would also be advisable for these products too, we will be engaging separately with companies on their contingency plans over the coming weeks.*

#### **Medical devices and clinical consumables suppliers**

*In advance of 29th March, the Department, working closely with procurement and logistics services in the Devolved Administrations, developed a central stockpile of fast-moving medical devices and clinical consumables. It is intended that this stockpile will remain in place in readiness for 31st October, with some small adjustments being made to reflect changes in demand and the time of year.*

*As for March, this stockpile does not cover all product lines and, therefore, there will be a requirement for suppliers to implement their own preparedness arrangements, considering the balance between stockpiling and re-routing to achieve the most effective and robust mitigation plan in the context of the anticipated disruption at the short straits. In all cases, the Department will be asking companies to notify the Department of their plans.*

*In addition to the normal medicine shortage management route, the Department has put in place legislation to enable Ministers to issue serious shortage protocols that, where appropriate, enables community pharmacists to supply against a protocol i.e. to issue a substitute medication instead of the medication indicated on the prescription without going back to the prescriber first.*

*We will continue to ask health and social care service providers to avoid local stockpiling over and above business as usual ahead of 31st October as it is unnecessary and could cause shortages in other areas, which could put patient care at risk. Nor do patients need to personally stockpile medicines.*

There are likely to be some webinars for suppliers to assist them with the detail of this update.

#### **(3) Two procurement exercises to secure freight capacity:**

The first exercise will be led by DHSC to secure an 'express freight service' to transport small medical supply consignments into the UK within 24 hours. This measure is designed to support the uninterrupted supply of medicines and medical products where there is an urgent need or where a suppliers' own logistics plans experience disruption.

The second exercise will be led by the Department for Transport. This will set up a framework to access secure additional 'roll-on, roll-off' freight capacity to support supplier contingency plans to re-route their supply chains away from the Channel short straits. Medicines and medical products will be prioritised on capacity that is procured.

- (4) **DHSC website update:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medicines-supply-contingency-planning-programme> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/medicines-and-medical-products-supply-government-updates-no-deal-brexit-plans>
- (5) **Dear Colleagues' letter:** there will be a Dear Colleagues letter (similar to the previous letter sent to suppliers) sent to all MPs and the NHS should be sending a similar update to relevant people including contractors in England. CPNI is seeking confirmation from DHNI if further information is to be sent to contractors here.