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Social Care

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To:

Adult social care providers

Local authority directors of adult social services

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Dear colleague

Preparing for EU transition in adult social care

As you will be aware, the EU transition period ends on 31 December. I wanted to draw your attention to the attached information to help you prepare.

Whatever the outcome of negotiations with the EU, there are various changes the adult social care sector will need to be ready for. This includes the possibility of supply disruption, and local travel disruption, particularly around ports.

The first annex to this letter contains priority messages for adult social care providers to help you prepare.

The second annex contains more detail for providers and local authorities on what to do in the event of supply disruption.

I want to thank you again for your tireless work in such a challenging year.

Best wishes,

Michelle Dyson

Annex A - Messages for adult social care providers preparing for EU transition

The EU transition period ends on 31 December. The following messages are intended to help social care providers prepare for the end of the transition period. Recognising the pressures facing the system at present, they aim to be concise and focus on the priority actions you as a provider need to take to prepare.

- 1. Make sure you understand the contingency arrangements your critical suppliers have in place to manage any potential disruption related to the EU transition.**
- 2. There is no need to stockpile any medicines or medical products**
 - DHSC is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system to make detailed plans to help make sure the supply of medicines and medical products continues to the whole of the UK and its Crown Dependencies.
 - There is no need to stockpile any medicines or medical products for the end of the transition period. Local stockpiling hampers national contingency efforts and could jeopardise continuity of care.
 - You can continue to get your free COVID-19 PPE via the COVID-19 PPE [portal](#). Call the customer service team on 0800 876 6802 if you have any questions about using the PPE portal. The team is available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week to help resolve queries. Adult social care services not supplied by the PPE portal will be able to access PPE through their local resilience forums or local authorities.
- 3. Allow more time for non-clinical goods to arrive**
 - There is no need to stockpile non-clinical goods. However, where you rely on 'just in time' supply chains, allow an extra 72 hours' lead time in case of any disruption.
- 4. If you experience a problem with supply of a product, follow the business as usual processes first. If you still have problems, the National Supply Disruption Response is there to help.**
 - In the first instance, please follow business as usual processes e.g. speak to the supplier or seek an alternative, and consider local arrangements in place via your local authority and local resilience forum where applicable.
 - Please ensure you take all appropriate steps before contacting the NSDR.
 - If you are still having difficulties then care providers can contact the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR) on 0800 915 9964 for support with resolving emergency supply issues for medicines, medical devices and clinical consumables (including PPE), or non-clinical goods and services.
 - Make sure you have processes in place for monitoring your own stock positions and any supplier issues, so you can identify and escalate issues at the earliest opportunity.
 - Make sure all staff are aware of changes to delivery lead times and follow business continuity plans
 - If you have technical products in the homes of your community service users or in care home, such as hoists, bathing equipment and elevators, check whether maintenance is up-to-date before 1 January 2021.
 - Further detail on actions to take in the event of supply disruption are at Annex B.
- 5. Make sure you understand any local contingency plans for potential localised disruption.**
 - Local disruption may occur, in particular, travel disruption around ports.
 - Make sure your business continuity planning is up to date, based on local assessments shared through local authorities and local resilience forums. If needed contact your local authority for more information.

Resources available

- Care Provider Alliance (CPA) guidance on business continuity, developed in partnership with Government and others: <https://careprovideralliance.org.uk/business-continuity>
- PPE portal guidance - www.gov.uk/guidance/ppe-portal-how-to-order-emergency-personal-protective-equipment
- National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR) helpline:
 - 0800 915 9964 (freephone number in the UK)
 - 0191 283 6543 (direct line from overseas)
- Wider advice on preparing for EU transition is at www.gov.uk/transition, including information on the EU settlement scheme, which qualifying individuals need to apply for before 30 June 2021.

Background - summary of actions taken by the Government on continuity of supply:

At 11pm on 31 December 2020, the UK will leave the EU Single Market and Customs Union. This will mean new border and customs procedures apply, regardless of whether the UK and EU agree the ambitious free trade agreement that the Government is seeking to negotiate. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), in consultation with the Devolved Administrations and Crown Dependencies, is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system in England to make detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products to the whole health and care system across the whole of the UK at the end of the transition period. This includes:

- medicines (prescription-only, pharmacy and general sales list and unlicensed medicines);
- medical devices and clinical consumables;
- supplies for clinical trials and clinical investigations;
- vaccines and countermeasures; and
- blood, tissue and transplant materials.

The Department set out its plans and preparations through a 'multi-layered approach' to help ensure continuity of medical supplies at the end of the transition period in a [letter to industry on 3 August 2020](#) and an update letter on [17 November 2020](#). This includes a request of suppliers where possible, to stockpile to a target level of six weeks' total stock on UK soil as part of their overall contingency plan. DHSC stands ready to support companies with their plans if required and understands that a flexible approach to preparedness may be required that considers a mixture of stockpiling and rerouting plans as necessary.

This also means that suppliers have been encouraged to review their own logistics arrangements and consider the appropriateness of using existing supply chain routes during this period as a matter of priority, ensuring they are 'trader ready' and that they are aware of regulatory changes.

Annex B – Responding to local supply disruption – update for adult social care providers and local authorities

The following messages are intended to help social care providers prepare for the end of the transition period. Recognising the pressures facing the system at present, they aim to be concise and focus on the priority actions you as a provider need to take to prepare.

This letter also includes information on how you can contact the **National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR)** with immediate effect where normal procedures and mitigations are unable to provide a resolution, regardless of whether the UK government agrees a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU.

Managing supply disruption issues

If you are an adult social care provider we suggest you take steps to understand the contingency arrangements your critical suppliers have in place to manage any potential disruption related to the EU transition. If you experience a problem with the supply of a product or service that might affect your ability to continue providing services, we recommend that you:

- ✓ Consider making contact with your supplier to source alternatives or put in place mitigating actions. Remember that your supplier will likely already be aware of the supply issue and may have already taken steps to resolve it.
- ✓ If the issue relates to the supply of medicines, also alert your community pharmacist who should know the latest on any supply disruption.
- ✓ Where relevant, raise your concern with your local care provider association or trade body representative. They may have mitigation plans in place for supply disruption.
- ✓ Where relevant and if your service is part of a larger business group, also ensure that operational management and the business owners are made aware of the issue.
- ✓ Contact other branches in your organisation where appropriate to try and make alternative arrangements.
- ✓ Raise your concern with your relevant local authority representative. This may be your local authority commissioner, contract management contact, or quality assurance team. If there is a significant risk to the safety or wellbeing of service users, you should also alert your local adult safeguarding hub.
- ✓ Remember that you should raise your concern with your local authority whether or not you are directly commissioned by them to carry out services. If you don't know who to approach, ask who is managing supply disruption issues.
- ✓ If you provide services across multiple local authorities, please contact your host local authority who should be able to alert other interested parties.

If you are a local authority, we suggest that you prepare for possible contact relating to supply disruption. If you have been alerted to an instance of supply disruption by one or multiple adult social care providers, we recommend that you:

- ✓ Consider whether you will be able to manage the disruption locally as part of your business as usual processes and/or end of transition period contingency plans.

- ✓ Make sure to alert any other local partners that might be affected by the issue. This could include neighbouring local authorities, your local CCG commissioner, or other relevant NHS contacts.
- ✓ If the issue cannot be resolved at a local level, link in with your Local Resilience Forum (LRF) through the usual channels, i.e. via the local authority representative on the LRF. They may mobilise the major incident response arrangements for your area.
- ✓ At this stage, you will need to alert the issue to the NSDR, and escalate it to relevant end of transition period leads within your local authority

Please note that this communication does not change the way you report or handle supply issues regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Supply issues with regards PPE should continue to be raised in the same way irrespective of end of transition period contingencies and this communication. You should therefore follow your BAU processes first including wholesalers, PPE portal and LA/LRF. If the item is not available on the portal and if you are still unable to source items then please contact the NSDR.

Managing supply disruption via the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR)

DHSC has established the NSDR to monitor the supply situation across health and social care and coordinate actions to address supply disruption incidents that occur after the end of the transition period, where normal procedures are unable to provide a resolution. It will coordinate between suppliers, health services, adult social care organisations, local authorities, and central government.

A wide range of organisations across the health and social care sector can contact the NSDR at any time to report an incident of supply disruption. However, the NSDR can only provide support where normal procedures are unable to provide a resolution. We recommend that you only contact the NSDR if, after taking appropriate steps to resolve the issue at a local level, you are still experiencing severe disruption to your supplies, or if you feel that there is the potential for severe disruption which will impact your ability to provide services.

If you are an adult social care provider or local authority, we strongly recommend that you take the steps outlined above to try to resolve the issue locally ahead of contacting the NSDR.

The National Supply and Disruption Response (NSDR) service remains operational in order to assist with the response to COVID-19. NSDR will be stood up from 21 December for the end of the transition period regardless of the COVID-19 situation.

NSDR can be contacted on:

Freephone number in the UK: 0800 915 9964

Direct line from abroad: 0044 (0) 191 283 6543

If you need to contact the NSDR please ensure that you have the following information available where possible:

- ✓ Details of the disruption and causes;
- ✓ Anticipated disruption and causes;
- ✓ Products or services affected;
- ✓ Criticality of products or services for care;
- ✓ Potential alternative products or service providers;
- ✓ The likely impact of the disruption;

✓ How many providers and/or people in care that could be affected (by region/country where applicable)

I hope this information is useful and provides direction to further inform your own preparedness planning and arrangements.

Please ensure you cascade this letter to staff in your organisation you have been nominated to deal with supply issues, and any business critical stakeholders.