



18<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to update you on the Government's contingency planning to ensure the supply of medical products is uninterrupted in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal in March, and to provide more operational details of 2 specific elements of these plans:

- Shipping routes between the EU and the UK
- Dedicated Shipment Channel

As per the Department's letters to suppliers in December 2018, the UK Government has been making preparations for a potential no deal Exit from the EU. While delivering a deal remains the Government's top priority, we must prepare for every eventuality.

#### **Shipping Routes between the EU and the UK**

It is possible that freight traffic using the short straits crossing may experience delays in a No Deal scenario. Government departments have been working to design customs and other control arrangements at the UK border in a way which ensures goods can continue to flow into the country and won't be delayed by additional controls and checks.

However, the UK Government does not have control over the checks which member states impose at the EU border. The European Commission has made it clear that, in the event of a 'no deal' scenario, it will impose full third country controls on people and goods entering the EU from the UK. It is possible that the imposition of such checks will lead to delays, especially if traders have not prepared for customs formalities, with the short straits crossing most likely to be affected because of the volume of traffic they support.

We are working hard to ensure our ports, routes into Europe and traders are ready in order to minimise the risk of significant delays, and that will continue to be a top priority. However, to ensure there is no risk to importation from the EU of critical goods such as medicines, the Government has secured some additional ferry capacity. This will be available as an alternative supply route for companies moving these products into the UK.

All medicines and medical products have been prioritised for use of the additional freight capacity.

The Government has purchased tickets for the extra capacity from the ferry operators and these will be sold on at market rate. Tickets will be available for purchase in the week commencing 4 March for an initial period and future capacity will then be open on a rolling basis. Access to the Government secured capacity will be via tickets; there will be no 'turn up and go' access.

We recognise that some suppliers will have already implemented their own contingency plans. We suggest that suppliers should consider their contingency plans and utilise the additional Government-procured



freight capacity only where they believe they have a need, recognising that we are at this stage unable to guarantee access to any particular route.

If you wish to access this additional roll-on, roll-off ferry capacity you will need to register. This does not constitute a commercial agreement to buy the space, but it will form the basis of our future contact with suppliers and their logistics providers about the ticketing process. If you do not believe you will require (or you are unsure) whether you will want to use the Government secured capacity, please continue with registration and provide comments in the appropriate section. If you choose to not respond to this form it will not preclude you from later registering for the additional capacity, although we encourage you to respond as this will assist the Department in ongoing contingency planning.

You will shortly receive an email with a link to enrol onto a portal named “DHSC eXchange”, it is on this portal that you will need to register to use the Government secured capacity. Please complete registration before 25 February.

Please be assured any data provided will be handled in the strictest confidence and is protected in law through the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the Law Enforcement Directive. A full list of your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is accessible at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/>

### **Dedicated Shipment Channel**

It is recognised that not all suppliers of medical devices and clinical consumables have the capability to hold stock of their full product range in the UK, often due to the need to supply goods on a “just in time” basis as part of a clinical procedure, and they routinely supply product directly from distribution centres in the EU to care providers or patients.

Suppliers operating these distribution models need to continue to work on their own contingency measures, especially where product is routinely supplied on **short lead times** (24 to 72 hours).

The Dedicated Shipment Channel operation has been established as a contingency measure for use in the event that suppliers’ arrangements encounter severe disruption to the movement of product to the UK as a result of EU Exit. This arrangement will apply to products ordered directly from suppliers or via the NHS Supply Chain ‘Blue Diamond’ and ‘E-Direct’ services.

The movement of product through this channel will be determined and controlled by the DHSC on the basis of the needs of the Health and Social Care systems across the UK and its Crown Dependencies.

The DHSC has set up a logistics operation to move products from mainland Europe into the UK and through to care providers and patients, typically within 3 days from receipt of products into the logistics hub in Belgium.

To enable products to be channelled through this logistics route at short notice, it is necessary that we have received and verified a range of information from suppliers, by means of a Dedicated Shipment Channel registration process.

Registration does not constitute a commercial agreement and does not commit the supplier to use this contingency or provide any guarantee that the DHSC will grant access to this contingency arrangement.

While we recognise that you may have full confidence in your own contingency measures and may feel that you would not need to call on this arrangement, we would encourage all suppliers that do use these



distribution models to register as an important element of their preparedness arrangements so that products can be moved quickly and efficiently in the event that the contingency needs to be deployed.

Suppliers will need to register online in order to be eligible for access to the Dedicated Shipping Channel by completing the form at: <https://shipper.mixmovematch.com/RegisterNHSSupplier>

To enable processing of registrations in good time we ask that supplier registrations are submitted by the **25 February 2019**.

Please be assured that any data provided will be handled in confidence and is protected in law through the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the Law Enforcement Directive.

Please note that the information provided in the registration process will be held securely on behalf of the DHSC by its appointed agents and used only for the purpose of enabling shipments via the Dedicated Shipment Channel.

See the attached 'Guidance for registration to access the Dedicated NHS Shipment Channel' for details on the registration process, information that will be required and signposting to other useful resources.

NOTE: The registration process for the Dedicated Shipment Channel is separate to the registration process for accessing Government procured tickets on alternative shipping routes between the EU and the UK. This is necessary as the two contingency measures are separate and the information required to meet customs procedures in the operation of the Dedicated Shipment Channel is more detailed than that required for purchasing tickets on the Government routes.

Suppliers that believe that they may need to access both contingency options will need to register on both systems separately.

The Department is committed to working closely with industry, through trade bodies and industry representatives, in order to ensure that our contingency plans work effectively for patients and care providers across the UK, and that we can be as prepared as possible in advance of the UK's exit from the EU.

We recognise that this is challenging situation, but I would urge all suppliers to give full consideration to the contingency measures set out in this letter and take the necessary steps to ensure your organisation is registered through the appropriate systems.

Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation with this important work. I am confident that, with adequate preparation and your support, we can together safeguard patient care in the event of a 'no deal' exit from the EU.

Yours faithfully,

**Steve Oldfield**  
Chief Commercial Officer