HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

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Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
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24 January 2019

Access to medicines in the event of 'no deal'

Dear Secretary of State,

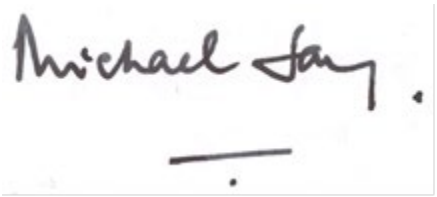
I am grateful for the Minister's letter of 10 January 2019, which the Committee considered at its meeting on 23 January. We welcome the details he provided on the Government's 'no deal' contingency planning. I note that the Government also published a series of letters and additional guidance to the health sector in December 2018. In light of this, I would be grateful if you could provide further information to the Committee on the following:

- When will the Government contact suppliers of medicines and medical products to give them notice and guidance on rerouting their supplies?
- In the letter to UK-based manufacturers of medicines on 7 December, you warned that a 'no deal' scenario "may now affect you even if you do not supply prescription only or pharmacy medicines from or via the EU/EEA into the UK". Can you please clarify what affect on the UK pharmaceutical manufacturers you were referring to?
- In the letter to health and care providers on 7 December you noted there is a separate programme to ensure the continuity of supply for centrally-procured vaccines and other products …used for urgent public health use." Can you please provide more information on this programme, including whether Public Health England is planning to stockpile these medicines and if there is a list of other products for urgent public health use?
- The letter to health providers also states that NHS Blood and Transplant are working to put written agreements in place with EU organisations to allow organ exchange to continue after 29 March 2019. Can you provide more detail on the agreements, including the provisions of the agreements and progress of concluding the agreements?
- With regard to clinical trials, I note that your guidance published 4 January says the "EU's current position is that where trials are pan-EU, sponsors or legal representatives must be based in the EU". What impact will this have on clinical trials that are in progress on 29 March 2019? Has the Government assessed the impact on the UK of the EU's policy position on clinical trials?

- In my previous letter I also referred to a news item[1] that claimed a drug company was excluding UK patients from a pan-EU clinical trial due to uncertainty over whether the EMA would accept the data of the trial. What assurances can you provide to drug companies to encourage them to continue to make their trials open for UK patients?
- In the Minister's response he cited commercial sensitivities as the reason for not providing the cost of flying in medical products for a six-week period nor the list of medicines that would be prioritised for air freight. We do not consider an estimate of this figure nor a list of medicines and medical products to have adverse commercial implications. Providing this information will assist the Committee in understanding the impact of no deal preparations and give assurances that the Government is prioritising medicines effectively.

Given that we are now just nine weeks away from leaving the EU with the increasing possibility of doing so without a deal, and noting the delayed response to our previous letter, we expect a response within ten working days.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Jay of Ewelme

Chairman of the House of Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee

[1] "Brexit uncertainty sees UK patients cut from heart attack drug trial", *Independent*, 3 October 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/brexit-heart-attack-drug-trial-research-european-medicines-agency-recardio-dutogliptin-a8566426.html