

# EU EXIT PREPARATIONS: GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL CARE PROVIDERS

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to update social care Providers on the preparations that are being taken, both nationally and locally within Lincolnshire in readiness for exiting the EU, to provide answers to some frequently asked questions, and to put forward a checklist of steps Providers can take to ensure the social care sector within Lincolnshire is prepared for all scenarios relating to EU Exit.

## NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The Government has been clear from the outset that the UK would prepare for all scenarios relating to EU Exit, which includes 'no deal' preparations. A range of information and communications have been issued by various Government departments to local government organisations, to businesses, and to the public in order to support preparations for the UK exiting the EU. This information includes:

- Brexit national position
- No deal planning
- Guidance to businesses
- Citizen's rights
- EU Funding
- Port health and trade

The Local Government Association website pulls this information together in one place and you can access it here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/brexit-advice-hub-local-government>.

## LINCOLNSHIRE PREPARATIONS

Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum has set up an EU Exit working group with multi-agency representation, including County and District councils, the emergency services, utility and infrastructure organisations, and the health and social care sector.

The EU Exit working group is responsible for coordinating efforts to assess the broader impacts on Lincolnshire of EU Exit using a template provided by the

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Social Care on this group is Tony McGinty, Consultant in Public Health (Health Protection) within Lincolnshire County Council. Representatives from the local health and care economy are working with Tony as SRO to input to this work and inform the assessment.

**Do not stockpile:**

The Department of Health and Social Care has issued clear guidance stating that UK health providers – including hospitals, care homes, GPs and community pharmacies – should **not** stockpile additional medicines beyond their business as usual stock levels. There is also no need for clinicians to write longer NHS prescriptions and the public should be discouraged from stockpiling.

Extensive work has been carried out centrally to ensure that the provision of medicines, medical devices and clinical consumables will continue when the UK exits the EU, details of which are contained within the "EU Exit Operational Readiness Guidance" issued by the Department of Health and Social Care, located here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/EU%20Exit%20Operational%20Readiness%20Guidance.pdf>

We therefore request that you follow the Secretary of State's message not to stockpile and, furthermore, would ask that you encourage your staff to reassure patients/ service users that they should not store additional medicines at home. However, should you identify any concerns regarding possible shortfalls, please refer to the LinCA website for further guidance ([www.linca.org.uk](http://www.linca.org.uk)).

**Potential acquisition of surplus supplies of non-clinical consumables, such as food, heating oil, and incontinence products:**

The Department of Health and Social Care has identified categories of national suppliers for non-clinical consumables, goods and services that it is reviewing and managing at a national level. The Department is engaging with suppliers and industry experts to identify and plan for any food supply disruption, including to schools and care homes. Where necessary, there will be cross-government work to implement arrangements at the point of EU Exit to ensure continued supply.

In relation to alternative fuel provisions such as heating oil and bottled gas, please note that no disruption to supply is envisaged at a national or local level. If your stocks are low then it would be prudent to replenish prior to EU Exit in order to maintain sufficient supplies for the six-week period following the date of exit, so that in the unlikely event of a disruption to your normal replenishment schedule, this will not lead to a shortage at your premises.

With regards to non-clinical consumables that you procure locally, we recommend that you carry out a self-assessment to identify risk areas in relation to essential supplies, if you have not already done so. You should escalate potential shortage issues through LinCA or the Council's Commercial Team.

### **Supporting EU nationals employed in your organisation:**

Make sure your employees are aware of the EU Settlement Scheme and where possible, provide practical assistance such as access to a computer or other device to support your staff to apply. Through this scheme EU citizens will be able to register for settled status in the UK if they have been here for five years, or pre-settled status if they have been here for less than five years. This will ensure the rights of EU citizens are protected in the UK after EU Exit, and guarantee their status and right to work.

On 21 January the Prime Minister announced that there will be no fee when the scheme opens fully on 30 March 2019. Anyone who has applied already, or who applies and pays a fee during the test phases (prior to 30 March 2019), will have their fee refunded by the government in due course.

More information, including where to register, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

### **Additional preparation for EU Exit:**

The majority of disruptions that might be experienced upon exiting the EU should already have been considered and mitigated by your organisation's normal business continuity plan (BCP). You should therefore ensure that your BCP is up to date, including the names and contact numbers for critical staff and suppliers. This should include vehicle registration numbers of critical staff that need a vehicle to attend work (where alternative transport is not available) or to perform their duties in the community. Further advice on business continuity planning is detailed in the Preparedness Checklist below.

As the EU Exit date approaches, further operational guidance will be issued and updated to support the health and care system to prepare for the UK leaving the EU prior to 29 March 2019. You should be prepared to receive and respond to further guidance as we approach EU Exit.

### **Supporting service users in preparation for EU Exit:**

Should any patients or service users express concerns about Brexit, encourage your staff to reassure patients and service users that significant work has been and continues to be done to secure as little disruption as possible when the UK exits the EU. You can also raise awareness and signpost EU Citizens to the EU Settlement scheme.

You should reiterate to service users that there is no need to store additional medicines at home, as the Government is working with industry to ensure a continued supply of medicines from the moment we leave the EU.

You should continue to support the social care needs of service users and escalate any concerns or vulnerabilities that might arise for service users as a result of EU Exit via [LinCA](#) or the County Council's Commercial Team.

## PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

The following checklist details a number of actions we are advising Providers to take to improve the level of preparedness for all scenarios relating to EU Exit. Officers of the Council's Commercial Team will support you by going through this checklist during regularly scheduled contract management visits:

#	ACTION	Tick box
1	Adhere to the Secretary of State's message to healthcare providers that you should not stockpile medicines, clinical devices or clinical consumables beyond your business as usual stock levels.	
2	Encourage staff to reassure patients/ service users that they should not store additional medicines at home, as the Government is working with industry to ensure a continued supply of medicines from the moment we leave the EU.	
3	Report any shortage issues and escalate queries for medicine supply issues unrelated to current shortages through existing regional communication channels.	
4	Carry out a self-assessment to identify risk areas in relation to essential non-clinical supplies. You should escalate potential shortage issues through LinCA or the County Council's Commercial Team.	
5	<p><b>PREMISES RELIANT ON ALTERNATIVE FUEL SUPPLIES:</b>                      Whilst no disruption of supplies of fuel oil and gas are expected, it would be prudent to maintain sufficient supplies of heating oil/ bottled gas for the six-week period following the date of exit.</p>	
6	Ensure your employees are aware of the EU Settlement Scheme and the decision by government that this scheme will be free of charge. Where possible, provide practical assistance such as access to a computer or other device to support your staff to apply.	
7	<p>Update your Business Continuity Plan, ensuring it contains the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Names and contact details for <b>critical</b> staff, including vehicle registration numbers of critical staff that need a vehicle to attend work (where alternative transport is not available) or to perform their duties in the community. <b>Please see supplementary guidance on identifying critical staff in the updated FAQs section below.</b></li> <li>• Names and contact details for critical suppliers.</li> <li>• Actions to take in the event of a disruption to: Staff numbers, critical suppliers, infrastructure (gas, water, electricity), loss of premises, and loss of systems/ ICT.</li> <li>• Lincolnshire County Council's Commercial Team has advised Providers to consider resilience planning for medical devices and consumables independently purchased. Such as:</li> </ul>	

	<p>*Self-assessment has identified the procurement of key items –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*incontinence Pads</li> <li>*syringe drivers</li> <li>*PEG Feeding Tubes</li> <li>*Catheters</li> <li>*IV Systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure you would be able to readily access the information listed above during a business continuity disruption.</b></p>	
8	<p>Support your service users by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing consistent public awareness messages not to store additional medicines at home.</li> <li>• Signposting service users who are EU Citizens to the EU Settlement Scheme.</li> <li>• Sharing the advice in Action 5 above with service users who may rely on alternative fuel supplies to cook/ heat their home.</li> <li>• Escalating any concerns or vulnerabilities that might arise for service users as a result of EU Exit via LinCA or the County Council's Commercial Team.</li> </ul>	
9	<p>Be prepared to receive and respond to further guidance as we approach EU Exit.</p>	

## UPDATED GUIDANCE - 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019

Preparations within Lincolnshire are on-going in readiness for all scenarios relating to EU Exit, with guidance and oversight from Central Government. The following has been collated in response to feedback on this document:

### **Business continuity - identifying 'critical' members of staff other information to collate:**

Your business continuity plan should detail the minimum staffing requirements needed to maintain a safe level of service for your users; this may include a pre-determined minimum number of staff required on duty, as well as identifying a need for staff with specific skills or qualifications. Your 'critical' staff would therefore be those staff members who are required to achieve the minimum staffing requirements you have identified to maintain a safe level of service.

It is important to note that your list of critical staff needs to take into account shift patterns and normal days off/ breaks from duty, so the number of critical staff you have is likely to be much higher than your minimum staffing requirements for any one day/ shift.

You should collate the following information for each critical staff member:

- Name
- Contact telephone number
- Address, including distance between home and workplace
- Vehicle registration number
- Whether their role requires use of a vehicle e.g. to deliver home care

- Any personnel issues that could impact their availability e.g. travel problems, childcare needs, relevant health care/ medical issues etc.

You must ensure that you keep the list up to date and that you can easily access it at all times. We recommend keeping a secure back-up copy, either printed or on an encrypted flash-drive, properly locked away.

**Potential action regarding medical devices you procure yourselves:**

We advise that all providers check their stock levels of medical devices that aren't provided through the NHS. You may want to order a little earlier than usual to top up stock, to allow for any delays in transportation which may occur, and especially for any stock that has a long delivery time.

**Providing Services into private homes and the medical devices they purchase for their home care:**

If your staff rely on medical devices purchased by private individuals in order to deliver their home care, you should advise these users to consider ordering a little earlier than usual to top up stock, to allow for any delays in transportation which may occur, and especially for any stock that has a long delivery time.