

Brexit: Frequently asked questions

The Care Inspectorate expects all care services in Scotland to continue to deliver high-quality care which meets people's needs and respects their rights and choices as laid out in Scotland's [Health and Social Care Standards](#).

We recognise that this is a time of uncertainty and challenge for care providers and the Care Inspectorate will continue to support the care sector across Scotland to meet the needs of those who rely on them.

Q. Should I order more than my normal amount of medicines for the people I care for in case there are delays and disruption in supply following Brexit?

A. Care services should not over order medicines or stockpile medicines as this may deprive others who need it.

The pharmacy sector currently deals with shortages of certain medicines, and procedures already exist across the UK to mitigate the effects of disruption in supply.

Q. What do I do if the person I am caring for cannot get their regular medicine because of supply shortages?

A. If the currently prescribed medicine is unavailable your pharmacy should let you know this. Procedures may allow your pharmacy to temporarily supply a different format or strength/quantity of the medicine, or even a different medicine that will have a similar effect.

You should note down the change in supply on your medicines administration recording (MAR) chart in the usual manner. For more information, please read [Guidance about medication personal plans, review, monitoring and record keeping in residential care services](#).

Q. Is there any forward planning my organisation can do in the event of delays at the border affecting supply of medicines and healthcare products?

A. Yes, there are some measures you can take.

- Make sure you are prepared to receive stock deliveries outside normal hours.
- If your organisation currently relies on receiving products from the EU with short-lead times of 24 to 48 hours, be aware that lead times may increase.

More generally, Scottish Care has published [guidance to care providers on resilience planning](#) in the context of EU exit.

Q. What do I do if I am running out of supplies that people need, for example continence equipment or medicine?

A. You should do what you have always done and this includes contacting your GP and/or pharmacist if it's a medicine. They will be able to provide advice including alternative medication if this is an issue.

In the event of a 'no deal' EU exit all social care organisations are expected to continue to apply a business as usual approach to the procurement of goods and any resultant supplier shortages. If you need other equipment, again you should contact the relevant person in your area who normally provides this.

On 16 October 2019, [the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer wrote to health and social care stakeholders](#) highlighting the preparations that had been made in relation to the supply of medicines, medical devices and clinical consumables. This included contingency plans being developed by NHS National Services Scotland and the Scottish Government for continued supply of medical devices and clinical consumables, including to the social care sector, in the event of disruption.

Q. What if the service experiences a shortage of staff due to Brexit?

A. As well as responding to challenges as they arise, we would expect providers to consider the prospect of staff shortages/absences before Brexit and plan for how those might be addressed or mitigated.

As with any issue surrounding staff, providers must follow the safer recruitment process. Where providers move staff between services for short periods, we would not expect additional checks to take place. If providers have recruited new staff but are awaiting checks, as with current guidance, staff can be deployed but it is the provider's responsibility to undertake a risk assessment to protect people.

If providers do not have enough staff to run a safe service they will be required to decide if the service can remain open or whether they can operate in a different way. If the service you are providing is a care home or care at home, you must make urgent contact with the relevant health and social care partnership to alert them to the situation and seek assistance. You should also inform the Care Inspectorate.

It will be important for early learning and childcare (ELC) services to maintain operations to enable parents to attend their place of work. There is the possibility of providing other ELC services with fewer staff in partnership with parents who do not work, for example 'stay play and learn' sessions.

Q. What if the service is unable to access relevant supplies/staff?

A. If as a provider or a carer you are worried about any shortages you should make contact with the relevant health and social care partnership or education department who can provide advice and assistance.

The Care Inspectorate has links to health and social care partnerships, education services and to the National Equipment Triage Centre in Scotland. If we become aware of shortages, we will alert services and discuss with providers/carers the action they should take.