

# Brexit

## Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Position Statement

July 2017

### Introduction

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges produced an initial position paper on Brexit following the referendum decision in June 2016 and the Council has kept the issue under review. A meeting was held in June 2017 for College and Faculty members along with some other key stakeholders (NHS Employers, GMC, HEE and Academy lay group) to exchange information and review College priorities and actions. This statement sets out:

- The proposed overall approach the Academy and Colleges intend to take
- The key issues for Medical Royal Colleges in respect of the implications of Brexit for Healthcare
- Intended specific actions and next steps.

### Our approach

Whatever the views of individual Colleges or College members on Brexit itself, all Colleges and the Academy recognise the reality that we will be leaving the EU. Our position is therefore that we should work with the government to achieve the best result from Brexit for patients and for health and social care across the UK. As such we will therefore adopt a pragmatic and solution focussed approach that will seek to minimise difficulties and threats to UK health and social care but also look out for and make the most of any positive opportunities that may arise. As organisations with a wide expertise on healthcare (including workforce issues) we will seek to provide whatever data and analysis we can to support and inform the process in terms of both our agendas and the priorities of Government and its negotiators.

In terms of how we take matters forward Colleges fully recognise the value of working both across the Academy and in wider alliances with organisations across health and social care. Whilst this in no way precludes individual Colleges and Faculties pursuing issues of relevance to them, all recognise the importance of seeking to have consistent and complementary messages in the run up to Brexit in 2019.

We also recognised that there will be some issues that will particularly impact on the medical workforce but in other areas the impact will be far greater for other NHS or social care staff.

We believe that solutions to the issues we have identified below are likely to fall into three categories:

- Continued access to current arrangements. Non-EU countries are participants in various current EU-led initiatives e.g. in the public health field
- Replication of current desired arrangements or requirements at UK level
- Replacement of undesired current EU arrangements with better and more appropriate UK alternatives or indeed simply abandoning undesired measures.

Which type of solution is best or achievable for which issue will need to be worked through and, probably more crucially, will depend on the outcome and approach of the wider negotiations.

## Key issues

Set out below are the key issues identified by Colleges which we believe must be addressed as part of Brexit discussions in respect of healthcare:

### Workforce Supply – The retention and continued recruitment of EU staff

The NHS and Social Care depend heavily on staff from the EU. It is essential that assurance is given urgently to current staff over their residency status in the UK and that going forward there are sensible and workable immigration rules so the NHS can recruit staff from overseas, both from the EU and beyond as required. Colleges recognise that whilst this is an important issue for doctors it is even more pressing in the case of nursing and other staff especially those working in social care. At the same time the NHS must become more effective in recruiting and investing in training UK staff.

### Medical regulation and definition/recognition of qualifications

Decisions will need to be made on what arrangements should replace the automatic recognition of medical qualifications for EU doctors. Whilst needing to maintain a balance between assuring quality and ease of movement, this may provide opportunities to address issues that have caused concern including consistent standards of medical undergraduate and postgraduate training.

### Medical science and research

Ensuring academic and research links including medical science and funding streams remain open and are maintained as part of a competitive programme is essential in both healthcare and economic terms.

### Regulatory alignment for health technology (medicines and devices)

It seems clear that the UK will lose its present status with the European Medicines Agency (EMA), which will relocate out of London. Alternative arrangements will be needed for the UK regulation and registration of medicines and devices. This is an issue about the safety of patients as availability of technology and innovation. The impact this may all have on the introduction and availability of medicines and devices is a very serious concern for the future of UK healthcare.

## Public Health

Continued co-operation on public health issues and communicable diseases is essential as well as ensuring appropriate environmental legislation and public health protection as these are issues that clearly span international boundaries.

## Reciprocal Health Arrangements/EHIC

Negotiations must clarify arrangements for reciprocal health care for EU citizens working in or visiting the UK and similarly for UK citizens in Europe. The Government has published its proposals for EU citizens in the UK and the outcome of these negotiations will determine reciprocal health arrangements.

## Funding and sustainability of the NHS

Whilst not an issue for Brexit negotiations the implications for the funding of the NHS and other public services post Brexit are crucial. The promised Brexit funding bonanza does not seem likely. A potential influx of UK citizens living in Europe (300,000 alone in Spain) seeking NHS treatment if there are no reciprocal arrangements will place additional strain on services.

## Other issues – Non-Healthcare specific issues

There are other issues which are not specific to the NHS and healthcare but will have implications for healthcare. These include:

- Public procurement requirements
- Working Time Directive
- Worker health and safety
- Infrastructure investment.

## Issues to take forward

We have identified a series of issues that both individually and collectively we would want to work on or take forward. These have different timescales and are of different magnitude and work is needed to refine the requirements. The following issues were identified:

## Developing the arguments

- Developing common scripts on key issues
- Ensuring arguments stress economic benefit as well as “moral” case
- Importance of the medicines/devices regulation agenda
- Preparing arguments and solutions for use/adoption in final rushed stages of negotiation.

## Campaigning and lobbying

- Working as far as possible with alliances e.g. Cavendish Coalition, Brexit Alliance
- Reinforcing messages of reassurance to overseas College members working in the NHS
- Identifying when key intervention points will be
- Identifying key groups for influence
  - UK Government
  - Devolved administrations
  - Opposition parties
  - Health & Brexit select committees
  - Individual MPs
  - Department of Health
  - DExEU
  - European bodies
- Colleges working with European professional associations.

## Post Brexit world

- The need for immigration policy criteria based on workforce need and value and not simply salary level (particularly in relation to social care sector)
- Development of schemes for short term medical appointment placements in the UK for periods up to two years to provide opportunity for both training and to meet service provision requirements. This will not simply be with the EU/EEA but more widely with English speaking countries for sharing of knowledge and skills.
- Working with the GMC and HEE/NES for a sensible recognition scheme of overseas medical qualification and training to help facilitate this exchange
- Arguing for a “Healthcare Impact Assessment” of any future proposals to amend or delete legislation adopted into UK law by the Repeal Bill.

## Immediate Next Steps

- To publish the statement setting out the College/Academy objectives
- For the Academy to take a co-ordinating role
- To propose to the Academy Council the establishment of a small group of College leads who are actively working on Brexit matters to co-ordinate information and activity
- To create an electronic reference group of those attending and other interested people to share and exchange information
- To consider future meetings seminars on specific issues as required
- To continue to input to existing groups e.g. Brexit Alliance and Cavendish Coalition.