

Brexit poses threat to NHS, Health Secretary warns

Mr Gething will tell the Assembly later today (Tuesday, 26 June) that the Welsh Government is working with the UK and Scottish Governments to deliver as smooth a transition as possible. However he warned several areas need to be addressed urgently to avoid damaging the NHS in Wales.

He said: "EU nationals make up an important part of the NHS and social care workforce. Every single employee must be made to feel welcome and valued for the role they play in delivering services which benefit the people of Wales and the wider contribution they make to our communities.

We will continue to press hard for unambiguous permanent residence status to be granted to all EEA health and social care workers and their families currently working in the UK. We also need assurance that we can continue to recruit medical staff from Europe through quick and reliable systems.

Decades of cooperation and harmonisation of standards on medicines and medical technologies have produced proven benefits for EU citizens. Any restrictions on trade, customs checks and trade tariffs are likely to reduce the availability of medicines, lead to delays in the supply of drugs and vaccines and potentially increased costs to the NHS in Wales."

The Health Secretary also set out the benefits and needs for continued cooperation with Europe on diseases control, food safety standards and medical research.

He added: "The UK Government must take notice of these concerns. We will continue to work with them constructively to ensure that all those affected are provided with as much certainty as possible over their future rights and status. Many of the risks I have highlighted to health and social care in Wales would be mitigated or removed altogether if the UK Government secures a sensible Brexit founded upon reality. If they do not, it may have real and lasting health and wellbeing consequences for individuals, families and communities across Wales."