

'No deal' Brexit worst possible scenario for Welsh patients – Welsh Health Secretary warns UK Government

The Health Secretary warned a 'no deal' Brexit would be the worst possible scenario for Welsh patients as he and the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies, joined leaders from across health and social care in Wales to discuss the implications of Brexit on the sector.

Central to the talks was contingency planning for a 'no deal' Brexit, including ensuring an uninterrupted supply of medication and securing the rights and status of EU nationals working within the health and social care sector.

Vaughan Gething said:

"I'm encouraged by today's talks, which have demonstrated a will from all within the sector to work together to protect the best interests of Welsh patients and social care clients.

"The UK Government must do more to avoid the worst possible scenario of a 'no deal' Brexit, which could have real and lasting consequences for our services, for individuals, families and communities across Wales.

"But, because of the continued uncertain situation we find ourselves in, we must act responsibly and prepare for this scenario. Our organisations are well-rehearsed in the long list of risks and challenges; today was an opportunity to come together and constructively discuss our readiness and make sure that whether the UK Government secures a deal or not, we continue to deliver quality care and support to those who need it."

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"We can only overcome the challenges Brexit poses for health and social care by working together. Today's meeting showed a commitment to doing this, with representation from across the sector.

"We've already allocated some of our EU Transition Fund towards research into how the Brexit process could impact on social care and childcare workforces in Wales, and help the sectors plan for any eventuality. Today was an opportunity to hear directly from those within the sector about their concerns and reassure them we are working to support them to plan for their workforce

requirements post-Brexit.”

The round table event was organised by the Welsh NHS Confederation, with their members and other representatives from across the sector.

Vanessa Young, Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation said:

“Today has been an important step in our planning for Brexit. Our preparations need to be coordinated and comprehensive, starting with understanding what action is being taken nationally by the UK and Welsh Governments.

We have therefore urged Ministers to work with us through a Ministerial Stakeholder Reference Group so that together we can ensure patients and social care clients will continue to receive the treatment they need whatever the outcome of the negotiations.”