

Impact of the Move to Brexit

Following the referendum vote and the decision to trigger article 50 of the Lisbon treaty the United Kingdom intends to leave the European Union at the end of March 2019. This paper considers some of the key issues that will face Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in the lead up to and the immediate aftermath of the exit date.

In part it is based upon the following Kings Fund article

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/articles/brexit-and-nhs>

This article identified five big issues for health and social care:

1. Staffing – in particular the impact that Brexit may have on current and future workforce;
2. Treatment – access to NHS treatment for EU nationals;
3. Regulation – affecting procurement, competition law, working time directives, regulation of medicines and medical devices and the impact on professional standards and education;
4. Cross-border cooperation;
5. Funding and Finance.

Some of these items will have a direct bearing on the Trust whereas others will be issues that are more likely to have an impact on a broader scale such as the economic consequences of Brexit.

This paper seeks to address the former – i.e. those having a potentially direct impact on the Trust and poses a set of questions to be answered in order to form a view about the overall impact and what steps the Trust should take in the following months. Each of the questions has been linked to a lead department to try and develop an answer.

Staffing

The Health and Social Care Information Centre have estimated that 55,000 of the NHS's 1.3 million workforce and 80,000 of the 1.3 million workers in adult social care have come from other EU countries. Without these workers there could be a considerable skills and resource gap and whilst negotiations are on-going at a national level to determine future arrangements it is important to understand the potential impact locally.

Key Question 1 (to be answered by HR Department) – What proportion of the Trust's workforce emanate from elsewhere in the EU and what roles do these staff carry out?

Key Question 2 (to be answered by HR Department) – Of those staff, do we know who plan to stay in the UK and gain 'settled status' or leave post Brexit?

Key Question 3 (to be answered by HR Department) – To what extent are future workforce plans based upon overseas recruitment and in particular from the EU?

Accessing Treatment

Key Question 4 (to be answered by Contracting Team) – How many patients from an EU country who are either ordinarily resident in the UK or have classed as overseas visitors have had access to treatment within the Trust over the last 3 years and for which procedures / treatments.

Key Question 5 (to be answered by Contracting Team) – What monetary value does this represent?

Regulation

a) Working Time Directive.

Key Question 6 (to be answered by HR Department) – What are the potential impacts on employment contracts if the Government decides to repeal or amend the working time regulations?

b) Procurement.

Key Question 7 (to be answered by Procurement Department) – What are the potential impacts on major contracts if the Government decides to repeal or amend EU rules on procurement and competition.

c) Regulation of Medicines and Clinical Trials.

Key Question 8 (to be answered by Pharmacy Department) – What medicines have only been authorised by the European Medicines Agency and not also authorised by the UK's own Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MRHA)?

Cross Border Co-operation

Key Question 9 (to be answered by the R&D Department) – is the Trust involved in any multi-centre clinical trials that are spread across the EU or does it receive any R&D funding from EU sources?

Key Question 10 (to be answered by the R&D Department) What percentage of R&D funding originates from the EU? And what value is that worth?

Key Question 11 (to be answered by the R&D Department) What are the implications for the Trust in accessing new medicines, technologies and other relevant medical innovations developed outside the UK?

Funding and Finance

There was considerable debate during the referendum campaign about the impact on the UK economy in general and on the potential for additional funding for health care. This could have a very significant impact on the Trust but as this sits within the broader context / impact this paper does not pose any specific questions to be answered by the Trust.

Conclusion

This paper poses a number of specific questions for the Trust to consider in the lead up to Brexit. It is quite possible that some of these questions will be directly addressed by the outcome of subsequent negotiations. However, as things stand the questions could all have a significant impact and it is worth the Trust considering what these are and what, if any, action it could take in response. It is

also possible that new issues will emerge during the coming months that the Trust will also need to formally consider.

Recommendation

The (Board/EDs) are asked to consider the potential implications of Brexit and in particular to seek further information in the form of answers to the set questions by the relevant team / department. Timescale for initial assessment is 31st March 2018.