



SIAA Response to the Health and Sport Committee

Impact of leaving the European Union on health and social care in Scotland

January 2018

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) is a membership organisation that has the overall aim of ensuring that Independent Advocacy is available to any vulnerable person in Scotland. Independent Advocacy safeguards people who are vulnerable and discriminated against or whom services find difficult to serve, empowering people who need a stronger voice by enabling them to express their own needs and make their own decisions.

The SIAA believes that key consideration needs to be given to people with disabilities, people with long term conditions and carers as Brexit could have huge implications on the care, treatment and services that they receive. We believe that this is a human rights issue and that work needs to be done in order to ensure that Brexit does not negatively impact upon people's right to health, right to live independently, and to an adequate standard of living and social protection.

1. How could the potential risks of Brexit for health and social care in Scotland be mitigated?

While the Brexit deal remains undecided and under negotiations, it is difficult to assess the potential risks and subsequently outline possible solutions. However, it is important to recognise the breadth and the impact of Brexit and that as a result human rights, access to medicines, workforce, funding and research are all likely to be hugely affected.

We support the Health & Social Care Alliance's amendment (NC44) to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill and reiterate the need for an impact assessment in order to monitor and address the impact of Brexit across health and social care in Scotland.

We are concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the impact of Brexit on the social care workforce and ask that confirmation of the rights of EU nationals who already live and work in Scotland to remain be provided. The Scottish Parliament must also find ways to encourage local authorities, integrated joint boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships to ensure that the impact of Brexit is a consideration in their workforce planning for the delivery of social care in the coming years.

Securing access to medicines should be a key concern, as shortages of supply will increase costs to both people who require them and the NHS in Scotland.

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We support the concerns of the ALLIANCE about the long term impact of Brexit on the rights of people across the UK, particularly those who use support and services. We are concerned that leaving the EU could enable a retraction in people's rights and believe that the Scottish Government can go further in order to avoid a retraction of the rights of disabled people, people with long term conditions and carers post-Brexit, by fully incorporating the UNCRPD into Scottish law alongside the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which establishes a range of rights including the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

2. How could the potential benefits of Brexit for health and social care in Scotland be realised?

We support the ALLIANCE's recommendation that dependent on the negotiation around the UK's place in the single market, there may be an opportunity to test and ensure the competence of European doctors, which is currently restricted by European law. This could allow for improved standards and greater reassurance to the public.

New and progressive approaches to the realisation of challenging targets related to air and water quality, as well as in relation to agriculture, food and environmental standards, could have benefits for Scotland's public health. Alongside this, the ongoing development of a new public health framework in Scotland, as well as indications that the UK Public Health Network will take a human rights based approach to public health in future, should allow for opportunities to further embed a rights-based approach to health and social care in Scotland.

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