

## 5.1 Brexit

“Name some consequences you think Brexit will have on the NHS?”

### 1. Scientific Research

How might Brexit affect scientific research?

- **Loss of free movement of scientists** - free movement of scientists in and out of EU member states could be revoked - reducing the number of scientific research conducted cross-countries
- **Loss of science budget** - according to one source, UK received €8.8 billion from the European Science Budget but contributed only €5.4 billion. Reduced funding could mean reduced research and implementation of innovation e.g. gene editing, immunotherapy, cancer research
- EU has "propped up" UK cancer research £126m in past decade, more than 40% of public money in this field has come from the EU - but there has been collaboration between countries before EU e.g. CERN, European space agency

### 2. Employment

How might Brexit affect supply of NHS staff?

- **Less NHS staff** - currently 60,000 European workers in the NHS - Lack of new migrant workers has meant that there has been an overall real-terms loss of 40,000 nurses. Knock-on effects for staff - with less clinical staff available, there are less people available to cover rotas so longer hours and less work-life balance
- **Less nurses especially** - since the vote to leave the EU, the number of nurses from overseas EU countries applying to work in the UK has fallen by 96%. Level of nurses likely to fall even more due to stricter immigration laws as well as a reduction in salary value due to currency depreciation.

### 3. Pharmaceuticals

How might Brexit affect the pharmaceutical industry?

- **Pharmaceutical industry** - to be sold in UK a drug needs to be approved by European Medicines Agency (EMA) which is funded for by the EU. Britain needs to set up a similar agency responsible for monitoring safety of medicines. Without it we are in a state of "regulatory uncertainty". Patients in the UK could face additional delays in accessing new medicines
- **Medical supply chains** - trade between the UK and EU is substantial, delivering medicine and medical devices to patients across Europe. Medical supply chains could be affected resulting in a shortage of certain drugs.
- **Access to clinical trials** - concerns that UK may not have access to EU clinical trials databases, making it harder for NHS patients to take part in international trials leaving fewer opportunities for patients to receive experimental treatments (which are often used as the last resort)

#### 4. Access to treatment + 5. Extra Funds

##### How might Brexit affect patient treatment?

- **Accessing treatment internationally** - UK citizens can currently access treatment in the EU through European Health Insurance cards, without these cards it's unclear how much UK citizens will be charged for healthcare when abroad, or vice versa
- **Positive = less membership fees** - Nuffield Trust (2016) - "It is possible that extra funds could be found for the NHS from any cancellation of Britain's EU membership fees – but whether or not these benefits will outweigh the significant staffing and financial costs Brexit may impose on already stretched services remains to be seen". These extra funds are estimated as an extra £100m per week to the National Health Service

#### Famous Brexit Bus

- Increased funding for the NHS after Brexit was a key point of the leave campaign - this demonstrates just how important the NHS is to the general public

- Boris Johnson since accused of misconduct in public office for making false claims - he has since gone on to claim EU membership costs £100 million less than he had claimed during the referendum campaign

## MMI Station 1: Brexit

**Station Brief:** On the 23rd June 2016 the British public voted to leave the European Union. How will leaving the EU affect the NHS?

### Pros of Brexit

- **Brexit NHS “bonus”**- getting more money from government as of leaving the EU. This extra cash as year would help relieve burden
- **Less demand from EU nationals** - Potentially EU national will no longer have access to NHS which could save money
- **Migration can still occur** - A “points-based” migration system which may promote migration of doctors and healthcare professionals

### Cons of Brexit

- **Drug shortages** - potential shortage of medicine if there is no deal as lots of chemicals needed to make certain drugs are imported from the EU
- **Nurse shortages** - The NHS currently has a shortage of nurses, and heavily rely on European citizens to fill such places.
- **Privatisation** - a post Brexit trade deal could open the NHS to big USA companies leading to. A culture of profit over people.
- **NHS Staff leaving** - Since the vote. In 2016 many EU nationals working in the NHS have left, and less are coming to work for the NHS. Thus, exacerbating the situation
- **Scientists & researchers leaving** - If we leave many EU academics might leave the UK. In addition, it might be made harder for UK university to get access to European university research. This could impact health research.

## MMI Station 2: Brexit

**Station Brief:** There has been a significant drop in nurses coming from the EU working in the NHS. So much so that the royal college of nursing have said that Brexit puts an “immediate risk to the provision of safe and effective care”. How might the shortage of nursing staff affect healthcare in the NHS?

### Good Answer

- **Increasing Demands.** Nurses are especially important now because of our ageing population (long term illness and repeated hospital admissions)
- **Overworking of Staff.** Leads to burnout among present nurses due to understaffing issue so less likely to recruit more nurses in the future
- **Role of Nurses.** Could argue that nurses play bigger role in patient care as they actually are the backbone of NHS, so with fewer numbers care is compromised

### Bad Answer

- **Ignoring their role.** Nurses truly are extremely important and the current lack of nurses is affecting patient safety.
- **Not coming up with a solution.** e.g. reinstating the NHS bursary to fund more nurses training, fast track courses
- **Lack of terminology.** You want to really show you're keeping up to date with what is in the news around the nursing crisis.