



Public Policy Projects

## BREXIT THREATENS ACCESS TO NEW DRUGS

**Stephen Dorrell warns against sacrificing UK life sciences on the ‘altar of political convenience’  
Funding constraints and regulatory fragmentation would delay launch of new drugs in the UK  
Life sciences is a global sector which generates revenues of £60bn for UK economy**

*“Alongside the motor industry and financial services, the life science sector is an essential British interest which must be a priority for ministers in their Brexit negotiations”* according to Stephen Dorrell, a former Health Secretary.

Launching a new report written by Stephen Dorrell and Luke Tryl which is published today by Public Policy Projects, Mr Dorrell said:

*“Science and science based industry, is a global activity and we face a simple choice: we either participate in full in that global scientific community or we prejudice a key British national interest”*

The report examines the implications for UK life sciences of different Brexit models and concludes that there is both a risk to the economic success that is the UK life sciences sector, and to British patients accessing new drugs if the UK ends up with a ‘Hard Brexit’.

Regulatory harmonisation across the European Union allows pharmaceutical companies to secure approval for new medicines across the entire of the EU in a single process, bringing benefits to patients, companies and taxpayers. Evidence collected for the report shows that if these regulatory structures are allowed to fragment, pharmaceutical companies would launch new medicines in the larger European market, instead of the UK. The report makes clear that if this happens, British patients could end up waiting years longer than those in the US and EU to access innovative new drugs.

Report author Luke Tryl said:

*Under a ‘Hard Brexit’ British patients face a perfect storm of lower health spending and a drug approval process that isn’t aligned with Europe. Simple commercial reality dictates that if companies have to choose between launching drugs in the UK, which accounts for 2.5 per cent of the global market and the EU which accounts for 16.6 per cent, then they will prioritise a European launch. This effect is compounded if restricted UK health spending means slower take-up in the UK. Ultimately that means British patients losing out on access to new drugs.*



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The report also highlights the risk to the £60bn contribution that the life sciences sector makes to the UK, along with the employment of 220,000 people. Using QuintilesIMS forecasts, the report concludes that hundreds of millions of pounds of drugs sales could be lost as a consequence of regulatory fragmentation and other trade barriers with Europe, making the UK a less attractive destination for investment in life sciences.

Commenting further Stephen Dorrell said:

*“This report debunks the idea that new trading arrangements will compensate for the loss of the EU market in life sciences. Using QuintilesIMS data the report shows that the BRICT bloc of countries will make up just 2.2 per cent of innovative medicines sales over the next five years compared to 26.8 per cent in the EU”.*

The report makes a number of recommendations, most importantly securing single market access for the life sciences, guaranteeing free movement of workers in the science industry and ensuring maximum regulatory alignment with the EU. The report is clear that a softer Brexit is necessary to safeguard the sector, highlighting the example of Switzerland to show how life sciences can thrive in a close relationship with the EU.

Stephen Dorrell said:

*“The story of development of life sciences is at heart a story of human achievement and a source of strength for the UK. We owe it to ourselves to ensure that our contribution is not sacrificed on the altar of political convenience.”*

**ENDS**

Notes

Public Policy Projects is led by Stephen Dorrell and provides policy analysis on major issues in the health and care sector.

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