

Urology Trade Association - Submission to House of Lords Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

Progress of the negotiations on the UK's Future Relationship with the EU

Background

The Urology Trade Association (UTA) was established in 2007 to represent manufacturers and suppliers of urology products. The association seeks to:

- promote and sustain patient choice in access to continence products;
- increase patient and public awareness about continence issues; and
- ensure that patients are not placed at adverse risk by ill-advised policy decisions.

Overview

What are the priorities for the UK, and for the EU, in the negotiations on the future relationship? How should the interests of different sectors of the economy and parts of the UK be balanced?

Most UTA Members trade across the EU, and therefore would like to see minimal barriers to trade prioritised in the negotiations. With regard to the future of medical device regulation, UTA members want to continue to operate in a system that they are familiar with.

Regulatory divergence will lead to changes in licensing arrangements, which could mean increased bureaucracy for the civil service and manufacturers. This could increase duplication of work, decrease competitiveness, and increase our operating costs. Therefore, it would be beneficial if the UK adopted a position of close regulatory alignment with the EU and worked closely with its international partners to harmonise standards when developing its own regulatory policy. The MHRA should also work closely with other EU Member States, to ensure that UK companies have a voice at the table when developing new regulatory measures.

Some of our members import products and/or raw materials from either single or multiple EU member states. New tariffs may have an impact on the price of products and the speed at which these goods can be delivered to UK customers.

The UTA recommends that the government ensures the continued smooth distribution of goods and services between the EU and UK. To ensure a continuous flow of medical devices into the UK, it is essential that there is minimal disruption at ports and checkpoints into the UK. Urology products are essential for users to maintain a quality of life, and there are potentially serious personal health consequences if users do not receive their products on time.

In the event of a no-deal Brexit, under the new UK Global Tariff regime, manufacturers and suppliers of urology products will be subject to new unnecessary and avoidable costs to import medical products such as adhesive removal sprays for use with incontinence sheaths and stoma products. These products are crucial to the NHS in reducing the risk of urinary tract infections, which is widely known as the largest cause of unplanned admissions into acute care.

When searching on the [UK Global Tariff checker](#), it is clear that the following medical products will be subject to a 6% tax when imported from the EU if we leave without a deal:

- Sheaths: 39269097 - <https://www.check-future-uk-trade-tariffs.service.gov.uk/tariff?q=39269097&n=25&p=1>
- Urine drainage bags: 39269097 - <https://www.check-future-uk-trade-tariffs.service.gov.uk/tariff?q=39269097&n=25&p=1>
- Adhesive remover spray: 29319000 - <https://www.check-future-uk-trade-tariffs.service.gov.uk/tariff?q=29319000&n=25&p=1>

These products, which many people in the UK rely on to manage conditions such as urinary continence, and maintain their quality of life, are not classified as “medical products”, and will therefore incur a preventable for both suppliers and the NHS, negatively impacting patients and clinicians. These products are all prescription products listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff, and therefore by definition, can all be prescribed by clinicians. The Department for International Trade need to work closely with other departments, including the Department of Health and Social Care, to ensure that the UK’s future tariff policy reflects the needs of patients.

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