

Rt Hon. Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0EH

18<sup>th</sup> December 2018

**Re: Government preparations for a “No Deal” scenario in relation to specialist nutrition products**

I am writing in my capacity as Honorary President of the British Dietetic Association (BDA) to seek your reassurance that the Department of Health and Social Care are making appropriate plans to ensure the continued supply of specialist nutrition products in the event of a “No Deal” exit from the European Union.

Specialist nutrition products are designed to meet the nutritional or dietary needs of patients living with a disease, disorder or medical condition, who are temporarily or permanently unable to achieve a suitable nutritional intake from normal foods. They encompass a wide range of specially formulated foods and feeds that are used in hospitals and in the community. This includes parenteral and enteral feeds, specialist allergy products, foods for the treatment of metabolic disorders and specialist infant formulas to name just a few. A great many of these products are manufactured in the EU and imported to the UK. For some forms of specialist product, there is no UK manufacturing base.

For use a specific example, specialist metabolic products for the treatment of phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare and irreversible condition that affects a person’s ability to metabolise protein. Without access to appropriate foods, children with PKU can suffer permanent brain damage. Pregnant women with PKU can suffer miscarriage, or their children can have congenital abnormalities. As the market for these highly specialized products is small, there are a very small number of suppliers and the supply chain is understandably fragile. Some products are produced in the UK, but others are produced in Europe with many raw ingredients for both sourced internationally. These products are not usually held in stock by pharmacies, but instead ordered in specially for individual patients. It is not unusual, even now, for patients to suffer short term difficulties accessing prescribed products.

I hope you can see why it is vitally important that products such as these continue to be available, even if a “No Deal” disrupts imports from the EU. I understand that you have outlined the government’s measures to ensure the continued supply of medicines but would appreciate clarification regarding the measures your department is taking for specialist nutrition products.

I understand that the BDA will be speaking directly to the Department of Health to highlight the full range of specialist products that need to be considered. But nonetheless would welcome a reply to this letter from you outlining the Departments plans