



Dear Colleague,

As part of Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC's) plans and preparations ahead of the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, I am writing to you with details of the **National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR)** and what actions suppliers should take in the event of supply disruption. It's important to remember that a Free Trade Agreement does not remove any of the requirements to act now to prepare for new customs and border processes. The Department will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations, Crown Dependencies, NHS England and NHS Improvement, the MHRA and all operators in the supply chain to prevent and manage shortages and minimise the risks to patients.

The NSDR processes will monitor the supply situation and co-ordinate actions to address supply disruption incidents that occur with immediate effect, where normal procedures and mitigations are unable to provide a resolution. To support traders further, we have produced a set of more detailed guidance and held a series of webinars. This guidance and all previous webinars are available via our [DHSC eXchange platform](#).

Actions in the event of disruption to supply arrangements

The following table identifies actions you should take if you experience disruption to your supply arrangements for products or services. The overall NSDR system incorporates existing reporting mechanisms, with an additional NSDR call centre to be used as outlined below. If an issue arises and it is unclear who to contact in those circumstances, please contact the NSDR call centre who will be able to advise. Medicine suppliers have a statutory duty to provide early notification of supply disruption to the Department and should contact the [Medicines Supply Team](#).

Industry sector	Actions
Medical Devices, Clinical Consumables (MDCC) and Non-Clinical Goods and Services (NCGS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you experience disruption to your normal supply routes, or you feel that there is potential for disruption, regardless of the cause, you should do everything possible to remedy the issue within your normal supply arrangements.• You should notify NSDR immediately of any issues relating to your normal supply routes, or any potential risks that are likely to impact your ability to ship products into the UK on

	<p>schedule, including your proposed contingency resolution where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are unable to resolve a disruption incident, you should contact the NSDR immediately to allow as much time as possible to assess the urgency and nature of the issue, and help to identify actions with you to mitigate impact on care provision and patients.
<p>Medicines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should continue to use existing medicines reporting arrangements and alert the DHSC Medicine Supply Team of any supply issues at the earliest point possible so the team can undertake a risk assessment and implement a management plan where required to help mitigate any potential impacts affecting patients. • Guidance about how and what information should be reported to the Medicine Supply Team and how to report via the routes below can be found at the following link: • https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reporting-requirements-for-medicine-shortages-and-discontinuations • The NSDR call centre can provide additional advice regarding transport issues, including access to the <i>Express Freight Service</i>, so companies should contact NSDR directly for queries of a logistical nature. • The Medicines Contingency Planning team will continue to support companies with their stockpiling, re-routing and trader readiness plans for the end of the transition period and companies are encouraged to continue to report any changes or issues relating to their preparedness to this team.
<p>Clinical trial sponsors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you experience disruption to your normal supply routes, or you feel that there is potential for disruption, regardless of the cause, you should do everything possible to remedy the issue within your normal supply arrangements.

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For all the product categories above, disruptions may or may not be related to the end of the transition period and may include problems such as component or raw material shortages, manufacturing outages, quality issues, regulatory challenges or delays, logistics or transportation problems.

The NSDR service remains operational in order to assist with the response to COVID-19 and from 21 December the NSDR will be stood up for the end of the transition period regardless of the COVID-19 situation.

From this point should any other supply arrangement fail with no immediate resolution available, you should report it to the NSDR unit on:

Freephone number in the UK: 0800 915 9964

Direct line from abroad: 0044 (0) 191 283 6543

Annex A: How will the NSDR work?

- The NSDR provides a 24/7 call centre to record supplies disruption concerns from any source, and route them correctly;
- The NSDR will offer logistics troubleshooting to suppliers/sponsors where consignments may experience border disruption which includes supporting access to the DHSC's Express Freight Service for eligible products.
- Supply disruption issues that are not purely logistical will be immediately passed to teams that can resolve them, using scaled up existing business as usual processes.

I recognise some of the difficulties in identifying when issues in the supply chain will result in disruption to the continuity of supply, however, I would urge all suppliers and clinical trial sponsors to report emerging supply issues which might benefit from logistical solutions at the earliest opportunity to the NSDR so that we maximise the time available to identify solutions with you; often 'early warning signs' are vital in preventing disruption in the future.

Please be assured that we will respect the commercial sensitivity of any information reported to the NSDR and will seek to work with you in the event that wider communication with care providers, patients or the public is required.

It should be noted that the NSDR arrangements have been put in place to support effective response to issues that arise, but all efforts should continue to ensure that we are all as prepared as we can be to prevent supply disruptions occurring.

Guidance on reporting supply disruption issues to the NSDR

- In reporting issues to the NSDR, you will be asked for detailed information to help our teams determine the most appropriate response, including;
 - details of the disruption and causes and anticipated duration of disruption,
 - products affected (including product description, product name and product code) and product characteristics, including any considerations with regard to storage conditions and/or shelf life,
 - criticality of products for patient care,
 - potential alternative products within your range or available from other suppliers,
 - the likely impact of the disruption
 - whether the product is part of a clinical trial or clinical investigation
 - healthcare providers and/or patients that could be affected (for the whole of the UK and/or by region/country as applicable).
 - The phone number and email address that the NSDR should use to follow up on an issue. This should include out of hours contact details.

- Please note that if you have reported a supply disruption issue to officials in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you should also report this to the NSDR. Close working arrangements have been put in place between the four countries and the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man as well as Gibraltar, however, early notification to the NSDR will help to facilitate these processes;

- You will need to provide contact details of the key responders within your organisations that the NSDR teams can engage with. This should include office and mobile telephone numbers and e-mail details, including out of hours / on call arrangements, that provide a 24/7 coverage; in general, it would be helpful to have a clinical/medical contact as well as supply chain or commercial ones. In addition, please provide details of customer service contacts that care providers or patients can contact for support in the event that supply issues start to manifest themselves ahead of mitigation actions taking effect;

- Note that guidance has been issued to all care providers on the steps that they should take in response to any supply disruption issues that they experience. In the first instance, providers and patients are directed to try and resolve supply issues through their normal supply routes.

So that you can promptly identify and manage supply issues, it is important that you take the following actions – Suppliers are asked to:

- continue to mobilise your own plans for the end of the transition period operational readiness;
- have systems in place for monitoring stock positions and supply chain performance that allow for developing issues to be identified at the earliest opportunity and report any unusual movements;
- have in place effective procedures for monitoring and managing demand to detect and challenge excessive ordering, and control stock despatches and report any unusual movements;
- have put in place the necessary governance structures and approvals processes to allow for rapid response and collaboration with the NSDR on supply disruption incidents;
- ensure that customer service functions are adequately resourced and equipped to manage an increase in enquiries, in the event that supply disruption events start to impact care providers and patients;

- ensure you have processes in place for the rapid reporting of all supply disruption incidents (including potential incidents) through the NSDR – the sooner the NSDR is informed of an incident or potential incident, the sooner it can take action to ensure providers and patients receive the products they need on time.

The Department will continue to work closely with industry and sponsors, through trade bodies and industry representatives, on contingency plans so that we can be as prepared as possible in advance of the end of the transition period.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.O.', written in a cursive style.

Steve Oldfield
Chief Commercial Officer