



PRESS RELEASE

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First survey shows 75% of frontline NHS leaders say Brexit would have negative impact on NHS

The first survey of NHS trust chairs and chief executives' views on the impact on the NHS of leaving or remaining in the EU is published today by NHS Providers. The chairs and chief executives come from an NHS trust sector that has three million contacts with patients a week, spends £70 billion of the £100 billion NHS budget and employs over 900,000 of its 1.2 million staff.

Forty-five chairs and chief executives from England's hospital, ambulance, mental health and community trusts responded to the survey, conducted by NHS Providers, the membership body which represents 95 per cent of all English NHS trusts and foundation trusts.

Three questions were asked in the survey*. The key findings are:

- A substantial majority – 75 per cent of our sample of 45 leaders – felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on the NHS as a whole. No respondents felt that leaving the EU would have a very positive impact.
- Two-fifths (40 per cent) felt leaving the EU would have no impact on the amount of funding the NHS receives. But over a third (38) felt it would have some or a very negative impact.
- 8 in 10 respondents (80%) felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on trusts' efforts to recruit health and care staff.
- Almost two-thirds (65%) felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on access to shared learning and knowledge from clinical trials, networks or other research and innovation.
- While 8 in 10 respondents (80%) felt that leaving the EU would have a negative impact on access to funding for research and innovation.
- However, one issue where it was thought there would be a positive impact was on competition rules: over two fifths (42%) felt that leaving the EU would have some or a very positive impact on procurement and competition rules affecting their trusts.

Commenting on the findings, NHS Providers chief executive Chris Hopson, said: "In response to the big question on whether leaving the EU would have a negative impact on the NHS, the vast majority of NHS leaders in our sample believed it would. This is not an exit poll and we do not claim this to be extensive research of the whole NHS, but it does show us the strength of feeling on what could be a generation-defining decision.

"Our survey shows the concern NHS leaders have about a range of issues if the UK were to exit the EU. High up this list of concerns is the impact on recruiting staff and access to funding for research and innovation."

The survey was conducted to inform NHS Providers' response to the Health Select Committee's inquiry into the impact of membership of the EU on health policy in the UK. It is the first survey of frontline NHS leadership opinion on the Brexit debate following comments last weekend from two former NHS chief executives and the current Chief Executive of NHS England.

Ends

Notes to Editors

- NHS Providers is the membership organisation and trade association for the NHS acute, ambulance, community and mental health services that treat patients and service users in the NHS. We help those NHS foundation trusts and trusts to deliver high quality, patient focused care by enabling them to learn from each other, acting as their public voice and helping shape the system in which they operate. NHS Providers has 95 per cent of all NHS foundation trusts and aspirant trusts in membership, collectively accounting for £65 billion of annual expenditure and employing more than 928,000 staff.
- Following the Health Select Committee's announcement of its inquiry on the impact of European Union membership on health policy in the UK, NHS Providers conducted an anonymous survey of Chief Executives and Chairs of NHS Trusts across the 226 NHS trusts and foundation trusts in England in our membership (out of a total of 238 in England). A total of 45 Chief Executives and Chairs of NHS trusts and foundation trusts participated in the survey; this breaks down to 21 Chairs and 24 Chief Executives. This is an 18% response rate – this rate is average for NHS Providers' surveys.

*The survey ran between 28 April and 11 May 2016. The survey comprised three questions:

1. *What impact (very positive impact; some positive impact; no impact; some negative impact; very negative impact; don't know) do you think leaving the European Union would have on the NHS as a whole?*
 2. *What impact (very positive impact; some positive impact; no impact; some negative impact; very negative impact; don't know) do you think leaving the European Union would have on the following specific issues for your trust?:*
 - Recruitment of the health and care workforce
 - NHS funding levels
 - Access to funding for research and innovation
 - Access to shared learning and knowledge from clinical trials, networks or other research and innovation
 - Procurement and competition rules affecting the NHS
 3. *Are there any other issues you want to identify which would be positively or negatively impacted by leaving the European Union?*
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