

15<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Participant,

**Re: BREXIT UPDATE**

The United Kingdom has left the European Union (EU), and the transition period after Brexit comes to an end on December 31, 2020. Whilst we do not yet know the full outcome of our departure from the EU, we would like to reassure all of our customers, participants and suppliers that we have taken all possible preventative actions to avoid any disruption to the services we provide.

In line with other UK NEQAS centres, we have developed a business continuity plan with the objective of maintaining services and supporting participants. Our intention is to continue with our full schedule services post 01 January, although this is subject to review and change as the situation evolves.

To ensure minimal disruption to our services we have: -

- Worked closely with our shipping companies and have adopted the use paperless trades systems to facilitate smoother customs clearance of EQA materials.
- Stockpiled critical materials to ensure sufficient stock levels for our continued operations.
- Arranged to send all shipments to the EU as 'Duty paid' to mitigate possible risks of customs clearance delays. This position will be also be subject to review and amendment once we have knowledge of the full impact of the import duty obligation .

Our logistics function will be monitoring progress very closely in the coming weeks and will be on standby to take any necessary measure to support participants.

In the event of failure in our supply chain, we will reduce or delay the supply of services until later in the year; however, we aim to fulfil the full range of service during the coming participation year.

We request that you continue to test the material for all exercises by the closing date in the exercise instructions, unless notified otherwise, and to note the date of testing on your return. We have made arrangements to avoid penalising participants for non-return of results due to circumstances beyond their control. If you cannot return results, please let us know by emailing [bt1p@ukneqas.org.uk](mailto:bt1p@ukneqas.org.uk) or [haem@ukneqas.org.uk](mailto:haem@ukneqas.org.uk) and include your PRN and the exercise code. The delay to the receipt of a proportion of results may mean that data processing and reporting is delayed beyond the published report dates. For UK participants, we will follow up on performance concerns as soon as they become apparent.

We believe the services we provide are to improve patient care. Irrespective of the final agreement, we believe we have an obligation, not just to our customers, suppliers and participants, but to our patients to ensure an uninterrupted EQA service.

We would like to thank you for your continued support, particularly at this politically sensitive time, and trust that we have been able to reassure you that the mechanisms we have implemented will result in our continued provision of excellent EQA services

With best regards,



Barbara De la Salle, PhD  
Director, UK NEQAS Haematology



Richard Haggas  
Director, UK NEQAS Blood Transfusion