



Fixing the big issues for disabled people in Buckinghamshire
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Getting Ready for Brexit – What Disabled People & Carers Need to Do

On 29 March this year, Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union (EU) after 45 years as a member of this European alliance. The word Brexit means ‘British Exit’.

BuDS is not a political charity and we do not support Leaving the EU or Remaining in the EU. We only want to provide disabled people and carers with accurate, reliable, information about issues which may affect them when Brexit happens. We are not part of ‘project fear’, which is what some people say about all warnings that Brexit may not have good results.

Why is Brexit a Risk for Disabled People?

The biggest risk from Brexit is that the UK may not be ready for the huge changes which come from leaving the EU after such a long time. A good way of thinking about this situation is to imagine 27 children in a preschool all sharing a huge box of Lego. Over a year, all the children build lots of different multicoloured models and buildings with the Lego. Then one of the children comes along and says, ‘I am leaving - and I’d like to take all the blue bricks with me’. As you can see, even if everyone tried hard, there would be a lot of disruption and confusion for quite some time while all the children sort out the removal of the blue bricks. In the same way, there will be a lot of confusion about Brexit, regardless of whether you think it’s a good or a bad thing.

Disabled people are much more likely to be badly affected by any Brexit problems, because they cannot adapt and cope as easily as non-disabled people, and they have higher needs. Because of this, BuDS’ researchers have been keeping a close expert eye on how preparations for Brexit are going.

The Government is trying to make an agreement with the EU about how things like trade and travel will work after Brexit. BuDS does not know whether this agreement will be made before Brexit day on 29 March 2019. Leaving without an agreement is sometimes called a ‘no-deal Brexit’.

BuDS thinks that there will be less confusion and disruption if an agreement with the EU is in place before Brexit day but that there will still be some problems for disabled people. If there is no agreement with the EU in place by Brexit day (a ‘no-deal Brexit’) then BuDS thinks there will be lots of more serious problems for disabled people.

Overall, BuDS thinks that it is now more likely than not that Brexit will lead to some problems for disabled people and carers whether we leave with an agreement or not. As a responsible disability charity, we think it’s sensible for all disabled people and carers to start preparing for these Brexit problems.

You can find our advice on the next pages. It covers prescription medicines, food and drink, meals on wheels, paid parers, health services, electricity, petrol & diesel, and crime and security.

Prescription Medicines

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most disabled people take medicines prescribed by their doctors, which they get from their chemist or dispensary. Some people are very reliant on their medicines, such as diabetics, people with cancer, people with immune diseases or people with serious mental health issues.• These medicines are made all over the world using ingredients from all over the world. There is a very complicated system behind the scenes which, until Brexit, made sure that chemists usually had the medicines that people needed at the time they needed them.
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For some time, Brexit is expected to make it slower and more complicated to bring medicines (and ingredients to make medicines) into the UK.• So, the chemists who give medicines to you may not have the medicines you need at the time you need them.• For a few months, you may find that you cannot get your usual medicines or that there is a delay until you can get them.• You might need to go to several chemists until you find one that has your medicines in stock
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DO speak to your GP, specialist clinic or hospital doctor NOW. Ask them what you can do if your usual medicines are not available or delayed after Brexit. Don't leave it until the problem happens.• There may be other medicines or treatment that they can offer to cover any gaps.• Organise a plan straightaway so you know what to do if there are problems.• Please do NOT try to build up a stock of medicines at home by ordering extra prescriptions. Doctors have been told not to allow this, so it won't work.• Please do NOT try to buy your prescription medicines on the Internet. You may be breaking the law by doing this, and you cannot be sure that you will get the proper medicine made in a safe way.• If you do run short of medicines, don't call 999 or go to A&E unless it is a real emergency. Call NHS 111 for help unless it is a real emergency – they will be able to help you sort out your problems.

Food & Drink

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The food and drink you buy in your shops come from all over the world. We are used to having thousands of different food and drink items on our shelves all the time. Even when something is grown or made in Britain, the way it is prepared or processed before it gets to the shops may involve supplies from abroad.• Behind the scenes, there is a very complicated system of farmers, suppliers, factories and warehouses. This system makes sure that we can buy whatever we want wherever we go to the shops, even if the food item or its ingredients have come from another country.• Many people who grow food, work in food factories, drive vans and trucks and serve in shops are from the EU
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For some time, Brexit is expected to make it slower and more complicated to bring food, drinks and ingredients to make food into the UK.• So, after Brexit, supermarkets and corner shops might not have all the food items you want on the shelves.• Restaurants and takeaways might also have problems getting their supplies or having enough staff, so they may be closed or have less to sell.• For a few months, you may find that you cannot get your usual food or that there is a delay until you can get it.• Fresh vegetables and fruit might be specially harder to buy.• You might need to go to several shops to get all you want rather than just to one shop or supermarket.• You might also have to spend more time shopping, on more days a week, to find everything you want.• Brexit might also make food cost more in the shops.• In the longer term, some people from the EU may leave Britain. If their jobs are not filled up straightaway, this might cause food supply problems and lead to higher prices for a long time.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First of all, DON'T panic. Nobody is going to starve and there will always be some food available in the shops. The Government has said it will do everything it can to keep food available in the shops.• DO think now about how you could change what you buy if there were shortages. If your usual food isn't on the shelves, what else could you buy instead?• DO think now about how you could shop more often, at different places, if what you want isn't in your usual shop. For example, could you get together with family or friends to share out the shopping?• DO think what you would do if your local takeaway or restaurant couldn't sell you a meal as usual. Could you cook for yourself or is there a friend who could help?• DO think about how you would cope if food costs more. Will you have enough money, or will you have to buy a bit less? If you think you may have serious problems buying enough food, find out now about your local foodbank or another charity that may be able to help you cope.• DO think about buying a little bit of extra food now so that you have a fuller cupboard by Brexit at the end of March. If you buy a little bit more now of the things that you usually buy, unexpected shortages won't affect you so badly. Remember to get things that will last, like dried foods, tinned food and long-life milk and drinks. Don't forget things like toilet paper and pet food. But don't panic buy – be sensible.

Meals on Wheels

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many disabled and older people have prepared meals delivered to them at home. These can be fresh meals to eat straightaway, or meals to be kept in the fridge or freezer and heated up later.• These meals are made in big factories using ingredients from all over the world. There is a very complicated system behind the scenes which makes sure the meals reach you ready to eat or keep until later• The staff who make and deliver the meals to you may be from the EU
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For some time, Brexit is expected to make it slower and more complicated to bring ingredients to make food into the UK.• So, after Brexit, there may be problems making and delivering all the ready meals needed.• For a few months, you may find that you don't get your usual meals delivered, or that there is a delay until they are delivered. They may not arrive every day.• In the longer term, some people from the EU may leave Britain. If their jobs are not filled up straightaway, this might cause problems with the making and delivery of meals for a longer time.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First of all, DON'T panic. Nobody is going to starve, and local councils and the Government will do everything they can to make sure your meals are delivered as usual after Brexit.• DO think now about what you would do if your meals weren't delivered or if they came late. Do you know who to call? Write the number down now.• Think about whether there is somewhere else you could get some food if you run short. Would a friend, neighbour or family member be able to help out?• DO think about whether you could buy some freezer supermarket ready meals now so that you have some put aside at the end of March when Brexit happens. But don't panic buy – be sensible.

Paid Carers

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many disabled and older people have a carer who comes to help them at home. These carers may come every day or once a week, and they may help you with getting washed and dressed, or with cleaning and laundry. Some people are very dependent on their carers. • These carers usually work for companies paid by your local council or NHS trust. Sometimes the carer is paid by you. • Many carers and the staff of the companies who provide them come from the EU
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the longer term, some people from the EU may leave Britain. • If their jobs are not filled up straightaway, this might mean a shortage of carers • In the months and years after Brexit, you may find that your carer isn't available. You may get less care visits, or shorter ones. • Your usual carer might be replaced by someone else. • The cost of having carers might increase
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, DON'T panic. Local councils and the Government will do everything they can to make sure you get the care you need • DO think now about what you would do if your carer doesn't turn up or if they came late or not as often as before. Do you know who to call about this? Write the number down now. • Think about whether there is somewhere else you could get some care in an emergency if your carer didn't turn up. Would a friend, neighbour or family member be able to help out?

Health Services

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many disabled and older people go a lot to their GP or to hospital clinics. They also may have help from nurses who visit them or specialist clinics that they visit every so often. These services are all provided by the NHS. • Many NHS doctors, nurses and staff come from the EU
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the longer term, some health care staff from the EU may leave Britain. • If their jobs are not filled up straightaway in the months and years after Brexit, this might mean a bigger shortage of doctors and other health care workers than we have at the moment • You may find that you have a longer wait for doctor or nurse appointments, or that clinics and operations are cancelled more often. • Your usual doctor, nurse or specialist might be replaced by someone else.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, DON'T panic. The NHS and the Government will do everything they can to make sure you get the health care you need • DO think now about what you would do if you can't get a doctor or nurse appointment or if your clinic is cancelled. Do you know who to call about this? Write the number down now. The NHS 111 service may be able to help. • Think about whether a friend, neighbour or family member might be able to help out in an emergency • DON'T ring 999 or go to Accident & Emergency unless it is a real emergency.

Electricity

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like everyone else, disabled and older people rely on having electricity to heat and light their homes and power essential equipment.• Some of our electricity comes from the EU
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a small risk that electricity from the EU might be interrupted after Brexit. But it is only a very small risk.• If this happens, there may be some power cuts in some areas of the country.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First of all, DON'T panic. The Government will do everything they can to make sure the electricity will keep working after Brexit and there is only a very small risk to supplies.• If you would be badly affected by a power cut or having no heating, even for a few hours, contact your power company NOW and ask them to register you as a 'priority user'. This means they will try to get your power or gas back on first if there is a cut and help you if the power cut is very long.• DO think now about what you would do if there was a power cut or your gas was cut off. Do you have warm clothing and coats to wear? Do you have any other SAFE ways to heat your home and cook your food?• DON'T use candles unless safe to do so, and remember that camping stoves and barbeques inside the house will suffocate you!• Think about whether a friend, neighbour or family member might be able to help out in a power cut. Think about how you would get in touch with them. You could arrange that your helper comes around automatically in a power cut.• Remember, the Internet will be cut off and mobile phones often don't work in a power cut. Wireless home phones also won't work. An old-fashioned plug in home phone will work even in a power cut - but you do need a list of useful numbers to call.• DON'T ring 999 unless it is a real emergency.

Petrol & Diesel

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like everyone else, disabled and older people rely on having petrol and diesel for their cars.• Petrol and diesel doesn't come from the EU, but some reaches us through EU ports• Many tanker drivers are from the EU.
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a small risk that petrol and diesel might be in short supply after Brexit. This might happen if a lot of EU people leave after Brexit quite quickly or if there is a big hold-up in EU ports that supply us with petrol and diesel. But it is only a very small risk.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First of all, DON'T panic. The Government will do everything they can to make sure that there is enough petrol and diesel for everyone after Brexit and there is only a very small risk to supplies.• DO think about filling your car tank just before Brexit at the end of March, so that you have some in hand if there are shortages. But DON'T try to keep spare petrol and diesel at home – it is illegal and very very dangerous!• DO think now about what you would do if you couldn't get enough petrol or diesel for your car. How would you go to work, shopping and get to appointments? Think about other ways you could manage or get around.

Crime & Security

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like everyone else, disabled and older people rely on the police to keep our neighbourhoods and homes safe.
The Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a small risk that some people will use Brexit as an excuse to cause trouble, make demonstrations or even loot shops. But it is only a very small risk.• If this happens, you may live near to these troubles or your local police may have to leave your area to deal with the trouble.
What to Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First of all, DON'T panic. The Government and police will do everything they can to make sure everyone is safe and life continues as normal after Brexit. There will be extra police on duty around the time of Brexit and the Army has been placed on standby just in case.• If trouble does happen near your home, keep inside with doors and windows closed and curtains drawn. Keep yourself to yourself and don't get involved. Any trouble will affect shops and public buildings, not homes, and it will soon be over.• Think about whether a friend, neighbour or family member might be able to help in an emergency. Think about how you would get in touch with them and make sure you have their phone number. You could arrange that your helper comes around automatically if there is trouble, for example.• Watch BBC TV news and listen to the BBC local radio to get the most reliable news. Don't listen to or pass on rumours, especially on the Internet or on social media. People often make something out of nothing.• DON'T feel you have to move away or leave your home just in case of trouble – it almost certainly won't happen.• DON'T ring 999 unless it is a real emergency, or you can actually see a crime happening.