Dear MP

**Emergency Contingency Planning - epilepsy medications**

I am writing to ask you to raise my urgent concerns, regarding the Government’s emergency plans, in case of a serious shortage of supply of medications.

My interest in this is ... (*include something personal about why this is important to you as a family member, person living with epilepsy or clinician.)*

Please can you seek an urgent written statement from Government regarding contingency plans for epilepsy medications.

I have read in the Times on 7th December 2018 about a Serious Shortage Protocol [**allowing pharmacists to overrule medical prescriptions**](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ministers-will-order-pharmacists-to-ration-drugs-if-uk-crashes-out-kxd00jv9j)and am aware that the Government’sEU Exit Operational Readiness Guidance announced on 21st December 2018 included this. I am aware that epilepsy patient organisations were included in an informal consultation, but reports in The Sunday Times on 6th January 2019, are that epilepsy will not be included in the Protocol ([*Epileptics exempted from Brexit prescriptions plan*](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/epileptics-exempted-from-brexit-prescriptions-plan-wxp2wzqmb) *by* Andrew Gregory, Health Editor)

I am supporting a coalition of charities led by SUDEP Action that urged the Government to consider contingency planning in relation to epilepsy medications extremely carefully. There are risks to patients, which was outlined in their letter to The Sunday Times [thesundaytimes.co.uk/letters](http://thesundaytimes.co.uk/letters). Regarding epilepsy medications, it is very important that existing safeguards are continued, avoiding any inappropriate switching of medications that may lead to a wide range of side-effects, breakthrough seizures, injuries, hospital admissions, and, unnecessary deaths.

I am pleased that The Sunday Times has now reported that legislation and regulations - which protect existing safeguards for epilepsy medications - will not be changed. But this has only been reported in press. It is very important to me that there is written clarification of this and also that there is a statement by Government on its alternative contingency planning for epilepsy, to ensure continuity of essential epilepsy medications.

Given that epilepsy (or neurological conditions more widely) have not been prioritised in the new NHS Long-Term plan, even though there are21 epilepsy-related deaths a week, and deaths in people with neurological conditions rising across the UK; national change and focus is needed now, and I would welcome any support you are able to give to this issue and to SUDEP Action.

In light of the upcoming Brexit debates, please support the call for action to address the likelihood of medicine shortages in the near future. There must be transparency, full consultation and parliamentary scrutiny on planned emergency powers, and measures set in place that safeguard the needs of patients with serious long-term conditions like epilepsy.

Please can you seek the necessary reassurances urgently from Government.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,