



SCIENCE • POLICY • PARENTS

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27<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Dear Secretary Hancock,

Infant Feeding Support UK advocate for safe, science based and inclusive infant feeding policies and support for all families irrespective of feeding method. We are writing to ask for clarification regarding provision of adequate supply and affordability of infant formula following Brexit in March 2019. We note recent widespread media reports that food and essential medicines may be subject to supply delays and tariffs following Brexit<sup>1</sup>; it is likely that such problems will also apply to availability of infant formula, much of which is currently imported from the EU.

By six weeks of life 77% of all British babies are reliant on infant formula either wholly or in part; by this time formula is the sole source of nutrition for one third (32%) of all British babies<sup>2</sup>, and a significant proportion require specialised prescription formulas for medical issues. Thus, the idea that infant formula may become an 'occasional luxury'<sup>3</sup> is extremely concerning for UK families and those of us for whom infant health is a priority. We are alarmed that neither the UK Government, nor other infant feeding organisations have directly addressed this issue upon which we seek immediate clarification.

Availability of, and unrestricted access to infant formula is critical in ensuring the health of British babies. In the early neonatal period, complications of insufficient feeding lead to concerning medical issues such as hypernatremia, hypoglycaemia, and jaundice<sup>4</sup>. In older babies, failure to thrive, nutritional deficiencies, and acute malnutrition can all occur when availability of adequate milk is affected. These problems can emerge very quickly since a baby cannot wait to be fed and even a short term delay in the provision of infant formula could have serious consequences for hundreds of thousands of babies.

It is of paramount importance that the availability and affordability of infant formula in the UK is safeguarded, irrespective of the outcome of Brexit negotiations.

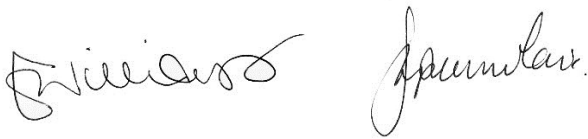
**We request that you clearly describe to us what plans the UK Government have put in place to safeguard the supply of infant formula, including specialised formulas, to the UK following UK exit from the EU under any and every possible exit scenario.**

**We request that you clearly describe to us what plans the UK Government have put in place to ensure that the price of infant formula will not rise following the UK's exit from the EU under any and every possible exit scenario.**

Infant Feeding Support UK declares that it has no conflicts of interest, potential or perceived, with respect to affiliations or income from any company or organisation involved in infant feeding, or any other related organisation. We commit to distributing the information provided to UK families who are anxious for clarity on this issue.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely,



Erin Williams BSc (Hons), PhD and Stephanie Maia MA (Hons), MSc  
Infant Feeding Support UK

#### REFERENCES

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