



## Post-Brexit Health Data Sharing at Risk?



After three-and-a-half years of deliberations, the UK officially left the European on January 31st. A transition period until the end of this year will see both stakeholders drawing up a number of agreements, with trade being at the forefront.

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As far as data sharing is concerned, both sides will need to come to an agreement December 31st.

How this stands at present is existing data sharing agreements between the UK and EU will be subject to an adequacy agreement, allowing continued sharing without further safeguarding being necessary.

Any tech companies, NHS trusts and other healthcare organisations that already have an EU agreement won't have to alter anything until the transition period is over.

But, with the UK no longer in the block, it won't be under [the umbrella of frameworks like GDPR](#). This means data sent to and from the UK will need to be sufficiently protected to comply with Brussels law.

The UK will have to devise an independent regime for transfer of data to third countries. How this will affect healthcare depends on the details of the agreement. The UK Government has stipulated that it is committed to the highest standard of data protection. To date, it hasn't given any sign that it plans to change data protection laws. If it does, it may impact the status of the EU adequacy agreement.

Any changes to data sharing agreements [will influence how healthcare handle data. Presently GDPR dictates stringent treatment of health data](#). These could be reviewed as the UK and EU work out their 'divorce' agreement.

Meanwhile, stakeholders have warned that a secure and steady flow of data is vital for innovation and economic growth.

"If data is not able to flow smoothly between the UK, Europe and the rest of the world the UK's ability to unlock the productive power of current and future digital technologies, as well as to continue to be a world leader in the development and adoption of responsible, digital innovation, will be put at risk," said Neil Ross, programme manager for digital economy at industry body, [techUK](#).

Source: [Digital Health](#)

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