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Transcript

July 13, 2023, 9:02AM

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 0:20

Good morning, bore da. Croeso and welcome.

My name's Liz Green.

I'm a consultant in public health for policy and international health at Public health Wales in The WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Wellbeing.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 0:41

I'm also a Program Director for Health Impact Assessment, Public Health Wales and we published on Tuesday, a health impact assessment of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, which is a bit of a mouthful but we will refer to it as the CPTPP. Trade and free trade agreements are important determinants of Health and in a post Brexit world the UK now has the ability, after the withdrawal from the EU, to conclude its own and negotiate its own trade agreements across the world. The CPTPP is a trading block of 11 countries currently and it will be 12 when the UK accedes to it next week.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 1:38

It accounted for about £96 billion worth of trade in 2018 and so it could have a wide range of benefits to the UK and to Wales but it could also have some unintended impacts too and they could be both positive or negative.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 1:58

Our health impact assessment articulates some of that. So this morning we're going to unpick the health impact assessment a bit more.

We've got a wide range of brilliant speakers who come from a variety of perspectives about trade and we also have a sort of participatory workshop, which we hope you will all engage with and participate in that looks at what could trade do to help

improve health or free trade agreements. What would a health promoting free trade agreement look like?

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 2:36

So the session is posted in the chat for you, so you'll see we've got Leah Silva and myself will present our findings of our health impact assessment.

Then we have a panel, there are some great speakers from a variety of perspectives and a wide range of experience in this area, and then our workshop.

If you've got any questions, please put them in the chat.

No questions are silly questions and that can be in either English or Welsh. We will have questions after the panel and the presentation and again like I said if you've got anything throughout the session, the next one and a half hours, please just let us know. If you do have any technical difficulties then please drop us a line in the chat and somebody will contact you to try and help figure that out.

So without further ado Leah Silva, who is a Senior Policy Specialist Officer at Public Health Wales, and I will go through the health impact assessment.

Leah, before I start, do you want to say anything?

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 4:08

No, I think I'll have plenty to say when we go on to the key findings.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 4:12

I'm just happy to be here and looking forward to sharing the findings with everyone.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 4:16

Fabulous. Thank you.

Right. So you know who we are. So Leah, if you can go to the next slide please.

OK, so what exactly is the comprehensive and progressive Trans Pacific Partnership or CPTPP?

So it came into force in 2018.

The US had originally been an originator of this agreement, and its forerunner. I won't bore you with the jargon. Some of this is in our HIA report and will be available online and it sets out a number of rights and obligations with respect to rules around trade and trading between nations. So the CPTPP is largely a Pacific

Rim block. So Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Vietnam, a wide range of countries are part of it and by the UK acceding to this, which means that they've agreed to join it, it is an existing block.

So we can't negotiate terms we can just negotiate to agree and there maybe some exclusions or some what they call carve outs and exemptions that the UK may not want to be part of as part of this, this trading block and it gives us wide range of market access across the world.

So there's been quite a lot of debate about what this will mean for the UK in terms of, you know, economically how much growth it will bring because trade agreements are all about growth and economic development and through prosperity, we will get increased incomes.

And therefore better health and well-being so goes the flow. But we do know that there might actually be negative impacts for some groups as well as positive impacts in the population.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 6:23

So the conclusion of the negotiations was in March 2023 and the signing of the agreement, which is when we will officially join it is next Sunday, 16th of July.

Next slide, please.

So some of you may be familiar with health impact assessment.

So in a way, in a nutshell, it's a way of looking at a policy, a plan, a project, a trade agreement such as the CPTPP and looking at how will it have an impact, which determinants of health. Will it be environment, economic, access to healthcare and services and medicines?

Or will it be, you know, will it be positive or will it be negative?

And who might be affected in the population?

So for example, those with long term conditions or those on low incomes and it is a very clear tool to try and implement health in all policies.

Next slide, please

Health in all policies is a way of trying to consider and avoid harmful health impacts and look at trying to integrate health and well-being or trade and into health, for example, in a wide ranging way. And it seeks to inform decisions and influence the development of policies so that we do get better health and well-being, or at least mitigate for any negative impacts and try and address any health inequalities, and this is the definition for health and all policies.

Next slide, please, Leah

So why did we do an HIA?

Well, it fits very nicely into that definition, but also you know, we know that the purpose of trade is to benefit us economically and prosperity and develop that.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 8:25

But it could have unintended impact for health, like, say, some could be positive, some could be negative, and so there's only ever been one health impact assessment of a trade agreement before that was published in 2016 of a forerunner of the CPTPP and that was in Australia.

And so there's something there about we really need to look at this because it's going to be a huge deal for the UK and how it would read across into Wales who are devolved.

So these are the aims and the objectives we wanted to better understand and identify the health and well-being impacts. We need to as public health professionals understand trade and the language and trade agreements and what it can mean for us and our populations, but also, you know, to engage with trade policymakers and decision makers, some of whom might have a familiarity with health and well-being and equity, particularly in Wales, with the Well-being of Future Generations Act,, but also to try and, you know, increase their understanding of public health.

And we wanted to also, you know, try and help inform any scrutiny.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 9:41

So these trade agreements will be monitored and we can have a baseline now to say this is what we're looking for.

Will those things happen?

Will things change?

Next slide please.

So this is what we did.

We did it quite quickly. So we started it in August 2022 and the actual appraisal and sort of gathering of all the evidence, because HIA is evidence based, and that involved literature search, engagement with stakeholders, some of you who are on

this call and I thank you very much for that.

And a community health profile.

So demographic statistics and the scope was Wales only, so it was quite comprehensive and it was quite participatory.

But we did it in sort of a relatively short timescale and we had some, you know, some great experts from not just Wales but the UK and Scotland on our steering group so that we were checking and balancing our health impact assessment as we did it.

So it has positives and it looks at opportunities for health and well-being.

It looks at negatives or unintended negatives and health and well-being.

And when I say health, I don't just mean physical health, but mental well-being, economic health, like I said, the wider determinants and those groups affected, so I'm now going hand you over to Leah and she's going talk to you about what was found and those determinants and those groups.

Thanks Leah.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 11:19

Thank you.

So as Liz mentioned, we were looking at potential positives and potential negative impacts and we found both potential positives and negatives across a number of determinants of health.

So I'm going to walk through those quite quickly, but the first is we found some positive impacts around economic conditions.

So joining the CPTPP could potentially lead to an increase in employment and GDP, although that growth is potentially to be quite small.

In addition, it could open export markets, as Liz mentioned previously, which could potentially benefit small and medium enterprises, of which there are quite a few in Wales and it could benefit food producers and drink producers in Wales as well.

In addition, mobility provisions could potentially benefit workforce flow, retention and recruitment, and this could benefit skilled workers in particular.

Although it might not have as much of a benefit for unskilled workers. In terms of healthy behaviours, we found a potential positive in terms of the varieties of food that might be available at cheaper costs.

However, it's unsure whether that will be an increase in access to healthier foods. Of particular concern around healthy behaviours is the investor state dispute settlement, or the ISDS, which allows foreign investors to take legal action against new public

laws. Public health laws, excuse me, created by the UK or Welsh Governments if they see it as having a negative impact on their business. So the fear of legal challenges and the cost of defending those challenges could lead to what we call regulatory chill or remaining of the status quo in which governments are hesitant or unlikely to consider or enact public health policies for fear of those legal challenges, and this could have a potential impact on public health policies that promote healthy behaviours.

For example, tobacco control policies such as plain packaging, alcohol pricing laws and nutrition labelling of food.

In terms of food safety, the mutual recognition provisions may lead to reduced food safety and animal welfare standards to lower cost for food producers who now face more competition from Member States.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 13:31

This may impact on pesticide residue in food and the importation of animal products with antibiotics.

As for the environment, the ISDS mechanism is also a concern here and could have potential chilling effect on climate policies and net zero objectives and environmental standard provisions are not necessarily enforceable in the free trade agreement.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 13:52

In addition, with the expanded markets, there may be more packaging and shipping requirements which could increase the carbon footprint of the UK and Welsh food producers and those who are sending products abroad.

In terms of access to care, trade and services is a key component of the free trade agreement, and this may increase supply of health and social care workers as there is going to be increased mobility across Member States and potentially relax visa requirements.

There may also be a mutual recognition of qualifications from Member States, which could also increase the number of health and social care workers and potentially increase access to care.

The UK Government has stated that the NHS is off the table but details of how they'll protect the NHS is unclear.

So we're looking forward to seeing the evidence that will become publicly available

upon signing to see how that has been played out in the later stages of the negotiations.

And then finally, the intellectual property provisions may also have negative impacts. Fortunately, we think that the UK is exempt from the grace period provisions, which is beneficial for access to generic medicines and consistent with the European Patent Convention.

But potential ever greening could allow patents to be extended, which again might encourage and incentivise research and development for new and innovative drugs and treatments, but could also make drugs less available at lower costs.

And this could impact those with longer term chronic illnesses or those on low incomes.

And just to note that across these determinants there's also a concern about the potential negative impacts of standard settings.

So the CPTPP sets a lowest standards available, and in particular this might address Labour Standards, Food Standards and environmental standards.

So it'll be important to consider how membership of the CPTPP may impact future government's abilities to raise those standards in the future, and how new members may impact on those standards as well.

So in addition to determinants, we also found that a number of populations could be impacted by the agreement.

So in particular, farmers play an important role in Wales and there may be positive impacts from expanded markets and increased export opportunities.

And there's also an opportunity to 'brand Britain', so highlighting that food is and other products are locally produced.

However, the agricultural sector could potentially be harmed by cheaper imports produced at lower standards, and so they may have to reduce their own standards in order to remain competitive.

And this could be quite costly for farmers if they decide not to maintain those standards.

As mentioned before, there could be potential opportunities for health and social care workers with increased mobility and regulation, and also with mutual recognition of qualifications.

And this could have a potential beneficial impact on those with longer term illnesses and conditions, with increased access to services and the intellectual property provisions which incentivise research and development could also increase access to

new and effective medicines and treatments.

However, some of the potential intellectual property provisions could increase costs if generic drugs are not made available at lower costs as well.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 17:07

And then finally, those on lower incomes could potentially be impacted as well.

So in particular, those who are underemployed or unemployed might be impacted as there is limited scope in the free trade agreement to improve or ensure good working conditions through regulations and in addition socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are at higher risk for unhealthy behaviours.

For example, tobacco and alcohol use.

So with the ISDS mechanism, if there's a limited ability to implement public health policies, or if there's the hesitance to do that, that might have an impact on those who are more at risk for those behaviours as well.

So overall, it's clear that trade is a key commercial determinant of health, and the panel will discuss this in a bit more detail.

But it's important for healthy functioning economies and can provide many opportunities for the populations of Member States.

However, they health impact assessment shows a complex and technical picture of impact.

The agreement has a potential to affect different populations in different ways and may lead to widening of existing health inequalities.

And these impacts also might be seen in the short, medium and long term.

Further research into the issues identified as part of this work, as well as the impact of trade agreements in general, would improve understanding of the link between trade and health well-being inequity. And again this includes for longer term impacts as well. And importantly, our health impact assessments calls for more transparency and free trade agreements, particularly at earlier stages of the negotiations so we can highlight those links sooner. And we recognise that the impacts of the CPTPP on Wales are potential rather than actual as the UK's membership is not yet finalised and the full implications of joining the agreement will take time to emerge and may change under different governments.

But we're really looking forward to seeing the evidence that becomes available once we sign, and we're happy to reassess and look forward to reassessing our health impact assessment and our findings.

So we hope that sharing the findings of this analysis now helps to demonstrate the value of health impact assessments as a tool for enabling full consideration of the potential positive and negative impacts on health well-being inequity.

And this is particularly important now ahead of scrutiny and discussions around this particular free trade agreement.

As Liz mentioned, this is only the second health impact assessment of a free trade agreement, and there's a big opportunity for public health to have a seat at the table during upcoming discussions of this agreement and future trade agreements as well. And then finally, and most importantly, this health impact assessment demonstrates that there's an opportunity for public health to work with Welsh Government and UK Government as well as other stakeholders and experts to mitigate potential negative impacts but also maximise opportunities.

So I will stop presenting and we'll hand it over to the panel.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 20:02

Thank you very much, Leah.

And I want to apologise because the language is so technical, so if you do have any questions, please do put it in the chat.

And as Leah said, we've used what evidence is openly available and some of one of the issues and limitations is maybe being the lack of openly available evidence for us. But on signing, everything will be published by the UK Government and then we can review it in the future.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 20:37

Some of our findings may change or it just may agree with it as it all plays out and it's implemented.

So thank you Leah.

OK, so I'm going to welcome our panel now and as I said, we've got some great speakers.

So we have Courtney McNamara, Margaret Douglas from Scotland, Alan Winters and Aileen Burmeister.

And so Courtney, you're going to speak first and then we've given a brief to all our speakers.

They've got 5 minutes to discuss trade and health, so Courtney is a social scientist across a range of disciplines and electorate Public health in the population Health

Sciences Institute in Newcastle University and Courtney has written a number of papers and extensively on the health impacts of international trade, including the CPTPP, and it particularly looks at labour markets and things like that, and Courtney's also the chair of the Trade and Health Forum in the American Public Health Association.

Then Margaret, is an expert in health impact assessment and health in all policies and is a consultant in public health in Public Health Scotland and is the lead for health and economy there. But Margaret also has a very clear understanding of things like spatial planning and health.

And so again cross the number of boundaries.

And Margaret's been chair of the Scottish Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment Network since it started in 2001 and works very closely with Scottish Government.

Then we've got Aileen Burmeister and Aileen is the head of Fair Trade Wales. Aileen has got many years of working in fair trade and that looks at access, looks at addressing global inequality using all aspects of sustainability, so economic, social and environmental factors. And Fair Trade Wales works with over 30 different community groups in Wales. Aileen has got a particular interest in trade deals as well, and has campaigned on investor state dispute settlements and cofounded Trade Justice Wales, which I feel is very important and is Chair of that. Aileen has contributed to a wide range of conversations and with bodies such as Welsh Government and advisory groups and the UK Government.

And then finally, we have Professor Alan Winters, who is Professor of Economics at the University of Sussex Business School. Alan is also Co-director of the Centre for Inclusive Trade Policy and a founding Director of the UK Trade Policy Observatory. Alan has worked in this space for a huge number of years and is a founding Director of the Trade Policy Observatory, like I said, and a member of the Petra Prevention of non-communicable disease using trade agreements network.

But Allen was also Chief Economist at the British Government's Department for International Development from 2008 to 2011 and Director of the Development Research Group of the World Bank.

So we have some very, very good speakers.

I'm really excited to hear what you've got to say and thank you very much all for the speaking and agreeing.

So Courtney, if you go first and then you hand over to the next speaker, which is Aileen, and then Aileen to Alan, Alan to Margaret, that would be marvellous. And then we'll take some question.

Thank you.

Courtney McNamara 24:32

Great.

Thanks so much, Liz.

And I'm.

I'm really happy to be here today and to talk about these issues.

So I was asked to just spend a few minutes discussing the value of health impact assessment, or HIA to trade policy and trade negotiations and I want to do this with attention to three main points and the first point is in relation to collecting and interpreting evidence.

So there's a growing body of academic evidence on the health impacts of trade.

But of course, the sources of this evidence are varied.

Some of it comes from investigation of issues and other highly developed countries.

Some of it comes from evidence in low and middle income countries.

Some of it comes from a legal perspective or a macroeconomic perspective.

Some of it comes from public health or health behaviour perspective and some even from a more biomedical or clinical perspective.

And the value of HIA here is that it really provides a systematic way of not only collecting this wide body of evidence, but also of assessing its quality and really making it relevant to a specific contents like we've seen today in the context of health and well-being in Wales.

Now another value of HIA's in a trade policy context is that they bridge divides between researchers, policymakers, civil society groups, and ultimately the public.

And it does this really by involving all of these stakeholders in the evidence collection and analysis process, but also through dissemination techniques.

So like today's event, it not only brings actors in these groups together, but it allows them to speak a common language and make clear the connections and common links among their different perspectives.

So this is a rare fee, as academic research rarely makes it beyond the borders of scholarly outlets like conferences and journals.

And while policymakers and civil society groups are often knowledge translators to the public, we can hardly charge them alone with the task of seeking out sometimes

rapidly evolving states of the academic evidence.

So information and evidence sharing needs to be a two way street and again HIA paves the road for that to happen.

Now a final value of HIA in the context of trade policy is its relevance to all points in the policy making process, from agenda setting to implementation to monitoring and scrutiny, HIA can really feed into discussions about proposed trade agreements.

Courtney McNamara 27:04

It can make proposals for mitigation strategies during the implementation of these agreements, and also, of course, act as a tool of scrutiny after the fact.

And while of course it's ideal to get ahead of the policy formulation stage.

In the context of trade and health, it's really never a bad time to do an HIA.

And so with that, I will.

I'll stop here and hand over to Aileen.

Aileen Burmeister 27:33

Diolch yn fawr, thanks very much.

Yes, I want to thank the team for inviting us here today.

And I'm Aileen and as Liz said I'm Chair also of Trade Justice Wales, which is a partnership between academics at Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre and the Wales Civil Society Forum and Fair Trade Wales. We finished the pilot, which was really successful and I want to talk a little bit about advocacy specifically in Wales and what that context looks like and how the health impact assessment can really support that.

So Trade Justice Wales has got over 40 stakeholders, all with limited resource.

Within Wales we found the only organisations that have full time trade policy officers are the Governments, and so actually in that role that we're playing as knowledge translators, as Courtney mentioned, and kind of wider advocates for ethical issues relating to trade deals and those wider determinants that are not just economic, we actually have very limited resource.

There are lots of doors open with the project, we've managed to forge really good relationships, but they often require a high level of knowledge on an ever speeding train of trade deals, which is quite difficult to manage on such a limited element.

What was quite interesting to see in the report was that micro enterprises in Wales account for 95% of enterprises.

I would say that this is very similar to the third sector and that's 0 to 9 employees. So the Trade Justice Wales project has got three main asks that we've been looking towards and I think the health impact assessment really highlights these issues as well and shows how they come up.

So the first really is robust governance.

As part of the project, we made an excellent video of how trade deals in the UK are made at the moment and the process in which that happens in order to help train people.

But we finished the video and the government changed the process immediately.

So we haven't really been able to use it.

And I think that that transparency and scrutiny that was mentioned earlier by Liz is really important in order for civil society to be able to advocate for what might happen in a trade agreement as a lot of these findings are possibilities and might, and based on small amounts of evidence. The health impact assessment has some really excellent infographics for people who are advocating on really limited resource to be able to find quite quickly what issues might be relevant for them.

The second thing is about trade's purpose and that actually trade is always meant to be representing other things and positive for reasons that are not just economic.

So the World Trade Organization's stated aim is poverty reduction and as was mentioned earlier, the whole point of trade might be to increase economic factors but those economic factors are meant to help wider issues such as health such as well-being and I think it's really excellent that there is an example of how they can be affected and also the different elements of society that could be affected by that.

So holistic assessments is something that we've been asking for. The third ask really which might be something that the health impact assessment could look at in more detail in future is that UK trade policy should consider its impacts outside of the UK and outside of Wales as well.

So we've seen in the past few years how health is a global issue.

It's definitely not just limited to one place, and actually how trade deals work can really impact health systems globally.

For example, it was mentioned earlier that there could be increased mobility of people travelling to Wales to help strengthen health systems here, but that would potentially result in what we call brain drain, which is a weakening of health systems elsewhere as people with expertise from low and middle income countries travel and leave their countries of origin.

So I want to thank everyone.

Those are kind of the three main points at the moment, and I'm really interested to be part of discussions later.

I will pass on to Alan.

L. Alan Winters 32:16

Yes, thank you very much, Aileen, and thank you Leah and Liz, for taking us through the report.

So I'm an Economist and Co director of the Centre for Inclusive Trade Policy, which means that we are interested in the way that trade affects the economy and how that might affect inclusivity.

So detailed outcomes of trade agreements and other trade issues, in a sense, are our bread and butter.

And so let me put out first of all, under my own health warning, it's very difficult.

There is a huge amount, not only that we don't know, but in principle we never really will be able to work.

Trade agreements are generally pretty small, and finding their effects among all the other stuff that's going on actually can be pretty complicated.

So let me say how much I welcome this HIA because it's sort of balanced and careful and sensible and in a sense it doesn't say here are 8 dreadful things that are going to happen without the evidence, which I'm afraid sometimes we hear. It rather says, look, here are some issues you ought to be worried about and here's how you might start to think about them.

Now the important thing, I thought I would start with is to recognise that free trade agreements are basically instruments of economic policy. Their purpose is to help the economy. We tend to summarize that in terms of helping economic growth, but that's not all there is to an economy and so I think that's a bit of a shorthand that can get us a little bit confused. But essentially the idea is that one is aiming to have economic benefits from these things.

That's going to involve some trade-offs because the other partners are going to want some things as well, which you might find uncomfortable.

But overall the idea is that by helping the economy, we do help all sorts of other things like health, but also other elements of well-being.

It's worth pointing out that we think one of the principal ways in which trade agreements actually do boost the economy is by reducing uncertainty.

Essentially, when you sign a trade agreement with other countries, you can strain your policy space in return for then constraining their policy space.

And that means that firms, producers, large and small, can start investing in things that the other partner countries are interested in and likewise they could invest in things that we're interested in. Anything that increases uncertainty by saying maybe we will object to this in the future and so on actually tends to reduce the economic benefits.

Now with CPTPP you also have to recognise there is a big foreign policy dimension to it. I'm not going to say much about that, but it figures very large in Governments, well particularly this Government's, view of the world. We are undertaking a sort of Pacific tilt.

One of the other things that the HIA is very clear about, these are potential effects. They are not things that are inevitably going to happen. They are things where we essentially might encounter some issues, positive or negative.

I think it's important to take this back to domestic policy.

In the end, we also expect trade policy to be an extension of domestic policy.

We work out what sort of society we want, and we try and have a trade policy that is coherent with that and at least as is so far, at least as far as this is consistent with our international obligations.. International obligations are very important because of this point about uncertainty. I've already sort of made my apologies, so this is very complex and one of the results of complexity is it's very difficult actually to download what public opinion requires.

Almost all of this debate has to take place between experts and the HIA is a really very important contribution to that, and it recognises that there are other dimensions.

Remember also that an awful lot of what we think we know about trade is essentially probabilistic.

We can say this will happen on average.

This will happen in aggregate, but then pinning it down exactly where it will happen and what you do about that becomes much more complex and so any assessment that we make is going to be with a lot of sort of finger crossing.

We really cannot know many of the things that we wish we did know.

If I may, I'd like to make one final point.

In a sense, we're too late for the CPTPP. Things have been negotiated, and it's going to be signed and then changing it is very, very difficult.

The real hope that one ought to have of HIA's is that we gradually build up a body of experience that informs future policy, future agreements, and, in a sense, this is the start of that process.

Liz will tell you how much hard work it was.

It's going to be a long process, but ultimately we want to be in a position to influence future policy, not merely complain about past policy.

So thanks very much and I now will pass on to Margaret.

Margaret Douglas 38:23

Thank you very much, Alan.

I'm just going to share a few slides, which I will whizz through as I only have 5 minutes to speak. So I was asked to say a little bit about the implications beyond Wales, which obviously are very broad, but I'm going to try and be very brief in what I say.

So obviously speaking from a Scottish point of view, Scotland has very similar issues and challenges to Wales and in particular what we've seen in recent years is that health is actually worsening and we have steeply rising health inequalities that are driven by inequalities and income, wealth and power.

So the extent to which any policy, including the CPTPP, influences inequalities and income, wealth and power, that will also influence health and health inequalities.

But I'm not going to rehearse all of the impacts that Leah took us through very ably early on, because in short, many of the impacts for Wales will be very similar or identical in Scotland.

What I want to do is say a little bit in the longer term about the commercial determinants of health.

As Leah mentioned, trade is a very important commercial determinant of health and I think in public health we were very often guilty of talking about the commercial determinants as if they're all negative.

But what I'm showing on the screen is a model from a very important I think series of papers in The Lancet earlier on this year on the commercial determinants of health that defined them as systems, practices and pathways through which commercial actors drive health and equity.

And really importantly, that is mutual.

It's not saying commercial determinants of health are bad.

It is saying they could be bad or they could be good and in fact a healthy trade

environment is really important for a healthy population as several people have already said today.

This is quite a complicated model and I'm just going to summarise very briefly some of the key elements.

So what this shows and I should say, I wasn't involved in this paper at all.

But I do think it is a very important paper for public health.

But what this shows in the top left, there's a circle which is activities of commercial actors of businesses which is not just the products that they produce, but also their labour practices and marketing, other practices, all of which can be good for health or can be bad for health.

And those activities, both shaped by the political and the economic system and part of the political and economic system, is trade agreements like the CPTPP.

And that system then affects what regulation and upstream policies are enabled, which then influences sectoral policies, which then influences the environments that we all live in, work in and grow in.

And we know in public health that those environments are very, very important in shaping health and health inequalities.

So that is a, I've sort of tried to simplify the ways in which commercial determinants can affect health. There's a little circle on the left hand side of this which is underlying drivers of commercial determinants and the ways in which they could be positive or could be negative and what that shows is that there are positive feedback loops as some actors gain in power that is self-perpetuating.

And I think that means that one of the things we need to look at in the CPTPP is who is empowered by this?

Which actors?

Which countries?

Who gains in power as a result of the CPTPP, and what does that therefore mean for health?

So I think it's important to think about commercial determinants much more broadly and thinking about implications of the CPTPP beyond Wales and also of course beyond the UK.

Just moving back a little bit more parochially the health impact assessment obviously was done on Wales and Wales was very much influenced by the Future Generations Act, a really important policy instrument I think.

In Scotland we don't have a similar act, but we have a national strategy for economic

transformation, which articulates a vision for a well-being economy defined as a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, delivering prosperity to all and respecting environmental limits.

And I think that ambition is really important in terms of how we would look at the CPTPP in Scotland.

Scotland also has a vision for trade and that vision sets out five trade principles which are the trade should promote inclusive growth, so everybody should benefit.

It should promote well-being, sustainability, net zero, which is a really important policy priority in Scotland and good governance. And I think from a public health point of view, those principles actually chime really well in terms of the kinds of things that we would want trade to achieve from a public health point of view as well. And then finally, the final thing that I wanted to say is that as we've already heard, this is only the second health impact assessment that has ever been done of a trade agreement.

The other one was the TPP in Australia several years ago, and I've worked in health impact assessment for more than 20 years and it's the first time I've ever had the opportunity to be involved in an HIA of a trade agreement.

And I think the HIA shows that there are many different ways in which trade agreements like this can affect health, and it's important, I think, to understand both the positives and the negatives. Both of them, from a Scottish point of view, it's been really useful I think for me to be involved in the steering group for the HIA. I'm really grateful to my Welsh colleagues for involving me in it and I hope that we'll continue joint work like that in the future. I'm sure that we will.

But also both of these HIA's were done in separately to decision making.

As Liz mentioned, we haven't had sight of the final terms of the agreement, and the HIA has been separate to the decision making process in many ways.

And what I really hope in future that, I hope Courtney has convinced you all, that health impact assessment is a very important process that can be useful to shape trade agreements and similar instruments.

And what I would really hope is that health impact assessments are used much more in future as part of the decision making process, not just as documents that are produced by people who are outside of that decision making.

So that is all I wanted to say.

Thank you very much indeed for listening and I think I will pass back to Liz.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 44:49

Marvellous. Thank you.

So you've provided us with some real food for thought, and you've all given very different perspectives in some ways, and I'm very pleased that you like the HIA and you found it insightful in lots of ways.

It has been very hard to do and some of that is around the timing and I've got a question there for Courtney and Alan.

And also we've had some questions from those online too.

So Courtney if I can just ask you, you said there's never a bad time to do an HIA, but Alan said maybe it was too late for the CPTPP which suggests a bit of, not difference, but perspective there. You would say there was never a bad time to do one?

Courtney McNamara 45:44

Well, yeah. And I think actually Allen and I probably agree in terms of his emphasis on domestic policies.

So now we have some idea of what potential impacts might be, and we can turn to see what sort of mitigation strategies are available in the domestic context.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 46:01

OK.

L. Alan Winters 46:05

Yeah. Can I say that, I mean, I'm not saying that it's a bad time, but I mean, it would be nice to do these things in advance. The Government does produce statements of the economic effects that it thinks will arise from free trade agreements it's going to negotiate, but the truth is they're basically works of fiction because the details of the FT are not known when they set off and they tend to be a little bit on the optimistic side if we're honest.

And the results are still very small.

And so one wants, in a sense, to be at the table to be part of the process.

And wants to be able to say if you are thinking about this clause here on page 718, actually you know it's going to have a big effect on health.

That's ideal.

One of the features of UK trade policy making or free trade agreement making in the

UK is it's been an immense rush and we can hope that it's all going to settle down and with a bit more encouragement from the Government to open debate we might get to the stage where they say, what if and people can actually respond to sort of concrete proposals but sort of wish lists and dreamland is not awfully helpful. However, pointing out at the start of these things, where some of the pitfalls are is exactly what we can get from previous HIA's.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 47:34

Thank you, Alan.

Thank you. Margaret you are nodding away.

Margaret Douglas 47:40

Yeah, I think that was exactly my last point that we would really want to do HIA's much earlier in the process and be much closer to decision making, have sight of what was being discussed.

I understand that there are issues in a negotiation about how much you want to share, but I think the lack of transparency is a problem in itself. And I do think an HIA should be done as part of decision making rather than externally.

It's useful to do externally because it raises awareness of these issues and hopefully it helps us advocate for HIA's to be done more routinely, but I think if we really want to have an impact, we really want to work in a health and all policies approach, then that does mean working much more closely with the decision makers, people who are involved in those negotiations.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 48:25

Great, thank you.

And I'm quite interested in Aileen, you also mentioned lack of transparency.

I think we've all referred to lack of transparency, but for me it's kind of well, how do we get over that barrier?

I don't know if you've got any thoughts or is it just something we live with?

Aileen Burmeister 48:49

I mean it's something we live with at the moment.

But yeah, I mean lack of transparency is particularly difficult and I think that something really would benefit if we were able to have more insight earlier in each

process.

But that's still each individual process of every single trade deal, which, as Alan said, is happening at speed.

It's happening very rapidly, particularly for civil societies and our micro enterprises.

Aileen Burmeister 49:16

We can't engage on every single issue in every single trade deal, and I think what would be really good is to have a trade policy really that was set out by government. It was lovely to see that Scotland has got a kind of principles of what they are aiming for in trade deals.

And so I think actually what would be really useful would be to have a trade policy. The other thing on a very practical level that we would love to have is a web page that said, this is how trade deals work in the UK at the moment.

This is what's going on at each stage. I know the EU has got quite a good kind of accessibility, even for that basic information.

What we're finding in civil society, it's taking so much resource just to find out what's happening and when that we've got lots of informal open doors and the Wales team in department for business and trade and the trade policy team in Welsh Government are very open with us but actually, having those informal conversations takes a long time, and it would be really useful just to have something quite easy and simple setting out what's happening so that we can help direct people to the right place.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 50:34

So that we don't have to go ferreting around for the information ourselves.

Aileen Burmeister 50:38

Yeah.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 50:38

I'll come back to you, Margaret.

And then, because I've got quite a lot of questions, but I will keep them and then we've got some questions from those online as well.

So I just want to go through them. Margaret?

Margaret Douglas 50:51

Yeah.

I just wanted to clarify, I probably wasn't clear enough because I was whizzing through the slides too fast. Scottish vision for Trade, Scotland is a devolved administration like Wales. Trade agreements are reserved to Westminster, so we're not in, Scotland is not in a position to negotiate trade deals.

So these are principles that Scotland is, and within that document there's a series of asks for the UK Government that are about trade agreements, and are about trade, Scotland is not in a position to negotiate trade deals by itself.

So sorry I should have been much clearer about that during the presentation.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 51:27

No, no. It was something I was going to raise anyway, about the fact that we're devolved and trade negotiations are actually reserved to the UK Government.

Welsh Government does have a trade policy as well and trade policy leads that are formulating that all the time, but also you know we've all got small capacity.

So it's how we all kind of come together and use this.

Leah I don't know if you want to come on board because we've got a couple of questions as well about the sort of monitoring and looking at the longer term impacts and because you mentioned the review and I mentioned it.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 52:10

So, do you want to come in here?

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 52:13

Yeah.

I mean, I think we we've had conversations with those involved in negotiations and we're learning things and I think we're going to learn quite a bit more about what this free trade agreement might look like. More details about the provisions, and I think you know we'd be very happy to know that quite a few of the potential negative impacts have been mitigated or addressed in the later stages of the negotiation process because we do want trade to benefit the health well-being inequity of everyone.

And so if those potential negative impacts have been addressed that's great.

And so that's why we highlight them, so they are considered. And I think that's what we'll do when we have more information and more publicly available evidence, is sort of review what we predicted or what we thought might be potential impacts and see if those will actually result.

I think it will be a discussion about how we do the long term evaluation.

I think that that's, in public health, always a challenge of those long term impacts because there are so many factors that contribute to outcomes from across many sectors.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 53:19

So sometimes it's hard to pinpoint what resulted specifically from a free trade agreement, but that's what we do at Public Health Wales and we will do our best to see what the impacts were from the agreement.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 53:31

Yeah, I mean, Allen said that as well that you know they're not in isolation.

And so thank you for your question, Olivia too.

And Ryngan, you sort of also asked about the evaluation of the health impact assessment and how we do it.

And you also mentioned that like Margaret and I have carried out health impact assessments and then we've tracked the impact about the prediction and the accuracy of health impact assessment and that could very much be something that we do as part of this kind of work as well.

So over the next year or two or three, we could track them and see, but also like we said, there could be sort of difficulties.

And then Olivia sort of asked on transparency of process, have you come across any international examples of how this has been done well?

I'm not sure if you mean that transparency of the free trade agreements negotiation or the actual like, things like the HIA's.

Because like we say, there's only been 2 on this and we don't have visibility to some internal ones and then Gemma has asked, I wonder if you could expand on the potential impact of lowering standards and our route in public health to mitigate the effects, particularly when they're likely most vulnerable.

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 55:02

So I can I can probably jump in to the second question a bit more.

So I think in terms of the lowering standards is the free trade agreement sets the lowest standards.

And so what we're thinking about again is those long term impacts.

So right now, those short term impacts, the UK Government has said that not much is going to change in terms of our standards, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but a future governments look to strengthen those standards or raise those standards, the CPTPP provisions might prevent that. So we want to ensure that we are thinking about future generations, particularly in Wales. We're not just looking at our Welsh population now, but future generations and so considering what governments will be able to do in terms of considering enacting and implementing public health policies or raising standards that impact on health well-being inequity of particular populations in Wales is something to keep an eye out for.

So we can ensure that they have the ability to do that.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 56:05

Right, thank you.

Alan?

L. Alan Winters 56:08

Yes, can I make a comment about transparency because it's really important.

L. Alan Winters 56:12

I mean, you do have to be clear about for whom that it's transparent.

The truth of the matter is that among developed countries, the UK is almost the worst. For instance, in the US, free trade agreement goes to an up and down vote in Congress.

How does the government sort of have a feel for what they can get through Congress when it's either for or against?

They have to talk.

They're obliged to talk to various interest groups.

You might worry about that, but at least business is kept informed and other interested groups, they're obliged to talk to committees.

The EU has conversations with the Parliament and put stuff out on the website. The New Zealanders put almost everything out on the website.

The Australians have a policy so I'm told when I talked to them about it, so that sort of getting closer to the end of the negotiation, every minister or every minister concerned with trade and the senior officials go out to sort of town meetings in the boonies and have a meeting with people to explain, probably pretty vigorously, what they like and what they don't like.

I think, I hope, I pray that this is just the reflection that the sort of policy dysfunction that we've had with implementing Brexit and that it will improve, but essentially it's not only the public in a sense who needs to be kept informed, it is interested parties because they've got the time and the ability to assess what they're hearing.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 57:48

Thank you, Alan.

And then Courtney, quick final one before we move to our workshop.

Courtney McNamara 57:54

Yes, this is also about transparency and I unfortunately I don't know too much about this, but I know in Thailand that there is a very close collaboration between public health people and the government policymakers.

And I believe there's a collaboration between them so there's more health involvement in the decision making process around trade agreements.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 58:19

Thank you, Courtney.

There's a couple more questions in the chat. Ryngan I will respond to you in a minute.

And now I'm going to hand over to Louisa who is going to tell us all about our breakout groups and our session now.

Thank you and thank you everyone on the panel.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 58:37

Great, lovely.

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 58:39

Thank you very much, Liz, and thank you for that very interesting discussion and I

feel like there's, so I'm sitting with quite a lot of questions myself as well, but it's time to hand over the responsibility of questions and answers to the people we have listening in today.

So this is the question that we have and that we would like you to sort of sit with and think about for the last sort of half an hour or so of this session. What role can trade agreements play in a wellbeing economy?

We've started to, I think Margaret mentioned well-being economy. I think I've heard a couple of times already this morning, but I just have a couple of slides just so that we can sort of say, what is it that we really mean when we're talking about a wellbeing economy.

So the quotes and infographic on this slide come from the World Health Organization and they define a wellbeing economy as one that places people and planet at the centre to create healthy, fairer and more prosperous societies. And there I identify a number of kind of cross cutting themes of planetary, economic, human and social well-being as all kind of being important and interconnected to a prosperous society. In Wales, we have our own way of talking about a wellbeing economy and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act has already been mentioned here, so this first quote on the left comes from Welsh Government, which talks about an economy that improves the well-being of everyone in Wales by being underpinned by the well-being of Future Generations Act, which in turn recognises that wellbeing has multiple dimensions.

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 1:00:21

It is about social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being, which is then broken down into 7 wellbeing goals.

So if a wellbeing economy in Wales could be articulated as one where all of these well-being goals are being met, what could that look like for trade policy? On the right here is an infographic that Leah and I have been developing that aims to try and illustrate how trade agreements could serve to help or to hinder the ability of Wales to achieve each of the seven well-being goals.

There are a number of subcategories that we've kind of identified under each of the goals that you can then consider.

So for example, under the healthier Wales goal, we can specifically consider how trade could impact on food and diet, infectious diseases, healthy behaviours, medicines and healthcare services and workforce.

What you'll find in the CPTPP report that we have recently published is that we've overlaid the findings of that HIA onto that kind of infographic model.

And this is what we see.

So potential negative impacts identified across all of the domains, but also potential positives across many of their domains. And we thought this analysis was really useful because we can start asking ourselves the questions you know as the panel has already been talking about today about how do we mitigate against those potential ways that the agreement could hinder our achievement of the goals, but also how do we maximize those potential opportunities in order to turn them into realities.

And that is the question that really got us thinking.

Would it be possible for a trade agreement to be an enabling force across all of those elements and help to improve all of those domains of wellbeing as we would want to see if Wales was to have a wellbeing economy?

So this is kind of what we want to start by asking you what would a trade agreement look like in a wellbeing economy?

We're going to split you off into some breakout groups in a moment with a facilitator who's going to be taking notes of your discussion.

I think you'll have about 15 minutes to talk and then we'll be bringing you back for just a very brief feedback and then to close. On the slide here, it is also going to be posted into the chat of your breakout groups.

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 1:02:54

So just a couple of prompt questions to kind of get you thinking.

So how do we make the case for trade having a role in a wellbeing economy?

What's the messaging?

What's the kind of evidence we might need?

What would the process look like?

So we've talked a little bit about transparency already, but if we were negotiating trade in a well-being economy setting, what does that process look like? Then thinking more about this kind of policy areas, what are the opportunities to promote well-being through trade?

Is there any low hanging fruit that we could we could pluck already?

And finally, what might we need to change about the way that we do current agreements in order to make them contribute to a well-being economy?

We're really hopeful that this is just going to be the start of this discussion and taking this kind of lens to thinking about trade and we've plans to do some more workshops on this over the coming months.

So please do get in touch through the chat if that's something that you would like to be involved in going forward.

But for now I will stop sharing my slides and get back to the room and we'll be able to head off to our breakout groups.

Workshop feedback

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 0:12

I will start.

So I think the main thing that I took away from our discussion was this idea of being able to have, at the outset, a framework or a set of principles that you're working towards that you can sense check how the trade agreement is evolving against to make sure that it is fulfilling those objectives and making sure that they include a very clear articulation of something to do with health. That it needs to be explicit in the outset, and we even identified within my group a potential low hanging fruit which was around food and making sure that a trade agreement didn't make unhealthy food products cheaper but that try to make healthy food products cheaper.

So that was something that came from my group.

But yeah, lots of very interesting discussions so thank you everybody. Who out of the facilitators would like to go next?

Michael Fletcher (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 1:10

Yeah, sure. I don't mind.

So we had a really good discussion as you saw it spilled over into the main room.

So in terms of summing it up, we were quite struck with how dealing with various consultations from UK government and how disconnected they are across governments sometimes.

And then not sort of convinced that those messages get through to the Department for International Trade and how come that sort of be corrected?

And then it's important to try and get your voice heard.

And then like what was I going to say to just sum up, we sort of had the same experiences. As it was mentioned earlier, calling for a UK trade strategy to tie everything together and have the same sort of voice across all nations.

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 2:16

Brilliant.

Thank you, Michael.

Yes, lots of echoes with, I think what we were discussing in our group as well.

Who'd like to go next, Leah?

Leah Silva (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 2:25

I think it's just me left and I'm trying to find a way to capture our discussion in a very pithy way but I'm going to do my best.

So somehow we ended up on the ISDS again because it's a massive concern, but I think we did spin it positively and so we were looking at the micro and macro elements of the economy and in particular, we're looking at procurement potentially as an area where we can make the argument for health well-being.

And then also looking past GDP etcetera.

But the ISDS mechanism might have a play in that, but one of the things with the ISDS is that foreign investors can challenge when, if they think it will negatively affect their business.

So at what level and how can we make the argument that a healthy thriving society can actually improve business and we thought that in Wales the microbusinesses, as they lean, mentioned a huge number of small medium enterprises, a lot of civil society organisations so that maybe that's where we can start sort of promoting that well-being economy among those sort of businesses, those organisations and sort of build up from there as I think that there's a lot more leverage to do it at that level. Hopefully I captured it but we'll share notes.

Louisa Petchey (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) 3:38

Yes, super interesting point.

Thank you, Leah, and I think that's a really interesting perspective to take on it, but echoes, I think that idea that approaching this through that well-being economy lends trying to think about what good looks like and kind of being quite practical about what could happen and how in terms of the process and in terms of the policy priorities has got legs.

So I really hope we can continue those discussions.

As I said, if you're keen to stay involved with any of that, please do let us know

through the chat.

But I will now hand over to Liz to close.

Thank you very much everyone.

Liz Green (Public Health Wales) 4:17

Fabulous. Thank you.

Very interesting.

The time has just whizzed by.

So we've had a couple more comments in the chat you might want to have a look at.

Steven I hope we've addressed your question and thank you Alan for that.

And Kate, thank you for posting your comment as well.

So I think in summary, we've had some really, like you said, interesting discussions.

We've had some great conversations and this is not just a one off.

We do have a work program and a work plan in Public Health Wales around trade and health and we will be writing up the HIA of the CPTPP into a journal paper and hopefully placing it and publishing it so that it will get to a wider audience as well.

So for now I would just like to say diolch yn fawr iawn to everybody for contributing, for attending. We have put a link in the chat to an evaluation form.

We would be really grateful if you could just take a couple of minutes to just tick the stars, the number how you found it.

Thank you for putting it in the chat Marie and we've also, if you want to be a member of the Public Health Network Cymru, there's an opportunity there for you to join that as well.

So that's everything for now.

We will keep you all informed and we hope to carry on with the work with the CPTPP and trade.

And as Leah said earlier, we look forward to it being signed and seeing the terms when they're openly published and all the evidence next week.

So thank you very much.