

Establishing and Evaluating Tools for Influencing the Commercial Determinants of Health

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Context and Approach:

Globally, just four commercial products account for 34% of all deaths (tobacco, alcohol, ultra-processed food, and fossil fuels). The commercial determinants of health are the systems, practices and pathways through which commercial actors drive health and equity. Public health aims to influence these to maximise population health benefits and reduce or mitigate associated risks and harms. The objectives of this project are to:

- Develop and refine a framework for good governance on managing the commercial determinants of health aimed at public bodies in Wales, using multiple learning and testing cycles
- Develop and refine a workshop exercise and learning materials for relevant students and policymakers on how to manage the commercial determinants of health

Planned Activity:

Research:

Research question: How are commercial determinants of health currently considered and managed by public bodies in Wales, and can this be improved using governance and learning products?

Methods: 90-day Institute of Healthcare Improvement learning and testing cycles followed by mixed-methods process and outcome evaluation.

The aim is to present findings at an academic public health conference with a view to publish in a peer-reviewed public health journal.

Leadership:

This will utilise a project management approach and small team for development of products followed by implementation in relevant teams/bodies, including potential changes to governance. It will also be supplemented by mentoring and coaching as appropriate.

Education/teaching:

The aim is to develop, test and evaluate learning materials and exercises for a range of audiences, including medical students, Masters of Public Health students, and healthcare workers. This will be used to form an application for an Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Progress to date:

- 7 semi-structured interviews conducted with plans for at least 3 more and 10 papers have been reviewed as part of a learning cycle approach, with several further references identified.
- A draft theory of change has been developed.
- A public involvement session has been organised for the Summer.
- Public Health Wales has been identified as a potential test site and links have been made with Cardiff University and the Faculty of Public Commercial Determinants Special Interest Group.

Reflections:

- The objectives have significantly changed since conceptualisation. Early conversations revealed a desire for knowledge and skills on managing engagement and interactions with industry, especially regarding governance on industries beyond the tobacco lobby. In some instances, there were also attitudes expressed that aligned with industry tactics, such as framing issues by the behaviour of individuals and expressing doubt about the evidence and public appetite for solutions. Therefore, the work has been changed to focus on upstream governance and engagement, for which there are existing evidence reviews.
- The new focus also better aligns with the work of other Fellows and the Bevan Commission. The main barrier so far has been limited capacity, but dedicated time has been secured from Autumn 2025.

Theory of Change on Influencing Commercial Determinants

