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# Brexit and Poverty in Wales: A Public Health Lens



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## Executive Summary

**The aim of this report is to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the implications of the United Kingdom's (UK) exit from the European Union (EU) – 'Brexit' - on poverty, and health and well-being in Wales.** Policy and decision makers, those who are part of the public health system, and stakeholders across sectors, can use the evidence presented to understand the opportunities and risks for communities in Wales, and identify actions to help build a fairer future.

Following the devastating and unequal effect of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on Welsh society and economy, it has never been more important or urgent to understand how Brexit and trade agreements will impact health and well-being. The case is even stronger for those living in, or at risk of poverty, where there is mounting evidence of widening inequalities as a result of the pandemic. Moreover, the **Socio-economic Duty**, and the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, both place a requirement on public bodies to take action to enable those facing socio-economic disadvantage to fulfil their potential (see Section 3).

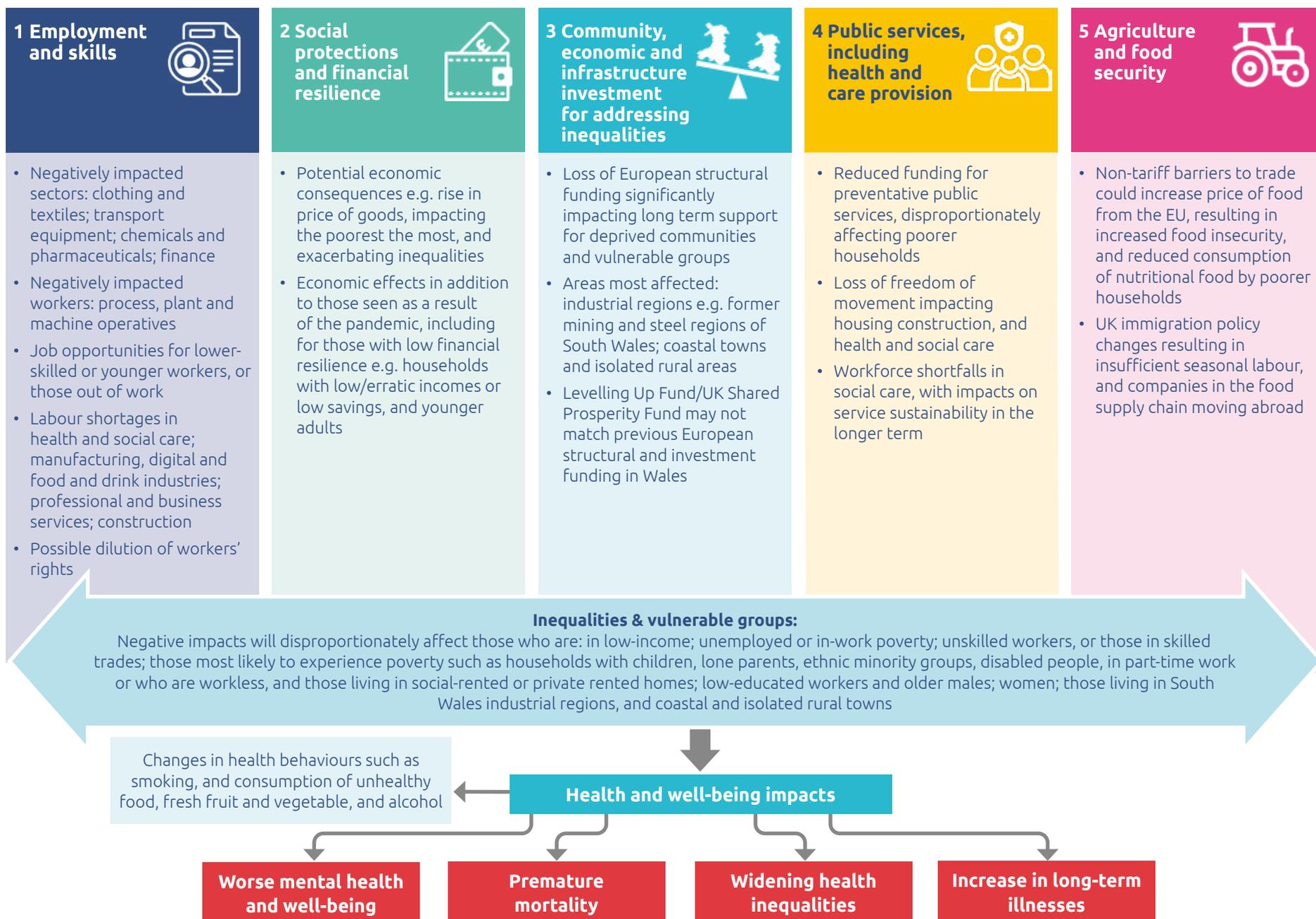
This report summarises the latest research, building on findings from Public Health Wales' health impact assessments of Brexit published in 2019, and forms part of an ongoing programme of work to explore the **interconnected nature of Brexit, trade agreements, and health**. The potential impacts of trade agreements on health have long been acknowledged, and arise through a number of mechanisms and pathways, which are not fully understood (see Section 5.1). The economic and societal changes brought about by trade agreements can affect population health far more than any direct impacts on health services.

Although the UK and the EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) has provided some clarity regarding the terms of the trading relationship, **much remains uncertain** and is dependent on how the TCA is interpreted, translated and implemented; how it evolves, for example if the scope is broadened; and if /how future agreements are reached for areas currently not included (see Section 1).

### Key findings

The pathways by which Brexit could impact on health and well-being, and affect those in poverty, are complex and interconnected; in Section 5.1 we look at the anticipated **Welsh economic impacts**, as this is one of the main pathways through which health and well-being will be affected. The impacts of Brexit are explored through **five themes** where we have identified evidence: **employment and skills; social protections and financial resilience; community, economic and infrastructure investment for addressing inequalities; public services, including health and care provision; and agriculture and food security** (see Section 5.2). The impacts identified will have differential effects on **inequalities and population groups**, including those who are more vulnerable (see Section 5.3).

## Brexit and trade agreements: impacts on health and well-being





## Action areas

Section 6 provides eight evidence-based action areas, which can support Wales' Brexit response, so that those who are vulnerable and in poverty benefit from gains and are protected from risks to health and well-being:

- 1 Welsh economic resilience** – building the resilience of businesses, and promoting stronger ties between business and local communities
- 2 Employment, skills and income** – identifying differential impacts on sectors and jobs, across different regions and communities and having future-focused training and skills development
- 3 Social protections and financial resilience** – safeguarding social protections for population groups with low financial resilience
- 4 Community investment to tackle regional inequalities** – identifying communities disproportionately affected, and effectively and equitably targeting future community investment
- 5 Public services** – strengthening the role of public services in tackling poverty, for example through their role as anchor institutes
- 6 Agriculture and food security** – supporting farming communities affected by changes to trade patterns, and promoting food systems that improve health
- 7 Trade and health** – developing and utilising approaches and tools to support the integration of health and well-being in trade policy and agreements, for example through inter-disciplinary working, and health impact assessments
- 8 Data and health intelligence** – identifying indicators to monitor the impact of trade agreements on health and well-being

## Conclusion

As Wales begins a new trading relationship with the EU and recovers from the pandemic, it is critical to consider how the future may look for people in poverty.

Emerging evidence gives an indication of how Brexit will affect health and well-being in Wales, although the full impacts, including the opportunities and risks, will only become apparent over time. Nevertheless, people living in poverty in Wales, having been unequally affected by the pandemic, will have less resilience to respond to any wider economic and societal changes as a result of Brexit. It is also clear that such changes will have complex and cumulative impacts, and could further exacerbate inequalities in Wales.

Through our response to the complex and interwoven issues of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and poverty, we have an opportunity to reinforce and enact our commitment to sustainable development and equitable outcomes, improve the well-being of Welsh people, and create a fairer society.





# 1. Introduction

**The aim of this report is to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the implications of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union ('Brexit') on poverty, and health and well-being in Wales.**

Building on Public Health Wales' publications *The Public Health Implications of Brexit in Wales* (Green et al. 2019) and *The Public Health Implications of Brexit in Wales: A Rapid Review and Update* (Petchey et al. 2019), this evidence review summarises the latest research on the potential impacts of Brexit on those experiencing poverty, or at risk of poverty in Wales. We have focused on poverty as these assessments identified that Brexit will have a *probable major short-medium-long term impact on people living on low income, including people living in food and fuel poverty*. Moreover, poverty is an intractable problem in Wales, affecting all aspects of life, including the life chances of children, mental well-being, health behaviours, participation in society, and is associated with reduced life expectancy (Ferrangina et al. 2013; Marmot et al. 2020a). In turn, poor health can lead to reduced income and worsen poverty – resulting in a 'health-poverty trap' (Khullar and Choksi 2018; Roberts 2018).

This report is part of a programme of work to build a picture of the interconnected nature of Brexit and trade agreements on health, contributing to the conversation on how Wales can meet the challenges and make the most of opportunities now that the United Kingdom (UK) is no longer a member of the European Union (EU), and build a fairer future for all. Policy and decision makers, those who are part of the public health system, and stakeholders across sectors, can use the evidence in this report to understand the opportunities and risks for communities in Wales, and identify actions to help navigate a post-Brexit landscape. The findings can also be used by public bodies to meet the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty and the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31 March 2021, and aims to deliver better outcomes for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (see Section 3 and Annex 3).

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## **Box 1: The COVID-19 pandemic**

Any impacts of Brexit need to be considered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has played out in the form of devastating health, well-being and socio-economic consequences that have been felt unequally across society (Dyakova et al. 2021). As well as affecting inequalities in health, the pandemic has widened inequalities in income; socioeconomic inequalities in education; and intergenerational inequalities. Data from a survey on health and well-being during coronavirus measures showed that 12% of adults in Wales had been worried a lot, and 24% a little, about their finances in the previous week (Public Health Wales 2021). In the longer term, the economic effects of the pandemic are likely to push more people into poverty (OECD 2020).

***Throughout this report, information relating to the COVID-19 pandemic has been highlighted in green to aid navigation for the reader.***

## 1.1 The UK's exit from the EU

In October 2019, the UK and EU agreed the terms of the UK's exit in the form of a Withdrawal Agreement. Whilst the agreement meant that the UK formally left the EU on 31 January 2020, little changed over the course of the year during the 'transition' or 'implementation' period. Following the announcement of a Trade and Co-operation Agreement<sup>1</sup> (TCA) with the EU on 24 December 2020, and passing of the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020 by UK Parliament on 30 December 2020, the UK and EU began 2021 under a new relationship.

The TCA covers a number of areas including trade; governance; a level playing field; state aid and subsidies; fisheries; security; and participation in EU programmes (see Glossary) (Ferguson P et al. 2020). The TCA has been accompanied by a series of joint declarations on a range of issues, such as financial services regulations, where the terms of cooperation have yet to be agreed (Welsh Government 2021a).

However, much remains uncertain and is dependent on how the TCA (and other agreed policies) are **interpreted, translated and implemented** by the UK and EU; **how current agreements evolve**, for example whether the scope is broadened for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications; and if/how **future agreements** are reached for areas currently not covered by current agreements, such as equivalence of sanitary and phytosanitary measures i.e. those that protect human, animal and plant health from pests and disease (Thimont Jack 2021).

## 1.2 Brexit and devolution

Welsh Government has recognised the UK Government's mandate to leave the Single Market and Customs Union, but has consistently advocated for maintaining close trading relations with the EU (Welsh Government 2020f). It has also highlighted that devolved governments have had a *"lack of any real influence.....over the negotiation process"* (Welsh Government 2021a). In its Programme for Government, Welsh Government (2021b) has pledged to *"argue for closer economic and research ties"* with the EU.

Welsh Government has responded to the TCA, stating that whilst providing stability, it has introduced *"new complexities"*, and not resolved uncertainty in some areas (Welsh Government 2021a).

As a result of the UK's exit from the EU, the UK is able to negotiate and agree trade agreements with non-EU countries. In the following section, we briefly consider the relationship between international trade agreements and health and well-being.

### Box 2: UK Internal Market Act

Prior to leaving the EU, the UK Parliament passed the UK Internal Market Act (UK Parliament 2020a). The stated aim of the Act is to reduce barriers to trade across the four UK nations resulting from any policy and regulatory divergence, following the loss of the EU single market framework (Institute for Government no date; UK Government 2020b). The Act means that goods and services lawfully sold/provided in one part of the UK are automatically accepted across the UK (mutual recognition), and that any statutory rules that discriminate against goods or services from another part of the UK do not apply (non-discrimination) (Sargeant and Stojanovic 2021). There is also provision for the UK government to directly spend money in devolved nations, including in areas of devolved competence such as promoting economic development, education, health and housing (Dougan et al 2020; Institute for Government no date).

The Welsh Government considers that the Act confers power on the UK Government which could amend the Government of Wales Act and reduce the devolution settlement. Along with the Scottish Government, it has refused legislative consent; its application for a judicial review of the Act was refused permission in April 2021 (BBC Online 2021; High Court of Justice 2021; Sargeant and Stojanovic 2021; Welsh Government 2021c), although this decision has since been overturned (Welsh Government 2021d).

## 2. Trade, and health and well-being

The potential impacts of trade agreements on health and well-being have long been acknowledged (Goodman 1971; International Labour Organization no date).

Figure 1 summarises some of the main routes through which trade and globalisation are thought to affect population health. Trade affects **risk factors** for both communicable disease, for example through movement of poultry increasing the risk of avian influenza; and non-communicable disease, for example through changes in availability and marketing of unhealthy food items. Changes to trade affect **domestic economic growth**, which in turn has an impact on **levels and distribution of national and individual wealth** and subsequently the **wider determinants of health and well-being**. Finally, trade **can affect health (and other public) services**, for example the movement of health-care workers (Smith et al. 2015).

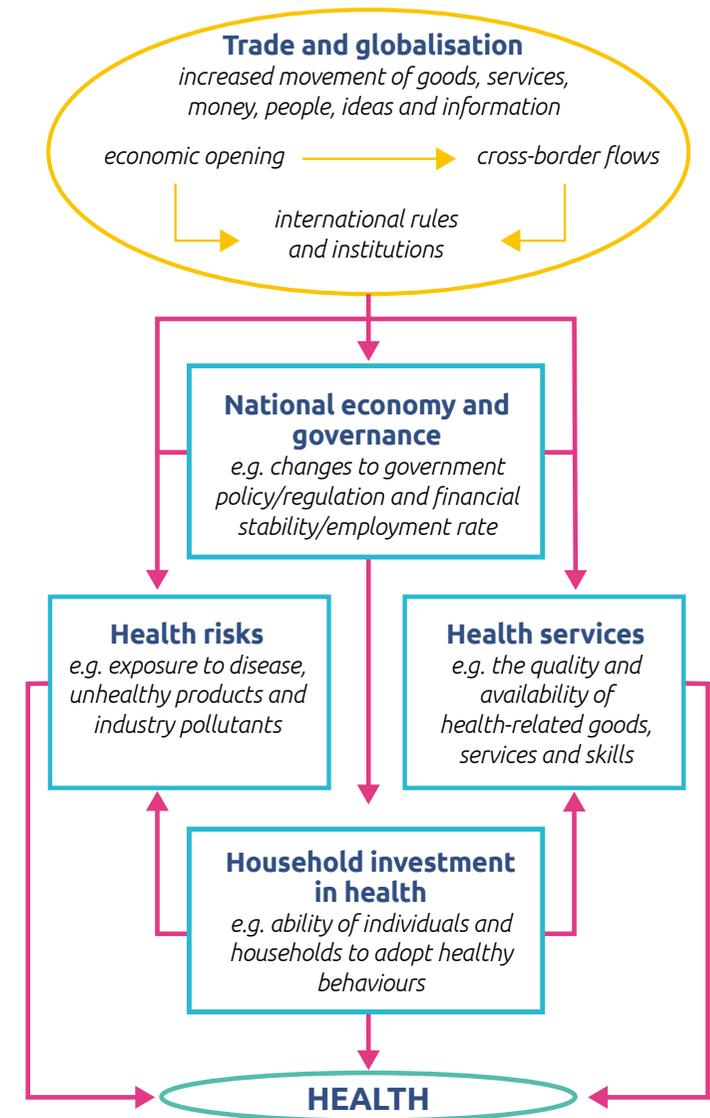
The economic or societal change brought about by trade agreements can potentially affect population health more than any direct impacts on health services (Dayan et al. 2020), although the mechanisms linking trade agreements with health remain poorly understood (Barlow et al. 2017).

### UK trade agreements with non-EU countries

The UK had a number of trade agreements in place by 1 January 2021 (See Annex 2), most notably with Japan (UK Government, 2021a).

The UK has prioritised negotiations with the US, New Zealand and Australia (UK Government, 2020c), and signed mutual recognition agreements (MRA) (see Glossary) with each of the nations. In addition to reproducing existing EU trade agreements and signing a Canada-UK Trade Continuity Agreement, the UK has applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), whose members account for 13% of the world gross domestic product (GDP) (Webb and Ward 2021).

Figure 1: Globalization, trade and health



Source: Adapted by L Petchey and K Cresswell from Smith, Blouin, Mirza, Beyer and Drager (eds) (2015).  
Trade and Health: Towards building a National Strategy. World Health Organization



Despite recognition that trade and health are intrinsically linked, the two operate in *'separate policy spheres'*, with diverging goals, and tensions between the aims of generating wealth and protecting and improving health (Fidler et al. 2009). Achieving common goals (policy coherence) is even more complex where there is an indirect link between trade and health, for example through impacts on economic conditions affecting the determinants of health such as employment or income inequality (Smith et al. 2009).

There have been drives from the World Health Organization (Smith et al. 2015) and more recently the UK Faculty of Public Health, amongst others, to bring together trade and health disciplines to *"secure the highest levels of health and well-being for the UK's workforce and wider population"* (Faculty of Public Health 2019).

In the next section, we look at poverty in Wales, before appraising how Brexit and international trade agreements may affect health and well-being, through the lens of poverty.

### 3. Poverty and the policy landscape in Wales

## Poverty in Wales

To be in poverty is to **lack or to be denied** certain **resources** that would allow **meaningful participation in society**. These resources can be **material** (such as income) or they can be **social** (such as lack of education).

**There is no single best measure of poverty, but a common distinction is...**

**Absolute poverty =** Household income is insufficient to afford basic necessities of life

**Relative poverty =** Household income from all sources is less than 60% of the average UK household income  
*A measure of income inequality that changes with economic growth or recession*

**Proportion of people in relative income poverty, by population group (2017-20)<sup>a</sup>**

Population Group	Percentage (%)
Pensioners	18
Children	31
Working age adults	22
All individuals	23

The following **population groups** are more likely to experience poverty in Wales<sup>a</sup>:

- Lone parents
- Minority ethnic groups
- Families in which there is someone with a disability
- People living in rural and coastal regions

For example: **38%** of children living in a family where there is someone with a disability are in relative income poverty, compared with 26% of those in families where no-one is disabled<sup>a</sup> (2015-20)

**180,000 children** live in poverty<sup>b</sup>

Wales has the lowest median hourly pay, compared to all other UK nations and regions, at **£10.73<sup>b</sup>** (2020 Q1)

Homeownership fell from 76% in 2001 to **70%** in 2019, as fewer and fewer households were able to enter the housing market<sup>b</sup>

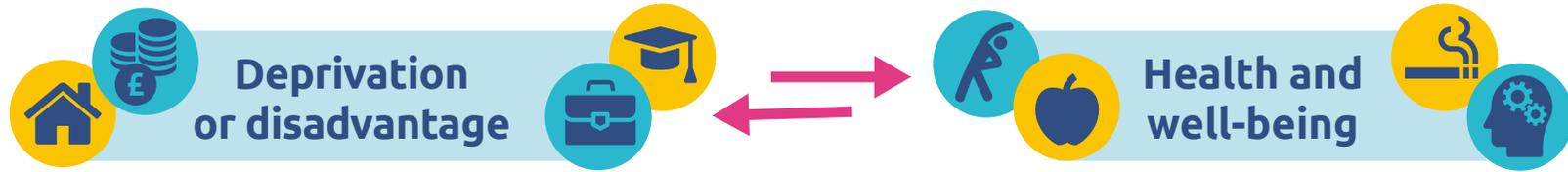
Wales has one of the highest in-work poverty rates in the UK, with **14%** of workers in poverty (2016-19)<sup>b</sup>

Over **2 in 10** working-age adults are in receipt of income-related benefits<sup>b</sup>

**155,000** households live in fuel poverty i.e. unable to keep their home warm at a reasonable cost<sup>c</sup> (2018)

**17%** of survey respondents said that in the last 12 months their household had worried about running out of food before there was money to buy more<sup>d</sup>

## The impacts of poverty on health and well-being in Wales



Housing, employment and education are all important and inter-related determinants of health. However, the impact of poverty and having **adequate income** cannot be overlooked

Material deprivation	Stress & feeling in control	Health behaviours	Social capital and cohesion
<p><b>14%</b> of children and <b>7%</b> of pensioners live in material deprivation, unable to access certain goods and services<sup>e</sup> (2017-20)</p>	<p>Approximately <b>400,000</b> adults (16%) have fallen behind on at least one bill, with <b>200,000</b> (8%) falling behind on their rent or mortgage payments<sup>b</sup> (June 2020)</p>	<p>Just over <b>a quarter</b> (26%) of adults living in the most deprived areas in Wales are smokers, compared with <b>11%</b> of those in the least deprived areas<sup>f</sup> (2019-20)</p>	<p>As many as <b>41%</b> of adults experiencing material deprivation report feeling lonely, compared with <b>12%</b> of those not in material deprivation (2019-2020)<sup>g</sup></p>

According to evidence from across the UK and Europe<sup>h-l</sup>

People living in poverty are **more likely** to:

- Experience adverse childhood experiences
- Experience mental health problems in adolescence
- Experience cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory conditions

People living in poverty are **less likely** to:

- Achieve good grades at school e.g. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C
- Participate in democratic processes in their local community
- Be regularly physically active and maintain a healthy weight

Healthy life expectancy at birth for people living in Wales (2017-2019) <sup>m</sup>		Most deprived areas		Least deprived areas	
		Females	50.2 years	Females	68.4 years
	Males	51.8 years	Males	68.6 years	



There have been longstanding concerns about the impact of the UK Government's tax and welfare reforms on those living in poverty. For example, in his review of health equity in England in 2020, Professor Sir Michael Marmot identified that benefit system changes such as the introduction of Universal Credit, changes to tax credits and a freeze in benefits had "*widened income inequalities penalising the poorest the most*" (Marmot et al. 2020a). The UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights also reported that for Wales, "*benefit changes are one of the structural causes behind the increase in poverty, rough sleeping and homelessness*" (United Nations 2019). Rising child poverty levels have been attributed to cuts/freezes to benefits and Tax Credits (University of Liverpool et al. 2017)

There are a range of measures in place in Wales to tackle poverty, which are underpinned by the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. Figure 2 summarises Welsh policies that aim to tackle poverty or which enable and support the poverty reduction agenda.

The Socio-economic Duty, which commenced on 31 March 2021, requires public bodies, when making strategic decisions, to pay due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome (such as lower healthy life expectancy, poorer skills and attainment) resulting from socioeconomic disadvantage. The Duty complements other statutory duties, for example the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, and more specifically its well-being goal for 'A more equal Wales' and 'A Wales of cohesive communities' (Welsh Government 2020a). Annex 3 summarises the relationship between the different legislation in Wales to address socio-economic disadvantage.

A review of poverty alleviation strategies and poverty reduction programmes and interventions is currently underway, with the aim of informing future governmental approaches to tackling poverty in Wales (Wales Centre for Public Policy no date). Looking forward, the Programme for Government (Welsh Government 2021b) includes commitments such as tackling fuel poverty, supporting the creation of a Community Bank for Wales, and income maximisation.

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An analysis commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission has estimated that UK Welfare Reform resulted in Welsh households losing 1.5% (£480) of their net income on average a year between 2010 and 2018, with households with the lowest incomes and with children (especially three or more) having lost up to £4,110 a year (Welsh Government 2019a).

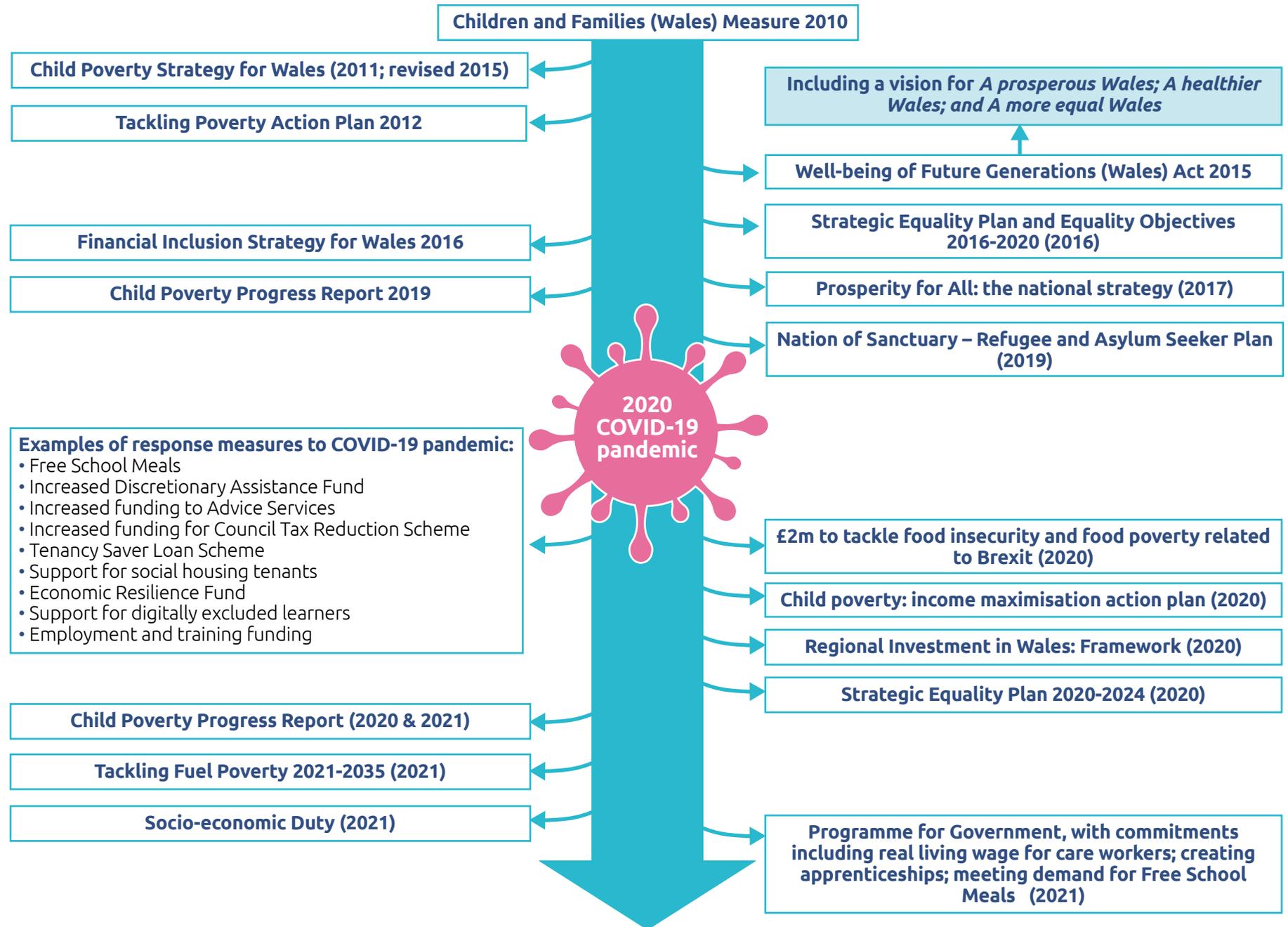
Over £400m is spent annually by the Welsh Government on different types of financial and in-kind support to people on low income (Bevan Foundation 2020a).

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Whilst it is beyond the remit of this report to look at the evidence for interventions to tackle poverty, we know that multiple sectors have a role to play, including housing, education, economic development, social welfare and health. Public sector organisations such as the NHS have an active role in tackling poverty, for example through raising awareness and advocacy for equity; as part of their role as service providers and commissioners; and in their role as anchor institutes in communities (Fenney and Buck 2021), whereby large non-profit organisations use their assets to support local well-being, for example through supporting local employment (Reed et al. 2019).

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Figure 2: Welsh policies to tackle poverty





## 4 Brexit, poverty, and health and well-being in Wales

Public Health Wales' health impact assessments (HIAs) of Brexit in Wales identified negative impacts of Brexit on those living on low income would be due to:

*“reduced resilience to any economic impacts such as price rises, fall in real wages, reduced employment, and reduced access and uncertainty on replacement for EU regional funding” and “cumulative impact with welfare reform and food poverty”* (Green et al. 2019; Petchey et al. 2019)

Other impacts highlighted include:

- changes to worker's rights and working conditions;
- employment changes in sectors exposed to import/export markets;
- large employers becoming less competitive and choosing to leave Wales;
- increased risk of fuel and food poverty, and impacts on child poverty;
- reduced investment in deprived areas, alongside opportunities to develop funding models more responsive to the needs of communities;
- changes to payments as a result of withdrawal from the Common Agricultural Policy;
- disruptions to the fishing industry.

Whilst the TCA has brought some clarity regarding the new UK-EU relationship, much of the evidence regarding the potential health and well-being impacts remains unclear, and is based on analysis of different Brexit scenarios prior to the TCA being agreed. In January 2021, the King's Fund (Holmes 2021) reported on the potential implications of the TCA, noting that overall it was

*“far too early to say what the implications of the UK's current international trading policy will be on public health or on the health and care system”*



## 5 Brexit impacts: pathways and key themes

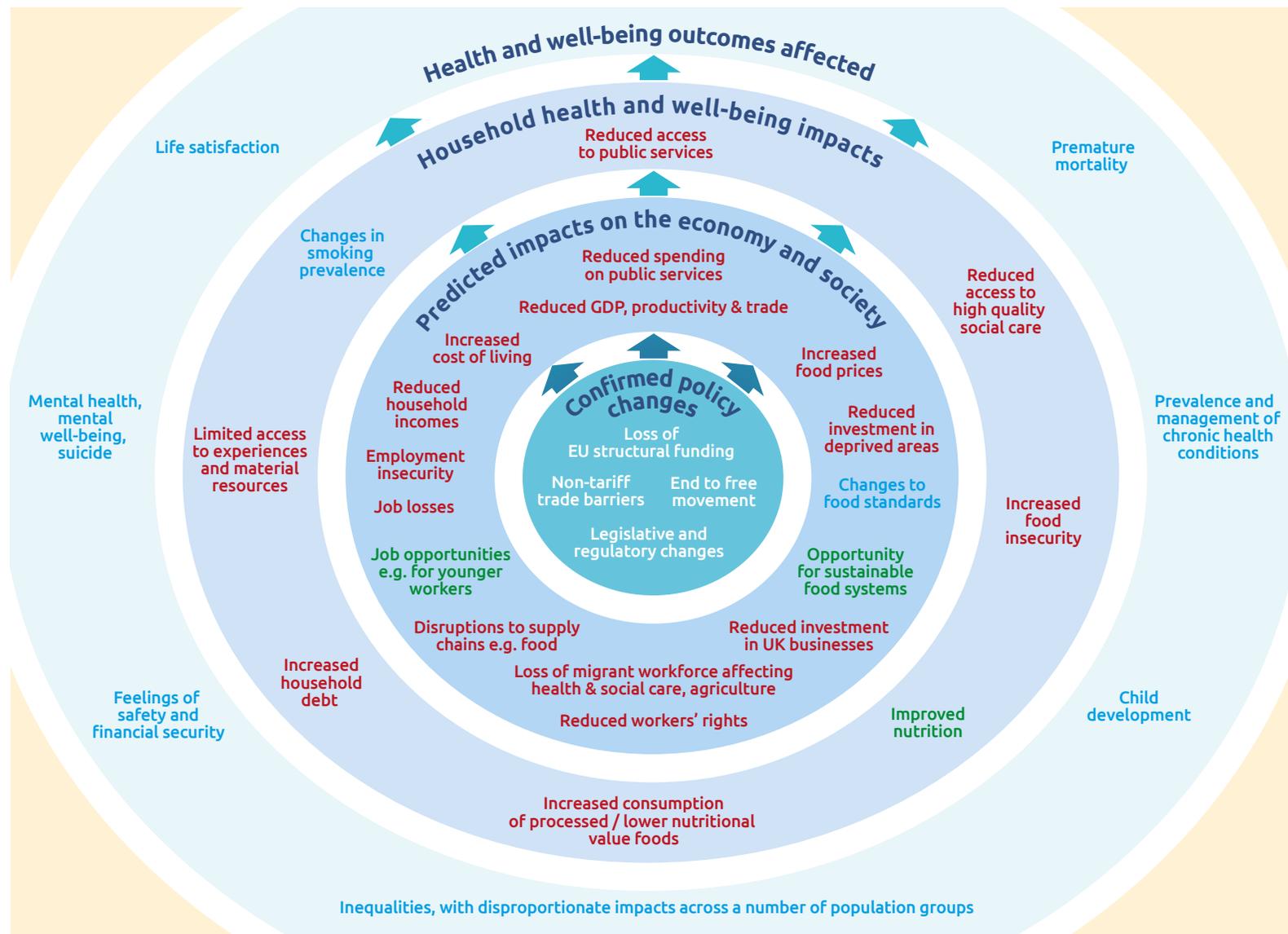
In this section, we summarise findings from the literature, firstly providing a brief overview of the pathways by which Brexit and trade agreements can impact on health and well-being, before looking at the anticipated Welsh economic impacts, as this is one of the main pathways through which health and well-being will be affected. This is followed by more detailed examination of five themes where we have identified the most evidence of potential impacts:

Finally, we consider how these impacts will have differential effects on population groups, including those who are more vulnerable. The themes reflect the five essential conditions for a healthy prosperous life highlighted in the World Health Organisation European Health Equity Status Report initiative framework: health and health services; health and income security and social protection; health and living conditions; health and social and human capital; health and employment and working conditions (Dyakova et al. 2021)

## 5.1 Pathways

Our review of the evidence has highlighted a number of pathways by which Brexit could impact on health and well-being, and affect those either living in, or at risk of poverty – summarised in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: The links between Brexit, poverty, and health and well-being**





## Brexit and the economy

### Key points

- The relationship between the economy and health is complex; over the longer term economic growth is associated with improved health. Conversely, economic decline negatively impacts on living standards, public spending, and employment, with subsequent increases in long-term illnesses, particularly worse mental health. Groups who are most vulnerable are those with lower incomes or low socio-economic status, families with young children, and pregnant women. The impact of economic decline on health behaviours is mixed.
- Compared with a frictionless trade agreement, under the terms of the TCA, the UK is predicted to experience reduced productivity, GDP and trade in the longer term.
- The pandemic has had a compounding effect on the economy, and widened inequalities, with low-income households disproportionately affected by job losses, reduced income, and fuel and food insecurity.

### Health and the economy

There is a complex relationship between the economy and health, with the health impacts influenced by a range of factors such as the timing of economic change (when it happens and whether impacts are seen in the short-term or long-term), the scale of economic change, and population characteristics. Over the longer term, economic growth has been associated with better health, whilst in the short term, there is evidence that both economic expansion and recession can improve health for some individuals and population groups (Frakt 2018). Overall the evidence is unclear, and this is further complicated by differences in results for various health outcomes (Janke et al. 2020).

The economy affects the determinants of health and well-being, including income, access to good work, affordability of food, living standards, and investment in community assets (Green et al. 2019). Economic decline is linked to increased unemployment, reduced income and wealth, and greater uncertainty about the future (Banks et al. 2020). Following the 2008 financial crisis, employment changes negatively affected long-term illnesses, with the strongest impacts seen on mental health. A modelling study has estimated that a 1% increase in local area employment growth results in a 1.7% decrease in chronic illnesses overall, with the strongest effects found for those with mental health conditions, and in areas with traditional industries, an older population, and worse long-term health (Janke et al. 2020). More specifically, there is consistent evidence to link recessions with increased mortality from suicide (World Health Organization 2011). Groups who may be more vulnerable to negative health effects of economic downturns include those with lower incomes or low socio-economic status, families with young children, and women who are pregnant (Banks et al. 2020).

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In Quarter 1 2021, trade in goods with the EU fell by 23.1% and 0.8% with non-EU countries, compared with Quarter 1 2018.

In April 2021, businesses reported that the end of the EU transition was their greatest importing or exporting challenge, more so than the pandemic or both the pandemic and EU transition combined.

(Office for National Statistics 2021a)

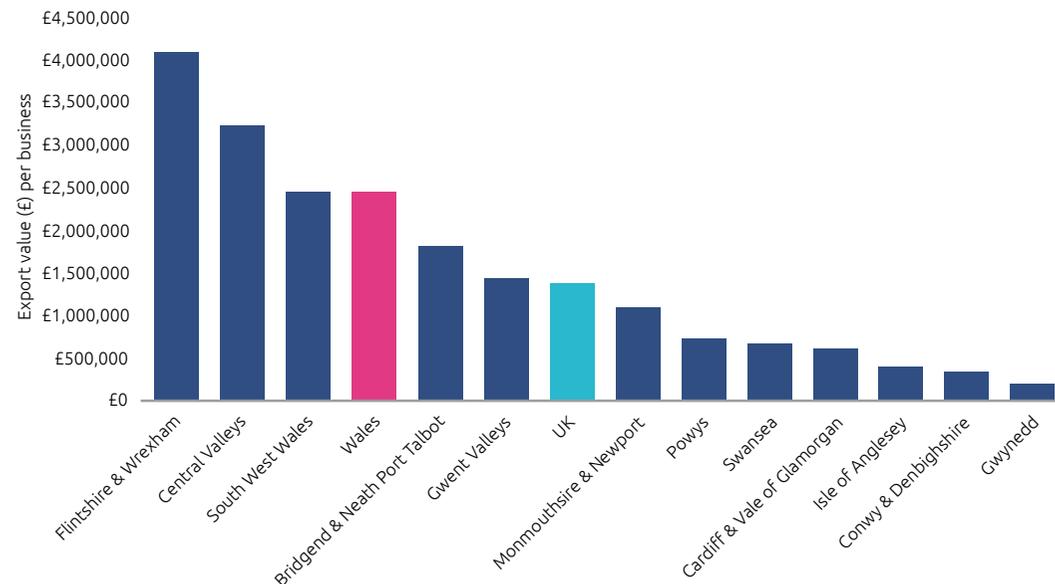
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Evidence regarding health behaviours is mixed. During economic downturns and negative income shocks, some research has shown a fall in smoking, alcohol consumption and unhealthy eating (Banks et al. 2020; Elliott et al. 2010). However, a recent meta-analysis has shown that in high income countries, the 2008 recession was associated with reduced intake of calories, fast food, sugary products and soft drinks, as well as reduced fruit and vegetable consumption (Jenkins et al. 2021).

## Welsh Trade Context

In its report on the impact of EU transition on trade in Wales, Grant Thornton noted the importance of exports to business development and growth in Wales, with 61% of goods exported to the EU in 2019, higher than for the UK overall (48%). Other export destinations for Welsh goods included North America (17% of goods) and Asia and Oceania (11% of goods). Exported goods from Wales mainly consisted of machinery and transport (50%); mineral fuels (14%); chemicals (12%); and manufactured goods (12%). Compared with the UK, Welsh businesses have a higher export value per business, with greater export intensity in more rural areas such as Flintshire and Wrexham, the Central Valleys and South West Wales (see Figure 4) (Grant Thornton 2020).

**Figure 4: Export value (EU and non-EU) per business (£) in Wales Local Authority areas, 2019**



Source: Grant Thornton (2020). HMRC Sub-regional Trade Statistics and Grant Thornton Analysis

On average, Wales imports £18.1 billion annually, of which 38% is from the EU, compared to the UK where 55% is from the EU (Grant Thornton 2020).



## Impacts of the TCA on the economy

Since the TCA was agreed, there have been a number of assessments of its potential impact on the UK and Welsh economy. In its assessment, the Office for Budget Responsibility (2021a) predicted that the UK will experience an approximate 4% reduction in productivity in the long-term (over 15 years), relative to remaining in the EU. A significant proportion of this reduction is due to the introduction of non-tariff barriers to services (such as reduced mobility of service workers), which formed 42% of the UK's export to the EU in 2019. The Bank of England has projected that under the new TCA arrangement, UK trade will be 10.5% lower in the long term, and productivity and GDP will be 3.25% lower compared with a frictionless trade arrangement, although there is uncertainty around these estimates (Bank of England 2021a).

With the majority of Welsh goods exports going to the EU (61%), compared with only 38% of goods imports coming from the EU, impacts of Brexit are more likely to be experienced by sectors involved in the export of goods. Results from modelling of a free trade agreement with the EU prior to the TCA being announced estimated that there would be a 6% reduction in Welsh exports, with an annual impact cost of £1.1 billion, and between 2.9%-9.4% of employees (8,800 jobs) being at risk (Grant Thornton 2020).

The Wales Centre for Public Policy (2021) has stated that the *“UK's exit significantly worsens the prospects for the Welsh economy”* and that while Brexit will disproportionately impact some sectors, the impacts will be seen across the Welsh economy. Wales is vulnerable to economic shocks due to under-investment in public services, infrastructure and skills; localised labour markets where there is a slow reaction to any economic shocks; and a dependence on fiscal transfers from the UK. At an individual level, those who have few savings or have high debt, or who are unable to move location or retrain are also less likely to be able to adapt to any economic shocks (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2020).

The Wales Centre for Public Policy (2021) has identified policy responses for Wales including building a more resilient economy, for example through structural changes such as having a greater focus on innovation and exports; by developing a skilled workforce; and through a diverse and interconnected industrial base. Organisations could become more resilient through adaptation and innovation, by developing strong ties with local communities, and by competing on the basis of high quality rather than cost. Actions to address challenges in the short term include providing guidance and financial support to affected sectors; in the longer-term actions include investing in research and development (R&D), technology and reskilling, and supporting those who are experiencing economic disadvantage through skills and training, and welfare provisions.

In its Programme for Government, Welsh Government (2021b) has committed to addressing economic damage caused by austerity and Brexit, supporting Welsh businesses to find new export markets and implementing its new Export Plan, and arguing for closer economic and research ties with the EU.



### Box 3: The compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the national response measures, has caused harms to society and the economy, such as job losses, an increase in poverty risk and working poor, and food and fuel insecurity (World Health Organization 2020). The economic and labour market shock has had ramifications for the quantity of jobs, the quality of work and effects on specific groups who are more vulnerable to adverse labour market outcomes (International Labour Organization 2020).

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Report (Bank of England 2021b) noted that the pandemic has affected spending, incomes and jobs, with the economic outlook remaining uncertain and dependent on the course of the pandemic and public health response measures. In March 2021, the Office for Budget Responsibility estimated that the pandemic will reduce UK GDP output by 3% compared to pre-pandemic forecasts (Ifan 2021).

In its report on long-term recovery from the pandemic, the Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee (Senedd Research 2021) has stated that the pandemic poses the *"biggest economic challenge in living memory"*, with significant impacts on Welsh GDP (2020 Q1 -2.4%; 2020 Q2 -15.1%). The sectors experiencing the greatest impact on GDP growth in 2020 Q2 (April to June) were accommodation and food services activities; activities of households as employers (e.g. domestic personnel); and construction (Office for National Statistics 2021). The Committee also highlighted a number of issues including: underlying challenges to the Welsh economy such as low productivity; risks to jobs in manufacturing sectors such as aerospace and steel; negative impacts on low paid workers including job insecurity and risks to health and safety; and societal and economic impacts of increasing youth unemployment.

Public Health Wales' appraisal of the evidence of the health and well-being impacts of the pandemic response measures has noted that low-income households have been disproportionately affected, for example due to increased employment insecurity and job loss; reduced income resulting in fuel and food insecurity; and increased risk of mental health impacts such as depression and anxiety (Green et al. 2020).

In their review of the impact of the pandemic, Marmot et al. (2020b) highlighted that inequalities have been *"exposed and amplified"*, with mortality rates following a social gradient. Social and economic effects are predicted to have long term impacts on physical and mental health and further worsen inequalities.

As a result of the pandemic, a range of UK and Welsh policy measures were introduced to protect the economy and livelihoods (see Figure 2 and Box 5).

## 5.2 Key Themes

For each of these themes, we provide a brief introduction to outline the connection with poverty, and health and well-being. This is followed by an overview of the current policy landscape and a selection of key facts and figures for Wales, before the evidence from the literature is summarised.



### Theme 1

## Employment and skills

### Key points

- The overall impact of Brexit on jobs remains uncertain, but certain sectors (clothing and textiles; transport equipment; chemicals and pharmaceuticals; and finance) and groups of workers (process, plant and machine operatives, who tend to be older men with few specific skills) are likely to be negatively affected
- Unemployment, even if short-term, increases the risk of ill-health and suicide; precarious employment is associated with a higher risk of mortality and worse mental well-being
- Occupations such as health and social care; manufacturing, digital, trade and creative industries; the food and drink industry; professional and business services; construction and higher education face a shortage of resident labour; reduced immigration could open up job opportunities for lower-skilled or younger workers and those out of work
- Particular groups may be more at risk if workers' rights are diluted, including workers who are female, LGBTQ+, disabled, migrants, and those in precarious employment

Being in stable and secure employment that provides regular income, a decent living wage and good working conditions, protects health and well-being and is key to preventing poverty and reducing inequality (Lovell and Bibby 2018; Marmot et al. 2010; Marmot et al. 2020a; van der Noordt et al. 2013).

The financial impact of job loss can affect health directly, for example through not being able to meet basic needs such as nutrition, and through secondary impacts such as housing repossession (Elliott et al. 2010). Even short-term unemployment impacts on longer-term earnings, (Nabarro 2020), and increases the risk of ill-health and the risk of suicide (Elliott et al. 2010). The anticipation of a (potential) job loss has been similarly linked with worse health than the actual experience of unemployment (Kim and von dem Knesebeck 2015). Being in precarious employment is associated with a higher risk of mortality including premature mortality in males, and poorer mental well-being in both males and females, with continual exposure to precarious employment appearing to be more detrimental to males (Gray et al. 2020). In some cases low paid and insecure work could be worse than no employment because of the instability it brings to a family's finances (Goulden 2010).

### Policy

EU structural funding has previously been used to tackle poverty through sustainable employment; increase skills levels, youth employment and attainment; and provide financial assistance to small and medium sized enterprises (Welsh European Funding Office 2018).

As part of the TCA non-regression principle, both the EU and the UK are required to not weaken existing labour (and other) protections, to prevent either from having a competitive advantage, for example by reducing the costs of production. However, it is unclear how this will be operationalised or enforced (Welsh Government 2021a).

The Employment Bill, initially announced by the UK Government in December 2019, was anticipated to include measures to reduce job insecurity for low-paid workers and protect and enhance workers' rights (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2021). However, no legislation has been brought forward since the announcement (BBC Online 2021b).

In its Programme for Government, Welsh Government (2021b) has committed to the principles of fair work and sustainable jobs, with actions such as giving everyone under 25 the offer of work, education, training or self-employment; creating 125,000 all-age apprenticeships; and paying care workers a real living wage.

### Key facts and figures

- Data for Wales (2017-20) shows (Welsh Government 2021e):
  - 6% (40,000) working-age adults in relative income poverty live in a household where everyone works full-time
  - 53% working-age adults in workless households live in poverty
  - 71% (140,000) children in relative income poverty live in working households
  - 73% children in workless households live in poverty, compared with 25% in working households
- Wales has lower pay for people in every sector than in the rest of the UK (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2020a).
- In 2020, 100,300 Welsh residents reported they would usually travel outside of Wales for work, if coronavirus restrictions were not in place (StatsWales 2021).

### Box 4: COVID-19, employment and income

The Bank of England has projected that unemployment in the UK will be 5.2% in 2021 Q2, and then decline to 4.7% in 2022 and 4.3% for the remainder of the forecast period (to 2024 Q2) (Bank of England 2021b). Income inequalities are likely to increase as a result of the pandemic, with unemployment affecting low paid, younger workers in sectors most impacted by the pandemic (Blundell et al. no date).

In winter 2020 approximately a quarter (24%) of households (328,000 households) in Wales had seen their incomes decrease since March 2020; 13% of households had seen their incomes fall by 'a little' and 11% by 'a lot'. Furthermore, at the same time many households also experienced an increase in key living costs, with 41% spending more on heating, electricity and/or water, 38% spending more on food and 16% spending more on digital connectivity; those disproportionately affected were 25-39 year olds, social renters, lone parent households and couple households with children. Over a fifth (22%) of households have had to cut back spending on clothing and 15% have cut back on food. In addition, 9% of households had fallen behind on at least one bill and 15% had borrowed money since March 2020. The three main reasons for falling incomes were reduced household working hours and/or pay (21%), being furloughed (19%), and job loss (13%) (Bevan Foundation 2020b; Bevan Foundation 2021). While there is some evidence that earnings in Wales have held up better than other parts of the UK during the pandemic (Ifan et al. 2021), earning falls at the lower end of the pay distribution in Wales have been greater than the average falls at the UK level, whereas earnings have held up better at the higher end (Office for Budget Responsibility 2021b).

Information about social protection measures introduced in response to the pandemic can be found in Section 3 and Box 5.

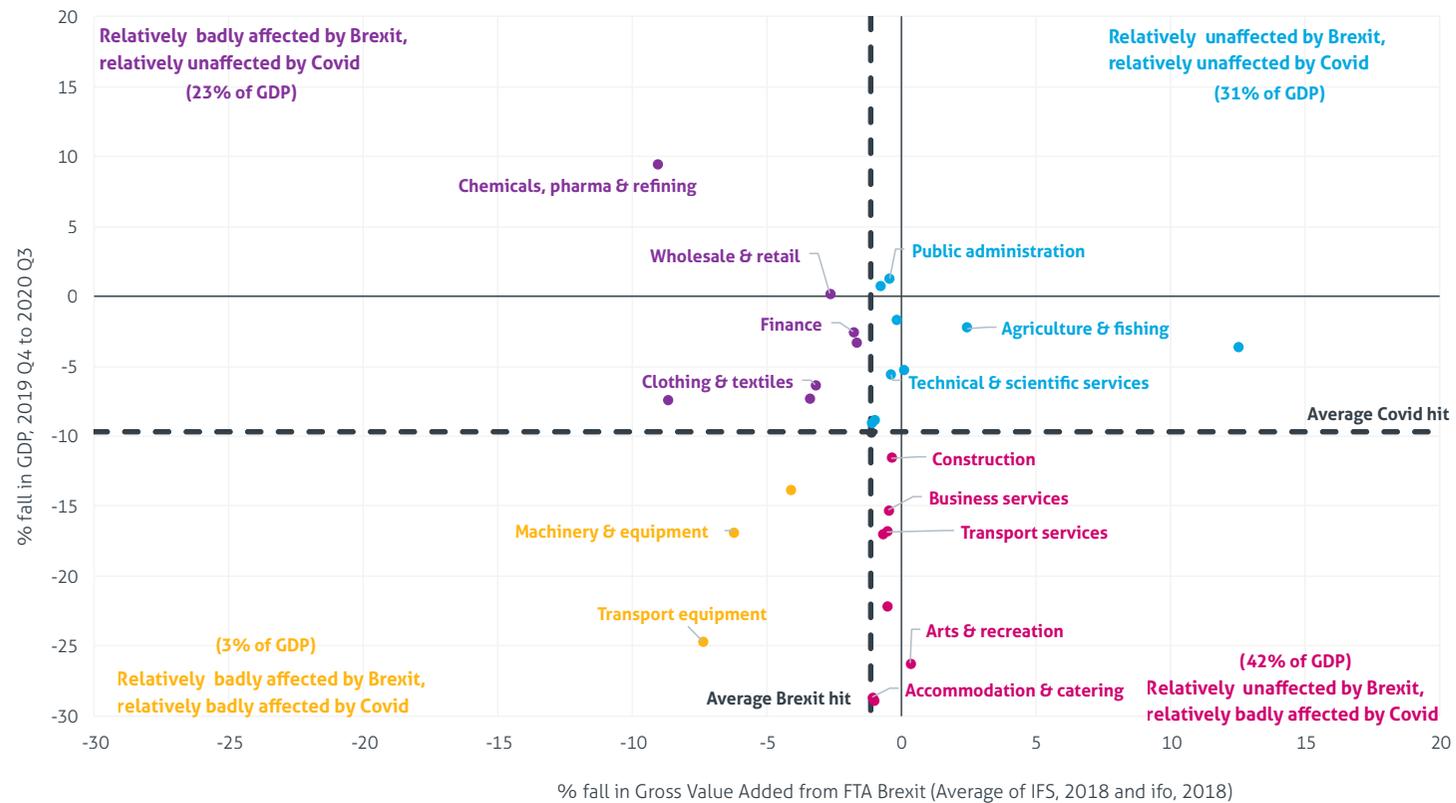
# Impacts of Brexit

## Sectoral impacts

By the end of December 2020, 69% of the UK economy had been badly affected by Brexit and/or the pandemic. Whilst Brexit affects sectors relying on cross-border trade with the EU, COVID-19 has mostly affected non-tradeable services that rely on in-person contact (Tetlow and Pope 2020).

Figure 5 provides a summary of the effects on different sectors of the pandemic and modelled impacts of Brexit in the medium term, with the UK and EU trading under the terms of a free trade agreement (N.b. this model was not based on the actual terms of the TCA).

**Figure 5: The impact of coronavirus and the FTA Brexit on GDP in different sectors**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics, UK GDP low level aggregates, November 2020, Levell, P and Norris Keiller, A, 'The exposure of different workers to potential trade barriers between the UK and the EU', Institute for Fiscal Studies, October 2018 and Felbermayr, Groschl and Steininger, Brexit through the lens of new quantitative trade theory, ifo, March 2018. In Tetlow, G. and Pope, T., (2020). Brexit and coronavirus economic impacts and policy response. Institute for Government.



Brexit impacts on industry are due to factors such as non-tariff barriers to trade (for example changes to regulations); reduced foreign investment; challenges related to rules of origin, and changes to the migration system (Tetlow and Pope 2020; Wales Centre for Public Policy 2021). For Wales, there are concerns that non-tariff barriers to trade, such as checks and paperwork, will impact sectors that require rapid turnaround, such as agri-food, automotive and aerospace (Grant Thornton 2020). Effects are likely to be seen over the medium-term; longer-term impacts on businesses will be larger than any short-term disruptions (Tetlow and Pope 2020).

Some industries are likely to be badly affected because they sell a large proportion of their output to EU countries, such as clothing and textiles; transport equipment (including car manufacturing); chemicals and pharmaceuticals; and finance (Levell and Keiller 2018). Modelling for Wales has identified that export sectors most likely to be affected by a free trade agreement will be machinery and transport, and manufactured goods (Grant Thornton 2020). These industries provide employment to thousands of people in Wales, and areas with significant manufacturing employment have been identified as being likely to be impacted (Davenport and Zaranko 2020). As highlighted in Figure 4, Flintshire and Wrexham, and the Central Valleys have a higher export value per business, with one in four jobs in Flintshire and Wrexham in manufacturing (Grant Thornton 2020). Across the UK, the most highly exposed workers are those employed in process, plant and machine operative occupations, who tend to be older men with specific skills (Levell and Keiller 2018).

Some manufacturing sectors, such as transport equipment, have been badly affected by both Brexit (due to anticipated impacts of non-tariff barriers) and COVID-19 (due to changing consumer behaviours) (Tetlow and Pope 2020). In the South Wales valleys in particular, the combination of leaving the EU and the fall-out from the pandemic may have an impact on job losses (Bevan Foundation 2020c).

Proposals to facilitate Wales' adjustment to Brexit and the pandemic by the Bevan Foundation (2020c) include supporting new manufacturing products and processes, especially digital innovation.

### **Job security**

The uncertainty of Brexit (as well as concerns about the economy more broadly) has led to a reluctance by some businesses in Wales to expand and recruit new staff (Morris 2019). Those who are unemployed may find it takes longer to find a new job or that they might need to move into a different sector or occupation, thereby making their accrued on-the-job skills less valuable (Nabarro 2020). Many workers in more-at-risk sectors have few formal qualifications, though they may be in skilled occupations, making it more difficult for them to find similarly paid and skilled work in a different industry (Levell and Keiller 2018). The longer people are unemployed the worse their prospects in the labour market, which can have long-term consequences (Nabarro 2020.).



## Changes to migration patterns and worker's rights

The number of EU citizens immigrating to the UK for work-related reasons more than halved from prior the EU referendum (190,000 per year) to the end of 2019 (75,000 per year) (Henehan and Judge 2020). The end of free movement and subsequent changes to EU migration flows to Wales will change the landscape of employment and job availability, particularly in those sectors more reliant on EU migrant workers.

In Wales, occupations where employers face a shortage of resident labour include health and social care; manufacturing, digital, trade and creative industries; the food and drink industry; professional and business services; construction; and higher education (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2021; Welsh Government 2021a). Overall, it is anticipated there will be a reduction in the size of the working-age population in Wales (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2021), which may impact the delivery of public services (see Theme 4), and across the food system e.g. agricultural companies (see Theme 5).

Reduced immigration could open up job opportunities for lower-skilled workers and younger people (Stewart et al. 2019), and training/re-skilling of the domestic workforce for those who are, or face being, out of work (Moss 2020; UK Parliament 2020c). One potential impact of labour shortages is to push firms to improve pay and conditions to attract new, and retain existing, workers (Henehan and Judge 2020). In health and social care, investment is needed for training and education of UK citizens to make social care jobs more financially attractive (Stewart et al. 2019).

The EU has played an important role in the development of workers' rights and safe working conditions in the UK, leading to concerns that any post-Brexit dilution of employment safeguards, such as the Working Time Directive, would be detrimental to workers. Certain groups may be more at risk, such as those working long hours or in precarious employment (Stewart et al., 2019), women (Mott et al., 2018), LGBTQ+ workers and workers with disabilities (Roache 2018a; Roache 2018b). Further, it has been suggested that fewer regulations based on the Working Time Directive could help some workers boost income from working over-time, although employees can already opt-out of the directive and work more hours if they choose to (Dobbins 2017).



Theme 2  
**Social  
protections  
and financial  
resilience**

### Key points

- Potential economic consequences of Brexit, for example a rise in the price of goods, will affect the poorest the most and exacerbate inequalities
- Compared with remaining in the EU, modelling of different trade scenarios has identified that over the medium term (to 2030), consumer prices will increase by 0.7%-2.8%
- The economic effects will be in addition to those already being seen as a result of the pandemic, including for those with low financial resilience e.g. households with low or erratic incomes or low savings, and younger adults (16-34 year olds)
- Maintaining social protection measures can help improve health outcomes during crises, and are key to improving health equity and protecting the most vulnerable in society

Although social security payments are outside the scope of the EU and the TCA, they will be vital for supporting those on low incomes or those with low financial resilience, in the event of any negative economic consequences of Brexit.

Social protection measures, such as income maintenance, poverty relief and active labour market policies, prevent people from being trapped in poverty and are one of the most effective actions to improving equity in health outcomes (Hillier-Brown et al. 2019; United Nations no date; World Health Organization 2015), protecting the most vulnerable in society from the consequences of poverty and strengthening human capital (World Bank 2020). Social protection measures have been shown to protect health, even within societies that are otherwise unequal, and have a positive impact on life expectancy. Measures to support families and reduce poverty are correlated with lower infant mortality rates (Glennester et al. 2010). There is evidence that strong social protections can help improve health outcomes during crises; for example following the financial crisis in 2008, countries with strong protection measures attenuated, and in some cases decoupled, the link between job losses and suicides (De Vogli 2014).

## Policy

### Box 5: COVID-19, social protections and financial resilience

In response to the pandemic, a number of UK measures were introduced to prevent job losses, support those experiencing poverty or those whose incomes had fallen / living costs increased (see Section 3 for Welsh measures), including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), allowing employers to retain staff on 'furlough' (temporary leave) and claim a grant covering a proportion of wage costs (Ifan et al. 2021; UK Government 2020d). The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme provides a similar level of support to self-employed individuals or partnerships (UK Government 2021b).

- 
- A temporary rise of £20 a week in the standard allowance (basic rate) of Universal Credit and basic element of Working Tax Credit (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2021).
  - A temporary halt in debt related benefit deductions (Fitzpatrick et al. 2020).

At the time of writing, the CJRS will continue until 30 September 2021 (UK Government 2021c) and there are UK Government plans to phase out the rise in Universal Credit in autumn 2021 (BBC Online 2021c).

There have been no uplifts for recipients of Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (this population includes disabled people and carers) and children's benefits (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2021).

The National Living Wage increased in April 2021, with incomes expected to rise in line with wage growth and more than projected price increases (UK Government 2020e).

## Key facts and figures

- Around 20% of public expenditure in Wales is spent on dealing with poverty and its consequences (Bevan Foundation 2020d). This is in addition to UK Government support (Bevan Foundation 2020a).
- Pre-pandemic, 20% of UK adults were over-indebted or were vulnerable to financial shocks (Financial Conduct Authority 2021). Groups with low financial resilience include those with low incomes or low savings, younger adults (16-34 year olds), and those who are employed (compared with self-employed individuals) (Office for National Statistics 2020).
- During the pandemic, nearly 200,000 more people became unpaid carers, in addition to 487,000 people who were unpaid carers prior to the pandemic (Cable 2020).
- In Wales, 247,300 people were furloughed in July 2020; this fell to 68,800 in June 2021 (UK Government 2021d). The likelihood of being furloughed was higher for those who were younger (18-29 years), older (60-64 years), in deprived communities, facing financial difficulties, or low skilled (Gray et al. 2021b). Less than half of furloughed workers received full pay (Bevan Foundation 2020d).
- The number of people claiming Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance doubled in the period March to May 2020 (Public Health Wales Observatory 2021). 21% of Welsh households (290,000) have received the Universal Credit uplift (Ifan et al. 2021).
- In March 2020, more than a quarter of Welsh households did not have enough savings to cover their regular income for just one month (Bevan Foundation 2020d).



## Impacts of Brexit

One potential mechanism for Brexit impacts is through a change in the price of goods. In the year following the EU referendum in 2016, there was an estimated 1.7% rise in inflation, with Wales and other devolved nations worst affected. This translated through to higher prices that cost the average households £404 per year; the lack of growth in wages was the equivalent of a £448 pay cut for the average worker (Breinlich et al. 2017); such changes will have affected poorer households disproportionately. An updated analysis by the authors (Breinlich et al. 2021) estimated that by June 2018, Brexit depreciation had increased consumer prices by 2.9%, equivalent to the average household experiencing an increase in the cost of living of £870 per year. Households in Wales were worse affected due to a higher proportion of income being spent on imported products, such as fuel, food and clothing. A study of different Brexit scenarios has identified that even with a UK-EU deal, median food prices are estimated to increase by 6.1% (90% credible interval -3% to +17%), with a subsequent increase in the number of households experiencing food insecurity (Barons and Aspinall 2020) (see Theme 5). A study of medium term (to 2030) impacts of different post-Brexit trade scenarios has identified that consumer prices will increase by 0.7%-2.8% compared to a baseline scenario (i.e. the UK remaining in the EU), due to an increase in non-tariff barriers; together with reduced productivity, real wages for low-pay workers are likely to be depressed (Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Cambridge Econometrics 2018).

Families from ethnic minority groups are more sensitive to price changes compared with white families, as they are less likely to have savings, spend a larger proportion of earnings, and will therefore be more vulnerable to economic downturns (McIntosh et al. 2018).

Modelling by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has identified that the impacts of price changes on those with low incomes will be determined by whether benefits and tax credits are increased in line with inflation. Failure to do so will result in increasing poverty and low-income households falling *“further behind the rest of society”* (Barnard et al. 2018).



### Theme 3

## Community, economic and infrastructure investment for addressing inequalities

### Key points

- European Structural and Investment Funds have provided opportunities to invest in the social determinants of health and tackle health inequity
- Wales received around four times more European structural and investment funding per person than the UK average
- The loss of European structural funding could have significant impacts on deprived communities
- Areas most affected by the loss of structural funding are industrial regions e.g. former mining and steel regions of South Wales, coastal towns and isolated rural areas, which also have higher concentrations of less-educated workers
- In Wales, there are concerns that the Levelling Up Fund or the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will not match previous European structural and investment funding

The main aim of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) is to address social and economic differences between regions and promote sustainable development. The ESIF have provided regions with opportunities to invest in the social determinants of health and tackle health inequity (Neagu et al. 2017). Since 2000, Wales has benefitted from ESIF funding for community regeneration, employment and skills development, and investment in local infrastructure such as broadband rollout and transport networks such as the South Wales Metro (Welsh Government 2021f). European structural funding has been used to support the most disadvantaged communities in Wales, addressing issues linked to inequalities and poverty, and more specifically child poverty, with beneficiaries between 2014-20 including an estimated 1,000 migrants; 11,000 disabled people; 4,000 women; 110,000 young people; and 291,00 people in disadvantaged communities (Broughton et al. 2019; University of Liverpool et al. 2017). However, a recent inquiry by the Welsh Affairs Committee (UK Parliament 2020d), has identified that analysis of impact of ESIF is “limited”, with little understanding of what would have happened without them. Evidence to the Committee has highlighted there was no impact on GDP per head between 2000-2018, although it was acknowledged that this could have been due to the scale of the challenge faced by the Welsh economy, and that on their own, the Funds would not have been able to deliver transformational change.

Welsh Government has been responsible for allocating EU structural funding through the Wales European Funding Office.

### Policy

Since 1 January 2021, the UK is no longer able to access new European structural funds, although pre-agreed funding will continue until the programmes are closed in 2023 (Welsh Government 2020b). In 2018 the UK Government announced it would set up a UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2022 to replace regional funding across UK (UK Parliament 2018) and focus on places most in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns, rural and coastal communities, as well as supporting people through employment and skills programmes (UK Government 2021e).



In November 2020, Welsh Government published a Framework for Regional Investment Funding (Welsh Government 2020c) on the basis that the Shared Prosperity Fund would replace EU funding and that Wales would continue to be responsible for programme design and allocation of funding. The framework included a greater focus on local funding and decision-making; addressing economic inequality; supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy; and healthier, fairer, more sustainable communities (Welsh Government 2020c; Welsh NHS Confederation 2021).

In March 2021, the UK Government announced a range of new funds, including the Levelling Up Fund (£4.8 billion for 2021-25), the Community Renewal Fund (£220 million for 2021-22), and the Community Ownership Fund (£150 million), to provide interim funding to UK regions and devolved nations. In Wales, 17 local authority areas are in the highest priority for the Levelling Up Fund and 14 have priority places in the Community Renewal Fund (UK Government 2021f).

Whilst future investment funding for Wales remains unclear, in its Programme for Government, Welsh Government (2021b) committed to insisting that *“Wales gets its fair share of the Shared Prosperity Fund and the so-called Levelling Up Fund from Whitehall”*.

### Key facts and figures

- £2.1 billion of European structural funds was awarded to Wales (mainly West Wales and the Valleys) between 2014 and 2020 (Welsh Government 2021f)
- European structural and investment funding over this timeframe was around four times the UK average, on a per person basis (Goddard 2021)

### Impacts of Brexit

In its analysis, the Wales Centre for Public Policy identified that the loss of European structural funding could have significant impacts on the provision of long term support for deprived communities, as well as for planned projects more specifically (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2021). From their research, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Broughton et al. 2019) has highlighted a number of concerns if there is lack of appropriate replacement funding, including potential closure of voluntary sector organisations working on equality and human rights; a disproportionate impact on people with certain protected characteristics; a reduced focus on social inclusion and socio-economic equality; and loss of partnerships, for example between third sector and business.

The lack of UK Government guarantees regarding the levels or targeting of funding may have negative impacts on children and young people in poverty, with calls for a Government commitment that there will be no reduction for evidence based projects which address child poverty (University of Liverpool et al. 2017). Areas in Wales which are expected to be most impacted are industrial regions such as former mining and steel regions of South Wales, coastal towns such as Aberystwyth and isolated rural areas. (Davenport and Zaranko 2020). These areas also have higher concentrations of less-educated workers (Davenport and Zaranko 2020; Stewart et al. 2019).



In the longer term, there is uncertainty whether the loss of structural funding in Wales will be adequately matched by the Levelling Up Fund (Welsh Government 2021g) or the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Nice et al. 2021). Indicators used by the Shared Prosperity Fund to allocate funding, such as productivity, skills, incomes and deprivation may not truly reflect local economic disadvantage or the impact of the pandemic (Davenport et al. 2020). The combined uncertainty resulting from the loss of EU structural funding, the Shared Prosperity Fund, and the pandemic further complicates the allocation of regional funding (Davenport and Zaranko 2020).

More recently, Economy Minister Vaughan Gething has criticised the Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund as “*power grabs*” with Wales having “*less say, over less money*”, and raised concerns that a lack of successor EU funding was placing jobs and services at risk. For example, loss of EU funding will mean there will be 5,300 fewer participants in the all-Wales apprenticeships scheme and fewer businesses receiving financial support through the Wales Business Fund (Welsh Government 2021h).



#### Theme 4

### Public services, including health and care provision

#### Key points

- Any economic downturn as a result of Brexit could lead to reduced funding for preventative public services, disproportionately affecting poorer households who are more reliant on them
- Early impacts of the loss of freedom of movement will be in areas such as housing construction, and health and social care
- There are concerns about workforce shortfalls in social care, with potential impacts on the sustainability of services in the longer term, with disproportionate negative impacts on the most vulnerable

Trade agreements have the potential to affect investment in public services, which provide universal support vital to the well-being of communities, and are integral to influencing the wider determinants of health (Holmes 2021). Poorer households are more reliant on public services, and are therefore more vulnerable to any cuts; multiple smaller cuts can have cumulative impacts on those most in need (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2015).

#### Policy

The trade agreement with the EU includes arrangements relevant for health and social care, including continuing participation in EU-funded research programmes; the mutual recognition of professional qualifications; and medicines manufacturing. However, the effect of loss of freedom of movement on the public service workforce is of greater relevance to poverty and deprivation (also see Theme 1).

#### Key facts and figures

- As of 30 June 2021, there have been 98,600 applications to the EU Settlement Scheme in Wales, with the largest number of applications in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Wrexham and Flintshire (UK Government 2021g).
- In Wales in 2017, 3% of workers in health, education and public administration were born in EU countries (The Migration Observatory no date).
- In 2020, approximately 8% of staff employed in health and social care were non-UK nationals, the majority of which were from the EU. 6.4% of staff working in registered social care are non-UK EU nationals (Welsh Government no date).



## Impacts of Brexit

### Funding of public services

Any economic downturn as a result of Brexit could reduce tax revenues, leading to reduced funding available for preventative public services important for public health and tackling poverty, such as housing and welfare. Any such impacts are likely to be seen over the longer term, at five years and beyond (Dayan et al. 2021).

### Workforce

In the first year after the TCA, it is predicted that overseas recruitment will be affected, exacerbating previous labour shortages (Henehan and Judge 2020, Read and Fenge 2018). Where EU migrants form a significant proportion of the public services workforce, the early impacts of loss of free movement of people will be on those working in key areas such as housing construction, social care and health care (Stewart et al., 2019). In the longer term (five years and beyond), new trade deals may enable more migration from non-EU countries, although these may not be sufficient to address persistent staffing gaps in health and social care (Dayan et al. 2020).

Despite the Health and Care Worker Visa and Skilled Worker Visa, there are concerns for the social care sector, where staff are recruited from a general labour pool without specific qualifications and where fewer roles will meet visa requirements (Portes et al. 2020). There are also fears from the social care sector that there will be recruitment and retention difficulties due to increased competition from larger providers, for example the NHS, that have favourable terms and conditions. Workforce shortfalls in social care could result in service delivery becoming more expensive and difficult (Stewart et al. 2019), affecting the sustainability of services in the longer term, potentially affecting the health and well-being of those in poverty.

### Access to services

Any EU citizens living in Wales before 31 December 2020 are able to continue accessing NHS services free of charge, provided they have settled or pre-settled status (Welsh NHS Confederation 2021). However, there are concerns that reduced spending on public services such as healthcare may impact service accessibility or quality, and will lead to more people buying private health insurance, thereby reducing equitable healthcare coverage (Dayan et al. 2020).



## Theme 5

### Agriculture and food security

#### Key points

- Changes to trade will disadvantage the Welsh agricultural industry, with sheep and beef farmers most affected
- Non-tariff barriers to trade could increase the price of food imported from the EU, with a subsequent rise in food insecurity and reduced consumption of nutritious food by poorer households
- Changes to the UK's immigration policy could result in insufficient seasonal labour, and prompt companies in the food supply chain to move abroad, with implications for job opportunities and food prices
- Post-Brexit agricultural policy offers an opportunity to move to sustainable food systems, promote a diet rich in fruit and vegetables, and reduce environmental impacts

The right to food, which is available, accessible (economically and physically), and adequate (meets dietary needs) is a human right under international law and is inter-related with other human rights, such as the right to health and the right to life (United Nations 2010). The agricultural industry, which represents a higher proportion of the Welsh economy compared with the UK overall (Welsh Government 2019b), is a vital part of the food system, and can impact on food security and nutrition, the economy, society and the environment (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2018).

#### Policy

EU funding has supported the rural economy and more specifically farming and land management in Wales. Having left the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Welsh agricultural payments are now covered by the Agriculture Act 2020. The Act applies mainly to England but provides for payment to farmers in Wales to continue, much the same as under CAP schemes, until 31 December 2024 (UK Parliament 2020b).

In early 2021, Welsh Government consulted on the introduction of an Agriculture (Wales) Bill. The White Paper is based on the principle of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and sets out proposals for a Sustainable Farming Scheme to address challenges to the climate, public health and environment (Orford and Henderson 2020; Welsh Government 2020d). Key elements of the bill include providing support to the wider food supply chain; reducing regulatory complexity by introducing a single set of national minimum standards; and improving animal health and welfare.

As part of the TCA, the UK and EU are able to develop independent sanitary and phytosanitary rules and regulations to protect human, animal and plant health. Following Brexit, the UK's minimum standards for food are set by the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA).



## Key facts and figures

- 90% of land in Wales is used for farming, and most of this is for sheep and cattle rearing (Welsh Government 2019c; Welsh Government 2020e).
- In 2016, there were an estimated 6,200 seasonal/casual/gang workers in the Welsh agricultural industry. In 2017, 99% of agency-sourced seasonal labour in the horticultural industry were EU nationals (Office for National Statistics 2018).
- For 2014-20, Wales' pre-allocated funding was €5.2bn as part of the Rural Development Programme (Pillar 2) and €22.5bn for the Agricultural Guarantee Fund (Pillar 1) under the EU's CAP (Bird and Phillips no date).
- In 2018, 10% of survey respondents in Wales lived in households that experienced low food security; these individuals were most likely to be young (16-34 year olds), in households with children, and have lower household incomes. Respondents in a households with low food security was less likely to report high/very high life satisfaction, high/very high happiness, and low/very low anxiety (Food Standards Agency 2019).
- In the period January to March 2021, 2% of people in Wales said they had received food from a food bank in the previous 12 months due to a lack of money (Welsh Government 2021i).

## Impacts of Brexit

### Agriculture

The Welsh Centre for Public Policy (2021) has identified that changes to trade will disadvantage Welsh agriculture (and sheep and beef farmers more so), although mixed, dairy and horticulture farms may be better placed to benefit. Any decline in funding for agriculture is likely to affect North and West Wales the most.

Although the TCA means there are no tariffs on food, there are now non-tariff barriers such as new customs checks at borders. Live animals and animal products are required to undergo inspections at designated border control posts. At present there are no border control posts in Wales, and imports from Ireland are required to be re-routed to other UK entry points, with potential implications for the Welsh economy (University of East Anglia no date). Of note, in March 2021, Welsh Government announced a border control post for Holyhead (Welsh Government 2021j).

Beyond the immediate disruptions, there are concerns that such barriers could result in an increase in the price of EU imported food (The Affordable Food Deal 2020; Sandiford 2020). Any increase in food prices will exacerbate food insecurity (The Affordable Food Deal 2020), and will disproportionately affect more deprived households (Barons and Aspinall 2020) who are more likely to change their diets (Guo et al. 1999), switching to increased consumption of processed, less nutritional foods (Barons and Aspinall 2020).

Welsh agriculture could benefit if consumers substitute away from more expensive imports towards products made in the UK (Levell and Keiller 2018).



## Food security

The UK's new immigration policy has implications for the food supply chain because of its greater reliance on overseas workers compared to most other sectors. Additionally, many jobs in the food supply chain require expertise acquired through experience which are not recognised by the immigration policy's definition of skilled work. Insufficient seasonal labour could cause agricultural companies and others in the food supply chain to relocate abroad, resulting in reduced job opportunities for local residents, or a rise in food prices (UK Parliament 2020c).

Modelled scenarios have shown that increased land allocation to fruit and vegetable production could reduce the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease and reduce inequalities (Seferidi et al. 2019). Agricultural policy measures to support a move to a diet rich in plant-based foods will contribute to the dual aim of improving health and moving to sustainable food systems that reduce environmental impacts (EAT no date). However, this needs to be seen in the context of the land profile in Wales, where 80% of agricultural land is designated by the EU as being of lower potential, with the mountainous terrain and high rainfall limiting farming options (Welsh Government 2019b).

There are opportunities to improve food supply and quality through trade deals, as well as support a healthier food system (Seferidi et al. 2018; Holmes 2021). Conversely public health can suffer, for example if a future trade deal leads to food imports of a lower standard (The Affordable Food Deal 2020; Holmes 2021; UK Parliament 2020c). There are ongoing concerns that trade negotiations may result in lower regulatory standards or dilute food protection provisions (Dayan et al. 2020).

## 5.3 Summary of impacts on inequalities and vulnerable groups

### Key points

Negative impacts will disproportionately affect those who are:

- In low-income
- Unemployed or in-work poverty
- Unskilled workers, or those in skilled trades
- Those most likely to experience poverty such as households with children, lone parents, ethnic minority groups, disabled people, in part-time work or who are workless, and those living in social-rented or private rented homes
- Low-educated workers and older males
- Women
- Those living in South Wales industrial regions, and coastal and isolated rural towns.

It is important to consider differential effects of Brexit for different populations, communities, industries and regions, which could have profound implications for interpersonal and geographical inequalities.

Individuals and families who face **multiple disadvantage and inequality**, such as those on low-income, unemployed or experiencing in-work poverty, have less financial and social resilience, for example fewer household savings, more debt, less capacity to re-train, are more vulnerable to any potential adverse economic impacts of Brexit. Poorer households will be disproportionately impacted by any increases in food prices as a result of changes in the cost of trade and supply chains (see Theme 5), or any cuts to public services or reduction in funding to civil society as a result of loss of EU funding (see Themes 3 and 4).

It has been suggested that any overall effects of Brexit on prices, wages and employment would be felt across the whole income distribution, making the majority of UK workers worse off, but potentially reducing some income inequalities in the process (Barnard et al. 2018; Levell and Keiller 2018). Nevertheless, moderate estimates suggest that whilst the vast majority of households will be able to continue to cover their costs post-Brexit, an additional 1.1% of the lowest income households in the UK will face a critical income shortfall, with households around £25 worse off each month (Tims 2019). Such impacts may disproportionately adversely affect **households who are more likely to experience poverty in Wales, such as households with children; lone parents; ethnic minority groups; disabled people; in part-time work or who are workless; and those living in social-rented or private rented homes** (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2020a) (See Section 3).

Low-income and unskilled workers, as well as those on zero-hour contracts and young people entering the job market, are generally more vulnerable to job losses. However, individuals employed in industries more exposed because they sell a large fraction of their output to EU



countries, such clothing and textiles; transport equipment (including car manufacturing); chemicals and pharmaceuticals; and finance are predicted to be most negatively impacted (Levell and Keiller 2018) (see Theme 1).

In particular, this may impact blue collar middle-earnings workers e.g. machine operatives and workers in skilled trades, who tend to be **older males**, have fewer formal qualifications and less opportunity to find alternative work in their local labour markets, for example when compared with those in managerial roles who have greater mobility. **Women** are more likely to be employed in non-traded industries and are therefore less exposed to changes in trade costs. However, female workers on low earnings are often partnered with workers in highly exposed occupations, and therefore may be indirectly negatively affected via a reduction in overall household income and associated welfare impacts (Griffith et al. 2020).

There are also important regional differences, for example **low-educated male workers in blue-collar jobs**, who are employed in potentially highly exposed industries, are concentrated in areas such as South Wales. With the UK one of the most geographically unequal countries in the developed world, reducing spatial disparities and boosting economic performance outside of London (also known as 'levelling up') is a stated priority of the current UK government. Wales is often described as being 'left behind' (along with parts of the North of England and the West Midlands); left behind areas can be characterised as former industrial areas with persistent long-term unemployment, such as **South Wales; coastal towns** such as Aberystwyth; and **isolated rural areas**. Former industrial regions of South Wales are among the areas with the lowest share of adults with degree-level education and the highest proportion of the working-age population receiving incapacity benefit (Davenport and Zaranko 2020). Regions vary in the extent to which their economies were previously connected to the EU through imports and exports, and prior receipt of funding related to poverty reduction through European structural funds. Such spending programmes were important for the 'levelling up' agenda, although there are concerns that Brexit could make 'levelling up' more difficult if it has disproportionate economic impacts (Davenport and Zaranko 2020) or if funding is below that of previous EU schemes (see Theme 3).

## 6 Areas for action

Following the devastating and unequal effect of the pandemic on Welsh society and economy, it has never been more important and urgent to understand how Brexit and trade agreements can impact health, well-being and equity. Many of the levers for responding to Brexit and tackling poverty are outside of Wales. However, ambitious Welsh legislation and policies, such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Socio-economic Duty can drive action to protect the most vulnerable in society.

In this section we summarise action areas, identified in the evidence, to support Wales' Brexit response, so that those experiencing poverty benefit from gains and are protected from risks to health and well-being. Actions will need to reflect the complex, dynamic and interconnected nature of poverty, Brexit, and the pandemic.

Theme	Action areas	Evidence
<b>1 Welsh economic resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build business resilience through advice to affected sectors, and a focus on innovation, research and development, and exports</li> <li>Promote stronger ties between business and local communities</li> </ul>	Section 5.1
<b>2 Employment, skills and income</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify separate and cumulative impacts of Brexit and the pandemic on different sectors and jobs in the medium to longer term, across different regions and communities in Wales</li> <li>Future focused (re)training and skills development for those working in affected sectors, including filling skills gaps arising due to changes in migration patterns</li> </ul>	Section 5.1 Theme 1
<b>3 Social protections and financial resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguard investment in social protections for population groups with low financial resilience, who are more vulnerable to changes in the economy, and the price of goods more specifically</li> </ul>	Theme 2
<b>4 Community investment to tackle regional inequalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For communities that have lost access to future European structural funding:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and measure impacts on communities disproportionately affected</li> <li>Target future community investment based on: an understanding of local needs; community involvement; sustainable solutions; and the principles of proportionate universalism<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Theme 3
<b>5 Public services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the role of public services in tackling poverty, for example through advocacy, through their role as major employers, and more widely as anchor institutes</li> <li>Monitor impacts of loss of EU workers on sectors vulnerable to changes in migration patterns, such as social care</li> </ul>	Section 3 Theme 1 Theme 4



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<b>6 Agriculture and food security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optimise opportunities to support farming communities affected by changes to trade patterns, and promote sustainable food systems that improve health through access to nutritious and affordable food</li><li>• Take a human rights based approach to tackle food insecurity</li></ul>	Theme 5
<b>7 Trade and health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilise a range of approaches and tools to support the integration of health and well-being in trade policy and trade agreements, for example through: building an inter-disciplinary approach between trade and health; adopting a Health in All Policies approach; and undertaking HIAs</li><li>• Strengthen evidence of the links and pathways, both direct and indirect, between trade and health, and the distribution of costs and benefits across the population</li></ul>	Section 2 Section 7
<b>8 Data and health intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify indicators to monitor the impact of trade agreements on health and well-being in Wales, focusing on sectors, geographical areas and population groups anticipated to be affected in the short, medium and longer term</li></ul>	Section 7

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## 7 Key areas for research

A number of important evidence gaps limit our current understanding of the likelihood and scale of the impacts of Brexit, and associated social and legislative changes on poverty, health and well-being across Wales. Identifying and addressing these gaps with good quality and timely evidence may help to inform future policy decisions.

### The primary constraints of reviewed Brexit evidence

- It is difficult to **differentiate the impacts of COVID-19 from the impacts of Brexit**; pathways from Brexit to poverty, health and well-being may be compounded, or indeed attenuated, by the effects of the pandemic. Available evidence is not always explicit in separating these effects, and there is currently no indication of when we can expect either influence to subside.
- There is little exploration of potential **opportunities** that Brexit-related changes may present for the UK and Wales more specifically.
- Evidence related to Brexit typically considers a UK-wide footprint and there is a lack of timely and rigorous **Wales-specific evidence**. Although it is possible to make inferences based on UK evidence, findings may not always be transferable to the unique political, social and economic context in Wales.
- There is a general absence of **data** for assessing the direction and scale of Brexit impacts, and there is **no established baseline** from which to measure change. For example, the number of migrant workers in some sectors pre-Brexit is largely unknown, making it difficult to measure the impact of the end of free movement. Although some **surveillance** data is available (e.g. employment) and stratified geographically, this may lack the detail required to understand impacts on different communities.
- There is limited evidence exploring the **timescales for impacts**. In particular, current understanding of the potential long-term impacts is incomplete.

### Topics that require further exploration

- Although there is growing interest in and recognition of the relationships between trade and health, gaps in evidence on important **causal pathways** persist i.e. between trade, wider determinants of health, and health. Understanding these different pathways and mechanisms is crucial for understanding the many potential impacts of the TCA and future trade agreements.
- Poverty is inherently **dynamic** in nature. Gaps exist in our understanding of poverty and how to measure its impacts; advancing this understanding requires the same dynamism.
- The UK Government's decision not to produce a full **equalities impact assessment** of Brexit leaves a significant gap in our understanding of the implications for different groups. This is particularly true for older people and young people entering the workforce.

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- Limited new evidence was identified for a number of key pathways of impact discussed in previous HIAs. For example **mental health and well-being, tobacco and alcohol regulation and consumption** were all previously identified as potentially being impacted by Brexit. This apparent evidence gap may be a consequence of our literature search strategy, which focused on poverty, rather than the wider impacts of Brexit on health and well-being.
  - The **voluntary sector** plays a key role both in supporting individuals and communities in poverty in Wales. However, this review found no evidence exploring the impact of Brexit on the voluntary sector.
  - Alongside Brexit, Wales is facing a number of challenges, with the pandemic and climate change being some of the most urgent and important; these challenges will intersect and have cumulative impacts. Public Health Wales is currently undertaking work to understand this 'triple challenge' and its implications for health and equity.



## 8 Conclusion

As Wales begins a new trading relationship with the EU and recovers from the pandemic, it is critical to consider how the future may look for people in poverty.

Emerging evidence provides insight into how Brexit will affect health and well-being in Wales, although the full impacts will only become apparent over time. Insufficient evidence means we do not fully understand the opportunities and risks that lie ahead; this picture is further complicated by the magnitude of harms caused by the pandemic. The continuing uncertainty of the pandemic, the operational realities of the TCA, and a new world of negotiating international trade agreements will themselves have an impact.

Nevertheless, our analysis does highlight that people living in poverty in Wales, having been unequally affected by the pandemic, will have little resilience to respond to any wider economic and societal changes as a result of Brexit. We have highlighted evidence of how Brexit will have further impacts on the economy; on employment; on social protections and public services; on infrastructure funding; and on agriculture and food security. It is also clear that such changes will have complex and cumulative impacts and could further exacerbate inequalities in Wales, and have subsequent impacts on health and well-being.

Although the precise mechanisms by which trade and trade agreements affect health are not fully understood, we know there are opportunities to protect and improve health, particularly for those most vulnerable in society. For example, there is a body of evidence demonstrating the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach to trade and health, to promote health, equity and prosperity.

Through our response to the complex and interwoven issues of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and poverty, we have an opportunity to reinforce and enact our commitment to sustainable development and equitable outcomes, improve the well-being of Welsh people, and create a fairer society.

## Glossary

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### **Bridging mechanism**

Bridging mechanisms have been used by countries to enter into arrangements with each other across a range of areas of international relations, including in matters of international trade. A bridging mechanism is not legally binding but creates a strong political commitment.

Further information is available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/947282/cnc-information-note-dec2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947282/cnc-information-note-dec2021.pdf)

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### **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**

This is a policy for all EU countries that aims to: support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring a stable supply of affordable food; safeguard EU farmers to make a reasonable living; help tackle climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources; maintain rural areas and landscapes across the EU; promote jobs in farming, agri-foods industries and associated sectors.

CAP payments have two strands:

- Pillar 1 - direct income support payments to farmers is based on the amount of land a farmer owns, not how much they produce
- Pillar 2 – for rural development, which requires co-financing from governments

Further information is available at: [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/common-agricultural-policy](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/common-agricultural-policy)

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### **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**

The CPTPP is a free-trade agreement between 11 countries around the Pacific Rim: Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan.

Further information is available at: [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/trade-cptpp](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/trade-cptpp)

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### **Free trade agreement (FTA)**

A free trade agreement is a pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers to imports and exports among them. Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.

Further information is available at: [www.investopedia.com/terms/f/free-trade.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/free-trade.asp)

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### **Joint declaration**

A joint declaration is the intention to agree at a later stage. A number of joint declarations are included as an Annex to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. These declarations concern a range of issues including the regulation of financial services; and asylum and returns.

Further information is available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/948105/EU-UK\\_Declarations\\_24.12.2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948105/EU-UK_Declarations_24.12.2020.pdf)

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<b>Level playing field</b>	<p>A level playing field is a trade-policy term for a set of common rules and standards that prevent businesses in one country gaining a competitive advantage over those operating in other countries. Areas covered by the level playing field are workers' rights, competition and state aid, taxation, and social and environmental justice.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/future-relationship-level-playing-field">www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/future-relationship-level-playing-field</a></p>
<b>Mutual recognition agreements (MRA)</b>	<p>MRAs are agreements between two trading partners to reduce technical barriers to trade. MRAs allow countries to recognise the results of another's conformity assessments with specified legal requirements.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/mutual-recognition-agreements-mras-all-you-need-to-know/">https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/mutual-recognition-agreements-mras-all-you-need-to-know/</a></p>
<b>Mutual recognition of professional qualifications</b>	<p>This is a system to allow professionals qualified in one country to practice in another, without the need to requalify.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9172/">https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9172/</a></p>
<b>Provisional application</b>	<p>Provisional application enables countries to apply treaty commitments on a provisional basis prior to entry into force, while they complete their necessary domestic procedures and relevant international treaty formalities.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947282/cnc-information-note-dec2021.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947282/cnc-information-note-dec2021.pdf</a></p>
<b>Rules of Origin</b>	<p>In the context of the TCA, only goods that have an EU origin and are imported into the UK, or have a UK origin and are imported to the EU, are entitled to preferential treatment, that is zero tariffs and zero quotas.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://brc.org.uk/media/677079/deloitte-rules-of-origin-report.pdf">https://brc.org.uk/media/677079/deloitte-rules-of-origin-report.pdf</a></p>
<b>Sanitary and phytosanitary measures</b>	<p>Sanitary and phytosanitary measures are measures to protect humans, animals, and plants from diseases, pests, or contaminants.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-controls/safety-health-environment-customs-controls/sanitary-phytosanitary-requirements_en">https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-controls/safety-health-environment-customs-controls/sanitary-phytosanitary-requirements_en</a></p>
<b>Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA)</b>	<p>An agreement between the UK and EU covering a range of areas including trade in goods and services, digital trade, public procurement, energy, fisheries, social security co-ordination, participation in EU programmes, and areas for future co-operation.</p> <p>Further information is available at: <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/982648/TS_8.2021_UK_EU_EAEC_Trade_and_Cooperation_Agreement.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/982648/TS_8.2021_UK_EU_EAEC_Trade_and_Cooperation_Agreement.pdf</a></p>

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**Trade Continuity Agreement**

The Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement replicates the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement on a bilateral basis. The Trade and Continuity Agreement, therefore, is meant to maintain the status quo in the Canada-UK trade relationship.

Further information is available at: [www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cuktca-accru/economic\\_impact\\_assessment-evaluation\\_impact\\_economique.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cuktca-accru/economic_impact_assessment-evaluation_impact_economique.aspx?lang=eng)

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**Non-tariff barrier**

A non-tariff barrier is any measure, other than a customs tariff, that acts as a barrier to international trade. These include regulations or rules that state how a product can be manufactured, handled, or advertised; rules of origin that require proof of which country goods were produced in; or quotas that limit the amount of a certain product that can be sold in a market.

Further information is available at: [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/non-tariff-barriers](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/non-tariff-barriers)

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**Levelling up**

The UK Government Levelling Up Fund is part of a broad package of UK-wide interventions that include: The UK Community Renewal Fund; The UK Community Ownership Fund; The Plan for Jobs; The Freeports programme; The UK Infrastructure Bank and The Towns Fund.

Further information is available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/966138/Levelling\\_Up\\_prospectus.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966138/Levelling_Up_prospectus.pdf)

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## Annex 1: Methods and limitations

### Methods

**Identifying evidence:** Systematic searches of grey and academic (peer-reviewed) literature were conducted to inform this briefing. Initial broad-scope searches were conducted to provide an update to previous rapid reviews, covering the period 14/09/2019 to 31/12/2020, using search terms and stems related to “Brexit” and “leaving the EU”, combined with those describing determinants of health and well-being (e.g. “education”). Google, key parliamentary websites, and the online resources of prominent health and policy think tanks were searched for grey literature, and academic literature was identified using Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO and ASSIA databases. Identified evidence was stored in an indexed bibliography and the totality of this general literature review was hand searched to identify content relevant to this poverty briefing. Supplementary searches were also conducted up to 31/12/2020, using the same sources as above, but focusing more specifically on the impact of Brexit on poverty. This included the use of terms such as “deprivation” and “socio-economic status”. Full details of all search strategies are provided on request. As this was an iterative process, further publications were reviewed up to 21 August 2021, to address gaps identified during synthesis.

**Evidence review and synthesis:** Titles and abstracts of retrieved literature were screened for relevance/inclusion by a senior researcher/policy officer. Full texts were accessed and distributed across a team of reviewers, who used a data extraction template to identify key information from each paper or report pertaining to potential or actual positive, negative or unknown impacts of Brexit on (pathways to) poverty. Literature was critically appraised using the AACODS Checklist (Tyndall, 2010). The team took part in a series of analysis meetings to synthesise the reviewed evidence, drawing out key concepts and themes.

### Limitations

The social, economic and political landscape continues to change in response to the ‘twin shocks’ of Brexit and COVID-19. The complexity brought about by the co-occurrence of the transition period and its ending with the ongoing pandemic creates a challenge of disentangling their broader impacts and identifying those impacts that can be specifically attributed to Brexit.

Many of the findings reported to date are based on predictions made prior to the agreement of the TCA and include results of the modelling of different ‘no deal’/hard/soft Brexit scenarios and their potential impacts. It is recognised that there may be other impacts on health and well-being that are at present unidentified, and that the broader impacts of Brexit will become clearer over time.

There has been a lack of high quality research publications focused on the health and well-being impacts of Brexit. Related to this, there is likely to be a lag time in evidencing the population health impacts of any changes brought about by Brexit. In addition, the often long timescales for publishing academic literature are not sufficiently reactive to identify the latest policy, context and impacts related to Brexit.



This briefing is limited to English-language literature and, by the nature of its method, was undertaken in a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, a systematic procedure for the searching and selection of articles was used.

The available academic literature may also be subject to publication bias on two main fronts; the first, towards the challenges of Brexit compared with potential opportunities, and the second towards the impacts of COVID-19, which has been a priority for rapid review and publication. The inclusion of grey literature has made an important contribution to this review and is likely to have reduced the risk of publication bias.

With the above limitations in mind, this briefing provides timely evidence to Public Health Wales and stakeholders on the impacts of Brexit on poverty and health and well-being in Wales. While its specific focus may limit its transferability to other nations, the findings of this briefing will be of interest to decision-makers and stakeholders outside Wales.

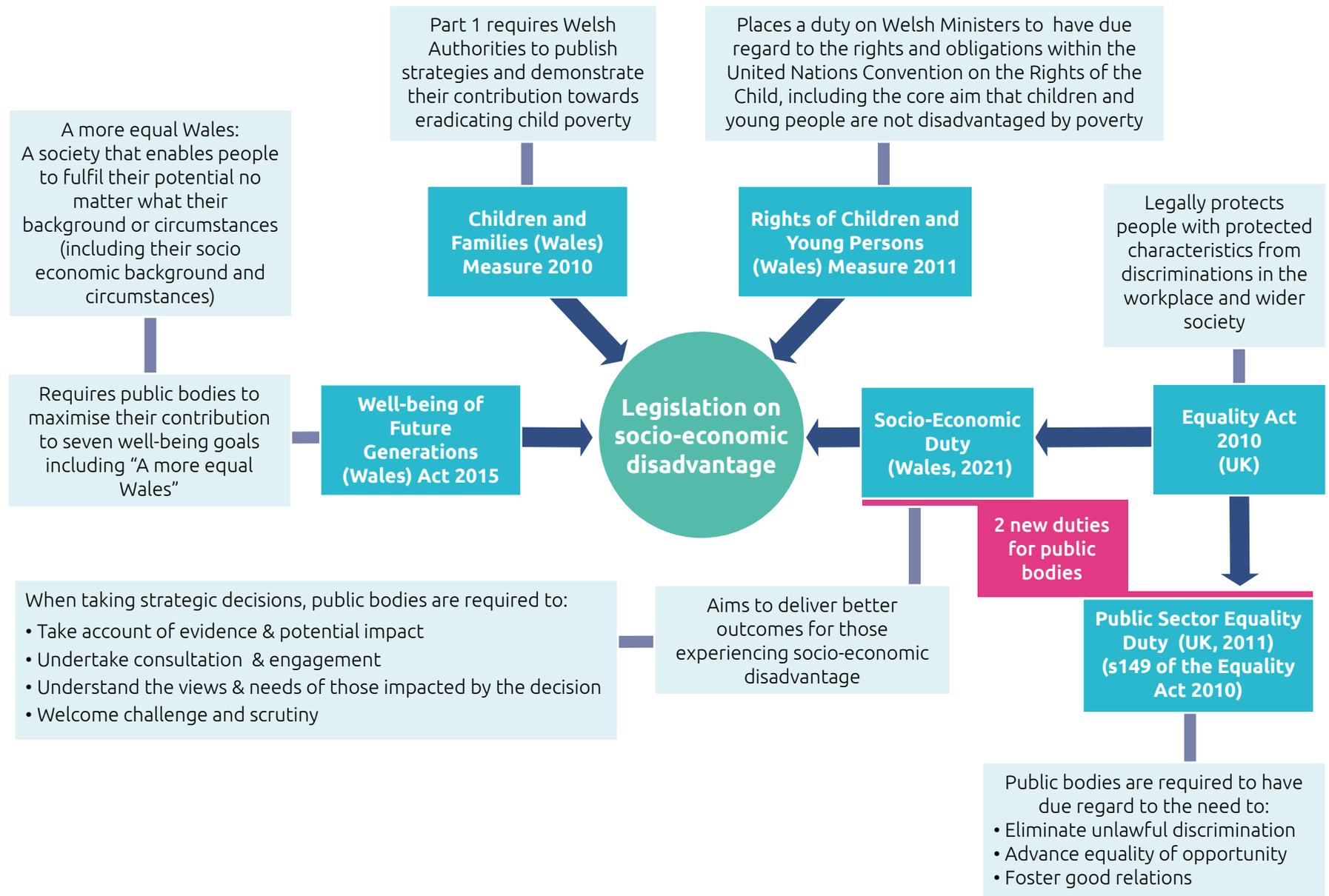
## Annex 2: UK trade agreements that took effect on 1 January 2021<sup>3</sup>

Full ratification	Bridging mechanism <sup>4</sup>	Provisional application
Andean countries (except Colombia)	Colombia	CARIFORUM trade bloc (except Trinidad and Tobago)
Central America	Cameroon	Iceland and Norway
Chile	Trinidad and Tobago	Moldova
Cote d'Ivoire	Kenya	Morocco
Eastern and Southern Africa trade bloc	Pacific States (except Papua New Guinea)	North Macedonia
Egypt		Papua New Guinea
Faroe Islands		Tukey
Georgia		Vietnam
Israel		
Japan		
Kosovo		
Lebanon		
Liechtenstein		
Palestinian Authority		
Singapore		
South Korea		
Southern Africa Customs Union and Mozambique trade bloc		
Switzerland		
Tunisia		
Ukraine		

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries>

<sup>4</sup> Bridging mechanisms and provisional applications have been utilised to enable continuity of trade, where trade agreements have yet to be ratified.

# Annex 3: Summary of legislation in Wales to address socio-economic disadvantage





**World Health Organization**  
**Collaborating Centre on Investment**  
**for Health and Well-being**



**GIG** | Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
**CYMRU** | Cymru  
**NHS** | Public Health  
**WALES** | Wales

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