

Provisional common framework: Food compositional standards and labelling

August 2022



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Provisional common framework: Food compositional standards and labelling

August 2022

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The UK and devolved governments published the **provisional common framework on food compositional standards and labelling** for scrutiny in February 2022, following an earlier version in March 2021.

Common frameworks are agreements between the UK and devolved governments on how to work together and manage divergence in areas previously governed at EU level.

Once all parliaments have completed scrutiny, the UK and devolved governments intend to agree a final version of the common framework.

In early 2022, the Senedd's **Health and Social Care Committee scrutinised** the provisional common framework on food compositional standards and labelling and made recommendations about it to the Welsh Government.

This briefing provides an overview of the provisional framework.

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Summary

As an EU Member State, the UK followed EU law. This set some harmonised standards for food compositional standards and labelling. Where no harmonised standards were set, it provided for mutual recognition of standards.

Now that the Brexit transition period has ended, the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments can diverge from retained EU law. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol in the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement, Northern Ireland continues to align with EU law on food compositional standards and labelling.

The common framework sets out how the UK and devolved governments will work together and manage divergence in this new context. The governments agree to collectively consider changes to law and policy in scope of the framework. During this process, they agree not to launch a public consultation or progress with the proposed change in any other way. If the governments do not agree whether to take the same approach or diverge, they can engage the dispute resolution process.

The framework sets out that decisions will be in scope of the joint decision-making process not just in areas formerly governed at EU level but in areas where EU law allows for national measures to achieve common outcomes. In contrast, the **food and feed safety and hygiene common framework** only provides for decisions in areas previously governed at EU level to be taken through the framework, and only where they affect the frameworks principles.

The governments will seek to agree whether to take the same approach to law and policy or diverge. If the governments do not agree on whether to take the same approach or diverge, they will seek to resolve the disagreement at the lowest possible level. They may then escalate the disagreement to senior officials and to Ministers.

Part of the purpose of the framework is ensuring the functioning of the UK internal market. Under the UK Internal Market Act 2020, goods permitted or imported into one part of the UK can generally be sold in any other part of the UK. This could limit the practical effect of changes to Welsh law on food compositional standards and labelling. The governments have agreed a process for considering exclusions from the Act in common framework areas, but the framework does not refer to this.

The framework also aims to enable the negotiation and implementation of international obligations. To this end, it sets out some commitments for the UK

and devolved governments to work together on relevant international obligations. However, it provides limited information on how the governments will engage with relevant international bodies and makes no reference to the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The framework provides for the governments to consider the implications of changes to the law in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) for alignment with Northern Ireland, and for implications of changes to EU law applying in Northern Ireland for alignment with Great Britain.

The framework does not require the governments to update parliaments and stakeholders on how it is working, or to involve parliaments and stakeholders in review and amendment. However, the UK and devolved governments have agreed in principle to report regularly to parliaments on common frameworks. The Welsh Government has also agreed unilaterally to report to the Senedd on common frameworks and to consult the Senedd and stakeholders during review and amendment.

1. Background

EU law sets some harmonised standards for food compositional standards and labelling. Where no harmonised standards are set, it provides for mutual recognition of standards.

EU Member States may adopt national measures on matters not covered by harmonised regulations, so long as they do not impede the free movement of goods within the EU.

Where standards on goods are not harmonised, the **mutual recognition principle** creates a general presumption (with some exceptions) that goods permitted in one Member State can be sold in another.

Now that the UK has left the EU, most EU law has been retained in domestic law. Functions and powers have been transferred from EU institutions to domestic authorities.

The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments can make changes to retained EU law on food compositional standards within their competence. Northern Ireland must continue to align with EU law on food compositional standards and labelling under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The UK also has to comply with international obligations, including international standards, new UK-EU agreements, and free trade agreements.

Legislation

Retained EU law

EU regulations and national enforcement

EU regulation sets out some harmonised standards on food compositional standards and labelling (FCSL). EU Regulations are directly applicable in Member States and have been retained in domestic law at the end of the transition period. The regulations are enforced by domestic legislation in each part of the UK.

The main EU Regulation on food information is **Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011** (enforced in Wales by the **Food Information (Wales) Regulations 2014**). This sets out rules for food information, establishing:

- general principles for food information;
- the responsibility of food business operators for providing food information;
- mandatory requirements for food information (including the food name, a list of ingredients, quantities, storage conditions, origin, use-by date, and a nutrition declaration) (supplemented by **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/775**);
- requirements for voluntary food information (for example, that information provided voluntarily should not be misleading or confusing); and
- that Member States may require additional mandatory food information, if justified on the basis of the protection of public health, consumer or property rights and with the authorisation of the Commission.

Regulations also set out additional harmonised requirements for certain products:

- **Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013** establishes a common organisation of markets for fisheries and aquaculture products, including setting labelling requirements. **Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009** and **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 404/2011** set out rules for the traceability of fishery products, **The Fish Labelling (Wales) Regulations 2013** enforce these rules.
- **Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013** establishes a common organisation of markets for agricultural products, including rules on marketing standards for certain products such as spreadable fats, olive oil and wine. **The Spreadable Fats (Marketing Standards) and the Milk and Milk Products (Protection of Designations) (Wales) Regulations 2008** enforce rules set out in the Regulation on spreadable fats and milk and milk products.

- **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013** sets out rules on indicating the country of origin for fresh, chilled and frozen meat products. **The Country of Origin of Certain Meats (Wales) Regulations 2015** enforce these rules.

Directives and national implementation

In addition to harmonised regulation, EU Directives set goals for food compositional standards and labelling policy for some products. Member States implement the Directives in national legislation.

The UK and devolved governments have generally transposed the Directives in separate but parallel sets of regulations.

The framework lists relevant implementing regulations in scope of requirements for the composition, description and labelling of bottled water; chocolate and cocoa products; coffee and chicory extracts; fruit juices and nectars; honey; jam and similar products; specified sugar products; caseins and caseinates (used in cheesemaking and as food additives); and condensed and dried milk.

Transfer of functions

Following the end of the transition period, most EU law on food compositional standards and labelling has been preserved as 'retained EU law' under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018. The UK and devolved governments can now make changes to this body of law.

To ensure retained EU law continues to function after the end of the transition period, the UK and Welsh Governments have made a number of correcting instruments under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018. This followed a **consultation on changes to food labelling** regulations in 2018.

The correcting regulations transfer functions from the EU to authorities at UK level and in Wales, For example, regulations correcting EU Regulation 1169/2011:

- **replace Commission powers** to make minor changes to food information requirements by delegated Act, with powers for the Welsh Ministers (or the Secretary of State with their consent) to make such changes (Article 51),
- **replace a requirement** for the Commission adopt implementing Acts to make certain changes to food information law after taking advice from the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health with ministerial powers under the negative procedure (Article 48); and

- **remove a requirement** for the European Food Safety Authority to be consulted on EU changes to food information law likely to affect public health (Article 5).

In Wales, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is responsible for advising on FCSL policy and for making recommendations to Ministers. Defra holds this responsibility in the UK Government; the FSA in Northern Ireland; and Food Standards Scotland in Scotland.

Non-EU-derived domestic legislation

Some domestic legislation on food compositional standards and labelling is not EU-derived, including the **Bread and Flour Regulations 1998** and the **Products Containing Meat etc. (Wales) Regulations 2014**. Some of this legislation may nevertheless be considered through the framework. This is considered further in section 2 below.

International obligations

The UK has taken on new international obligations previously exercised on its behalf by the EU following the end of the transition period. The UK Government is responsible for negotiating international obligations, while the **devolved governments are responsible for observing and implementing them** within their competence.

International obligations relating to food transcend multiple areas and types of international obligations, from international food trade to public health and human rights legislation.

International obligations

The right to food, including adequate food, is enshrined in a number of international conventions, for example the UN's **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ICESR).

There are a number of bodies and standards relevant to food compositional standards and labelling. For example:

- the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is the international body that sets minimum food standards (including labelling), guidelines and codes of practice for all foods;
- the United Nations' World Health Organisation and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) develops standards;

- the World Trade Organisation SPS and TBT agreements set the benchmark for harmonisation of global food standards;
- the **International Organisation for Standardisation** (ISO) develops standards relating to food, food safety and nutrition; and
- the United Nations has developed **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2**, to improve nutrition, and **SDG 3** on healthy lives and wellbeing.

UK-EU obligations

Withdrawal Agreement: Northern Ireland Protocol

Under the Protocol, Northern Ireland must remain aligned with EU law in certain areas, including food compositional standards and labelling,

The Protocol has implications for trade in food between Northern Ireland and Great Britain:

- for goods moving from GB-NI, relevant EU law continues to apply in Northern Ireland; and
- for goods moving from NI-GB, the UK Government's commitment to ensuring **unfettered access** between Northern Ireland and Great Britain means that qualifying goods can mostly move freely, with a few exceptions.

The main forum for discussing implementation of the Protocol is the **Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee** (see **Senedd Research explainer**). Since its entry into force, the Protocol has been the subject of **multiple UK-EU disputes**.

Trade and Cooperation Agreement

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement sets out obligations relevant to food compositional standards and labelling, in particular:

- level playing field provisions (which include environmental impacts of food production, notably the use of antibiotics and decontaminants); and
- extensive requirements to comply with international instruments, including agreements of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

International trade

The UK Government is negotiating trade agreements with other countries following the end of the transition period.

For example, free trade agreements with **Australia** and **New Zealand** will both introduce full tariff-free access for agricultural imports to the UK, phased in over a number of years.

Some stakeholders have raised concerns that trade agreements could lead to increases in imports from countries that have different or lower food standards than the UK.

The **UK Government must report** on whether certain trade agreements are consistent with statutory protections on human, animal or plant health, animal welfare and the environment, informed by the **advice of the Trade and Agriculture Commission**.

In 2021, the **National Food Strategy report** (commissioned by the UK Government) recommended that the Trade and Agriculture Commission should be asked to define a core set of UK food standards, and that the UK should agree in trade deals to remove import tariffs only on products that meet these standards.

Policy context

The UK and devolved governments have different positions on aligning with or diverging from retained EU law.

However, the governments are working together on proposed changes to food standards and labelling law in some cases. In April 2022, the **Welsh Government told the Senedd** that the UK and devolved governments were working together on a review of the Bread and Flour Regulations.

Wales

During the UK-EU negotiations, the **previous Welsh Government indicated** that it wanted to see continued alignment with EU law.

The Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, **Mick Antoniw, has stated** that there should be “no derogation from the standards that we actually hold to” and that the Welsh Government wants to improve on standards in Wales in devolved areas of responsibility.

At the domestic level, the Welsh Government published a **Vision for the food and drink industry from 2021** in November. This document sets out plans for the development of the food and drink industry until 2025.

Rest of the UK

In **England**, the UK Government published a **food strategy** in June 2022. This follows the **independent National Food Strategy report** in 2020-21. The food strategy says that the UK Government will consult on proposals to “improve and expand” mandatory labelling requirements in 2023.

The **Scottish Government** intends to continue to align with EU law in many areas using powers in the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021.

Northern Ireland continues to align with EU law on food compositional standards and labelling under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

2. The common framework

The provisional common framework on food compositional standards and labelling was published in February 2022, following publication of an earlier version in March 2021.

The framework is made up of a framework outline agreement and a Concordat:

- the framework outline agreement sets out how Defra, Food Standards Scotland, and the FSA in Wales and Northern Ireland will work together to manage divergence in FCSL law and policy after the end of the transition period; while
- the Concordat underpins the framework and is formally agreed by Ministers.

The framework is a non-legislative document and will not be enforceable.

Common frameworks principles

The framework affirms the **principles for common frameworks** agreed by the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) in October 2017.

The JMC (EN) set out six criteria for where common frameworks would be established. The framework indicates that it is needed to meet three of these criteria:

- enabling the functioning of the UK internal market, while acknowledging policy divergence;
- ensuring compliance with international obligations; and

- ensuring the UK can negotiate, enter into and implement new trade agreements and international treaties.

Food compositional standards and labelling principles

The governments agree to give due consideration to two further principles when making decisions:

- that consumers have the right to clear and accurate food information, to make informed, healthy, and safe choices; and
- that compliant businesses should be supported to trade across the UK with minimal barriers.

3. Scope

The framework sets out where policy changes should be subject to the joint decision-making processes that it establishes.

In scope

The framework sets out that changes will be in scope if a government proposes a change to law or policy:

- in an area of returning powers;
- in an area where EU law allows different domestic legislation to achieve common outcomes (such as the Jam and Similar Products Regulations); or
- for requirements for establishments based in or products circulated in only one part of the UK.

This appears to suggest that the governments will commit to make joint decisions on food compositional standards and labelling, even in some cases where they would previously have had autonomy to regulate differently when the UK was in the EU.

Comparison: Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene (FFSH) Framework

The framework appears to leave less room for flexibility for the Welsh Government to make changes without going through a joint decision-making process than the FFSH framework.

The FFSH framework states that:

- changes in areas of returning powers will only be in scope of the framework if they affect the framework principles;
- changes to rules for products and establishments in only one part of the UK should be subject to notification, but not joint decision-making; and
- changes should be out of scope where EU law allows for national measures to achieve common outcomes.

It is not clear why the food compositional standards and labelling framework appears to offer less flexibility.

Out of scope

Changes to the enforcement of food compositional standards and labelling law will not be within scope, because EU law allows domestic legislation to make provision for enforcement.

The framework also notes that some parts of FCSL policy are covered by domestic law, rather than EU law (for example, the **Bread and Flour Regulations 1998** and the **Products Containing Meat etc. (Wales) Regulations 2014**.)

It states that the governments should aim to discuss changes in these areas and seek agreement across the UK where possible. Such changes will not be bound by the dispute resolution process.

Related policy areas

The framework acknowledges that it is closely linked to the frameworks on food and feed safety and hygiene (FFSH), nutrition-related labelling and compositional standards (NLCS), and agricultural support.

The framework provides some information on how the frameworks will intersect, confirming that:

- the mandatory nutrition declaration will be in scope of the NLCS framework (EU

1169/2011 Section 3, articles 29-35);

- allergen labelling policy will be in scope of the FFSH framework; and
- dairy designations for marketing standards will be in scope of the agricultural support framework.

It also appears possible that this framework could interact with other frameworks in related policy areas, such as organics or animal health and welfare, or areas of retained EU law where no frameworks are planned.

The framework does not give any consideration to how interactions with other framework or non-framework policy areas should be managed.

4. Managing divergence

Working together

The framework establishes a group bringing together officials from each part of the UK to discuss FCSL policy and make recommendations to Ministers.

The group of officials will meet on a quarterly basis or at the request of any party. The chair will be rotated between governments.

The main responsibilities of the group will be to:

- enable the governments to consider proposals for FCSL legislation;
- consider whether proposals should be taken forward for one part of the UK or across the UK;
- facilitate multilateral policy development;
- seek to agree common approaches and manage potential divergence;
- coordinate parliamentary and stakeholder engagement; and
- provide a coordinated UK position on FCSL so messaging is “clear and consistent”.

The group will be able to create working groups to consider proposed policy changes.

Making decisions on divergence

The governments agree that they will be able to make divergent law and policy “where evidence is clear that divergence is both necessary and proportionate to

meet local needs”.

The framework sets out a process for the governments to make decisions on changes to law and policy in scope of the framework.

If a government wants to propose a change, it should submit that proposal to the officials’ group, which will consider whether the proposal should be taken forward. This could be across the UK/GB or only in one part. Officials will consider the proposal and gather evidence, which will be shared between the parties where possible.

During this time, the government proposing a change will not launch a public consultation or progress with the proposed change in any other way.

If officials agree the change, it is agreed or escalated to Ministers for agreement. If officials do not agree, the dispute resolution process is engaged.

The **Senedd’s Health and Social Care Committee has raised concerns** about the impact of this on the role of the Welsh Government, the Senedd and stakeholders in making laws for Wales. The **Welsh Government has said** that the framework will not affect devolved powers.

Role of the FSA

The FSA is responsible for advising the Welsh Ministers on food compositional standards and labelling. The FSA in Wales will represent Wales at official-level discussions on managing divergence through the framework.

The FSA is a non-ministerial department of the UK Government. Most members of the Board are appointed by the UK Government Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The Health Ministers for Wales and Northern Ireland each have the power to appoint one member to the Board. The **Board Member for Wales** chairs the **Welsh Food Advisory Committee**. This Committee advises the FSA on food policy in Wales. The FSA also has a Director with responsibility for Wales. The FSA’s **annual report and an annual report for Wales** are laid before the Senedd as well as the UK Parliament. **About 40** people work for the FSA in Wales, compared to **about 1,150** working for the FSA in Westminster.

The Welsh Government works with the FSA on the basis of a concordat. This was last updated in 2016. The **Welsh Government confirmed** that the concordat was

under review in correspondence with the Fifth Senedd's External Affairs Committee on the FFSH framework in early 2021.

In June 2021, the **Welsh Government announced** a review of the operation of the FSA in Wales, with a remit to consider "if current structures, governance and stakeholder engagement are effective and fit for purpose to deliver against the FSA in Wales remit." In April 2022, the **Welsh Government said** it had not been able to find a contractor to carry out the review.

Managing the impact of the UK Internal Market Act 2020

Part of the purpose of the framework is to ensure the functioning of the UK internal market,

The **UK Internal Market Act 2020** sets out principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination for the movement of goods between different parts of the UK.

This means that in general food products permitted in or imported into any part of the UK can now automatically be sold in any other part, subject to narrow exclusions (such as the protection of public health).

For example, the governments could agree through the framework that the Welsh Government could set different rules for food labelling. However, food labelled in a way permitted in or imported into any other part of the UK could still be sold in Wales.

The UK Government has powers to create new exclusions from the market access principles or vary the list of legitimate aims by regulations. The UK and devolved governments have agreed a **process for considering and agreeing exclusions to the Act in common framework areas**. The framework makes no reference to this process.

Managing divergence with Northern Ireland

Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU law on food compositional standards and labelling continue to apply in Northern Ireland. This could lead to the development of divergence between GB and the EU/NI.

The framework sets out that:

- as the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments make decisions on policy and regulation, the Northern Ireland Executive will participate in discussions and its

views will fully be taken into account; and

- where rules in Northern Ireland change in alignment with the EU, the governments will consider the changes and determine “any impacts and subsequent actions”.

If Northern Ireland Ministers believe that concerns have not been adequately addressed, they can use the framework’s dispute resolution process.

Managing future changes to retained EU law

The **UK Government has set out plans** to introduce a Retained EU Law Bill to make it easier to change or repeal retained EU law (REUL) and to remove the special status it has in UK law.

The **UK Government has said** that it “will not seek to make changes to retained EU law within Common Frameworks without following the ministerially-agreed processes in each framework.”

5. Resolving disputes

The framework sets out a process for the resolution of disputes between the governments. It states that the dispute resolution process should only be used if the parties cannot agree on a policy proposal; if one party considers that the parameters for the governance of the frameworks has been breached; or if a party considers that the JMC(EN) principles have been broken.

Any party may notify the officials’ group of a disagreement. The officials’ group may then convene a meeting of the parties. The parties will set out their positions and consider options for resolving the dispute, including mediation and the commissioning of further evidence.

If the dispute is not resolved, it may be escalated to senior officials and finally to Ministers. No timelines for this process are set.

If the dispute cannot be resolved through this process, it may then be escalated to the intergovernmental dispute resolution process set out in the **Memorandum of Understanding on Devolution**. In January 2022, the **governments agreed** a new inter-ministerial dispute resolution process as part of the Intergovernmental Relations Review. The **Counsel General said** this was a “groundbreaking step”.

The framework does not provide for disputes to be notified to parliaments or

stakeholders. However, the **Welsh Government has committed** to notify the Senedd of disputes.

6. Managing international obligations

Part of the purpose of the framework is to ensure that the UK can negotiate and implement international obligations.

The framework sets out some commitments for the UK and devolved governments to work together on the negotiation and implementation of international obligations.

The governments agree that international policy formulation will be based on “the current Devolution MoU and its accompanying International Relations Concordat” and that they “will automatically use any updated IR Concordat, and the wider outcomes of the Joint IGR Review”.

The **International Relations Concordat** was last updated in 2013; it was not revised as part of the Intergovernmental Relations Review. The Concordat does not explicitly reflect the UK Government’s increased role in agreeing post-Brexit international obligations in areas previously within EU competence, such as trade.

International trade

The framework states that it will allow the governments to “consider any implications stemming from international trade which have a direct bearing on the operation of a Common Framework.”

It states that the UK will “be looking for robust assurance on food standards before signing trade deals”.

The **Welsh Government has said** that the framework will “provide opportunity for discussions of UK positions on FCSL policy issues, including where they may be relevant to the negotiation or implementation of a trade agreement”.

UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement

Some frameworks provide for the UK and devolved governments to work together on the implementation of the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement. They provide for representatives of the devolved governments to attend relevant UK-EU meetings, in line with **wider UK Government commitments**.

This framework does not make any reference to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Some text in the framework appears not to have been updated since the conclusion of the UK-EU negotiations: for example, it states that the EU will “likely be looking for robust assurance on food standards before signing trade deals”.

International food compositional and labelling standards

The framework says it is “designed to ensure the UK can continue to fulfil international obligations such as Codex and WTO membership’. However, it offers very limited information on how it will do this.

The framework makes no reference to:

- how the governments will work together on the implementation of relevant international law or standards; or
- whether the governments will seek to agree positions ahead of significant international conferences on standards (as EU Member States do).

Comparison: FFSH and NLCS Frameworks

While acknowledging the international standards of the WTO and **Codex**, the FCSL framework makes fewer references to international standards than the other food-related common frameworks (namely, FFSH and NLCS).

In particular, the NLCS framework contains detailed proposals for the UK’s representation and involvement at specific international bodies, which, while only partially representative of international bodies, is not replicated here.

The CAC was founded jointly in 1961 by the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) as part of their Food Standards Programme.

The CAC holds regular meetings and has **several relevant Committees** to the NLCS which are not mentioned in the NLCS Concordat, including on food labelling (hosted by Canada) and nutrition (hosted by Germany). Regional Coordinating Committees exist to define the problems and needs of food standards in each region. The UK has been a member of the CAC since 1963 and is part of the Coordinating Committee for Europe, which has 52 members (51 member states and 1 organisation – the EU).

The international context is very similar, if not identical, for each of these framework areas, and so it is not clear why some frameworks provide more preferential terms than others for devolved engagement in international affairs.

Future international commitments are also likely to impact the FCSL framework, including the development and refining of international standards. While these can be non-binding, they are a result of food trading nations moving from a bilateral system of recognising equivalence of each other's standards, to a global, multilateral system of agreed equivalence for mutual benefit. The framework does not anticipate how it might respond to such changes.

7. Monitoring, review and amendment

The FCSL officials' group will monitor the operation of the framework at its quarterly meetings. The group will assess intergovernmental cooperation on the framework, compliance with the framework principles, and whether any "harmful divergence" has taken place.

The governments will undertake a review of the framework one year after implementation, and every three years thereafter. A review will cover "whether the governance and operational aspects of the Common Framework are working effectively, and whether decisions made over the previous three years need to be reflected in an updated non-legislative agreement." The governments may hold an exceptional review to discuss a 'significant issue'.

Following a review, the governments may agree to amend the framework unanimously. Any amendment must also be agreed unanimously. If there is no agreement, the dispute resolution process may be used.

8. Transparency and accountability

The framework says that stakeholder views were sought during its development. The **Welsh Government has said** that the governments carried out stakeholder engagement on the framework in October 2020 and June 2021. No stakeholders in Wales responded in October 2020. Three stakeholder groups from Wales attended an online event about the framework in June 2021.

The Senedd's **Health and Social Care Committee completed scrutiny** of the provisional framework in March 2022. The **House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee** and the **Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee** have also considered the framework.

There is no commitment for reports on the operation of the framework to be produced or published. The **Welsh Government has committed** unilaterally to reporting annually on frameworks. In November, the **Counsel General said** that the governments had all agreed to future reporting to parliaments on common frameworks.

There are no commitments to give parliaments a role in monitoring the operation of the framework or scrutinising amendments. The framework says that the governments may use third parties to advise on review and amendment to the framework. This could include government bodies or external stakeholders. In March, the **Counsel General agreed** to notify the Senedd and stakeholders when a common framework is reviewed, and consider their recommendations before the review process concludes.