

Engagement with UK Government

Engagement with UKG has historically been positive, particularly in areas where the UK government has accepted there is an interaction with devolved policy. However, many areas of trade negotiations which are considered ‘reserved’ impact on devolved areas.

Previously, information sharing relating to areas viewed as ‘reserved’ by the UK government, such as market access, has been limited, despite these areas often having a disproportionate impact on Welsh producers.

However, we have recently seen improvements in information sharing across the Government and officials now see most of the information they need in order to engage fully at different stages in the negotiations.

Despite current engagement being positive, the Welsh Government continues to believe that a concordat is needed to help ensure that meaningful engagement continues, despite any future changes in governments or individuals. This would ensure that the positive relationship we had with DBT is captured within a more formal structure.

Our approach to trade policy and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) is to consider and analyse any impact they may have on Wales through a Future Generations lens based on the principles established under our Well-being of Future Generations Act, rather than in purely economic terms. This approach means we place enhanced value on areas such as environment, labour, and gender in Free Trade Agreements.

The Welsh Government is a constructive partner in trade negotiations, sharing analysis and working closely with UKG departments to ensure the representation of Welsh interests in negotiations. At a Ministerial level, discussions on FTAs take place through forums such as the IMG-Trade and bilateral meetings. At an official level information is shared throughout the negotiation stages and officials are able to discuss negotiations on a regular basis, including with specific policy teams and the negotiation team itself.

It is important that the UK Government understands that new free trade agreements should not undermine our ability to pursue our own ambitions or to regulate domestically, and deals must not lead to gains for other parts of the UK at the expense of Wales.