

A Regional Approaches to Commercial Determinants of Health in Y&H



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Background

Industries have a huge impact on the places in which we are born, live, grow, and work. Their influence shapes the choices we make, the products we consume, and ultimately affects our health. These 'commercial determinants of health' (CDOH) present a huge economic cost to our society and cause significant premature death and disease - especially amongst disadvantaged groups.

The Y&H Regional team within the DHSC's Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) has been collaborating with the Y&H ADPH to support local places and regions to take action to address these harms.

Building on the existing Y&H ADPH work programme on CDOH, we delivered:

1) A Y&H ADPH Position Statement on CDOH

This set out our regional narrative and approach, summarised the key evidence, presented a public health approach, and actions for local places to take to address commercial determinants



pathways through which commercial actors drive health and equity' (Lancet). These actions and omissions play a significant role in shaping the environments in which we are born, live, grow, and work.

As DsPH we affirm the importance of inclusive wellbeing economies that serve the wellbeing of people and the planet, making life better for all (ADPH Y&H). Along with the WHO, we recognise that 'commercial activities shape the physical and social environments in which people are born, grow, work, live and age – both positively and negatively.' We also echo the Lancet series on the CDOH by acknowledging the diversity of the commercial world ranging from 'transnational and multinational corporations with revenues larger than the gross domestic product of some countries to small-scale, locally owned businesses' (The Lancet). We start by noting some of the positive impacts that commercial entities can have for society (such as creating ethical employment) and the necessary role that specific industries can play in improving health (such as the cycle industry in active travel). Our work to improve the health of the public and drive equity must also recognise the substantial harms that commercial entities can cause. Again, as the second paper in the Lancet series on CDoH points out 'few commercial entities, if any, are wholly good or bad for public health' and our concerns are directed at specific forms of commercial activity that harm health (The Lancet). Unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) are companies who manufacture, produce, process, distribute, import, sell and/or market other products or services (including any company that derives significant revenues from producing, selling, or marketing such products or services) that could be considered detrimental to physical or mental health and, as a result, profit from their sale (Spectrum). Some of this paper starts with a focus on the key UCIs: the tobacco, alcohol, gambling, unhealthy food (such as ultra-processed food and food high in salt, sugar, and fat), and fos

2. Why do they matte

2.1 CDoH cause significant morbidity and mortality, and people are dying before their time

• The products and associated commercial practices from just four UCIs (fossil fuel, tobacco, alcohol and ultra-processed food) have been estimated to cause at least one-third (36%) of

estimated to be made from sales [of alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy food] at levels harmful to health in the UK each year"

(ASH, OSA & AHA, 2023)

"£53 billion of combined industry revenue is



2) Launch event for the Position Statement

150 people from across the four nations attended our virtual launch. It was chaired by a Y&H DPH and featured a keynote presentation from a prominent academic. Other presentations comprised: a Y&H DPH, a public health registrar, and the national ADPH CDOH project manager. The

ADPH CDOH project manager. The audience included local authorities, OHID, UKHSA, academia, the NHS, the police, and the VCSE sector. The discussion and chat were lively

with many resources shared.



What next? Y&H ADPH have commissioned Common Cause Australia to deliver a workshop for us in December 2025 to help address one of the emerging barriers to engaging with CDOH - framing the narrative with businesses, elected members, and/or communities. We are also exploring the potential for a regional approach to CDOH.

4) A cross-cutting seminar series

In response to demand for networking and shared learning amongst those working on CDOH (in the context of lack of capacity for a Community of Improvement), a series of webinars covered crosscutting issues in CDOH.

Content always included an expert speaker and a local example of relevant work, with lots of time for networking and group discussions. Topics included: 'commercial determinants in all policies' approach, suicide prevention and mental ill-health, licensing, and advertising and sponsorship.

3) Workshop series to facilitate implementation of actions

In the absence of capacity to support each local place individually, two workshops were organised for regional public health staff to sustainably support implementation of key Position Statement actions. The focus was providing space and time to think through plans whilst supporting and learning from each other.

"support from across the region is very much appreciated" "great opportunity to share and learn from Y&H colleagues"

Participant feedback, Workshop #1