Unit 7: Sociological Perspectives for Health and Social Care

Unit code: M/601/2402

QCF Level 3: BTEC Nationals

Credit value: 5

Guided learning hours: 30

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to enable learners to gain an understanding of the different sociological approaches that can be used when studying and how these approaches can be used to study health and social care.

● Unit introduction

Sociology is the study of society, and is a method of enquiry and explanation. In this unit learners will gain an understanding of sociology as a discipline and the different sociological perspectives. They will then consider the application of different sociological approaches to the understanding of a number of concepts within health and social care. This will include exploring the social dimension of health and illness.

Sociologists argue that health and illness have two aspects to them. The first of these is biological, and there are clearly distinct states of discomfort, pain and abnormality that can be considered to be ill health. The second aspect, however, involves how the concepts of health and illness are themselves considered, and sociologists consider the cultural dimensions of these concepts.

Learners will also examine health inequalities among different groups of people in society, and the range of explanations that sociologists have suggested for these inequalities.

The unit will encourage learners to be reflective, and will be valuable to those learners intending to work with people in a caring capacity. It will also be useful for learners who intend to progress to study at a higher level.

The sociological approach is embedded in several other units in the programme and is extended in *Unit 19: Applied Sociological Perspectives for Health and Social Care*.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1   Understand sociological perspectives

2   Understand sociological approaches to health and social care.

Unit content

1 Understand sociological perspectives

Terminology: social structures, eg the family, education system, health care services; social diversity, eg social class, gender, culture, ethnicity, age, locality; socialisation, eg norms, values, beliefs, roles, status

Principle sociological perspectives: functionalism, Marxism, feminism, interactionism, collectivism, postmodernism, 'New Right'

2 Understand sociological approaches to health and social care

Application of sociological perspectives to health and social care: understanding different concepts of health and ill health; understanding patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings

Understanding different concepts of health and ill health: concepts of health (negative, positive, holistic, World Health Organization definition); models of health (biomedical, socio-medical); ill health (illness, disability, disease); the sick role; the clinical iceberg

Understanding patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings: measurement of health, eg morbidity rates, mortality rates, health events, disease incidence, disease prevalence, health surveillance; difficulties in measuring health; patterns and trends according to, eg social class, gender, ethnicity, age, locality; risk behaviour; sociological explanations (artefact, natural/social selection, cultural/behavioural, materialist/structuralist)

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 explain the principal sociological perspectives [IE3; IE4; CT2; CT4; SM3]	**M1** assess the biomedical and socio-medical models of health	
P2 explain different sociological approaches to health and ill health [CT4]		
P3 explain patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings. [IE3, IE4, CT4; SM3]	**M2** use different sociological perspectives to discuss patterns and trends of health and illness in two different social groups.	**D1** evaluate different sociological explanations for patterns and trends of health and illness in two different social groups.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills which are embedded in the assessment of this unit. By achieving the criteria, learners will have demonstrated effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit should be delivered using a mixture of tutor input and learner-led activity, such as research, role play and case studies and, where appropriate, guest speakers from a variety of health and social care settings and other appropriate practitioners. Initially, learners should explore the principal sociological perspectives and their relevance to approaches to health and ill health. Learners could work in small groups to identify these different sociological perspectives, and then apply them to the study of health and ill health. From this information learners will move on to assess both the biomedical and socio-medical models of health and, where appropriate, supported by the tutor apply these models to their lives so far and also within the health and social care sector.

Once learners are familiar with the principal sociological perspectives, approaches to health and ill health, and both the biomedical and socio-medical models of health, they should progress to investigate patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings. Many learners find this very interesting and they will be able to source up-to-date patterns and trends in health and illness by accessing 'social trends' from the Office of National Statistics website. They will then investigate these different patterns and trends by applying the different sociological approaches already studied. They should focus on two different social groupings for this. They will evaluate this for a distinction grade.

It is important that P1, P2 and M1 are delivered and covered before P3, M2 and D1, as without these three initial criteria being covered/achieved learners will be unable to successfully approach P3.

Learners should be given opportunities, and time, to develop and practise their research skills when carrying out their investigations for this unit. Arrangements for interactions within the workplace should be discussed and agreed with the tutor and work supervisor/mentor.

In addition to learners accessing a health or social care setting for workplace experience it would be very useful to bring the world of the workplace into the classroom, giving learners applied learning opportunities and also the opportunity to question practitioners. Therefore time should be put aside for learners to prepare questions for visiting practitioners before their visit to get the most out of these opportunities.

Learners should be encouraged at all times to be reflective and to develop an awareness of their feelings, thoughts and experiences relating to the different models, patterns and trends of health and ill health.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction.
Guest speaker: for example local authority practitioner working in the health department (ideally strategic director or similar).
Learning outcome 1   Tutor input: sociological perspectives to study.   Buzz group/learner research: different principal sociological perspectives.   Case studies: on health and ill health and the use of the different models of health – biomedical and socio-medical.   Discussion: the different perspectives and learner experiences of attitudes to health and ill health.
Assignment 1: Sociological approaches (P1, P2, M1)   Produce an information booklet covering an: • explanation of the principal sociological perspectives   • explanation of the different sociological approaches to health and ill health   • assessment of the biomedical and socio-medical models of health.
Learning outcome 2   Tutor input: sociological approaches to health and social care.   Learner research: investigate national and local social trends regarding health and ill health.   Guest speakers: Q&A session with a researcher involved in using national and local social trend statistics on health an ill health.   Case studies: of different patterns and trends of health and ill health.   Learner research: investigate social trends of health via Office of National Statistics (website).
Assignment 2: Patterns and trends in health and illness (P3, M2, D1)   Plan and take part in a investigation covering an: • explanation of the patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings   • discussion (using the different sociological perspectives) of the patterns and trends of health and illness in **two** different social groups   • evaluation of the different sociological explanations for patterns and trends of health and illness in **two** different social groups.
Unit review and assessment.

Assessment

This unit should be delivered and assessed with as much employer engagement/workplace learning opportunities as is appropriate and relevant.

The learning outcomes can be met through two different assignments where learners are asked to present their evidence using a variety of methods.

Assignment 1 could be presented in the form of an information booklet. This can be produced however learners prefer, but it must be explanatory in nature and not just descriptive to meet the requirements of P1. Assignment 2 could take the form of a report/essay or presentation as appropriate.

Learning outcome 1 is achieved by meeting P1 and M1 and learning outcome 2 by meeting P2, P3, M2 and D1.

Assignments set can be assessed whenever is the most appropriate time the tutor and learners, the order in which they should be completed is important, Assignment 1 should be completed first in order for learners to have the knowledge required to be able to approach Assignment 2.

In order to pass the unit learners must achieve a pass grade for each learning outcome, all three pass criteria are spread across both assignments, and both assignments must be covered and assessed. All three pass criteria must be achieved before merit grade criteria can be assessed. The merit criteria must be achieved before distinction grade criteria can be assessed.

Pass grade learners will, on the whole, produce evidence that is an explanation.

Merit grade learners, in addition to the above, will also produce evidence that shows they have carried out an assessment and examination.

Distinction grade learners, in addition to the above, will also include an evaluation in their evidence.

Learners may like to carry out their plans and investigations/research in small friendship groups, this is acceptable but final evidence for assessment must be individually produced pieces of work.

Tutors are encouraged to embed personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) for as many opportunities as is appropriate within classroom-based activities, applied learning/contextualised activities and assessment.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, M1	Sociological approaches	You work for local government.	Information booklet.
P3, M2, D1	Patterns and trends in health and illness	At work you have been asked to investigate the need for a new, larger health centre for the locality. You ultimately need to investigate the social trends regarding health and illness in your locality to discover whether there is a need for a new health centre. You will share your information with your colleagues.	Investigation report/essay.

Links to National Occupational Standards (NOS), other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Health and Social Care sector suite (see *Appendix A*) and has links with units from other qualifications in that suite. See *Appendix E* for NOS links and *Appendix G* for a mapping of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework against particular units in this qualification.

Essential resources

Learners will require access to library facilities, including relevant texts, professional magazines and journals, CD ROMs, current newspapers and ICT facilities including the internet, with tutor guidance to avoid inappropriate use. Guest speakers who work in the statutory, private and voluntary sectors will enhance learning.

Social trends, particularly regarding health patterns and trends, are an essential resource and can be accessed via a central library or the Office for National Statistics website.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Visits from speakers employed within the health and social care sectors and representatives of particular bodies in society associated with health inequalities and trends will enhance learner understanding. Learners would also benefit from visits to organisations.

The local authority will be useful for this unit. The local authority will have several departments who deal with health as part of their daily work. The first point of contact for this unit in this context will be the local authority human resources department.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Asbridge L, Lavers S, Moonie N and Scott J – *BTEC First Health and Social Care* (Heinemann, 2006) ISBN 9780435463328

Baldock J, Manning N, Miller S and Vickerstaff S – *Social Policy* (Oxford University Press, 1999) ISBN 9780198781738

Clarke L – *Health and Social Care GCSE* (Nelson Thornes, 2002) ISBN 9780748770724

Eden S – *Society, Health and Development Level 1 Foundation Diploma* (Pearson, 2008) ISBN 9780435500900

Haralambos M and Holborn M – *Sociology Themes and Perspectives* (Collins Educational, 2008) ISBN 9780007245956

Haworth E, Allen B, Forshaw C, Nicol D, Volbracht A and Leach J – *Society, Health and Development Level 2 Higher Diploma* (Pearson, 2008) ISBN 9780435401030

Lovell T and Cordeaux C – *Social Policy for Health and Social Care* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1999) ISBN 9780340683613

Mason L, Horne S and Irvine J – *BTEC Introduction Health and Social Care* (Heinemann, 2004) ISBN 97843546245l

Moore S – *Social Welfare Alive Third Edition* (Nelson Thornes, 2002) ISBN 9780748765614

Moore S, Chapman S and Aiken D – *Sociology for AS-level* (Collins educational, 2001) ISBN 9780007113149

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 1* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907663

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 2* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907470

Journal

Sociology Review (Phillip Allen Updates)

Websites

www.dh.gov.uk	Department of Health
www.official-documents.co.uk/document/doh/ih/ih.htm	Government website that contains the 1998 Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health Report
www.ohn.gov.uk/ohn/ohn.htm	Our Healthier Nation website
www.statistics.gov.uk/socialtrends	Office for National Statistics

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are …
Independent enquirers	[IE3] investigating the different principal sociological perspectives and approaches to health and ill health
	[IE4] analysing and evaluating information, judging its relevance and value
Creative thinkers	[CT4] questioning their own and others' assumptions on the concept of health
Self-managers	[SM3] organising time and resources, prioritising actions to meet assessment deadlines.

Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are …
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	retrieving work saved throughout their investigation into the principal sociological perspectives and the different sociological approaches to health and ill health
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching and investigating patterns and trends in health and illness among different social groupings
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	organising findings from research to suit assignments as evidence for learning outcomes
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	presenting information in different ways for different audiences, eg information booklet and report/essay
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing patterns and trends of health and illness in two social groupings, from different sociological perspectives
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching textbooks and websites regarding patterns and trends of health and illness
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing an information booklet for Assignment 1 and a report for Assignment 2.