

Unit 8: The Sociological Context of Health and Social Care

Unit code: F/601/1593

QCF level: 4

Credit value: 15

● Aim

The aim of this unit is to help learners gain understanding of sociological concepts and their application to policy making and care practice in health and social care.

● Unit abstract

This unit enables learners to gain understanding of the nature of contemporary society. Learners will explore how society is structured in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, social class, family and households. Learners will also consider the impact of marriage, partnership formation and relationship breakdown on health and wellbeing.

The focus of the unit will be to consider the impact that social inequalities in society have on policy-making and care practice in health and social care. Learners will examine the factors that contribute to health and wellbeing from sociological perspectives and will explore health inequalities. Learners will develop an understanding of how social factors influence the provision and delivery of health and social care services and their role as a key determinant affecting health and social care outcomes for individuals.

● Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit a learner will:

- 1 Understand the contemporary nature of society
- 2 Understand how social inequalities influence the life chances and health status of individuals
- 3 Understand sociological concepts and theory in relation to contemporary social and health issues.

1 Understand the contemporary nature of society

Political and economic constructs: systems of stratification (age, gender, ethnicity, social class, households, partnership formation and relationship breakdown)

Social constructs: family and households; community; education; work; unemployment; leisure

Societal change: demographic (population profiles, national, regional); economic (wealth, technological development)

Cultural values and beliefs: related to diversity; ethnicity; religious belief; distribution of income and wealth

Implications for health and social care sector: services; resources; access

2 Understand how social inequalities influence the life chances and health status of individuals

Sources of data: the census; birth and death registrations; population estimates and projections; population locations

Sociological perspectives: conflict and consensus theories; social construct theories

Inequalities in health and social care: biological factors (heredity); individual needs; access issues; health and social care outcomes

Health status: holistic consideration of health and wellbeing status; physical eg immune status; mental health; emotional health; social health eg friendship networks, mobility

Life chances: education opportunity; housing; social networks; employment; affluence; lifestyle choices; risks eg accidents, deviant behaviours; access to support

3 Understand sociological concepts and theory in relation to contemporary social and health issues

Sociological definitions of: health; illness; disability

Social issues and problems in contemporary society: population change eg proportion of working age, population mobility, pensions, changing care needs and expectations; work eg stress, changing nature of work, unemployment, distribution of wealth; technological advances eg in therapies, assistive technologies, expectations; lifestyle choices eg leisure, activity, substance misuse; the role of politics, media and public opinion in shaping the health and social care agenda

Social inequalities in contemporary society: life chances; physical environment eg housing, transport, urban versus rural, employment, pollution; choice and access to services eg education, social care, health care; resources eg income, benefits, time; the ability of services to compensate for biological factors influencing health and wellbeing

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcomes On successful completion of this unit a learner will:	Assessment criteria for pass The learner can:
LO1 Understand the contemporary nature of society	1.1 explain how political, social and economic constructs can be used to categorise society 1.2 review current trends in societal change, including how these might shape social expectations 1.3 discuss the influence of cultural values and beliefs in society 1.4 evaluate the implications of societal change for the health and social care sector
LO2 Understand how social inequalities influence the life chances and health status of individuals	2.1 use data to explain inequalities which exist in health and social care 2.2 analyse social inequalities from a sociological perspective 2.3 analyse how inequalities which exist in health and social care can impact on an individual's health status and life chances
LO3 Understand sociological concepts and theory in relation to contemporary social and health issues.	3.1 apply sociological concepts and theory to definitions of health and wellbeing 3.2 use data to explain how social and health issues are socially constructed 3.3 explain the possible implications of social and health issues for health and social care service providers 3.4 analyse social and health issues in terms of their impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals in society.

Guidance

Links

This unit has links with, for example:

- *Unit 2: Principles of Health and Social Care Practice*
- *Unit 7: Social Policy*
- *Unit 17: Community Development Work.*

This unit also has links with the National Occupational Standards in Health and Social Care. See *Annexe B* for mapping.

This unit also has links with the National Occupational Standards in Leadership and Management for Care Services. See *Annexe C* for mapping.

Essential requirements

There are no specific requirements for this unit, but an appropriate selection of books and journals is strongly recommended. In particular, the following resource is critical reading for sociological study at this level:

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

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Input from specialists, for example community or social workers, would be beneficial to the delivery of this unit.