

Care: Social Influences

SCQF: level 6 (6 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: J22T 76

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to analyse the ways in which social influences can impact on people and the relevance this has for care practice. They will use sociological theories to explain social influences and the impact these might have on people's life chances. Learners will also analyse actions taken in society to improve the life chances of individuals using care services.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Analyse how social influences affect individuals using care services

This Unit is available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in *Unit Assessment Support*.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ♦ National 5 Care Course or relevant Units
- ♦ Literacy Unit (National 5)

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

Standards

Outcomes and assessment standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

- 1 Analyse how social influences affect individuals using care services by:
 - 1.1 Explaining social influences on an individual, using sociological theories
 - 1.2 Explaining the impact of social influences on the life chances of an individual, using sociological theories
 - 1.3 Explaining and analysing actions taken in society to improve the life chances of an individual

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of sources and presented in a variety of formats. The evidence does not need to be achieved in one activity, but can be assembled from a variety of tasks and assessments undertaken throughout the Course. Evidence can be presented for individual Outcomes or gathered for the Unit or Course as a whole by combining assessment holistically in one single activity.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in *Unit Assessment Support*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.2 Writing

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level as the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Appendix: Unit support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ♦ the *Unit Specification*
- ♦ the *Unit Assessment Support packs*

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Approaches to learning and teaching

Teachers and lecturers should be aware that some topics and issues may be sensitive for individual learners and should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress. Discretion and professional judgement should always be used by teachers and lecturers and care should be taken in the choice and delivery of material. It would be appropriate to draw up a class code of conduct at the beginning of the class to ensure that all learners are aware of the need to maintain boundaries and show respect to self and others.

Suggestions for learning and teaching on specific areas include:

Social influences

Learners will have the opportunity to use sociological theories such as conflict theory, feminism, functionalism and symbolic interactionism to explore what is meant by society, and understand that there are different aspects of society that influence the way people think and behave. Learners will have the opportunity to explore socialisation; the process by which we learn to become a member of society and learn norms, values and roles.

Learners will have the opportunity to investigate the range of ways that people are influenced by primary and secondary agents of socialisation, which could include family, media, religion, education, government, peer groups or other relevant agents. Learners could investigate other ways in which society, at a systematic and institutional level, impacts on people through economic and political systems, patriarchy and other influences.

Learners could explore the process of socialisation by first reflecting on socialisation in their own family and community and what has influenced their development and behaviour. In this way, learners will apply sociological theories to familiar settings before applying them to cultures and circumstances different from their own.

Learners could use sociological theories to explore the levels of control that an agent of socialisation such as religion or education has for specific groups and what conflict might arise from the influence of different agents of socialisation on an individual.

Learners could use sociological theories to look at the influence of agents and how their importance has changed over time. For example, they could compare the influence of the media or the family on the attitudes and aspirations of adolescents now and in their parent's generation.

Each person lives within a variety of cultures (family, community, society, work, interest group, class etc.) and that the expectations of a person in each culture they are part of might not always be the same. Learners could explore the similarities and differences between cultures, the role of sub cultures, and the ways they influence the lives of people who belong to them.

When investigating socialisation and culture, learners will be able to explore the difference between sociological explanations, which are based upon researched evidence and are systematic and objective, and 'common sense' explanations or subjective beliefs based on personal opinion, which assumes that an aspect of behaviour is 'natural' and sees the individual as an uninfluenced 'free agent'.

Impact of social influences on life chances

Social influences may have a positive, neutral or negative effect on people. When people have a positive experience of socialisation within their family, school and community, they are likely to have access to a variety of life chances and experiences and the confidence and support to make the most of their opportunities. However, people such as service users and others may experience inequality based on factors such as gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion, socio/economic status, health status, or other aspects. A person may experience inequality due to a number of these factors.

People who experience inequality often experience disadvantage, disempowerment, exclusion, isolation, lack of opportunity and choice, lack of self-worth/self-esteem, marginalisation, oppression, subordination and face barriers when trying to access resources. This affects their ability to access all the life chances available in society, which has a further impact on their ability to fulfil their potential. People may end up in a cycle of poverty or deprivation from which it is difficult to escape.

The life chances and opportunities of people who experience inequality are reduced as they are more likely to:

- ◆ experience physical and mental health problems
- ◆ have poor attainment in education
- ◆ have limited opportunities in employment
- ◆ live in poverty
- ◆ face barriers to accessing services

Inequality is often linked to discrimination, as people who have lower status in society tend to be the ones negatively discriminated against. Learners will have the opportunity to explore the relationship between prejudice and stereotyping leading to acts of discrimination by individuals, communities and society.

Learners could explore the reasons for inequality and disadvantage, comparing explanations from a common sense perspective and a sociological perspective, based on an explanation that inequality is socially constructed: prejudice and stereotypes are learned. Learners could explore the role of socialisation in creating and perpetuating discrimination. Learners could use sociological concepts such as labelling, power, conflict, stratification, consensus and dysfunctional to explain inequality and discrimination.

- ◆ prejudice: prejudging someone: an opinion often based on lack of knowledge or fear
 - ◆ stereotyping: labelling someone as part of a group and not seeing them as an individual
 - ◆ discrimination: treating someone differently — this can be positive or negative
- Discrimination occurs when someone acts on a prejudice about a person, according to the stereotyped view they hold about the person, rather than seeing them as an individual who has a right to respect and fair treatment.

Prejudice is learned through the process of socialisation, based on the values and norms of the culture in which a person is raised. These norms and values vary between the different agents of socialisation the person is influenced by.

Learners could also explore the ways in which people who experience inequality choose to take action as an individual or as part of a group to highlight their situation and ensure that changes are made in an organisation or society to challenge inequality.

Reference to current issues in the media would serve to illustrate the impact of inequality on the life chances of individuals. Learners could be asked to pose a question and form groups to investigate and debate issues raised by the topic. Different roles can be allocated to learners to chair the debate, present point of view, challenge questions, support points of view, summarise key points. This could be videoed or notes could be taken.

Actions taken in society to improve life chances

Learners could investigate a number of actions that have been taken in society to improve life chances and challenge discrimination and stigma. This includes things such as campaigning for rights and social justice, lobbying parliament, the creation of initiatives and strategies targeted at specific groups, organising marches and petitions, developing new legislation, developing new services, raising awareness, publicising investigations and documentaries in the media, advertising campaigns, inspection of organisations and other relevant actions.

Learners could prepare questions for, and take notes from, meetings with guest speakers representing campaigns such as those for young carers, homeless people or user groups such as mental health forums.

Groups of learners could choose a specific group of people and investigate actions taken in their local area or in society to improve life chances for the group. They could then communicate their findings through a presentation, information leaflet, video or other appropriate medium, and answer questions from the rest of the class on their investigation.

Thematic approach

The Unit could be taught in a thematic way. For example, themes such as homelessness, stigma, deviance or poverty could be studied and learners could explore a variety of ways in which different sociological theories explain society and individuals within these themes. Some or all of the themes could be related specifically to care services, and the learner could explore which theories would help workers understand the context within which they live and work.

Learners could link their learning in this Unit with that in the *Care: Human Development and Behaviour* Unit when looking at a theme such as prejudice or discrimination; comparing and contrasting sociological and psychological explanations for behaviour and the formation of attitudes.

Combining assessment within Units

Assessment could be combined in this Unit by holistically assessing all the Outcomes of the Unit in a single assessment. When assessment within the Unit is holistic, teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual Outcome.

Administrative information

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Superclass: PN

History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Page 3 — Assessment Standards 1.1 to 1.3: 'individuals' changed to 'an individual'.	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
3.0	Level changed from Higher to SCQF level 6. Unit support notes added. Assessment standard threshold added.	Qualifications Manager	September 2018
4.0	Unit code updated	Qualifications Manager	July 2019

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