

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel in GCE Health &  
Social Care (6948)

Unit 11- Social Issues and Welfare  
Needs

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The assessment evidence required for this unit consists of a report into a social issue or welfare need. There was a low number of candidates this year, and most had attempted to meet the assessment requirements of the unit appropriately. An important aspect of this unit is the student's choice of issue, and learners who had difficulty meeting all the assessment requirements had generally chosen an inappropriate choice of issue to look at. Some centres had advised learners to look at health issues rather than social issues, which is not appropriate for this unit and makes it difficult for learners to access the mark bands. An example of this is obesity, which was regarded as a social issue by some students. Another issue to consider when choosing a topic is whether there are appropriate government responses associated with the issue. If there are not appropriate government responses then learners will have difficulty accessing marks in Assessment Objective (AO) 4. One technique that has proved useful to some centres is to ask learners to research government responses to the issue (AO4) before they embark on the report, to ensure they can all the necessary information exists. This should be one of the criteria used to assess the suitability of an issue for use in this unit.

Some centres had adopted a very directed and formulaic approach to this unit. Whilst this may help weaker students to complete the assessment successfully it may disadvantage more able students since it limits the opportunities for an individual approach to the completion of the assessment requirements of the unit.

In AO1 learners need to look at the origins of the social issue or welfare need that they are investigating. Some students are using research on the origins of the issue that go too far back into history; there is no need to go back further than the inception of the welfare state in the mid twentieth century. Some students had included information from as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century; this is not required and may disadvantage students as it lacks relevance for the modern period they may lose focus as a result.

In AO2 students need to show how demographic factors have affected the social issue or welfare need. Many learners had successfully identified relevant demographic factors and linked them to the issue under discussion. In some reports though learners had approached this AO very generically and links between factors and the issue in question were missing.

In AO3 learners need to look at the contemporary context of the social issue or welfare need they are investigating. This section of reports is usually done well, but the evidence for it is often included in the work for AO1. Assessors need to make sure they recognise

work that can be credited towards AO3 even though students may have put it elsewhere in their reports. In higher scoring reports candidates had used a range of relevant sources of different types, for example they had included charities such as MIND for mental health, and Help the Aged for ageing population.

In AO4 candidates need to provide an evaluation of government responses to the issue being looked at. Often there are descriptions rather than evaluations, and these are assessed in a higher high mark than they deserve. Centres need to ensure that they encourage candidates to evaluate government responses, and not just provide descriptions of them. Government responses can be from either central government or local government. Some of the best reports had excellent evaluations of local government responses. As mentioned above it is advisable that students research the requirements of this AO before embarking on the rest of the unit, to ensure that government responses exist and that they are able to deal with AO4 adequately.

