

Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2016

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in
Public Services

Unit 1: The Role and Work of the
Public Services (21484F)

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Introduction

This report has been written by the lead examiner for the BTEC unit entitled The Role and Work of the Public Services. It is designed to help you understand how learners performed overall in the exam. For each question there is a brief analysis of learner responses. You will also find example learner responses from Level 2 Pass, Merit and Distinction learners. We hope this will help you to prepare your learners for future examination series.

General Comments

This was the second examination series for Unit 1 entitled The Role and Work of the Public Services. It was pleasing to see many candidates attempted the majority of questions. In general, examiners were disappointed with the range and application of responses in some of the more challenging questions. These items tested both the higher order command words and Merit and Distinction grade descriptors.

Generally, learners were able to show an understanding of the role and work of the public services. However, it should be noted that their examination technique was not as effective as it could have been. Appropriate practice and preparation for external examinations should be a priority for tutors and centres using all of the information available.

The paper was wide ranging in terms of grades to be awarded. Often questions asked learners to explain **two** ways, or state **two** examples, but many learners limited the number of marks they could be awarded by only providing one example or limited explanations. Learners found some difficulty with the terminology used within the examination although the same terminology is used within the specification. Centres are encouraged to give learners copies of the specifications to support them in becoming familiar with the terminology that will be used during teaching, learning and assessment.

Feedback on specific questions

Q1

This was an identification question. Most learners were able to identify two public service who would be involved in the management of an incident of this type. Marks were not awarded for the response of 'Paramedic' as this is a person rather than a service.

Q2 (a)

Some learners were able to name one other service provided by local authorities. Examples such as 'education' or 'housing' were popular. Marks were only awarded for services not personnel.

Q2 (b)

Many learners were able to state one way social services support families and children. Popular answers for this included 'protecting vulnerable people ' and 'supporting families and children'.

Q 3

Two examples of how the police services carries out its role was required here. Responses to this were wide ranging and many learners were able to gain two marks for this question. Popular responses included 'responding to incidents' and 'community engagement'.

Q4

Most learners were able to name central government department with the most popular being 'education'. Marks were awarded for naming any of the 23 Ministerial departments.

Q4 (b)

A significant majority of learners were unable to gain the full marks available here. Learners could not state two functions of the Department of Education. Marks were awarded for responses such as 'teaching', 'ofsted' and 'policy formulation. Learners tended to focus on repeating the stem with responses such as:

providing education (0 mark) give people skills (0 mark)

Marks were awarded for responses such as:

ensure every child gets an education (1 mark) organise with the government the budget for the education system (1 mark)
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Q5 (a) (i)

Some learners were able to identify another example of a direct charge with responses such as:

payment for using public toilet (1 mark)
toll roads (1 mark)
prescription (1 mark)

Q5 (a) (ii)

Some learners only gained one out of the two marks available. Few were able to explain a disadvantage to the local authority of making direct charges but they did manage to identify a disadvantage with responses such as:

it can put people of using the service (1 mark)
they may not receive as much money as they expected (1 mark)
people may stop using them (1 mark)

It should be noted that learners must be clear in their answers what they mean for example a learner's response was 'complain'. Whilst this was not awarded a mark had the learner been clearer in their response it may have been awarded a mark.

Q5 (a) (iii)

Some learners only gained one out of the two marks available. Few were able to explain one way local authorities might use this additional funding but they did manage to identify a way with responses such as:

to buy other stuff to benefit their work and their customers (1 mark)
pay for other services (1 mark)
protect services in trouble by giving them money (1 mark)

Q5 (b) (i)

This question was taken directly from the specification A1 (bullet point 5). Learner responses needed to be specific when naming the voluntary sector public sector organization and learners performed well at this question.

Q5 (b) (ii)

This question was taken directly from the specification B2 (bullet point 8). Learner responses were wide ranging and the marks scheme allowed for this by accepting examples of sponsorship as well as references to non-public service situations in the learner responses. Common responses included:

paying a company to advertise another company (1 mark)
to sponsor someone basically giving them money (1 mark)
raising money by public donations (1 mark)

Q5 (c)

Again, this question was taken directly from the specification B2 (bullet point 6). Learner did not perform well at this question with muddled responses including:

people who are trained to work but only go when called (0 mark)
when asked to work with another sector (0 mark)

A few learners were able to give very clear definitions and marks were awarded for responses such as:

Contracting out e.g. 'meals on wheels' private company help/do the job (1 mark)
This is a service/organisation which are hired to aid and combine with public services via tendering (1 mark)

Q6

An explanation of how the British Army meets its purpose by providing humanitarian aid was required here. Overall most learners were able to gain one of the two marks available however learners repeated the stem with responses such around 'humanitarian aid' and 'conflict' which did not gain a mark. Responses that were awarded marks included:

if we help other countries they might help us when/if the UK is in danger (1 mark)
supporting international peacekeeping (1 mark)

Q7

An explanation of how the NSPCC support the work of Social Services was required here. Again, overall most learners were able to gain one of the two marks on offer however some learners switched round their responses and received no marks for example:

NSPCC solve problems that social services bring to their attention (0 mark)
social services do home checks for the NSPCC (0 mark)

A few learners were able to give very clear definitions and marks were awarded for responses such as:

NSPCC provide safety to children who have been physically or emotionally damaged (1 mark)
NSPCC support social services by advertising in the TV what children need (maybe a home) which is then done through social services (2 marks)

Q8

The majority of learners did not engaged with the scenario and, although this was quite a challenging question, gained 0-1 marks. Learners demonstrated that they have knowledge of public, private and voluntary sectors working together they did not read the question and the stem and did not give responses that explained two advantages to the **service user**.

Examiners were unsure if this was because learners did not understand the language used or learners did not read the stem and question fully. This should be highlighted when teaching learners as well as when supporting learners with exam techniques.

Examples of responses that demonstrated learners have knowledge of public, private and voluntary sectors working together but did not read the question and the stem and gained zero marks are:

They get to use a wider range of resources as they are shared amongst all three sectors when they work together (0 marks) / they work better together and gain experiences in teamwork with other people (0 marks)

This means that the resources that are spread amongst the services are better and bigger allowing them to do a better job (0 marks) / by working together they will increase their speed and can do the job quicker and better (0 marks)

Some learners gained one mark and responses included;

a service user might get a quicker service (1 mark)
this might help them get a better reputation with their customers (1 mark)
this could allow the people who use the services to get more help (1 mark)

Q9 (a)

This was a multiple choice question asking learners to identify which government department is responsible for the UK Border Agency taken directly from the specification A2 (bullet point 8).

Q9 (b)

The majority of learners were able to state one function of the UK Border Agency. The examining team are aware this agency was replaced in 2013 by UK Visas and Immigration / Immigration Enforcement but learners are not expected to know this change in title. As such the marks scheme allowed for this and answers which referred to both the functions of the UK Border Agency as well as UK Visas and Immigration / Immigration Enforcement were awarded.

Q10

This group of questions was taken directly from the specification A2 (bullet point 13). Learners did not perform well at these and confused the role between Crown Prosecution / Probation / Prison and voluntary services within the Justice sector.

(a)

An explanation of one purpose of the crown prosecution service was required here. Learners did not answer this question well and many responses suggested that the CPS are responsible for 'deciding if someone is guilty' or 'to get justice and lock people up'.

(b)

An explanation of one purpose of the probation service was required here. Learners performed better with this question but few were able to gain all marks as the question asked for an explanation and learners were not able to give that level of detail in their responses. For example;

help people who was in prison when the get out (1 mark) keep an eye / monitor prisoners when allowed back in society (1 mark)
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It should be noted that learners must be clear in their answers what they mean for example one learner response was 'keep the prison'. Whilst this was not awarded a mark had the learner been clearer/expanded in their response it may have been awarded a mark.

(c)

An explanation of one purpose of the prison service was required here. Learners performed better with this question but few were able to gain all marks as the question asked for an explanation and learners were not able to give that level of detail in their responses. For example;

Keep prisons running properly (1 mark) keep prisoners in prison out of harms way (1 mark)
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(d)

An explanation of one purpose of voluntary sector organisations supporting individuals involved in the court process was required here. Learners did not perform well at this question and many responses suggested that voluntary organisations 'provide solicitors in court' or 'the jury decide if you are guilty'.

Q11 (a)

Few learners were able to name one voluntary organisation that supports the work of the police service. Popular answers were as 'Red Cross' or 'Mountain Rescue' but many learners responded with 'PCSO' which is not a voluntary organisation.

Q11b

The majority of learners did not engaged with the scenario and, although this was quite a challenging question, majority of learners gained 0-1 marks. Learners demonstrated that they have knowledge of the impact of funding cuts on service provision but they did not read the question and the stem and did not give responses that explained two ways cutting funding to the **voluntary sector** impacts they support they can provide.

This should be highlighted when teaching learners as well as when supporting learners with exam techniques.

Examples of responses that demonstrated learners have knowledge of the impact of funding cuts but did not read the question and the stem and gained zero marks are:

When funding is cut for the ambulance service they y not be able to help everyone and may not have the best equipment (0 marks) / when funding is cut for the Coastguard people can be lost at sea because they are not able to get to them quick enough (0 marks)

One way cutting funding can impact the ambulance service is with less funding less paramedics might be trained which means there are less ambulances to attend calls (0 marks) / funding can impact the HM Coastguard because with less donations the HM Coastguard cannot do their job properly (0 marks)

If a response did not refer to ambulance or coastguard it was assumed by examiners that the response referred to the voluntary sector support and the marks scheme was written to allow for marks to be awarded for responses such as:

a service user might get a quicker service (1 mark)
this might help them get a better reputation with their customers (1 mark)
this could allow the people who use the services to get more help (1 mark)

Q12

This question was taken directly from the specification A2 (bullet point 14). Learner responses needed to be look at one way that DEFRA work towards protecting the environment. In order to gain marks responses needed to be at strategic level for example 'agree policy' or co-ordinate responses in emergencies'. Learners tended to give responses at service level such as 'putting up more recycling bins' or 'by putting solar panels on houses'.

Some learners were awarded marks with responses such as:

monitor pollution levels (1 mark) protecting fishing quotas (1 mark) stopping trees being cut down in (1 mark)
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Q13

This question provided an opportunity for the learner to demonstrate their ability to discuss ways the fire and rescue service could prevent similar concerns being raised in the future following in an independent report on the Shirley Towers fire in 2013.

The examiners remind learners that marks will not be awarded where responses

- simply restate the findings of the report
- look at one aspect of the report but fail to consider other issues
- only discussed consequences for prisoners

Learners are reminded that the use of offensive and derogatory terms is unacceptable. Tutors must ensure that this does not happen in future exams.

Learners did not respond well to this question with most learners who were awarded marks only providing a Level 1 response.

The response below gained two marks. The response only identifies ways the fire and rescue service could prevent these concerns in the future briefly. Most points are relevant:

One way fire and rescue service could prevent these concerns is buy using their funding better and at the end of the year make sure they have all the PPE. Make sure they have enough staff and give them some more training so when they go into a burning building they can communicate with each other and do their job properly. (2 marks)
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The response below gained four marks. The response discusses ways the fire and rescue service could prevent these concerns in the future briefly. Most points are relevant:

Using the money they are given by the government to spend on better more up-to-date PPE . They could practice their operational procedures regularly so they are more efficient at this. They could do more training say every two weeks so everyone can communicate better. Thy should also do regular kit checks to make sure it all properly (4 marks)

Summary of performance on the paper

Based on their performance on this paper, in future learners should:

- Be aware that there is an hour to complete this paper and plan time accordingly. The lengthier questions come towards the end of the paper so more time could be allocated for later questions.
- Spend time reading each question thoroughly to ensure the question asked is the question answered.
- Be aware that all parts of the specification will be tested during the life of the qualification.
- Study the specification to ensure key aspects that could be tested are known.
- Look at the command word in the question – outline, describe, explain, discuss. These words provide information on the type of response required and how the answer should be phrased. For example, 'outline' requires a basic response, whereas 'explain' will require an initial idea or way to be identified followed by expansion and/or examples to apply and illustrate why this idea or way is suitable.
- If two explanations are required half the marks will be awarded for the first response and the other half will be awarded for the second response. So if only one explanation is made then half the marks allocated for the question will be lost.
- Plan the response to the last question which will require a number of different aspects to be addressed, with reasoning, for higher marks to be awarded. Use all of the information supplied, such as statistics.
- Exam techniques are important and appropriate preparation will ensure that learners approach the exam more confidently and with knowledge of how to respond to different types of questions.

Grade Boundaries

Unit	Max Mark	D	M	P	L1	U
21484F – Unit 1: The Role and Work of the Public Services	50	38	29	21	13	0

External assessment

The suite of 'next generation' NQF BTECs include an element of external assessment. This external assessment may be through a timetabled paper-based examination, an onscreen, on demand test or a set-task conducted under controlled conditions.

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we 'set' the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Level 1 fallback).

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries - this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries ensures that a learner who receives a 'Distinction' grade next year, will have similar ability to a learner who has received an 'Distinction' grade this year. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to make sure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in externally assessed question papers

Each exam we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries year on year because then it wouldn't take into account that a paper may be slightly easier or more difficult than the year before.

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found

here: <http://pastpapers.edexcel.com/content/edexcel/grade-boundaries.html>

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