

Unit 1: Government, Policies and the Public Services

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| Unit code: | K/600/5979 |
| QCF Level 3: | BTEC National |
| Credit value: | 10 |
| Guided learning hours: | 60 |

● Aim and purpose

This unit enables learners to develop knowledge and understanding of the UK government policies and the democratic election process. It also enables them to demonstrate the process of developing government policies and how these policies impact on the public services.

● Unit introduction

A major part of the UK's government process is the democratic election of representatives to all levels of government including local, regional, national and European governments. Learners will examine the responsibilities that each level of government has to maintain effective public services, and also explore the different electoral processes available, and those currently used. Learners will then move on to investigate the main roles of elected representatives within the different government levels, including a brief investigation into the devolved parliaments in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and also the European Parliament, although an in-depth knowledge of these is not required.

Learners will also study the structure of government in the UK to discover what the different levels of government are, from central government to local councils. This investigation will lead to knowing about specific responsibilities of government departments and other organisations involved in the government structure, including their relationship to the public services.

The unit will explain how government policies are developed, give an understanding of the legislative process and the effects that government policies can have on the public services, the personnel working within them and the provision of services.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the different levels of government in the UK
- 2 Understand the democratic election process for each level of government in the UK
- 3 Know the impact of UK government policies on the public services
- 4 Be able to demonstrate how government policies are developed.

Unit content

1 Know the different levels of government in the UK

Levels of government and their responsibilities: European Parliament; central government; devolved parliaments, local authorities; regional governments; other local authorities; other institutions in the government process, eg the monarchy, House of Commons, House of Lords; branches of government (executive, legislative, judicial); main roles at government levels eg prime minister, government ministers, members of parliament, mayors, council members; London Assembly

Responsibilities of government departments and other levels of government for specific public services: the government departments' responsible for the public services eg Ministry of Defence, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department for Communities and Local Government

Accountability of public services: inspectorates used to monitor public services activities eg HM inspectorates (constabularies, prisons, probation, Independent Police Complaints Commission, Care Quality Commission, defence vetting agency); local organisations eg police authorities, health authorities, fire and rescue authorities

2 Understand the democratic election process for each level of government in the UK

Democratic election processes: who is entitled to stand for election; candidate selection processes; the influence of the party system on elections; representatives; period of election; publicity and electioneering activities undertaken; the voting processes eg personal, postal, electronic; election-day activities for different elections eg general elections, local elections eg parish, district, county, metropolitan boroughs elections; responsibilities of elected bodies; voting systems used eg first past the post, single transferable vote, alternative vote, proportional representation

3 Know the impact of UK government policies on the public services

Examples of policies affecting different public services: policies that influence all services eg environmental, civilian, equal opportunities, human rights, financial reductions or increases; policies affecting the military services eg declarations of war, increased use of reserve forces, increased use of technology; links with other international services (NATO, United Nations, combined services activities); policies affecting the emergency services eg fire and rescue station closures in some areas, target-setting standards (attendance times, petrol usage, financial targets)

Social responses to government policies: how government actions affect the public services eg civil disobedience, demonstrations involving the police and ambulance services, terrorism affecting all the services, meetings that require police attendance, picketing of sites such as military bases and closing companies, sit-ins to prevent road building

4 Be able to demonstrate how government policies are developed

Development processes: meetings that will occur to create policies eg cabinet meetings, parliamentary committees and sub-committees, the use of white papers and green papers in Parliament, consultation meetings, public meetings or enquiries; representations from outside government eg from opposition members of parliament (MPs), letters to MPs, MP's constituency surgeries

The legal processes used to create legislation: the drafting of the statute; laying before parliament; parliamentary readings; voting in House of Commons and House of Lords; signature by the monarch; setting dates of implementation; issuing guidance and directives to public services to support the implementation and identify their accountability; advertisements in media to publicise the law; financing of charities and organisations to assist in the implementation of policies eg Prince's Trust, NACRO, probation service

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 outline the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK | M1 explain in detail the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK | D1 evaluate the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK |
| P2 describe the role of government departments in relation to public services including their responsibilities | | |
| P3 explain the electoral processes used in UK elections | M2 compare the electoral processes used at different levels of government in the UK | |
| P4 describe, with examples, the impact of government policies on different public services | M3 explain the impact of different government policies on a range of public services | D2 evaluate the impact of government policies on public services and the communities they serve. |
| P5 identify how society is affected by government policies | | |
| P6 demonstrate how government policies are developed. [SM3] | M4 analyse how government policies are developed. | |

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate 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 gives learners a basic overview of the levels of government that are part of the UK's political structure. It is intended to give learners an understanding of how the layers of government, including the European Parliament, are interconnected and relate to public services. Learners will be expected to know the responsibilities of different government levels for public services. They will need to understand the democratic processes in place to elect the representatives who are part of the government structure in the UK. Learners will also need to know how government policies are developed and how they can affect the uniformed public services. The unit is a stand-alone unit which can also be used as a sound introduction to the position of public services in our society today. It will provide a basis for progression to a number of other units identified in the *Links* section.

To enable learners to understand the relationships between the different levels of government, they will need access to information about the many local and national government organisations. This can be done by researching the various reports, such as the Audit Commission and local government performance reports, that are issued regularly and meeting with a variety of elected representatives. Visits to council offices and other government offices could be used to enable learners to build case studies, identifying the roles of both the elected and non-elected personnel, for example civil servants, pressure groups and lobby groups. To enable the learner to gain knowledge of particular government departments related to the public services, tasks which involve group or individual work will help considerably. Websites listed in *Indicative reading for learners*, will be informative in this respect. If this or visits are not possible, the information will need to be provided via tutor presentations.

When developing their understanding of electoral processes, learners should be encouraged to participate in any elections that they can to gain first-hand experience. This experience would bring them a greater understanding of the electoral processes and the democratic system that is the basis of these elections. To be able to identify the responsibilities of the different levels of government for the public services, a variety of different resources can be used. These could include guest speakers from the elected bodies and public services groups and visits to offices of the various organisations. Additionally, any public documents such as annual reports, mission statements, statistical records and other documents issued on behalf of government organisations will help to develop a better understanding of government practices. Learners need to develop an understanding of the likely effects on the public services of government policies, and to do this they will need to read journals and newspapers. The journals can be those distributed for specific public services or other weekly journals as shown in the *Indicative reading for learners* section. Learners will need to update themselves regularly on current affairs through news broadcasts, the internet or the daily press. This will give them the opportunity to consider the effects of different government policies.

Finally, learners will need to know how government policies are developed and implemented with particular reference to public services. It is expected that these processes will have to be taught using presentations to ensure that learners understand them clearly. Learners' knowledge of the additional factors that can influence government policies can be introduced through the talks and visits mentioned above. To address the influences it is important that learners are introduced to differing views of government policies. This will develop their understanding of the methods that are used to influence government policy decisions, such as lobbying parliament and use of the press and demonstrations against policies. This knowledge will help learners if they are involved in discussions about government policies and their development and also in the evaluation of the impact that these policies have on public services.

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 |
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| Introduction to the unit and assessment methodology. |
| Teaching activity incorporating group work and guest speakers from the different levels of government where possible. |
| Case study analysis looking at the responsibilities of the levels of government. |
| Teaching activity surrounding the roles at government levels, including a role-play activity to reinforce knowledge. |
| Research activity gathering evidence of links between government departments and public services. |
| Assignment 1: Roles and Levels of Government (P1, P2, M1 and D1) |
| Preparation for assessment of learning outcome 1 – learner-led presentation covering roles and levels of government. |
| Formal assessment of learning outcome 1. |
| Review of assessment including learner feedback and reworking. |
| Teaching activity relating to the current election process used for the differing levels of government, including election to the European Parliament. |
| Research activity investigating alternative voting systems available. |
| Assignment 2: Electoral Processes (P3 and M2) |
| Preparation for assessment of learning outcome 2 – report covering electoral processes used in UK elections. |
| Formal assessment of learning outcome 2 including learner feedback and reworking. |
| Teaching activity – introduction to a variety of policies introduced and proposed by UK government at different levels, including local and national. |
| Case study analysis of different policies and how they impact on UK public services. |
| Teaching activity – how do members of the public respond, both positively and negatively, to government policies? |
| Case study analysis of social response to government policies |
| Assignment 3: Policy Impacts (P4, P5, M3 and D2) |
| Preparation for assessment of learning outcome 3 – learner-led seminar on the impact of a government policy and the response of society to this. |
| Formal assessment of learning outcome 3, including learner feedback. |
| Teaching activity – government process for developing policies, including use of focus groups, consultation, and legislative process. |
| Learner group work – developing proposed policies, where learners work together to simulate the process, through developing realistic policies, using focus groups amongst their peers and constructing questionnaires to support the process. Class can then act as the two houses and debate the policies before voting. |
| Assignment 4: Policy Development (P6 and M4) |
| Preparation of assessment of learning outcome 4 – discussion activity with individual learners or groups to assess knowledge and experience of simulation exercise. |
| Formal assessment of learning outcome 4, including learner feedback. |
| Review of unit and assessment. |

Assessment

To achieve a pass grade, learners must meet the six pass criteria in the *Assessment and grading criteria* section. To achieve a merit grade, learners must meet all the pass criteria and four merit criteria. To achieve a distinction grade, learners must meet all the pass criteria, all the merit criteria and all the distinction criteria.

To achieve P1, learners must outline the responsibilities of the various levels of government and elected bodies from local councils and national government to the European Parliament. To show the relationship of the tiers of government, learners could create a hierarchical diagram with Parliament at the top, with a spur off to the European Parliament, and local councils at the bottom. A brief outline of the responsibilities at each level will be sufficient to gain the pass. As M1 is an extension of the task for P1, learners will need to explain the responsibilities that each level of government has in the UK. Evidence can be achieved by including an additional section of information for each level of government with the chart provided to achieve P1. M1 will be achieved if learners explain how the responsibilities referred to in the chart are managed at the appropriate level of government.

For P2, learners must identify a minimum of two government departments and include a basic description of their responsibilities for specific public services. This evidence can be combined with the evidence for P1 in a presentation, but learners must ensure that they contain sufficient information on each government department. The information needs to include the name of the department, identification of the minister currently responsible for it and a description of the department's responsibilities for the selected public service.

When discussing the role of the government departments for P2, it is important that learners make reference to which government department holds the public services accountable, for example the Home Office will hold the police services accountable for their spending and performance, using information provided by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabularies amongst other information.

The explanation should be detailed and will be expected to identify the complete process from the initial application to stand for election to the declaration of the vote, including the voting system that is used. The explanation can be in the form of a report using pictures and words to describe each stage of the process. Evidence for M2 must include a comparison of the election process for the elected representatives for at least two levels of government. This will involve the learner in providing evidence which could support the report for P2, showing evidence of independent thought when making the comparison comments. They must not present just a simple list of comparative points between the election processes for the different levels of government.

To achieve D1, learners must evaluate the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK. To do so they will need to evaluate information provided for P1, P2 and M1, to consider the appropriateness of both the responsibilities of the different levels of government and include comments which express their views.

To achieve P4, learners must describe the impact of two government policies on different public services. They must cover a minimum of two government policies, saying how each policy has impacted on at least two public services. For example, if they were to choose the decision to implement ID cards, they could then discuss the effect this has on the police and local authorities. Learners would then choose a further policy and apply this to two other services. M3 is an extension to this, and requires the learner to fully explain the impact on the public services. This will require them to show evidence of wider reading and an attempt to draw conclusions to their findings. Evidence for these criteria could come from learner-led seminars where they research the policies and the impacts they have on public services, and present this to a small group of their peers. Learners need to include information in their seminar which identifies how government policies can be influenced by different groups or social factors. Evidence for P5 can be combined with that of P4 as the learners can move on to discuss how society has been affected by proposed policies. They will need to present a valid and justified identification, which must cover both the positive and negative consequences, rather than simply their opinion.

Legislative processes used to create legislation should be assessed as part of P6 and M4, as they are integral part of how government policies are developed.

To achieve P6, learners must demonstrate how government policies are developed. This may be achieved through participation in a simulation of the development process of government policies. Learners could formulate and research a policy, through the use of focus groups and questionnaires. The class could then debate each policy and vote on it in a simulation of the Houses of Parliament. Learners could make notes about each process and use the information to make clear and effective contributions to an observed discussion with a small group of their peers. In this way both the observation comments and the prepared notes can contribute to their assessment. The explanation must include reference to the general development processes such as the use of parliamentary committees and the legal processes if the policy is to be implemented.

To achieve M4, learners will be expected to analyse the development process, building on the notes prepared for activity P6. Using all the evidence gathered for P4, P5 and P6 and M3 and M4 learners must evaluate the impact on the public services and communities of the government policies already described, including their comments and views.

Programme of suggested assignments

The following table shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the 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, D1 | Roles and Levels of Government | As part of a community education section of the local authority you have to present information on local, national and European government to a group of Year 8 students as part of a PSHE lesson. | Learner-led presentation. |
| P3, M2 | Electoral Processes | To continue your work in the community education department, you have been tasked with preparing a report on the current electoral process used in the UK, making suggestions as to alternatives that could be used. | Report. |
| P4, P5, M3, D2 | Policy Impacts | Still working within the local authority, you have been seconded to a working party that is monitoring the impact of government policies. on public services and their personnel | Learner-led seminar. |

| Criteria covered | Assignment title | Scenario | Assessment method |
|------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| P6, M4 | Policy Development | You have worked well within the local authority and decided to become an MP. Once elected, you have been appointed to a committee that will drive policy development for your party. Your first task is to participate in the development and legislative process for a new policy. | Role-play simulation with supporting observed discussion. |

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

This unit forms part of the BTEC Public Services sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the Public Services suite:

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Public Services Skills | Citizenship, Diversity and the Public Services |
| | Law and its Impact on the Individual | International Institutional and Human Rights |
| | Crime and its Effects on Society | Aspects of the Legal System and Law making Process |

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Where possible, learners should visit local public services covering the types indicated by the content or have talks from guest speakers who can discuss how government policies are developed and how these policies impact on the public services. Where this is not possible, learners should have access to appropriate case study material taken from recent sources. Learners also need to have access to relevant websites.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Axford B et al – *Politics: An Introduction, 2nd Edition* (Routledge, 2002) ISBN 0415226422/9780415226424

Peele G – *Governing the UK, 4th Edition* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004) ISBN 0631226818/9780631226819

Stanley M – *How to be a Civil Servant* (Politico's Publishing Ltd, 2004) ISBN 9781842750971

Journals

Hansard

Police Review

Prison News

Soldier

Magazines

The Economist

The Spectator

The Week

Other publications

Documents produced by local authorities, to include annual reports and minutes.

Parliamentary publications

Websites

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|--|--|
| 10 Downing Street | www.number10.gov.uk |
| Direct Gov – public services all in one place | www.direct.gov.uk |
| Electoral Commission | www.electoralcommission.org.uk |
| European Parliament | www.europarl.org.uk |
| How to be a Civil Servant | www.civilservant.org.uk |
| Information for local government from central government | www.info4local.gov.uk |
| Local Government Association | www.lga.gov.uk |
| London Assembly | www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london |
| New Local Government Network | www.nlgn.org.uk |
| UK Parliament | www.parliament.uk |
| Welsh Government | www.wales.gov.uk |

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

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 ... |
|---------------|--|
| Self-managers | demonstrating how government policies are developed. |

Although PLTS opportunities are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

| Skill | When learners are ... |
|-----------------------|---|
| Independent enquirers | evaluating the impact of government policies supporting conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence |
| Self-managers | organising time and resources, prioritising actions when demonstrating how government policies are developed. |