



## Unit 8: Sociological Perspectives

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### Delivery guidance

#### Approaching the unit

Sociology is the study of society and different groups, covering social class, religion, disability and the area in which we live. Sociology in health and social care allows us to understand the impact that social processes can have on individuals and groups of people from all areas of society. It allows us to understand the factors that influence different beliefs about health and why behaviours such as unhealthy lifestyle choices occur.

Different perspectives in sociology, along with patterns and trends in health and ill health, need to be understood by health and social care professionals to allow provision and practice to develop effectively to meet the ever-changing needs of the society in which we live.

Throughout this unit, learners will develop transferable skills and competencies that will allow them to consider the inequalities faced by individuals and groups of people in society, applying these to the health and social care sector through an understanding of health and different models used to support health and wellbeing. The unit also allows for an understanding of how service provision is developed due to demographic change, data and the incidence and prevalence of different diseases across society as a whole.

#### Delivering the learning aims

**Learning aim A** allows learners to understand sociological concepts and perspectives applied to health and social care, providing them with a breadth and depth of knowledge in relation to diversity of culture and identity and the main institutions within society. This learning aim also allows learners to focus on specific sociological perspectives that can be applied when working in health and social care. These ideas can be used in conjunction with local settings that learners are familiar with to support their understanding of the use of sociology in the sector.



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**Learning aim B** gives learners an understanding of models and concepts of health, ill health and disability. This section of the unit allows for learners to understand the reasoning behind treatments and approaches taken by health and social care professionals, along with social group views on health. It also allows for the opportunity to explore medicalisation of health and the different ways in which individuals may receive treatment due to changes in the health and social care sector through history. Learners should be able to develop an awareness and understanding of how practice can impact different service user groups in both positive and negative ways.

**Learning aim C** further develops an understanding of different social groups in society, focusing on the idea of inequalities and how these can have a significant impact on different groups. This section allows for good discussion and understanding to be developed about aspects such as discrimination in health and social care and prejudice towards certain social groups. It also gives learners the opportunity to consider social groups that may be outside of their everyday life, to develop an understanding of the needs of a range of individuals. There is the opportunity to develop numeracy skills through analysis of demographic data, and patterns and trends of health and ill health, which supports learner understanding of the development of service provision and practice in the sector.

### Assessment model

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
<b>A</b> Understand how sociological concepts and perspectives are applied to the study of health and social care	<b>A1</b> Concepts and terminology used within sociology <b>A2</b> The key sociological perspectives	A report on the role of sociological perspectives in the understanding of society, and models and concepts of health in relation to service provision in a local health and social care setting.
<b>B</b> Examine how sociological approaches support understanding of models and concepts of health	<b>B1</b> The biomedical model of health and alternatives <b>B2</b> The concepts of health, ill health and disability	
<b>C</b> Examine how social inequalities, demographic change, and patterns and trends affect health and social care delivery	<b>C1</b> Inequalities within society <b>C2</b> Demographic change and data <b>C3</b> Patterns and trends in health and ill health within social groups	A report on the sociological explanations for patterns and trends of health and ill health in different social groups.

### Assessment guidance

This unit is internally assessed. There is a maximum of two summative assignments for this unit. Tutors should refer to the assessment guidance in the specification for specific detail, particularly in relation to the requirements for Pass, Merit and Distinction grades.

It is suggested that **learning aims A and B** are assessed through a written report that addresses sociological concepts and perspectives in relation to a local health and social care setting. Learners will need to explore how these contribute to our understanding of health and ill health and how society functions. The report also aims to allow learners to explore models and concepts of health, considering how these are used in health and social care practice and provision. The report should be supported by the use of a local health and social care setting case study to allow learners to focus their learning and apply concepts to specific areas of provision and practice in the sector.



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**Learning aim C** should be assessed through a second report including inequalities in different social groups, along with patterns and trends in health and ill health, supported by demographic data that is relevant and up to date. This report allows learners to focus their learning on a particular setting as a continuation of the first report, providing them with the opportunity to examine how data can have an impact on the distribution and delivery of services across health and social care.



## Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

### Introduction

This unit gives learners the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of sociology and its implementation in health and social care. As a starting point, learners should understand why we study sociology and the benefits to understanding the needs of different social groups. For example, if there is a prevalence of a particular disease associated with one social group, learners should understand how and why it is important to address this and overcome the issue to remove inequalities.

### Learning aim A: Understand how sociological concepts and perspectives are applied to the study of health and social care

- Learning aim A is focused on diversity of culture and identity and the main social institutions. Learners should understand a range of different social groups and how they contribute to society, along with the support required from different health and social care provisions. As a starting point, you could give learners some case studies of individuals/social groups and the issues that they face for discussion in small groups. They could consider the issues faced and the impact that these can have on health and wellbeing.
- For A1, the primary focus is on concepts and terminology used within sociology in relation to diversity of culture and identity. You could watch relevant documentaries that highlight the issues faced by some of these groups. Alongside this, you could ask learners to investigate news articles on a range of issues such as the impact of social class on health and wellbeing.
- For A2, the focus is on different sociological perspectives, including functionalism, Marxism, feminism, interactionism and postmodernism. You could give learners key ideas on each perspective through tutor-led sessions, using a range of case studies for different social groups/health and social care settings to apply these ideas to real-life situations in the context of health and social care.

### Learning aim B: Examine how sociological approaches support understanding of models and concepts of health

- Learning aim B focuses on models and concepts of health. It is important for learners to understand the idea that different models can be used in a range of ways to support different social groups in different contexts. For

example, a combination of the biomedical model and the social model may be needed when caring for someone with a mental health condition because they may need medical treatment alongside social support to function in society.

- For B1, the primary focus is on models of health including the biomedical model, the social model, the complimentary model and personalised care models. These models will give learners a good understanding of how we see and approach health and wellbeing as practitioners in the sector. This could be done through tutor-led sessions to provide learners with information for each model, applied through discussion of different settings that learners attend – for example, a discussion on the different approaches taken by family doctors, hospital specialists or social care environments that learners (or their family members) have used.
- For B2, the focus is on concepts of health, ill health and disability. There is a vast array of documentaries and current research that can be used to support delivery of the concepts included in this section. For example, when teaching medicalisation of health, the focus could be on the change to childbirth through history. Learners could focus on medical interventions during labour and how these have evolved through the years (home births versus hospital births, the use of drugs during labour, the use of medical equipment and the benefits/drawbacks of these). When considering the sick role, there could be a focus on the recent pandemic, the need for assuming the sick role through isolation, having vaccinations, travel restrictions etc. It is also possible to highlight the changes in self-care and health in relation to the clinical iceberg while discussing this, linking the two together to consider the change in our approach to health.

### **Learning aim C: Examine how social inequalities, demographic change, and patterns and trends affect health and social care delivery**

- Learning aim C is focused on social inequalities, demographic change, and patterns and trends that can affect health and social care delivery. This learning aim should use previous learning to support delivery where possible. Learners will already have an understanding of different social groups and the inequalities faced through learning aims A and B and this should be built upon in this section of the unit.
- For C1, learners need to understand the social inequalities faced by different social groups and the impact that these can have on health and wellbeing. One way that this can be delivered is through a guest speaker from a local health and social care setting. For example, they may work with

individuals from a more deprived socio-economic group and discuss with learners what impact this can have on holistic health and wellbeing, while considering the prejudice faced, stereotyping that may occur, along with the idea of marginalisation of this group in society.

- For C2 and C3, the focus is on demographic change and patterns and trends that can affect health and social care delivery. Again, this should be related back to previous content in order for learners to apply their understanding of different social groups to the data presented. It is a good idea to undertake a whole-class example to start learners in their understanding because interpreting data can be difficult for learners without guidance. One option is to provide learners with data in relation to mortality, life expectancy and age. They could work through graphs/charts/data for an older age group to consider what issues they face with health in later years, the main causes of ill health/death, and service provision offered to this particular social group. It is also important to introduce learners to different organisations that collect and interpret data to support their ability to research and generate their own evidence for assessment. This should support learners with application to a local health and social care setting for assessment.

### **Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications**

This unit links to:

- Unit 9: Psychological Perspectives
- Unit 10: Supporting Individuals with Additional Needs
- Unit 14: Policy in Health and Social Care

### **Resources**

#### **Textbooks**

Barry, A M and Yuill, C – *Understanding the Sociology of Health* (Sage Publications, 2016) ISBN 9781473929456

Clarke, A – *The Sociology of Healthcare* (Longman, 2013) ISBN 9781405858496

Wainwright, D – *A Sociology of Health* (Sage Publications, 2008)  
 ISBN 9781473902961



## Journals

*Frontiers in Sociology*

*Journal of Sociology*

*The Sociological Review*

## Videos

A wide variety of videos can be found on the internet to support delivery of this unit. Useful documentaries on social groups, clips to explain inequalities in health, models and concepts can be found in abundance. These should be relevant and appropriate for the level of learning and learners undertaking the course.

## Websites

A wide variety of websites can be used to support learning in this unit. It is good to use:

- government-led sites
- healthcare organisations
- social care organisations
- reputable charities.

*Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.*