



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **Health and Social Care 8626/8629**

**HC18      Social Policy**

# **Report on the Examination**

*June 2009*

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## **HC18: Social Policy**

This unit attracted more candidates than in previous years and the quality of the work follows an upward trend. Formal reports were the norm and some interesting and insightful conclusions were drawn.

The unit challenges candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of how central and local governments attempt to deal with social problems in the UK today. Candidates in many cases chose a sensible and relevant research question (a social policy issue) and produced a report focused locally and/or nationally. There were far fewer instances of inappropriate topics than last year. The emphasis was on Health and Social Care related issues of a practical and applied nature contributing to the improved quality of the work.

The inclusion of reams of generic material was far less evident and some highly original reports were submitted. The work demonstrated thought and independence. Nutrition was superseded this year as the most popular choice by underage pregnancy, smoking and drinking. Less academic reports tended to focus on the more sensational subjects such as drug abuse or prostitution.

Marks tended to be 'clustered', with whole centres presenting reports in either the higher or the lower mark bands. Candidates produced formal reports following the guidelines in the specification.

The introduction to the reports adopted a concise and formal style with the majority of candidates evidencing relevant facts, knowledge and a real understanding and concern about contemporary issues.

There was an improvement in the application of appropriate terminology when discussing policy issues. Candidates demonstrated an understanding of cause and effect with issues and possible consequences discussed, supported by secondary source information.

A range of policy solutions was covered and applied to their targeted issue by the majority of candidates. When discussing instruments of social policy some candidates neglected to evaluate their effectiveness, or to illustrate points with everyday examples. The crux of the problem appeared to be that some candidates did not appear to understand what an instrument of social policy actually is. Understanding and use of appropriate terminology is a problem area and needs to be tackled if candidates are to reach the higher mark bands.

Research and referenced materials should support any analytical input. This is an area where there is room for improvement. Analysis of any data is often made clearer or more palatable using visual representations such as charts or graphs. Cost benefits modelling might also serve the candidates well in this section.

The section where candidates were required to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of potential or actual policy solutions tended to be limited. Possible outcomes are a useful way of evaluating solutions. Many candidates did offer their own original solutions to the research issue and the ramifications of the implementation were fully discussed and analysed. The less able candidates often fared well in this section where commentary drawn from common sense and/or experience rather than intellectual rigor sometimes attracted higher marks.

Overall this unit was tackled in an interesting and sociologically competent manner. The reports are not only creditworthy in terms of their academic competence but interesting in that they reflect the sensitive, informed and responsible attitudes and thoughts of young people on the issues of our times.

### ***Grade boundaries***

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