

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

GCE Health & Social Care (6941) Paper 01
Unit 4 - Social Aspects and Lifestyle Choices

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General comments

The format and style of the paper was similar to that in the previous series. There were three full questions in total, each marked out of 30, giving an overall total for the paper of 90 marks. The scenarios enabled the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge across the full breadth of the specification.

The external assessment paper covered the unit specification, which includes:

- Lifestyle choices and life course events
- Social factors affecting health and well-being
- Care professional/service user relationships

A holistic summation of the paper is that it was very fair and gave the candidates the opportunity to show what they have learnt throughout the course. Using the young carer as the focus for the case study was felt to work well as candidates were able to relate to this subject as there has been a lot of information on it in the media over the last year.

The examiners felt that the paper discriminated well, with a wide range of marks being seen in each question. They noted that the candidates repeated previous mistakes seen in other series in that they did not read the question stem correctly, confusing words in them and often repeating themselves. Many candidates paraphrase the question at the beginning of their response, thereby not able to gain credit for their answer until half way down the page. The Quality of Written Communication was often not very good and bullet points were frequently seen which limits the number of marks that a candidate can be awarded. A number of candidates appeared to become so engrossed with the scenario of the question that they were unable to look beyond it.

Question 1

This question was based around Molly, a young carer, 12 years of age. Carol, Molly's mother is physically disabled and uses a wheelchair. The candidates were asked to draw upon their knowledge of the formal support available to Molly in helping to look after Carol, the effects of positive peer pressure and the factors that may contribute to a change in an adolescent's self-esteem.

In part 1(a) the majority of candidates scored 1 mark for this question as very few wrote that a life course event 'affects the personal development of an individual'

Overall part 1(b) was not well answered. The majority of candidates were unable to make the link between physical disability and the effects on an individual's social development.

Part 1(c) was based on positive peer pressure and proved confusing to a number of candidates. Some found it difficult to think about peer pressure in any other way than negative and therefore were not awarded marks.

In part 1(d) the majority of candidates will be awarded marks in level 2 (4 – 5 marks). The emphasis is how the methods of formal support may help Molly to look after her mother. A number of candidates wrote about informal support, namely friends and family as they became confused between the two types of support.

In part 1(e) candidates who read the question properly and noted the command verb as 'discuss' will access the top of level 2 with some attaining marks in level 3. They will be able to discuss the link between life events and their effects on an adolescents self-esteem. However, the majority of candidates will be awarded less than half marks (4 marks) for this question as their answers will appear unstructured, they will appear to rush into it, believing that they have understood the question.

Question 2

This question focussed on the influences of wealth and ethnicity on the health and well-being of individuals with particular emphasis on relationships.

In part 2(a) the majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

In part 2(b) the majority of candidates at this level will score half marks (2 marks). They will make a statement about living on a low income but will be unable to describe how it will affect emotional health.

In part 2(c) candidates struggled to explain how the close relationship with her mother may benefit Molly in the future, it was the emphasis on the future that they were unable to explain. A small number explained attachment and primary socialisation.

In part 2(d) candidates demonstrated a basic level of knowledge of the effects on intellectual development of caring for a relative.

Part 2(e), the ethnicity question was challenging for the candidates. The majority of them were able to write something although their responses were often very brief and there was a lack of discussion. A number of candidates wrote about mortality and not morbidity, as they were confused as to which one was which.

Question 3

This question focussed on the care values and how they are implemented with a service-user.

In part 3(a) the majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Part 3(b) on care values is usually well learnt and understood by the candidates.

A range of marks were seen for part 3(c) with many being awarded marks in level 2 as discussion was limited with few evaluations and conclusions.

Question 3(d) on positive stereotyping proved challenging for candidates. They seem to want the question to be on negative stereotyping and tried to answer it accordingly, thereby changing the focus of the question. A number of candidates explained at the beginning of their answer what stereotyping is which is not called for.

The person centred approach in part 3(e) was well understood by many candidates, however the higher level skill of discussion proved difficult for many.

Overall, the paper challenged the A/S learners, it gave them an opportunity to gain some good marks if they had the subject knowledge. However, it appeared that a number of candidates did not seem to understand what was being asked of them which was perhaps due in some way to the paper being completed in January by young students. It is always a little disappointing that more students do not gain MB3 grades. Centre staff appear to have completed some work on the verb hierarchy of exam questions, and generally overall the answering of exam questions which is refreshing, but too many marks were lost because candidates did not read the questions properly. There were very few blank pages which is always a good sign for candidates.

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