
9 Unit 9: Caring for Older People [AS level, double award, optional, externally assessed]

9.1 ABOUT THIS UNIT

This AS level unit is an optional part of the double award only and is externally assessed.

This unit enables you to investigate the effects of ageing and the impact this may have on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social life of people aged 65 plus. You will study the current support services available to older adults, and how care professionals need to apply care values within their day-to-day tasks.

This unit has links with: Unit 1: *Promoting quality care*, Unit 3: *Promoting good health*, Unit 7: *Health as a lifestyle choice*, Unit 12: *Anatomy and physiology in practice* and Unit 14: *Mental health issues*. Although this unit does not link directly to the NVQs in Providing health, social and protective services, it provides a broad introduction to the topic.

This unit is assessed through an external assessment. The mark on that assessment will be your mark for the unit.

9.2 WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN

You need to learn about:

- physical effects of ageing on body systems;
- social, emotional and economic aspects of ageing;
- community care and support services for older service users;
- professional care workers;
- legislation.

9.2.1 Physical Effects of Ageing on Body Systems

You need to have a broad understanding of the physical effects of ageing on older people. You need to consider illnesses and disorders associated with later life, which for testing purposes will be limited to:

- disorders of the circulatory system, e.g. heart attack,
heart disease,
heart dysfunction,
sclerosis;

- sensory impairment, e.g. cataracts, visual/hearing degeneration;
- muscular-skeletal disorders, e.g. osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatism;
- disorders of the nervous system, e.g. damage caused by a stroke, senile dementia, multiple sclerosis;
- disorders of the respiratory system, e.g. lung cancer, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD);
- disorders of the digestive system, e.g. irritable bowel, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's Disease, chronic constipation.

You need to have a general overview of the coping strategies service users might use to relieve the effects of illnesses and disorders.

You need to know the main organs of the body, where they are situated and their structure and function. You also need to know how the different parts of each of the above systems interrelate, e.g. *arteries* take blood from the heart, while *veins* return blood to the heart.

You also need to have a broad understanding of how the physical effects of ageing on older people may affect their daily living, e.g. if the muscular-skeletal system is affected: the older person may find movement difficult and they may become less mobile; this could mean that they are less likely to socialise by going out and meeting friends; the effect this could have is that the older person becomes more isolated, feels less valued and may become confused as they have little social contact; they may also put on weight through lack of movement, which affects the muscular-skeletal system, causing possible further deterioration in condition.

9.2.2 Social, Emotional and Economic Aspects of Ageing

You need to understand the impact of social, emotional and economic changes associated with ageing on health and well-being, which for testing purposes will be limited to:

- increased isolation, as a result of mobility problems, decreased income, decreased motivation, not feeling valued;
- increased dependency on others, as a result of illness or disorders, lack of confidence;

- inability to cope as a result of confusion, dementia, mental illness;
- increased likelihood of potential dangers to self, to others;
- communication problems, as a result of illness or disorders, confusion;
- roles of older people, e.g. family members, voluntary workers, members of the community;
- lifestyle changes, e.g. work patterns, time, leisure, income;
- changes in health and care needs, e.g. informal support, formal support;
- life expectancy and the effects of losing a partner.

Changes in *economic* situation, for instance, can greatly affect an older person, particularly if they are dependent solely on their state pension. The amount of money they may have could limit their leisure activities. When working, they may have been able to enjoy attending clubs or going away on holiday, but once retired and with a limited income, activities may have to be curtailed and social isolation could result.

9.2.3 Community Care and Support Services for Older Service Users

You need to have a broad understanding of the types of community-care services, and their purpose, in your local area for older service users, which for testing purposes will be limited to:

- health-care services;
- social-care services;
- day-care services;
- domiciliary services;
- private and voluntary services.

Service provision includes hospitals, intermediate-care centres, hospital day-care centres, sheltered accommodation, social day-care centres and clubs for older people.

9.2.4 Professional Care Workers

Care values are:

- maintaining confidentiality;
- promoting equality and diversity of service users;
- promoting individual rights and beliefs.

You need to know about the professionals who provide care within community-care services and how they apply care values within their day-to-day tasks, which for testing purposes will be limited to:

- health-care workers, e.g. psychiatric nurse,
health-care assistant,
occupational therapist,
GP;
- social-service care workers, e.g. social worker,
care assistant.

When considering care values, the emphasis needs to be on how care workers apply these in their day-to-day tasks, e.g. a care assistant discussing personal matters with an older person should use language that could be understood by the older person, they might speak in a low voice in order to maintain confidentiality, and should provide the opportunity for choice in order to promote individual rights. You need to show, within a typical day at work, how the care worker would apply care values in each main task undertaken.

9.2.5 Legislation

You need to understand the impact of current legislation on the provision of care for older people. You need to evaluate the effectiveness of legislation, which for testing purposes will be limited to:

- NHS and Community Care Act 1990;
- Care Standards Act 2000;
- Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995;
- Mental Health Act 1993;
- Health Act 1999.

9.3 GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS

9.3.1 Guidance on Delivery

Physical effects of ageing on body systems

Candidates are not expected to study body systems in detail. They need to know the main organs involved, where they are situated in the body, and their structure and function. They need to have a broad understanding of how the different parts within a system interrelate.

The Science Department within a centre and regional Health Promotion Units may be able to provide materials such as anatomical models and video material that would help with the delivery of 'dysfunctions and disorders' of body systems. A Trust Hospital Training Department or a University may also be able to help with the delivery of this sub-section.

Social, emotional and economic aspects of ageing

When considering *economic* aspects of ageing, you could present candidates with **two** case studies. **One** for an older person who only has a state pension and **one** for an older person who has an occupational pension and a state pension. Candidates could compare the different choices available to each, and how each older person is likely to be affected as a result.

Alternatively, older people with different economic and/or social experiences could be invited to the centre to talk about any restraints that living on a pension can bring. Older people are often quite eager to be involved in this type of activity. However, care needs to be taken **not** to ask each service user the exact amount of their income.

Community care and support services for older service users

It is often useful to establish contact with older people who live in sheltered accommodation in order to gather information. Contact could be made with the warden. Other useful contacts are day-care settings or older relatives who are willing to share their experiences. Residential homes are also a good source of information. ***It must be remembered that confidentiality must be maintained and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 observed.***

Professional care workers

If it is not possible to visit a care setting, inviting a professional care worker into the centre could be an alternative way of obtaining the information needed. A care assistant, social worker or home-care organiser would be able to provide information about care values, and how older people can be protected from abuse.

Legislation

When considering the impact and effectiveness of legislation on the care of older people, care workers could be interviewed directly. Use could be made of charters, policies and guidelines that are used to make sure the care given to older people meets the requirements of the legislation.

9.3.2 Resources

Organisations	Age Concern BBC Television programmes Help The Aged Home Care Agencies Hospital Trusts Primary Care Trusts Social Services Departments
Publications	Community Care
Textbooks	Moore S <i>Social Welfare Alive</i> Nazarko L <i>NVQ In Nursing and Residential Homes</i> Nolan Y <i>Care S/NVQ</i> Stoyle J <i>Caring For Older People</i>
Websites	Age Concern www.ageconcern.org.uk Department of Health www.doh.gov.uk Help The Aged www.helptheaged.org.uk NHS Direct www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk