

Changing Society

This unit is based on the BBC Bitesize Modern Studies website.

Go to the site to find a number of short videos which will greatly help your understanding of the topics which follow.

You can also use the excellent www.modernstudies.org.uk which has also been a very helpful source for the information below.

Content and concepts

In this part of the syllabus you should know -

- Health needs of the elderly
- Housing needs of the elderly
- The needs of the unemployed - jobs, money
- Inequality between different elderly people because of wealth, health and housing
- Inequality between families
- 1. New technology and its impact on jobs
- The role of individuals, families, government and voluntary organisations in meeting the needs of people such as the elderly, unemployed and those on low incomes

Knowledge and Understanding questions for this Syllabus Area will be based on three different concepts -

- Equity
- Ideology
- Need

Questions could be based on the elderly, employment and unemployment or families in the UK.

The Elderly

This section covers the needs of elderly people - emotional, financial, medical & housing needs.

Who are the Elderly?

- People who are old enough to receive the state pe_____n
- Currently men get the state pension at 65. Women did get it at 60 but this is being gradually increased to 65. Moreover, as people are living longer the govt is spending a lot more on pensions, so the government has decided that over the next few years, the pension age for both men and women will be raised first to 66 and then to 67.

What are the social concerns of the elderly?

- Over half those who are older than 75 live a_____e and many feel lonely
- Some do not have c_____l heating and live in unsuitable ho_____g
- Some are dis_____ated against when applying for jobs
- The proportion of elderly people is inc_____g
- Many elderly people live in pov_____

Emotional needs



E_____al needs often include requiring companionship. Many elderly people are very _____ly, especially after the death of their p_____r. They enjoy co_____y and appreciate it when people take time to have an interest in them. One reason older people like to stay in their own home is that they may have friends and family in the community who come and visit. However, some elderly people who live in their own home get very few visitors.

Moving into she_____ housing or a resid_____ home can provide company and prevent loneliness. However, many do not want to give up the indep_____ of their own home.

Financial needs

What are the economic concerns of the elderly?

- Most pensioners have to survive on less than half the w_____s they earned
- Many elderly have only small sav_____s
- Most pensioners do not have their own car
- However, a growing elderly people are w_____ off



Why are some elderly wealthier than others?

- They worked in w_____ -p_____ jobs and have been able to s_____ rather than have debts
- They have an occ_____al pension from their jobs, and may have a priv_____ pension
- They have a well-paid family that can help to su_____rt them
- This groups is sometimes known as WOOPIES (Well Off Older People)

What benefits are the elderly entitled to receive?

The benefits available from the government include

- Retirement pension – often called the st_____e pension
- Attendance allowance – for ill or dis_____ people 65+ who need a lot of looking after
- Winter fuel payment
- Income support - this is "means tested"
- Housing benefit - this is "means tested"
- Council tax benefit - this is "means tested"
- Free prescriptions, dental treatment and eye tests from the NHS

Why do some elderly people not claim the benefits they are entitled to receive?

- Some benefits, such as income support, are **means-tested**. This means they are not given automatically, but depend on a person's inc_____ and sav____s. Some elderly do not want their income and savings looked into
- Some elderly do not k_____ they are entitled to the benefit
- Some elderly do not want to rely on others
- Some elderly people are too proud or emb_____ to ask for something they think is a form of 'charity' – even although they are ent_____d to it because they paid tax while they were working
- Some elderly are worried about the process of applying for benefits

What other types of support are available to the elderly?

- Some councils offer t_____ concessions (cheap fares & bus passes)
- Day cen_____s
- Support from vol_____y organisations such as ch_____h groups
- Pr_____e Gr_____s such as A_____ Concern aim to improve the status of the elderly

What arguments are there for increasing the state pension?

- The state pension is barely enough to cover the b_____c needs of the elderly
- The val_____ of the pension has declined over recent years when compared to inflation
- Although the poorest pensioners are entitled to income support, some don't cl_____ it

The _____ needs of elderly people are met in a number of ways.

All elderly people receive the state retirement p_____, but many have other sources of I_____. Some have an occupational p_____ and others have taken out insurance policies or priv_____ pensions, which guarantee them a good income when they retire. Others have substantial savings. Some elderly people rely on their ch_____n to give them financial help when they are old.

Health needs

Why do the elderly have greater health needs?

- The elderly are more likely to suffer from arth_____ and rheuma_____
- Most elderly people have some problem with their e_____t
- Problems with hea_____g increases with age
- Elderly people are more prone to hypothermia (low body heat), especially in w_____r
- Senile Demen_____ (Alzheimer's Dis_____) is an illness that affects the brain. It reduces the physical and mental capacity of a sufferer. It is more common in older people.

How have new medical developments helped the lifestyle of elderly people?

- Hip r_____ent oper_____s allow older people to move around more easily
- Cata_____ s_____ry can improve the eyesight
- More advanced medical equipment e.g. whole body scanners, intensive medical care, help the elderly as well as other age groups
- Tiny hearing a____s make hearing difficulties much less obvious
- Pace_____s help older people with heart conditions



Elderly people make big demands on the National _____. They see their doctor more frequently than other groups and are given many more pre_____ions. They also take up a large number of hospital beds, for acute conditions, such as cataracts in the eyes, and chronic conditions, such as arth_____.

Acute conditions can be treated. Chronic conditions will never be c____d, but efforts can be made to make an older person more "comfortable". Elderly people do not ____ for their prescriptions and, like everyone else, they are entitled to f_____ health care through the NHS. There is a growing n_____r of older people in the population, so they are becoming a bigger burden on health care services. The level of care can vary from one local a_____y to another.

Housing needs

Elderly people may wish to stay in their own home because they value their independence and they have friends and family who visit. When someone becomes frail, they can be helped to stay in their own home with a range of different types of help. This is called Care in the Community.



Their house may be equipped with special equipment and they may get help from visiting services such as doctors, nurses, care assistants and home-helps. They may also get help from voluntary groups including the delivery of 'meals on wheels' along with help from friends and families.

The growth of voluntary help is what David Cameron and the government want to see as part of the 'Big Society' initiative they talk a lot about. However, some opponents claim the government is trying to save money and that elderly need more professional helpers and cannot depend on the hope that more and more volunteers will come forward to help.

How can their own houses be adapted to meet the needs of elderly people?

- Stair lifts and extra rails to help the elderly moving between floors
- Hand rails in showers, bathrooms and toilets
- Alarms - under the carpet or round the neck - help can be called in an emergency

What does sheltered housing provide?

- This is often new housing that is specially built to meet the needs of elderly people
- It allows them to continue to live independent lives in small self-contained flats
- It is usually part of a scheme with a warden 'on call' with alarms available
- Residents can socialise with others in the complex in communal areas
- Furnished and equipment suit older people and they often bring some of their own

What do residential homes provide?

- These are provided by either private companies, local authorities or voluntary groups
- They are for elderly people who have difficulty looking after themselves
- Care workers help look after the social and health needs of the residents

Elderly people have specific _____ needs. Depending on the health and the mobility of an older person, these can be met in a number of ways -

- Adaptations to existing housing (e.g. installation of alarm systems, st_____ lifts etc.)
- Purpose built ret_____nt flats (with many fittings designed specially for older people)
- S_____d housing
- Very sheltered housing (like sheltered housing, but residents have all their _____ cooked for them)
- R_____tial Home (a mixture of hotel and hospital, where old people are given care and attention twenty-four hours a day)

Sheltered housing is thought by many people to be the best housing option for older people. A sheltered housing complex is a number of small, self-contained flats, with an on-site w_____.

The flats are designed to meet the needs of elderly people, with grab rails beside the _____h and toilet, power points in accessible places, alarms and an e_____y contact system to call the warden.

There is usually a communal area where the residents can meet and where entertainment is often arranged for them.

Sheltered housing allows the old person to retain considerable in_____ but also means that help and company is never far away.

Sheltered housing is often used as part of C_____ in the Community

There is an argument in the UK about the merits of Care in the Community against those of Residential Care. Care in the Community is a system where elderly people live at home for as long as p_____, and receive special help and attention. This can include home helps, _____ on wheels, regular visits from _____ and nurses and help from the _____ work department. Supporters of Care in the Community say it is b_____ for the old person because it gives them more independence. Opponents of Care in the Community say that sometimes old people are virtually aba_____ with no help at all when they can do little for themselves.

This next section will help you revise four main areas relating to employment, income and families -

1. Unemployment
2. new technology – jobs
3. inequality
4. G_____t policies to help families.

Unemployment and the World of Work

What are the needs of the unemployed?

- Employment needs – obviously, to get a _____
- Training needs – if people learn new sk_____ they are more employable
- F_____ needs - money for themselves and their family.



How does the government help people find a job?

- People who are unemployed and looking for a job are entitled to a benefit called the "Jobseekers All_____ce"
- Unemployed people can visit Job Centres which display vaca_____es and have staff to give adv_____
- If a person has been unemployed for more than 6 months they can use a job club which gives help with job app_____s
- People who have been out of work for more than two _____rs get more help from a specialist in the "Jobfinders Scheme"
- Adults can also take part in training schemes to improve their s_____s and increase their empl_____ity

What does the government do to help young people find jobs?

- Skillseekers - which is a mixture of work exp_____ & tra_____g for 16 to 18 yr-olds
- Modern Appr_____ips - involves training to a higher level than _____seekers

Why may it be harder for people with disabilities to find work?

- Prej_____ - the employer may not think they can do as good a job as others

- There may be access problems in the workplace (for example, no ramp for wheelchair users)
- The employer may not be willing or able to spend money adapting the workplace so that it is suitable for a disabled person

Why may it be harder for older people to find work?

- They may not have the skills needed for many modern jobs
- They may not want to retrain in the new skills
- Young people can be paid less than old people as the NMW for young people is lower
- Employers may opt to hire a young person who could have a longer working life

Why may it be harder for single parents to find work?

- Cost of childcare makes working not financially viable (i.e. not worthwhile)
- Some employers may discriminate as they think single parents will need to take time off work to care for their children

What are the effects of new technology on employment?

Positive effects

- Cheaper to make goods ... better for customers and/or higher profits for business
- Goods are made to a more accurate, consistent standard by machines
- Machines do the boring, repetitive or dangerous jobs that used to be done by humans
- New areas of employment have opened up in manufacturing (e.g. silicon chips) and service industries (e.g. website design)

Negative effects

- Jobs are lost to machines in manufacturing e.g. robots in car factories, offices, etc.
- People have to adapt and retrain to use the new technologies

What are the arguments for a National Minimum Wage?

- It frees people from the poverty trap where they would be better off not working and receiving benefits rather than earning a wage
- Less people would claim benefit therefore saving the government money
- More people have more money to spend and therefore the whole economy benefits

What are the arguments against a National Minimum Wage?

- It increases costs for employers whose business may make less profit
- Workers may have to be laid off as the employer cannot afford the higher wages
- The price of goods and services to the consumer would increase as costs are up
- Britain would be less competitive than other countries as wage costs are higher

What are the effects of unemployment and low pay?

- Health problems - people who are unemployed or have low pay tend to have poorer diet, lower self-esteem, higher disease levels and lower life expectancy
- Housing problems - people who are unemployed or have low pay tend to live in smaller houses with more dampness and a poorer state of repair
- Social problems - people who are unemployed or have low pay tend to live in areas that have more crime, drug abuse and poorer recreational and social facilities

Employment needs

How does the government help unemployed people find a new job?

Unemployed people need to find a job. The government tries to help unemployed people find w____. Job Centre Plus holds details of local job v____ies. Unemployed people can visit ____ centres to look for work and to meet an advisor who can help them find a suitable job.

The govt spends billions of pounds each year on schemes to help people who have been u_____ people find a new job, particularly those who have been out of work for a long time. This includes finan_____l help to employers to encourage them to take on new workers.

Unemployed people will also be given advice on writing applications and inter_____ techniques. They may also be given training in new skills at college or on temporary work placements with employers. If a person does not take up any of the options, and shows little sign of looking for w____k, their benefits can be sto_____d.

Financial needs

Unemployed people do not work and so they do not earn an income. In order to be able to buy necessities they receive financial help to meet their b____c needs.

The government helps to meet the financial needs of the unemployed by providing them with money whilst they are actively l_____ing for work. The money they receive is a benefit known as Job Seekers A_____ (JSA). This money is enough to support the basic needs of themselves and their families.

Training needs

Some unemployed people do not have the skills required to get the types of jobs available today. T_____g is therefore needed to give unemployed people the necessary skills and qu_____ to get a job. An example of a training programme which the government has set up is the New Deal. This programme gives people on benefits the help and s_____rt they need to look for work, including training and preparing for work. Programmes available include New Deal for Y_____ People, New Deal 50 plus and New Deal for Lone Pa____ts.

New technology - jobs

New _____ has brought many advantages and disadvantages to the workplace. Some of these include -

Advantages

- Goods can be produced f_____r and therefore more cheaply using machinery.
- Production is easy to move and can be loc___ed almost anywhere.

Disadvantages

- Fewer staff are r_____d which leads to u_____t.
- Sometimes industries move ab____d creating unemployment.

There have been pos_____ and neg_____ impacts on employment.

In some industries such as software design and mobile phone production new technology has c_____d job opportunities. However, in other areas such as newspaper production and car ma_____ring, computer systems and r_____ts have replaced the need for workers.

New technology has also created opportunities for certain groups of people. People with ph_____ disabilities are now able to do a wider range of jobs and more people than ever before can work from h____. However, some ol____r workers have been replaced by new technology and cannot get new jobs because they lack the relevant sk____s.



New technology has brought about a revolution in the business world. People can reach others throughout the w_____ in a matter of seconds with costs being almost nil. Employees no longer need to be physically with their clients or other w____s. They can work effectively from home so long as the essential hardware is in place: a phone and personal computer, with i_____ access and possibly with v____o conferencing facilities.

The Family



Why do some families have a higher standard of living than others?

It depends on

- How much the f_____y members are paid
- How m____y children are in the family
- The area people live in. Some local authorities have more money than others to spend on local services (e.g. sch____s and recr_____ facilities)



Should the government do more or less to help poor families

Arguments for doing more

- It has a duty to look after the n_____s of the poorest in society
- It is correct that the better off should h____p the poorer families through tax contributions

Arguments for doing less

- People should be encouraged to ____k after themselves and not dep____ on others

Standards of living - inequality

Not all families experience the same ____'_____ of living. Some can meet all of their material needs and are also able to enjoy many l_____es. Others struggle to provide even their necessities.

Families with a high standard of living can afford to ____ their own home. They may own more than one car and go on several _____ a year. Others with a low standard of living may have to rely on a low income and/or b_____, may be forced to r____ accommodation and can only afford to buy n_____, no luxuries.

There are a variety of factors which can create ineq_____y.

- Where there are two parents present and both working there will usually be a higher _____ than in families headed by a _____ parent.

- Many single parent families find it difficult to get a _____ and arrange suitable childcare. They may not work at all or else they may be forced to pay a lot of money in _____ care costs.
- The standard of living can also differ due to the t_____e of job the parents do, the number of _____ in the family and the h_____ costs of the area in which the family lives.

Government policies to help families

There is a national min_____m wage to help fight poverty in the UK. This is the minimum amount of money which w_____s ought to receive. From October 2011 the minimum wage was £6.08 per _____ for workers aged 21 and over, £4.98 for those aged 18-20 and £3.68 for 16-17 year-olds.

Here are schemes introduced by the government to help families socially and f_____ially:

- Sure Start Scotland

Sure Start Scotland provides support for families with very y_____ children. The aim is to expand support, focussing on more depriv_____d communities and vulner_____ families. The aim is to help children get a good start in by getting a lot from p_____school education.

- Tax Credits

Tax credits are payments from the g_____. If you're responsible for at least one child or young person who normally lives with you, you may qualify for Ch_____ T_____ C_____. If you work, but earn low wages, you may qualify for W_____g T_____ C_____.

- Child Benefit

Child Benefit is a tax-free payment that a _____ can claim for a child or children. There are separate rates for each child. The payment can be claimed by anyone who qualifies, whatever their i_____ or sav_____s. There are two separate amounts, with a higher amount for the e_____st (or only) child. The rates are £20.00 a week for the eldest child and £13.20 a week for all o_____ c_____.

- Child Trust Fund (CTF)

CTF is a long-term s_____ and i_____ account where the child (and no-one else) can with_____w the money when they turn 18. The government provides a £250 v_____r to start each child's account. Children in families with l_____r incomes automatically get an additional payment of £250 from the Government.