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National 5 MODERN STUDIES



BrightRED Study Guide

Curriculum for Excellence

N5

MODERN STUDIES



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DEMOCRACY IN SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

WORK OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS

FACT



The largest Scottish council is Glasgow City Council, with 85 councillors. The smallest is Orkney, with 21 councillors.



Convener Malcolm Bell.

THE COMPOSITION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Local councils are made up of elected councillors. There are 1227 councillors in total in Scotland. Each **ward**, or area, elects three or four councillors. They are elected using the single transferable vote system (see pages 34–35).

Councillors earn a basic salary of £16,927 (from 4th May 2017), or more if they are an opposition spokesperson or are the convener of a committee (see below). Council leaders can earn up to £50,783 per year, depending on the size of their local authority.

Councillors have a number of main roles that they must fulfil in order to provide local solutions for local problems. Malcolm Bell, Convener of Shetland Islands Council (SIC), puts it like this:

‘My personal belief is that decision making (and the ability to fund and be accountable for such decisions) should be devolved to the lowest possible level. There is a great deal of evidence that good decisions are made in this environment ... Local authorities need the freedom to provide local services according to the situation pertaining in their area. One size does not fit all.’



Councillor Mandy Morgan.

SURGERIES

Councillors are elected by voters to represent their concerns and opinions when important local decisions are made. In order to learn about their constituents' concerns, councillors hold **surgeries**. These are open meetings where any resident can meet their councillor and raise any issues they feel strongly about or ask questions about what the council is doing. Mandy Morgan, councillor for the North East Ward in Glasgow, holds surgeries three times a month in different places around the city. Councillors can then represent their constituents by raising these concerns within the council or at a higher level.

FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Many important council decisions are taken by a meeting of the full council. These meetings occur when the entire council meets together to make decisions about what to do in their area. Decisions are made by voting. When voting, councillors don't just base their decisions on their own opinion, but also what their party wants and the views that they have heard from their constituents, for example at surgeries.

Meetings are held according to that council's rules. For example, the City of Edinburgh Council usually meets once a month. Full council meetings are open to the public so anyone can attend and watch decisions being made. The **agenda** and **minutes** (written record) of council meetings are made available to the public.

COMMITTEES

Local councillors may also join council committees. These are small groups of councillors who propose new decisions for the council or scrutinise (closely examine) decisions the council has already made. Each committee works on a different topic or policy area. For example, the City of Edinburgh Council has an Education, Children and Families Committee. Its convener (leader) is Councillor Ian Perry.

If a local resident has a complaint or wants to raise an issue about this topic area, they can contact a member of this committee even if they are not from that councillor's area.

DELIVERING SERVICES

As well as committees, councillors can also be involved in arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs). These are organisations outside the council that the council can use to deliver services like leisure services, property maintenance, transport or economic development. At this time of budget cuts, councils are beginning to use ALEOs more, as using them can often be cheaper than using the council's own departments.

Councillors may also be appointed to sit on a Joint Board. These boards are responsible for overseeing the delivery of council services. For example, councillors from City of Edinburgh, Fife, Perth and Kinross and West Lothian Councils sat on the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA), which was responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Forth Road Bridge. FETA was disbanded in 2015, with responsibility for the Forth Road Bridge and the Queensferry crossing going to Amey PLC who won the contract.



Queensferry Crossing.

WORKING WITH OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

In order to make the best decisions possible, local councillors often meet with other representatives. Councillors might meet with community councillors, MSPs or MPs if they think this will help to resolve the issue. For example, if a constituent raised a concern about health care in their ward, their councillor could discuss the issue with the area's MSPs and ask them to raise it in the Scottish Parliament.

CELEBRATING LOCAL SUCCESSES

Local councillors are, of course, primarily concerned with very local issues. As well as providing services and fixing problems, councils are also very keen to celebrate achievements or efforts made by people in the local area.



Shetland Islands Council Convener Malcolm Bell presents Diamond Jubilee certificates and badges to Shetland's School Crossing Patrol Officers.



THINGS TO DO AND THINK ABOUT

- 1 Find out how your local councillor is using your council's webpage.
- 2 Try to find examples of your local councillors working in each of the ways described above.
Use what you find to make an A4 poster called 'The work of local councillors'.
- 3 How important do you think local councils are in Scotland?
Use what you have learned about the parliament and local councils to write a report explaining what you think.



ONLINE TEST

Take the test on local councillors at www.brightredbooks.net/N5ModernStudies.

SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES 1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES

Poverty affects where people live and their lifestyles. If you live in a run-down deprived community you're unlikely to go for a jog around your local area. Gym memberships can be expensive so people in deprived communities may not use health facilities even if they are nearby.

People on low incomes may be reliant on public transport, meaning they can't always travel to larger supermarkets and become reliant on the goods they can get from local shops, which aren't always fresh and healthy. Levels of obesity are often higher within poorer communities as a result.

People in deprived communities are more likely to suffer from depression and mental health problems. As a consequence they are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol excessively or take drugs as a release from their socio-economic disadvantages.

Sir Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, has named this the 'biology of poverty'. He claims that a child born into the stress of poverty is negatively affected biologically and is more likely to succumb to ill-health than a child born elsewhere.

Social class

Social class is the category that people fall into based on their income and occupation. The lower down the social class scale you are the more likely you are to be living in poverty, and several government reports have highlighted the link between poverty and poor health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) published their findings of a 3-year health study in 2008, highlighting the effects of poverty on life expectancy. The report concluded by stating that 'social injustice is killing people on a grand scale'. For example, life expectancy can differ depending on the area you live in.

According to the World Health Organisation, men born in Glasgow have an average life expectancy of 54. By comparison, males born in close-by Lenzie are expected to live to 82 years of age.



ENVIRONMENT

The environment that people live in can have an impact on overall health. This can be related to pollution in built-up cities or simply the household environment or family structure a person lives in. Unhealthy or abusive parents are more likely to have unhealthy children.

AGE

As people get older their health tends to deteriorate and they may require more healthcare and support. Conditions such as osteoporosis and diseases such as Alzheimer's are more common among the elderly.

FACT

Symptoms of deprivation include high levels of obesity, poor diet, little exercise, excessive alcohol consumption and drug misuse. (BBC News, November 2016).

VIDEO LINK

Learn more about social exclusion by watching the video at www.brightredbooks.net/N5ModernStudies.

GENDER

Statistically women live longer than men in the UK but they suffer more health problems throughout their lives.

The biggest killer of Scottish women is lung cancer and women have higher death rates from conditions as a result of ageing and mental health problems than men. Surveys have shown, however, that women are more likely to seek medical advice than men.

RACE

Ethnic minorities suffer from fewer diseases related to the overconsumption of alcohol and often have healthy diets compared to the overall population. This is directly related to cultural and religious beliefs, but ethnic minorities are more likely to live in poverty than whites and suffer overall poorer health as a result.

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

As health and law and order are devolved matters, the Scottish Parliament has responsibility for the NHS in Scotland and the introduction of new laws (legislation) related to health. The duty (tax) paid on alcohol and cigarettes rises almost annually and possession of drugs such as heroin carries heavy penalties.

Smoking legislation

In a bid to reduce the number of people who smoke in Scotland, especially young people, laws have been introduced to restrict smoking. Health warnings are now clearly given on cigarette packets to highlight the dangers of smoking and cigarette companies cannot publicly advertise their products.

Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005

- It has been illegal in Scotland to smoke in the majority of enclosed public places since 2006. England followed suit in 2007.
- In May 2016, the promotion of electronic cigarettes on popular forms of media such as TV, radio and internet were banned.

Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010

- People must be at least 18 years old to buy tobacco products.
- Tobacco products cannot be openly displayed in larger shops etc.
- Vending machines cannot sell tobacco products.
- Cigarettes can no longer be sold in packs of ten. This law came into effect on the 21 May 2017.

In December 2016, a new law was introduced in Scotland making it illegal to smoke in a car when a person under the age of 18 was present. Former Liberal Democrat MSP, Jim Hume, was an early advocate of the Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Act 2016 supported by organisations such as ASH Scotland and the British Lung Foundation.

In 2011, a Scottish study suggested that the air quality inside a smoker's car was comparable to industrial smog in cities such as Beijing or Moscow, even with the windows open.



THINGS TO DO AND THINK ABOUT

- 1 In May 2017, the UK Government followed the Scottish Government's lead in introducing plain cigarette packaging legislation. Why do you think the UK government may have initially delayed their plans to introduce plain packaging for cigarettes?
- 2 Why do you think women are more likely to seek medical help for health problems than men?



FACT

According to a 2017 National Records of Scotland (NRS) report, covering the period 2014–2016, the average life expectancy for females born and raised in East Dunbartonshire was 83.5 compared with 78.8 for females born and raised in West Dunbartonshire; a gap of 4.7 years.



DON'T FORGET

Health is a devolved matter in Scotland.



DON'T FORGET

Laws can vary in different parts of the UK as a result of devolution.



NO SMOKING



FACT

The Scottish government introduced plain cigarette packaging legislation in May 2016. This resulted in all packets of cigarettes displaying a graphic warning and using a standard size, font and colour.



ONLINE

Learn more about the smoking ban in Scotland at www.brightredbooks.net/N5ModernStudies.

MODERN STUDIES

Kirsty Marsland, Caleb Marwick and Heidi Stoutjesdyk

This BrightRED Study Guide is just the thing you need to tackle your course and gain the exam skills essential to succeed at National 5 Modern Studies. Written by experienced Modern Studies teachers Kirsty Marsland, Caleb Marwick and Heidi Stoutjesdyk, this book is packed with brilliant examples, tasks and advice. It is the ultimate companion to your studies.

- ▶ **Contains all of the essential and updated information**, fully revised to reflect latest SQA changes and political developments.
- ▶ **Designed in full colour, highly illustrated, accessible and engaging topic spreads** to make sure all that studying sticks!
- ▶ **Don't forget!** pointers offer advice on key facts and on how to avoid common mistakes.
- ▶ **Things to do and think about** sections at the end of each topic allow for further practice and research.
- ▶ **A glossary of key terms** helps you reference and check important course concepts.

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