

## Assignment 1 (TMA01)

**Task 1: Using examples from the case studies of Jean and Emma in Chapter 5 show how the local environment, including housing, can influence health and well-being. (800 words)**

### Guidance notes

You might find it helpful to re-read the effective study section 'Writing academic essays' in chapter 5 to remind yourself how to write in an academic style, and plan, structure and write an essay. To communicate well with your reader you need to write clear sentences and organise your paragraphs well. Reading your work out loud to yourself is a useful way to check the clarity of your work. Make sure that you reference the sources of evidence you cite using the referencing format outlined in section 3 of this booklet.

This option asks you to show your understanding that localities – namely housing and the local environment - influence people's health and well-being. The material in section 5.3 'Locality and health: the housing and the built environment is particularly relevant for this question. You will probably only have the word space to discuss about three examples from the section, so use the case studies for Jean and Emma to pick good examples and offer evidence which demonstrates the influence of the environment.

*A case study is a detailed description of one specific example (often a person's experience), as a way of understanding a particular issue. It is a type of qualitative (descriptive) rather than quantitative (statistical) evidence. One case study can be compared and contrasted with another. This helps us to look at the similarities and differences of the cases to build up a better understanding of what we're studying.*

**Task 2: Write a short description of how you have used the feedback you received on your first assignment to help you prepare and write assignment 2 (50 words).**

### Guidance notes

This part of the assignment offers an opportunity to demonstrate that you can use feedback from your tutor to improve your learning (learning outcome 4). This is a key study skill. Write a short description of some of the key points made by your tutor on the PT3 cover sheet and the script of your first assignment. You might also draw on discussion during telephone tutorials. Most importantly, you should explain how this advice has changed how you study or how you intend to put the advice into practice when preparing and writing assignments.

## **TMA 01 – Task 1**

### **Using examples from the case studies of Jean and Emma in Chapter 5, show how the local environment can influence health and well-being.**

This essay will focus on how both physical and mental health can be influenced by housing and the local environment using the two case studies of Jean and Emma. Jean is a single mother with two children living on a run-down housing estate in Glasgow and Emma lives with her partner and daughter in a detached house in Guildford. The essay will show how surroundings can influence health by isolating people from other members of their community and important services, as well as having significant problems such as anti-social behaviour which effect people's morale. The essay will also consider how poor quality housing can lead to illnesses.

It could be argued that both Jean and Emma experience some level of isolation from their local communities. For example, Jean lives on a housing estate which has poor public transport links to the City Centre. Additionally, there are few local services such as health care and services for young people. This means that Jean sometimes finds it difficult to get the health care she and her family need. It also means that there is not much for young people to do on the estate. This may be why there is a drug problem on the estate and anti-social behaviour. This makes people on the estate less likely to use play and communal areas leading to people becoming more isolated. This may lead to low morale and mental health problems because people don't feel safe where they live. Mental health has been defined as how someone 'feels, thinks and acts when faced with life's situations'. Mental health is important in enabling people to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday life and build healthy relationships with others. These relationships can also help provide important emotional support which, in turn, lead to better mental health. Research shows that people living in deprived areas and on low incomes tend to experience more mental health problems compared to those on higher incomes living in more prosperous communities. However, living in a prosperous area doesn't always mean that people aren't isolated.

For example, although Emma lives in an affluent area, there are no local shops or services. Even the local primary school is

#### **Tutor's comments**

Before introducing your essay you could briefly define what is meant by health and well-being. For example you could refer to the World Health Organisation's definition on page 9. Overall, though, this is a good introduction - well done.

When you quote material from the course book you do need to provide a reference for it. For example, you could write: (Finlay et al., 2005).

These are really good

over a mile away from where Emma lives. This means that Emma and her partner have to use their cars to go shopping and access local health care services. This may mean that Emma and her family are less likely to get the exercise that they need to help keep them healthy. Emma may also feel isolated from her local community and this could lead to feelings of depression and anxiety. However, because Emma is relatively well off, she is able to afford to join the local gym where she can make friends and socialise.

As noted above, the quality of housing is also important when considering influences on health at the level of locality. For example, Jean lives in a one bedroom flat which is damp and cold. There is also no room for the children to play or have any privacy. Breathing problems have been linked to damp, cold housing. For example, Jean's one-year old son, Sean, was hospitalised with bronchitis, and Jean's four-year old daughter, Jenny, has chronic asthma. There is little the doctors can do except treat the children, but to really improve their health the family would need to move to better accommodation. Emma's family live in a house with central heating, four bedrooms and a large garden. Emma's daughter, Chloe, has lots of toys and plenty of room to play in. Locally, the house is in a quiet area with little traffic and no problems with anti-social behaviour.

In conclusion, the locality can have a significant influence on people's health and well being. Clearly, the local environment can influence whether people feel part of a local community and well supported. This is important for building secure relationships, which, in turn, support better mental health. Access to local services (including health care services) is also important for health, particularly when families have children with chronic health conditions, such as asthma. However, this essay has shown that it is not just living in deprived areas that can lead to isolation from the local community or difficulties accessing local services. People living in affluent areas can also feel isolated. However, as noted above, poor quality housing is probably one of the biggest influences on health and well being. It is useful to consider influences at the local level because if we are to tackle ill health, we must consider health care interventions which involve providing people with better quality housing and better access to services.

(858 words)

## References

Finlay, L., Pearson, C. and Ram S. (2005) *Understanding health*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

examples of how the local environment can influence health. You are stating your claims first and then using evidence from each case study to support those claims - this is an excellent approach.

OK - so could you say a little about the health of Emma's family - is it good? Could this indicate that better quality housing may influence better health for people?

It's great to see a conclusion which clearly answers the question.

Good - you have provided a reference at the end of your essay.

## **Task 2**

**Write a short description of how you have used the feedback you received on your first assignment to help you prepare and write assignment 2. (50 words)**

In my first assignment my tutor told me that the essay had a good structure with an introduction, discussion and conclusion. However, I did not use evidence from the course book or references. For this assignment I have used evidence from two case studies and I have written the reference at the end of the essay. (60 words)

Yes, well done - you have clearly used the feedback from the first assignment to develop your writing skills.