

Who gets health care? Lesson 1

Starter

Brainstorm: what do we expect from the NHS?

Students work in small groups to provide a list of criteria for the NHS.

Gather responses for use at the end of the activity.

Main activity

“How should money be spent?”

Three hypothetical patients with different medical issues which require treatment.

Ask the students to put them in rank order with the most worthy recipient at the top of the list. They must also be able to justify the order they have selected for who might be a recipient of treatment, and then write down the reasons for their decision and to justify it.

Patients

A A woman in her 30s who has been unable to have a baby through natural conception and is trying to get fertility treatment.

B A student studying law, medicine or another important degree who has STI/HIV resulting from a relationship with a long term boyfriend/ girlfriend who infected him/her without the victim's knowledge.

C An older person who has paid NHS contributions throughout his/her life and now has cancer caused by his/her job.

You can select other areas where there is some controversy over medical care. This might be for example:

- 1 Spending on preserving life where the quality of life is questionable, as in recent cases related to small babies.
- 2 Current national or local examples of medical dilemmas which may come up at the time this unit is being covered

Students could use the information from Resource 2 or research costs on the Internet. If there is media coverage of a particular case at the time, then newspapers and TV coverage could also be used to collect information. A good site for information on this is the BBC news site, news.bbc.co.uk that has a section on health.

Feedback

In light of the list of criteria for the NHS, derived from the initial brainstorm, discussion whether or not lifestyle choices should be taken into account when deciding who should receive treatment, and whether or not making such decisions affecting a person's life are fair.

More spending?

Using Resource 2, ask students to consider what would be cut if they decided to increase spending on health care.

Using Resource 3, ask students how they would change taxation if they really wanted to treat all the patients.

If they suggest that the solution is for companies to pay more taxes point out that businesses need to make a profit if they are to survive and employ people. Companies are a rather abstract concept and students often do not realise that raising Corporation Tax hits businesses as hard as raising Income Tax hits people.

Plenary

Why should we pay taxes?

People often regard tax as a 'bad thing'. Ask students to brainstorm the impact of there being no taxation.