Much of our interaction with others is political, even if we don’t realise it. Every time you have an opinion, an argument, make a decision or disagree with someone, you are engaging in a political process. The only difference between this and national politics is the scale and influence the opinions, disagreements and decisions have. Although many people think they are not interested in politics and that it is not connected with their lives or that it is boring, they are, in fact, engaging in politics every day.

This unit provides you with an introduction to the political structure of the UK, including the levels of government and the roles and responsibilities each level has. Through it you will examine different government departments and take particular interest in the departments that have a direct effect on the public services such as the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice. You will also look at the accountability of the services since they have great power over the public. They are trusted to use that power responsibly, however there are inspectorates that hold them to account on our behalf.

This unit is essential in providing you with an understanding of the policies and influences that impact on the work of the services every day of their working lives. It is important that you have a clear grasp of the political issues that the public services deal with. Remember that the business of government is your business as well. You live and work under the policies the government creates, whether you agree with them or not.

You will also have the opportunity to find out how political representatives are elected to power and what their main roles and responsibilities are. You will also look at how government policies are developed, the external factors that influence public policy and the impact that these policies can have on the work of the services.

Learning outcomes

After completing this unit you should:
1. know the different levels of government in the UK
2. understand the democratic election process for each level of government in the UK
3. know the impact of UK government policies on the public services
4. be able to demonstrate how government policies are developed
## Assessment and grading criteria

This table shows you what you must do in order to achieve a pass, merit or distinction grade, and where you can find activities in this book to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that you are able to:</th>
<th>To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, you are able to:</th>
<th>To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, you are able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **P1** Outline the responsibilities of the levels of government in the UK  
See Assessment activity 1.1 page ?? | **M1** Explain in detail the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK  
See Assessment activity 1.1 page ?? | **D1** Evaluate the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK  
See Assessment activity 1.1 page ?? |
| **P2** Describe the role of government departments in relation to public services, including their responsibilities  
See Assessment activity 1.2 page ?? | **M2** Explain how different government policies have impacted upon a range of services  
See Assessment activity 1.4 page ?? | **D2** Evaluate the impact of government policies on public services and the communities they serve  
See Assessment activity 1.4 page ?? |
| **P3** Explain the electoral processes used in UK elections  
See Assessment activity 1.3 page ?? | **M3** Evaluate the impact of government policies on public services and the communities they serve  
See Assessment activity 1.4 page ?? |  |
| **P4** Describe, with examples, the impact of government policies on different public services  
See Assessment activity 1.4 page ?? | **M4** Carry out an analysis of how government policies are developed  
See Assessment activity 1.6 page ?? |  |
| **P5** Identify how society is affected to government policies  
See Assessment activity 1.5 page ?? | **M4** Carry out an analysis of how government policies are developed  
See Assessment activity 1.6 page ?? |  |
| **P6** assess the current psychological skills of a selected sports performer, identifying strengths and areas for improvement  
See Assessment activity 17.5, page 40 | **M4** Carry out an analysis of how government policies are developed  
See Assessment activity 1.6 page ?? |  |
How you will be assessed

This unit will be assessed by an internal assignment that will be devised and marked by the staff at your centre. The assignment is designed to allow you to show your understanding of the learning outcomes for government, policies and the public services. These relate to what you should be able to do after completing this unit. Assessments can be quite varied and can take the form of:

- reports
- leaflets
- presentations
- posters
- practical tasks
- case studies
- simulations.

Maneno looks at the layers of government in the UK

I didn’t expect to like this unit as politics isn’t really my thing and I’ve always thought it was really boring. It turns out that everything we do or decide can be influenced by politics. Because I am quite outspoken and have an opinion on lots of things, it turns out I am very political without even realising it!

One of the things I enjoyed most was looking at the different levels of government in the UK. I hadn’t realised how all the responsibility in the country is divided up and shared by the different levels. I particularly liked looking at what my local council does, as they are the ones who control the facilities and standards in the place I live. If they don’t do their job properly it shows on the streets and housing estates near my home.

I also liked looking at the different views the political parties have. It’s interesting to see how they come up with their policies and why. I’m not old enough to vote yet, but when I am I think I will have a much better idea of who I agree with and who I want to vote for.

My tutor also recommended that we started to read a broadsheet newspaper at least once a week or read the BBC News website in our lunch hour. I’m much better informed since I’ve started doing this and I’ve found it really helps to be up to date with the news in my other units as well.

Over to you!

- What areas of government might you find interesting?
- Have you ever been involved in politics before?
- Do you have strong opinions on current issues?
- What preparation could you do to get ready for your assessments?
1. Know the different levels of government in the UK

There are many different levels of government in the UK that have a direct or indirect impact on our lives as well as the work of the uniformed services. This part of the unit looks at these levels in detail.

1.1 Levels of government and their responsibilities

European Parliament

Although the European Parliament is not strictly part of the UK levels of government, it has a significant impact on EU (European Union) citizens and their public services. The parliament has 736 members who represent all 27 member states of the EU. There are 72 that are directly elected from the UK and are there to represent the interests of our country. The role of the parliament is to draft legislation that has an impact across all the EU states on issues such as:

- the environment
- equal opportunities
- transport
- consumer rights
- movement of workers and goods.

Key term

Legislation is another word for law or policy.

Thinking about government

Disagreeing with a government policy can be a very dangerous thing to do in some parts of the world. Can you think of a country where political dissent might cost you your life?

In the UK, every citizen is allowed to disagree with government decisions and protest peacefully against them if they choose. How does this affect the role of the public services? What would happen if you disagreed with a government decision to go to war, but you were a serving British soldier? Write down your thoughts and share them with the rest of your class.

Activity: The European Parliament

What are your thoughts on the European Parliament? Go to their website at www.europa.eu and research the role of the parliament. Do you think it represents the interests of the member states fairly? Do you think the decisions are beneficial for all EU citizens? What is the impact of these decisions on the public services of the member states? Make notes on what you find and feedback to your tutor.

Central government

Central government is the layer of government that operates across the whole country. It is usually located in the country’s capital city and it has very specific responsibilities that no other level of government is able to do. For example:

- signing treaties or agreements with other nations
- making laws
- defending the nation.

Functional skills

By researching relevant information on the internet you will be practising your functional skills in ICT.
The central government of the UK is based in at the Palace of Westminster in London. It contains the major central political institutions of the UK: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Together with the ruling monarch, these three institutions are known as Parliament. We will look at all three institutions in more detail later on in this book.

Consider this

Why are responsibilities such as signing treaties and making laws the role of central government? What would happen if all levels of government had those powers?

Devolved parliaments

Devolution is a process whereby power is transferred from a centralised governmental organisation to a regional organisation. Devolution consists of three elements:

- The transfer of power to another elected body that is lower down the chain of authority.
- The geographical move of power from the capital to another city or town.
- The transfer of roles and responsibilities of government from central to regional assemblies.

In the UK there are three main regional assemblies that have devolved power, these are:

- The Scottish Parliament
- The Welsh Assembly
- The Northern Ireland Assembly

Table 1.1: The advantages and disadvantages of devolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devolution</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional assemblies can reflect and take into account cultural and linguistic differences between the region and central government. Regional assemblies are more in touch with the needs of their people; laws will be fairer and more readily accepted by the people. Reduces the burden on central government. Because regional assemblies only deal with the work of the region they are more efficient. Central government can concentrate on issues of national importance rather than being concerned about the regions. The combative politics seen in centralised government are reduced in regional assemblies where parties are happier to work towards common goals.</td>
<td>Establishing regional assemblies is very expensive. Why create an organisation to do what central government already does? Regional assemblies lack the decision-making experience of central government. Regional assemblies may conflict with central government. Regional assemblies may lead to the break up of the UK. Low voter turn out in devolution referendums suggests a lack of popular support for regional assemblies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.2: The main regional assemblies in the UK.

| The Scottish Parliament | The Scottish Parliament was established by the Scotland Act 1998. The Scottish Parliament is empowered to deal with devolved matters such as education, health, civil and criminal law, environment, housing and local government. The Scottish Government is self-contained, which means it can pass laws without having to go through the UK Parliament in Westminster first.

The UK Parliament has reserved powers, which means it still has jurisdiction on matters that affect the UK as a whole or that have an international impact, such as declarations of war. The Scottish Parliament is made up of 129 elected members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP). As with the UK parliament, the party that has the most representatives forms the government, which is also referred to as the Scottish Executive. The majority party selects a representative from their ranks who is appointed as First Minister by the Queen. |
| The Welsh Assembly | The Welsh Assembly was established by the Government of Wales Act 1998, after a Welsh referendum showed public support for the idea. The Welsh Assembly has 60 members.

Like the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly has considerable scope to deal with regional issues such as transport, health, education and the environment. Wales also has a First Minister who is elected by the whole executive and is usually the leader of the largest political party. One substantial difference between the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly is that Wales does not have jurisdiction over its own criminal and civil law; it is subject to English law in this area. |
| The Northern Ireland Assembly | The Northern Ireland Assembly was created by the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This act was based on a referendum of the Belfast Agreement (more often referred to as the Good Friday Agreement). There are 108 members, six representatives from each of the 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland.

As with Scotland and Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly has responsibility for education, health, agriculture, housing and so on. The Assembly is based at Stormont and there are around eight political parties represented within it. Like the other regional assemblies it has a first minister who is elected by all members and is usually a member of the dominant party. The conflict between the different parties in the Northern Ireland has in the past led to an unstable assembly. |

Key term

Referendum is a public vote on whether to pass a law. Usually laws are made and passed in parliament, but in a referendum the public has the final say.

Activity: Devolution

What are the implications of allowing devolution to continue to other regions that have a distinctive culture and language, such as Cornwall? What would be the impact on the citizens of the area, their public services and the country as a whole?

Regional governments

There are eight regional assemblies in England, which were created by the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998. They are as follows:

- East of England Regional Assembly
- North East Assembly
- South East England Regional Assembly
- West Midlands Regional Assembly
- East Midlands Regional Assembly
- South West Regional Assembly
- North West Regional Assembly
- Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

London has its own regional system that works differently from those listed above and is discussed in the Case study below.
The membership of regional assemblies varies from region to region, about 70 per cent of the members are elected local authority councillors and 30 per cent are drawn from businesses, voluntary groups, religious groups and environmental organisations. Regional assemblies are funded through central government although some also receive money from local authorities (see below).

Key term
Regional government is a form of government where the decisions about what happens in a particular region are made at local level.

Role of regional assemblies
Regional assemblies perform four main roles and these are shown in Figure 1.3.

Case study: The London region
Arrangements for regional governance are different in London from the other eight regions. London has the Greater London Authority (GLA), which is a city-wide form of government with an elected mayor and separately elected assembly. The Mayor of London plays a key role in the development of the city’s policies on a variety of issues, such as transport, emergency planning, budgets for key public services (e.g. the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority), and so on. The assembly acts as a form of scrutiny on the actions of the mayor to ensure what they are doing is correct and in the best interests of London. To this end they must approve all of the Mayor’s budgets, they have the opportunity to question the Mayor at a monthly question time, and they investigate and publish reports on issues that affect Londoners.

1 Why do you think that the London region needs a different form of regional assembly from the other eight regions?
2 Is it important to have a Mayor of London who acts a spokesperson for the capital?
3 Why would the activities of the Mayor require scrutiny?
4 Are there issues that affect Londoners that don’t affect the rest of the country?
Local authorities

There are many forms of local government, such as county councils, metropolitan councils, parish and district councils. Many of the roles and responsibilities they perform overlap, but they all focus on the services and facilities needed in local areas.

Table 1.3: The main forms of local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of council</th>
<th>Roles and responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>• Education&lt;br&gt;• Emergency Planning&lt;br&gt;• Highways and Traffic&lt;br&gt;• Libraries&lt;br&gt;• Planning and Development&lt;br&gt;• Public Transport&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Disposal&lt;br&gt;• Social Services&lt;br&gt;• Trading Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>• Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages&lt;br&gt;• Cemeteries and Crematoria&lt;br&gt;• Education&lt;br&gt;• Environmental Health&lt;br&gt;• Housing&lt;br&gt;• Planning and Development&lt;br&gt;• Recreation and Amenities&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Collection&lt;br&gt;• Registration of Electors&lt;br&gt;• Tax and Council Tax Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>• Street Lighting&lt;br&gt;• Local Transport and Traffic Services&lt;br&gt;• Allotments&lt;br&gt;• Cemeteries&lt;br&gt;• Recreation Grounds&lt;br&gt;• War Memorials&lt;br&gt;• Seating and Shelters&lt;br&gt;• Rights of Way&lt;br&gt;• Tourist information centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan (cont.)</td>
<td>• Highways and Traffic&lt;br&gt;• Housing&lt;br&gt;• Libraries&lt;br&gt;• Planning and Development&lt;br&gt;• Public Transport&lt;br&gt;• Recreation and Amenities&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Collection&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Disposal&lt;br&gt;• Registration of Electors&lt;br&gt;• Social Services&lt;br&gt;• Tax and Council Tax Collection&lt;br&gt;• Trading Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan (cont.)</td>
<td>• Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages&lt;br&gt;• Cemeteries and Crematoria&lt;br&gt;• Education&lt;br&gt;• Emergency Planning&lt;br&gt;• Environmental Health&lt;br&gt;• Highways and Traffic&lt;br&gt;• Housing&lt;br&gt;• Libraries&lt;br&gt;• Planning and Development&lt;br&gt;• Public Transport&lt;br&gt;• Recreation and Amenities&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Collection&lt;br&gt;• Refuse Disposal&lt;br&gt;• Registration of Electors&lt;br&gt;• Social Services&lt;br&gt;• Tax and Council Tax Collection&lt;br&gt;• Trading Standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monarch

The UK is a constitutional monarchy, which means that our head of state is the current reigning monarch, although laws are generated and approved by an elected body – for us this is the Houses of Parliament. The monarch is currently Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who has reigned since 1952, and her formal title in the UK is ‘Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith’.

The Queen has several important formal and ceremonial governmental roles, including:
• opening each new session of Parliament
• dissolving Parliament before a General Election
• appointment of the Prime Minister
• final approval of laws via ‘Royal Assent’
• appointment of peers
• advice and guidance to the Prime Minister.

**House of Commons**

The House of Commons consists of 646 elected members of parliament (MPs) who represent a broad spectrum of political parties. Each of the MPs represents a localised geographical area, called a constituency. Constituencies can change boundaries to become bigger or smaller or sometimes disappear altogether.

**Key term**

**Constituency** is a geographical area that has an elected representative in parliament.

**Activity: The House of Commons**

Using the parliament website research the current breakdown of MPs from different parties at www.parliament.uk. Who has a majority? Who is in opposition? Are there any very small parties? Draw a pie chart to show your findings.

**Key terms**

**General election** is a general election is where all of the seats in the House of Commons come up for election at the same time. General elections are called by the serving Prime minister and must happen five years and three weeks apart or less.

**By-election** is a by-election happens in a specific constituency due to the death or resignation of the current MP for that area. They can happen at any time.

There are two ways in which an individual can be elected to the House of Commons. The first is through a general election, which is when representatives from all 646 constituencies are elected simultaneously, and the second is via a by-election. A by-election happens when the current representatives of a constituency dies, retires or resigns and a new representative is needed for that constituency only. A general election happens every five years or so, but a by-election can occur at any time.

A range of political views and interests are represented in the House of Commons. This enables the House to ensure that legislation and decisions are well debated by a variety of individuals holding different political views. The majority party is called upon to form the government and this party sits to the right of the Speaker while the opposition and smaller parties sit on the left of the Speaker.

**Did you know?**

The five elected members of Sinn Fein are not allowed to take their seats in Parliament or use their vote until they swear allegiance to the Queen – something all MPs must do. The oath reads: “I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.”

Sinn Fein representatives are Republicans, this means that they do not believe in the power of the monarchy. Do you think it is important that they swear allegiance to the Queen – or should allegiance to the public be an MP’s first duty?
Table 1.4: Duties of the House of Commons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making laws</td>
<td>Nearly 50% of the work in the House of Commons involves making new laws. These laws can have an extremely wide impact on the country and public services alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling finance</td>
<td>The House of Commons controls the raising of finances through taxation and the selling of government assets. It must also give its approval to any plans the government has to spend money. The House can also check up on the spending of government departments through the Public Accounts’ Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>The House of Commons scrutinises the work of the government. The government must explain its policies to the House and be prepared to accept criticism and questioning. This ensures that all decisions have been examined by a variety of individuals before they happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegated legislation</td>
<td>The House does not have the time it needs to debate, discuss and pass all the laws needed by the country. It overcomes this problem through delegated legislation. The House creates the parent law and then monitors how delegated legislation is implemented by local authorities and councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining European proposals</td>
<td>The House of Commons must examine all proposed European laws in order to assess their likely impact on the UK, its population and its public services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the individual</td>
<td>The members of the House of Commons are often contacted by individuals with difficulties or petitioned on a variety of issues of importance to individuals or groups, such as road building, reducing taxes and changes to the law.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The House of Lords

The House of Lords dates back to the fourteenth century and it has a long, distinguished and more recently, controversial history. The House of Lords can have a variable number of members, currently there are around 737, and a number of different types of Lords, for example:

- **Life Peers.** This title is for a lifetime only and not able to be passed on to the next generation. Life Peers are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister and they make up the majority of the Lords. There are currently around 600 of them.

- **Bishops and Archbishops.** This title is for those who represent the Church of England. There are currently 25 sitting in the House of Lords. They pass their title onto the next most senior Bishop when they retire.

The House of Lords carries out a variety of roles, some of which are similar to the Commons, but some of which are quite different (see Table 1.4). The House of Lords used to be the highest level of court in the UK, but its role as a court have been taken over by the Supreme Court.

Table 1.5: Duties of the House of Lords.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law creation</td>
<td>The process by which a bill is created is detailed in later in this unit. The House of Lords plays a large part in this. The Lords spend around 60% of their time on this kind of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>The House of Lords performs the same function as the Commons in that they act as a form of scrutiny on the government, using questioning and criticism as a form of control on government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent expertise</td>
<td>The Lords conduct a variety of investigations and inquiries. They have a range of expertise, which can be used on government business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Branches of government

The UK is a liberal democracy. This means that we encourage competition and plurality and the minimal interference of the state. There are three forms of power involved in the running of a liberal democracy.
Legislative. This is the power to make laws. In the UK the body with legislative power is parliament. Parliament makes laws through a multi-stage process, which is outlined in Figure 1.7. In addition to the power to make new laws, parliament also has the legislative power to reform old laws.

Executive. This is the power to suggest new laws and ensure existing laws are implemented. This power is invested in government departments and the civil service who deal with the day to day running of the country. Laws are suggested via green papers, which open discussion about potential new laws and white papers, which set out blueprints for potential laws.

Judicial. This is the power to interpret the laws that have been made and make unbiased judgements on whether laws have been broken. This power is given to the court system and is implemented by judges in all courts in the UK.

These three powers work together to ensure the smooth running and stability of the nation.

Prime Minister (PM)

A bill of rights was passed in 1689, which restricted the power of the ruling monarch, by making it illegal for them to act on a variety of matters without the consent of parliament. This was in response to unscrupulous monarchs who raised taxes and executed laws to suit their own financial and political purposes. The monarch remained as head of the executive branch of the government and was, therefore, still able to propose and create law. However, the monarch did not rule alone as had been the case previously, instead they appointed a cabinet of ministers who were able to take on many of the duties of government with the support of the House of Commons. This situation continued for around 30 years or so until the early 1700s when the monarch of the time, George I, stopped attending cabinet meetings. In his absence a minister was deputised to act on his behalf and called the ‘First Lord of the Treasury’. The role of First Lord gradually evolved into the role of Prime Minister over the next 150 years.

The individual who is appointed to the office of PM is usually the leader of the political party with the highest number of representatives in the House of Commons. The role of PM is complex and difficult, involving a variety of administrative, bureaucratic and public duties such as:

- allocation of duties to ministers
- appointment and dismissal of ministers
- appointment of chairs of national industries
- to give out honours
- setting agendas for government business
- control of information released to the government ministers, Parliament and the public

The power of the government is distributed throughout the government ministers but the PM is extremely influential and dominant. The PM also plays a significant role on the European and World stage, meeting with other heads of state to discuss foreign and financial policies, which can have far reaching implications well past our own borders. However, it is important to note that as a public servant the PM is answerable to the Queen, their own political party and the public. When appointing to ministerial posts, they must take account of advice from senior advisors and ensure that individuals appointed are competent to do the job and do not create substantial political imbalance.

1.2 Main roles at government level

The government in its current form could not work effectively without people who fulfil the main roles needed to ensure the country works effectively and decisions are made and implemented. The key roles you are required to examine are as follows:

- Prime Minister
- Government Ministers
- MPs
- Mayors
- Council Members
The increased concentration of the media on high profile politicians such as government ministers and the Prime Minister means that their activities are closely scrutinised and the majority of their choices are in the public domain. This means that PMs must balance their own conscience with the demands of the public, who often favour or disfavour issues based on biased media information rather than a real analysis of the facts. Leaders must be aware of this and sometimes be prepared to take a political stance which is in opposition to the wishes of the public.

**Activity: Ministerial decisions**

Can you think of a recent issue where the Prime Minister has made a decision that the majority of the population didn’t agree with? What are the political implications of doing this?

**Government minister**

There are many government ministers, but the 20 or so most important ministers are called ‘the cabinet’, which operates as the central committee of the British government. Cabinet members are selected by the Prime Minister; the majority are elected MPs from the House of Commons who have been selected by virtue of their expertise and loyalty to head up particular ministries such as the Ministry of Defence or the Home Office. The cabinet also consists of a few members of the House of Lords and so it is representative of both chambers of Parliament.

There are some issues that overlap many government departments, such as terrorism. On issues such as these ministries try to work in close coordination to ensure that the overall government response to a situation is sensible and provides a good service to the citizens they serve. All governments are headed up by a Secretary of State (Senior Minister), who may or may not be part of the cabinet. The Secretary of State usually has several junior ministers who are responsible for specific areas of the ministries responsibilities, for example:

![Diagram of Home Office structure](Figure 1.5)
Did you know?
That the 646 elected members of parliament cannot run an effective government by themselves. The actual machinery of government, which implements decisions, lies with the 500,000 or so civil servants employed by the government.

Key terms
Prime Minister is the leader of the political party with most seats in the House of Commons
Minister is usually an MP appointed by the Prime Minister to take charge of a government office such as defence, or the Home Office.
Cabinet is a committee of the 20 or so most senior government ministers who meet once a week to support the Prime Minister in running the country.

Members of parliament (MPs)
The duties of an MP are split between working in the constituency where they are elected and working in the House of Commons itself. The current split is shown in Figure 1.4.
to raise, such as rubbish collection or poor repair of council houses, since these concerns are the business of local councillors. MPs also spend a great deal of time on public business. This includes the creation of legislation and membership of committees, which evaluate potential law.

Activity: Your MP

Conduct some research to find out who your local MP is and what role they play in politics in your local area and whether they have any specific responsibilities in the House of Commons.

Mayors

A mayor can have a variety of roles, they are normally appointed or elected for a period of one year and their role is often largely ceremonial. The role of the Mayor of London is different as you will have noted from the previous detail on the London assembly and its Mayor. The main duties of a mayor are:

- representing the council in civic and ceremonial occasions
- chair meetings of the full council
- promoting the area and being the council’s spokesperson
- teaching civic pride to young people
- supporting charities and community groups.

Council members

Councillors are elected by the local community to conduct the business of the council. They try to improve the quality of life in their area where they are elected by making decisions about local issues such as transport, education and public services. They are often community leaders and promote community groups and charities in their area, they may also act as advocates by speaking on behalf of individuals or groups who are in need. One of their most important roles is to decide on the policies that will be implemented by the council, this can have far reaching effects both on ordinary citizens and the work of the public services.

Assessment activity 1.1

The public services must abide by the policies created at the various levels of government in the UK. This means you should be able to describe the responsibilities each level of government has. In the form of a presentation answer the following questions:

1. Outline the responsibilities of the levels of government in the UK **P1**

2. Explain in detail the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK **M1**

3. Evaluate the responsibilities of the different levels of government in the UK **D1**

Grading tips

For **P1** a simple outline is required, so your slides do not have to be detailed in order to pass. When you are delivering your presentation you can explain the responsibilities in more detail and this should be enough to help you gain **M1**. To get **D2** you should supply a set of supporting notes to your tutor which goes into much greater detail about the responsibilities.
1.3 Responsibilities government departments and other levels of government have for specific public services

Many government departments have responsibility for one or more public services. Table 1.6 highlights the main government departments and their responsibilities to the uniformed public services. The unformed public services fall into several different ministries, this is one of the reasons why they are subject to different terms and conditions of employment.

Table 1.6: Responsibilities of the main government departments (find out more at the government department websites).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government department</th>
<th>Responsibilities for the public services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Defence (MOD) <a href="http://www.mod.gov.uk">www.mod.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Ministry of Defence has responsibility for the British Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Defence and three junior ministers, the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Procurement, the Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans. The MOD decides on budgets, policy and procurement for all three armed services. This means it has a tremendous amount of influence on the armed services, deciding everything from pay and conditions to equipment to locations of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice <a href="http://www.justice.gov.uk">www.justice.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>This ministry has responsibility for the courts, prisons and probation service, which means it is involved in offender management from charge to release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Home Office <a href="http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.homeoffice.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The Home Office has primary responsibility for many of the UK civilian public services such as the police, passports and immigration service and drugs policies. It contains the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, the Passport Office and it has responsibility for homeland counter-terrorism. The ministerial responsibility chart for the Home Office is shown in Figure 1.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Communities and Local Government <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>This is where primary responsibility for the UK’s fire and rescue services lies. It is headed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and several junior ministers. It has responsibility for allocating local governments with resources to fund their fire and rescue services and it also develops fire and rescue national policies and priorities. This ministry also has responsibility for local government which while non-uniformed is still an essential public service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for Health <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk">www.dh.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>This department has overall responsibility for the healthcare of the nation by running the National Health Service (NHS). From a uniformed public service point of view, this gives the department responsibility for the Ambulance Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM Revenue and Customs <a href="http://www.hmrc.gov.uk">www.hmrc.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>This government department has responsibility for the collection of taxes. From a public service point of view, it has responsibility for the Customs and Excise Service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accountability of uniformed public services

Since the uniformed public services are funded with public money and are designed to serve the needs of the public, it is important that there are checks and balances on their behaviour. Some of the public services have tremendous power over the lives of individuals and it is essential that they are seen to act in a fair and consistent manner. Equally, it is important to note that our public services cost billions of pounds of taxpayers’ money each year and the taxpayer has a right to know if that money is being used effectively.

The government recognises this and has set up a variety of inspectorates and monitoring commissions that are designed to establish whether the public services offer value for money and if they are effective in the job they are supposed to do. These inspectorates may also offer the public the opportunity to make a complaint about poor or unfair treatment, which can then be investigated impartially by a complaints agency.

There are two main procedures for investigating and monitoring the public services, through:
- inspectorates
- local organisations

Inspectorates and HM Inspectorates (HMI)

Inspectorates and HMIs are set up by the government on a national basis to ensure the smooth running of specified public services.

The Defence Vetting Agency (DVA)

The DVA exists to carry out national security checks. This kind of check might be applied to anyone who wishes to join the armed services, civilians who work for the Ministry of Defence, civilian contractors who might build on MOD land or supply MOD services and other background checks on individuals in other government departments. The DVA conducts around 140,000 checks on individuals each year, which makes it the largest government vetting agency.

Independent Police Complaints Commission. (IPCC)

The IPCC was created in 2004 to replace the Police Complaints Authority, although it gains its regulatory powers from the Police Reform Act 2002. It is funded by the Home Office, but remains entirely independent of it. This ensures that any decisions it makes are free of any government influence. The IPCC can investigate in several different ways, firstly it can choose to supervise a case being investigated by a police service internally or it can carry out an independent investigation if the complaint is about a serious matter. Serious complaints might include:

- incidents involving death or injury
- police corruption
- police racism
- perverting the course of justice.

The IPCC has teams of investigators allocated to certain regions so that it can deal with complaints quickly and efficiently. In 2008-9 a total of 31,259 complaints were received, a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. The most common causes of complaints were as follows:

- Neglect or Failure in Duty (24%)
- Incivility, Impoliteness and Intolerance (21%)
- Assault (13%)
- Oppressive Conduct or Harassment (7%)
- Unlawful/Unnecessary Arrest or Detention (5%)

Source – Police complaints Statistics for England and Wales 2008/9

Functional skills

By answering the research-based questions on this case study you may be contributing to the independent enquirer and reflective thinker aspects of your PLTS course

PLTS

By conducting internet-based research you will be practising your ICT functional skill
Quality Care Commission (Health Care Commission)

The Quality Care Commission (QCC) is the independent regulator for healthcare and social care for adults in England. The role of the QCC is to ensure that all healthcare provision, including private healthcare, meets quality standards and that patients receive the standard of care they should expect. It conducts reviews and inspections of healthcare facilities such as midwifery, surgery, mental healthcare and GPs. The QCC publishes the information it collects about these services to allow the public to make an informed choice about where they go for treatment or social care.

HMI of Prisons for England and Wales

Like the inspectorates we have already examined HMI Prisons is also funded by and reports directly to the government while maintaining its independence. Although inspecting prison establishments is its main priority it also has a responsibility to inspect immigration holding centres and it has been invited to inspect the military prison at Colchester. In terms of its main responsibilities, it must inspect every prison in England and Wales at least once every five years. However there are a variety of different types of inspection some of which the prison will know about in advance and some that they will not. A prison cannot refuse entry to the inspectorate.

Purpose of the inspections is to ensure that the prison it’s fulfilling its aims, a ‘good’ prison should be safe for Youth Offending Teams in reducing re-offending and protecting the public. It also works very closely with the Inspectorate of Prisons to assess the effectiveness of offender management.

Case study: The London region

In April 2009 leaders from the world’s richest and most influential nations met in London to coordinate global action on pressing financial and economic problems such as the recession and banking crisis. The G20 Summit attracts many protesters who are unhappy at the way the global economy is run and the financial inequalities that cause so much poverty in the developing world.

There were numerous complaints about police tactics made to the IPCC in the days after the event, many focusing on direct assaults made by the police on peaceful protesters and civilians who were trying to make their way home after work. The controversial tactic of ‘kettling’ also came under scrutiny. Kettling is the penning in of protesters to a confined area and not allowing them to leave for significant periods of time. Some protesters and passers-by in London accused the Metropolitan Police of keeping them ‘kettled’ for up to eight hours without access to food, water or toilet facilities, this included parents with children and the elderly. Liberal Democrat MP Martin Horwood, who was an eyewitness, has said he saw the police use dogs on the protesters.

Even more controversial was the death of Ian Tomlinson who was a newsagent trying to make his way home on the day of the protests. He tragically died after an alleged assault on him by a Metropolitan Police Officer. This matter is still under investigation by the IPCC.

1 Research the police response to the G20 protests using sources such as Youtube, broadsheet newspapers and the Metropolitan Police statements. Do you think the response to the protesters was appropriate? Explain your answer.

2 Why are independent commissions like the IPCC necessary?

3 What might happen to the public if there was no way to complain about unfair treatment?

4 Many of the protesters had camera phones and were able to record police actions on the day. Is this a good thing or might it lead to a ‘trial by media’ once the clips are shown?
the inmates and be an environment where they are treated with respect and dignity. The prison should provide activity and education that may lead to the rehabilitation of the offender and prepare them for release into the community.

Did you know?
Since prisons are not open to the public if the inspectorate did not exist no-one would know if prisoners were being treated poorly.

HMI of Constabulary for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (HMIC)

The HMIC is one of the oldest inspectorates in England and dates back to the County and Borough Police Act of 1856. Like the other inspectorates it is funded by and reports to the Home Office, but is independent of it. The role of the HMIC is to formally inspect and assess the 43 police services in England and Wales and support the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, but it also has other inspection roles with the:

- Central Police Training and Development Agency
- Civil Nuclear Constabulary
- British Transport Police
- Ministry of Defence Police
- Serious Organised Crime Agency

HMIC is able to conduct several different types of inspections. Some of the types are described below:

- **Thematic Inspections.** Here a particular aspect of performance is measured across several different police constabularies. For example, dealing with child protection or the training of police officers.
- **Best Value Inspections.** This type of inspection centres round ensuring that the police authority is allocating and spending money in a manner which could be considered best value.
- **Command Unit Inspections.** This type of inspection focuses on leadership and management.
- **Baseline Assessment.** This type of inspection seeks to monitor the improvement or deterioration in performance against a pre-established baseline.

Local organisations

Local organisations are also responsible for ensuring the quality and performance of the public services. Table 1.7 shows the key organisations involved at a local level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.7: The key local organisations investigating and monitoring the public services.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Police Authority</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Strategic Health Authorities (SHA)** | There are currently 10 SHAs in England and Wales (this matches the Regional Assembly areas in Figure 1.?, except for the addition of a South Central region between the South West and the South East). The SHAs were created in 2006 from the merging of smaller health authorities. The role of each SHA includes:
  - strategic oversight and leadership of the healthcare system in a particular region
  - ensuring better value for money for taxpayers
  - leading service improvements
  - accountability to the Department for Health for providing high quality healthcare
  - reducing health inequalities |
| **Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA)** | FRAs are like Police Authorities in that they are made up of local representatives from the council. Most FRAs have somewhere between 12 and 30 members depending on the size of the area they manage. Their primary responsibility is to be accountable to the public in the area for providing an efficient and effective fire and rescue service. The authority must ensure that the fire service has all the firefighters, equipment, premises and vehicles it needs in order to fulfil its duties to the public. It also has a responsibility for ensuring equality and diversity as a key role in brigade recruitment and training policies. |
2 Understand the democratic election process for each level of government in the UK

There are several types of election in the UK but the most common types are general elections and local elections. A general election occurs when all the **seats** in the House of Commons are open for re-election. The maximum term that a parliament can sit without a general election is 5 years and three weeks, so this type of election tends to happen between every 3.5-5 years depending on when the party in power think they might have the best chance of winning the most seats. It is the Prime Minister who makes the decision. Local elections follow a 4-year cycle, but not all councils elect at the same time.

### Candidate selection processes

If you are standing as an independent representative there are no candidate selection procedures, as long as you are eligible you may stand for office. However the political parties often have more potential candidates than they need to fill the seats they are hoping to win. A selection procedure becomes necessary to ensure that the best candidate, or the candidate most likely to win the seat, is selected.

There are many selection methods, for instance the party can draw up a list of centrally approved candidates from which the local branch can choose. The list is drawn up in a very rigorous way and in many ways mirrors the public services selection procedure. There will have been a paper sift of the candidates’ CVs and application forms, a background check will have been run and they will have been subjected to a weekend full of aptitude tests.

Existing MPs who want to stand for election again are normally automatically approved.

The local branch of the party can interview the potential candidates to find the one they want to serve their area. A party will draw up a shortlist containing only women or only candidates from ethnic minorities so as to increase the diversity of MPs in the party, but this can be controversial tactic and not everyone agrees with it.

### Influence of political parties

Political parties have a tremendous amount of influence on the election process. Firstly and most importantly, the political party in power is the one who chooses when to have a general election. This means they can call a general election at any time within the five-year period that suits them and makes it more likely for them to win. The party in power is likely to have the funds to support their candidates and the resources for publicity to help them win the seat. This puts smaller parties and independent candidates at a distinct disadvantage.

### 2.1 Who can stand for election?

This depends on the type of election. For a general election where all 646 UK constituencies are open for re-election you must be over 21 years of age and a British, Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland Citizen. You must be nominated by at least 10 of the registered electors in the constituency and if you want to stand for a particular party you must receive authorisation from that party. If you don’t have authorisation from a party you are classed as independent. In addition, you must pay a £500 deposit when you register as a candidate, and you only get this money back if you receive over 5 per cent of the votes cast. You may not stand for election if you are a prisoner serving a sentence of over 12 months.

For a local election you must satisfy similar criteria, but an individual who is a citizen of a nation in the European Union may also stand. You are not eligible to stand for local election if you are employed by the local authority, are subject to bankruptcy restrictions or have been sentenced to a prison term of three months or more.
Did you know?
By September 2008 Barack Obama had managed to raise $454 million to fund his presidential campaign. This was money used for publicity and electioneering activities. How difficult do you think this would make it for new or independent candidates to become the US president?

Publicity and electioneering activities
It is important that a candidate becomes well known in the area they are hoping to represent and to this end they will often undertake a great deal of publicity work, such as leafleting houses, displaying posters, and canvassing door-to-door for votes. Publicity costs money and so the more wealthy parties will have an advantage. In addition, during a general election you will often see party political broadcasts for the main parties outlining their policies. This is because they can afford publicity campaigns that include film-making.

Did you know?
During election campaigns the main parties often have publicity campaigns that concentrate on telling you why you shouldn’t vote for the rival parties, rather than good reasons why you should vote for their party. This is called negative campaigning.

Period of election
Periods of election in the UK can range from 1-5 years depending on the post the candidate is elected to. Mayors typically serve for one year, councillors for up to four and MPs for up to five before they must stand down or be re-elected.

Case study: Negative campaigning
Look at the three election slogans in the photos. Each is trying to get a message across to the public, but the message often focuses on the negative qualities of rival parties rather than positive qualities of their own.

1  What message is each political poster trying to get across?
2  What is your opinion of negative campaigning?
3  Why do parties often focus on the faults of others rather than the benefits of themselves?
2.2 The voting processes

As technology has evolved there have become more ways to cast a vote than ever before. Most people are familiar with the traditional way of going to a polling office (usually a church, school or community centre that has changed purposes for the day) to go into a voting booth and place a cross on a ballot slip next to the name of the candidate you wish to vote for. However, it is also possible to vote by post or electronically through the internet. There is also a facility where you can name someone to cast your vote for you. This is called voting by proxy.

Voting systems

There are many methods used in both the UK and worldwide to decide who gets to be part of the government and these include:
- first past the post
- the single transferable vote
- the alternative vote
- proportional representation

First past the post (FPTP)

The British electoral system is based on the FPTP system. This system is very clear-cut and definitive, the candidate with the highest number of votes in a constituency wins. In order to vote in a FPTP system you simply mark a cross (X) next to the name of the candidate you are choosing. If your candidate polls more votes than the others they win, regardless of whether he or she has more than 50 per cent support.

For example, the results of a by-election are as follows:

Candidate 1 polled 40% of the vote
Candidate 2 polled 32% of the vote
Candidate 3 polled 18% of the vote
Candidate 4 polled 7% of the vote
Candidate 5 polled 3% of the vote

Activity: Election day

Working as a group

Election day is busy for candidates, political parties and the media. Conduct some research and find out what kind of activities happen on election day in general and local elections. Put your findings into a poster.

Table 1.8: Advantages and disadvantages of the FPTP system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheap and simple way to hold an election</td>
<td>More people in a constituency can vote against a candidate than vote for them and the individual is still elected. The example described previously had the winning candidate on 40% of the vote. This means that 60% of the constituents voted against them. Is this truly democratic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting of ballot papers is fast and accurate</td>
<td>Individuals may cast negative votes, i.e., voting against a candidate they dislike rather than voting for one they like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot papers are easy to understand</td>
<td>There is a lack of choice of representatives, usually only 3 or 4 will stand for election, if you don’t like them there is no alternative choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows a new or incumbent government to either take over the reins or continue as usual, swiftly and with the minimum of upheaval</td>
<td>The government as a whole may not represent the will of the people. For example in 1997 the Labour Party gained just over 40% of the vote nationally but received over 60% of the seats in the House of Commons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPTP gives a clear mandate to the party in power</td>
<td>The government can change constituency boundaries to affect the results of elections; this is called ‘gerrymandering’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a stable and legitimate political system with usually just two parties dominating. It means a party can pass legislation and tackle the country’s problems without having to rely on other parties for support</td>
<td>Voters in strong party constituencies may feel their vote is wasted. If you know the other candidate will win why bother to vote? This badly affects smaller parties such as the Liberal Democrats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a close and direct link between the MP and the constituency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.8: Advantages and disadvantages of the FPTP system.
This means that Candidate 1 is empowered to act as a representative for the constituency despite the fact that only 4 out of every 10 constituents voted for them.

When members have been elected in this fashion the party with the most elected representatives is invited by the Queen to form the government. The FPTP system is used in both general (House of Commons) elections and local elections.

The alternative vote (AV)

Voters must rank the candidates on the ballot paper in order of preference. If a candidate receives 50 per cent or more of first preferences then they are elected. If not, then the candidate with the lowest number of first choices is eliminated and their second choices are redistributed to the other candidates. This process continues until one candidate has an absolute majority.

Table 1.9: Advantages and disadvantages of the AV system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensures the winner has a majority</td>
<td>Does not give parties the proportion of seats that their votes have earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong bond between representatives and constituents is maintained</td>
<td>Does not help change the status of those who have been traditionally under represented in political processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes issues of wasted votes</td>
<td>Time consuming and more complex that FPTP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme left or right wing parties would be unlikely to get enough support to be elected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single transferable vote (STV)

This system involves multi-member constituencies in which parties can field as many candidates as there are seats. Voters then rank the candidates on a ballot paper in order of preference. If a voter’s first-choice candidate doesn’t need their vote because they have already accrued enough votes to be elected then the vote is transferred to the second choice and so on.

Table 1.10: Advantages and disadvantages of the STV system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power is in the hands of the voters</td>
<td>Link between representative and constituency is gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide choice of candidates</td>
<td>Leads to weak coalition governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects the views of voters</td>
<td>Voters have no say in which individuals are chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No wasted votes</td>
<td>Favours big parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters can rank in preference based on things other than party allegiance, such as gender or ethnicity</td>
<td>Power is in the hands of the party leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a relatively simple procedure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small parties will benefit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportional representation

This is a voting system which tries to match the proportion of votes cast with the proportion of seats a party receives. For example, under proportional representation if you received 35 per cent of the votes you should get 35 per cent of the seats in Parliament.

Table 1.11: Advantages and disadvantages of the proportional representation system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Represents the wishes of the voters as a whole</td>
<td>Can be difficult to make decisions if no party has a clear majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority parties end up with a fairer share of the seats</td>
<td>Requires good voter turnout and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases the opportunities for independent candidates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces the possibility of one party dominating</td>
<td>Can lead to unstable coalition governments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key term

Coalition government is a government where no single party has a majority and so they have to team up to form an alliance in order to ensure decisions can be made and legislation is passed. However, because different parties are involved they often disagree on how best to do things and this can lead to instability.
Assessment activity 1.3

You have applied for a job working for the local council’s electoral department during your summer break. As part of the interview process you need to take part in a group discussion with the other candidates to demonstrate your knowledge about elections. In the group discussion you must address the following:

1. Explain the electoral processes used in UK elections
2. Compare the electoral processes used at different levels of government in the UK

Grading tips
You have a lot of freedom with a discussion so it is important to make sure you keep focused on the subject and answer the tasks. For P1 make sure you explain the election process used at local and national level and for M2 make sure you can draw clear comparisons, this means identifying the similarities and differences between local and national processes.

3 Know the impact of UK government policies on the public services

The policies created by the UK government can have significant effects on the public services. The government can create:

• policies that affect all the services
• policies that affect the armed services
• policies that affect the emergency services.

3.1 Policies that affect all the services

Human rights

The uniformed public services have a tremendous amount of power over our lives. They can take away our freedom, investigate our private lives, monitor our actions and use the information they find out against us if required. These powers must be carefully regulated to avoid abuses by the state and its public services against individual members of the public. In a democracy there must always be checks and balances on power to ensure that no one agency or service has power over the public that cannot be challenged. Generally speaking, the public services operate with the consent and cooperation of the public and are respected and respectful. However, even in a country like the UK with highly trained and knowledgeable officers, a breach of human rights can still occur. This is why laws and policies as the Human Rights Act 1998 exist. The Act makes it clear that certain rights are given to all UK citizens and if these rights are broken by the public services then an individual has the right to take the service to court and challenge its actions.
Figure 1.7 The human rights of an individual are shown here. Can you discover any more about the rights of a child?

- Right to life
- Right to education
- Protection of property
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry
- Freedom of expression
- Right to respect for private and family life
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Right to a fair trial
- Right to liberty and security
- No punishment without law
- Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
- Prohibition of torture
- Right to life
- Right to free elections
- Prohibition of discrimination

**Case study: The right to protest**

In 2006 coaches full of anti-war demonstrators were detained by the police for more than 2½ hours and prevented from joining a peaceful demonstration against the war in Iraq at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. The police argued that by preventing the demonstrators from attending the protest they were protecting the demonstrators right to life since the American forces at the base had reserved the right to use ‘deadly force’ if the base were breached. The protesters argued that the detainment violated their right to freedom of speech and assembly, and freedom from arbitrary detention. The House of Lords agreed with the protesters and found the police in breach of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Helen Wickham, a coach passenger, said: “I think it is deeply worrying that Gloucestershire police, confronted with the possibility of US troops shooting unarmed protestors, chose to defend the US use of lethal force over our right to protest.”

1. Do you think the police made a sound case for wanting to protect the lives of the protesters?
2. Why do you think the protesters felt the need to take the case to court?
3. What impact might this case have had on the police?
4. Examine the quote from the coach passenger, where should the responsibilities of the UK public services be, with the UK public or with our US defence partner?
5. In your opinion, did the House of Lords make the right decision?
Finance

At the heart of all of the work that the public services do is finance. The public services could not operate if they did not have the resources to pay their personnel, buy and maintain equipment and support a complex infrastructure. Therefore the financial policies of the government have a tremendous impact on the public services. It goes without saying that if public money used to fund the services is reduced then this will have a direct impact on the work the services can afford to do. For instance, less officers may be appointed, they may have less specialised training and equipment and so respond less effectively to social or military problems. If public spending is increased then the reverse may be true.

Equal opportunities

The public services place a great deal of emphasis on the importance of equal opportunities and this has impacted on procedures in a number of ways. Firstly, the services are bound to reflect the communities which they serve and so the presence of ethnic minority groups and women in the public services is encouraged. This enriches the service and makes it more representative of the people it serves. To this end many public services are actively recruiting suitable women or individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds, although there is still some way to go on this. Equal opportunities policies and legislation can have an impact on uniform requirements, for example Muslim police women may wear a dark blue head covering under their police hats, Sikh male police officers may wear a dark blue police turban with the badge of the force clearly displayed upon it. In the armed services ration packs with kosher and halal provisions are available for Jews and Muslims. Equal opportunities legislation such as the Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act have fundamentally changed the way the services interact with their officers and the public.

Activity: Equal opportunities

Working in pairs

Why is it important that the public services are representative of the rest of society? What benefits could this bring? Consider these questions and make a list of your answers ready to feed back to the rest of your group.

Did you know?

In March 2009 the percentage of ethnic minority police officers in England and Wales was 4.4%, the percentage of ethnic minority firefighters in 2008 was 3% and the RAF recorded just 1.8% ethnic minorities in the service in 2007-8.

Activity: Women in the service

In the armed services there are some job roles that are not open to women, such as serving in the infantry or as a submariner. This does not promote equal opportunities. Can you think why they might make decision such as this? Discuss the issue with your colleagues and make a list of possible answers.

Civilianisation

Civilisation is a process where police officers (or other public service officers) are released from doing non-operational tasks that don’t require their specialist expertise or training. These officers are then free to work in an operational role. This makes use of these staff much more efficient since they are doing the job they were trained to do rather than routine administrative work. The routine or non-specialist support then comes from civilians employed by the service. It is cheaper to employ a civilian on non-operational duties than to use a public services officer as well as being an efficient way to use a trained public service officer.
Environment

The environment is an important issue affecting all parts of public life. The government is bound to tackle the environmental problems that face us as a society and so the public services have become more aware of the need to recycle resources and move towards procedures that limit damage to the environment. In addition, some MOD areas of land have been set aside to protect species that may not have a chance to thrive elsewhere.

Key term

Civilianisation is the process of freeing up public service personnel by employing civilians to do non-operational work.

3.2 Policies affecting the armed services

Declarations of war

As you will appreciate a declaration of war will have a large and immediate impact on the military services. They will begin to be deployed almost immediately to a particular battle zone, along with their resources and equipment. They will be fighting for an aim or set of aims specified by the government.

The armed services exist as servants of the government and can only go into military action when ordered to do so by the government. They cannot pick and choose where they serve or when they serve. The implications of this on the services are far reaching as there is the ever present risk to the lives of serving soldiers who are in combat or in an area of global instability. They may be killed or seriously injured by the enemy, by civilians who resent the military presence or even by friendly fire. There is also an impact on the families of military personnel who may experience extreme stress and anxiety about the welfare of their loved one. Going to war is also a tremendously expensive prospect and a war can quickly use up a variety of resources, including ammunition and protective equipment.

Reserve forces

Until the late 1990s military reserve forces were barely ever used on active duty. In 2006 reserve forces numbered 36,000 with the largest proportion of these coming from the Territorial Army plus around 52,000 regular reserves (former full-time army personnel who can be called up to serve). As the commitments of the armed services has grown over the last 10 years with operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, reserve forces have had to be used as an essential component of the UK fighting force. The National Audit Office report on reserve forces in 2006 notes that over 12,000 reservists have been deployed in Iraq since 2003 and they contribute approximately 12 per cent of the fighting force. Reservist medical personnel have been even more important as they have staffed up to 50 per cent of the field hospitals in the conflict. There are advantages and disadvantages of using reserve forces. Commanding officers have noted that reservists may be less physically fit to cope with the demands of conflict and often they had not received adequate training or had the chance to be deployed with a regular unit. On the plus side, they bring a wealth of experience from their civilian lives which can enhance the service greatly. The government is committed to maintaining reserve forces although they are considering policy changes on how they are trained and deployed to try to bring them in line with their regular counterparts.

Key term

Reserve forces are volunteer troops who may be called up in time of conflict, but have a normal civilian life.

Activity: The Sanctuary Awards

The MOD holds an annual awards ceremony for outstanding efforts in conservation, wildlife, archaeology and environmental improvement. Research the Sanctuary Awards and find out which projects achieved an award last year. What does this tell you about how the MOD views environmental issues?
Use of technology
The armed services have always been at the forefront in the use of technology. They have provided the impetus for the development of many areas of technology with war and conflict driving technological changes as each side seeks an advantage over the other. This has become particularly true in the war against terrorism where advanced technology and surveillance equipment have been used by both military and civilian counter-terrorist specialists to protect the public.

Links with international services
As a result of the coordinated policy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), of which the UK is a founder member, we are required to maintain collective defence capabilities. This means that NATO forces must be able to integrate into operations seamlessly where possible. To this end UK troops often exercise with NATO troops from allied nations in combat simulations. This ensures they can be more ‘combat-effective’ should a situation arise where they have to collaborate. Our own three armed services, the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Army, also regularly train and exercise together since they are reliant on each other for a variety of roles.

Key term
**Exercise** is another word for a simulation, it’s a chance for the public services to practice their skills and knowledge in a simulated battle or emergency situation.

2.3 Policies that affect the emergency services

Fire station closures
There has been a recent spate of fire station closures, particularly in smaller more rural areas as an efficiency measure. This is despite concerns from local residents that if local stations are closed it could take longer for a fire crew to reach the area in times of emergency.

Target setting
Central government sets targets for all of the public services. Public services also set their own targets on a range of tasks such as 999 response times, ethnic minority recruitment, female recruitment, budget expenditure, reductions in crime or fires, patient survival rates and many more. This can lead to a tremendous amount of pressure on all levels of the public services as they work to meet the targets and avoid the possible consequences if they are not met. For instance, in the Case study on the fire station closure another reason for closing the Ringinglow fire station was that the brigade was not meeting 999 response times in certain other areas of South Yorkshire and so it needed to move the under-utilised resources to a place where they would have a better impact on targets. In this case, the corporate plan put forward by the South Yorkshire fire authority included a new Dearne Valley fire station which would help to meet the target set for response times in that area. This shows how government and local targets have a real influence on the operation of the services.

**Case study: Fire station closure**

Every fire authority in the UK has to create a three-year corporate plan that demonstrates improvement to the services and shows the taxpayer that the services are offering value for money. The 2006–2009 corporate plan for South Yorkshire Fire Authority included the closure of Ringinglow fire station despite enormous local opposition in the area. As the area in question is rural and the local people were extremely concerned that response times in the case of an emergency would be increased, potentially putting lives and property at risk. However, the rationale for closing it presented by the South Yorkshire Fire Authority was that it was a station with consistently low call-out rates and the firefighters and equipment could be better deployed elsewhere without compromising the safety of people in the area.

1. Should public services have to produce a corporate plan like a business?
2. What are the potential problems with closing fire stations in rural areas?
3. What is the likely impact on the community of such a closure?
4. In your opinion were the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority correct in closing the station and redeploying the resources elsewhere?
Social responses to UK government policies on the public services

Although many aspects of government policy are open to public consultation there will be decisions made that some of the public do not agree with and feel so strongly about that they are prepared to have their say. There are several ways a society or an individual can make a response to a policy:

1. Describe, with examples, the impact of government policies on different public services
2. Explain how different government policies have impacted upon a range of public services
3. Evaluate the impact of government policies on public services and the communities they serve

Grading tips

The assessment guidance for this requires you to examine two different policies and two different services, so you need to make sure that you follow this guidance. For choose two different government policies and explain how they have impacted on two services. For make sure you evaluate these policies by examining the positive and negative aspects of the policies.

Assessment activity 1.5

Working individually

Government policies don’t just affect the uniformed services, they also affect the general public. Understanding how the public can respond to the policies is very important as some of their responses may require a public service presence. Write a report that addresses the following task.

1. Identify how society is affected by government policies

Grading tips

This is a very straightforward task, if you identify and give a brief explanation of the issues identified in the table above, perhaps with some examples, you should achieve the criterion.
Table 1.2 Response to a policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Explanation and example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil disobedience</td>
<td>A civil disobedience is a deliberate and planned breach of policy or law by an individual or group of people. It is usually done peacefully to highlight how inappropriate a law is and promote the need for a change in the law. This was a very common tool used in the black civil rights movement in the USA in the 1960s where Black men and women would deliberately break the racial segregation laws to show how deeply unfair they were and how much the law needed to change. A good example of this is the case of Rosa Parks who in December 1955 didn’t give up her seat on a bus to a White man when asked to do so, she was arrested and this arrest sparked a chain of events which led to the US Supreme Court deciding in 1956 that racial segregation on transportation was illegal. Civil disobedience, even when peaceful, often requires a coordinated public service response to make sure no-one is hurt or injured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrations and meetings</td>
<td>Meetings to discuss problems with policy and decisions are very common and are a way for like-minded individuals to air their concerns in a supportive environment. Sometimes these meetings are held outdoors and include a march or demonstration to show the government or local authority the depth of public feeling against a decision. An example of this might be the 2009 G20 protests in London which required a police and paramedic presence as so many individuals were involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>Terrorism is an extreme response to public policy. It involves using violence or the threat of violence against civilian and military targets in order to force the government to change its policy on a specific issue. It is usually the last resort of a group that has already tried civil disobedience and demonstration to no effect. Governments do not respond well to terrorism, and many have a policy of not negotiating with terrorists under any circumstances. For example, in Northern Ireland in the second half of the twentieth century Loyalist and Republican terrorist groups were active in Northern Ireland and on the British mainland with great cost to civilian and military life and property. One of the worst atrocities was the bombing of a shopping centre in Omagh (1998) which killed 29 people. The UK government did not undertake the terrorists’ demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picketing</td>
<td>Picketing is a very common way of employees showing that they are unhappy with a policy decision made at national or local level on issues that usually have an impact on pay, redundancies, or working conditions. The Royal Mail Strikes in 2009 are an example of this. The public services themselves rarely strike (in fact many are forbidden from doing so by law) but the fire service has a history of national strikes, the last being in 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit-ins</td>
<td>Sit-ins are a peaceful way of demonstrating against an issue by causing great inconvenience and delay to the people trying to implement the decision. For example, it is a tool often used by environmental protesters who want to oppose the building of new roads. They build camps underground, in trees and generally make it impossible for work to begin safely. The Newbury bypass which opened in 1998 had a total of 29 camps set up at one point including tree houses and a tunnel network. Although the protesters didn’t stop Newbury it led to a change in government thinking on the building of new roads, which led to the Salisbury bypass being stopped on the basis of the environmental impact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Be able to demonstrate the process of developing government policies

Government policy can be generated by a number of factors such as a need identified by the public or organisations, a reaction to an issue in the media or a new issue such as terrorism. All of these can change the way the government runs the country. The creation of law and policy can be a complex procedure and there are many parts to it, this section of the unit discusses the policy-making procedure in the UK, so you can have a better understanding of how our laws and policies are generated.

4.1 Development processes

Initially policies begin life as ideas on how to change or manage a situation. These ideas can come from a variety of sources, such as:

- the public
- the media
- the public services
- politicians
- subject experts.

If the policy is needed and the idea has merit it is subject to a great deal of discussion in governmental meetings such as cabinet meetings and parliamentary committees and subcommittees. If after these discussions the idea is still considered to be worthwhile then the procedure becomes more formal and the proposed policy takes the form of a green paper.

Green paper

This is a document about a proposed change in the law that is distributed to interested parties to gather their views on the change and open up a period of consultation and debate. This debate might take the form of public meetings, specialist consultation meeting or open enquiries from outside government. Sometimes the discussions around a green paper make it clear that the policy or law would not be welcome or is not needed and the policy stops there. However, sometimes the discussions show that there is a need for the law and it moves ahead to the next stage. The next stage is a white paper.

White paper

This is much more formal than a green paper and contains a set of formal proposals on the new law or policy. White papers are the drafts of what will become known as bills in later stages of development.

Key terms

**Draft** is a term used when a policy is not yet in its final form and might be subject to change after further discussion and debate.

There are other ways in which views on new policy can be heard such as, letters to MP’s, seeing an MP in their surgery and taking into account the views of the opposition are all ways that new public policy can be influenced from outside the government.

4.2 The legal processes used to create legislation

All potential laws and legislation begins life as a ‘bill’. A bill is a proposal for a piece of legislation. There are three kinds of bills:
A **public bill.** This is usually a proposal for a large piece of legislation that will affect the whole country. Public bills are created by the government currently in power, examples include: the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Theft Act 1968.

A **private bill.** This is usually proposed by a local authority or large corporation and generally will only affect the group of people who proposed it, for instance if the building of a new motorway requires a local authority to compulsory purchase land. An example of a private bill is the Henry Johnson, Sons and Co Limited Act 1996 which was an act that allowed the company of Henry Johnson, Sons and Co to transfer to the republic of France.

A **private members bill.** This is usually prepared by a member of parliament who has to enter a ballot in order to be guaranteed the time to introduce the bill in parliament. This allocated time is very important because it allows the bill to be debated in parliament and the reason private members bills often fail is due to a lack of time for debate. Sometimes private members bills are introduced as a way of drawing attention to a particular public concern, examples include the Abortion Act 1967 and the Activity Centres (Young Persons Safety) Act 1995.

**The process of a policy**

What is the procedure for these bills to become Statutes or Acts of Parliament? There are seven stages that a bill must proceed through before it can become law. These are listed in Table 13 and shown in Figure ?.

**Implementation and guidance**

A new law or policy is rarely implemented immediately. It is important to have a period where the public services can become familiar with the new law, undertake relevant training if necessary and be ready for when the bill becomes law. For this reason laws are rarely implemented on being signed, but have an implementation date. For example, the Human Rights Act 1998 didn’t come into force until 2000. Also, before new laws come into force the government issues guidance and directives to the public services that are affected, identifying the changes and the areas the public service will be responsible or accountable for.

It is also important that the general public have an opportunity to become familiar with a new law. If a new law was implemented immediately the public would have difficulty conforming to it. One way in which changes to policy and the law are promoted and introduced to the public is through the use of the media.

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**Case study: The use of mobile phones while driving**

On February 27 2007 new legislation came into force that increased the penalties that drivers receive if they use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. The new policy means a punishment of a £60 fine and 3 penalty points on the driving licence. The penalties can be much worse if the case goes to court and worse still if the offence was committed by a bus driver, or the driver of a heavy goods vehicle.

A national multimedia campaign began on the 22 January 2007, which involved the radio, television and internet. The government also targeted key employers and industries with leaflets and posters. Road safety officers and police were heavily involved in promoting the changes in the law to the public.

1. **Why did the media campaign begin a month earlier than the actual change in the law?**
2. **Why did the government decide on a multimedia campaign?**
3. **Which form of advertising do you think would be most effective and why?**
4. **Do you think the government have been successful in promoting the change to the law?**
Figure 1.8: The stages of a bill before it becomes law
Did you know?

That the Royal Assent stage of a bill is a formality these days, the last time a monarch refused a bill was Queen Anne in 1707 who declined to give consent to a Scottish Militia Bill.

This Case study highlights the use of road safety officers to promote a change in road safety law, but there are other organisations that may be involved in promoting change or implementing a law. For example, the Probation Service, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) and of course the police. The agencies involved in supporting a change to the law depends entirely on what the law is about.
Assessment activity 1.6

Working in groups
You have been asked by a local school to explain to their Y10 learners how policy is decided and made by government. The students have not studied government before so rather than provide them with written materials their teacher has asked if you and your colleagues would be willing to do a role-play explanation instead to make the subject more interesting and interactive. For this activity develop your own government role-play where you address the following tasks:

1. Demonstrate how government policies are developed.
2. Carry out an analysis of how government policies are developed.

Grading tip
Role-plays can be tricky to do, they key is good preparation and a good script, so spend some time on developing this and make sure everyone has a role to play. Choose a policy to develop and talk through all the stages it must go through in order to become law. Then translate this into an interesting and interactive role-play which would be informative and interesting for your audience.
I work as a local councillor in the town where I live. My job is to make sure that local money is spent on the right things and to make sure that the people of my community are represented and their views get heard by the council. I also have to work closely with lots of other agencies to make sure that the people of my town get all the high quality services they are entitled to and sometimes I represent the people of my town at national or regional events.

A typical day

There is no such thing as a typical day for a councillor. It’s not a full time job so I juggle my responsibilities with working full time and raising my family. Usually I will be required to attend meetings and respond to council business and the correspondence of my constituents. Most councillors spend around 15 hours a week on their role unless they have extra responsibilities in the council.

The best thing about the job

This is when I get to see my constituents and help them with their problems. They elected me to serve them and represent their interests so helping them when they are in difficulties is a really big part of my job. It might involve matters of housing or refuse collection or even lobbying for community facilities such as a bike track or footpath to be created. All of this goes to making my community a better place to live for everyone.

Think about it!

What topics have you covered in this unit that might give you the background to work in local or national government?

What knowledge and skills do you think you need to develop further if you want to be involved in policy creation in the future?
BTEC’s own resources

Just checking

1. What are the three parts of parliament?
2. What are the three branches of government?
3. How many MPs are there?
4. What is gerrymandering?
5. What does the Ministry of Justice do?
6. What is the role of the IPCC?
7. Who can stand for election?
8. What is the ‘first past the post system’?
9. Name three policies which affect all uniformed services.
10. What responses can the public take to policies they disagree with?

Assignment tips

1. In a unit like this that focuses on how the government works and how this affects the services, one of the best things you can do to help improve your grade and your knowledge is to make sure you keep up to date with current events by reading a reputable news source on a daily basis. This means using your lunch hour or an hour after school/college to read the BBC News website or picking up a broadsheet newspaper such as The Times or The Guardian (both of these have websites where you can read the news if you can’t get hold of the paper see: www.timesonline.co.uk and www.guardian.co.uk). Not only will you become more informed about government policies and the public services, but you will also pick up lots of information which can be used across all of your national diploma units.

2. This may sound very basic, but make sure you have read your assignment thoroughly and you understand exactly what you are being asked to do. Once you are clear about this then you can move on to your research. Doing your research well and using good sources of evidence is essential. Lots of students rely too much on the internet and not enough on other sources of information such as books, newspapers and journals. The internet is not always a good source of information, it is very easy to use information from American or Australian government websites without noticing – but your tutor will notice. Always double check the information you find, don’t just accept it at face value. Good research and preparation is the key to getting those higher grades.