1.4 Pressure Groups, Think Tanks and Lobbyists in UK Politics: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but must be accurate. Time guidance: 20 minutes for the whole pack.

1 Define the term 'pressure group' as used in UK politics, naming its primary purpose.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State two features that distinguish insider pressure groups from outsider pressure groups in the UK.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 State two factors that commonly determine the success of a UK pressure group, and for each give a one sentence explanation.

(Total for Question 3 is 5 marks)

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4 Explain the role of think tanks in UK policy-making, using one named UK think tank as an example and describing one way it influences government.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

5 Explain one way professional lobbyists differ from voluntary pressure group campaigners in the UK, and give one implication of that difference for democratic accountability.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.4 Pressure Groups, Think Tanks and Lobbyists in UK Politics: Test Pack

Question 1

a concise definition that a pressure group is an organised body seeking to influence government policy or public opinion without seeking to become a political party — **B1**

Answer: An organised body that seeks to influence government policy or public opinion on specific issues without aiming to become a political party.

Question 2

one feature, e.g. insider groups have regular access to ministers and civil servants — **B1**

second feature, e.g. outsider groups lack official access and rely on public campaigning or direct action — **B1**

Answer: Insider groups have regular access to ministers and civil servants and are consulted in policy-making, while outsider groups lack such access and typically rely on public campaigning, media pressure or direct action to influence policy.

Question 3

one factor named, e.g. finance — **B1**

brief explanation of the first factor, e.g. money funds research, legal cases and professional lobbyists — **B1**

second factor named, e.g. membership size or expertise — **B1**

brief explanation of the second factor, e.g. large membership signals electoral importance and can supply volunteers or public pressure — **B1**

a third minor factor or extension, e.g. media presence or government sympathy counted as half-credit if well linked — **B1**

Answer: Finance: money allows groups to commission research, mount legal challenges, hire professional lobbyists and run sustained campaigns. Membership size or expertise: large membership indicates electoral importance to politicians and supplies volunteers for campaigning, while specialised expertise gives credibility in technical consultations.

Question 4

identifies that think tanks produce research, policy proposals and expert advice aimed at shaping debate — **B1**

names a UK think tank, e.g. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Policy Exchange, or The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) cao — **B1**

explains a route of influence, e.g. publishing reports used by ministers or civil servants as evidence in consultations — **B1**

explains an additional route, e.g. providing expert witnesses to Select Committees or seconding staff to government — **B1**

gives a concrete example of influence consistent with the named think tank — **B1**

brief evaluation of limits, e.g. influence depends on proximity to government and perceived independence — **B1**

Answer: Think tanks produce research and policy proposals to shape debate; for example Policy Exchange publishes reports and organises briefings that ministers or civil servants may use when drafting policy, and think tanks often give evidence to Select Committees or second experts into departments. Their influence depends on perceived quality, political proximity and independence.

Question 5

identifies a difference, e.g. lobbyists are paid agents representing client interests while voluntary campaigners act on behalf of a membership or cause — **B1**

develops the difference, e.g. lobbyists may represent commercial or foreign clients and provide targeted access to officials — **B1**

identifies an implication for accountability, e.g. paid lobbying can be opaque and reduce transparency about who influences policy — **B1**

develops the implication, e.g. citizens may find it harder to hold decision-makers to account if influence is channelled through hidden paid networks — **B1**

gives an alternative implication, e.g. lobbyists can professionalise evidence provision which may improve policy quality — **B1**

brief balanced judgement, e.g. the democratic cost depends on regulation and disclosure rules — **B1**

Answer: Professional lobbyists are paid agents representing specific clients, often providing targeted access to officials, whereas voluntary campaigners act on behalf of a membership or public cause. This can reduce transparency and make it harder for citizens to see who shapes policy, though lobbyists can also professionalise evidence provision and thus improve policy quality; the net democratic effect depends on the strength of disclosure and regulation.

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