1.13 The Role of Government and Legislation in Medical Change, c1250-1900: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write in full sentences for Questions 1 and 2. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Explain why government action in public health in Britain increased between c1700 and 1875.

You may use the following in your answer:
- changes in urban conditions and industrialisation
- the impact of publicised disease outbreaks and reports

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

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2 'Government legislation, not individual doctors or inventors, was the most important driver of improvement in public health before 1900.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the role of national legislation such as the Public Health Acts
- the contribution of local officials and voluntary groups

You must also use information of your own. 4 marks are available for spelling, punctuation, grammar and the accurate use of specialist terms.

(Total for Question 2 is 20 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.13 The Role of Government and Legislation in Medical Change, c1250-1900: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 1 Identifies one or two simple reasons for increased government action with little supporting detail. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain some reasons, supported by some accurate detail and showing some links between causes. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains a range of reasons, each supported by accurate and relevant detail, and shows how they contributed to greater government involvement. **7-9**

Level 4 Provides a well-developed explanation that analyses several interconnected reasons for increased government action, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail and clear judgement about their relative importance. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Urbanisation and industrialisation increased the size and density of towns, producing overcrowded housing, poor drainage and contaminated water supplies that made disease more common and visible, creating pressure for public action.
- High-profile outbreaks, such as cholera epidemics in the 1830s and 1840s, and published reports like Edwin Chadwick's 1842 Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population, publicised the links between environment and illness and persuaded politicians and the public that government action could prevent disease.
- The growth of statistical thinking and public health expertise gave authorities evidence to argue for intervention, for example data on mortality rates in towns versus rural areas.
- Economic and social arguments influenced reformers: employers and civic leaders wanted a healthy workforce and stable urban populations, so economic self-interest supported sanitary reform and encouraged government involvement.
- Changes in political culture, including greater willingness to reform social problems and the example of some effective local sanitation projects, made Parliament more ready to pass acts such as the 1848 Act and later the 1875 Act which made duties compulsory.

Question 2

Level 1 Shows limited knowledge of the period and offers a simple, unsupported view on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and begins to weigh the importance of legislation against other factors, but the argument is not well developed. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good knowledge and gives a balanced evaluation of legislation and other contributors, reaching a supported judgement with some analysis of connections. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and evaluates in a sustained, balanced way the relative importance of legislation, local officials, voluntary bodies and medical advances, reaching a clear and supported judgement. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- For government legislation as most important: Acts such as 1848 and 1875 created an organisational and legal framework that allowed systematic improvements in sewerage, water supply and street cleansing, and by making duties compulsory the 1875 Act ensured widespread action where voluntary measures had failed.
- For other contributors: local officials, boards of health and voluntary sanitary associations carried out practical work on sewers and water, and municipal engineers and surveyors provided the technical means for improvement, so local initiative and expertise were essential in implementing national laws.
- Medical and scientific developments, including growing acceptance of germ ideas late in the period and better medical statistics, helped justify and shape legislation, while public campaigns and reporting exposed conditions and mobilised public opinion, pressuring politicians to legislate.
- Limitations of legislation: the 1848 Act was permissive and depended on local adoption, showing that law alone did not guarantee improvement without local willingness and resources; conversely, by 1875 legislation made duties compulsory, showing law could be decisive when enforced.
- A balanced judgement might argue that legislation was the crucial turning point because it provided the necessary legal power and framework, but emphasise that without local officials, voluntary bodies and technical experts to carry out the work, legal change would have had limited impact.

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