



RS.TA8 Changing Patterns of Family Life in the UK

AQA 8062 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Which one of the following best describes a blended family, in the context of changing family patterns in the UK?
- ☐ A household where grandparents live with grandchildren and their parents
 - ☐ A family where one or both partners bring children from previous relationships into a new family unit
 - ☐ A family where unrelated adults share a house purely for economic reasons
 - ☐ A household formed when siblings live together after leaving their parents

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Identify and name the family type in the UK where a single adult, mother or father, is the main carer and brings up a child on their own; give a one sentence identification in that context.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

- 3** Give two types of family found in modern UK society, naming each type briefly and clearly within the topic of changing family patterns.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4** Explain two sociological reasons for the changing pattern of family life in the UK, for example the rise in blended families, single-parent households and same-sex parenting.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** Give three sociological factors that have contributed to more women in paid employment and therefore helped change family life patterns in the UK, naming each factor briefly.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

- 6** Explain two ways that having an absent parent, for example through separation or work-related absence, can affect children in families in contemporary UK society.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

- 7** Explain two contrasting religious attitudes to same-sex parenting, and include a reference to a source of wisdom or authority in your answer, within the context of Christian and Muslim responses to changing family patterns.

(Total for Question 7 is 5 marks)

- 8** Give three features of foster families in the UK, naming each feature and keeping the context of changing family provision and support services.

(Total for Question 8 is 3 marks)

- 9** Explain two reasons why some Christians and some Muslims may support adoption and fostering, within the wider context of religious teaching about caring for the vulnerable.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

- 10** Give three ways UK society has become more accepting of diverse family types, with each way named and briefly explained in the context of legal, cultural or educational change.

(Total for Question 10 is 3 marks)

- 11** Explain the importance of stable family relationships for children in contemporary UK society, using religious and non-religious reasons.

(Total for Question 11 is 6 marks)

- 12** The traditional nuclear family is no longer the best model for society. Evaluate this statement, considering religious and non-religious arguments. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, and reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 12 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · RS.TA8 Changing Patterns of Family Life in the UK

Question 1

- **B1** one mark for identifying the blended family as a new family unit formed when partners bring children from earlier relationships, oe
- **Answer: A family where one or both partners bring children from previous relationships into a new family unit.**

Question 2

- **B1** one mark for naming 'single-parent family' and identifying it as one parent being the primary carer raising the child alone, oe
- **Answer: Single-parent family: one adult, the mother or father, is the main carer and brings up the child on their own.**

Question 3

- **B1** one valid family type named, oe
- **B1** a second valid family type named, oe
- **Answer: Any two distinct types, for example: same-sex parents; foster family; adoptive family; blended family; single-parent family.**

Question 4

- **B1** point 1: increased divorce and separation rates have created more single-parent households and, through re-partnering, more blended families, oe
- **B1** development: explain how divorce leads to household break-up and new family formations when adults remarry or cohabit, creating step relationships, oe
- **B1** point 2: greater social acceptance and legal change have made it easier for same-sex couples and single people to raise children, increasing diversity in family types, oe
- **B1** development: explain how changes such as same-sex marriage law, adoption rights and reduced stigma enable these family forms to be more visible and stable, oe
- **Answer: E.g. higher divorce leads to single-parent and blended families via separation and re-partnering; growing social acceptance and legal change allow same-sex and other non-traditional households to form families openly.**

Question 5

- **B1** one factor named, e.g. increased access to higher education for women, oe
- **B1** second factor named, e.g. improved employment rights and equal opportunities, oe
- **B1** third factor named, e.g. greater availability of childcare and flexible working patterns, oe
- **Answer: Any three distinct factors such as: increased education for women; stronger employment protections and equal opportunities; better childcare and flexible working; changing social attitudes to gender roles; economic necessity.**

Question 6

- **B1** point 1: emotional impact, such as feelings of loss or insecurity for the child, oe
- **B1** development: explain how absence can lead to behaviour changes, lower self-esteem or a need for additional emotional support, oe
- **B1** point 2: practical impact, such as reduced household income or less parental supervision, oe
- **B1** development: explain how this can affect opportunities, school support or day to day routines, and may require help from extended family or social services, oe
- **Answer: E.g. emotional effects like insecurity and behavioural change; practical effects such as reduced income or less supervision affecting school and routines.**

Question 7

- **B1** belief 1: some Christians and Muslims teach that marriage between a man and a woman is the ideal context for raising children and may therefore disapprove of same-sex parenting, oe
- **B1** development: reference to Christian teaching on marriage as between husband and wife based on passages such as Genesis 2:24 or to traditional Muslim teaching about marriage as a male-female institution, oe
- **B1** belief 2: other Christians interpret scripture more inclusively and support same-sex couples raising children, offering pastoral care and blessing, oe
- **B1** development: reference to Christian arguments emphasising love, justice and welcoming the family, and to some Muslim individuals or communities who argue for compassion and support in practice, oe
- **B1** accurate reference to a source of wisdom or authority made, e.g. Genesis 2:24 for the traditional view, or general Christian principles of love and justice for the supportive view, oe
- **Answer: Contrast example: traditional view that marriage should be man-woman, grounded in Genesis 2:24 and conservative Muslim teaching, versus inclusive Christian pastoral approaches that emphasise love and justice and may support same-sex parents in practice.**

Question 8

- **B1** one feature named, e.g. carers provide temporary care for children who cannot live with their birth parents, oe
- **B1** second feature named, e.g. foster carers may be approved and supported by social services, oe
- **B1** third feature named, e.g. placements can be short-term, long-term or emergency, depending on needs, oe
- **Answer: Any three: temporary care by approved carers; support and oversight from social services; placements vary from emergency to long-term; focus on the child's welfare and contact with birth family where appropriate.**

Question 9

- **B1** point 1: both religions teach care for the vulnerable and the importance of showing compassion, oe
- **B1** development: explanation citing Christian teachings about love and caring for the needy, and Muslim teachings about caring for orphans and the vulnerable, oe
- **B1** point 2: adoption and fostering allow the practical expression of duty to support families and children in need, providing stability and a loving home, oe
- **B1** development: explanation of how these actions reflect religious values and produce social benefits, oe
- **Answer: E.g. religious duty to care for the vulnerable and orphans, and adoption/fostering as practical ways to provide stability and love, reflecting Christian and Muslim teachings on compassion.**

Question 10

- **B1** one way named, e.g. legal changes such as introduction of same-sex marriage and adoption rights, oe
- **B1** second way named, e.g. more positive media representation of diverse families, oe
- **B1** third way named, e.g. education and public campaigns promoting equality and anti-discrimination, oe
- **Answer: Any three: legal changes like same-sex marriage and adoption rights; more diverse media representation; school and public education promoting equality; workplace protections.**

Question 11

- **Level 3** (5-6): A well-developed, balanced explanation that uses both religious and non-religious reasons to show why stable family relationships are important, with clear supporting detail and links between points.
- **Level 2** (3-4): An explanation that gives some religious or non-religious reasons with appropriate support, though some points may be underdeveloped.
- **Level 1** (1-2): One or two basic points are made about the importance of stable relationships, with little development or support.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Religious reasons: many Christians stress the value of stable, loving relationships for moral upbringing and emotional security; references to teachings about family responsibility and care.
 - Religious reasons: some Muslims emphasise family as the basic unit of society and the duty to care for children and relatives, giving stability and identity.
 - Non-religious reasons: psychological and sociological research links stable relationships with better educational and emotional outcomes for children.
 - Non-religious reasons: practical stability, such as consistent routines and parental support, helps development, behaviour and social inclusion.
 - Consideration of differing views: some argue that stability is not determined by family structure alone but by the quality of relationships, whether in single-parent, blended or same-sex households.
 - A balanced answer may give examples and weigh religious teachings against empirical evidence about child wellbeing.

Question 12

- **Level 4** (10-12): A well-structured, balanced evaluation that analyses a range of religious and non-religious arguments on both sides, supports assertions with reasoning or evidence, considers the strength of counter-arguments, and reaches a justified conclusion.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear response that discusses several relevant arguments for and against the view, including some religious material, with a reasonable conclusion.
- **Level 2** (4-6): A basic discussion that offers arguments on both sides, with limited development and some reference to religious viewpoints, and a simple conclusion.
- **Level 1** (1-3): Limited and descriptive points are made for one or both sides, with little or no religious material and no clear conclusion.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments supporting the statement: increasing diversity of family forms such as same-sex parents, single-parent and blended families fulfil needs of modern life, showing that the nuclear family is not the only effective model.
 - Arguments supporting the statement: legal and social changes, women in paid employment and greater social acceptance mean other models can provide stability and care effectively.
 - Religious arguments supporting the traditional model: many Christians and Muslims teach that the two-parent married family is the ideal environment for raising children, citing scripture and long tradition.
 - Religious arguments opposing a strict traditionalist stance: other religious voices stress compassion, support and the importance of stable loving relationships regardless of exact family structure.
 - Non-religious counter-arguments: research shows child wellbeing is linked more to quality of parenting and economic stability than to the exact family form, so diverse families can be equally successful.
 - Consideration of social policy: some argue society should support a range of family types with welfare, childcare and legal frameworks rather than promote a single ideal.
 - Evaluation might weigh the benefits of continuity and cultural values associated with the nuclear family against evidence that other family types can provide equal care, and conclude with a justified position that recognises complexity.