5.8 The Effectiveness of Prison and Rates of Reoffending: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for extended responses and for any question asking you to explain. Aim to spend about 75 minutes on the whole paper.

1 Which of the following is a stated aim of imprisonment used by supporters to justify custodial sentences in the UK criminal justice context?

- ☐ A) Rehabilitation is never considered for prisoners
- ☐ B) Incapacitation removes the offender's ability to harm the public while inside prison
- ☐ C) Prison eliminates all future offending by the individual
- ☐ D) Prison sentences are always shorter than community sentences

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Define the term 'recidivism' as used by sociologists studying prison and reoffending in the UK.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 State one sociological limitation of evaluating prison effectiveness solely by looking at reconviction figures.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Identify one sociological reason why overcrowding in prisons might undermine the goal of rehabilitation.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Explain how a custodial sentence can affect the family of the offender, as discussed by sociologists studying the social consequences of imprisonment.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 Using sociological ideas, give one reason why a short custodial sentence might be less effective at reducing future offending than a longer, well-supported sentence.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.8 The Effectiveness of Prison and Rates of Reoffending: Test Pack

Question 1

B (incapacitation removes the offender's ability to harm the public while inside prison) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies recidivism as reoffending or returning to criminal behaviour after release from custody **B1**

development, e.g. often measured by reconviction or reimprisonment rates over a time period **B1**

Answer: Recidivism is reoffending, returning to criminal behaviour after release from custody, often measured by reconviction or reimprisonment rates over a period of time.

Question 3

identifies a limitation, e.g. reconviction figures may not capture unreported or undetected offending **B1**

brief development, e.g. changes in policing or recording practices can affect recorded reconvictions independently of true offending levels **B1**

Answer: Reconviction figures may not capture unreported or undetected offending, and changes in policing or recording practices can affect recorded reconvictions independently of true offending levels.

Question 4

identifies that overcrowding reduces time and access to education and treatment programmes **B1**

brief development, e.g. less access to programmes means fewer opportunities for offenders to change behaviour **B1**

Answer: Overcrowding reduces access to education and treatment programmes, which means fewer opportunities for offenders to change behaviour and undermines rehabilitation goals.

Question 5

identifies an effect, e.g. separation can cause financial hardship and emotional stress for partners and children **B1**

development, e.g. loss of the offender's income and increased childcare responsibilities can harm family stability and wellbeing **B1**

Answer: A custodial sentence can separate the offender from their family, causing financial hardship and emotional stress; loss of income and extra childcare responsibilities can harm family stability and wellbeing.

Question 6

identifies a reason, e.g. short sentences may not allow time for rehabilitation or to resolve causes of offending **B1**

development, e.g. quick release can return individuals to the same environments and problems that led to offending **B1**

Answer: Short custodial sentences may be less effective because they do not allow time for rehabilitation or to address causes of offending, and quick release can return people to the same environments that led to offending.

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