5.9 Alternatives to Prison: Community Sentences and Restorative Justice: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For numbered short-answer questions, a sentence or two is usually enough; write full sentences for the final 12-mark discussion. Total time suggested 30 minutes.

1 Explain how electronic tagging can raise ethical or practical concerns when used as an alternative to custody in the UK context.

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 Discuss how far sociologists would agree that alternatives to prison, such as community sentences and restorative justice, are more effective than custodial sentences at reducing reoffending. Refer to different sociological perspectives and reach a reasoned conclusion. Context: the question is about effectiveness at cutting reoffending and about wider social consequences such as community confidence.

(Total for Question 2 is 12 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

3 Identify and explain one purpose of unpaid work requirements as part of community sentences in the UK criminal justice system.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

---

4 Describe one feature of probation supervision as a non-custodial measure in the UK criminal justice system.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

---

5 Item A: Restorative meeting after a shop theft. Context: The offender, Amir, aged 20, stole food and damaged packaging. The victim, shop manager Erin, attends a supervised restorative meeting where Amir apologises, explains why he stole and agrees to perform unpaid work at the local youth centre and to pay a small amount in compensation.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 5.9 Alternatives to Prison: Community Sentences and Restorative Justice: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies an ethical or practical concern, e.g. invasion of privacy	**B1**
development, e.g. constant location tracking can feel intrusive and restrict normal life	**B1**
further development, e.g. practical issues such as technical failure or inaccurate readings can lead to unfair enforcement	**B1**

Answer: Electronic tagging raises concerns such as invasion of privacy because constant location tracking can feel intrusive and restrict normal life, and practical issues like technical failure or inaccurate readings can lead to unfair enforcement.

Question 2

Level 1 Basic statements about alternatives to prison with limited sociological evidence or perspective. May list advantages or disadvantages with little development or no clear conclusion.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear explanation of how some alternatives can reduce reoffending, with some use of sociological ideas or evidence. Might present one or two perspectives but with limited balance and a simple conclusion.	**4-6**
Level 3 Well developed discussion with several sociological perspectives considered, use of evidence or plausible examples, and balanced argument showing strengths and weaknesses of alternatives versus custody.	**7-9**
Level 4 Comprehensive evaluation using competing sociological perspectives, relevant evidence and clear reasoning. Considers issues such as effectiveness for different offence types, social context, measurement problems and public confidence, and reaches a supported, reasoned judgement.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Functionalist perspective might support community sentences where they reduce reoffending by maintaining social bonds and reintegrating offenders, protecting social order at lower cost than prison.
- Marxist or conflict perspectives might argue that community sentences are applied unevenly, that structural inequality causes reoffending and that without addressing poverty and alienation alternatives have limited long term effect.
- Feminist perspectives may highlight that community sentences and restorative justice can better meet needs of female offenders and victims, for example by avoiding family disruption, but warn that they can also hide unequal treatment if implemented inconsistently.
- Interactionist perspective could emphasise the restorative process of offender taking responsibility and changing identity, but also note labelling processes where community sanctions still stigmatise individuals.
- Evidence and evaluation: cite hypothetical or local evaluations showing reduced reoffending after treatment and probation programmes, but note methodological limits such as selection bias, short follow up periods and the 'dark figure' of unrecorded offending.
- Practical considerations: community sentences can preserve employment and family ties and be cheaper, but they require adequate resources and monitoring; poor implementation may lead to public feeling sentences are too lenient.
- Restorative justice benefits for victims include apology and reparation, which can reduce desire for revenge and support desistance, but it may not be appropriate for serious violent offences or where power imbalances exist.
- Discuss that effectiveness varies by offence type and offender profile: some offences may need custodial restriction for public protection, while rehabilitation-focused alternatives may work best for drug-related or low level offences.
- Conclude with balanced judgement, for example that many sociologists would agree alternatives can be more effective at reducing reoffending in appropriate cases and when well resourced, but custody remains necessary for serious offences and public confidence depends on perceived fairness and proper implementation.

Question 3

identifies a purpose, e.g. to make offenders give something back to the community	**B1**
development, e.g. unpaid work provides reparation to communities harmed by offending and may build offender skills	**B1**

Answer: One purpose is to make offenders give something back to the community; unpaid work provides reparation to those harmed and can help offenders learn skills and routines.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Question 4

identifies a feature, e.g. regular contact with a probation officer	**B1**
development, e.g. probation officers monitor compliance, offer support and set rehabilitative requirements	**B1**
further development, e.g. may include referrals to drug or mental health programmes	**B1**

Answer: Probation supervision involves regular contact with a probation officer who monitors compliance, offers support, sets rehabilitative requirements and may refer offenders to drug or mental health programmes.

Question 5

identifies a benefit, e.g. it gives the victim a chance to receive an apology and explanation	**B1**
develops it by linking to Item A, e.g. Erin receives an apology and compensation which may help repair harm	**B1**
identifies a second benefit, e.g. it can encourage offender accountability and reduce reoffending	**B1**
develops it by linking to Item A, e.g. Amir accepts responsibility and agrees unpaid work, which may reduce his likelihood of reoffending	**B1**

Answer: Restorative justice gives the victim a chance to receive an apology and compensation, helping to repair harm, and it encourages offender accountability, with Amir agreeing unpaid work which may reduce his chance of reoffending.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk