



GSOC.CR9 Alternatives to Prison: Community Sentences and Restorative Justice

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 70 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 70 minutes.

1 Which one of the following is an example of a community sentence in England and Wales?

- ☐ A) Life imprisonment without parole
- ☐ B) Unpaid work requirement
- ☐ C) Mandatory deportation
- ☐ D) Automatic custody for first offenders

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Define what is meant by a 'community sentence' in the context of criminal justice in the UK.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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 Identify and explain two ways electronic tagging or electronic monitoring is used in community sentences in the UK.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

- 6** Explain one practical advantage of community sentences compared with short prison sentences in reducing the immediate social costs to offenders' families.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

- 7** 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 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** Explain two ways community sentences try to achieve rehabilitation rather than only punishment.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

- 9** State one criticism that opponents of community sentences often make about them in terms of public confidence in the justice system.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

- 10** Define restorative justice as used in the UK criminal justice system, naming its core purpose.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

- 11** Explain one way unpaid work as part of a community order could reduce reoffending for low level property offenders.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

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

(Total for Question 12 is 3 marks)

- 13** State one strength of using restorative justice for victims, other than receiving compensation.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

- 14** Explain one limitation of restorative justice where the offence involved serious violence, considering safety and appropriateness.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Using Item B: A hypothetical local scheme reduced short custodial sentences for drug possession by offering mandatory treatment and probation instead. The published local evaluation found reoffending for those in the scheme fell from 40% to 25% over twelve months. Using Item B and your own knowledge, explain one reason why this scheme might have reduced reoffending.

(Total for Question 15 is 4 marks)

- 16** Explain two differences between probation supervision and a short custodial sentence in terms of offender community ties and rehabilitation opportunities in the UK context.

(Total for Question 16 is 4 marks)

- 17** 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 17 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.CR9 Alternatives to Prison: Community Sentences and Restorative Justice

Question 1

- **B1** B (Unpaid work requirement)
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** identifies community sentences are punishments served in the community rather than inside prison
- **B1** development, e.g. may include unpaid work, curfews, electronic monitoring or probation supervision
- **Answer: A community sentence is a punishment served in the community rather than in prison; it may include unpaid work, curfews, electronic monitoring or probation supervision.**

Question 3

- **B1** 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
- **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.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies one use, e.g. enforcing a curfew by recording presence at home at set times
- **B1** development, e.g. tags send data to authorities to check compliance with court-ordered hours at home
- **B1** identifies a second use, e.g. monitoring exclusion zones or ensuring an offender stays away from a victim or certain places
- **B1** development, e.g. GPS or proximity tags alert authorities if an offender enters a banned area or a victim's address
- **Answer: Electronic tagging can enforce a curfew by recording presence at home at set times, with data sent to authorities, and can monitor exclusion zones or keep offenders away from victims, using GPS or proximity alerts.**

Question 5

- **B1** 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
- **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 6

- **B1** identifies an advantage, e.g. offenders can continue to live at home and support dependants
- **B1** development, e.g. maintaining family roles reduces disruption to children and household income compared with imprisonment
- **Answer: An advantage is offenders can continue to live at home and support dependants, reducing disruption to children and household income that would follow from imprisonment.**

Question 7

- **B1** 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
- **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.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies one way, e.g. requiring attendance on treatment programmes such as drug or anger management courses
- **B1** development, e.g. these programmes address causes of offending and aim to change behaviour
- **B1** identifies a second way, e.g. unpaid work and education requirements build skills and employment prospects
- **B1** development, e.g. improving skills and employment chances reduces the economic pressures that can lead to reoffending
- **Answer: Community sentences can require treatment programmes addressing causes of offending, such as drug or anger management courses, and can include unpaid work or education to build skills and employment prospects, both aiming to change behaviour and reduce reoffending.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies a criticism, e.g. they are seen as too lenient or 'soft' and may reduce public confidence that justice is being done
- **B1** brief development, e.g. victims or the public may feel offenders are not sufficiently punished
- **Answer: A criticism is community sentences are seen as too lenient or 'soft', reducing public confidence that offenders are being properly punished, because victims or the public may feel justice is not strong enough.**

Question 10

- **B1** defines restorative justice as a structured meeting between offender and victim facilitated by a trained practitioner
- **B1** development, e.g. core purpose is reparation, recognition of harm and offender rehabilitation rather than only punishment
- **Answer: Restorative justice is a structured meeting between offender and victim facilitated by a trained practitioner, with the core purpose of repairing harm, recognising the impact on the victim and promoting offender rehabilitation rather than solely punishment.**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies mechanism, e.g. unpaid work gives routine and responsibility
- **B1** development, e.g. routine, skills and community ties reduce idle time and opportunities for property offending
- **Answer: Unpaid work can give offenders routine, responsibility and skills, which reduces idle time and improves community ties, lowering opportunities and incentives for property offending.**

Question 12

- **B1** 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
- **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 13

- **B1** identifies a strength, e.g. victims can have their voice heard and feel acknowledged
- **B1** brief development, e.g. being listened to can support emotional recovery and closure
- **Answer: Victims can have their voice heard and feel acknowledged, which can support emotional recovery and provide a sense of closure.**

Question 14

- **B1** identifies a limitation, e.g. may not be appropriate if the victim is at risk or feels unsafe
- **B1** development, e.g. power imbalances, trauma or fear can make direct contact harmful rather than helpful
- **Answer: Restorative justice may not be appropriate for serious violence if the victim is at risk or feels unsafe, because power imbalances, trauma or fear can make direct contact harmful rather than helpful.**

Question 15

- **B1** identifies a reason from Item B or own knowledge, e.g. treatment addressed drug dependency
- **B1** develops link to Item B, e.g. treating dependency reduces the underlying cause of offending
- **B1** identifies a second supporting reason, e.g. probation supervision offered ongoing support and monitoring
- **B1** develops link, e.g. supervision helps ensure compliance with treatment and reduces relapse into offending
- **Answer: The scheme likely reduced reoffending because mandatory treatment addressed drug dependency, removing an underlying cause of offending, and probation supervision provided ongoing support and monitoring to help ensure compliance and reduce relapse.**

Question 16

- **B1** identifies first difference, e.g. probation allows offenders to remain in the community while custody removes them
- **B1** development, e.g. staying in the community helps maintain family and work ties which support reintegration
- **B1** identifies second difference, e.g. probation commonly includes tailored community-based programmes while short custody may offer limited targeted rehabilitation
- **B1** development, e.g. community programmes can be more focused on individual needs such as addiction or employment support
- **Answer: Probation lets offenders remain in the community, maintaining family and work ties that support reintegration, whereas custody removes them from these supports; probation also commonly provides tailored community-based programmes while short custody often offers limited targeted rehabilitation.**

Question 17

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic statements about alternatives to prison with limited sociological evidence or perspective. May list advantages or disadvantages with little development or no clear conclusion.
- **Level 2** (4-6): 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.
- **Level 3** (7-9): 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.
- **Level 4** (10-12): 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.
- **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.