

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 1

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each question and element of this course assessment component.

Question 7: Understanding criminal behaviour

“The social cost of crime outweighs the economic cost.”

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other comparator country/countries you have studied

(30)

Analysis

This response was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate's response includes detailed points on analysis throughout and this analysis is integrated with points about a range of international comparators. Coverage includes looking at fear within the Muslim community, the poverty effect, wider economic impacts - loss of trading days impact on jobs, cost of prison, reputations, the effect on house prices and the increase in strain which may lead into further crime. The ideas of others are also integrated with the candidate's own views, with the candidate referencing information from The Guardian, Harvard University and Jamaica's Tourism Minister. The response clearly demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the set question and interlinks points about economic and social costs throughout.

Comparison

This response was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The candidate draws comparisons between the UK and a range of international countries to formulate their overall argument. There is information about Canada, Mexico and about Jamaica. These international comparators are introduced at the beginning of the response and form a key part of the response throughout. The candidate uses phrases such as *‘this is also the case in...’* and *‘this clear international similarity demonstrates...’* which clearly indicates that they are comparing, rather than simply ‘dropping in’ international information.

Evaluation

This response was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes a range of evaluative comments throughout the response and these are well-evidenced. Judgements are made, for example, that there is a *‘severe social impact of crime’* (page 2) and that there is an *‘irrefutable link between poverty and crime’* (page 8). The candidate suggests that those in

poverty are impacted more by crime due to their proximity to the offenders, but also recognises that wealthier areas tend to have high numbers of robberies. The candidate regularly uses the wording of the question to consider whether social costs do outweigh economic costs, as well as considering alternative perspectives on this, before finally judging that they are both equally significant.

Synthesis

This response was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate has a strong line of argument, which flows throughout the response. The response integrates analysis and evaluation and comes to a clear overall conclusion that they are both as important and substantial as one another, but that despite this they impact upon those in poverty most. This judgement follows from the arguments made throughout the main body.

Overall, this response was awarded 30 out of 30 marks.

This is a well-written and argued response, which focuses closely on the posed question and clearly analyses and evaluates the social and economic costs, as well as the links between the two. A strong response.

Question 8: Responses by society to crime

'Punishment can only be justified when it deters further crime'

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland and any other comparator country/countries you have studied

(30)

Analysis

This response was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate's response includes detailed points of analysis throughout and this analysis is integrated with points about a range of international comparators. Coverage includes looking at 'tough' vs. 'soft' approaches, community-based responses giving back to the community, the importance of labelling, rehabilitation which takes place in prison and protection of the public warranting harsh responses. The views of others are present, with the candidate referring to the Ashcroft study, the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, The Guardian, a BBC Panorama documentary, as well as evidence gleaned from a class trip to HMP Greenock. These analytical comments are strong and show an in-depth understanding of the question.

Comparison

This response was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available for this element.

The introduction sets out which international comparators will be included, and the response actually mentions more besides New Zealand and Brazil. New Zealand is covered in relation to judges increasingly seeing community sentences as being more effective punishments (page 12), Norway is covered on page 15, Brazil on page 17 and the USA is compared to both the UK and Norway on page 19. The candidate uses phrases such as ‘this strong area of comparison’ which clearly indicates that they are comparing, rather than simply ‘dropping in’ international information.

Evaluation

This response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The candidate makes evaluative judgements throughout the response, arguing that some regard community sentences to ‘*not be an appropriate punishment*’, but that while being seen as ‘soft’ they are more likely to discourage reoffending. Additionally, judgements are made in relation to mental health, what helps offenders most, public opinion and whether offenders truly ‘*learn their lessons*’. The response implicitly focuses on the question of what is justified for the most part, but there are a couple of examples of explicitly evaluating whether it is justified, eg ‘*a reason for harsh punishment...*’ and ‘*a soft approach is unjust for victims*’. More focus on the ‘justified’ element on the question is needed to secure the final mark for this element.

Synthesis

This response was awarded **7 out of the 8 marks** available for this element.

The response pulls together information by means of paragraph conclusions and has a good overall conclusion. The candidate argues that community sentences play a key role, but that they are only helpful to those who want to change. It balances this too, with the view that prison and a harsh approach is needed to protect the public, but that a softer approach is more likely to reduce reoffending. Further exploration here as to which responses are justified or not, is needed to secure the remaining mark.

Overall, this response was awarded 28 out of 30 marks.

This response is a well-written and argued piece. It focuses on whether the responses are justified or not, though there is scope to expand this aspect more explicitly in addressing the question. The candidate’s approach to writing introductions is one example of good practice: it engages with the question, outlines the four areas they intend to cover and mentions the international comparator countries they intend to discuss.