

## #40DayChallenge Day 13

Outline and explain two ways in which social policies have impacted on the birth rate in the UK (10)

One way in which social policies have impacted on the birth rate in the UK is through the introduction of employment legislation that tackled gender inequalities in society. The rise of second wave feminism in the 1960s led to the introduction of two policies that tackled workplace discrimination of women. The Equal Pay Act and the Sexual Discrimination Act, both made employment and having a career a more attractive proposition for females. This increased the aspirations of girls in education and led to an increase in girl's achievement. This resulted in more girls going on to university and delaying marriage and having children until after they had established themselves in a career. As a result, the fertility rate for females dropped as the age at which women had their first child rose. Furthermore, women had less children as many returned to work after having children rather than being stay at home mothers. This ultimately had an impact on the birth rate throughout the 1980s and 90s and the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A second way in which social policies have impacted on the birth rate in the UK is through laws on migration. The birth rate in the UK began to rise again in the early part of the twenty first century after the mass migration into the UK of Eastern European economic migrants to the UK following the expansion of the European Union. The migrants that came to the UK looking for better employment and education, were typically in their early twenties and had a higher fertility rate than UK nationals. This was a consequence of having more traditional family roles of breadwinner and homemaker and consequently increased the birth rate as they settled in the UK and raised families. This brought many structural problems, including insufficient places in schools in certain areas of the country, as previous governments had closed schools down due to the falling numbers of births.