

Item A

There are differing sociological views on the role of punishment in society. Some sociologists see punishment as protecting the public and reinforcing societies values, whilst others see the role of punishment as allowing criminals to show remorse for their actions and change their ways.

However, the rate of reoffending for some groups indicates that punishment is not always effective in achieving these goals.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two functions of criminal punishment for society (10)

One function that criminal punishment fulfils for society is to reinforce the norms and values of society, or what Durkheim called Boundary Maintenance. Item A states that punishment 'reinforc(es) society's values' and this is achieved through the punishment of offenders for acts that are seen to deviant against the norms and values of society. For Functionalists, it is important to preserve the value consensus and collective conscience in society to stop society from falling into a state of anomie. Punishing deviant behaviour acts as a condemnation of these acts and reinforces the idea that society will not tolerate this form of behaviour. An example of this is the harsh sentencing that was handed out to people involved in the 2011 riots to act as an example to others that this behaviour will not be tolerated by mainstream society. This idea is supported by right realist theories such as zero tolerance, whereby offenders are given harsh sentences for criminal behaviour in order to act as a deterrent to others.

A second function that punishment provides for society is to act as a form of rehabilitation for offenders. Item A states that punishment acts as a way for 'criminal to show remorse for their actions and change their ways'. This can be achieved through prison education programmes that would allow those that have committed crimes to learn skills to enable them to gain employment upon their release, based on an assumption that they may have turned to crime due to status frustration or relative deprivation. Furthermore,

#40DayChallenge Day 23

restorative justice programmes where inmates face their victims have been used to try and rehabilitate offenders by showing them the consequences of their actions. Both methods are designed to perform the function of rehabilitating offenders so they may re-join society as fully functioning members of society. However, many critics would suggest that rehabilitation programmes only work if the social and economic conditions in society allow for criminals to be reintegrated and point to the high rates of re-offending (recidivism) as evidence of this.