

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3A

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## Introduction

As in other recent series this paper saw a pleasing level of focus on contemporary events from many candidates, particularly in the areas of Education, the NHS and the Economy. It was particularly noticeable that a great many more candidates gave predominant focus to post-2010 Politics, albeit questions were deliberately constructed to encourage this. As usual it was the Law and Order topic where the most candidates tended towards the overly historical, although even here there was progress with less pre-1997 content than previously.

It was also the case that the Welfare and Economy essays, which both invited candidates to critically assess the impacts of coalition policy, saw a greater number of candidates structure their response from a personal political point of view. Provided that this was done in such a way that both sides of the argument were still given reasonable consideration it could be a very effective approach, and a pleasing number of candidates were able to do this.

It was also pleasing to again see few candidates eschewing a political approach in favour of a Business Studies approach (Question 2), a Sociological approach (Question 7) or any of the numerous other such traps for those who study related subjects. In general there was a strong political focus.

It was interesting to note a very even spread of both short responses and essays than in previous years with no obvious favourites or strongly unpopular questions. There was little repetition of last year's common misunderstanding of a basic political term (universal welfare benefits) although quite a few of the candidates who responded to question 2 showed limited rather than clear understanding of 'quantative easing' even where they clearly understood the criticisms of it.

Balance remained critical to achieving Level 3 in essay responses, and in those short responses where it was requested, and it should be emphasised that to meet this fully requires to an appropriate balance between governments as well as between 'sides' of the debate.

It was apparent that many candidates have acted on feedback with regard to making a series of underdeveloped points in short responses, and as a result more candidates offered a sensible number of better developed arguments, although this was still a fault on question 5 in particular. Equally some candidates fell into the opposite trap on question 4 by covering what was essentially one point, about the impact on civil liberties, from several different angles.

There was a certain extent to which some candidates understanding of synopticity slightly regressed in terms of a 'yes/no' structure, but equally there was a good degree of explicit awareness of views *within* parties and between coalition partners, as well as simply between government and opposition. More candidates than in the last series were also able to recognise that with law and order essays it is generally possible to argue both for and against a question for both Labour and the Coalition.

Another weakness that was relatively common, and not new to this paper, was a tendency to engage the question, but not the whole question. For example both question 1 and question saw rather more 'how' than 'why' and/or a focus of only one government rather than 'governments'. Equally a significant minority of candidates did, at times, adopt an over descriptive style, where the question specifically required consideration of impact or success.

Candidates must remain vigilant in their attempts to respond to all that is asked, as well as only that which is asked, as this allows them to access the maximum marks whilst making the most effective use of their time.

## Question 1

The key elements to success in answering this question were an appreciation of both 'why' and 'how', and an awareness of the policies of more than one government. Most candidates were able to offer at least some consideration of each of these elements, but the how was generally better done than the why. The need to meet emissions targets as a driver for policy change was often discussed but not always in detail and was sometimes quite vague.

The most popular policies discussed were the congestion charge and fuel escalator under Labour, and HS2 and the scrapping of Heathrow's additional runway under the Conservatives. Some candidates showed some confusion as to government policy on these latter two projects although this is perhaps partly understandable. Boris Bikes were also mentioned in dispatches by some candidates. Besides carbon emissions, motivation for these policies focused on discussion on the impact of wildlife and the desire to reduce congestion.

Level 1 responses were rare, but generally failed to address the question. Most often they discussed why transport policies had been criticised on environmental grounds, rather than why and how environmental concerns had impacted on policy.

Level 2 were generally characterised by either a fairly broad focus on 'how' but a more vague 'why', mostly commonly a general link to 'carbon emissions', or alternatively a focus on only one government. A lack of sufficient 'how' was quite rare as a limiting factor.

Level 3 responses offered specific and relevant policy examples from both Labour and Coalition government, and a more detailed consideration of the motivation behind these. This motivation was not necessarily individual to each policy, although it could be. It was also possible to reach Level 3 with only one why, provided it was explored in sufficient detail, for example with specific emissions targets or treaties, rather than simply 'reducing emissions'.

Since the 2010 general election, there has been a great move for all parties towards the green agenda. The Lib Dems have been known traditionally to be the greenest party with every part of the manifesto based on green issues. Their target targets for renewable energy were the most ambitious - striving for 100% by 2050. The Conservatives were not far behind with a target of 80% which is in accordance with Labour.

Due to the presence of these targets in conjunction with European and international ones governments since 1997 have ~~also~~ moved towards green transport policy, for example the building of the Channel Tunnel during the Brown era to reduce short-haul flights across the area. This is extended today with the coalition who have passed legislation for the building of HS2 from London to Birmingham.

since it alleviates the business flights needed from Heathrow.

Heathrow is also a matter of concern since it has reached its maximum capacity and the Brown government and the Labour party until 2012 were committed towards building a third runway. Environmental groups argue that Labour is not really committed towards the green agenda since a third runway would cause great environmental damage with emissions of fossil fuels. The coalition has eliminated the possibility of a third runway in the coalition agreement but the Conservatives have recently announced that 'all alternatives are being considered' questioning the possibility of one after the next election.

The use of congestion charges are left to the council to decide.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Comments

This response covers two valid 'how' items - HS2 and Heathrow, and discusses some of 'why' with reference to green targets. This could potentially reach the top of level 2 or bottom of level 3, but the candidate wastes time on the incorrect point about the Channel Tunnel and therefore does not cover the other points in as much detail as they might have, leaving this in mid level 2. Actual Mark 8.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Tip

Be wary of including points that you are not sure about - you will not lose marks if they are incorrect but you will lose time that you could have spent gaining marks elsewhere.

Environmental concerns have been a major issue confronting the question of airport expansion in the UK in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Because of the gases that aircraft emit the green lobby of Greenpeace, and also local pressure groups have resisted the attempts to build a third runway at Heathrow, and expand other airports, with the construction and opening of Terminal Five bitterly resisted. They view an increase in capacity as an invitation for more flights, whereas the last Labour government degraded, and pitched the UK's special case status as an aviation hub as the pre-eminent national interest.\*

The excessive use of road transport in the UK has been contentious, as the cars emit gases identified as contributing to the greenhouse effect. Therefore the widening of the M25 was controversial, as was the decision to not raise fuel duty. Whilst environmental concerns were raised, they have not gained ascendancy over economic ones. However the Labour government did produce the Car Scrapage Scheme where old cars which polluted

particularly were funded in for cash by the Government.  
Due to a regulation the next generation of cars are  
much more eco-friendly.

Investment in rail has been identified as important  
due to its potential to take commuters off the road.  
New Labour invested in the West Country line, initiated  
the Crossrail project - continued by the Coalition,  
and modernised the London Underground. Although  
this was part of a wider investment in infrastructure  
and transport, it did try to alleviate the environmental  
concerns. Furthermore the Congestion Charge introduced in  
London has eased traffic and concentration of vehicles,  
also helping the environment.

\*Point 1 continued: The environmental concerns have proved  
decisive in making the Liberal Democrats oppose airport  
expansion, affecting the non-action of the Coalition, who  
await for a public enquiry to report 'One Nation'.  
Labour are much more ambivalent about expansion,  
and whilst the Conservatives are lukewarm due to  
electoral issues of the seats suffering from air pollution, MPs such  
as Zac Goldsmith have been outspoken on the issue for  
environmental concerns.

Cycling has been encouraged by government since 1997  
with the fee in mind that the bicycle is a zero emissions  
means of transport. In London 'Boris Bikes'



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This candidate covers a wider range of points across the relevant period and more clearly links the how and the why aspects taking this comfortably into Level 3. Actual mark 13.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

For 'how and why' questions you can deal with these aspects separately, but explicitly linking them within particular points often makes for a strong answer.

## Question 2

This specific economic ground had not been covered previously and perhaps as a consequence this was the least popular of the short response questions. Nevertheless this did not deter a significant number of candidates from attempting it. The most striking feature about these responses was that a large number showed only a limited understanding of the mechanics of Quantitative Easing, generally describing it as 'printing more money'. Furthermore few understood that the decision was in the hands of the Monetary Policy Committee rather than the government, although confusion over this subtlety is perhaps understandable. Despite this many candidates did go on to show a substantial understanding of the relevant criticisms of the policy, particularly in terms of inflation, devaluation, effectiveness and lack of government control, and achieved marks in higher level 2, or in level 3.

Level 1 responses were characterised by major confusion as to the meaning of quantitative easing, often confusing it entirely with the general policy of stimulus pursued by Labour prior to 2010.

Level 2 responses generally offered either an accurate definition but only one clear grounds for controversy, predominantly the inflationary effects, or a limited definition with additional accurate controversies.

Level 3 responses most commonly showed both a complete and accurate definition and at least two clear controversies that were explained in some detail. However some responses were able to reach level 3 with a limited definition, where this was compensated for by a substantial range of accurate controversies.

Quantitative easing is the idea of pumping money into banks in the hope that interest rates will rise. After the banking crisis in 2008, ~~conservative~~ Labour was left with no choice but to bail out Northern Rock by nationalising it. Conservative party claimed that doing this wasn't the best choice at the time as they ~~used to~~ believe in the privatisation of services.

Labour hoped that by doing this then they would lend to people more, this led them to take "risky" lending to people who may not have been able to pay it back. This was controversial as conservatives felt like a undermined their responsibility.

Q.





**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

A very confused answer that focuses on the wrong government and appears to very hazy as to what QE involves. A small amount of credit is given for the references to pumping money into banks, which does have some relevance. Actual mark 2.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

If a question asks you to critique something and you are not certain that you understand the concept you are critiquing then the question is best avoided.

Quantitative easing is the process whereby the Bank of England buy up government bonds from commercial banks in order to increase liquidity and enable banks to lend to investors. It is used to encourage investment and borrowing thus encourage economic growth.

It can however result in inflationary pressure due to the higher supply of cash in the economy, this is counter productive to the government target of a low 2% inflation rate.

Furthermore neo-liberals may argue that although Quantitative easing is controlled by the monetary policy committee, the government can heavily influence its use and this is an interventionist approach to the economy where neo-liberals believe

The supply of money should be left to market forces.

Critics of Quantitative easing may argue that the increase in liquidity for commercial banks is placing too much trust in them to lend (considering the 2008 Banking crisis) furthermore, the critics may argue there is no guarantee banks will ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> just repay existing debts instead of lending to stimulate growth.

Finally, the more lending in the economy could arguably be damaging for individuals as it is easier to take out a loan and therefore easier to ~~go~~ <sup>go</sup> amount high personal debts.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Comments

The candidate offers a clear and reasonable definition and makes three acceptable points. Had these points been developed further they might have reached the very top of the mark scheme, but this was still sufficient for Level 3. Actual mark 11.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Tip

The difference between responses at the bottom and top of Level 3 is commonly a question of how developed the points made are.

### **Question 3**

This was the second most popular short response question, only just behind question 4, and many responses followed a similar pattern to question 1 – recognising the requirements for both policy (how) and motivation (why) and covering more than one government. The 'why' offered was generally stronger than on question 1 and as a result more candidates accessed the higher marks. Some candidates were also able to explicitly identify the continuity and/or contrasts between different governments' policies which, whilst not required by the question, was both relevant and creditable. The favoured policies to focus on were the internal market, PFI and Commissioning Boards; and costs, standards and ideology were all commonly cited drivers.

A small but surprising minority of candidates disregarded 'since 1997' and addressed reforms of the Thatcher or Major governments. A few other erroneously identified League Tables to be, by themselves, an example of private sector involvement.

Level 1 responses were very uncommon, usually being seen only where a candidate was clearly struggling either with timing or with selecting a third question.

Level 2 responses generally offered a clear explanation of both the motivation and policy of one government, or covered both governments policy well but with relatively brief consideration of the motivation behind it.

Level 3 responses covered more than once government and commonly showed understanding of the motivations of both. In the strongest responses they were to link the pre and post 2010 policies although this was not necessary to reach this level.

Monitor

Choose 2 + those

Indicate your second question choice on this page.  
You will be asked to indicate your third question choice on page 9.

Put a cross in the box  indicating the second question that you have chosen.  
If you change your mind, put a line through the box   
and then indicate your new question with a cross .

1997- Govs sought to bring Private Sec- in NHS

Chosen Question Number:

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

The private sector has played an increasing role in the NHS in recent years. From the Labour policy of retaining the Internal Market within the NHS, inherited from the previous Conservative government, to the Coalition's reformed NHS following the Health and Social Care bill 2012; the private sector have maintained a part of the current NHS system in the UK.

Firstly, the Labour policy of retaining the Internal market in 1997, after promising to abolish it, has brought the private sector into the NHS. As hospitals could 'opt out' of authority control and become hospital trusts, ~~this allowed private~~ ~~companies~~ (such as the Leeds Hospital Trust), this allowed private companies to ~~take~~ ~~contracts~~ take over hospitals.

The Coalition have also brought in the private sector to the NHS system. Following the Health and Social Care Bill 2012, the creation of Clinical Commissioning groups

(CCG's) were established. As GP's would control the ~~large~~ significant part of the budget - about 60%, many worried that this would lead to GP's making deals with private companies who ran hospitals to provide patients and services to them. In this way, the Coalition have indirectly supported the private sector through GP's outsourcing services to private hospitals.

The Coalition regulator called 'Monitor' also promoted the idea of competition under the new system using the phrase 'any qualified provider'. In the new NHS system, private companies could win contracts to run hospitals, something which is increasing. An example of a newly private hospital would be the Huddersfield Hospital in Leeds.

Overall, Both Labour + Coalition have brought the private sector into the NHS, from the newly established 'Choose and book' system under Labour, which allowed patients to choose where to go for treatment, including private hospitals who matched the NHS for price, to the new system allowing private companies to run NHS hospitals.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a clear example of a candidate who chooses to focus almost entirely on 'how' at the expense of 'why'. In doing so they cover a range of pertinent points across different governments and therefore still reach within L2, but they miss the opportunity to enter L3. Actual mark 9.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

If a question asks 'how and why' it is almost impossible to enter level 3 without clearly covering both (although a 50/50 split is not necessary).

In 1997 New Labour were elected into office. They started to bring the private sector into the NHS by having private firms carry out cleaning duties and running the catering services and ~~the~~ cafés. Largely to reduce the cost to the government and increase efficiency. Also to show that Labour now accepted a market based economy. This increase in the use of the private sector was then extended into the actual building of hospitals under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) whereby private firms built and maintained hospitals and the government then rents the premises off them or eventually buys it. This was done to reduce short term costs to the government of building hospitals and also to get more built more quickly as these private firms are more efficient and productive. When the Coalition came to power in 2010 with Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt, use of the private sector was even further extended with more private hospitals and health services ~~at~~ actually carrying out operations and treatments but with the government still paying for it<sup>so</sup> retaining the principle

of free at the point of delivery. The coalition would argue that this reduces waiting times for everyone and also takes the pressure off public sector NHS hospitals to do everything themselves. Also this may satisfy the new right in the Conservatives as it is often dubbed "quasi-privatisation" or "privatisation by stealth" which is in line with the ideological neoliberal new right.



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is a relatively brief example of a Level 3 answer, but its high mark is merited by the clear reference to both policy and motivation pre and post 2010. The 'why' part could have been developed further but it receives rather more attentions from this candidate than from the vast majority. Actual mark 12.



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Where questions specifically ask you to consider 'governments', it is generally most effective to consider governments of different political colours and to give them as equal weight as you can.

### Question 4

This was the most popular short response question and it was pleasing here to see just how many candidates took the trouble to describe relevant individual pieces of legislation, rather than treating it as one homogenous mass. Some candidates took the trouble to cover coalition policy as well as that of Labour, which was creditable but not necessary for this question.

The major common weakness of responses was a lack of range of criticisms, with too many candidates simply discussing different aspects of civil liberties with reference to various pieces of legislation. Other relevant points commonly accessed by stronger candidate including the alleged misuse of police powers against ethnic minorities, and criticisms as to effectiveness.

A significant minority of response also erroneously asserted that CCTV was predominantly an anti-terrorist tool deployed 2001: since although some were able to more effectively link the concept of the surveillance state this was still weak in terms of 'legislation'.

Level 1 responses, although rare, invariably described some legislation, but offered a very thin and general 'civil liberties' criticism.

Level 2 responses generally discussed legislation in some detail, and often explained the distinctive civil liberties impact of each, but usually did not move beyond this to consider other criticisms.

Level 3 responses also covered legislation in some detail and covered a range of linked but distinctive criticisms. The very strongest responses showed good awareness of the narrative of how anti-terrorisms legislation had evolved in the years since 2001.

Many new anti-terrorist legislation have been introduced since the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the 2005 attacks on London transport, some of these measures have been criticised.

In 2001, an act was introduced which made religious extremism and training and inciting terrorism an offence. This has been criticised because it is seen to be eroding civil liberties and impacting on an individual's right to freedom of speech.

Further terrorist legislation, such as in 2002 and 2005 has enabled the police and security services to place



control orders on suspected terrorists, therefore ultimately placing them under house arrest and severely limiting their movement. This has been criticised as it is seen to be eroding civil liberties in terms of an individual's right to freedom of movement.

Further legislation has also been criticised in recent years, for example, the planned detention of suspected terrorists for up to 90 days was seen to be eroding civil liberties too much and was therefore criticised heavily, leading to the planned legislation being vetoed in parliament.

Following the death of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, the Justice Secretary wanted to be able to allow the Security Services to monitor online communications between suspected terrorists, if a warrant was provided by the Home Secretary Theresa May, however these plans were shelved.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate clearly has a very detailed awareness of policy but does not make level 3 as their discussion of the criticisms, which is the focus of the question, are entirely focused on one particular area - civil liberties. This is clearly important, and the range of ways in which this is explored does secure a high level 2 mark, but a wider focus could have taken this candidate clearly into level 3. Actual mark 9.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

When covering several points, particularly arguments for or against a policy, try to ensure that they are distinct, and not all variations of the same theme, as this will enable you to access higher marks.

Since 2001 ~~many~~ several anti terrorist legislation has been passed and these have been criticised for a number of different reasons, both in relation to civil liberties but also the intrinsic nature of the acts ~~themselves~~ themselves.

The 'Anti-terrorism act 2001' is a key piece of anti terrorist legislation. This was criticised as being 'reactive' in that it was drafted in the months immediately following the 9/11 attacks. This is a common criticism of anti terrorist legislation, that it is only introduced after a successful or near successful terrorist threat. The same was said for the Terrorist Act 2005 which banned 'glorifying terrorism' this bill was put through as a reaction to the 7/7 bombings in London back in 2005.

The legislation has also been criticised as being cumbersome and inconvenient - certainly airport security checks have ~~more~~ heavily increased in length meaning air travel is a more ~~burdened~~ burdened method of travelling - it is also considered ineffective. Stop and search powers have allowed police to exercise more than 10,000

random searches, many of which have unveiled terrorist actions.

The other key set of criticisms are to do with the conflict between civil liberties and the anti terrorist legislature. The ~~indefinite~~ indefinite detention of terror suspects in Belmarsh prison was considered to be a violation of the human rights act, as were Labour proposals to increase detention without trial to 90 days (which was blocked by the Lords).

It is also argued that anti terror legislation has been used illegitimately ~~by~~ on lawful protesters exercising their democratic right to peaceful protest. The death of Ian Tomlinson in 2009 (20) was initially done as an anti terrorist measure and raised questions over the nature of the legislation as well as police conduct. The wrongful use of legislation weakens democracy - Foreman.



## ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate, in contrast to the last, considers civil liberties more briefly than might be expected, but this is more than made up for by the range of other relevant and clearly made points. The reference to specific instances of controversy is also very useful. Actual mark 13.



## ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Accurate examples that illustrate how theoretical criticisms can be seen in practice are always helpful to achieving a good mark.

### **Question 5**

This was a popular question and the vast majority of candidates showed awareness of a variety of arguments on both sides of the question, with one sided responses being fairly rare. What separated most responses in terms of quality was the extent to which the arguments were argued and developed rather than listed and asserted. The quality of pertinent examples was another discriminating factor.

Many candidates effectively utilised a thematic approach, considering both sides of areas such as economy, security, safety and environmental impact. Relatively few responses considered Nuclear Energy relative to the alternatives, although there was some discussion of both renewable sources and Fracking.

Level 1 responses were rare given the degree of range of points offered by most candidate and were usually linked to timing issues via bullet points or brief and asserted arguments.

Level 2 responses were occasionally one sided but more commonly balanced and showing good range limited by a lack of sufficient development of the point made.

Level 3 responses developed points on both sides of the debate, often linking this to relevant examples in Russia and Japan (against) or France (in favour). Useful reference was also made to specific government goals in terms of emissions and renewable energy.

Under the coalition, two new power plants have been passed for creation. It is these attempt to produce and meet targets of 15% of the UK's energy ~~to be produced by~~ <sup>by 2020/2023</sup> ~~with renewable energy by 2020~~. These arguments for this means of production is that it will 'generate more jobs' and is not harmful to the environment. However, it has been criticised under Labour by its <sup>excessive</sup> ~~high~~ cost in building the power stations, and with recent findings that it will exceed their 'initial ~~thought~~ <sup>prediction</sup> of cost.

Moreover, an argument for ~~new~~ nuclear power is that it is less damaging ~~the~~ to the environment than the coalition's new proposal for fracking. ~~Fracking~~ The idea of fracking as a source of energy was apparent in last week's proposals within the Queen's speech.

Labour minister's and Libdem officials have stated their lack of approval with the idea. In turn, nuclear power could be an alternative solution as in the short term it is less destructive to the environment.

Finally, the long term effects of nuclear power can be very ~~strong~~ <sup>good</sup> argument against the ~~new~~ coalition's plans. ~~As~~ As nuclear power is non-renewable source of energy and takes ~~thousands of years to~~ <sup>be</sup> broken down into safe-waste, it seems that it can be more harmful to the long-term plan of the environment. ~~to~~ This also goes against the coalition's <sup>creation of</sup> Green Investment Bank which investigates and ~~develops~~ <sup>promotes</sup> renewable energy resources.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This response contains enough arguments to reach level 3 if they were developed further beyond 'generates more jobs' or 'occurs excessive costs', but remains in mid-high level 2.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Is it important when arguing for or against something to explain how it would generate jobs, or why it is dangerous or expensive, not simply to assert that it is so.

Recently, The Coalition government has <sup>recently</sup> agreed to build more nuclear power stations. This is controversial as nuclear power isn't a source of renewable energy <sup>and is dangerous as its radioactive</sup>. Also it is politically sensitive as the Conservatives since 2006 have tried to publicise themselves as a party that cares about the environment, as they urged voters to 'Vote blue go green'.

<sup>George Osborne would argue that</sup> Nuclear power ~~is~~ will boost the UK economy and create jobs. ~~The~~ Osborne argues that it will create jobs and have a positive long term economic effect. In times of austerity, the government are finding it difficult to create jobs so <sup>nuclear power</sup> this is an expansion is too good an opportunity to ~~let go~~ <sup>pass</sup> especially in times of austerity.

The oil in the North Sea is decreasing

and this makes the UK ever more dependent on oil from the Middle East. This in turn puts the UK at risk of ~~the~~ potential blockade imposed by Middle Eastern countries to make the UK bend to their will. Therefore having more nuclear power stations will make the UK more self sufficient in ~~the~~ the supply of energy.

Also ~~the~~ expansion of nuclear power will lower the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. ~~as using~~ Generating more <sup>energy</sup> power via nuclear power stations means the UK will use less energy generated via ~~the~~ coal burning power stations. This will allow the UK to meet its ~~the~~ EU CO<sub>2</sub> emissions target.

The expansion of nuclear power stations is a reckless move on the Coalition's part. Nuclear power stations is dangerous as it ~~is using~~ <sup>uses</sup> radioactive uranium and this could put the UK at risk of radiation. Events like Chernobyl <sup>and Fukushima</sup> could occur as ~~at~~ any mistake can create catastrophic effects on the country. The UK is a small island; if one of the nuclear power stations core reactor malfunctions and overheats then that radiation <sup>will</sup> ~~is~~ go all over

the UK and most of Europe. Therefore building more nuclear power stations is reckless and dangerous.

Also when the ~~the~~ fissile material of Uranium is used up, there is radioactive waste left. This radioactive waste will remain radioactive for thousands of years, thus endangering future generations. Also there isn't a good efficient way of getting rid of the waste - it seems childish to lock it away underground as it still is radioactive.

In conclusion the ~~at~~ disadvantages of nuclear power expansion outweighs the advantages as it is too risky and dangerous. ~~At~~ No one would've predicted that Chernobyl <sup>and Fukushima</sup> would occur so what if a similar fate is resigned to one of the UK's power stations, the ~~the~~ country would care more about the radiation pollution than the ~~the~~ economic benefits. ~~§~~ An alternative is to use renewable ~~resources~~ resources such as wind ~~for~~ turbines, which can power UK homes but without the environmental risks of nuclear power plants.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

Although some of the political context at the start is not particularly relevant, and the conclusion also does not advance the mark received, the range and clarity of arguments on both sides takes this high into Level 3. In particular there is effective use of examples, and a better than usual explanation of the specific dangers involved.



General introductions (as opposed to a brief definition of relevant terms) and conclusions rarely add much to your mark for short responses. Nevertheless they only cost you time, not mark, and high quality argument will still be rewarded regardless of this.

## **Question 6**

This was, marginally, the most popular essay question. Explicit reference to the founding principles of the welfare state made for a helpful introduction to responses to this question, although its absence was not a firm barrier to Level 3 depending on the quality of the points made. Clearly this question required focus on post-2010, and most candidates embraced this although a few also legitimately argued that much coalition policy was a logical continuation of Labour policy.

The most striking aspect of many responses was the breadth of government policies considered. Whilst naturally welfare policy was the single most popular area of discussion, many candidates also gave detailed consideration of health and education policy. This was perfectly creditable provided it was clearly linked to the principles of the welfare state, which was relatively straightforward in the cases of tuition fees (not free at point of delivery), harder to make with commissioning boards, and often tenuous in terms of academies. In terms of welfare itself bedroom tax, universal credit and child benefit all represented obvious fertile ground, with quality of link to the specific question being the distinguishing factor.

Major discriminators, besides the quality of the link to the principles of the welfare state, were the degree of balance, the range of relevant points discussed and the level of development of these points.

The weakest candidates indulged in one sided polemics, commonly in support of the premise of the question, or simply listed policy without analysing it or linking it to the question. Middling responses were characterised by relevant policy but an unbalanced argument, or by spending too much time on policy that had only a tenuous link to the specific question asked, mixing it in with more promising material. Responses that came close to Level 3 without achieving it could most commonly have reached the higher level by more explicitly linking policies to the relevant principles.

The strongest responses showed balance and clearly focused on relevant policy initiatives. They did not necessarily concentrate exclusively on the impact of welfare policy on the poorest, but were also able to discuss such issues as means testing of child benefit and university tuition fees.

In terms of synopticity the most common effective approach was for candidates to consider the detailed criticisms made by the opposition, but effective use was also made of views expressed by charities or campaign groups. There was relatively little discussion of media viewpoints, which perhaps reflects the views of the government supporting press in particular.



Some of the policies of the Coalition government have been criticised for 'attacking the principles of the welfare state', losing potentially a treasured system of policies within the UK. Since the creation of the Coalition government in 2010, the government have imposed many restraints on all areas of the welfare state, most notably within social security, however there have been large changes to areas of both education and health.

The 2010 Cameron government faced serious economic crisis, due to the fall of mortgage companies within America in 2009. The government therefore had to make significant cuts within expenditure, most notably within the areas of social security. This particularly affected those who were out of work for health issues, which led to an introduction of strict

means testing, which saw an input of interviews put into place to ensure only the most deserving were given the benefits they needed. There was also an introduction of a benefits cap, which restricted people in how much they were able to obtain.

This has been seen as a breakaway from the system of 'from the cradle to the grave', as many were no longer able to support themselves as they once were able.

The issues continued with taxation, and the introduction of the bedroom tax, which saw everybody who owned spare rooms having to pay tax to keep them.

There have also been huge cuts to education, as such schemes as EMA were stopped. There was also the introduction of higher university rates, from 3,000 per year to up to 9,000, leading to the argument of lack of opportunity for all, as the system once built for all seeming appearing to become

far more elitist within its structure, appearing to hit those most in need hardest, pushing away from the traditional ideas of the 1946 Beveridge report. There has also been a continued element of privatisation within healthcare, leading to better care for those who can



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response is a mixture of promising points not developed, more marginal points, and general commentary. Had it contained a greater range it might still have reached mid level 2 or slightly higher, but ended up just creeping over the level 2 threshold. The abrupt finish suggests timing problems.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

The essay is worth half of the available marks and merits half of the available time: it need not be tackled last depending on preference but needs to be given sufficient attention whenever it is tackled.

Since the coalition government came to power in 2010 they have followed a policy of austerity involving cuts to spending including on the ~~the~~ welfare state. Many on the left such as socialists and the Labour party have argued that this has been a 'fundamental attack on the principles of the welfare state' which implies that the government had ~~intended~~ been attempting to dismantle it or strip it down to its bare bones. ~~The~~ The coalition would argue that while some policies have challenged the principles of the welfare state, being universality, free at the point of use and <sup>being</sup> compulsory to pay into, that they are not attempting to dismantle it, but make it more sustainable so it can meet the demands of a growing and aging population.

In terms of education, those in Labour and some in the Liberal Democrats have argued that cutting funding to universities and raising tuition fees to £9,000 a year at most, has led to the quasi-privatisation of ~~the~~ university education, as this is no longer free at the point of use, or universal. However, the coalition have defended this policy as ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ being an attack on welfare state as the charges were brought in under Labour and the Brown report suggested they were raised even more in

Education, primary and secondary school education is still free for all children up to the age of 18 and ~~never~~ still universal. To add to this, some ~~aspects~~ aspects of <sup>universities in</sup> primary school have been extended, such as stopping meals <sup>^</sup> testing for free school meals up to the age of 7, ~~as~~ so all children ~~will now~~ receive free school meals. The pupil premium is another measure which has ~~strengthened~~ ~~the~~ increased the government's spending on schools, as children from low income families ~~are~~ are entitled to extra funding given to the school for them to spend to improve their education. However, it has been argued that the expansion of academies and creation of free schools has extended the use of private sector in education and could lead to the private sector ~~forcing~~ forcing more schools, which threatens the principle that services should be provided by the state. However, the government has ~~contended~~ ~~this~~ claim ~~by~~ by pointing out that free schools and academies are still largely funded by the state and are still free at the point of use for all students up to 18.

The NHS is another area of the welfare state that has been subject to policies of the coalition that could be seen as an attack on the fundamental principles of the welfare state. Firstly, the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups has been seen as threatening the principle of ~~the~~ the state being the provider, because these groups can refer patients to private providers of healthcare. In addition, it also ~~increases~~ ~~the~~ <sup>increases</sup> the marketization of ~~marketization~~ marketization.

of the welfare state, which is a fundamentally socialist idea, and many on the left of the Labour Party such as the late Tony Benn would criticise this. ~~However,~~ ~~the~~ the coalition would argue that this is not an attack on the principles of the welfare state, because patients do not have to pay for the use of the private sector on the NHS, and the NHS is still available to everyone in the UK, regardless of financial background. In addition, the coalition would defend the policy of use of the private sector in the NHS, as it was also used by the Labour government. So to this extent the coalition government's policies have not been a fundamental attack on the ~~basic~~ principles of the welfare state, because the NHS is not being dismantled, as some would claim, and is being made more sustainable in some ways.

Social Security and pensions have been subject to radical overhaul, which has led to controversy and the claim that the coalition are attacking the principles of the welfare state. Firstly, ~~the~~ child benefits had previously been a universal benefit to all families with children, however this has now become means tested, so that ~~the~~ households with one parent earning over £10,000 can have their benefits uncut, and those earning over £60,000 have their benefits cut completely. This has ~~not~~ ~~could~~ ~~been~~ ~~seen~~ as an attack on the principle ~~of~~ of universality, because child benefits are now given according to earnings. ~~the~~

It ~~can~~ could be argued that this is a threat to the welfare state and is unfair because ~~even~~ ~~even~~ exceptional cases such as two people with children earning ~~£~~ £59,000 a year each would still get child benefit. The cap on ~~benefits~~ unemployment benefits has also been seen as a threat to the principles of the welfare state, because one of the other principles was to prevent the 5 grants of idleness, squalor, <sup>disease</sup> ~~disease~~, want and homelessness. Some have suggested that the coalition cap on benefits to £16,000 a year can cause large families with little or no income in poverty. ~~It~~ However, the coalition argue that this is fair, and that it helps to ~~to~~ eradicate "idleness" as capping benefits increases incentives to work, which would ~~be~~ improve people's lives the most.

~~The~~ ~~the~~ Pensions is another part of the welfare state that has been affected by coalition policies. The "Tide Lock" which means pensions go up in accordance with wages, inflation or by 2.5% has secured pensions and the coalition have been praised for this policy as it helps to protect the most vulnerable in society. ~~It~~ However, cuts to public sector pensions have ~~caused~~ caused some to accuse the government of ~~be~~ attacking the fundamental principle that the government should provide pensions; there has also been a move to ~~reduce~~ reduce dependency on the government for pensions & in the private sector, with private firms being encouraged

to increase pension schemes. Bus passes and job and electric help have remained universal, but may be cut also.

In conclusion, the coalition's policy have not been a 'fundamental attack on the welfare state' as on the whole the principles of being free at the point of use, compulsory to pay into one being universal has been protected at most levels such as the NHS, secondary and primary education and pensions. However, some policies such as the increased use of the private sector and cuts to benefits could be seen as the coalition trying to ~~be~~ dismantle the welfare state by causing quasi privatisation.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This candidates make explicit and accurate reference early on to the principles of the welfare state, and referring back to these principles enables them to bring in points, for example in relation to education and health policy, that might otherwise have come across as marginal. The level of detail on changes to benefits, including awareness of the pensions triple-lock as a counter-argument, is also impressive. Actual mark:

AO1 10

AO2 9

Syn 9

AO3 7

Total 35



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Where a question asks to you compare policies to a set of principles it is very helpful to specifically outline those principles, and to constantly refer points back to them - this shows the examiner that you genuinely understand the link that you are trying to make.



## **Question 7**

It was pleasing to see most candidates accept the strong hint offered by 'since 1997' and avoid the common temptation to dwell excessively on the policies on Michael Howard. Equally this insistence on a more contemporary focus may partly have been responsible for this law and order essay being less overwhelming popular than many of its precursors.

Besides the obvious requirements to consider more than one government since 1997, and to discuss both sides of the question, the strongest distinguishing factor here was the degree of focus on 'success' – i.e. on impact rather than simply approach. It was hard to perform well without some discussion of statistics, whether in terms of crime committed, reoffering rates or public perceptions, but a significant minority of responses went to some lengths to avoid this altogether. Some of these responses still achieved reasonable marks, if they went sufficiently beyond description of policies to analyse their success or failure, but would have been better suited to a question that was related to approaches rather than outcomes

The weakest responses were one sided, strongly descriptive rather than analytical, and usually focused entirely pre 2010.

Middling responses were generally characterised by awareness of a wide range of policy, often encompassing more than one government, but a lack of sufficient focus on success or failure. Responses at the lower middle in particular were keener to discuss the popularity of such policies, or their balance between being tough and crime and tough on the causes of crime, than to discuss its impact. Higher middle responses were more impact focused, often giving some consideration to crime statistics.

The strongest responses focused on success vs failure through, and often showed a sophisticated understanding of the different ways in which this could be interpreted in terms of headline figures, types of crime, geographical spread and reoffering rate. The very strongest responses considered the factors other than government policy that might have caused a reduction in crime. Few level 3 responses, even at the high end, gave more consideration to post-2010 policy than to pre-2010, but all gave some thought to both.

In terms of synopticity the most common approach was via discussions of the different viewpoints about effectiveness. Additionally some candidates showed a nuanced awareness of differences within as well as between parties. Others considered the views of pressure groups such as the Howard League for Penal Reform.

When Blair came into power he decided to take a tough approach on crime. His election motto was "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime." The coalition have been split on how to tackle crime but like Blair, on the whole have a relatively tough stance. Since 1997 crimes rates have dropped considerably but some areas still haven't seen much change. Overall I think that governments have been relatively successful at tackling crime but can still improve.

Under Blair in 2007/8 gun and knife crime fell. His tough approach at tackling 'yob culture' seemed to work with fewer homicides by 2010 than the previous year. Fewer people felt that they would be attacked and be a victim of crime in ~~the~~ 2008 than if they were asked

in 1995. Gun and knife crime fell by 7% in 2007/8 with the police recording the cases separately to other crimes. This shows that Blair was quite successful in tackling the idea of 'yob culture' and a broken society.

Under the coalition, total crime has fallen 6.1% since 2010. This shows that even with a recession, where crime is usually higher due to unemployment, it hasn't affected crime rates negatively. The coalition's tough stance seems to have worked with the need to build 8 new prisons.

The prison population has gradually been rising since ~~2003~~ 2003 and currently stands ~~at~~ at about 84,000 in 2024, with most prisons only able to take a maximum of 90,000 prisoners. These figures show that governments have been successful at tackling crime due to the increase in the prison population and the positive correlation of falling crime

figures. However the Liberal Democrats ~~do~~ stress the need to introduce rehabilitation into prisoners' lives in order to help them re-integrate into society. They would say that the tough stance of putting more people in jail doesn't necessarily work because reoffending rates can still be high. Under Blair bail applications were tougher if you were a persistent reoffender showing that prison doesn't ~~work~~ combat the reoffending cycle but rehabilitation might.

When Blair was in power he created ASBOs against youths who were known to be local troublemakers. They were ordered to ~~do~~ cease their criminal behaviour otherwise they could be liable for prosecution. These ASBOs were meant to help tackle youth crime but Blair never managed to combat it with youth crime rates still high. Pressure groups who want to see more rehabilitation being used probably would've ~~try~~ tried to encourage youth offenders to seek help in order to deal with the causes of crime, rather

than just branding them with an ASBO.

Since 2010 credit card fraud and drug related crimes have increased. This shows that currently the coalition are failing to tackle these crimes. It has been suggested that drug users receive more supportive help which would even extend to Class B users. The Liberal Democrats and a pressure group that wishes to see the reclassification of drugs would be in favour of this supportive help but currently the coalition have no policy on it. Credit card fraud needs combating with the use of new technology available to criminals. Civil liberties groups such as Liberty will want people's rights and information protected.

It can be difficult to ~~now~~ measure how successful recent governments have been at tackling crime because perception of crime may be higher than actual crime as in the case of ~~the~~ 2008. The British Crime Survey (BCS) questions the public on

Their experience of crime. They found that 40% of people who read tabloid newspapers thought that crime ~~is~~ was higher than it actually was. ~~This~~ This may potentially distort some crime figures.

Even though Blair and the Coalition mainly have a tough ~~an~~ approach to crime, backing that 'prison does work' and crime figures have been falling, there are still ~~many~~ many crime 'hot spots' in inner cities in the UK. In cities such as Manchester where the police force is in great numbers, the governments have still failed at ~~the~~ tackling the job culture in those cities. This means that whilst crime figures may be falling on the whole, locally they may be higher than expected. Yet again this is where more liberal approaches to crime may need to be taken to challenge the causes and broken society in the UK.

Overall I think that many total crime figures show that governments have been successful in tackling most types of crime since 1997. However when they are looked at in more depth and localised,

There are still many problems. Youth crime ~~has~~ since Blair has never been properly sorted out so that remains high. Prisons are full but the reoffending cycle still exists meaning governments in the future should perhaps ~~be~~ look at more rehabilitative approaches in order to prevent reoffending. I think governments need to try and strike a fair balance between authoritarian and a liberal approach. This could be by sending ~~for~~ criminals to prison but giving them education lessons inside as they do at one prison in the UK. The Coalition have a fair shot at this with the Conservatives higher stance and the Liberals more rehabilitative stance. On the whole more can be done to tackle crime and end reoffending.



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is a shorter response than a number of others that did not score so highly. What distinguished it was its degree of focus on the efficacy of government crime policies, rather than adopting a more descriptive approach. In particular the points about variations in geography (crime hotspots) and in different types of crime showed a sophistication that many answers lacked.

AO1 10

AO2 10

Syn 10

AO3 7



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Where a question asks how effective policy has been, the most effective answers will tightly focus on the word 'effective'.

When Blair's government came into power in 1997 crime was at the forefront of political issues due to the rising crime rates and so the new Labour government sought to tackle the crime level. However in more recent times more pressing issues such as the economy and the global environment has caused more concern than crime and so the coalition has done less than the Labour governments.

In 1997 the Labour government sought to reduce crime rates, Blair campaigned for 'toughening up' on the causes of crime and looked to backgrounds and the reasons why crimes were ~~being~~ being committed; especially with youth crime. The Labour government introduced 'ASBO's' with local councils being able to give these out to young people committing crimes. These prevented young people from going to certain places or being out at certain



times. In some places like Manchester these were used in excess, in some opinion, however it enabled the council to stamp out youth crime & ending the a large reduction in crime figures. However some political commentators argued that ASBO's were not the right punishment because it criminalised young people making it difficult for them to get jobs in the future. Although ASBO's in some areas were effective in reducing youth crime it can be argued that it was at the cost of causing young people to become unemployable.

~~Now~~ The Labour government also increased police funding to allow better street policing as well as to allow for bigger operations to tackle things such as gun crime as well as drug problems. Through better & more efficient policing due to the increased budget, crime rates dropped partly down to the more effective police work. More recently the role of PCC has been introduced, however many political analysts claim this is in an attempt to politicise the police & not in an attempt to reduce crime

figures further.  
'Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' was a key motto of Tony Blair's PM which his Labour government sought to tackle the root of the problem for why crime was being committed. In many cases crime was caused due to negligence from the family & so the Labour government attempted to eradicate the situation. In doing this a lot of funding was re-allocated to health centres for example in order to give young offenders the opportunity to get off the streets & give them a place to socialise. Tony Blair argued this was also a key turning point in the reduction of youth crime with 'another success' for the Labour government.

More recently gun & knife crime was a key issue as the death rate due to crimes related to weapons was on the up, however with increased operations to seek out & seize arms dealers gun crime specifically has seen massive reduction.

However it can be argued that although governments have been 'successful' because crime has reduced according to statistics, there is

Still widespread crime whether it be organised ~~crime~~ crime or the spontaneous London riots for example which sent the country into chaos, in the foreseeable future crime cannot be eradicated it is always going to be there even though recent governments have been successful in reducing crime rates it is still going to be present. With the election approaching though psephologist Prof. John Curtice believes that crime is going to creep towards the forefront in an attempt from the politicians to gain popular support from the electorate.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate is clearly very aware of a range of relevant crime policy, but remains stuck in level 2 for two main reasons - firstly the link made to effectiveness varies in quality, and secondly there is insufficient, although some, reference to the coalition. The references to crime statistics and to the London riots is useful and boosts this within level 2.

AO1 7  
AO2 6  
Syn 7  
AO3 5



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Law and order is always a topic where it is tempting to focus entirely pre 2010 (or in some cases, though not this one, pre 1997). This temptation is best avoided.

## **Question 8**

This was, marginally, the least popular essay question but it was more popular than economy essays have sometimes been, and

saw more candidates than is usual adopt a clear line of argument on government economic policy. What was particularly pleasing was that most of these candidates did not restrict themselves to one side of the debate but instead properly acknowledged and considered the alternative point of view.

It was quite legitimate here, but perhaps unsurprisingly rare, for candidates to dispute the premise that austerity has been painful although this was occasionally considered for example with respect to cuts in child benefit for higher earners.

The question of whether austerity was necessary, and by implication effective, was more promising ground for a two sided discussion, and many candidates showed strong awareness of both specific policies and specific impacts on growth, inflation, debt and unemployment. Equally many candidates would have benefitted from more clearly considering the main alternative to austerity, since that would help to draw out whether it was necessary. Some discussion of the economic situation in economies such as Greece and Germany might also have been helpful but was not essential and rarely done. Nevertheless there were a high number of level 3 responses and strong analysis and synopticity from many candidates.

The weakest responses spent too little time on economics and instead focused on a one sided discussion of the social impacts of government policy.

Lower middling responses were competent as far as they went, but tended to assert their points with regard to necessity or pain, rather than arguing them through. Higher middling answers showed a greater degree of detailed argument, and a moderate level of balance, but were insufficiently specific in terms of the economic impact to quite make it into level 3.

Stronger responses embraced the question of necessity, most often by a detailed and balanced consideration of the impact of austerity on a variety of economic indicators. A good number also compared austerity to its main alternative of stimulus, and the very strongest considered both economic and social impacts extensively.

In terms of synopticity the most effective approach was to directly contrast austerity and stimulus. More commonly candidates alternated arguments for and against austerity or utilised, usually to slightly lesser effect, the indirect 'for then against' structure. Effective consideration was given by some to the views of the World Bank, credit rating agencies and businesses as well as political parties.

When the Coalition Government gained power in 2010 it was met with the hard task of solving the economic deficit.

In order for the Coalition to cut the deficit austerity measures had to be taken in regards to public spending, such as the NHS, the Police and Education. The Austerity measures were correct because they were required in order to cut the deficit and bring the UK out of a time of recession.

The public welfare takes up  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the budget so it makes sense that procedures were put in place in order to lessen the spending of the government in regards to welfare. One of these measures was universal welfare. Universal welfare was aimed to be a welfare system that gave families one lump sum of money from the Government, this aimed to cut down of the costs of bureaucracy as only one

auditing department would be required for the whole welfare state. Critics of the Universal Credit argued that it denied those in society who were the most in need of help. However supporters argued that it was correct because it was required to cut spending and reduce the deficit.

Thatcherites in the Conservative party would argue that Austerity was correct as it lifted the state from the individual in regards to welfare. Thatcherites would argue that the austerity measures in welfare, specifically job seekers allowance which was ~~not~~ reduced, helped to create less of a nanny state and increased the incentive to work to individuals. They would argue that this kind of tough love was required in order to cut spending and reduce the dependency of individuals on the state.

Supporters of the Austerity measures to the NHS would argue that the fact the NHS survived the recession was a miracle. They would argue that ~~it~~ in a society of around 60 million people having free at the point of use healthcare is a luxury not an entitlement. The fact that the coalition didn't sell the NHS to the private

Sector shows that it's a well regarded piece of the welfare state.

The increase of the retirement age received a lot of public attention as it seemed impacted public sector workers the most. Although the increase of retirement age received a lot of public attention the coalition planned to increase the involvement of employers in preparing workers to save for their pension. Increasing the retirement age was deemed necessary in order to respond to the economic position of the country.

I will now assess the points against the statement that deem the austerity measures to be incorrect.

One of the criticisms from the left wing perspective of the austerity measures was that it negatively affected the defenceless and the weak when in reality more should have been done to reduce the deficit with the help of 'core companies and business'. The cuts to welfare ~~and the~~ were particularly criticised because they brought those on the fringes of society, such as the disabled and sick closer to the poverty line. The implementation of this is that it

increased social divisions in society and has led to a greater divide between rich and poor.

One of the criticisms of the austerity measures brought to the education system is that it will negatively impact the economy of the future as it will lead to a less intelligent workforce. The increase of tuition fees will lead to more people deciding against higher education and will lead to greater divisions of the social classes as less working class pupils will decide to go to uni due to a fear of debt.

The idea that increasing the retirement age would cut the deficit was criticised as being a quick fix. The increase of retirement age was criticised for just passing the problem on to the next generation.

One of the major criticisms of the austerity measures was that they did nothing to create jobs. Critics argued that in order to get the UK out of a recession it would be wise to create jobs as this stimulates growth.



encourages investment and would lead to more  
tax being paid ~~as~~ which would help reduce the  
deficit.

to conclude I feel that the austerity measures  
were correct in order to reduce the deficit,  
however I feel more could have been done  
to create jobs and more could have been done  
to protect the needy in society.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This answer contains a great deal of material relevant to a discussion of austerity from a political point of view which is especially relevant to the 'painful' aspect of the question. To reach level 3 it needed more focus on the economic success or otherwise of either the particular policies or the overall thrust of austerity, albeit there was some reference to this.

AO1 6

AO2 7

Syn 7

AO3 5



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Although economic policy is relevant to other areas of politics, and discussion of these relevant impacts will always be credited, it is most helpful within economy question to give the economic arguments the most attention.

Austerity is an economic recovery plan that involves cutting major cuts to the public spending and making the economy more efficient in order to promote growth again. The Austerity plan in the UK has been headed by George Osborne who deems it necessary for the survival of the UK economy but the Labour party claim there are better and less harmful approaches to run the economy.

One reason why austerity was the correct response is that the UK needed to dramatically cut down on the level of borrowing ~~etc~~ which occurred in the previous government which was under Labour. The way to cut borrowing is to cut spending so the ~~of~~ coalition government made cuts to public spending such as making cuts ~~to~~ to the NHS and the police force. It aims to cut the police budget by 20% by 2015 and has frozen pay for the majority of the public sector apart from a 1% pay rise which was announced in the ~~to~~ 2014 budget. This has helped to

cut public sector in the UK which is projected to finally generate a budget surplus in the next fiscal year of £5bn.

Labour have argued that these cuts go 'too far, too fast' and has left most regular people in the UK worse off after austerity and is a contributing factor to the 'cost of living crisis' which Ed Milliband refers to a lot. Those in the Labour party would take a more Keynesian approach to ~~sort of~~ get out of a recession by spending in the public sector and investing in projects which will create a positive return back into the UK economy. It is also a widely unpopular move to make cuts to the NHS as it was seen by protests against freezing of nurses pay and doctors salaries ~~and also~~ which also occurred in police and fire services over anger of the closing down of some departments that has left a large number without jobs.

The Conservatives argue that it would be an absurd idea to borrow more with a budget deficit currently at £10bn £108bn and a total debt well over £1 trillion ~~and~~ as borrowing more would make the situation worse and it would take far longer to revert back ~~to~~ to the original state of the economy than a Keynesian approach.

Labour also claims that austerity cuts have kept many ~~into~~ people who worked in the public sector without any job or means to find a job because there is no training scheme or help offered by the government to help find jobs for those who lost theirs. Putting people out of work is very bad for the economy because cuts consumption levels and means that benefit payments to those unemployed would rise. This is why Labour oppose austerity because they believe it will ~~be~~ too many jobs still cuts growth.

The counter argument to this would be that unemployment has now fallen to below 7% which is the lowest it has been since before the time of the economic crash which shows that although austerity may have caused the loss of jobs in areas it has not had an overall detrimental effect on the labour force of the UK with unemployment below 7%, 1.12 million people claiming unemployed benefits as well in the UK at the same time where net migration has been well over 100,000 for the past few years so it shows that the UK is getting more people into jobs and that there are a large number of jobs still going and available because unemployment figures have dropped still below what it was before.

and ~~any~~ immigration levels has risen.

The public see making cuts to a vital piece of public infrastructure such as the NHS and police force as a bad move and is widely unpopular move. There were a large number of protests in pay was frozen for NHS workers and there are always ~~demonstrations~~ demonstrations when a move is suggested to close down a hospital. This also occurs when a police or fire station is in threat of closure. This shows that to the public, closing public services is a step too far ~~as~~ in trying to help in the recovery of the UK economy.

Finally, austerity can be argued as has been the correct decision to make as the UK economy is now the most stable and the fastest growing in Europe with inflation stabilising and 1.8% over the last few months and growth predicted to be over 2% in ~~2014~~ 2014 is proof that austerity was ~~more~~ necessary and has worked.

In Conclusion, the arguments show that although it is very ~~of~~ unpopular with the public, austerity has been the correct response to the economic situation since 2010 and has now helped the UK economy to get back on track.



## ResultsPlus

**Examiner Comments**

This answer contains a useful and accurate blend of the reasons for austerity, the economic impact, and the criticisms of it, and this takes it clearly to level 3. To go higher would have required a wider range of economic points - for example a discussion of the sluggish growth experienced before the recent economic improvement.

AO1 9

AO2 10

Sym 9

AO3 7



## ResultsPlus

**Examiner Tip**

When discussing the necessity of a particular policy making comparisons to what went before, or to the possible alternative approaches, is always helpful and will be credited.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Address the question as set, paying particular attention to instruction words such as 'to what extent' or 'how and why', noting where a question demands consideration of more than one government, and focusing, where requested on the *success* (or otherwise) of policies.

- Maintain a contemporary focus and avoid overly historical commentary. Unless the question specifically indicates others candidate should now expect to spend most of their time on post-2010 content, and pre-1997 should be discussed only very briefly if at all.
- Maintain a practical political focus that links theory to policy.
- Endeavour to strike a balance between range and depth of points, particularly on short responses where three well explained points will usually out-perform seven brief points, or one very in-depth point.
- Avoid assertion or general debate in favour of specific and clearly argued points, for example the ways in which private sector involvement in the NHS could be argued to greater efficiency and not simply that it does.
- Ensure that any and all statistical evidence cited is robust, particularly with regard to law and order statistics.
- Continue to develop the use of synopticity, avoiding simplistic yes/no, agree/disagree approaches and making use of competing viewpoints between, within and outside of parties where appropriate to the demands of the question.
- Ensure that they include sufficient balance in all essay questions particularly where they wish to structure their response from a personal point of view, which is a perfectly acceptable approach.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>



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