

Does prison work assignment



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Does Prison Work? The aim of this essay is to analyse and discuss the prison system in England and Wales to determine whether or not the current prison system works. The work of Joyce (2006) suggests that there are five objectives that are analysed when looking to see if prisons work, these are punishment, reform, incapacitation, deterrence and denunciation. However due to the limited word count this essay will only look at three key factors of prisons including punishment, rehabilitation and security.

Crotchet (2007) explains that a person may be in prison for two circumstances that include someone who has been sent to prison on remand and is awaiting trial or someone who has been sentenced to imprisonment as a consequence of their actions. The first key aspect of prisons that this assignment will discuss is punishment. Joyce explains that punishment is for society to avenge those who have committed crime. This would mean that in fact only society can decide whether or not prisons actually work in terms of punishment (Joyce, 2006).

Joyce (2006) also explains that the legal and prison system are constantly criticized for being too lenient when sentencing and granting early release. Early release could be due to the mass increase in the prison population, as of the 23rd November 2011 the prison population was 88,115 (Howard League for penal reform, 2011), compared to the 25th November 2005 when the prison population in England and Wales was 77,421 (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2005). Overcrowding is a consequence of the prison population growing. Overcrowding impacts a prison's function in many ways.

It can disrupt daily routines and can influence the way that prisons maintain their order (Matthews, 1999). One great concern with overcrowding is that there is great pressure being put on the prisons rehabilitation programmer, as well as the cost to keep an offender in prison being 100,000 per year (British Crime Survey). However the increase in the prison population could impact the amount of crime in society, when looking at the British Crime Survey crime rate is down 50 per cent since 1995, these statistics could argue that prison is working and is in fact decreasing crime in our society.

Another key issue when considering the validity of prisons is whether it is primarily designed to look after the interests of the prisoner or societies (Joyce, 2006). Tim Newbury (2009) argues that prison practices isolation and offenders tend to be studied as individuals how prisoners are seen in the eyes of the law, he suggests that offenders should be seen as no different from anyone else in society. Rehabilitation programmes are being run within prisons. The media often criticizes prisons for making criminals worse than actually helping them.

Roommate (2005) argues that prisoners are poorly educated on prison life before they enter, making them more likely to follow other inmate's routines and behavior. This means that while in prison offenders can be influenced by worse behavior of other inmates. The Home Office (2005) shows that while in prison one in three prisoners use drugs. Another problem with rehabilitation in prisons is that the majority of offenders receive short sentences, this can affect their rehabilitation as rehabilitation staff are given a limited and insufficient amount of time to re-educate prisoners (Joyce, 2006).

On the other hand key performance indicators have been implemented to monitor the effectiveness and success of the prisoner's rehabilitation (Davies et al, 2005). Security is another factor that relates to rehabilitation of offenders, which suggest that prisons are a primary place of punishment and not a place of rehabilitation (Joyce, 2006). Joyce (2006) also explains that the extent or availability of training and education is considerably influenced by inmate's security and risk categorization.

This essay has discussed the key aims of prisons to analyse whether or not they work. From looking at punishment it can be seen that the courts are sentencing more people to imprisonment which appears to be reducing crime rates. However the ever rising prison population is creating further problems with overcrowding. Rehabilitation programmes are taking place in prisons but statistics show they aren't necessarily working. Security is also affecting the way the rehabilitation programmes are run.

Prisoners continue to take drugs within prison and continue to follow the behaviors of more experienced criminals. This essay hasn't given a clear answer to whether or not prison works as there is not a straight answer, our prison system has its disadvantages and advantages.