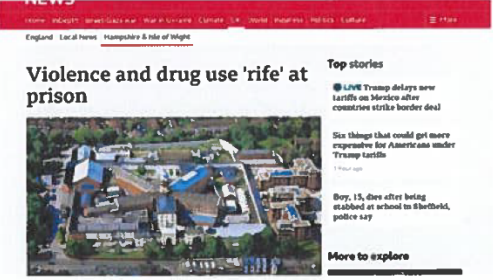


Candidate 1 evidence

Modern Studies National 5 Research Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
<p>Source 1 - Survey (January 2025)</p> <p>1) What gender do you identify as ?</p> <p>2) What age are you ?</p> <p>3) Those convicted of drug offences, or crimes where drug use was the main cause, should be sent to prison. What is your opinion on this statement ?</p> <p>4) Explain your answer to question 3</p> <p>5) If a prisoner shows signs of mental health struggles what do you think prisons should do about this</p> <p>6) 38.9 % of prisoners had a drug use disorder on entry to prison Do you think that drug use has a strong link to issues within prisons such as mental health ? Please explain your answer</p> <p>7) At the end of May 2024, 71 of the 122 prisons in England and Wales were holding more people than their maximum capacity What impacts do you think overcrowding has on prison as a whole - staff and convicts?</p> <p>8) Overall, do you think our prison system needs improvement on dealing with issues such as mental health , overcrowding and drug use or is it doing all that it is required to do ?</p>	
 <p>Source 2 - https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd6vy9g58nvo - 24th October 2024 accessed 8th December 2024</p>	

Source 3

<https://prisoninfo.co.uk/are-uk-prisons-full/#:~:text=1%20Increases%20in%20violence%20due%20to%20close%20proximity.and%20medical%20services%204%20Negatively%20impacts%20rehabilitation%20initiatives>

accessed 8th December 2024

**Assessing The
Overcrowding
Situation In UK Prisons**



Source 4 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-61244570> - 28th April 2022 ,
accessed 8th December 2024



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Urgent action call over prisoners' mental health

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National 5 Modern Studies Assignment Report

You must use this report to complete your assignment. The wording in this template must not be altered in any way.

Research topic/issue: Issues within UK prisons

Describe the purpose/aims of your research.

I intend to prove or disprove the following hypothesis:

The UKs prisons are not fit for purpose

Aims:

- To find out about drug use in UK prisons
- To find out the impacts of overcrowding in UK prisons
- To find out if UK prisons negatively affect prisoners mental health

Research methods:**10 marks**

For two methods of research you have used to collect information during your assignment, you should comment on:

- ◆ why you chose each method for your research
- ◆ strengths and any weaknesses of each research method
- ◆ how you could do things differently

You should refer to the evidence for each research method which you have noted on your research sheet.

Source 1 - Questionnaire

For my first method, shown as source 1, I used a survey in the form of an online questionnaire to gather data about the public's opinion on issues within UK prisons.

The first advantage of this method is that it allowed me to ask questions tailored to my aims so I could gather relevant information. It also allowed me to ask close-ended questions such as question 5 which was if a prisoner shows signs of mental health struggles what do you think prisons should do about this - they were then given a selection of answers to choose from - this allowed me to gather data from which I can make comparisons and clear decisions on topics. I also asked open-ended questions such as question 3 which was Those convicted of drug offences, or crimes where drug use was the main cause, should be sent to prisons. What is your opinion on this statement? These questions allowed me to gather more information on people's opinions on the topic.

Another advantage to this method is that it is anonymous which means people are more likely to give their true opinion as there is no identification, this will increase the reliability of my results as people will be honest as there is no fear of judgement as prisons are a widely discussed and controversial topic which many people will disagree on.

However, a disadvantage is that most people may not be very well educated on the UK's prisons, therefore there will not be a lot of information which is reliable which negatively impacts the quality of my results.

Another disadvantage is that I did not ask a large and diverse amount of people, this limiting the range of viewpoints on the topic meaning my results were not representative to the country. Also, the majority of my respondents were female and aged below 18 which is a very specific group which may all have similar views which overall will alter my results affecting the reliability. Next time to improve the accuracy of my results I would post my survey on social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook as this way I would reach a much broader spread of people from different backgrounds and ethnicities ensuring that my results represent the views of the country.

Source 2 - BBC Website

One advantage of using the BBC was that it is a well-known, highly trusted mainstream site from which professional writers post articles, this ensures the accuracy of my results as the information will all be honest and informative. The BBC must also editorially and technically check every article before it is published which further improves the reliability of my results.

Another advantage is that the BBC is not a very biased website, they have to be objective and have no political agenda, this means in each article there are positive arguments for UK prisons and negative ones, making it an even playing field. The BBC are more to educate and inform us rather than persuade us to support their views. This means I get a broad range of data from which I can make clear comparisons of the good and the bad of UK prisons allowing me to come to conclusions for each of my aims.

However, a disadvantage is that my article was posted more than a year ago which negatively affects the accuracy of my results as the prison system is a constantly evolving and changing system from which recent information is crucial as a lot can change in a matter of weeks.

Another disadvantage is that the article only discusses one prison located in England, this is not representative enough as I am discussing the whole of the UK which is not included in this article. This means I cannot make comparisons or make broad comments.

A solution to improve the accuracy of my results is that next time I would use the prison HMI inspectorate annual report as this includes all the prisons across the UK giving me more information to work with that is recent and relevant, also allowing me to make comments about the UK's prisons system as a whole.

Research findings:**6 marks**

Describe and explain the main findings of your research. You should refer to the research evidence on your research sheet.

Aim - To find out about drug use in UK prisons

In source 2, I found that 41% of approximately 690 men in category B prison tested positive for drug use. This conveys the large amount of people who use drugs in UK prisons but also how easy it is to take them, this is due to the lack of tight security. Linking to this in source 4, I found that many prisoners gain addictions to drugs within prison as they are much more accessible and something to help with the boredom but this is dangerous as many people who have never used drugs before are and they do not know the limits to drugs meaning that overdoing is not an uncommon issue.

Aim- To find out the impacts of overcrowding in UK prisons

In source 1 I asked What impacts do you think overcrowding has on prison as a whole - staff and convicts? The most popular response with 96% of people choosing it was that there would be a lack of spaces in programmes which help with mental health issues. Linking to this I found in source 3 that there is a chain reaction to overcrowding in UK prisons. It starts with prisoners being locked in their cells for longer hours - sometimes up to twenty hours - this makes them feel extremely isolated and alone which leads them to the use of drugs as they are almost an escape from reality for them and something to numb the pain they are going through mentally which they are not receiving help due to the overcrowding taking up spaces in programmes. This shows how drug use and mental health is exacerbated by overcrowding. Linking to what I found in source 3, in source 1 I asked Do you think that drug use has a strong link to issues within prisons such as mental health? Every response agreed, with many saying that the lows of drugs can heavily affect someone's mental state and can cause serious issues such as depression and anxiety, if they do not receive professional help which overcrowding prevents.

Aim- To find out if UK prisons negatively affect prisoners mental health

In source 4, I found that many prisoners who enter prison with pre-existing mental health illnesses struggle to receive help and support within prison, this is due to insufficient therapy and the low number of spaces for programmes and mental health nurses. This means that they will not have help and will continue to face their struggles alone, this can put prisoners in a very dark place making them feel even more alone, this can lead to very severe consequences. Supporting this I found in source 3 that 16 in 10,000 prisoners commit suicide in the UK, this is the target rate in Europe. This clearly shows how not enough is being done to help these prisoners. I also found in source 4 that many prisoners who received medication prescribed by a GP outside of prison were denied it within. This can seriously affect someone's mental state as there is a sudden imbalance within their bodies, this can affect their behaviours and moods.

Research conclusions:**4 marks****What conclusions have you reached about your research topic or issue?**

In conclusion to my first aim, drugs have a very severe and known presence within UK prisons. A solution to this could be to separate prisoners whose crime was linked or caused by drugs or if they tested positive for drugs on entry to prison. This would also limit the spread of drugs within UK prisons especially to those who have never used before, as well as allowing prison officers to keep a closer eye on the prisoners who are likely to smuggle drugs into prison, therefore limiting the sale of drugs. We could also start to include harsher punishments for the sale of drugs which would hopefully limit the amount of drug related crimes.

In conclusion to my second aim, overcrowding has many large impacts on many factors which affect prisoners. A solution to this would be to employ more staff and build more prisons to house the prisoners in prisons which are beyond capacity. We could also cut non-custodial and low time sentences and instead give out community pay back orders. This is also proven to be a more effective form of rehabilitation and would lower the prison population.

In conclusion to my third aim, prisons do heavily affect prisoners mental health and can either worsen it or create long term issues. A solution to this could be to train more staff for mental health awareness so that they can be able to recognise the signs if a prisoner is struggling mentally. Also by solving the current overcrowding issue more spaces will open up in programmes and for mental health nurses meaning more people will be seen and receive help.

In conclusion to my hypothesis, I believe the UK's prisons are not fit for purpose as they are not meeting the needs of all the convicts across the country. Prisoners' wellbeings are being neglected and they are not receiving the help which so many of them desperately need. The prison system is also currently cracking under the pressure of the growing prison population and need to adapt and take on many solutions - some of which I have listed - in order to prevent further damage to an already breaking system.