EVALUATION

• Official statistics – unreliable as they underestimate the true extent of crime. Only 25% of offences are included in the official statistics. The other 75% makes up the dark figure of crime. Police recording rules may be why some crimes don’t appear in official statistics. Nottinghamshire were more likely than any other region to record thefts of under £10. This explains the spike of thefts in this area. Therefore, policing priorities may distort official figures.

• Victim surveys – more likely to include details that weren’t recorded to the police so more accurate. However, they rely on respondents having accurate recall and telescoping may occur, thinking an event happened in the last year when it didn’t, therefore distorting the figures.

• Offender surveys – even though confidentiality is assured, responses may be unreliable. Offenders may want to conceal more serious crimes or even exaggerate the number for reasons of bravado. This means certain types of crime are overrepresented whereas middle-class offences like fraud are unlikely to be included.
CUSTODIAL SENTENCING

• Involves a convicted offender spending time in prison or a closed institution like a young offenders institute or psychiatric hospital. **4 main aims:**

• **Deterrence** – unpleasant prison experience is supposed to put people off offending. General deterrence sends a broad message to society that a behaviour isn’t tolerated. Individual deterrence prevents a person repeating the same crime in light of their experience.

• **Incapacitation** – offender is taken out of society to stop them reoffending, protects the public. This depends on the severity and nature of the offence. Society need to be protected more from a murderer than an elderly person refusing to pay their taxes.

• **Retribution** – society getting revenge by making the offender suffer, based on the biblical notion ‘eye for an eye’. Many believe prison is the best option for this and that alternatives are a soft option.

• **Rehabilitation** – prison should provide opportunities to develop skills, training, access to treatment programmes for drug addiction for example. Offender should reflect on their crime.

**Psychological effects:**

• Stress and depression – higher suicide rates than in the general population, self-harm, self mutilation. The stress of prison increases the risk of psychological disturbance.

• Institutionalisation – having adopted to the norms and routines of prison life, the individual is unable to function outside of prison.

• Prisonisation – behaviour that may be considered unacceptable in the outside world may be encouraged and rewarded inside of the institution.

• Brutalisation – prison acts as a school for crime, reinforces a criminal lifestyle, leads to high recidivism rates.

• Being labelled as a criminal leads to reduced employability, problems affecting custody of children.

• Recidivism – 57% of UK offenders will reoffend within a year of release. In Norway, reoffending rates are the lowest in Europe, greater emphasis is placed on rehabilitation and skills development than in the UK. Some people say this is the soft option though and doesn’t sufficiently punish offenders.
• Easy – no need for expertise or specialist training. Token economy programmes can be implemented by virtually anyone in any institution. They are cost effective and easy to follow. However, there must be a consistent approach. Research found that if staff applied the techniques inconsistently due to lack of training or high staff turnover, the benefits were lost.

• Positive change in behaviour may be lost when the offenders are released from prison, the programme is unlikely to extend beyond the prison setting. Law-abiding behaviour isn’t always reinforced in the real world. Therefore there is little permanent rehabilitation.

• Ethical issues – regarded as manipulative and dehumanising. Participation is obligatory rather than optional. A programme which can withdraw privileges like exercise may be ethically questionable.

• Individually tailored programmes are most effective – youths were placed on a special programme where the rewards were more immediate and frequent, and the results were positive. This suggest the programme should be designed to best suit the individual.
ANGER MANAGEMENT

• Cognitive factors trigger the emotional arousal which causes aggressive acts. Anxious or threatening situations can trigger anger. Anger management is a form of CBT.

1. Cognitive preparation – the offender learns which situations trigger their anger and whether they interpreted the event rationally. The therapist then aims to break this automatic response.

2. Skills acquisition – they are introduced to a range of techniques and skills to help them deal with anger-provoking situations. Includes positive self-talk to encourage calmness. They are taught to communicate more effectively, and relaxation/meditation. Ensure the offender is in control of their emotions rather than the other way round.

3. Application practice – given an opportunity to practise their skills in a controlled and monitored environment. Role play where the offender and therapist re-enact situations which previously provoked anger. It requires commitment from the offender as they must see the scenario as real. Reacting well from the role play would result in positive reinforcement.

• Study – young offenders aged 17-21 took part in the National Anger Management Package, involved 8 two hour sessions. The final outcome was generally positive and they reported that they were more aware of their anger and could exercise self-control. However some didn’t take the course seriously and failed to fill in their diary.