

**Question 1**  
**Why was an allowance system introduced in Staffordshire in 1811?**

From looking at source A, I have found no direct reason why this system was introduced in Staffordshire. However there must have been a large number of paupers for a meeting of JP's to be held.

This might have been the case because of a population explosion. This will have lead to a high rate of unemployment, along with changes in working methods came machines, which took the place of a manual worker. This will have made it extremely hard for paupers to find work. Without work the breadwinner of the family would not be bringing a wage into the house. If the breadwinner died then his family would lose its major income, leaving them with no option but to ask the parish for relief. Another case would have been a period of "slack" trade. This would have mean that the family would go trough a period of having very little money if any at all coming in. If these periods lasted for a long time and the breadwinner was out of work or doing casual work then the paupers would become more and more poor, and depending on relief from the parish more and more. Even in good times of trade the paupers wages were barely enough to support his family. In these good times of trade casual workers were employed, to either work part time or for a short spell maybe until the spell of good trade ended. When these good spells of trade ended and the casual workers were surplus to requirements they were sacked. So the paupers and their families didn't have a steady regular wage coming into their homes. Not all cases were out of the pauper's control. For example drinking, many paupers drunk alcohol because of the poor water supply, but they would become hooked and they would waste a large amount of their wages on alcohol. Also being a drunk would make it hard for the paupers to receive relief, because the parish would know that if they gave the drunken pauper money then he or she would waste it on alcohol. Another example is gambling; paupers would become hooked on gambling and once again would lose large amounts of their wages paying for it. If the pauper became to far in debt in gambling he might turn to crime to try to cover them, but if he was caught then he would be imprisoned and then he would be imprisoned or hanged. Both making him useless to his family

Another factor, which could have lead to their being such a high number of paupers in 1811, was the high price of wheat. This was mainly due to the

Napoleonic blockades, which stopped Britain importing wheat from abroad. So with very little wheat available paupers would have to pay an extortionate price for bread, which was the main part of all paupers diets.

## Question 2

### What are the differences between the Staffordshire allowance system and the Speenhamland system?

The Staffordshire allowance system stated “A labourer earning 12 shillings per week with a wife a three children under the age of seven should be able to look after themselves without relief from the parish, except if sick. However if the labourer has more than three children under the age of seven then he can go to the parish and ask for relief.”

The Speenhamland system made parishes give paupers extra money in their wages, so that they could buy the high priced bread.

Income should be	For a Man	For a single woman	For a man and wife	With one child	With 2 children
When the gallon loaf is 1s 0d	3s 0d	2s 0d	4s 6d	6s 0d	7s 6d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 1d	3s 3d	2s 1d	4s 10d	6s 5d	8s 0d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 2d	3s 6d	2s 2d	5s 2d	6s 10d	8s 6d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 3d	3s 9d	2s 3d	5s 6d	7s 3d	9s 0d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 4d	4s 0d	2s 4d	5s 10d	7s 8d	9s 6d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 5d	4s 0d	2s 5d	5s 11d	7s 10d	9s 9d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 6d	4s 3d	2s 6d	6s 3d	8s 3d	10s 3d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 7d	4s 3d	2s 7d	6s 4d	8s 5d	10s 6d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 8d	4s 3d	2s 8d	6s 8d	8s 10d	11s 0d
When the gallon loaf is 1s 9d	4s 6d	2s 9d	6s 9d	9s 0d	11s 3d

After looking at both of the allowance systems I can see they were similar in the following ways. Both of the systems gave relief to paupers in their own homes (outdoor relief), not in as workhouse. This helped families support themselves in their own homes. Another similarity is that both of the

systems depended on the size of your family. The Staffordshire allowance system gave relief to families with more than three children under the age of three. The Speenhamland system gave relief to all families; the amount of relief given went up depending on the size of your family and the cost of bread.

From looking at this source I can also see that there were differences. One of these differences was that the Speenhamland system had a clear table showing all paupers what they were entitled to. This table was clear enough for the illiterate paupers to understand. This was completely different to the Staffordshire system, which was much more complex and harder to understand. The table in the Speenhamland system showed how much relief the paupers should get, depending on the cost of bread and the size of the paupers family. Another difference was that the amount of relief given in the Speenhamland system went up with the price of bread. Unlike the Staffordshire system which just depended on the number of children you had, no matter how high or low the priced of bread was.

After looking at both allowances systems I can see they were similar in the following ways. Both of the allowances gave relief to the paupers at home (outdoor relief), not in a workhouse. This helped the families support themselves in their own homes. Another similarity is that both of the allowances depend on the size of the pauper's family. The Staffordshire allowance system gave relief to a pauper with more than three children. The Speenhamland system gave relief to all family sizes, the amount given goes up with more children the paupers have, and with the price of bread.

There are also some differences in this source. One of these differences was that the Speenhamland system had a clear table, which showed what all paupers were entitled to. This table was clear enough for the illiterate paupers to understand. The Staffordshire system was more complex and harder to understand. The table in the Speenhamland system showed how much relief paupers should get, depending on the cost of bread and the size of the pauper's family. Another differnce is that the amount of releif given in the Speenhamland system went up with the price of bread, unlike the Staffordshire system, which depended on the number of children the pauper had.

### Question 3

#### What does source B tell us about the reasons some paupers were treated differently to others?

From looking at source B I can see that paupers were treated differently, for example in 1821 William Reynolds went to the parish asking for relief. He had no work and had to support his family of four children. He received 5 shilling per week.

Also in 1821 Thomas Eccles went to the parish asking for relief. He was unemployed and in health. He received nothing.

Another case in 1821 was Thomas Hodgkiss who went to the parish asking for relief. He had five children and ten shillings savings. He received nothing.

In 1821 Ann Sansons boy went to the parish asking for a pair of shoes. His request was granted

In 1822 William Bradbury went to the parish asking for relief. He had no work and was a drunk. He received nothing.

In 1823 John Vernon went to the parish asking for bed linen and a blanket. His wife told the parish that if he didn't get this he would leave his family.

Ann Sanson's boy received a pair of shoes because he couldn't work or pay for them himself.

William Bradbury received nothing because he was a drunk. He was probably an alcoholic, so if they did give him money he would waste it on alcohol.

John Vernon's request wasn't granted because the parish was not going to be blackmailed, because if they allowed one pauper relief then all of the parish's paupers would try it.

William Reynolds received relief because he had no work and had four children to support.

Thomas Eccles jnr received nothing because he had no wife or kids to care for, and he was also in good health a fit to work

Thomas Hodgkiss who had five children and ten shillings savings received nothing because he had money.

John Adderly received 1 shilling and six pence per week because he did casual work, and wasn't earning all year round to support himself.

Mary Roden also received 1 shilling six pence because she was a widow and had lost the major breadwinner of her family.

John Proudman received 12 shillings per week relief after being shot by Mr. Bull the saddler. This left him unable to work and maybe in need of some kind of medical help.

There were two things which made the parish's decisions different. One was if the person asking for relief were thought to be the deserving poor, and being poor was outside of their control. An example of this is William Reynolds who was seen as a deserving pauper, because having no work and five children is not his fault. The main thing that stopped paupers receiving relief was if they were idle poor, this made them the undeserving poor. They were poor because of their own actions. A prime example of an idle poor pauper is William Bradbury, who brought poverty upon himself. This was due to him not having work and being an alcoholic. Wasting whatever money he had on alcohol.

#### Question 4

**How useful are these sources as evidence about how the cost of the Poor Law changed between 1776 and 1832?**

Source C shows me that the cost for providing relief for the poor was increasing drastically in Staffordshire, and in the two individual parishes of Stoke upon Trent and Tamworth. The results increased hugely between 1776 and 1803

The advantage of source c is that it gives clear specific figures. These figures show that the cost for providing relief in Stoke upon Trent, Trentham and Staffordshire as a whole was increasing drastically.

The disadvantages of this source are that the table is set out strangely, as a result of this you could be mistaken for thinking that the figures were going down. Another disadvantage is that the source doesn't include any figures for 1832, so you can't see how the cost of the Poor law changed. Also the

source only shows two parishes in the whole country, so you are only seeing a narrow picture of what is happening nationally.

Source D shows that in the parish of Tamworth the population went down by 37 people between 1821 and 1831, but the cost for providing relief for the poor went up. From under £1000 in 1821 to under £1200 in 1832.

The advantages of this source are that it is primary and it gives clear specific figures.

The disadvantages of this source are that it is only from one parish, this parish could be completely different to the rest of the country. Another disadvantage of this source is that the author was deliberately looking for faults in the system of poor relief. Therefore this made the author biased.

I think that these sources are useful to a certain extent. However you are only getting a very narrow picture of poverty in one county. To improve these sources the authors could have gathered more information from other counties. This would help you see if there is a change in the cost of poor relief or not.



### **Question 5**

#### **Which of these sources gives the most reliable evidence about workhouses before 1834?**

Both source E and F are reports of the conditions inside workhouses. Source E is workhouse in Stafford, source F is a workhouse in Tamworth.

Source E is a visitor's letter to a gentleman's magazine in 1805. A man called James Neild, who was rich, wrote the letter. His letter talks about the appalling conditions of the workhouse. He says the state of the building is deplorable, so old that it is almost falling down. He also says that the rooms along with windows are small, and the lower rooms damp with the upper ones being dark and dusty.

This source is likely to be biased though, because James Neild doesn't mention any good points. He may be doing this deliberately to make the workhouse sound worse than what it really is. Another reason why this source might have been biased is because James Neild was rich and he was trying to change the way in which the rich viewed the paupers and workhouses. To do this James Neild may have had to exaggerate on some of the down sides of the workhouse. With James Neild being rich he had probably never seen such conditions before, and he might have assessed them and made them sound much worse than what they actually were. These problems make this source biased, because Neild was trying to exaggerate the truth to make the conditions change.

Source F is a description of a workhouse in Tamworth, written by a poor law commissioner in 1832. The commissioner was sent out deliberately to pick up on any faults that the workhouse had, he didn't find many. Instead he found the workhouse to be excellent and commodious, in a dry healthy environment. He reported this back to his over commissioners.

This assistant was deliberately sent out to find faults, and not finding any makes him extremely fair and unbiased, because he found, and reported back the opposite of what he was sent to find

I believe that source F is more reliable than source E, because the Poor Law commissioner knew what he was looking for and he was probably used to seeing such conditions. This commissioner was also very, because he reported back the opposite to what he was deliberately sent to find.

## **Question 6**   **How far do you agree with Christopher Hill's view on the old poor law?**

Source G is a secondary source, because it was written in 1975. The source says that the Speenhamland system was in operation over most of England. Hill also says that the old poor law was inefficient, demoralizing to the poor and costly to the ratepayers.

The Speenhamland system originated in Speenham in Berkshire, and spread over the south of England. This happened because the south was more agricultural and this system worked well for agriculture. The Speenhamland system didn't spread to the north though, because the north was more industrial. In the industrial north, there were trade fluctuations, and workers were made redundant until trade picked up. With large numbers of workers becoming unemployed at once the Speenhamland system couldn't cope.

The other stems of relief that existed and were used in the rest of England were:

### **The Roundsman System**

This gave able-bodied laborers tickets to find work, if they got some work then the council paid some or all of their wages.

### **Labor Rate**

This was when ratepayers paid a separate rate in addition to the ordinary poor rate. Employers could choose to either pay their share of this rate or use it to pay laborers at the going rate for labour's in the parish.

### **Gilburts Act**

Put into action in 1782, the act allowed parishes to join together unions to build workhouse. This made workhouses cheaper because the cost is spread between parishes.

## **The Settlement Act**

Put into action in 1622, allowed parishes to send away paupers from elsewhere after thirty days. Unless the pauper had a note from their home parish agreeing to pay back any money spent.

## **The Workhouse Act**

Put into action in 1722, made parishes build workhouses for the able bodied people, who couldn't work. Still the parishes preferred outdoor relief, because it was cheaper.

The advantages of the Speenhamland system were that no one starved, because paupers always had enough money to buy food. The system was also straightforward and was easy to run.

The disadvantages of the Speenhamland system were that it encouraged paupers to have large families, because with a bigger family you would receive more relief. The Speenhamland system also encouraged paupers not to work, because they would be making enough money to live without having to work. The Speenhamland system was also unable to operate when a large number of people required relief.

I believe that the Speenhamland system was demoralizing, because it made paupers avoid work, making them lazy and idle. It also made farmers keep the paupers wages low, because they knew the parish would make up the paupers wages. The Speenhamland system also encouraged paupers to have bigger families, so that they would receive more hand out.

There are many suggestions to why the Speenhamland system was costly to the ratepayers, but they can't be proved, because no records were kept.

I believe that Hill was correct in three out of four of his statements on the Speenhamland system. The statement he made on the system spreading over all of England was incorrect though, because of the statements above.

### **Question 7**

#### **What features of the New Poor Law can be seen to have been put into effect in this source?**

Source H is a prospective view and a ground plan of a workhouse. The building in these two plans comes across as a prison, because of its small windows high walls and separate yards.

**The terms of the New Poor Law were:**

- 1) Pauper's families should join them in the workhouse.**
- 2) Families should be split up into men, women, boys and girls. This was referred to as segregation.**
- 3) Paupers should follow strict rules of conduct.**
- 4) Paupers should be fed on a strict diet.**
- 5) Paupers should be forced to do "Hard Labour".**
- 6) The workhouses should be made worse than the home of the lowest paid labourer.**
- 7) The elderly, sick and very young should be looked after in separate institutions.**

This source does show what the law wanted because the paupers are separated into separate bedrooms, yards toilets etc, so segregation was been put in place



**Question 9**  
**Why are source K and L so positive about the New Poor Law**

The guardians of the Cheedle Poor law union wrote source K in 1838. The authors thought that the New Poor law would:

- Give education to children.
- Give moral instruction to all.
- Bring a fall in the poor rates.
- Make only the desperate poor apply.

I would question this board's judgement, because the workhouse wasn't even been built. The source also doesn't mention any negative points, this may make the aurtherers biased, because they are trying to cover up the truth. Maybe to impress the Home Seceratry and avoid inspection.

Source L was written by the guardians of Tamworth in 1832. The authors thought that the New Poor Law would:

- Bring improvements in the habits and characteristics of paupers.
- Reduce the cost of the Poor Law.
- Give more attention to the really desperate.
- Make sure no one would suffer.

This board might be biased, because they fail to mention any problems. They might be doing this to impress people. They might have wanted to prove that this new workhouse was better than the old one. This makes this source unreliable, because they might be trying to make there new workhouse sound better than it really was.

These sources might be so positive about the New Poor Law, because they might be trying to exaggerate the truth about there workhouses to impress the home seceratry and avoid inspection. The might be do this because in there workhouse the conditions in there workhouse do not meet the requirements of the New Poor Law.

### **Question 8**

#### **To what extent do these sources show that the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834 was being fully carried out in Staffordshire?**

In the case of Mrs. Perkin, who's husband was seriously ill with fever. She said " I need out door relief to support my husband, myself and our five children." The parish gave her 10lb of bread per week, during the time of illness. This was not obeying the law though, her and her children should have been put in a workhouse. Her husband should have been put in a special hostel, until he had recouperated fully.

In the case of John Faulkener, who was unemployed and his family were starving. He wasn't given outdoor relief, instead he was told that he should, along with his family, should enter a workhouse.

In the case of the labourers, who couldn't work due to the bad frost, this situation was seen as serious enough for outdoor relief to be provided. This wasn't following the law, all of the labourers should have been put into workhouses.

In the case of the woman who's husband was in jail for poaching. She had no money and was unable to support herself and her two children. She was told that her children and herself, should be put in a workhouse. Until such time that her husband was released and earning. This obeyed what the law wanted.

In source J is a note that was pinned on a workhouse wall, it indicated the punishment for an " Idle and disorderly person," if a pauper was idle or disorderly then they would be sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

This wasn't what the law stated, the law said that if a pauper was idle or disorderly then they should have their rations cut.

Whether or not the pauper(s) received relief depended in this workhouse maybe depended on whether or not the workhouse could cope with more paupers and wasn't full. In some cases the guardians of the parish maybe took pity on paupers, and gave the paupers outdoor relief. Another reason that some paupers were given outdoor relief was if the guardians of the parish were trying to follow a strict regime, in an attempt to keep paupers out , once again maybe because the workhouse was full.

This shows me that the Poor Law Amendment act of 1834, wasn't been followed in some cases. Instead the parish guvenuers of this workhouse were bending the rules to suit there needs, and maybe there pockets.

This was probably the case throughout the country, and most workhouses were probably braking the law.



### Question 10

#### **What are the advantages and disadvantages of these sources as evidence about the food eaten in Staffordshire workhouses before and after 1834?**

At the time that source M was written, the Old Poor Law of 1601 was in operation.

The advantages of this source are that it's detailed and easy to understand. It shows quite clearly what the paupers received for breakfast, dinner and supper, for every day of the week. This source dates back to 1792, and is primary, therefore it is more reliable. It is more reliable because the person who created it was actually there at the time.

The disadvantages of this source are that it only shows one workhouse in one county. The source also fails to mention any amounts, so you don't know what quantity of food the pauper's received. We know that the old, sick and young received a different diet, but this source doesn't mention anything about other diets.

Source N was written looking back on a strike in 1840. At this time the New Poor Law was in operation.

The advantages of this source are that it's someone's personal experience of a workhouse and witnessed what the conditions were like in a workhouse at this time. This source is full of description and is extremely detailed.

The disadvantages of this source are that it's very exaggerated, and the exaggeration clouds the issue. This made the author extremely biased. He is biased because he had to exaggerate the story to sell his book. The source is only showing one workhouse in the whole country. Therefore it is very hard to see the whole state of the rest of the county. The source also only mentions two meals, so you don't find out what the other meal was like, or even if they even received one. This source is also only one man's view of a workhouse, and his could be extremely different from everyone else's. This source is also from a child's mind, and was written by an old man. His memory may have become a lot more vague. So he may have had to fill in the gaps with exaggeration.

The advantages of source O, which was written in 1840, during the time the New Poor Law was in operation, are that it gives very detailed factual information. The source also shows what quantities of food the paupers were fed in the workhouse. The source also shows you what all of the inmates got e.g. men, woman the old and sick. The table also shows the slang for some food the pauers were given.

The disadvantages of this source is that it's only from one workhouse, and the rest of the county could have been completely different. There is also no proof or evidence that this was what the paupers were actually fed. The diet was unvaried, and the source also varies with what the other people reported.

If I was to use these sources as evidence, I would be slightly scepticle, because they are only three workhouses in a county of probably thirty. This makes the three source slightly dubious, because they could be completely different to the rest of the workhouses in the county.

## **Question 11**

Both sources P and Q are opinions on the New Poor Law. Source P by Charles Dickens , who lived through the time of the New Poor Law in London, the other by a modern day historian looking back on the New Poor Law.

Source P was a video of the book “Oliver Twist”. This showed an orphan who lived in a workhouse. This orphan named Oliver Twist did hard labour, his job was to grind corn. Oliver was fed on gruel along with the other inmates, whilst the fat cat guardians feasted on a roast. Oliver ended up becoming so hungry that he asked for more. The guardians punished Oliver and sold him on. Oliver then ran away , and joined a den of thieves in London. Oliver then turned to street crime for a living.

By writing “Oliver Twist” Charles Dickens was trying to show that the New Poor Law was inefficient, and children would rather run away than stay in a workhouse. The mistreatment of children in workhouses angered Charles Dickens, and in writing “Oliver Twist” he was trying to get workhouses changed.

Source Q on the other hand says that the New Poor Law reduced the rates. Maybe by discharging outdoor relief, and reducing the number of paupers in workhouses, despite a twenty five percent increase in population. Source Q also says that the New Poor Law restored paupers self belief, by encouraging paupers to work hard, to avoid having to go into a workhouse. Although the New Poor Law made progress, it did so at a great cost. At the cost of misery to thousands of poor people. Source Q also talks about how harsh places workhouses were, and how harshly administered they were.

Source Q is not biased because it discusses the good points and the bad points of the New Poor Law. Whereas source P only shows the bad points of the New Poor Law and Charles Dickens’ hate for workhouse and in particular the new Poor law. Source P is very exaggerated, this might be due to the fact that Charles Dickens was trying to tell it as a book



