

AQA GCSE Citizenship: Taking Citizenship Action write-up:

1. Primary Research vs Secondary Research

Primary research = information you collect yourself.

Examples: surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations.

Secondary research = information already collected by others.

Examples: government reports, news articles, charity websites, statistics.

2. Advantages and Disadvantages

Primary Research

Advantages: Specific to your issue / Up-to-date / Can target your local community

Disadvantages: Time-consuming / Small sample size may reduce reliability / Can be biased depending on who you ask

Secondary Research

Advantages: Quick to access / Often large-scale and reliable (e.g. official statistics) / Provides background context

Disadvantages: May be outdated / Not specific to your local area / Possible bias depending on source

3. Rank Order of Usefulness of Evidence (example)

1. Official statistics (e.g. government data) – Most reliable and accurate
2. Primary research (your surveys/interviews) – Specific but smaller sample
3. Charity/organisation reports – Expert but may have bias
4. News articles/social media – Useful for awareness but less reliable

You should explain why you ranked them that way (reliability, relevance, bias, scale).

4. Working Alone vs Working in a Group

Working in a Group

Benefits: Shared workload / More ideas and perspectives / Develop teamwork skills

Drawbacks: Disagreements / Unequal effort / Harder to organise meetings

Working Alone

Benefits: Full control / Easier to organise / No conflict

Drawbacks: More pressure / Fewer ideas / Less support

5. Targets for Success

Targets should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Examples:

- Gain 100 petition signatures
- Receive a response from the local council
- Increase awareness through an assembly to 200 students
- Get 50 survey responses

You must explain how you measured success.

6. Benefits of Choosing a Local Issue

- Direct impact on your community
- Easier to gather primary research
- More realistic chance of change
- Stronger personal connection
- Decision-makers are more accessible (e.g. local councillors)

7. Citizenship Skills Used

- Research and analysis / Communication (speaking, writing) /Teamwork / Time management
- Problem-solving /Critical thinking /Planning and organisation /Advocacy and persuasion

8. Justify Your Choice of Topic

You should explain:

- Why it matters
- Who it affects
- Evidence showing it is a real issue
- Personal connection (if relevant)
- Link to citizenship themes (rights, justice, democracy, equality)

9. Justify Your Choice of Action (e.g. campaigning/advocacy)

Explain why your action was the most effective method:

Campaigning – raises awareness and pressures decision-makers.

Petitioning – shows public support with numbers.

Writing to MPs/council – direct democratic participation.

Social media campaign – reaches a wider audience quickly.

10. How Was Your Action an Example of Active Citizenship?

Active citizenship means participating in democracy and trying to create change.

Your action was active citizenship because:

- You identified a problem
- You gathered evidence
- You engaged with decision-makers
- You attempted to influence change
- You participated in democratic processes

Topic 1: Taking Citizenship Action: Crime in Bradford

1. Primary Research vs Secondary Research

In my investigation into crime in Bradford, I used both primary and secondary research.

Primary research included conducting a survey of local residents and students to gather opinions about safety in Bradford and whether they feel crime has increased.

Secondary research included analysing official crime statistics from West Yorkshire Police and national data from the Office for National Statistics, as well as local news reports.

Using both types strengthened my investigation because primary research gave local opinions, while secondary research provided factual data and trends.

2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Different types of research

Primary Research

Advantages: Specific to Bradford /Up-to-date /Shows real community concerns

Disadvantages: Limited sample size /Possible bias (mostly young people responded) /Opinions may not reflect actual crime rates

Secondary Research

Advantages: Large-scale and reliable (especially official statistics) /Shows long-term trends /Provides factual evidence

Disadvantages: May not reflect how safe people feel...Some data may be slightly outdated /Media sources may exaggerate crime

Overall, official police and ONS data were the most reliable because they are based on recorded crime.

3. Rank Order of Usefulness of Evidence

1. Official crime statistics (West Yorkshire Police & ONS) – Most reliable and factual.
2. Survey results from local residents – Useful for understanding perceptions of safety.
3. Local news reports – Helpful for examples but may focus on extreme cases.
4. Social media comments – Least reliable due to opinion and exaggeration.

I ranked official statistics highest because they are collected systematically and are less biased.

4. Why Work in a Group?

I worked in a group because crime is a complex issue.

Benefits: Shared workload (research, survey design, presentation) /Different perspectives on causes and solutions /Developed teamwork and communication skills

Drawbacks: Occasional disagreements about focus /Needed strong organisation

However, overall working in a group improved the quality of our action and allowed us to divide responsibilities effectively.

5. Targets for Success

We set SMART targets:

- Collect at least 75 survey responses
- Present findings to 100 students in an assembly
- Contact a local councillor about community safety
- Raise awareness through posters/social media

Our action was successful because we exceeded 80 survey responses and received a response from a local representative.

6. Benefits of Choosing a Local Issue

Choosing crime in Bradford had clear benefits:

- It directly affects people in our community / We could gather local primary research easily /Local decision-makers are accessible /There is a realistic chance of influencing change

Local issues make citizenship more meaningful because you can see the impact.

7. Citizenship Skills Used

Through this project I developed: Critical thinking (analysing statistics) / Research skills /Communication skills (presentations, letters) /Teamwork / Advocacy /Evaluation skills

These are essential skills for active democratic participation.

8. Justify Your Choice of Topic

I chose crime in Bradford because it directly affects community safety and quality of life. Crime impacts young people, businesses, and families. Media coverage suggests crime is increasing, but official data was needed to understand the reality.

As a resident/student in Bradford, this issue is personally relevant and affects how safe people feel in their own city.

9. Justify Your Choice of Action (Campaigning & Awareness)

We chose awareness campaigning and contacting local representatives because:

- Crime policy is influenced by local councils and policing strategies
- Raising awareness can change behaviour (e.g. reporting crime)
- Democratic engagement allows young people to have a voice

Campaigning was appropriate because we aimed to influence attitudes and encourage action, rather than directly enforce change ourselves.

10. How Was This Active Citizenship?

Our project was an example of active citizenship because:

- We identified a community issue
- We gathered evidence
- We engaged with democratic processes (contacting representatives)
- We attempted to influence change

Active citizenship involves participating in society to improve it, which we demonstrated through research and advocacy.

11. Link to SPEC

Crime in Bradford links strongly to SPEC:

Social – Affects community safety, young people, and social cohesion.

Political – Involves policing, government policy, and local council decisions.

Economic – Crime impacts businesses and funding for policing.

Cultural – Media portrayals can affect Bradford's reputation and identity.

Therefore, my investigation clearly fits within the SPEC framework.

Taking Citizenship Action: Mental Health in UK Schools (West Yorkshire Focus)

1. Primary Research vs Secondary Research

In my investigation into mental health in schools in West Yorkshire, I used both primary and secondary research.

Primary research included conducting an anonymous survey of students in my school about stress, anxiety, exam pressure and access to support. I also collected qualitative comments to understand personal experiences.

Secondary research included analysing national data from the NHS England and the Office for National Statistics, alongside reports from YoungMinds and local information from West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership.

Using both types strengthened my investigation because primary research showed how students in my local area feel, while secondary research provided reliable national and regional trends.

2. Advantages and Disadvantages

Primary Research

Advantages: Specific to my school and local area /Up-to-date /Reflects real student experiences

Disadvantages: Limited sample size /Responses may be influenced by honesty or social desirability /Cannot represent all schools in West Yorkshire

Secondary Research

Advantages: Large-scale and statistically reliable /Shows long-term trends /Helps compare local findings to national averages

Disadvantages: May not reflect individual school experiences /Some reports may be slightly outdated /Charity reports may focus on worst-case scenarios to encourage funding

Overall, official NHS and ONS data were the most reliable because they are evidence-based and nationally collected.

3. Rank Order of Usefulness of Evidence

1. NHS & ONS statistics – Most reliable and objective.
2. West Yorkshire regional health data – Relevant to my local focus.
3. My school survey results – Useful for insight but smaller scale.
4. News articles/social media discussions – Least reliable due to bias.

I ranked official health data highest because it is systematically collected and peer-reviewed.

4. Why Work in a Group?

I worked in a group because mental health is a sensitive and complex issue.

Benefits: Shared responsibility when handling sensitive topics / Broader range of ideas /Stronger presentation and campaign planning

Drawbacks: Needed careful communication /Some differences in opinion on solutions

However, teamwork improved the quality of our research and allowed us to divide tasks effectively (survey design, research, presentation).

5. Targets for Success

We set SMART targets: Achieve at least 100 anonymous survey responses /Present findings to senior leadership or in assembly

- Raise awareness through posters/social media /Encourage at least one wellbeing initiative (e.g. mental health awareness week activity)

Our action was successful because we collected over 120 responses and increased awareness within the school community.

6. Benefits of Choosing a Local Issue

Choosing mental health in West Yorkshire schools had clear benefits:

- Directly affects students in our community /Easier to gather primary research /Schools and local NHS services are accessible /Greater chance of realistic change

Local focus makes citizenship action more impactful and achievable.

7. Citizenship Skills Used

Through this project I developed:

- Research and analytical skills / Communication and presentation skills / Empathy and ethical awareness
- Teamwork / Advocacy / Problem-solving

These are key citizenship skills because they enable informed democratic participation.

8. Justify Your Choice of Topic

I chose mental health in UK schools because it significantly affects young people's wellbeing, academic achievement and long-term life chances. Evidence shows rising levels of anxiety and depression among young people nationally, making this a relevant and urgent issue.

As a student, this topic is personally relevant and impacts my peer group directly.

9. Justify Your Choice of Action (Awareness Campaign & Advocacy)

We chose to run an awareness campaign and present findings to school leaders because:

- Schools have a duty of care for student wellbeing
- Raising awareness can reduce stigma
- Presenting evidence to decision-makers is a democratic process
- Advocacy is appropriate when seeking policy or support improvements

Campaigning was effective because it aimed to influence attitudes and encourage institutional change.

10. How Was This Active Citizenship?

This project was an example of active citizenship because:

- We identified a social issue
- We gathered evidence
- We engaged with decision-makers (school leadership)
- We attempted to influence change

Active citizenship involves taking informed action to improve society, which we demonstrated.

11. Link to SPEC

Mental health in schools clearly links to SPEC:

Social – Affects relationships, wellbeing, and student safety.

Political – Linked to government education and health policy.

Economic – Poor mental health can affect attendance, attainment, and future employment.

Cultural – Stigma around mental health varies across communities.

Therefore, the investigation fully fits within the SPEC framework.