**Essay: evaluate the view that legal changes are the main reason for the increase in divorce over the past 40 years in the contemporary UK (20 marks)**

**Plan:**

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| Introduction (needs to define key words in the question and highlight areas to be discussed in the main body) | |
| Arguments for legal issues being the most significant  (Any arguments in this side should be argued against using the other side) | Arguments for other factors being more significant |
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| Conclusion (should sum up the essay and come to a decision) | |

Notes:

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| Factors for the argument | Factors against the argument |
| Set the scene for why there were fewer divorces before e.g. why was it so hard to divorce.  Laws:   * Divorce Reform Act (1969)- what it does, what impact it has. * Matrimonial proceedings act (1984)   Extending on:   * Equal Pay Act (1970)- women’s rights * Child Support Act (1996)- these laws have helped to enable people to maintain their families after divorce.   You can’t have a divorce if you don’t have a legal right to have one. | Attitudes towards marriage have to change to allow people to get a divorce (evidence- increase in cohabitation, Giddens- confluent love)  Decline in religion (secularisation)  Impact of second wave feminism.  Views of divorced women have changed.  Women want to be more independent/career minded (Sue Sharpe)  Rise in individualism (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim) |