

ABORTION

Half of Britons Say NHS Should Only Fund Abortions in Emergency Cases

A large proportion of respondents think the 24-week window for women to have a procedure should be reduced.

[LONDON – Jan. 13, 2010] – A large proportion of people in Great Britain think that the National Health Service (NHS) should only fund abortion procedures in the event of medical emergencies, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 2,010 British adults sought to review the opinion of respondents on a wide range of topics related to abortion.

Personal Feeling

When asked what their personal feeling about abortion is, just under a fifth of Britons (18%) think the procedure should be permitted in all cases.

A significantly larger proportion (39%) say abortion should be permitted, but with the same restrictions that are currently in place.

Also, 18 per cent of respondents would allow abortion but under greater restrictions than now, and 14 per cent would restrict the procedure to cases such as rape, incest and to save the woman's life.

Only five per cent of Britons feel that abortion should only be permitted to save the woman's life.

KEY FINDINGS

- **55% say abortion should be legal only in certain cases**
- **49% say NHS should only cover abortions in medical emergencies**
- **47% want the limit on abortion to be lower than the current 24 weeks**
- **49% say there is no point in re-opening the debate on abortion in the UK**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 8 to January 10, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,010 randomly selected British adults who are Springboard UK panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Legality

More than a third of respondents (36%) think abortion should be legal in all cases, whereas a majority (55%) thinks that the procedure should be legal only under certain circumstances. Only three per cent of Britons would ban abortion altogether.

Funding

Just over a third of Britons (36%) believe the NHS should fund abortions whenever they are requested. However, half of respondents (49%) agree with the notion of the NHS only fund abortions in the event of medical emergencies. Just six per cent of respondents believe the NHS should not fund abortions at all.

24-Week Time Limit

A significant proportion of Britons (47%) thinks that the current time limit for an abortion—within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy—should be lowered. Over a third of respondents (36%) would maintain the current time limit, and just four per cent would increase the limit to over 24 weeks.

Women (57%) are more likely than men (37%) to support a reduction in the current 24-week time limit.

Information for Pregnant Women

Two-in-five respondents (41%) believe that pregnant women have enough access to information about alternatives to abortion, such as counselling or adoption. Three-in-ten (30%) disagree with this assessment, and 29 are not sure.

Women Under the Age of 18

Half of Britons (50%) think that women under the age of 18 should be required consent from their parents or legal guardians in order to access an abortion procedure. A third of Britons (34%) disagree with this point of view.

Re-opening the Abortion Debate

Despite the fact that Britons voiced support for changes in funding and the 24-week time, half of respondents (49%) say there is no point in re-igniting the debate on this subject, while 35 per cent believe the discussion should be re-opened.

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Abortion			
Next, we'd like to ask you some questions about abortion. What is your personal feeling about abortion?			
	Total	Male	Female
Abortion should be permitted in all cases	18%	20%	16%
Abortion should be permitted, but with the same restrictions that are currently in place	39%	40%	39%
Abortion should be permitted, but subject to greater restrictions than now	18%	16%	20%
Abortion should be permitted only in cases such as rape, incest and to save the woman's life	14%	13%	15%
Abortion should only be permitted to save the woman's life	5%	5%	5%
Not sure	6%	6%	6%

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Abortion			
Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?			
	Total	Male	Female
Abortion should be legal under any circumstances	36%	35%	36%
Abortion should be legal only under certain circumstances	55%	57%	53%
Abortion should be illegal in all circumstances	3%	3%	4%
Not sure	6%	5%	7%

Abortion			
In Great Britain, abortions may be funded by the National Health Service (NHS). Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?			
	Total	Male	Female
The NHS should fund abortions whenever they are requested	36%	34%	39%
The NHS should only fund abortions in the event of medical emergencies	49%	51%	47%
The NHS should not fund abortions at all	6%	7%	5%
Not sure	8%	7%	9%

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Abortion

In Great Britain, it is only legal to have an abortion during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, provided that certain criteria are met. Thinking about this, which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Total	Male	Female
The time limit on abortion should be reduced to less than 24 weeks	47%	37%	57%
The time limit on abortion should remain at 24 weeks	36%	42%	31%
The time limit on abortion should be extended to more than 24 weeks	4%	6%	2%
Not sure	13%	15%	10%

Abortion

In your view, should women under the age of 18 require the consent of their parents or legal guardians in order to have an abortion?

	Total	Male	Female
Yes	50%	50%	50%
No	34%	34%	33%
Not sure	17%	16%	17%

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Abortion

From what you have seen, read or heard, would you say that pregnant women in Great Britain have access to enough information about alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, counselling for pregnant women, etc.?

	Total	Male	Female
They DO have enough access to information about alternatives	41%	41%	42%
They DO NOT have enough access to information about alternatives	30%	29%	32%
Not sure	29%	31%	26%

Abortion

Finally, which of the following statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Total	Male	Female
There is no point in re-opening a debate about abortion in Great Britain right now	49%	55%	42%
A debate about abortion is long overdue in Great Britain, and the discussion should be re-opened	35%	30%	38%
Not sure	17%	14%	19%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at

<http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:

<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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