

EUTHANASIA

Most Britons Support Euthanasia and Would Not Prosecute Cases of Assisted Suicide

More than half of respondents believe a parent found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not be punished.

[LONDON – Feb. 2, 2010] – People in Great Britain hold mostly favourable views on euthanasia and assisted suicide, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,004 British adults, 71 per cent of respondents support legalising euthanasia in the United Kingdom, while 18 per cent oppose this idea.

Overall, three-in-five Britons (61%) think people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted.

Arguments

At least three-in-four respondents believe legalising euthanasia would establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions (78%) and give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain (84%).

Conversely, less than half of Britons side with the arguments that legalising euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection (46%) and send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable (30%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **71% support legalising euthanasia in the UK**
- **54% believe parents who assist a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not be punished**
- **61% think people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 26 to January 27, 2010, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 2,004 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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Assisted Suicide

In 2000, Heather Pratten of Essex pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the suicide of her terminally ill son, Nigel, who suffered from Huntington's disease. Judge Graham Boal gave Pratten a conditional discharge instead of immediate imprisonment, due to the "exceptional circumstances" of the case.

In this survey, respondents were asked to select the appropriate punishment for a parent who is found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die. A majority (54%) would apply no penalty at all, 12 per cent would levy a fine, 14 per cent would prefer a prison sentence at the discretion of a judge, and only two per cent would impose a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment.

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Euthanasia

Next, we'd like to ask you some questions about euthanasia. Generally speaking, do you support or oppose legalising euthanasia in the UK?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Strongly support	26%	21%	27%	27%
Moderately support	46%	45%	45%	47%
Moderately oppose	10%	12%	10%	9%
Strongly oppose	8%	4%	9%	10%
Not sure	11%	18%	9%	7%
Support – NET	71%	66%	72%	74%
Oppose - NET	18%	16%	19%	19%

Euthanasia

There are many arguments for and against legalising euthanasia. Do you agree or disagree with each one of the following arguments?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Legalising euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection	46%	40%	14%
Legalising euthanasia would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable	30%	60%	10%
Legalising euthanasia would establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions	78%	13%	9%
Legalising euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain	84%	9%	7%

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Euthanasia

If a parent is found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die, what do you think should be the appropriate punishment?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
A mandatory sentence of life imprisonment	2%	5%	2%	1%
A prison sentence at the discretion of a judge	14%	16%	13%	13%
A fine, but no time in prison	12%	13%	12%	10%
No penalty at all	54%	44%	56%	60%
Not sure	18%	22%	17%	16%

Euthanasia

Do you think people who help a person to commit suicide should be prosecuted?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Yes	14%	11%	18%	12%
No	61%	62%	54%	61%
Not sure	25%	26%	28%	27%

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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.

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.

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. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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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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