

EUTHANASIA

Two Thirds of Britons Are Willing to Legalise Euthanasia

Almost three-in-five respondents believe people who help a person commit suicide should not be prosecuted.

[LONDON – 10 November 2010] – Support for the legalisation of euthanasia remains high in Britain, and many people believe that parents who assist a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not face prosecution, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,015 British adults, 67 per cent of respondents support legalising euthanasia in the United Kingdom, while 19 per cent oppose this idea.

In addition, 58 per cent of Britons think people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted.

Arguments

A large majority of respondents believe legalising euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain (83%) and establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions (77%).

Three-in-ten respondents (30%) believe that legalising euthanasia would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable.

Britons are evenly split on whether legalising euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection, with 43 per cent agreeing with this statement, and 42 per cent voicing discrepancy.

KEY FINDINGS

- **67% (-4 since January) support legalising euthanasia in the UK**
- **55% (+1) believe parents who assist a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not be punished**
- **58% (-3) think people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From October 27 to October 28, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,015 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.

CONTACT:

Mario Canseco, Vice President, Communications & Media Relations, 877-730-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

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. More than half of Britons (55%) believe no penalty should be applied, while 11 per cent would levy a fine, and 12 per cent would prefer a prison sentence at the discretion of a judge. Only two per cent of respondents would impose a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment in this case.

Our January 2010 survey on euthanasia can be found [here](#).

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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+
Support	67%	63%	70%	66%
Oppose	19%	17%	17%	23%
Not sure	14%	20%	13%	11%

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	43%	42%	15%
Legalising euthanasia would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable	30%	61%	9%
Legalising euthanasia would establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions	77%	14%	10%
Legalising euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain	83%	10%	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%	4%	1%	1%
A prison sentence at the discretion of a judge	12%	17%	9%	11%
A fine, but no time in prison	11%	11%	10%	11%
No penalty at all	55%	45%	60%	58%
Not sure	20%	22%	19%	20%

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%	20%	12%	12%
No	58%	53%	58%	61%
Not sure	28%	27%	30%	27%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specialising 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 Public Opinion 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 in Canada and the United States can be found at:

<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/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/>

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