

EUTHANASIA

Legal Euthanasia Supported by Majority in Great Britain

Most respondents also think that anyone who helps a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted.

[LONDON – 31 January 2012] – Most people in Britain continue to endorse the idea of legalising euthanasia in the country, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,014 British adults, 71 per cent of respondents (+4 since October 2010) are in favour of legalising euthanasia in the United Kingdom, while 16 per cent (-3) oppose this idea.

More than four-in-five Britons (86%) believe that legalising euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain, and three-in-four (78%) think it would establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions.

Respondents are evenly divided on whether the legalisation of euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection (Agree 42%, Disagree 42%), but three-in-five (61%) reject the notion that it would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable

KEY FINDINGS

- **71% (+4 since October 2010) support legalising euthanasia in the UK**
- **57% (+2) believe parents who assist a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not be punished**
- **60% (+2) 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 13 to January 16, 2012, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,014 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.

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.

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A majority of Britons (57%) believe that, if a parent is found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die, there should be no penalty at all. Support for this course of action is decidedly higher among respondents over the age of 55 (65%).

In addition, three-in-five Britons (60%) believe that people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted.

Consult our [January 2010](#) and [October 2010](#) surveys on euthanasia.

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About Angus Reid Public Opinion

[Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) is a public affairs practice headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

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**For more information, please contact
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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	71%	67%	74%	73%
Oppose	16%	14%	15%	19%
Not sure	13%	19%	11%	9%

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	42%	42%	16%
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	78%	13%	9%
Legalising euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain	86%	7%	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%	3%	0%
A prison sentence at the discretion of a judge	12%	15%	12%	11%
A fine, but no time in prison	9%	10%	8%	9%
No penalty at all	57%	45%	60%	65%
Not sure	19%	26%	18%	15%

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	13%	17%	13%	10%
No	60%	54%	60%	65%
Not sure	27%	28%	27%	25%

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