

ABORTION

# Britons Divided On Whether Abortion Debate Should Be Re-Opened

*Almost half of respondents think the current 24-week window in which abortions can be performed should be shortened.*

[LONDON – Jul. 14, 2010] – A significant proportion of people in Great Britain think it is time to re-open the debate on abortion, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,000 British adults, 40 per cent of respondents say a national debate on abortion is long overdue and the discussion should be re-opened. However, 45 per cent of Britons disagree.

## Legality and Funding

Two-in-five Britons (40%) think abortion should be legal in all cases. But half of respondents (50%) disagree, saying that abortions should only be performed under certain circumstances.

A third of respondents (34%) say the NHS should always fund abortions, but most people (51%) think state funding for abortions should be limited to medical emergencies. Seven per cent of Britons say the NHS should never provide funding for an abortion.

There is no difference in how women and men approach this particular question.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **37% say abortion should always be legal**
- **51% want the NHS to only fund abortions in medical emergencies**
- **46% say the 24-week window in which abortions are currently allowed should be shortened**
- **32% say pregnant women don't have enough access to information about alternatives to abortion**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From July 7 to July 9, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,000 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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## 24-Week Time Limit

Almost half of Britons (46%) think the 24-week window currently allowed for terminating pregnancies should be lowered. Respondents are also divided on this issue, with more than a third (37%) believing that the current window should stay as is.

Women (58%) are much more likely than men (33%) to call for a reduction of the 24-week period. Respondents over the age of 55 (50%) are also more inclined than others to call for a shorter window.

## Information and Consent

Almost half of respondents (48%) think it would be a good idea to require parental consent from women under the age of 18 in order to perform an abortion. Over a third of respondents (37%) disagree.

Women (50%) are only slightly more inclined than men (46%) to support mandatory parental consent. Younger Britons—aged 18 to 34—are less supportive of this measure than their older counterparts (42% against more than 50% in the remaining brackets).

Two-in-five respondents (41%) think pregnant women have access to enough information about alternatives to abortion, such as counselling and adoption. A large proportion of Britons (32%) think this is not the case and that pregnant women lack enough information right now.

### *Download Full Tables*

[http://www.visioncritical.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/table\\_abortion\\_july2010.pdf](http://www.visioncritical.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/table_abortion_july2010.pdf)

### *Download Full Methodology Statement*

[http://www.visioncritical.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/2010-07-09\\_UK\\_Method.pdf](http://www.visioncritical.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/2010-07-09_UK_Method.pdf)

See our previous poll on abortion in Great Britain [here](#) (Jan.2010)

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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	41%	39%	43%
Abortion should be legal only under certain circumstances	50%	50%	49%
Abortion should be illegal in all circumstances	4%	5%	3%
Not sure	5%	5%	5%

### 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	34%	32%	35%
The NHS should only fund abortions in the event of medical emergencies	51%	51%	51%
The NHS should not fund abortions at all	7%	10%	5%
Not sure	8%	6%	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	46%	33%	58%
The time limit on abortion should remain at 24 weeks	37%	44%	30%
The time limit on abortion should be extended to more than 24 weeks	4%	6%	3%
Not sure	13%	17%	9%

### 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	48%	46%	50%
No	37%	40%	35%
Not sure	15%	14%	15%

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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
<b>They DO have enough access to information about alternatives</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>They DO NOT have enough access to information about alternatives</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>

### Abortion

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

	Total	Male	Female
<b>There is no point in re-opening a debate about abortion in Great Britain right now</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>A debate about abortion is long overdue in Great Britain, and the discussion should be re-opened</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>18%</b>

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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 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](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://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>*

- 30 -

**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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