



# Freedom of Speech Poll

## METHODOLOGY NOTE

ComRes interviewed 2,050 GB adults online between the 7th and 9th May 2016. Data were weighted to be demographically representative of all GB adults. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

To commission a Voting Intention poll or a public opinion survey please contact Tom Mludzinski, Director of Political Polling:

[Tom.Mludzinski@comres.co.uk](mailto:Tom.Mludzinski@comres.co.uk)

To register for Pollwatch, a weekly newsletter update on the polls, please email: [pollwatch@comres.co.uk](mailto:pollwatch@comres.co.uk)

## Freedom of Speech Survey

### ONLINE Fieldwork: 27th - 30th May 2016

Absolutes/col percents

Table 1

**Q.1 Would you say that each of the following feel more free or less free to express personal beliefs or thoughts in a public place such as the pub or workplace, compared with ten years ago?**

**Base: All respondents**

	Gender		Age						Social Grade				Employment Sector		
	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Public	Private
Unweighted base	2050	1046	1004	205	346	318	382	293	506	561	580	388	521	242	829
Weighted base	2050	998	1052	238	355	336	365	296	460	551	551	447	500	268	892
<b><u>You personally</u></b>															
More free	369 18%	161 16%	208 20%	76 32%	76 21%	53 16%	58 16%	32 11%	74 16%	100 18%	117 21%	72 16%	81 16%	58 22%	161 18%
About the same	1036 51%	522 52%	515 49%	105 44%	192 54%	176 52%	178 49%	160 54%	225 49%	308 56%	279 51%	203 45%	247 49%	142 53%	462 52%
Less free	531 26%	282 28%	250 24%	41 17%	62 17%	89 26%	105 29%	89 30%	146 32%	121 22%	127 23%	146 33%	137 27%	56 21%	227 25%
Don't know	113 6%	34 3%	79 8%	17 7%	25 7%	19 6%	24 6%	14 5%	15 3%	23 4%	28 5%	26 6%	36 7%	12 4%	42 5%
<b><u>British people generally</u></b>															
More free	348 17%	145 15%	203 19%	63 26%	73 21%	62 18%	51 14%	27 9%	73 16%	94 17%	111 20%	59 13%	84 17%	56 21%	142 16%
About the same	778 38%	390 39%	388 37%	94 40%	163 46%	130 39%	120 33%	116 39%	154 34%	232 42%	221 40%	155 35%	170 34%	109 41%	367 41%
Less free	781 38%	415 42%	366 35%	56 24%	85 24%	124 37%	164 45%	138 47%	213 46%	194 35%	174 32%	204 46%	209 42%	85 32%	325 36%
Don't know	142 7%	47 5%	95 9%	25 10%	33 9%	21 6%	30 8%	14 5%	19 4%	32 6%	44 8%	29 7%	37 7%	17 7%	59 7%

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**Q.1 Would you say that each of the following feel more free or less free to express personal beliefs or thoughts in a public place such as the pub or workplace, compared with ten years ago?**

**Base: All respondents**

	Region												
	Total	Scotland	Wales	NET: England	North East	North West	Yorkshire & Humberside	West Midlands	East Midlands	Eastern	London	South East	South West
Unweighted base	2050	194	110	1746	88	231	199	148	145	207	258	308	162
Weighted base	2050	178	104	1767	86	236	174	184	152	199	270	287	180
<b><u>You personally</u></b>													
More free	369 18%	48 27%	15 14%	307 17%	16 18%	38 16%	36 21%	34 18%	27 18%	23 12%	52 19%	49 17%	32 18%
About the same	1036 51%	76 42%	62 59%	899 51%	48 56%	126 53%	74 43%	103 56%	77 51%	108 55%	136 50%	142 49%	85 47%
Less free	531 26%	47 26%	22 21%	462 26%	20 23%	59 25%	53 30%	35 19%	40 26%	58 29%	68 25%	78 27%	52 29%
Don't know	113 6%	8 4%	6 5%	100 6%	3 3%	13 6%	11 6%	13 7%	8 5%	9 5%	14 5%	18 6%	11 6%
<b><u>British people generally</u></b>													
More free	348 17%	41 23%	17 17%	289 16%	16 18%	30 13%	28 16%	33 18%	29 19%	28 14%	52 19%	39 14%	34 19%
About the same	778 38%	66 37%	47 45%	665 38%	30 35%	94 40%	56 32%	71 39%	59 39%	73 37%	102 38%	109 38%	70 39%
Less free	781 38%	59 33%	34 32%	689 39%	37 43%	94 40%	75 43%	63 34%	56 37%	85 43%	98 36%	118 41%	63 35%
Don't know	142 7%	12 7%	6 6%	125 7%	4 4%	16 7%	15 9%	17 9%	8 5%	13 7%	19 7%	21 7%	13 7%

## Freedom of Speech Survey

### ONLINE Fieldwork: 27th - 30th May 2016

Absolutes/col percents

Table 2  
**Q.2 Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?**  
**Base: All respondents**

	Gender		Age							Social Grade				Employment Sector	
	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Public	Pri- vate
Unweighted base	2050	1046	1004	205	346	318	382	293	506	561	580	388	521	242	829
Weighted base	2050	998	1052	238	355	336	365	296	460	551	551	447	500	268	892
<b><u>Freedom of speech is hindered today by political correctness</u></b>															
Agree	1654	863	792	153	252	269	299	260	422	429	445	369	410	210	695
	81%	86%	75%	64%	71%	80%	82%	88%	92%	78%	81%	83%	82%	78%	78%
Disagree	188	75	113	42	50	22	32	21	21	66	56	32	34	26	93
	9%	7%	11%	18%	14%	7%	9%	7%	5%	12%	10%	7%	7%	10%	10%
Don't know	208	61	147	43	54	45	35	15	17	56	50	46	55	31	105
	10%	6%	14%	18%	15%	13%	10%	5%	4%	10%	9%	10%	11%	12%	12%
<b><u>People who criticise Islam need to be punished by so-called 'hate speech' laws which aim to prevent people saying things which are liable to offend others</u></b>															
Agree	301	138	162	67	69	50	34	37	44	88	91	63	59	56	130
	15%	14%	15%	28%	19%	15%	9%	12%	9%	16%	17%	14%	12%	21%	15%
Disagree	1260	703	557	98	180	187	244	211	339	334	319	284	322	138	544
	61%	70%	53%	41%	51%	55%	67%	72%	74%	61%	58%	64%	64%	52%	61%
Don't know	489	157	332	73	106	99	87	48	77	129	141	100	119	74	218
	24%	16%	32%	31%	30%	30%	24%	16%	17%	23%	26%	22%	24%	28%	24%
<b><u>Being offended is inevitable and acceptable, within limits, in order to protect freedom of speech</u></b>															
Agree	1594	823	772	167	254	248	281	252	393	434	432	354	374	207	672
	78%	82%	73%	70%	71%	74%	77%	85%	85%	79%	78%	79%	75%	77%	75%
Disagree	183	89	94	27	42	22	39	24	28	51	51	34	47	23	96
	9%	9%	9%	11%	12%	7%	11%	8%	6%	9%	9%	8%	9%	8%	11%
Don't know	273	87	186	44	59	66	45	20	39	67	68	59	79	38	125
	13%	9%	18%	19%	17%	20%	12%	7%	8%	12%	12%	13%	16%	14%	14%

## Freedom of Speech Survey

### ONLINE Fieldwork: 27th - 30th May 2016

Absolutes/col percents

Table 2  
**Q.2 Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?**  
**Base: All respondents**

	Gender			Age						Social Grade				Employment Sector	
	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Public	Pri- vate
Weighted base	2050	998	1052	238	355	336	365	296	460	551	551	447	500	268	892
<b><u>The right to free speech, even when we sometimes disagree with what is being said, is a valuable liberty which it is important to defend</u></b>															
Agree	1750 85%	902 90%	848 81%	175 73%	271 76%	273 81%	313 86%	274 93%	444 96%	483 88%	466 85%	389 87%	413 83%	217 81%	747 84%
Disagree	72 4%	32 3%	40 4%	14 6%	25 7%	9 3%	15 4%	6 2%	3 1%	17 3%	27 5%	9 2%	18 4%	12 4%	36 4%
Don't know	227 11%	64 6%	163 16%	49 21%	59 17%	55 16%	38 10%	15 5%	13 3%	51 9%	58 10%	49 11%	70 14%	40 15%	109 12%
<b><u>It is right to have laws which protect people from so-called 'hate speech' even if it means for example that Christian preachers sometimes get arrested for repeating what is in the Bible</u></b>															
Agree	540 26%	271 27%	269 26%	69 29%	106 30%	95 28%	98 27%	69 23%	104 23%	153 28%	135 24%	130 29%	123 25%	71 26%	245 27%
Disagree	966 47%	529 53%	437 42%	87 37%	131 37%	142 42%	173 47%	176 60%	258 56%	271 49%	262 47%	190 42%	244 49%	125 47%	400 45%
Don't know	544 27%	199 20%	345 33%	82 35%	118 33%	100 30%	95 26%	50 17%	98 21%	128 23%	155 28%	128 29%	134 27%	72 27%	248 28%
<b><u>I worry sometimes that I could be in trouble because of the new 'hate speech' laws, by saying something which is misinterpreted</u></b>															
Agree	838 41%	459 46%	379 36%	86 36%	123 35%	143 43%	135 37%	132 45%	218 47%	197 36%	205 37%	211 47%	225 45%	100 37%	345 39%
Disagree	844 41%	383 38%	461 44%	107 45%	166 47%	125 37%	155 42%	115 39%	176 38%	261 47%	253 46%	151 34%	178 36%	116 43%	391 44%
Don't know	368 18%	157 16%	212 20%	45 19%	66 19%	68 20%	75 21%	49 17%	65 14%	93 17%	94 17%	84 19%	97 19%	51 19%	157 18%

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Weighted base	2050	998	1052	238	355	336	365	296	460	551	551	447	500	268	892
<b><u>Recent laws protecting people from being offended by what other people say about their lifestyle choices are a step in the right direction</u></b>															
Agree	642 31%	288 29%	354 34%	89 37%	120 34%	87 26%	108 30%	88 30%	149 32%	168 30%	176 32%	140 31%	159 32%	88 33%	273 31%
Disagree	779 38%	466 47%	314 30%	58 24%	105 30%	120 36%	141 39%	144 49%	211 46%	214 39%	214 39%	163 37%	188 38%	86 32%	342 38%
Don't know	629 31%	245 25%	384 37%	91 38%	129 36%	129 38%	116 32%	64 22%	100 22%	170 31%	161 29%	144 32%	153 31%	94 35%	277 31%
<b><u>The right to be protected against being offended should outweigh the right to speak your views openly</u></b>															
Agree	470 23%	235 23%	236 22%	66 28%	97 27%	69 20%	78 21%	55 19%	105 23%	124 23%	129 23%	98 22%	119 24%	50 19%	213 24%
Disagree	1045 51%	573 57%	472 45%	93 39%	155 44%	146 43%	190 52%	190 64%	270 59%	292 53%	280 51%	222 50%	252 50%	133 50%	438 49%
Don't know	535 26%	191 19%	344 33%	79 33%	102 29%	121 36%	97 27%	50 17%	85 18%	135 25%	143 26%	127 28%	129 26%	85 32%	242 27%

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<b><u>Freedom of speech is hindered today by political correctness</u></b>													
Agree	1654 81%	152 86%	85 81%	1417 80%	70 81%	185 79%	138 79%	158 86%	117 77%	169 85%	194 72%	242 85%	144 80%
Disagree	188 9%	12 7%	10 10%	165 9%	12 13%	25 11%	13 7%	13 7%	13 8%	13 7%	32 12%	19 7%	26 14%
Don't know	208 10%	14 8%	9 9%	185 10%	5 6%	25 11%	23 13%	13 7%	22 15%	17 8%	44 16%	25 9%	10 5%
<b><u>People who criticise Islam need to be punished by so-called 'hate speech' laws which aim to prevent people saying things which are liable to offend others</u></b>													
Agree	301 15%	39 22%	20 19%	243 14%	14 16%	26 11%	23 13%	25 13%	20 13%	22 11%	48 18%	38 13%	28 15%
Disagree	1260 61%	100 56%	64 62%	1095 62%	59 69%	160 68%	111 64%	114 62%	89 59%	122 62%	155 57%	176 61%	109 61%
Don't know	489 24%	40 22%	20 20%	429 24%	13 16%	50 21%	40 23%	46 25%	42 28%	55 27%	68 25%	72 25%	43 24%
<b><u>Being offended is inevitable and acceptable, within limits, in order to protect freedom of speech</u></b>													
Agree	1594 78%	151 85%	81 78%	1362 77%	69 80%	185 78%	135 78%	143 77%	111 73%	151 76%	194 72%	228 80%	148 82%
Disagree	183 9%	12 7%	6 6%	164 9%	8 9%	19 8%	15 8%	22 12%	15 10%	20 10%	36 13%	17 6%	12 7%
Don't know	273 13%	15 8%	17 16%	241 14%	9 11%	31 13%	24 14%	20 11%	26 17%	27 14%	41 15%	41 14%	21 11%

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<b><u>The right to free speech, even when we sometimes disagree with what is being said, is a valuable liberty which it is important to defend</u></b>													
Agree	1750 85%	160 90%	96 92%	1495 85%	74 86%	200 85%	140 80%	163 88%	127 84%	167 84%	213 79%	251 87%	160 89%
Disagree	72 4%	5 3%	1 1%	66 4%	3 4%	11 5%	5 3%	6 3%	6 4%	5 3%	16 6%	7 2%	8 4%
Don't know	227 11%	14 8%	8 8%	206 12%	9 11%	24 10%	30 17%	16 9%	19 12%	26 13%	41 15%	29 10%	12 7%
<b><u>It is right to have laws which protect people from so-called 'hate speech' even if it means for example that Christian preachers sometimes get arrested for repeating what is in the Bible</u></b>													
Agree	540 26%	56 31%	25 24%	458 26%	20 24%	63 27%	43 25%	46 25%	36 24%	52 26%	80 30%	67 23%	50 28%
Disagree	966 47%	81 45%	51 49%	834 47%	47 55%	124 53%	80 46%	102 55%	72 47%	95 48%	107 39%	133 47%	75 41%
Don't know	544 27%	41 23%	29 27%	475 27%	19 22%	48 21%	51 29%	36 20%	43 29%	52 26%	83 31%	86 30%	56 31%
<b><u>I worry sometimes that I could be in trouble because of the new 'hate speech' laws, by saying something which is misinterpreted</u></b>													
Agree	838 41%	72 40%	36 35%	730 41%	40 47%	99 42%	64 37%	77 42%	61 40%	89 45%	104 38%	127 44%	68 38%
Disagree	844 41%	85 48%	53 51%	705 40%	28 33%	99 42%	73 42%	78 42%	57 37%	76 38%	103 38%	104 36%	86 48%
Don't know	368 18%	21 12%	15 14%	333 19%	17 20%	37 16%	37 21%	29 16%	34 22%	34 17%	63 23%	55 19%	26 15%



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Disagree	779 38%	64 36%	36 35%	679 38%	38 44%	101 43%	69 39%	80 44%	55 36%	77 39%	88 32%	106 37%	66 37%
Don't know	629 31%	48 27%	27 26%	553 31%	23 27%	70 30%	58 33%	42 23%	53 35%	52 26%	101 37%	94 33%	62 34%
<b><u>The right to be protected against being offended should outweigh the right to speak your views openly</u></b>													
Agree	470 23%	37 20%	24 23%	409 23%	18 21%	62 26%	37 21%	53 29%	29 19%	48 24%	60 22%	62 22%	41 23%
Disagree	1045 51%	87 49%	51 49%	907 51%	51 59%	113 48%	88 51%	87 47%	78 52%	102 51%	136 50%	148 52%	104 58%
Don't know	535 26%	55 31%	29 27%	451 26%	17 20%	61 26%	49 28%	44 24%	44 29%	49 25%	74 28%	77 27%	36 20%