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Public Polling on Emergency Healthcare

January 2023

Background

Public opinion is crucial to policymaking and democratic processes, as it gives people an opportunity to share what they think on key issues, guiding policy development and decision making with impartial information.

In December 2022, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) commissioned Ipsos Mori to conduct an online poll of adults aged 16-75 in the UK public to better understand their views on emergency care.

Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out between 9th December 2022 - 12th December 2022. Ipsos interviewed a representative quota sample of 2,219 adults aged 16-75 across the UK. Data has been weighted to known offline population proportions.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252 and with the Ipsos Terms and Conditions.

Application

Below are table summaries of the results of fieldwork, accompanied by a text summary. The text summaries are as they appear in our campaign document, 'Five priorities for UK Governments to #ResuscitateEmergencyCare'.

Results

	Q1. To what extent are you confident or not that if you personally had a medical emergency in the next week and needed to attend your local A&E ...			
	The A&E department would provide a timely service	A hospital bed would be available for you if you needed to be admitted	You would be treated in an appropriate area (e.g. in a cubicle or a hospital bed)	You would only be discharged when you are medically fit to do so
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Unweighted base	2219	2219	2219	2219
Weighted base	2219	2219	2219	2219
Very confident	192 9% B	149 7%	207 9% B	330 15% ABC
Fairly confident	486 22%	515 23%	820 37% AB	838 38% AB
Not very confident	718 32% CD	752 34% CD	655 30%	612 28%
Not at all confident	699 31% CD	669 30% CD	410 18% D	302 14%
Don't Know	125 6%	134 6%	127 6%	138 6%

The public are acutely aware of this issue as they reported a lack of confidence in being admitted to a bed in a timely manner; 64% of those surveyed not feel confident a hospital bed would be available if they needed to be admitted via A&E.

What's more, a significant proportion of the public recognise that they could be subject to overcrowding: 48% of respondents expressed that they did not feel confident they would be treated in an appropriate area if they had a medical emergency that required them to visit their local A&E.

	Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
	My local A&E has enough staff to care for patients in a timely way	My local A&E has enough staff to provide safe medical care for patients
	(A)	(B)
Unweighted base	2219	2219
Weighted base	2219	2219
Strongly agree	105 5%	123 6%
Tend to agree	293 13%	379 17% A
Neither agree nor disagree	368 17%	485 22% A
Tend to disagree	603 27% B	494 22%
Strongly disagree	527 24% B	397 18%
Don't Know	323 15%	341 15%

Just 18% of the respondents agreed their local A&E had enough staff to care for them in a timely way, and only 23% of those surveyed expressing agreement that their local A&E had enough staff to care for them in a safe way.

	Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Government has the right policies to tackle increasing waiting times in Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments in hospitals?			
	UK Government	Scottish Government	Welsh Government	Northern Irish Government
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Unweighted base	2219	191	104	55
Weighted base	2219	186	105	62
Strongly agree	110 5%	15 8%	7 7%	2 4%
Tend to agree	256 12%	32 17% A	16 15%	8 13%
Neither agree nor disagree	387 17%	38 20%	19 18%	13 22%
Tend to disagree	519 23%	40 21%	22 21%	8 12%
Strongly disagree	796 36% B	45 24%	32 31%	28 46% B*
Don't Know	150 7%	16 9%	8 8%	2 3%

The poll revealed that confidence in the UK Governments' approach to tackling long waits for patients in A&E is low, with many of those disagreeing that the Governments have the right policies to tackle increasing patient waiting times in A&E (% disagreeing: UK Government- 59%, Scottish Government- 46%, Welsh Government- 51%, Northern Irish Government- 58%).