

# The Health Foundation COVID-19 Survey

**A report of survey findings on public attitudes  
towards the future of Brexit in the context of  
COVID-19**

**Ipsos MORI, Public Affairs**

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**Ipsos MORI**



# 1. Background, context and methodology

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The Health Foundation commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a representative poll of the general public in Great Britain to understand opinion on a range of issues. **This report focuses on public attitudes towards the future of Brexit in the context of managing the Coronavirus pandemic.**

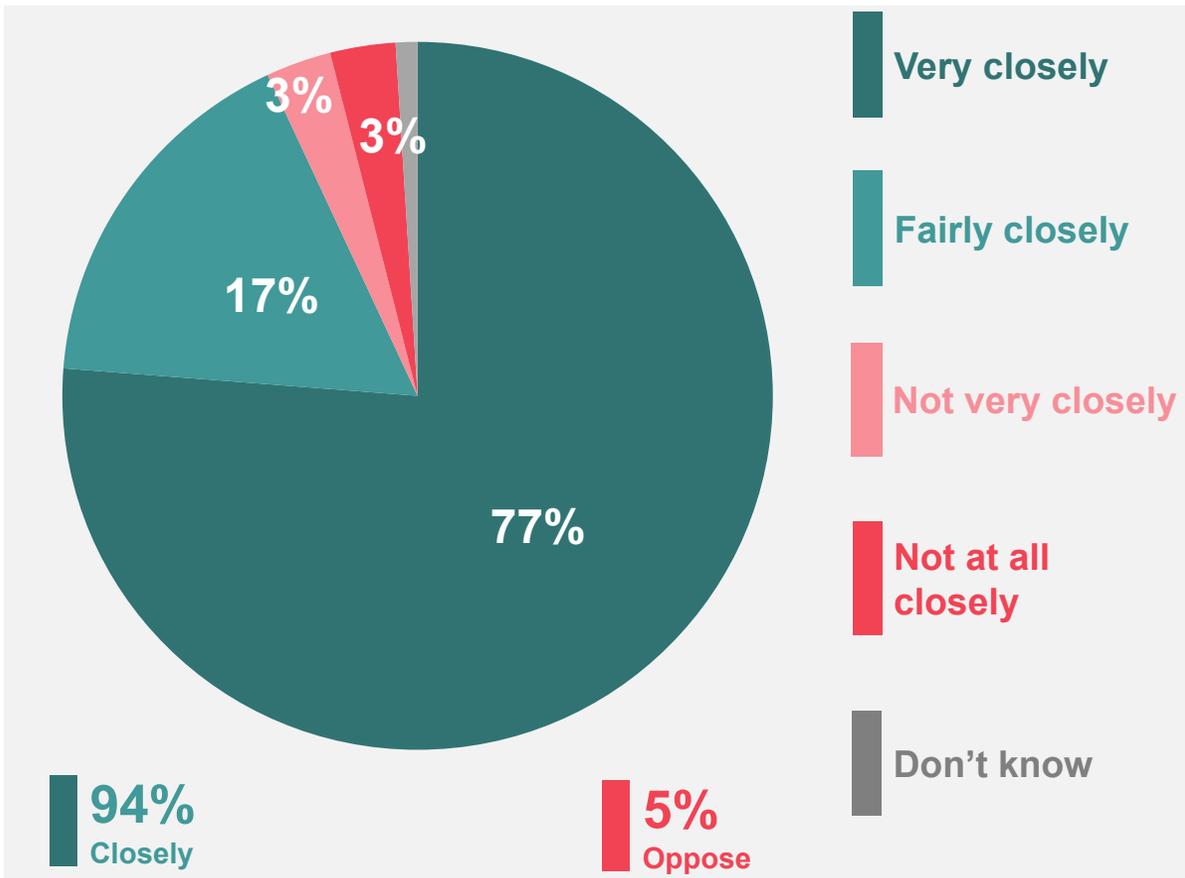
The survey was conducted by telephone on the Ipsos MORI CATI Omnibus survey, a weekly telephone omnibus survey of a representative sample of people aged 18 and over in Great Britain. Fieldwork took place between 1 and 10 May 2020. A total of 1983 people were interviewed. Quotas were set on age, gender, government office region and working status. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age within gender, government office region and working status, social grade and education level.

Throughout the report findings will highlight, and make reference to, different sub-groups based on responses to certain questions. When interpreting the survey findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the population, not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to margins of error, and not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant (i.e. a real difference).

## 2. Summary of key insights

# Nearly all of the public support the UK working closely with the EU in order to combat coronavirus

Q. How closely if at all, do you think the UK should work with the EU in order to combat coronavirus?



Nearly all of the public (94%) support the UK working closely with the EU in order to combat coronavirus. Only five per cent think it should not.

- Almost all of those who voted Remain in the EU Referendum (99%) support working closely with the EU to combat coronavirus, although over nine in ten (91%) of those who voted Leave also support closer working;
- Otherwise, support for close working is high across all age groups and demographics, although routine and manual workers, state pensioners and the unemployed are significantly less likely to think the UK should work closely with the EU (nine per cent, compared with five per cent overall).

# Impact of coronavirus outbreak on the Brexit transition



The public were asked a question about whether they thought the Brexit transition should be extended beyond 31 December 2020 as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

For this question, half of the sample were read the following question text: *'The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 but the current rules on trade, travel, and business for the UK and EU will continue to apply during a transition period currently due to end on 31 December 2020'*, before the question was posed to them.

The remaining half of the sample were read a slightly lengthier preamble, which contained additional detail as to the consequences of no extension: *'The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 but current rules on trade, travel, and business for the UK and EU will continue to apply during a transition period currently due to end on 31 December 2020. If there is not a UK/EU trade deal or an extension to the transition period, the UK will trade on World Trade Organisation terms from 31 December 2020 effectively in a 'no deal' Brexit. This could lead to a delay in the supply of certain products, including the supply of medicine and medical products'*, before the question was posed to them.

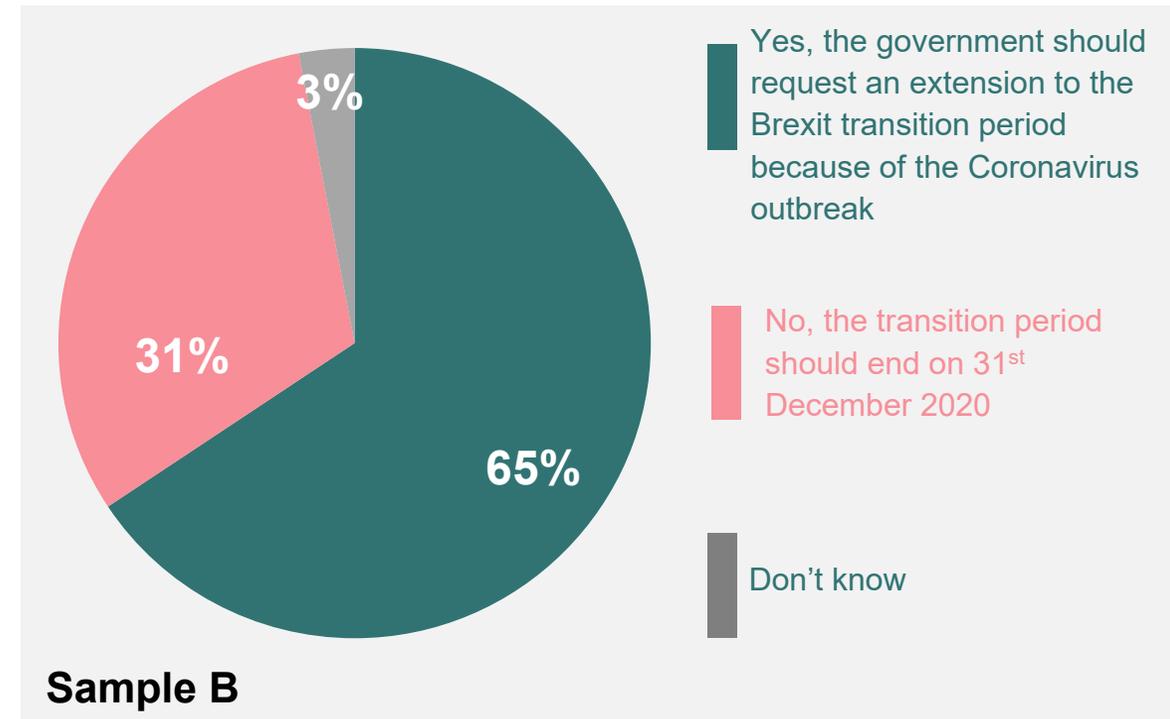
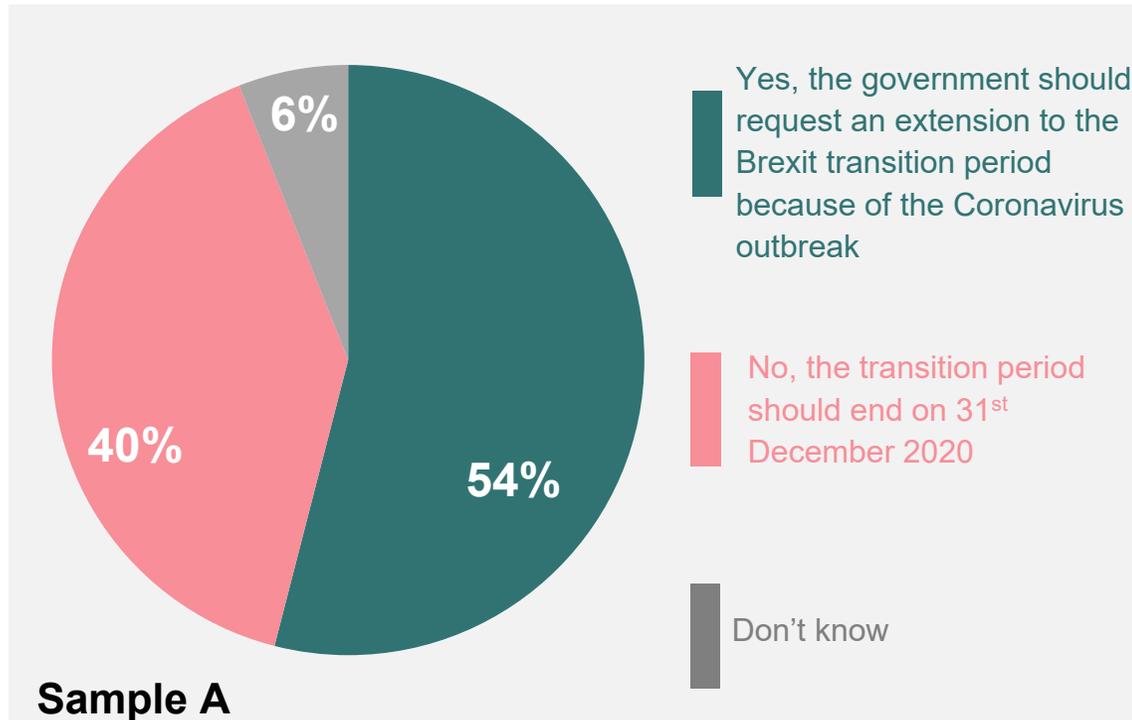
The illustrations overleaf summarise the findings from these questions.

# A majority in both samples think a Brexit extension should be sought

**Q. Should the Government request an extension to the Brexit transition period because of the Coronavirus outbreak or should the transition period end on 31 December 2020?**

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# Across both sub-samples, the majority of people thought that the government should request an extension to the Brexit transition beyond 31 December 2020

When half of the sample were presented with additional information about the consequences of no deal by 31 December 2020, **two-thirds (65%) thought the government should seek an extension**. However, **even when only basic information was presented, over half (54%) still supported an extension** to the transition period.

The increase in those who agreed that an extension should be sought is likely to be because the additional information set out the repercussions of not extending the transition period, with particular reference to a 'no-deal' Brexit and the potential delays of certain products, including the supply of medicine and medicinal products.

# However, there were differences among groups within the population

- **Leave/remain:** Across both samples, not unsurprisingly **those who voted to Remain were more likely to advocate an extension to the transition period** (A:79% and B:85%) whilst **those who voted to Leave were more likely to think there should not be an extension** (A:66% and B:58% respectively);
- Also across both samples, **younger people (aged 18 to 24) are more likely to advocate an extension** (A: 68% vs. 54% overall and B: 85% vs. 65% overall). In contrast, **older people are more divided in their views of the transition period**. In Sample A, where less information is given, views are evenly divided (rather than there being a majority for requesting an extension). Around half (48%) of those aged 55 and over think the government should seek an extension and the other half (47%) think it should not. In Sample B, where more information is given, a majority of all age groups think the government should request an extension. However, those aged 65 and over are more likely than the other age groups to think that the transition period should end on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 (41% of those aged 65 and over, compared with 31% overall);
- From the sample presented with more information (Sample B), **women are significantly more likely to agree that an extension should be requested** (69%, compared to 65% overall), which was not the case with Sample A, where women are more likely to think the transition period should end in December 2020 (44% compared with 40% overall).
- Regional differences are also evident in Sample A, where **two-thirds of those in Scotland want an extension** (64%, compared with 54% overall).

# And also by educational level and type of work

- **Differences by educational level are more stark in Sample A**, where participants were given the shorter version of the question. Around half of those with GCSEs or equivalent as their highest qualification (48%) and those with no formal qualifications (50%) think the transition period should not be extended (compared with 40% overall). In the longer version of the question, there is a majority for an extension regardless of qualifications.
- However, **people with at least a degree are more likely to say the government should request an extension to the transition period** (for example, in Sample B, where more information was given, 72% compared with 65% overall).
- Where participants were asked the longer version of the question, those in **managerial, administrative or professional jobs are more likely to think there should be an extension to the transition** (74%, compared with 65% overall).

# Thank you

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