

What do voters in Northern Ireland think about the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland?

October 2021

Notes

- i. The project - *Governance for 'a place between': the Multilevel Dynamics of Implementing the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland* – is part of the [Governance after Brexit](#) (Phase II) programme funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).
- ii. Polling was carried out by Belfast-based polling and market research company [LucidTalk](#) through its online Northern Ireland (NI) Opinion Panel. This panel has over 13,000 members and is regularly polled and surveyed to obtain views and opinions on a range of issues relating to Northern Ireland. This panel is balanced by gender, age group, area of residence, and community background. A data auditing process was carried out to ensure that all completed poll surveys were genuinely 'one person, one vote' returns. The base dataset was then weighted by community and other demographic measurements to reflect the demographic composition of Northern Ireland. All surveys and polls may be subject to sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error and measurement error. Data was weighted to the profile of all adults in Northern Ireland aged 18+. Data was weighted by age, sex, socio-economic group, previous voting patterns (i.e. turnout probability), constituency, constitutional position, party support and religious affiliation.
- iii. The poll attracted 628 comments from 2,682 respondents. Of the comments, 109 related exclusively to the survey structure and 519 related to the survey topic. The following provides a summary of the themes addressed by the qualitative comments received in the open-text part of the survey:

Theme/Issue	Occurrences	
	October	June
Protocol viewed as necessary / (potentially) beneficial / make it work	210	149
Protocol viewed negatively	122	116
Critical of DUP or Unionism/PUL	110	115
Brexit as mess / folly / viewed negatively	109	80
Critical of UKG / PM or GB	95	91
Lack of information / Misinformation	76	87
Brexit, not Protocol, as the problem / cause	71	58
Scrap the Protocol / Irish Sea Border	65	77
Critical of EU / EU approach to implementation	40	45
Critical of NI politicians generally	36	13
Protocol needs to be changed	30	23
Protocol contrary to B/GFA	24	32
UK as a whole should / ought to have left the EU	22	25
Lack of NI (full) representation / consent	22	53
A (referendum on) United Ireland is more likely / desirable	21	25
Critical of IRE/EU for using NI	16	23
Protocol as undemocratic / ECJ concern	13	11
UK(NI) re-join EU / Single Market & Customs Union	10	-
Fear of violence / threat to peace	9	22
UK-EU Alignment/SPS	6	11
Protocol as consequence of threat of violence	4	10
Brexit as threat to B/GFA	1	4
Critical of threats to violence	0	7