

Resolution – Cohabitation Legislation

METHODOLOGY NOTE

ComRes interviewed 157 MPs between the 26th June and 24th July 2013. Data were weighted by political party and region to reflect the exact composition of the House of Commons. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

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The number of people in a cohabiting relationship (unmarried and living together) stands at more than 5.3 million. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, this figure has almost doubled in the past two decades from an estimated 2.7 million in 1992.

Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Ensuring that unmarried cohabiting couples who are separating have some degree of financial protection will reduce the burden on the welfare system Base: All Respondents

Unweighted Total Weighted Total
Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know
Not stated
AGREE
DISAGREE

		PA	RTY			COUNTR	Υ		REG	ION		DAT	TE OF BI	RTH		MARGII	NALITY				LENGT	H OF SE	RVICE			GEN	NDER
Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dems	Other	Eng -land	Wales	Scot land & NI	Lon- don	South	Mids	North	Pre- 1950	1950- 1959	1960+	0.1- 9.9%	10.0- 19.9%	20.0- 29.9%	30%+	1986 or before	1987- 1991	1992- 1996	1997- 2000	2001- 2004	2005- 2009	2010+	Male	Fe- male
157	59	80	13	5	120	17	20	18	23	36	43	23	55	79	52	48	31	26	6	7	15	24	21	19	65	124	33
157 100%	74 100%	62 100%	14 100%	7 100%	129 100%	10 100%	19 100%	18 100%	34 100%	39 100%	38 100%	21 100%	53 100%	83 100%	49 100%	52 100%	30 100%	26 100%	7 100%	6 100%	14 100%	25 100%	20 100%	18 100%	68 100%	126 100%	31 100%
21 14%	2 3%	14 22%	4 33%	1 12%	15 11%	4 37%	3 17%	3 14%	-	6 15%	6 16%	4 21%	11 21%	5 7%	8 16%	8 14%	3 11%	3 11%	1 13%	-	4 29%	4 18%	2 10%	3 14%	7 11%	15 12%	6 20%
79 51%	32 43%	37 59%	6 43%	5 67%	63 49%	5 52%	12 63%	12 69%	11 33%	17 44%	22 59%	12 56%	22 41%	46 55%	24 49%	24 47%	18 62%	13 49%	3 44%	4 61%	7 53%	14 55%	10 53%	9 47%	33 48%	64 51%	15 48%
26 16%	17 23%	6 9%	1 8%	1 21%	21 16%	1 6%	4 21%	1 5%	7 22%	7 18%	6 16%	4 17%	11 20%	11 14%	8 16%	8 16%	5 17%	5 18%	3 44%	1 14%	-	4 18%	5 25%	5 26%	8 12%	22 18%	3 10%
6 4%	6 8%	-	1 5%	-	6 5%	-	-	1 7%	3 9%	1 4%	1 2%	-	3 6%	3 4%	1 2%	5 10%	-	-	-	2 25%	-	-	-	2 9%	3 5%	5 4%	1 4%
21 13%	17 23%	4 6%	-	-	20 16%	1 6%	-	-	11 31%	7 18%	3 8%	1 6%	3 6%	16 20%	6 13%	6 11%	3 11%	6 22%	-	-	3 18%	1 5%	2 12%	1 4%	14 21%	16 12%	5 17%
3 2%	-	2 3%	2 11%	-	3 3%	-	-	1 5%	2 5%	1 3%	-	-	2 5%	1 1%	3 5%	1 2%	-	-	-	-	-	1 3%	-	-	3 4%	3 3%	-
101 64%	34 46%	51 81%	10 76%	5 79%	77 60%	9 88%	15 79%	15 84%	11 33%	23 59%	28 75%	16 77%	33 62%	51 62%	31 64%	32 61%	21 72%	16 60%	4 56%	4 61%	11 82%	18 73%	12 63%	11 61%	40 59%	79 63%	21 68%
32 20%	23 31%	6 9%	2 13%	1 21%	28 21%	1 6%	4 21%	2 12%	11 31%	8 21%	7 18%	4 17%	14 27%	14 17%	9 18%	13 26%	5 17%	5 18%	3 44%	2 39%	-	4 18%	5 25%	6 35%	11 16%	27 22%	5 15%



The number of people in a cohabiting relationship (unmarried and living together) stands at more than 5.3 million. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, this figure has almost doubled in the past two decades from an estimated 2.7 million in 1992.

Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

There is a mistaken belief in the existence of 'common-law' marriage among my constituents Base: All Respondents

Unweighted Total Weighted Total
Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know
Not stated
AGREE
DISAGREE

		PA	RTY	-		COUNTR	Y		REGI	ON		DA	TE OF BI	RTH		MARGII	NALITY				LENGT	H OF SE	RVICE			GEN	NDER
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34 22%	12 16%	14 23%	6 45%	2 24%	26 20%	3 34%	5 26%	5 28%	6 17%	10 25%	5 14%	6 27%	15 29%	13 16%	14 29%	9 17%	5 17%	6 22%	1 10%	1 22%	6 39%	9 37%	4 21%	5 26%	9 13%	26 20%	8 27%
75 48%	36 49%	31 50%	4 27%	4 55%	62 48%	5 48%	8 45%	9 49%	18 53%	12 30%	24 62%	10 48%	24 45%	41 50%	17 35%	25 48%	18 60%	15 57%	5 69%	5 78%	6 39%	7 29%	9 44%	8 45%	36 53%	61 48%	14 45%
20 13%	11 14%	8 13%	1 8%	-	17 13%	2 18%	2 8%	2 12%	4 12%	5 12%	6 15%	5 22%	5 10%	10 12%	6 12%	7 13%	4 12%	3 13%	-	-	1 6%	5 21%	4 22%	2 11%	8 11%	18 14%	2 7%
4 3%	3 4%	-	-	1 21%	3 2%	-	1 8%	-	1 4%	1 4%	-	-	3 5%	1 2%	-	4 8%	-	-	1 21%	-	-	1 5%	-	1 8%	-	4 3%	-
22 14%	13 17%	8 13%	1 8%	-	19 15%	-	2 13%	2 11%	3 9%	11 27%	3 9%	-	4 8%	17 21%	9 19%	7 13%	3 11%	2 9%	-	-	1 10%	2 8%	3 14%	2 11%	14 20%	15 12%	6 21%
2 1%	-	1 1%	2 11%	-	2 2%	-	-	-	2 5%	1 2%	-	1 4%	2 3%	-	2 5%	-	-	-	-	-	1 5%	-	-	-	2 2%	2 2%	-
109 69%	48 65%	46 73%	10 73%	5 79%	88 68%	8 82%	13 71%	14 77%	23 70%	22 55%	29 76%	16 75%	39 74%	54 65%	31 64%	34 66%	23 77%	21 79%	5 79%	6 100%	11 79%	16 65%	13 64%	13 70%	45 66%	87 69%	22 72%
24 15%	13 18%	8 13%	1 8%	1 21%	19 15%	2 18%	3 16%	2 12%	5 16%	6 15%	6 15%	5 22%	8 15%	12 14%	6 12%	11 21%	4 12%	3 13%	1 21%	-	1 6%	7 27%	4 22%	3 19%	8 11%	22 17%	2 7%



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Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

The legal rights of unmarried cohabiting couples who separate are currently unclear

Base: All Respondents

Unweighted Total Weighted Total
Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know
Not stated
AGREE
DISAGREE

		PA	RTY			COUNTR	Y		REG	ION		DA	TE OF B	RTH		MARGII	NALITY				LENGT	H OF SE	RVICE			GEN	IDER
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23 15%	8 10%	12 20%	3 24%	-	18 14%	2 23%	3 17%	3 16%	3 9%	8 19%	4 11%	4 20%	9 18%	10 12%	8 16%	8 16%	4 13%	3 13%	1 13%	1 22%	3 18%	5 22%	1 6%	3 18%	9 13%	17 13%	2
96 61%	45 60%	37 60%	9 64%	5 79%	78 61%	6 60%	12 67%	14 79%	23 69%	19 49%	22 57%	15 70%	31 58%	50 61%	27 54%	31 60%	19 64%	19 73%	4 66%	5 78%	11 82%	15 62%	14 71%	12 64%	35 51%	79 62%	1 5
20 12%	12 17%	7 11%	-	-	18 14%	1 12%	-	-	4 13%	6 16%	8 20%	1 4%	7 13%	12 15%	7 14%	6 12%	5 18%	1 5%	1 21%	-	-	2 7%	3 15%	3 14%	11 16%	17 13%	
8 5%	6 8%	2 3%	-	-	6 5%	1 6%	1 4%	-	1 4%	3 7%	2 5%	1 6%	2 3%	5 5%	4 8%	2 4%	-	1 5%	-	-	-	1 5%	2 9%	-	5 7%	5 4%	
7 5%	3 5%	4 6%	-	-	7 5%	-	1 4%	1 5%	-	3 9%	2 6%	-	2 3%	6 7%	3 6%	2 4%	1 5%	1 3%	-	-	-	1 3%	-	1 4%	6 8%	5 4%	
3 2%	-	-	2 11%	1 21%	2 1%	-	1 8%	-	2 5%	-	-	-	3 6%	-	2 3%	1 3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 4%	3 2%	
20 76%	52 71%	50 80%	12 89%	5 79%	96 75%	8 82%	16 84%	17 95%	26 78%	27 68%	26 69%	19 90%	40 76%	60 73%	34 70%	40 76%	23 77%	23 86%	5 79%	6 100%	14 100%	21 85%	15 77%	15 82%	43 64%	96 76%	1
27 17%	18 25%	9 14%	-	-	25 19%	2 18%	1 4%	-	6 17%	9 23%	10 26%	2 10%	8 16%	17 20%	11 21%	9 16%	5 18%	3 10%	1 21%	-	-	3 12%	5 23%	3 14%	16 23%	22 17%	1



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Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

I have been contacted by constituents about legal problems surrounding cohabitation in the past year Base: All Respondents

Unweighted Total Weighted Total
Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know
Not stated
AGREE
DISAGREE

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157	74	62	14	7	129	10	19	18	34	39	38	21	53	83	49	52	30	26	7	6	14	25	20	18	68	126	31
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
15 9%	5 7%	7 11%	3 20%	-	13 10%	2 17%	-	4 21%	-	7 17%	3 7%	3 15%	5 9%	7 8%	2 5%	6 12%	4 14%	2 9%	1 13%	1 16%	-	3 13%	1 6%	3 19%	5 8%	10 8%	5 16%
35	13	15	4	3	28	1	6	6	7	3	11	3	15	17	13	9	5	8	1	1	6	6	4	4	13	27	7
22%	18%	24%	26%	43%	21%	11%	33%	33%	22%	8%	30%	16%	27%	20%	26%	18%	15%	31%	13%	9%	45%	24%	19%	22%	20%	22%	24%
50	26	20	4	-	42	3	5	5	13	13	11	9	11	31	16	17	11	6	2	3	3	7	3	7	25	41	9
32%	35%	32%	30%		33%	34%	25%	30%	39%	32%	29%	42%	20%	37%	32%	33%	38%	23%	31%	51%	21%	28%	16%	40%	37%	32%	30%
42	24	14	1	3	35	1	6	2	12	13	9	3	16	23	12	16	7	8	3	-	4	8	8	3	16	37	6
27%	33%	22%	8%	45%	27%	12%	34%	11%	35%	32%	23%	14%	30%	28%	25%	30%	23%	30%	44%		28%	34%	42%	15%	24%	29%	18%
12 7%	5 6%	6 9%	1 4%	1 12%	8 6%	2 26%	2 8%	1 5%	-	4 9%	3 9%	3 12%	4 7%	5 6%	4 9%	2 4%	3 10%	2 8%	-	1 24%	1 6%	1 2%	3 13%	1 4%	6 8%	8 6%	4 13%
3 2%	1 1%	1 1%	2 11%	-	3 3%	-	-	-	2 5%	1 3%	1 2%	-	3 6%	-	2 3%	2 4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 4%	-	3 4%	3 3%	-
49	18	22	6	3	41	3	6	10	7	10	14	7	19	23	15	15	9	10	2	2	6	9	5	8	19	37	12
31%	25%	35%	46%	43%	32%	28%	33%	54%	22%	25%	37%	31%	36%	28%	31%	30%	29%	39%	26%	25%	45%	37%	24%	42%	27%	29%	40%
92	50	34	5	3	77	4	11	7	25	25	20	12	27	54	28	33	18	14	5	3	7	15	11	10	41	78	15
59%	68%	54%	38%	45%	60%	46%	59%	41%	73%	64%	52%	56%	50%	65%	57%	63%	60%	53%	74%	51%	50%	61%	58%	54%	61%	62%	48%



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Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

In light of the rise of cohabitation in the UK, there is a need for greater legal protection for unmarried couples upon separation Base: All Respondents

Unweighted Total Weighted Total	
Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	
Not stated	
AGREE	
DISAGREE	

		PA	RTY		(COUNTR	Y		REG	ION		DA	TE OF BI	RTH		MARGII	NALITY				LENGT	H OF SE	RVICE			GEN	IDER
Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dems	Other	Eng -land	Wales	Scot land & NI	Lon- don	South	Mids	North	Pre- 1950	1950- 1959	1960+	0.1- 9.9%	10.0- 19.9%	20.0- 29.9%	30%+	1986 or before	1987- 1991	1992- 1996	1997- 2000	2001- 2004	2005- 2009	2010+	Male	Fe- male
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100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
26	4	17	5	-	18	3	5	4	3	6	6	7	9	10	10	7	4	5	1	3	4	7	2	2	7	21	5
17%	6%	28%	34%		14%	34%	25%	21%	9%	15%	15%	35%	17%	12%	21%	14%	13%	17%	13%	48%	29%	30%	13%	10%	10%	17%	17%
64	19	34	4	7	47	5	12	9	9	10	20	10	20	34	20	22	13	9	3	1	4	11	10	7	29	47	17
41%	25%	55%	32%	100%	37%	49%	66%	49%	25%	26%	51%	48%	38%	41%	41%	42%	45%	34%	43%	12%	26%	43%	52%	41%	42%	37%	55%
34	28	5	1	-	32	1	1	2	10	15	5	2	14	17	6	10	6	11	3	1	5	5	3	5	11	29	5
21%	38%	8%	6%		25%	6%	4%	12%	30%	38%	14%	11%	26%	21%	12%	20%	21%	41%	44%	14%	38%	19%	17%	28%	17%	23%	15%
17 11%	15 21%	2 3%	-	-	16 12%	1 12%	-	1 7%	9 27%	3 7%	3 8%	-	5 10%	12 15%	6 12%	8 16%	3 10%	-	-	2 25%	-	-	2 13%	2 12%	11 16%	15 12%	2 7%
12 8%	7 9%	3 5%	2 16%	-	12 9%	-	1 4%	2 11%	1 4%	5 11%	4 10%	1 5%	2 3%	10 12%	5 11%	3 6%	2 7%	2 7%	-	-	-	2 8%	1 6%	2 11%	7 11%	11 9%	1 4%
3 2%	1 1%	1 1%	2 11%	-	3 3%	-	-	-	2 5%	1 3%	1 2%	-	3 6%	-	2 3%	1 2%	1 3%	-	-	-	1 6%	-	-	-	3 4%	3 3%	-
90	23	51	9	7	65	8	17	12	11	16	25	18	29	43	30	29	17	14	4	4	8	18	13	9	35	67	23
57%	31%	83%	66%	100%	51%	82%	92%	71%	34%	41%	66%	83%	55%	52%	62%	56%	59%	51%	56%	61%	56%	73%	65%	50%	52%	54%	73%
51	43	7	1	-	48	2	1	3	19	18	8	2	19	29	12	19	9	11	3	2	5	5	6	7	22	44	7
32%	58%	11%	6%		38%	18%	4%	18%	57%	45%	22%	11%	36%	36%	24%	36%	32%	41%	44%	39%	38%	19%	30%	39%	33%	35%	23%



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Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Summary table Base: All Respondents

	-	Strongly	Tend to	Tend to	Strongly	Don't		40055	D104 0DEE
	Total	agree	agree	disagree	disagree	know	Not stated	AGREE	DISAGREE
Ensuring that unmarried cohabiting couples who are separating have some degree of financial protection will reduce the burden on the welfare	457	04	70	00	•	04	0	404	20
system	157	21	79	26	6	21	3	101	32
	100%	14%	51%	16%	4%	13%	2%	64%	20%
There is a mistaken belief in the existence of									
'common-law' marriage among my constituents	157	34	75	20	4	22	2	109	24
	100%	22%	48%	13%	3%	14%	1%	69%	15%
The legal rights of unmarried cohabiting couples									
who separate are currently unclear	157	23	96	20	8	7	3	120	27
	100%	15%	61%	12%	5%	5%	2%	76%	17%
I have been contacted by constituents about legal									
problems surrounding cohabitation in the past year	157	15	35	50	42	12	3	49	92
	100%	9%	22%	32%	27%	7%	2%	31%	59%
In light of the rise of cohabitation in the UK, there is a need for greater legal protection for unmarried									
couples upon separation	157	26	64	34	17	12	3	90	51
	100%	17%	41%	21%	11%	8%	2%	57%	32%



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Q1: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Summary table - NET AGREE Base: All Respondents

			PA	RTY	-		COUNTR	Y		REG	ION		DA	TE OF B	IRTH		MARGIN	ALITY				LENGT	H OF SEI	RVICE			GEN	DER
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Weighted Total	157	74	62	14	7	129	10	19	18	34	39	38	21	53	83	49	52	30	26	7	6	14	25	20	18	68	126	31
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The legal rights of unmarried cohabiting couples who separate are currently unclear	120	52	50	12	5	96	8	16	17	26	27	26	19	40	60	34	40	23	23	5	6	14	21	15	15	43	96	24
	76%	71%	80%	89%	79%	75%	82%	84%	95%	78%	68%	69%	90%	76%	73%	70%	76%	77%	86%	79%	100%	100%	85%	77%	82%	64%	76%	77%
There is a mistaken belief in the existence of 'common-law' marriage among my constituents	109	48	46	10	5	88	8	13	14	23	22	29	16	39	54	31	34	23	21	5	6	11	16	13	13	45	87	22
	69%	65%	73%	73%	79%	68%	82%	71%	77%	70%	55%	76%	75%	74%	65%	64%	66%	77%	79%	79%	100%	79%	65%	64%	70%	66%	69%	72%
Ensuring that unmarried cohabiting couples who are separating have some degree of financial protection will reduce the burden on the welfare system	101	34	51	10	5	77	9	15	15	11	23	28	16	33	51	31	32	21	16	4	4	11	18	12	11	40	79	21
	64%	46%	81%	76%	79%	60%	88%	79%	84%	33%	59%	75%	77%	62%	62%	64%	61%	72%	60%	56%	61%	82%	73%	63%	61%	59%	63%	68%
In light of the rise of cohabitation in the UK, there is a need for greater legal protection for unmarried couples upon separation	90 57%	23 31%	51 83%	9 66%	7 100%	65 51%	8 82%	17 92%	12 71%	11 34%	16 41%	25 66%	18 83%	29 55%	43 52%	30 62%	29 56%	17 59%	14 51%	4 56%	4 61%	8 56%	18 73%	13 65%	9 50%	35 52%	67 54%	23 73%
I have been contacted by constituents about legal problems surrounding cohabitation in the past year	49	18	22	6	3	41	3	6	10	7	10	14	7	19	23	15	15	9	10	2	2	6	9	5	8	19	37	12
	31%	25%	35%	46%	43%	32%	28%	33%	54%	22%	25%	37%	31%	36%	28%	31%	30%	29%	39%	26%	25%	45%	37%	24%	42%	27%	29%	40%

