

EXIT BREXIT – Key Messages

- Liberal Democrats have consistently made the case for remaining in the EU; there is no deal better than the deal we have as members of the EU.
- We are the only party who have consistently fought to give the people the final say on the deal. We have been consistent about this for two years and we continue to stand firm, fighting for those who did not vote for this catastrophic Brexit.
- There is no deal better than that we have inside the EU. No deal was ever going to be better than the deal we have as EU members and this is likely to be a very bad deal for the United Kingdom. We are left rule takers not rule makers.
- Liberal Democrats would give people the final say on the Brexit deal with the choice to remain in the EU.

Key rebuttals

- **We had a vote in 2016. Stop trying to overturn the will of the people – just accept the result of the referendum.**

That was two and a half years ago. We know so much more now than we did then. It has taken far longer, and cost so much more already than we were told it would.

In 2016 nobody voted to be poorer or to damage our NHS. The Conservatives have made a mess of Brexit. It is costing more and taking longer than we ever thought it would. We need an exit from Brexit.

If you're buying a house and you get the surveyor's report showing it will fall down, you don't have to go ahead. Democracy is an ongoing process. As with General Elections, the public are entitled to vote again. Now that we have a clearer picture of what Brexit will mean, it is essential that the people are given the final say on the deal.

A People's Vote will be the first chance the public gets to vote on the emerging reality of what Brexit will mean. That includes facts we did not know two years ago such as a divorce bill of £50 billion (and rising) for a deal where we've handed over our best cards, without getting anything in return.

- **There hasn't been a big enough shift in public opinion to justify a new vote.**

Let me be clear: even if our MPs march through those voting lobbies alone, Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to give the people the final say on the deal. We are the only party who have been fighting for more than two years to give the people the final say.

Opinion has moved significantly from 52-48 in favour of leaving to 53-47 in favour of staying. More importantly are the surveys showing a People's Vote is the most popular of all the available options including Theresa May's deal and no deal. A total of 575 out of 630 seats in the YouGov MRP show a majority in favour of a People's Vote.

One of the chief reasons opinion has shifted is that more than 1m young people who were denied a voice in 2016 are now on the electoral register and they support a People's Vote and staying in the EU by a margin of more than seven-to-one.

And, in any case, the flaw in this argument is that we are simply trying to re-run the 2016 referendum. People have a right to demand their voice is heard on what Brexit has become - which is very different to what was promised two years ago.

- **There isn't time for a referendum. We're leaving in March and there's no time to legislate for a referendum.**

Various senior EU figures, from Macron to Tusk, have said they would welcome the UK choosing to stay in the EU. If the political will in the UK is there, then we will be able to achieve a people's vote. Until we leave, there is always time.

We have at least two opportunities to press for a referendum – including when the deal is put to the house and when the Withdrawal Agreement Bill comes to the house.

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Democrats will fight at every single opportunity to ensure people are given the final say on the deal, as we have done since 2016.

The Electoral Commission can verify the wording of any referendum question at the same time as the legislation passes through the House. If there is the will amongst Parliamentarians in the Lords and Commons, then legislation can be passed through Parliament very quickly. We have not left yet, there is still time.