



People's Vote Messaging

6th August 2019

1. “Let’s **trust** the British people, not Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, to solve the Brexit crisis. **Let us be heard.**”

This Brexit crisis has now come down to a simple question about whether we live in a democracy: can we allow Boris Johnson to force No Deal - or another vicious form of Brexit - on our country, without all of us having our voice heard?

- Boris Johnson and the Leave campaigners he has installed in Downing Street are ready to inflict No Deal on the rest of us when they sold Brexit on the basis they’d get a “great deal”. Their destructive Brexit is a million miles from what they promised in 2016.
- Boris Johnson was made Prime Minister with the votes of Conservative Party members comprising barely 0.1% of the population by making more promises he could not keep. He does not have permission to force his Brexit on the rest of us.
- Now we know so much more about what his Brexit really means – whether you want to stay in Europe or leave – it’s only fair to demand that we all have our voice heard in a People’s Vote.

2. “Let’s have **hope** for the future, not a never-ending Brexit crisis. **Let us be heard.**”

No Deal means no deals on *anything*, so it would be the start of years – even decades – of arguments and negotiations, with no end in sight.

- The UK would urgently need a trade deal but we’d find ourselves negotiating from a far weaker position and still facing the same EU stance on the backstop and the divorce bill.
- Brexit would dominate politics for years to come, shrinking our future and meaning issues like housing, schools, our NHS and tackling climate change are underfunded or ignored. That can only deepen the divisions in our country while we turn in ourselves.
- Now we know so much more, a People’s Vote would allow us to turn back from the brink, debate how we tackle the divisions exposed in the last referendum - and get the clarity we need to start talking about something other than Brexit.

3. “Let’s have some **pride** in our country, rather than lost opportunities for our young people, lost jobs and lost influence in the world. **Let us be heard.**”

There’s nothing patriotic about forcing something on the country that will cost people their jobs, hurt our NHS and see the UK humiliated by bending our knee to Donald Trump.

- Boris Johnson says No Deal would be fine, but WTO terms are the worst trading terms in the world – they would take us back 70 years – which would cause job losses, bankruptcy for businesses and a squeeze on the NHS. We’re already seeing the impact of Brexit on sectors like the car industry and farming so we know that No Deal would be catastrophic for them.
- Our country, one of the greatest democracies in the world, is in danger of becoming a laughing stock because the likes of Boris Johnson put their interests before the national interest. Their Brexit already threatens the security of our country and peace in Ireland. Now they want to humiliate us further by selling Britain down the river to Donald Trump.
- Now we know what Brexit means for our country and our place in the world, it’s time to show faith in the good sense of the people of our country to end this crisis through the pragmatic solution of a final say referendum.



QUESTIONS & ANSWER REBUTTAL

1. Why do you still think we can get a People's Vote?

Because ultimately this is the only democratic way to solve this crisis without hitting a dead end Deal or heading over the cliff-edge No Deal.

- Theresa May discovered to her cost there is no majority in either Parliament or the country for either a Brexit Deal that makes the UK poorer and offers it less control – or for No Deal.
- Leaving with No Deal when it was barely discussed in the 2016 referendum and explicitly ruled out by Boris Johnson would be deeply undemocratic,
- A General Election would not necessarily be decisive and, even if it did deliver a hard Brexit majority in the Commons, this would not be regarded as a mandate if most people in the country still oppose it.

2. How can it be democratic to have a new referendum when we had one in 2016 that decided to Leave?

Because, now we know that Brexit is a million miles from what was once promised, it would be a democratic outrage to force it on us without our explicit permission in a final say referendum.

- We now know that whatever form Brexit takes, it will mean breaking a lot of promises. For instance, Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson once told us we could easily get a deal and we wouldn't leave without one.
- We now know there have already been massive costs in lost investment and lost jobs because of Brexit – and that is only the start.
- And knowing so much more means that a new vote would not be a re-run of 2016. It would be real facts rather than just the theories and predictions used by both sides last time – and a choice between a specific form of Brexit - not a “unicorn”- and staying in the EU.

3. Isn't the People's Vote just a way for people who voted Remain to overturn the will of the people?

Whether you want to leave or stay, a People's Vote is the only way to legitimise the outcome of this disastrous Brexit crisis.

- For any government to impose a vicious form of Brexit or No Deal on the British people without them giving their explicit consent would be undemocratic and unfair.
- The “will of the people” is not a snapshot or a moment, it is a process by which we give informed consent. It's a bit like deciding to buy a house and then, when you see the surveyor's report showing it has dry rot, you still have the right to say whether or not you want to go ahead.
- This must not be a stitch-up in Westminster: we want the people to have the final say on whether to go ahead with a specific form of Brexit or stay with – and maybe improve – the deal we've got inside the EU.

4. If there was a new referendum, would you accept the result?

A new referendum would settle the issue, if not all the arguments, for a decade or more.

- A new vote would be on a specific Brexit proposal so, if it was approved, there would be no room for argument about what people voted for.
- It could be made binding, rather than advisory, on MPs and the legislation could require all participants to accept the result.
- Accepting the result does not mean people have to change their minds any more than they are required to change parties if their side loses an election. Of course, arguments will continue but the issue can be settled.



5. *Would a People's Vote be divisive?*

Brexit has already divided the country deeply. A People's Vote offers us the chance of closure with a democratic and decisive settlement

- Leaving the EU on disastrous terms will do nothing to heal divisions exposed in the last referendum – instead it would deepen inequality, deny opportunity and hit working class communities first and worst.
- There are strong feelings on both sides but we can never allow people like Tommy Robinson to dictate to our democracy. Indeed, only one campaign is getting crowds of a million people out on the streets, especially young people whose voices have too often been left out or ignored in the Brexit debate.
- A new campaign to stay in would have the chance to show how the EU can be part of the solution – so a referendum could be a battle between two contrasting versions of change to tackle deep problems in our society and begin healing divisions.

6. *How can we stop Boris Johnson taking the UK out of Europe with No Deal?*

Because in a democracy, Prime Ministers – especially those with wafer-thin Commons majorities – cannot just do whatever they want.

- There is no majority for No Deal Brexit in either the country or in Parliament. MPs from all parties have shown they are ready to reject No Deal and, if necessary, seize control of the agenda, demand a People's Vote or bring the Government down.
- Cabinet Ministers have acknowledged MPs' ability to block a government intent on forcing No Deal. And the Speaker has indicated he would be open to MPs using emergency debate rules to create new amendable motions — so giving MPs the chance to rewrite standing orders and pass new laws
- Even if Boris Johnson was hell-bent on delivering a humiliating self-destruct Brexit, MPs could collapse the Government through a no-confidence vote. Political reality, rather than legal process, is what matters most.

7. *If you get a referendum, would a hard Brexit or No Deal option would be on the ballot paper?*

The question asked in a referendum depends on the exact circumstances in which it comes about.

- We've always said it's up to MPs to decide what's on the ballot paper in consultation with the Electoral Commission. This Government or another one could still negotiate a new deal and put a referendum on the face of a Withdrawal Agreement Bill.
- But it is not for our campaign to say what Brexit means – it is up to those politicians driving it forward. What we do think is that staying in the EU would have to be one option because polls now show a consistent lead for staying in the EU.
- We think any alternative to staying in cannot be another unicorn like the cake-and-eat-it fantasy Brexit that was sold in 2016. It has to be a specific set of proposals. So if anyone wants to put No Deal Brexit on a referendum ballot paper they need to set out clearly what it means.

8. *Is there enough time for a People's Vote?*

There must always be time for democracy and, if that is what Parliament wants, nothing should stand in its way.

- We're confident that if Parliament decided to go back to the people this autumn, the EU would give us a further extension because it not want to stand in the way of our democracy and a referendum could be held in the spring.



- The UCL Constitution Unit says it would take around 22 weeks to organise and hold a new vote and, while some experts think that time could be cut down, we wouldn't want to do this with unnecessary haste.
- But we recognise that a lot of people are getting impatient and, if we're going to get a democratic resolution to this crisis which provides the clarity and closure we all need, politics cannot drag its feet forever.

9. Do you have the support of enough MPs to get a People's Vote?

We've always known this would go down to the wire and, when the time comes, we believe we will have the votes.

- Last time Parliament voted, a confirmatory referendum got more support than anything else. Every opposition party in the House of Commons now backs a new vote on any Brexit outcome, as do many Conservatives.
- We respect MPs who remember how tough the last referendum was and are reluctant to back a new vote. But a People's Vote is not an option *in* this crisis like all the different Brexit proposals that have been endlessly debated.
- Instead, it is the solution *to* a crisis in which more and more MPs are slowly turning to a new vote as the best way – and last hope - of preventing a destructive Brexit

10. Does the People's Vote campaign support the formation of a Remain Alliance of political parties?

We are not a political party or a Remain campaign. The clue is in our title: We support a People's Vote.

- We will continue to support all MPs who back a People's Vote with an option of staying in the EU as a way of settling this Brexit crisis.
- We don't take sides in political debates except on this one issue and we're not a vehicle for creating a new political party or realigning politics.
- If there is a General Election, we would support all MPs who back a People's Vote. But we would focus on the marginal contests where our impact will matter most and where we would urge our supporters to vote for whichever pro-People's Vote candidate is best placed to defeat an opponent.