

# Our future relationship with the EU: Q&A from a public meeting with Thangam Debbonaire, MP for Bristol West

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## Introduction

On 13 October 2018, I held a public meeting on Brexit at St James’ Priory Church. More than 200 people attended the meeting, submitting written questions in advance and asking questions during the event. This document collates answers to all these questions.

Please note that some questions were very similar. These have been combined avoid repetition.

If you would like more information on about what I am doing on Brexit I have posted a list of significant events [here](#). You can also read my detailed response to the People’s Vote campaign [here](#).

Yours,

Thangam

## The political process

1	Parliament should be leading us to a good outcome. Most MPs know any Brexit outcome will be worse. Parliament as a whole (individually) knows that. So the collective Norman Lambs may be personally principled but are failing to lead us and letting the country down (on a principle).  Standing up for remain is the right thing to do. It will be difficult but rightworthy.
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	<p>I absolutely agree that Parliament should be leading us to a good outcome, and that's what I am trying to do. The government are being utterly reckless in how they are leading us. I believe we should remain in the closest possible relationship with the EU, which should ideally be full membership, and if not, as close as possible to a Single Market and customs union arrangement as we can. I continue to argue that, analyse evidence and make the case for it.</p>
2	<p>How likely is it, that at this stage, article 50 will be revoked / rescinded?</p> <p>A legal action to establish whether the UK can rescind Article 50 has been referred to the European Court of Justice and it will be looked at in November.</p>
3	<p>If parliament votes down any "deal" and <u>if</u> the ECJ judgement proves Article 50 can be revoked and <u>if</u> Labour come to power surely the ramifications of crashing out without any deal are so catastrophic, the government <i>must</i> revoke Article 50?</p> <p>There are a lot of 'ifs' in that question! No Labour government would want to leave the EU without a good deal for a future close relationship. Exactly what we would do would depend on where we were in the process at the time of the election. It's hard to see how we will have a general election when the Tories would have to vote for it, since the introduction of fixed-term parliaments in 2011.</p>
4	<p>If we get an EU extension for 5 years what would happen if the Government changed to a Pro EU government?</p> <p>We could potentially stay in the EU. As no one has ever left the EU none of this is clear. If we leave without a deal stipulating a close relationship it would be a lot harder to return. This is why I am carefully analysing all the options for what happens next.</p>
5	<p>How could the DUP help or hinder Brexit? What do you think they will do?</p> <p>I think the DUP will do whatever they can to avoid a border of any kind in the Irish sea. They have repeatedly said this. If they feel the Government's deal puts the Union in danger then they will vote against it. This could help to defeat the deal, but as they are in favour of leaving the EU it is hard to know how this would help in the longer term.</p>
6	<p>Thank you for inviting me to today's constituency meeting about Brexit.</p> <p>I have been thinking about what you said about MPs from Leave constituencies voting in Parliament the way their constituents had voted. It reminded me about the difference between being a delegate, which involves voting the way you are told, and an MP who is there to represent the best interests of their constituents. Given that the best interests of their voters is to remain within the EU, perhaps you could make this argument to those Labour MPs who are voting in Parliament as delegates rather than representatives.</p> <p>I suspect that you may already have used this argument in your discussions with them, but if not, as a Labour Whip, it could be useful to point this out.</p> <p>MPs have to balance three things: representing the people in their constituency, representing the political party whose manifesto they were elected on and the vow we take to do their best for the country. I have raised the argument above with colleagues from all parties and will continue to.</p>
7	<p>Realistically is there any way Brexit is not going to happen?</p> <p>Yes, in theory, it could be stopped, or reversed if we were to leave with a close relationship with the EU and continue to have regulatory alignment.</p>

## Chequers Proposal

1	<p>Would you consider some parts of the Chequers proposal to be adopted into our soft Brexit policy?</p> <p>Yes, the part on being part of a Single Market for goods, however, the Prime Minister does not currently have the support of her own party for Chequers so it is almost irrelevant.</p>
2	<p>What is your view of the Chequers deal and how will you vote if that comes to Parliament?</p> <p>See above - if this is the deal that is put forward, I will vote against it, as it fails Labour's six tests.</p>
3	<p>Can you be a little more specific about the objections to Chequers from the remainers point of view?</p> <p>It does not go far enough in many areas, for example it does not protect workers' rights, does not keep us in a Customs Union or Single Market type relationship which would solve the problem of the border on the island of Ireland and would protect jobs and trade. However, it is no longer even viable as almost from the start it was clear it does not have the support of the Prime Minister's own MPs.</p>

## Brexit Impact

1	<p>I am concerned about the loss of health and social care workers who make such a valuable and essential contribution to the lives of the most vulnerable in our community. How does the security of residency stand for EU workers in this sector?</p> <p>The Prime Minister has said that people who have been here for a while and are working or have families are welcome to apply for what is called 'settled status'. However, this is not law yet – the Immigration Bill would put this into law when it goes through Parliament. I have been pushing the government to bring this Bill forward as soon as possible as people need to have clarity and certainty. It's an awful way to treat people and Labour put down amendments to give that certainty into the EU Withdrawal Bill last year, but the government voted it down. We will continue to stand up for all EU citizens, including UK citizens working in the EU 27.</p>
2	<p>Does Brexit make it easier or harder for us to tackle global challenges like climate change, social media, artificial intelligence and biotechnology?</p> <p>Yes. It absolutely makes it more difficult to face global challenges when we turn our back on the rest of the world. With Trump taking the US out of the Paris Accord, we should be working more closely than ever with our European partners to show a positive alternative to this isolationism.</p>
3	<p>How much of the welfare state will likely collapse post Brexit?</p> <p>This is a very difficult question to answer. However, it looks very likely there will be less money available for everything after Brexit, according to the government's own analysis, and that will mean less to spend on the welfare state. A contracting economy will be extremely negative for the poorest in our society.</p>
4	<p>How will we restore/maintain workers' rights under a new Labour government?</p> <p>A Labour government will maintain all of the protections the EU offers workers. When voting on key legislation earlier this year, we put down amendments to defend these protections. Unfortunately, they were defeated by the Tories but we would reinstate them.</p>

5	Please could you tell us about the post-Brexit status envisaged for UK nationals living and working in more than one EU country?
	This is far from settled. I know this from my own personal situation, as my husband works in the Netherlands and other countries (as so many people in Bristol West do). This will be up to other countries individually. Some are making some tough announcements in the absence of any legal certainty from the UK government on the future treatment of people from the other 27 EU countries living in this country – which makes it all the more important that the government brings its Immigration Bill to Parliament as soon as possible.

## People's Vote/Second Referendum

1	<p>Would you support a new referendum?</p> <p>The People's Vote website states that the parliamentary vote comes first. I agree with this. This vote was a victory won by Labour. Keir Starmer has done a great job, he is truly trying to unite the country. Like me, he is a pro-remain MP in a strongly pro-remain constituency, and he is doing all he can to influence the final outcome.</p> <p>At Labour conference, Keir stated that Labour is not ruling out 'remain' as an option on the ballot paper. I agree – if it comes to it, this option should be on the ballot.</p> <p>However, there would need to be a convincing and workable strategy to win a further referendum, and this would have to take into account the likelihood that the leave campaign will use the same strategies as last time and potentially win again. If another referendum comes out in favour of leave, or the result is close, that will do nothing to heal the divisions in this country but also it would take us even further away from any close relationship now or any time soon, so it is a risk.</p> <p>The referendum in 2016 was a disaster. When Nigel Farage said that the UK achieved independence with no shots fired, he was lying. One of my friends, Jo Cox, was killed doing the job I am doing. We must not have a repeat of 2016 at any cost.</p>
2	<p>What happens if we have a People's Vote and remain (or the most remain option) loses again?</p> <p>This is the worst of all the scenarios as it would remove the possibility of any and all close relationship with the EU now or any time soon. This is a dilemma for anyone opposed to Brexit – if we vote down a deal in Parliament and then lose a People's Vote, we would end up leaving the EU with no agreed relationships ('no deal' Brexit) which would affect virtually every aspect of our lives, from air pollution to the import and export of food.</p>
3	<p>1) Is a #PeoplesVote more likely before March 2019 or in transition. 2) Are you working with the cross-party "Wednesday morning" team?</p>

	<p>Arranging another referendum would take a lot of time, and I cannot see it being voted on and taking place within such a short timeframe.</p> <p>Until I looked it up, following this question, I was not aware of the “Wednesday morning” team – so no, I have not been part of these discussions but I do work with and consult colleagues from all parties regularly.</p>
4	<p>What’s the best course of action to get a parliamentary vote on a second referendum?</p> <p>Parliament would need to vote on a motion, which must be neutrally worded. Making something neutrally worded when you are talking about Brexit is a challenge! However, there are mechanisms for putting this to a vote.</p> <p>However, the bottom line is that it would require primary legislation, which means more MPs need to walk through the AYE lobby than the NO lobby. At the moment, this looks unlikely. As a whip it is my job to count numbers of possible votes, and there are not enough Tory MPs supporting a second referendum. Also, the Prime Minister and government could decide to block this vote and go straight to a ‘no deal’ Brexit, which some Tories want.</p>
5	<p>Is there a realistic possibility of Parliament being able to trigger a 'People's Vote' on the deal - or no deal?</p> <p>This will not be easy. Remember that the Prime Minister had to be taken to court in order for parliament to get a meaningful vote and she does not have to respect the result of the Parliamentary vote, although I know Keir Starmer, our Brexit Shadow Secretary of State, is working on ways to force her to respect it.</p>
6	<p>What does a meaningful vote mean for the Labour Party?</p> <p>A truly meaningful vote must be on whether we accept a deal, or push it back to the negotiators to come up with something better. It cannot be a choice between no deal and a bad deal.</p> <p>However, Tory MP Dominic Grieve let us down on this. He put forward an amendment for a meaningful vote with powers to require the Prime Minister to follow the will of Parliament, which had significant cross-party support, including from the Labour party. He then did a deal with the Prime Minister and backed down, voting against his own amendment and taking some of his supporters with him. This meant that despite Labour efforts, this amendment fell. At the moment we will be voting on whether to reject or accept any eventual deal. This is not a truly meaningful vote but Sir Keir Starmer is working on ways to force the Prime Minister to respect the will of Parliament in spite of this setback and I trust Keir on this.</p>
7	<p>When we discussed a new vote there seemed to be only two or three options. None of these options seem to offer a new and, as such consolidatory, option – with reference to the divisions discussed today. Is there a new path to empower people in our EU relationship: the option of remain AND reform? This would be a 4<sup>th</sup> option to vote on. Altering the perception of the UK as a victim of the EU.</p> <p>If there is a further public vote and if, as Labour argues and I support, ‘remain’ is on the ballot paper, it would indeed be on the basis of reform needed, as it was in 2016. Note that the Electoral Commission is not keen on a three option ballot and are very unlikely to support four.</p>
8	<p>Would a possible strategy, in the event of another vote, (1) be for the remain campaign to set out all the claims made by the leave campaign to show how they were untrue? (2) For businesses to speak up about the problems they would encounter.</p>

	<p>1. That sounds similar to the Remain campaign from 2016 – we tried our best to show that the claims were not true and this was labelled as ‘Project Fear’ and we lost the referendum. Nevertheless, a lot of us are indeed trying to show the truth about the claims in the 2016 referendum.</p> <p>2. If only they had done this in 2016 things may have been different! To my intense frustration, in 2016 businesses mostly did not make clear the problems they would encounter, which they described to me privately but refused to make public. Some of them are now starting to be more open about the consequences and if there is another public vote it will be essential that they speak up more widely.</p>
9	<p>More leavers died than remainers that have joined the voting population. Why don't Labour ask firmly for another EU Referendum or even best of 3!</p> <p>I know that this is a view some people hold, but it does not constitute a strategy for winning the arguments and the vote. Plus, if Remain had won, we would not appreciate it if the Leave campaign kept asking for another and then another vote. As I said in the meeting we need to look at the causes of Brexit and listen to the people who voted for it. I don't think waiting for people to die will undo all of the causes of Brexit.</p>
10	<p>Does a second referendum threaten our democracy for the United Kingdom?</p> <p>We do not need to stick to the result of the referendum indefinitely. People change their minds all the time. We had another referendum in the 1970s, but this was not seen as the final word on the EU.</p>
11	<p>What is the best strategy to defeat Brexit? Is it (a) to seek a 2<sup>nd</sup> vote or to (b) seek to bring down the government and win an election and then revoke article 50 or (c) another plan? Thanks for the great job you are doing.</p> <p>Thanks for your support. I cannot give a clear, unambiguous answer to this question, sadly. I have concerns about relying solely on another public vote. At the moment I would like us to push for pausing Article 50 (which would delay the departure date) and campaign for a relationship which is as close as possible to Single Market and Customs Union,. This would give us most, though not all, of the benefits of our current relationship, but still be leaving – a compromise which could potentially unite much of the country. But the Tory government seem determined to leave at any cost. We have to keep making the arguments for this being a very bad idea for jobs, the environment and our standing in the world and I will do just that.</p>
12	<p>Why are the left wing and New World Order so contemptuous and hostile toward democracy when the first referendum did not go as they would have it?</p> <p>As I've repeatedly said there needs to be a parliamentary vote on the Brexit deal first before we look at a people's vote. Whilst I know that many people share your view that another referendum would be hostile to democracy I also know many who feel that by not being consulted again they are not being listened to.</p>

## 2016 referendum questions

1	<p>Why isn't Labour calling for an inquiry into the criminality, both proven and alleged, of the Leave campaigns during the 2016 referendum?</p> <p>I believe (and it is Labour policy) that sitting and former Government Ministers who worked with Vote Leave during the referendum campaign should come before the House of Commons and explain their role in the illegal activity and its cover-up. It must be</p>
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	<p>investigated whether they broke the ministerial code during their time working with Vote Leave.</p> <p>Tom Watson, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party has asked for this.</p>
2	<p>Given the seemingly overwhelming common sense view that Brexit is a disaster for the country and European influence in the world as a whole, why are we still heading towards it and where are the political leaders with the guts to pull us back from it?</p> <p>I agree with you that Brexit is likely to be a disaster, particularly if we have no close relationship arrangement with the EU. Unfortunately, the Tory government do not see it as a disaster and seem recklessly determined to leave at any cost. I am doing my best to keep the UK as close as possible to the EU.</p>
3	<p>The 2016 referendum unleashed a concept known as "the will of the people". What do you think it is likely the people's will is going to demand after Brexit?</p> <p>I do not know but I hope it is a change in government, so we can have a Labour government, dedicated to funding our schools and our health service properly, investing in the skills, infrastructure and knowledge we need to create a sustainable economy, and as close a relationship with the EU as possible.</p>
4	<p>Has Tom Watson received a reply to the letter he sent to Jeremy hunt on October 4<sup>th</sup> regarding possible Russian meddling in the Brexit campaign and his request for a Mueller style investigation?</p> <p>Not that I know of but I am monitoring this.</p>
5	<p>What is your opinion on the police refusing to prosecute the Vote Leave campaign, despite evidence from the Commons, due to "political sensitivities"?</p> <p>PS. Arron Banks already argues for the purge of Brexit constituencies with remain MPs.</p> <p>I believe that the Met need to further explain their decision why a police investigation has not yet happened.</p> <p>From what I know of Arron Banks he wouldn't want many Labour MPs regardless of their views on Brexit.</p>

## Labour's position on Brexit

1	<p>What is Labour's agreed position on Brexit?</p> <p>Labour has six tests for the Government's deal. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retaining strong, collaborative relationship with EU</li> <li>2. Ensuring same benefits currently enjoyed within single market and Customs Union</li> <li>3. Fair migration system for UK business and communities</li> <li>4. Protecting workers' rights and employment protections</li> <li>5. Protecting national security and tackling cross-border crime</li> <li>6. Delivering for all nations and regions of the UK</li> </ol> <p>These tests are based on what the former Brexit Secretary David Davis set as the government's aim in Parliament. You can read more about this on the BBC's 'Fact Check' on Labour's plan for Brexit <a href="#">here</a>. These tests are important, because as Her Majesty's Opposition it is our constitutional role to hold government to their promises and to challenge them to do better.</p>
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	<p>At the moment, it is difficult to see how the Prime Minister could meet all these six tests, unless she negotiated a deal to keep us in an arrangement similar to the one Norway is in with the EU – and she has stated she does not want to do that. If she did achieve the six tests, this would be a much better basis for leaving the EU than no deal, and arguably a reasonable compromise, given that it would give the UK most of the benefits, rights, protections, trading ability and rights to work across the EU that we currently enjoy as members, but still constitute leaving.</p>
2	<p>If a general election was called how would Labour present Brexit in its manifesto: would an option of Remain be presented?</p> <p>I don't know. It depends on the state of the negotiations, why an election was called, when the election was called, as well as hundreds of other factors.</p>
3	<p>Why should I vote Labour when their policy on Brexit is so unclear?</p> <p>You can read about our policy on Brexit on the BBC's Fact Checker pages <a href="#">here</a>. I do appreciate that the whole process and our role in it can seem unclear. One reason for confusion is that Labour is having to define its policy as the Opposition, during a fast paced negotiation where the Government's view has changed weekly or daily.</p>
4	<p>On balance, how many seats would Labour expect to lose/gain at the next election by doing the patriotic thing and seeking to reverse article 50 with immediate effect?</p> <p>I don't know, it depends if people change their mind about how they voted in the 2016 referendum. Based on models I've seen I think Labour would lose a lot of leave seats and gain a handful of remain seats. However, this may now be out of date.</p>
5	<p>Does the Labour Party face an irreconcilable problem because its core voters are Brexiteers?</p> <p>I'm fortunate that as a Remainer, I represent a seat that voted remain. For a lot of MPs it is hard that their seats (which have been Labour for a long long time) voted leave and they instinctively want to remain. Part of being an MP is listening and they have to listen to their constituents. I know that my colleagues tell me that some of their constituents voted Leave because they felt shut out of the country's wealth, particularly as austerity started really hurting people under the LibDem/Tory Coalition government and they could see the effects on their local health services, schools and pay packets.</p>
6	<p>Is there a chance that the Labour party leadership will adopt an unequivocal pro-european stance?</p> <p>I'm pro-EU, the Labour manifesto on which I was elected in 2015 was pro-EU and I remain pro-EU. Jeremy Corbyn has not made a secret of the fact that he is sceptical about the EU. But he also understands that party democracy is very important.</p> <p>At Labour Party conference I saw a lot of T-shirts that said "Love Corbyn, hate Brexit". I think this is an important distinction. Most Labour members want to stay in, but many of our traditional supporters voted to leave. I believe Jeremy is listening to that and indeed his position has shifted over the last two years.</p> <p>Almost all parties are divided on Brexit, including the Tories, Lib Dems and the Greens.</p>
7	<p>Is Jeremy Corbyn be prepared now to push to ring fence rights for EU citizens in this country as they stand at present?</p> <p>Labour has consistently called on the Government to unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK and we have pushed amendments to legislation to support and protect EU citizens. Unfortunately these were voted down by the Tory government.</p>

8	Do you agree that it might be a winning move for Labour to endorse BOTH a radical economic and infrastructure boost for areas that have been left behind AND a referendum on Brexit based on a single transferable vote?
	Investment in the left-behind areas is crucial for us to help make a sustainable economy providing equality of opportunity across the country and that should help. As I have said, we will put the option of a further referendum on the table if Parliament votes down the Brexit deal.
9	Can Labour give any assurances that if there were a general election before March and they won, Michel Barnier has the backing of the EU27 to extend the Article 50 period to allow for either further negotiation or a Peoples vote?
	Delaying Article 50 is something that has been floated by Emily Thornberry and from what I understand the EU are open to it. I think it is unlikely that there will be an election before March however.
10	What is Labour Party policy should 1. Brexit go ahead 2. The Party is elected to government
	I imagine that any party policy would depend on the deal (or lack of a deal) that Labour inherits.
11	Does Labour want the UK to be a member of the EU, or not? And <u>your</u> position?
	<p>I want the UK to stay in the EU. If this is impossible then I want the closest possible relationship, which should be a form of Single Market and Customs Union relationship – this would give us most of the benefits, rights and protections we currently enjoy as full members and would be better than leaving with no deal. Most Labour members want to stay in, but many of our traditional supporters voted to leave, so it’s complicated.</p> <p>Almost all the major parties are split on Brexit.</p> <p>Labour’s view (and my view) is that should the Government’s deal not meet the six tests then Labour will vote against the governments deal. if Theresa May cannot not reach a Brexit deal with the EU, or parliament votes against an agreement, then Labour will seek a general election. If that is not possible then Labour’s view is that all options should be on the table including a public vote with remain as an option.</p>
12	If there is a general election, what sort of deal do you imagine Jeremy Corbyn bringing back that would pass the six tests?
	<p>We put those tests down because they were things that were promised by the Tories. And Theresa May said that they would be met.</p> <p>It would be possible to compromise on a close relationship which met those six tests with a negotiated form of Single Market and Customs Union style of relationship, which should give us most of the benefits, rights and protections we currently enjoy as full members.</p> <p>However, the Tory government repeatedly rules out such a deal, and the Prime Minister’s Chequers statement does not fulfil that aim, so it is unlikely that she will come back with a deal which meets the six tests.</p> <p>If we were in government, Keir Starmer would be leading the negotiations and he has been meeting regularly with Michel Barnier and others in Brussels throughout the last two years and working hard on the options. I would trust Keir over Dominic Raab (and previously David Davis) any day.</p>

13	<p>The Labour movement has always been one of solidarity, of forging and strengthening links both nationally and internationally. That has brought about most of the great social reforms over the last century here and in Western Europe. How can the Labour Party possibly contemplate allowing all that to be thrown away because a bunch of toffs, who see it in their ideological interests to reverse those reforms, sold a pack of lies and false promises to the British people?</p> <p>It's tricky, as most Labour members want to stay in, but many of our traditional supporters voted to leave. I have found that when talking to traditional Labour supporters who voted Leave that telling them they were lied to isn't helpful and won't convince anyone. In fact telling people they were lied to by 'a bunch of toffs' might come across as patronising.</p>
14	<p>"Many people are sick of Brexit". I agree but for me, as I suspect for many other people across the country, the sickness arises from the disgraceful behaviour, showboating and manoeuvring of many of our so-called elected representatives when dealing with one of the most important issues for the people of the UK of this generation.</p> <p>My experience as the local MP, from what people tell me in their many emails, the public meetings and on the doorstep and street, is that they are sick of hearing about it, or feel that we might as well get on with it, even though most of them do not want Brexit. Yes, I agree that there has been and still is some disgraceful and reckless behaviour from some politicians. I have also seen and continue to see many very dedicated politicians working very hard on the best possible route out of this situation for the country, often to the detriment of their own positions.</p>
15	<p>According to a recent survey in the Observer, Brexit is currently costing Britain £500m a week. Therefore, Brexit cannot possibly pass Labour's six tests. So when is Labour going to change the public discourse and talk of "if", not "when" Brexit happens?</p> <p>I have also heard that figure.</p> <p>As for passing the six tests, it looks doubtful whether any deal the government will bring back will pass them. I cannot speak for the Labour leadership about the exact wording of the messages but I don't think changing the wording from 'when' to 'if' is what is going to get us out of this situation. I think we need to highlight the damaging impact of Brexit on our country and the need for us to retain the closest possible relationship with the EU, which I am doing, as are most Labour MPs.</p>

## Future relationship with the EU

1	<p>Is it politically possible to rescind Article 50 and give the country time to think and debate properly about the pros and cons of Brexit? It is after all a voluntary withdrawal not an expulsion</p> <p>I can't answer for the government. I see this as an option and one we will certainly have to consider if, as I expect, Parliament votes down the government's Brexit deal as inadequate.</p>
2	<p>What are the chances of us remaining in the EU?</p> <p>It is difficult to say at this stage. Unfortunately it seems unlikely when we have a government which is recklessly determined to leave at any cost.</p>
3	<p>Currently the UK helps to shape EU laws. As full members of the EU, we can veto or opt-out.</p> <p>Does it not make sense to <u>remain</u> in the EU rather than <u>Leave</u> and (subsequently) re-apply? In this way, we'd preserve the opt-outs negotiated historically</p>

	That is the argument a lot of us made during the referendum. It is something I still believe. I do not want us to leave.
4	<p>A number of people have suggested that a Canada++ arrangement would be easy to achieve, however in an interview on Radio 4 the negotiator of the Canada deal explained this is unlikely as the Canada deal stipulates that it will automatically benefit from more favourable elements offered to other countries.</p> <p>How can we ensure that politicians give us fuller and more accurate information instead of simplistic “this way will be easy” rhetoric?</p> <p>We can’t stop politicians from exaggerating or giving simplistic rhetoric, that has always happened and always will, but we can challenge them, either through speaking to them or by voting them out of office. That’s part of democracy. I’ve challenged the government many times on their false promises and damaging impact and will continue to do so.</p>
5	<p>What is being done to protect established trade agreements between the UK and EU countries?</p> <p>What can we do if the “deal” negotiated by May from Brussels is bad news for Britain?</p> <p>Our trade agreement between the UK and the EU is known as the Single Market and a customs union. So unfortunately very little is being done to protect this agreement. As a member of the EU, we also have around 80 agreements with other countries outside the EU, and the future of these agreements looks uncertain. Most of them took many years to negotiate, and countries may want to make additional demands of the UK once it is outside the EU. Liam Fox said negotiating new deals would be extremely easy. This was a lie.</p> <p>If the deal is bad for the UK, I would hope that the government would go back and negotiate a better one. I had little hope of David Davis doing this, and not much more hope about Dominic Raab. Keir Starmer would do a much better job.</p>

## What people can do

1	<p>Is there anything we can do apart from signing petitions?</p> <p>Talk to people who voted leave and listen to their concerns and try to understand them – if we have another public vote this will help inform your campaigning.</p> <p>If you have friends in constituencies with Leave-supporting MPs then encourage them to write to their MP.</p> <p>Discuss with your colleagues, boss and trade unions what the impact of Brexit could be (or already is) on your job and place of work and let me know.</p> <p>If you are the boss, prepare for the ‘no deal’ Brexit. There is a lot you can do, including consulting Business West, contacting me to arrange a meeting for your business network and looking at the government’s ‘no deal’ website pages.</p> <p>If you are from one of the other EU 27 countries, or if you are a UK citizen working in one or more of the other EU countries, take legal advice now on what steps you need to take to give yourself the maximum possible chance of retaining your rights to live and work where</p>
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	<p>you are now. The UK government has made commitments but they are not law yet, so do not take anything for granted. I will continue to push the government on this, as we need the Immigration Bill to go through Parliament to give clarity. Other EU countries are starting to make announcements about this, so if you live in or work in another EU country you need to take advice in that country.</p>
2	<p>Although I realise that we must try to “work together for the best possible outcome”, I find it unacceptable that we should be obliged to consider and passively accept the opinions, wishes and actions of the Brexiteers without opposing them strongly, particularly and despite evident proof that they have absolutely no consideration towards those of the Remainers and no regard for the rules. They conveniently forget that we are not exactly a “minority”, that although the procedures of the referendum were far from straightforward and transparent, still 48% of us voters expressed the wish to remain in the EU and will have to live with the consequences of leaving it.</p> <p>I can understand how frustrating it is to feel not listened to about Brexit. Particularly when it feels like the government are listening more to their most diehard Brexit supporting MPs rather than the country as a whole. We do however need to speak to people who voted leave and still feel that way, despite the stories of lies and broken laws. If we don’t listen to them, then they have no reason to listen to us.</p> <p>But my primary duty, as an MP representing a majority Remain constituency, and as a pro-EU MP, is to push for the needs, wishes and views of the 48% and I am doing just that.</p>
3	<p>A lot of us hear Brexit and switch off. How do we keep public engaged and hold the government to account?</p> <p>The second part of that is my job. I have a long list of things I am doing <a href="#">on my website</a>, and I add to it every week, challenging government ministers whenever possible.</p> <p>Engaging the public is more tricky. On the doorstep, I find most people are sick of hearing about Brexit. But it is important that whatever happens in March 2019, we know what is happening, and this does mean being willing to discuss difficult matters. I suggest starting by talking to colleagues about the impact of Brexit and how to prepare for the worst. Help them understand the concrete impact of Brexit on their lives.</p> <p>We also need to speak to and most of all listen to people with different opinions. Ignoring them won't make them go away. That may be difficult and upsetting. But we have to be willing to demonstrate what we want others to do, by being willing to listen.</p>

## Ramifications of Brexit

1	<p>Are there any plans for the impact Brexit could have on unemployment levels if companies chose to leave the UK?</p> <p>The government are apparently preparing plans but refuse to let MPs scrutinise them.</p>
2	<p>Please update us on the latest actions and measures to end the hostile environment for migrants and EU nationals</p> <p>It is my understanding that the Home Secretary is pausing the hostile environment policy but I think this is too little, too late. I would like to see this policy - which has ruined people's lives - ended for good.</p>

	<p>As your MP, I am working on an alternative vision for our immigration policy. This means working with Labour colleagues and other MPs from other parties on how we can reform our immigration system to be humane, treat refugees properly, welcome people with different backgrounds and skills and protect workers' rights. This is, along with Brexit as a whole, is my top work priority this year.</p>
3	<p>With the NHS haemorrhaging nurses and recent data showing more left the register than joined, how can we ensure EU nurses working in the UK healthcare sector both NHS, and independent, remain in the UK?</p> <p>Currently EU nurses earn points for the years they work in the UK which help them then get a job in their home country. If we leave what happens to those points? No one is telling them/knows!</p> <p>I am grateful to you for letting me know about this. I am following this up, with meetings with local representatives of the Clinical Commissioning Group and Hospitals and in Written Parliamentary Questions. Do let me know if you would like me to come and discuss this with you and your colleagues.</p>
4	<p>What is your solution for the Irish Border <u>if</u> we leave with no deal?</p> <p>Leaving with no deal leaves no solution. I would prefer us to stay in the EU and if not, a customs union, which Labour proposes and the government of Ireland supports.</p>
5	<p>What are the current plans of the government for workers' rights?</p> <p>I can't speak for the party of government, the Tory Party, but you can judge their aims from the fact that my party, Labour, put forward several amendments to the Withdrawal Bill to protect workers' rights, but the Tories voted them down.</p> <p>Successive Tory governments have shown that we need that backstop of the EU to protect workers, the Tories cannot be trusted to protect our rights.</p>
6	<p>What will be the impact on Africa if we manage to come out of the single market and customs union?</p> <p>I am concerned that if we leave the various trading agreements we have with the least developed countries, which include many in Africa, they will lose out on the 'Everything But Arms' agreements, which give them tariff and quota free access to EU markets on all goods except arms. If we come out of these arrangements this could restrict their abilities to trade with us on this basis. This could then damage their economies.</p>
7	<p>What is the purpose of the "registration" of EU citizens and what are the "concerns"?</p> <p>The purpose of the registration is that the government is keen to end the freedom of movement and needs to know who from the EU is in the country in order to do this.</p> <p>The concerns are that we've seen how the Home Office has been dealing with the fallout from the Windrush scandal and it isn't good enough. Also, none of the proposals are law until the government brings the Immigration Bill to Parliament and it goes through all the legislative stages – I have been pushing the government on this as people deserve clarity and certainty.</p>
8	<p>To what extent are we heading for another economic crash?</p> <p>Unfortunately, this seems possible. We have flatlining productivity in this country. Very little was done by the Lib Dem/Tory Coalition government or subsequent Tory government to remedy the problems leading to the 2008 crash, and Brexit is likely to negatively affect our economy, according to all respected economic forecasts.</p>

9	Will the settled status scheme for EU citizens still be valid with no deal Brexit? Wasn't it passed as a law by Parliament in July?
	<p>The government say that the rights of settled EU-27 citizens will still be protected. But in my work helping constituents, far too often the Home Office does things it should not have done, so understandably there are anxieties.</p> <p>In any case, it will be very hard to create a new system for registering EU nationals living here in time. I have seen the proposals for the new registration system and it seems there are still some flaws. As I have said above, we need an Immigration Bill to give certainty.</p>