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# WHAT THE MANIFESTOS SAY 2017

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## BREXIT, DEVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

# MANIFESTO POLICY PROPOSALS

## BREXIT, DEVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

This document sets out the key commitments on Brexit, devolution and constitutional reform in the 2017 Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, UKIP and Green national manifestos.

■ CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO  
<https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

■ LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO  
[www.labour.org.uk/manifesto2017](http://www.labour.org.uk/manifesto2017)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PARTY MANIFESTO  
[www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto](http://www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto)

■ UKIP MANIFESTO  
[www.ukip.org/manifesto2017](http://www.ukip.org/manifesto2017)

■ GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO  
<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/green-guarantee>

# Brexit

## ■ CONSERVATIVES

- Negotiate a new deep and special partnership with the European Union (EU), which will allow free trade between the UK and the EU's member states. (p15 and p35)
- Ensure immediate stability by lodging new UK schedules with the World Trade Organization (WTO), in alignment with EU schedules to which we are bound whilst still a member of the EU. (p15)
- Seek to replicate all existing EU free trade agreements and support the ratification of trade agreements entered into during our EU membership. (p15)
- Continue to support the global multilateral rules-based trade system and introduce a Trade Bill in the next parliament. (p15)
- Create a network of Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners to head nine new regional overseas posts, leading export promotion, investment and trade policy overseas. (p15)
- Reconvene the Board of Trade with a membership specifically charged with ensuring that we increase exports from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as England, and that trade policy is directly influenced by every part of the UK. (p15)
- Take a more active role in supporting British consortia to win the largest and most innovative contracts around the world. (p15)
- Ensure that small and medium-sized businesses are able to identify the right markets and sectors to win vital contracts abroad. (p15)
- Produce a comprehensive 25 Year Environment Plan that will chart how we will improve our environment as we leave the EU and take control of our environmental legislation again. (p26)
- Use the structural fund money that comes back to the UK following Brexit to create a United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund, specifically designed to reduce inequalities between communities across our four nations. The money that is spent will help deliver sustainable, inclusive growth based on our modern industrial strategy. The design of the fund will be consulted on, including with the devolved administrations, local authorities, businesses and public bodies. (p35)

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- No deal is better than a bad deal for the UK. (p36)
  - Secure the entitlements of EU nationals in Britain and British nationals in the EU. (p36)
  - Maintain the Common Travel Area and maintain as frictionless a border as possible for people, goods and services between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (p36)
  - Workers' rights conferred on British citizens from our membership of the EU will remain. (p36)
  - Pursue free trade with European markets, and secure new trade agreements with other countries. (p36)
  - Work together with Europe in the fight against crime and terrorism, and collaborate in science and innovation. (p36)
  - No membership of the single market or customs unions. (p36)
  - Determine a fair settlement of the UK's rights and obligations as a departing member state, in accordance with the law and in the spirit of the UK's continuing partnership with the EU. (p36)
  - Enact a Great Repeal Bill which will convert EU law into UK law. Once EU law has been converted into domestic law, Parliament will be able to pass legislation to amend, repeal or improve any piece of EU law it chooses, as will the devolved legislatures, where they have the power to do so. (p36)
  - As powers return from the EU, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each devolved administration but without creating new barriers to living and doing business within our union. In some areas, this will require common UK frameworks. (p37)
  - No repeal or replacement of the Human Rights Act while the process of Brexit is underway but the human rights legal framework will be considered when the process of leaving the EU concludes. The UK will remain signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights for the duration of the next Parliament. (p37)
  - Establish an immigration policy that allows us to reduce and control the number of people who come to Britain from the EU, while still allowing us to attract skilled workers. (p55)
- **LABOUR**
- Scrap the Conservatives' Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis on retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union. (p24)
  - Immediately guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals living in Britain and secure reciprocal rights for UK citizens who have chosen to make their lives in EU countries. (p24)
  - Drop the Conservatives' Great Repeal Bill, replacing it with an EU Rights and Protections Bill that will ensure there is no detrimental change to workers' rights, equality law, consumer rights or environmental protections as a result of Brexit. (p25)

- Throughout the Brexit process, make sure that all derived laws that are of benefit – including workplace laws, consumer rights and environmental protections – are fully protected without qualifications, limitations or sunset clauses. (p25)
- Seek a Brexit deal that delivers for all regions and nations of the UK. (p27)
- Introduce a ‘presumption of devolution’ where devolved powers transferred from the EU will go straight to the relevant region or nation. (p27)
- Ensure there is no drop in EU Structural Funding as a result of Brexit until the end of the current EU funding round in 2019/20. (p27)
- Ensure that no region or nation of the UK is affected by the withdrawal of EU funding for the remainder of this Parliament. (p27)
- Legislate to guarantee that Parliament has a truly meaningful vote on the final Brexit deal. (p27)

#### ■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Second referendum on the exit deal from the EU. (p9)
- Unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK. (p10)
- Simplify the requirements for EU nationals to obtain permanent residence and UK citizenship. (p10)
- Maintain access to the single market and freedom of movement. (p10)
- Fight to ensure social rights and entitlements, such as the right to 52 weeks’ maternity leave and rights to annual leave. (p11)

- Maintain the EU’s environmental standards in UK law. (p11)
- Protect support for domestic industries such as farming, tourism and the creative industries, as well as regional support for deprived areas. (p11)
- Campaign against any reduction in investment in UK universities and for their right to apply for EU funds on equal terms. (p11)
- Retain traveller and tourist benefits such as the European Health Insurance Card, reduced roaming charges and pet passports. (p11)
- Ensure that the priorities and long-term interests of the nations of the UK are fully taken into account during negotiations. (p11)
- Work with devolved parliaments and assemblies to allocate to them any powers repatriated as a result of Brexit in their areas of responsibility, and ensure that the devolution of any repatriated powers or responsibilities does not disadvantage the nations of the UK. (p91)

#### ■ UKIP

- Repealing the European Communities Act 1972 should be the first, not the last step in the leaving process. (p6)
- Withdraw from the EU unilaterally. (p6)
- All EU laws could remain in place temporarily, until they are repealed individually, amended, or allowed to stand. (p6)
- Legislate to repeal the European Elections Act 2002 to ensure no British national can stand for election to the European Parliament in 2019. (p7)

# MANIFESTO POLICY PROPOSALS

## BREXIT, DEVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- Implement the referendum decision according to our own requirements, and then agree the terms of our separation. (p7)
- Once the UK has left the EU, EU flags will not be allowed to be flown from public buildings. (p7)
- Declare 23rd June Independence Day, and make it a bank holiday. (p7)
- Britain must be completely free from the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, and free to relinquish our membership of the European Court of Human Rights. (p7)
- No freedom of movement obligation. (p7)
- Set and meet our own annual migration targets. (p7)
- Retake our seat on the WTO and resume the sovereign right to sign trade agreements with other entities or supra-national bodies. (p7)
- Set our own tariff and non-tariff barriers consistent with WTO rules. (p7)
- Leave the EU single market and the customs union. (p7)
- Make no 'divorce' payment to the EU and no contribution to the EU budget. (p7)
- Brexit must be complete before the end of 2019. (p7)
- Cut unnecessary EU regulation from the 88 per cent of the UK economy that is not linked to trade with EU countries. Prioritise free trade agreements with non-EU countries. (p12)
- Protect workers' rights once we have left the EU: leaving the EU must not usher in any kind of 'race to the bottom' on employment rights. (p14)
- Coastal towns will have top ranking when it comes to national successor funds to the European Regional Development Fund. (p15)
- Close any loopholes in reciprocal healthcare arrangements, making sure reciprocity is like-for like, and pursue any moneys owed to us. We will also tighten the application and approval process for EHIC cards and review the scheme as part of our Brexit negotiations with the EU. (p20)
- Some 167,000 EU nationals work in the health and social care. UKIP would guarantee their right to remain here, whatever the EU decides with regard to the rights of British citizens overseas. (p20)
- Establish a Migration Control Commission and set a target to reduce net migration to zero, over a five-year period. (p33)
- Introduce a new Australian-style points-based system, and a work permit system. (p33)
- Place a moratorium on unskilled and low-skilled immigration for five years after we leave the EU. (p33)
- Operate a seasonal worker scheme based on six-month visas to support those sectors, such as agriculture, which need additional labour for short but predictable periods of time. (p33)
- Allow law-abiding EU citizens living in the UK before Article 50 was triggered the right to stay here indefinitely. We expect the same concession to be granted to British citizens living overseas within the EU. (p34)
- Opt out of the European Arrest Warrant. (p41)

- Repeal Labour's Human Rights legislation and remove the UK from the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. (p41)
- Introduce a new UK Bill of Rights. (p41)
- Continue our close cooperation with our European partners on matters of defence and security once we have left the EU. (p42)

#### ■ GREEN PARTY

- A referendum on the detail of whatever deal is negotiated for Britain's departure from the EU, with the option to reject the deal and remain in the EU. (p9)
- Protect freedom of movement, press for remaining within the single market, and safeguard vital rights for people and the environment. (p9)
- Immediately guarantee the rights of EU citizens to remain in the UK and urgently seek reciprocal arrangements for UK citizens in the EU. (p9)
- Defend the Human Rights Act and UK membership of the European Convention on Human Rights, and reinstate funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. (p21)
- Give Parliament a vote on any new trade deals. (p21)

## Devolution and constitutional reform

### ■ CONSERVATIVES

- Support local growth through combined authorities, mayoralities and local enterprise partnerships. (p24)
- Make each partnership and combined authority responsible for co-ordinating their own local industrial strategy in alignment with our national industrial strategy, bringing together local businesses, political and public sector leaders to drive growth and economic regeneration. Wherever possible, deliver growth funding through these organisations. (p24)
- Give local enterprise partnerships greater weight by backing them in law. (p25)
- Continue to work in partnership with the Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive, in a relationship underpinned by pooling and sharing resources through the Barnett Formula. (p31)
- Work as an active government in every part of the UK, working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish and Welsh governments, and the new devolved authorities in England for the benefit of all our people. (p31)
- With devolution now established in London and other parts of England, we will consolidate our approach, providing clarity across England on what devolution means for different administrations so all authorities operate in a common framework. We will support those authorities that wish to combine to serve their communities better. (p32)

# MANIFESTO POLICY PROPOSALS

## BREXIT, DEVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- For combined authorities that are based around our great cities, we will continue to support the adoption of elected mayors, but we will not support them for the rural counties. (p32)
- Bring forward a Borderlands Growth Deal, including all councils on both sides of the border. (p33)
- Build on the Cardiff Capital region and Swansea Bay City region deals, and bring forward a North Wales Growth Deal, connecting north Wales with northern England. (p33)
- Work with the Welsh Government to encourage further cross-border working, ensuring that the border between England and Wales does not become a barrier to business, education or communities. Foster opportunities between cities in Wales and the rest of the UK, such as linking economic development between Cardiff, Newport and Bristol. (p33)
- As powers return from the EU, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each devolved administration but without creating new barriers to living and doing business within our union. In some areas, this will require common UK frameworks. (p37)
- Continue to modernise and improve our electoral registration process. (p42)
- Legislate for votes for life for British overseas electors. (p42)
- Continue with the current boundary review, while reducing the number of MPs to 600. (p42)
- Retain the first past the post system of voting for parliamentary elections and extend this system to police and crime commissioner and mayoral elections. (p43)
- Retain the current franchise to vote in parliamentary elections at eighteen. (p43)
- Repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act. (p43)
- Legislate to ensure that a form of identification must be presented before voting, to reform postal voting and to improve other aspects of the elections process. (p43)
- Ensure that the House of Lords continues to fulfil its constitutional role as a revising and scrutinising chamber which respects the primacy of the House of Commons, and continue to ensure the work of the House of Lords remains relevant and effective by addressing issues such as its size. (p43)

### ■ LABOUR

- Devolve powers over economic development, complete with the necessary funding. (p86)
- Introduce a 'rural-proofing' process so that all our laws, policies and programmes consider their impact on rural communities. (p88)
- Establish a constitutional convention to examine and advise on reforming of the way Britain works at a fundamental level. The Convention will look at extending democracy locally, regionally and nationally, considering the option of a more federalised country. (p102)
- Reduce the voting age to 16. (p103)
- Create a role for a Minister for England, who will sit under the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and will work with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. (p103)

- Restore regional offices to increase contact between central and local government on the ground. (p103)
- Be guided by public opinion when determining whether to include directly elected mayors in future devolution deals. (p103)
- Extend the Freedom of Information Act to private companies that run public services. (p102)

#### ■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Continue to champion the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine initiatives and invest significant capital resources in infrastructure projects across the north of England and the Midlands. (p44)
- Devolve further revenue-raising powers away from Westminster, to regions from Cornwall to the north-east. We will ensure that any powers devolved are matched by the funding to deliver on the needs of local people. (p44)
- Devolve more decision-making power over key levers of economic development including transport, housing and skills. (p44)
- Encourage local authorities and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to work in partnership with existing business, universities and other business hubs to develop plans for building on already established success in a particular area, including the ability to raise money to incentivise clustering by businesses with particular specialisations. (p44)
- Drastically reduce the powers of central government ministers to interfere in democratically elected local government. (p64)
- Aim to increase the number of neighbourhood, community and parish councils and promote tenant management in social housing. (p64)
- Establish a government process to deliver greater devolution of financial responsibility to English local authorities and any new devolved bodies in England, building on the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. Any changes must balance the objectives of more local autonomy and fair equalisation between communities. (p64)
- Give the devolved administrations the right to sponsor additional post-study work visas. (p77)
- Reform the voting system in local government and Westminster, with votes at 16, and prevent evasion of constituency election spending limits. (p89)
- Greater devolution to Scotland and Wales and secure the political stability of the Northern Ireland Assembly. (p89)
- 'Devolution on demand' for England, letting local areas take control of the services that matter most to them. (p89)
- Ensure that every reasonable effort is made to ensure that those people legally entitled to vote are included on the electoral registers, with far greater efforts in particular to register under-represented groups. (p90)
- Introduce the Single Transferable Vote for local government elections in England and for electing MPs across the UK. (p90)
- Reform the House of Lords with a democratic mandate. (p90)

# MANIFESTO POLICY PROPOSALS

## BREXIT, DEVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- Introduce trials of weekend voting to help raise turnouts in elections. (p90)
  - Establish a UK constitutional convention, made up of representatives of the political parties, academia, civic society and members of the public, tasked with producing a full, codified constitution for the UK, to report within two years. (p91)
  - Deliver home rule to each of the nations of a strong, federal and united United Kingdom. (p91)
  - All areas should however have access to the same opportunities and mayoral authorities should not be ranked higher in terms of the powers with which they can be granted. (p94)
  - Retain the Barnett formula but ensure that the Barnett floor is set at a level that reflects the need for Wales to be funded fairly, increasing the Welsh block grant to an equitable level over the course of the Parliament. (p94)
  - Support an English-only stage in legislation affecting England on a proportional basis, genuinely reflecting the balance of opinion in England. (p95)
- UKIP
- Abolish the House of Lords. (p5)
  - Replace the out-dated Barnett Formula with a fair funding formula based on need. (p10)
  - Strongly advocate a proportional electoral system that delivers a parliament representative of the number of votes cast, while retaining a constituency link. (p58)
  - Reserve postal votes only for those who can show a genuine need. (p59)
  - Create a new English Parliament, with its own First Minister and 375 members elected under the Additional Member system of proportional representation, with one or more from each traditional county or large city and 125 top-up seats. (p60)
  - All four nations will have broadly similar devolved powers and none will have power over matters affecting the whole of the UK, such as foreign policy, defence of the realm, or constitutional matters. (p60)
  - Halve the size of the House of Commons to 325 directly elected members from across the four nations, according to a system of proportional representation. (p60)
  - Pass legislation allowing citizens to influence our legislature directly, by giving them the power to initiate binding referenda on the issues of most importance to them. Every two years, a national referendum will be held on the issues gaining the highest numbers of signatures on approved petitions. The outcome of these referenda would be legally binding and included in the Queen's Speech. (p60)
  - Oppose the 'cabinet' system of local governance, which puts too much power in the hands of too few people. We advocate a committee system, which brings more openness and transparency, and facilitates cross-party collaborative working. (p61)

## ■ GREEN PARTY

- Introduce proportional representation for parliamentary and local elections, and votes at 16. (p21)
- Increase diversity in representative politics, with job-shares, a 50/50 Parliament, and replace the House of Lords with an elected second chamber. (p21)
- Give power to local communities by allowing for 40 per cent of the local electorate to secure a referendum on local government decisions or to recall their MP. (p21)



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