

Leaked manifesto reveals Labour won't give people final say on Brexit deal

The leaked version of the Labour manifesto has confirmed Jeremy Corbyn's Labour won't give the people the final say on the Brexit deal.

This comes after Jeremy Corbyn made clear that Labour believes Britain must leave the EU whatever the agreement reached, in an interview with BBC Look North yesterday.

Former Liberal Democrat party president Simon Hughes said: "Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has waved the white flag and given Theresa May a blank cheque to pursue a divisive Brexit.

"Now this leaked manifesto confirms they are refusing to give the British people the final say over the Brexit deal, no matter how bad it is.

"A better future is available. The Liberal Democrats will stand up to Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain and against a bad Brexit deal that will cost jobs and put up prices.

"We will give you the final say on Brexit – with the option to stay in if you don't like the deal on offer."

£7 billion extra for schools under Liberal Democrat plans

The Liberal Democrats have announced they will invest nearly £7bn more in schools and colleges over the next parliament.

The funding would reverse cuts to frontline school and college budgets, protect per pupil funding in real terms and ensure no school loses out from the National Funding Formula.

Liberal Democrat Shadow Education Secretary Sarah Olney said: "Children are being taught in overcrowded classes by overworked teachers – but Theresa May doesn't care.

"While funding per pupil is set to see the biggest cuts in a generation, billions of pounds are being spent on divisive plans to expand grammars and free schools.

"This extra £7 billion of funding would ensure no school and no child loses out.

"We will reverse crippling Conservative cuts to school budgets and invest to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed."

Liberal Democrat Leader Tim Farron said: "A landslide for the Conservatives would allow Theresa May to take parents across the country for granted and cut our schools to the bone.

"Only the Liberal Democrats can provide the strong opposition Britain needs to stand up for your community.

"Vote for the Liberal Democrats and you can change Britain's future."

The Liberal Democrats will invest £6.9bn more in our schools and colleges over the next parliament, to ensure no school and no child loses out. This goes further than Labour's commitment to reverse £3bn of cuts to school budgets by 2020.

Over the course of the parliament, we will:

- Protect per pupil funding in real terms in schools (£3.3bn)
- Protect further education per pupil funding in real terms (£660m)
- Ensure no school loses out from the National Funding Formula (£1.26bn)
- Protect the pupil premium in real terms (£415m)
- Invest in continuous professional development for teachers (£165m)

The £6.9bn includes £1.1bn of Barnett consequentials for devolved nations.

These plans will be fully costed in the Liberal Democrat manifesto, which will be launched in due course and set all our spending plans out in more detail. This will include reversing the Government's proposed funding for new grammar schools.

The ethnicity pay gap is unacceptable. **The Lib Dems are fighting to close it.**

Today, we at the Lib Dems are proud to announce our plan to introduce mandatory reporting on the ethnicity pay gap for organisations with 250 employees or more.

Why? Because we think it's shocking that racial inequality still exists in 21st century Britain, and because practical measures are needed if we want to combat it.

Employee ethnicity data is currently patchy at best and there is no uniform way to collect it, making monitoring and analysis difficult.

My colleague and friend Jo Swinson, our former Business Minister, commented: 'the country is failing to make the most of talent in the workplace.'

Information is powerful, and while organisations are allowed to get away with keeping patchy records, we'll never know the full extent of the gap.'

She continued: 'Transparent data on the Black and Middle Eastern pay gap will help employers focus on what they need to do to ensure equal opportunities at work for people of all ethnic backgrounds.'

The Liberal Democrats believe that every person, regardless of their ethnicity, should be allowed to reach their full potential in the workplace. We also know that equal pay makes good business sense. In fact, a report from McGregor-Smith conducted in the last Parliament said that ending ethnic minority inequality at work in Britain would boost the economy by £24 billion a year.

My party and I will keep campaigning for equality and keep holding the government to account for its inaction.

Vote Liberal Democrats this General Election.

Big beasts return to Lib Dem front line as Tim Farron announces election campaign team

The Liberal Democrats have announced a new General Election Campaign Team, with former ministers including Jo Swinson, Vince Cable and Ed Davey all returning to the Lib Dem frontbench.

I'm delighted to announce my new campaign team, which sees some big beasts of the party returning to lead our General Election fight.

The team brings together a wealth of experience from former ministers, such as Jo Swinson, Vince Cable and Ed Davey, and I'm thrilled to personally welcome them back.

From challenging the government over their disastrous Hard Brexit plans, to fighting for the NHS and social care, to protecting schools from further Tory cuts; together we will provide the strong opposition – the only opposition – with the power steer the country in a more progressive direction.

Vote for the Liberal Democrats to change Britain's future.

Leader

Tim Farron

President

Baroness Sal Brinton

Chancellor
Vince Cable

Foreign Affairs
Tom Brake

Defence
Baroness Judith Jolly

Europe; International Trade
Nick Clegg

Europe
Baroness Sarah Ludford

Home Affairs
Lord Brian Paddick

Health
Norman Lamb

Education
Sarah Olney

Work and Pensions
Baroness Cathy Bakewell

Business
Baroness Susan Kramer

Energy and Climate Change
Lynne Featherstone

Local Government
Baroness Kath Pinnock

Transport
Baroness Jenny Randerson

Environment and Rural Affairs
Baroness Kate Parminter

International Development
Baroness Shas Sheehan

Culture Media and Sport
Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter

Equalities
Baroness Lorely Burt

Northern Ireland
Baroness Alison Suttie

Young People
Daisy Cooper

Europe/ALDE Liaison
Catherine Bearder MEP

London
Caroline Pidgeon MLA

Justice
Lord Jonathan Marks

Refugees
Amna Ahmad

First Secretary of State
Alistair Carmichael

Election Campaign Spokesperson
Ed Davey
Eluned Parrott
Jo Swinson

Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats
Mark Williams

Cabinet Secretary for Education in Wales
Kirsty Williams AM

£6bn extra a year for the NHS and care

Today, we've announced our first election manifesto commitment; we will invest an extra £6bn a year in our NHS & Social Care system.

This new funding will be paid for through an immediate 1p rise on all rates of income tax.

This funding will be ring-fenced to be spent only on the NHS and social care and will provide vital services with the money they desperately need until a longer-term solution can be found.

This is our flagship spending commitment and our first major policy announcement for the election.

Our manifesto will also set out a 'five-point recovery plan' for NHS and social care services.

As he made the announcement, Liberal Democrat Leader, Tim Farron, said:

"Theresa May doesn't care about the NHS or social care. People are lying on trolleys in hospital corridors and she has done nothing. The truth is you can't have a strong NHS with a Hard Brexit."

"The Liberal Democrats will rescue the NHS and social care. We are prepared to be honest with people and say that we will all need to chip in a little more."

"It is not too late to change Britain's future. The Conservatives want absolute power, Labour are too weak to stand up to them, so we will. The Liberal Democrats will be the strong opposition Britain needs."

Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Health, Norman Lamb, added:

"The NHS was once the envy of the world and this pledge is the first step in restoring it to where it should be."

"A penny on the pound to save the NHS is money well spent in our view."

"Simply providing more money on its own is not enough and that's why this is just the first step in our plan to protect health and care services long-term."

"We also need to do much more to keep people fit and healthy and out of hospital, and that is why this new funding will be targeted to those areas that have the greatest impact on patient care such as social care, general practice, mental health and public health."

This our five-step plan for the NHS & Social Care:

1. Introduce a 1% raise in income tax, generating £6bn a year
2. Ring-fence ALL of this for the NHS and care, investing efficiently and effectively in social care, primary care, mental health and public health
3. Consolidate all health and care taxes into a single, dedicated Health and Care Tax, showing on people's payslips exactly what we spend it on
4. Establish a cross-party health and care convention, consulting and working with patients, the public, NHS staff and care workers, to ensure our systems are sustainable and integrated
5. Introduce an independent agency to monitor health and care budgets, which would report every three years on how much money the system needs to flourish