

PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON BREXIT

The Citizens' Assembly on Brexit brought together 50 randomly selected citizens this autumn to learn about trade and migration issues from a variety of experts and politicians, deliberate with each other, and come to **recommendations on the form that Brexit should take**. Assembly members with diverse views on Brexit worked through the issues in a constructive and cooperative way to reach shared recommendations on an issue which has, to date, been characterised by division.

The findings of the Assembly provide the only evidence on considered **public opinion about the form that Brexit should take** and demonstrate the value of informed and in-depth public engagement on challenging and complex areas of public policy, a model that should be used to inform decision-making around Brexit and other areas of public policy.

- During their first weekend together, the Members heard from **diverse experts** and received **balanced briefing papers** vetted by a **mixed Advisory Board**.
- During the second weekend, Assembly Members **deliberated and reached decisions**. They were supported throughout by **professional, independent facilitators**.
- Feedback from Assembly Members provides strong evidence of the **fairness, balance and quality of the Assembly process**.

RECOMMENDATIONS Following the learning phase and extensive deliberation, the Citizens' Assembly made recommendations on the UK's post-Brexit policies for trade and migration.

- On **trade with the EU**, the Assembly considered four possible options for post-Brexit trade with the EU. Most Members wanted a bespoke UK–EU trade deal.
- On **trade beyond the EU**, the Assembly considered three possible options. Members preferred a customs arrangement that would allow the UK to conduct its own international trade policy while maintaining a frictionless UK/EU border.
- On **migration**, the Assembly voted to retain free movement of labour, but with the UK government exercising all available controls to prevent abuse of the system.
- **If a deal cannot be reached** in negotiations on trade, the Assembly **preferred to stay in the Single Market and Customs Union to no deal at all**. The health of the economy and the desire for a frictionless border were important considerations underlying this preference.

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GUIDELINES FOR BREXIT

Citizens' Assembly Members created a list of priorities for post-Brexit trade and migration policy.

Priorities for trade policy were: 1. Minimise harm to the economy, 2. Protect the NHS and public services, 3. Maintain living standards, 4. Take account of impacts on all parts of the UK, 5. Protect workers' rights, 6. Avoid a hard border with Ireland.

Priorities for migration policy were: 1. Investment in training for UK nationals, 2. Better data on migrants, 3. Sustain public services, 4. Benefit our economy, 5. Responsive to regional need, 6. Better planning of public services.

RECRUITMENT

The 50 members of the Citizens' Assembly on Brexit were selected randomly (with the help of ICM), to reflect the characteristics of the broader population, including their vote in the referendum. Accordingly, the Assembly contained more Members who voted Leave than Remain.

		Assembly members %	population %
Brexit vote	remain	44	34.7
	leave	50	37.4
	did not vote	6	27.8
Social grade	ABC1	50	55
	C2DE	50	45
Age	18-34	28	28.8
	35-54	38	34.4
	55+	34	36.7

MORE INFORMATION

More detailed information – including a full **report of the Citizens' Assembly**, briefing materials, presentations, further endorsements, the structure of the Assembly weekends – is available at <http://citizensassembly.co.uk/brexit/about/>

The Citizens' Assembly on Brexit was organised by an independent consortium of universities and civil society organisations. The project was led by Dr Alan Renwick of the Constitution Unit at University College London in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Westminster, the University of Southampton, Involve and the Electoral Reform Society. The project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council's 'UK in a Changing Europe' programme.