

[The terms for a SNP/Lib Dem/Labour coalition according to Nicola Sturgeon and friends](#)

I do not predict UK election results where I am taking part. The SNP and Lib Dems do, and are predicting a hung Parliament. I see the polls as others do, and read that there could still be a hung Parliament where post election deals would decide how we are governed. I hope that is not the outcome, given the disastrous last months of the last Parliament where no-one had a majority.

Meanwhile some parties are telling us how they would behave if the electorate voted for another stalemate. Nicola Sturgeon has set out her terms to allow a Labour minority government to take office. She wants an early second referendum on Scottish independence, the removal of Trident submarines from Scotland and more money for the NHS. Jeremy Corbyn probably agrees with the second and third, and Labour would doubtless finesse the issue of another referendum in order to get Labour into government.

Jo Swinson seems to have abandoned her rhetoric of expecting a Lib Dem majority. Whilst playing hard to get she has made it crystal clear she would not want to help a minority Conservative government, so it only leaves one option of Labour into office. It might well not be a coalition, but just allowing them to win confidence votes would be sufficient for Labour to take over.

The push for a second Independence referendum in Scotland would be disruptive. It would establish the idea that governments only accept referendum decisions they like and make people vote and vote again to get a reversal. It would invite further uncertainty over Brexit, with the parties concerned wanting a second referendum on that as well. It would plunge the country into another two years or more of constitutional wrangling and confusion, undermine business confidence and get in the way of the new Parliament doing things to improve public services, grow the economy and pursue an strong and consistent foreign and trade policy.

Now is the time for a clear decision. We need a majority government to move on from Brexit and to remind the SNP they had their referendum and promised to accept its result.

[More nurses and student grants](#)

I was pleased to see the recruitment of 50,000 more nurses figure in the

Conservative Manifesto. It also proposes a £5000-£8000 annual maintenance grant for student nurses when training.

I proposed similar ideas for my Brexit bonus budget. The total increase in NHS spending turns out to be £650 million extra a week between 2018 and 2023 on Conservative spending plans.

Tax independence

The Conservative Manifesto, echoing Vote Leave, promises to take back control of our money and our laws. Some are writing in to claim we will have to live with tax harmonisation or a level playing field with the EU after we have left thanks to the withdrawal Agreement.

I do not see it like that. It is most important we are free to set our own taxes. Today in the EU we have got away with setting a lower Corporation Tax rate than many other states, though there have been adverse judgements on other Corporation tax matters making us do as the ECJ decides. We are free to set our own Income tax rates, but are subject to strict controls on VAT which is partly an EU tax.

The government has made clear it will change the list of items subject to VAT once out. We need to assert our own authority over all taxes. The Bill to implement the Withdrawal Agreement contains a sovereignty clause. Once the Implementation period is over EU tax and other laws will no longer apply unless we choose to enact similar measures.

I do not think we will still have to raise or keep up taxes that we want to lower or abolish once out. Debate on the bill will be an important opportunity to clarify this matter. The likely decision to press on and take VAT off some items will be important proof that we have indeed taken back control of our taxes.

Hospital parking charges

Parking as an outpatient or a visitor to a patient is often difficult and expensive at NHS hospitals. I recommended including free parking for patients and visitors in my proposed Brexit bonus budget.

I was therefore pleased to see the case half won in the Conservative Manifesto. It states that free parking will be offered to the disabled, to frequent outpatient attenders, to parents of sick children staying in

overnight and staff working nights.

Policies needed so when we leave we are better off

The government has already carried out two of the essential policy changes for us to be better off. The first is to switch the aim of policy to the promotion of prosperity and growth. The second is to make selective increases in public sector employment with teachers, police and doctors, and to expand worthwhile public investment.

The third must be to cut taxes in a Brexit budget. In a fast moving global economy capital and talent moves to the places with the more attractive tax rates. The UK government has been correct to lower our Corporation Tax rates at a time when the USA, India and others are doing the same. It is also necessary to have competitive personal Income Tax and transaction tax rates. The planned cuts in National Insurance will boost personal incomes and provide a stimulus to consumption.

The UK needs to lower Stamp Duties and CGT on property transactions. Lower rates will also bring in more revenue by encouraging more capital into the UK and fostering more transactions.

The UK needs to reduce the top rate of Income Tax to the 40% that prevailed during most of Labour's time in office. That would help resolve the issue of doctors' pay.

The government should implement its planned cuts to tariffs on imports from non EU sources. All components needed for UK manufacture should be tariff free. All foodstuffs that we are unable to grow for ourselves should also be tariff free.

The UK should expand its freeport strategy and ally them to enterprise zones where it is easy to get permissions and support to base a new or expanding business.