

Press Release: Totnes and S Devon Labour Party

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Sarah Wollaston to join the Liberal Democrats

This evening, Sarah Wollaston MP announced that she is to join the Liberal Democrats after resigning from the Conservative Party in February.

We fully agree with Sarah's statement to her constituents, that what matters is: *'investment in local communities, tackling climate change and supporting the workforce and infrastructure of our NHS, schools and transport'*. These are issues that the Labour Party has campaigned on throughout her time as MP. We have tried to engage her in resisting the closures of our community hospitals and childrens' services, in preventing the roll-out of Universal Credit to the poorest and most disadvantaged in our area, and in standing up for more education funding. We have contacted her about the climate emergency we are facing around the globe, and more recently about the cuts to fire and rescue services that directly threaten her constituents' lives.

Rather than acting on these issues on her doorstep, Sarah has focused instead on her ever-changing political commitments: first to leaving the European Union, then to staying in. First to the Conservative Party, then to Change UK, then to 'Independents for Change', and most recently to the Liberal Democrats. As recently as this month's letter to constituents, she claims that the cuts to Devon's Fire and Rescue services are in fact an 'investment', and that she has 'no powers' to intervene. She used the exact same arguments about the Community Hospitals, despite being the Chair of the Health and Social Services Select Committee at the time the cuts were pushed through. She talks as if she cares, then votes for the axe.

In Parliament, she has always voted with the Conservative government (and before that with the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition) for austerity measures that pushed the cost of the 2008 financial crisis onto public services and ordinary working people. She has also consistently voted:

- against greater regulation of fracking
- against raising welfare benefits and welfare spending
- against a higher tax for those who earn over £150,000
- against tenants' rights and secure tenancies
- against proportional representation
- against retaining the current scope of legal aid
- against trade union rights

(All from 'They Work For You')

Sarah Wollaston now claims the right to represent Remain voters in Totnes and South Devon. On Europe, despite her very public about-turn during the referendum campaign, she has consistently voted against retaining the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights as part of UK law. On the eve of the referendum, when members of Labour, the Green Party and the then Liberal Democrats leafleted the constituency with arguments for remaining in and reforming the European Union, Sarah's voice was absent. She was, as ever, too busy explaining her own changeable position on national television to get involved in the local campaign.

Sarah has been a loyal member of the Conservative Party and we deplore the treatment she has had from her own Conservative Association, who have campaigned to de-select her. But she does not deserve the votes or support of anyone genuinely progressive. We look forward to challenging her on her record at the earliest opportunity.

