Would Britain benefit from a greater use of referendums?

**YES**
- Enhance democracy -> encouraging political participation, banish apathy, engage votes – higher turnout
- Could increase turnouts – Scottish referendum was 85%
- Provide a simple clear answer to a question in a way that general elections cannot.
- Complements representative democracy e.g. to legitimise constitutional change e.g. devolution – the government can consult those they represent.
- Can be useful for overcoming divisions in government
- The case for more referendums as a means of participation has become greater as party membership and turnout have declined.

**NO**
- Turnout is not high even in General Elections -> could lead to voter fatigue and democratic overload
- Undermines representative government and parliamentary sovereignty – decisions are made by the ill-informed public, the public loses confidence in the government to make decisions
- Referendums are likely to give more power to pressure groups – could give too much power to the wealthy and already influential media
- Government controls/sets the question (wording, funding, timing)

Should the UK use more referendums or extend its initiatives?

- The 11 referendums called by Westminster between 1973 and 2011 have focused on a very narrow range of issues – largely devolution
- Low turnouts have brought on questions of legitimacy, going beyond simply questioning whether referendums are compatible with representative democracy. Although there is no great demand for the use of initiatives as used in some US states and some European countries, public support for more referendums is increasing.
- A greater public acceptance if referendums, allied to the prospect of more constitutional reform make it likely that such devices will be used.

Should the UK allow recalls of elected officials?

- A recall election is a device that allows citizens to unseat an elected official before the end of their term in office
- Recalls are only permitted where there is evidence of corruption, negligence or incompetence.
- Although recalls have not traditionally been available to voters in the UK, the 2009 MPs expenses scandal led to the introduction of such a system.
- The 2010 G.E. manifestos of all 3 main parties proposed introducing the power of recall, but little progress has been made.
- The problem with recall elections is that they undermine representative democracy.