

We know the arguments (they're inside if you need a reminder!), and we know it's right – and now is the time to make Votes at 16 a reality!

The Prime Minister has said he wants to look seriously at lowering the voting age, and has launched a Youth Citizenship Commission to do it. Senior government ministers have said they support Votes at 16, the Welsh Assembly supports it and a majority of Members of the Scottish Parliament do as well. 16 year olds in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man are all able to vote.

Votes at 16 has never been closer to success. But we need your help! Get your school council or youth council to pass a motion in support, write to your MP and local councillors, and sign up at www.votesat16.org.uk.

Tell us what you want to do to help the campaign and we'll help you do it!

CAMPAIGN!

FED UP OF BEING IGNORED BY POLITICIANS? FEEL LIKE NO ONE IS LISTENING TO YOUR VIEWS?

Voting is the way we choose those who represent us and make decisions on our behalf – and how we hold them to account for those decisions. 16 year olds are increasingly treated like adults and expected to take their responsibilities seriously – now it's time 16 year olds were given the respect and the right that every citizen deserves.

The Votes at 16 Coalition is a group of nearly 40 organisations campaigning for the voting age in all UK public elections to be lowered to 16.



For more information about the Coalition, or to support the campaign;

www.votesat16.org.uk

info@votesat16.org.uk

020 7928 1622



A LITTLE LEAFLET ABOUT VOTES AT 16

Accountability

All too often politicians and governments ignore our views. Lowering the voting age to 16 would force politicians to listen to us and engage with us when we're at school – because we'll be voting for (or against) them in the next election.

We want it!

Thousands of young people want to see the voting age reduced to 16. The UK Youth Parliament, the Scottish and Welsh Youth Councils, the British Youth Council, the English Secondary Students' Association and other major youth-led organisations in Britain are all campaigning for Votes at 16. The Electoral Commission's public consultation on the voting age in 2004 found that 72% of respondents favoured a voting age of 16. Young people want to be able to vote and take on the responsibility of voting.

We already vote!

Thousands and thousands of young people already vote – for school councils, youth councils, young mayors, and youth parliaments, and in consultations across the country. We take it seriously and think carefully about how we use our vote. Sometimes more young people vote for their youth representatives than in the “proper” elections!

Fairness & consistency

16 is the age at which young people start to make the real decisions about their lives, and many significant rights come into play. At 16 young people can leave home, choose a career, pay taxes, join the armed forces and start a family. These responsibilities should not be divorced from the right to vote.

Citizenship

We are the first generation of voters who have ever needed to study our democracy and the importance of voting. Yet we are denied the right to use this knowledge for at least two further years – possibly seven years. Lowering the voting age to 16 would allow a seamless transition from learning about voting, elections and democracy to putting that knowledge into practice.

Youth Engagement

Lots of people are worried that young people aren't engaged or involved in democracy and society. We're not apathetic – we want to get involved – but only if it will make a difference. Preventing us from participating in elections when we're enthusiastic sends a message that our views aren't valid, and that voting isn't the way to make a difference. If we can't vote when we're 16, why should we bother when we're 18?

you need the vote!