

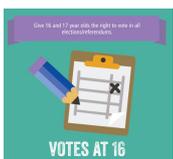


# Youth Parliament

MAKING OUR MARK

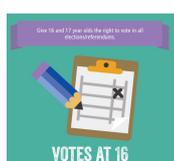


**Votes at 16 Campaign**  
**#votesat16**



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# Campaign introduction

Over the Summer 112,680 young people voted for votes for 16 and 17 year olds as a top issue, following this, Members of Youth Parliament voted to make it UK Youth Parliament's National campaign over the next year. UK Youth Parliament will campaign for 16 and 17 year olds to get the right to vote in all public elections.

**It is important to stress that, this is a year long campaign and so the actions that have been developed will be carried out by MYPs 2016/17 and MYPs 2017/2018. We have the chance to make a big impact so please do share information and actions with your friends and other elected representatives.**

## Campaign Aims:

- Widen the conversation: We want to increase engagement on Votes at 16. Let's keep trending as it raises the profile of the campaign and the fact that it is a priority for young people.
- Find out which decision makers support the campaign: Decision makers can change their minds, we want to keep up to date with who supports the campaign.
- Highlight young people's participation in democracy.
- Increase the number of decision makers who support the campaign: Lobby local councils to pass motions in support of Votes at 16.

## #votesat16

## How are we going to do it? (Campaign Actions):

### Phase 1:

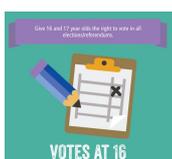
**What: National Action Day of Action**

**When: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**Who: MYPs 2016/2017**

**Aim: Get a clearer picture of what decision makers think about Votes at 16, widen the conversation and bring Votes at 16 before Parliament**

- If MPs support votes at 16
  - Ask them to tweet why they support Votes at 16
  - Share feedback with [ukypg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukypg@byc.org.uk)
- If your MP is not a supporter of Votes at 16
  - Ask them why they do not support Votes at 16
  - Share feedback with [ukypg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukypg@byc.org.uk)



**Phase 2:**

**What: Local Council Motion**

**When: March 2017 to Annual Sitting 2017**

**Who: MYPs 2016/2017, MYPs 2017/2018 and local elected youth representatives**

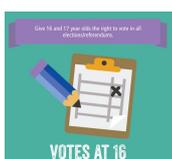
**Aim: To increase the number of local councils in support of Votes at 16**

**What: [Organise debates in schools](#)**

**When: March 2017 to Annual Sitting 2017**

**Who: MYPs 2016/2017, MYPs 2017/2018 and local elected youth representatives**

**Aim: Widen conversation and highlight young people's participation in democracy**



# Phase 1: National Day of Action Meeting Briefing

## Preparing to meet your MP

Meeting Aim: To promote the UK Youth Parliament's National Campaign

Meeting Objectives (what you need to have done by the end of your meeting):

1. Take a picture with your MP.
2. Ask them for a quote endorsing the Campaign.
3. Ask MP to support the campaign by raising its awareness in the House of Commons.

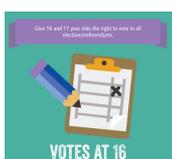
## Useful tips:

- Take your passion with you but also make sure you read the campaign brief on why this campaign is important. You can never be over prepared.
- Take a notepad with you so you can note down any important points but also to remind yourself of any key points.
- Make sure you introduce yourself and mention what you are there to discuss.
- Listen with intent – allow your MP to respond to your points/questions.
- Take your time! Take your time to make your points and respond to any questions.
- Do not doubt yourself – remember 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has'. There are other young people across the UK doing the same thing you are, you are not alone!
- As the meeting is coming to a close, briefly run through what you have discussed and what steps you are going to take to move forward.
- Be sure to take the time to thank your MP for agreeing to meet.
- After the meeting:
  - Send an email/letter to your MP, again thanking them for their time and reminding them that you will keep them updated on the campaign event/assembly.
  - Email [ukypg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukypg@byc.org.uk) your picture with your and their quote.

## Please note:

If your MP is not a supporter of Votes at 16

- Ask them why they do not support Votes at 16. Share feedback with [ukypg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukypg@byc.org.uk)



## Phase 2: How to Pass a Local Council Motion

A motion is a step to introduce a topic for consideration by a group of people so they can form a viewpoint on it. Motions are simply proposals which are submitted at meetings. They can change the policy on matters. Local Councils use motions as part of their policy process. We are asking Members of Youth Parliament and all young people passionate about making a difference, to get their Council to pass motions that support Votes at 16!

Motions must be put forward by local Councillors; and to pass, the motion will need to be approved by a majority of Councillors. [You can see a list of councils who support it here.](#) **If your council already supports Votes at 16, get a Councillor to tell you why Votes at 16 is important and share that with us!**

There are 6 steps:

### Step 1

- Find out who your Local Councillor is and get their contact details. You can do this by visiting your local council's website.

### Step 2

- Approach your Councillor – send them an email and book an appointment to see them. Use the Votes at 16 Campaign briefing to help you express why this is an important issue. The important outcome of this step is that the Councillor agrees to take the motion forward at the next Council meeting.

### Step 4

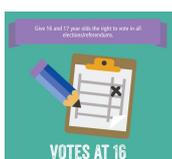
- If your Councillor has a positive response, send them a follow-up email with wording for the Votes at 16 motion, and ask them to tell you the date of the meeting where the motion will be discussed. You can see a motion template below.
- If your Councillor has a negative response – send an email update to [ukypbg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukypbg@byc.org.uk)! Your work has helped us paint a true picture of where more support is needed.

### Step 5

- On the day of the meeting, contact your MP thanking them for taking the motion forward and ask them to keep you informed of the outcome.

### Step 6

- Whether the Votes at 16 motion is approved or not – you have played a big role in making a difference for the campaign. 1) Send your Councillor an email to thank them for getting involved in the campaign. 2) Let us know!



Send an update email to [ukyppg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukyppg@byc.org.uk) - we want to see how many young people are involved in making a difference and if your Council passes a motion we will acknowledge their support!

## Template Motion:

### Support of the Votes at 16 campaign

<Insert name of Council > notes;

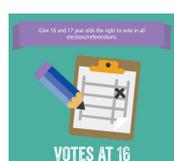
1. That currently 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds are denied the vote in public elections in the UK.
2. That the campaign to lower the voting age is supported by thousands of young people across the UK and that following a nationwide consultation, the UK Youth Parliament voted it as their national campaign for 2017.

This Council believes;

1. 16 and 17 year olds are knowledgeable and passionate about the world in which they live and are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen;
2. Lowering the voting age to 16, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future;
3. People who can consent to medical treatment, work full-time, pay taxes, get married or enter a civil partnership and join the armed forces should also have the right to vote.

This Council resolves;

1. To write to the Leader of the Council, local MPs and the local media to inform them of their decision to support Votes at 16;
3. To promote this policy through its communications;



## Reasons for Votes at 16

- Enable 16 and 17 year olds to influence key decisions that affect their lives.
- Bring equality between 16 and 17 year-olds in across the UK.
- We want the government to align the rights of 16 and 17 year olds with their responsibilities by lowering the voting age.
- Encourage early and continued participation in the political process.

Why:

### **Enable 16 and 17 year old to influence key decisions that affect their lives**

16 and 17 year olds are denied the chance to influence decisions made by politicians about issues that massively affect their lives. Young people's concerns – on issues like tuition fees, living wage and youth service cuts – are often ignored.

There is a generation of 16 and 17 year-olds emerging from the education system that are well equipped to engage and participate in all elections across the UK. Every 16 year-old receiving school education will have completed citizenship classes. This is recent education about the political process and democracy. Young people want to vote – we believe its time to give them the vote.

### **Bring equality between 16 and 17 year-olds across the UK**

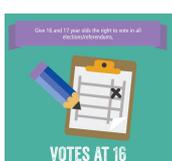
We believe that allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote in selected parts of the UK and not others is unjustified. The Scottish Government took more positive steps towards a more inclusive political system when they passed the Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Bill, which allows all 16 and 17 year olds to vote in all Scottish elections from May 2016. Although this doesn't not allow them to vote in all elections – this was a huge milestone.

Young people's participation in the Scottish Referendum demonstrates that they are eager to engage. 75% of 16 and 17 year olds turned out to vote in a once in a lifetime opportunity to have their say in shaping the future of their country. Other young people across the UK should have the same democratic right.

### **We want the Government to align the rights of 16 and 17 year olds with their responsibilities**

Over 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds are currently denied the right to vote. We believe it is impossible to justify the automatic and blanket exclusion of 16 and 17 year olds from the right to vote because, at 16, the law allows a person to:

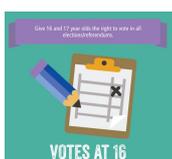
- Give full consent to medical treatment
- Pay income tax and National Insurance
- Obtain tax credits and welfare benefits in their own right
- Consent to sexual relationships
- Get married or enter a civil partnership, with parental consent
- Change their name by deed poll
- Become a director of a company
- Serve in the armed forces but not deployed on the front line



### **Encourage early and continued participation in the political process**

Far too long have 16 and 17 year olds been denied the right to fully participate in democracy. There is a generation of 16 and 17 year-olds emerging from the education system that are well equipped to engage and participate in both this all elections across the UK. Every 16 year-old receiving school education will have completed citizenship classes. This is recent education about political processes and democracy. Furthermore, thousands and thousands of 16 and 17 year-olds are already coming together to engage in direct democracy and encourage community participation and leadership:

- Over 605,000 young people voted in the youth election in the Academic Year
- Over 970,000 young people voted in the UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark Ballot



## Organising debates in school/college

If you would like to organise a debate in your school or college – [follow the link to a](#) great resource provided by the Votes at 16 Coalition.

Be sure to take pictures and let us know so we can celebrate your great work!  
Email us at [ukyppg@byc.org.uk](mailto:ukyppg@byc.org.uk).

