



Act now; make history

Say YES to Votes at 16

There is a massive opportunity to lower the voting age to 16.

We need your help to make history!

What is it?

The Government has set up an independent '[Youth Citizenship Commission](#)'. The Commission is chaired by a Professor and its job is to look at how to get young people more involved in politics. This includes whether to lower the voting age to 16.

In October 2008 it launched '*Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?*'. This lays out all the options for *voting age* reform. It includes information on the current legal position, international comparisons, engagement amongst young people and status of Citizenship Education. The document is available at: www.ycc.uk.net/votes/ycc.pdf

What we want you to do

We need as many young people as possible to tell the Commission that 16 and 17 year-olds should be able to vote. We need you to write to the Commission giving your views on why the voting age should be lowered.

The Commission has said that **all** evidence, opinions and comments received will be taken into account. **Any** supportive letter, email or message online, no matter how brief, will influence the final consultation response. **Sending something is better than sending nothing!**

Where to send it

Written responses can be sent:

Via post to:

Lola Bello, Youth Citizenship Commission,
7.35, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

Via email to: ycc@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Online responses can be sent:

Via a question by questions response form at:
www.ycc.uk.net/votes/consultation/

If you do not want to answer all questions and/or want to offer general support you can send a message online at:

www.ycc.uk.net/haveyoursay/comment/

Top tips for sending your views

If you send a written response please:

- Ensure that you include your name and address (and email if you wish).
- Mark your response "Old enough to make a mark?"
- Say you are a young person
- State you would like your name to be published in the final document
- If you are from a youth forum or youth group, give a summary of the people or organisation you represent.



Key arguments for Votes at 16

Whatever you submit to the Youth Citizenship Commission is up to you. The Votes at 16 Coalition is asking people who believe the voting age should be lower to make a few common arguments:-

- The voting age should be lowered to 16 in all United Kingdom public elections. This includes European, national and local elections.
- Only lowering the voting age in local elections is inadequate. It assumes that either 16 and 17 year-olds are not interested in national and European issues *or* that local elections are a less important element of democracy. Neither of these statements is true.
- Voting is a human right which 16 and 17 year olds are being denied.
- 16 and 17 year-olds are capable of voting. They make many complex decisions about their lives on a daily basis. There is no credible evidence that they are less capable of voting than those over 18.
- Young people are just as passionate about the world they live in as older people. They have views on a wide range of issues. However, unlike older people they are denied a fundamental right of citizenship and opportunity to have a say in governance.
- 16 and 17 year-olds are the only generation to have benefited from statutory Citizenship Education and learning about the electoral system.
- Lowering the voting age to 16 is a just and fair thing to do. Young people can pay tax and join the armed forces but they can not elect the government that spends their taxes or sends them to war.
- There has is wide spread and growing support for lowering the voting age to 16 from politicians, youth organisations and young people themselves.

Some people have said that the questions in the Youth Citizenship Commission document confusing. Below is how the Votes at 16 Coalition will be responding:

Do you think the voting age should be lowered?	YES
Do you think the voting age should remain at 18?	NO
Do you think the voting age should be lowered to 16 in all elections?	YES
Do you think the voting age should only be lowered in local elections?	NO
Do you think lowering the voting age might encourage young people to take part in elections?	YES

Got questions?

Visit: www.votesat16.org.uk

Read: [16 for 16: Sixteen reasons for lowering the voting age to 16](#) published in June 2008 by the Votes at 16 Coalition

Contact: Tom Burke, Children's Rights Alliance for England if you have any questions tburke@crae.org.uk or call 020 7278 8222 ext. 21