

# GENERAL ELECTION

# 2017

**BUT –**  
 young people aged between 16 and 18 *and*  
 those looking forward to being 16 soon  
**CAN'T VOTE UNTIL WE ARE 18.**  
 ARE THERE GOOD REASONS FOR THAT?  
 We are KEVICC students, but these are our own opinions.



**HAVE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?**  
 DEADLINE TO REGISTER: MONDAY 22ND MAY  
 GOV.UK/REGISTER-TO-VOTE  
**GENERAL ELECTION 2017**

Lowering the voting age is a controversial topic. Some people believe that there are many reasons for keeping it as it is. They would argue that younger voters are immature; unable to make balances, reasoned judgements. That they might not be able to deal with the increased responsibility of having a say.

Sam, a teenager who is a few years from being able to vote, agrees with this view: 'Most will only do what their friends do, and will only sign up to vote if their friends tell them to.'

They could be persuaded by their parents' ideology, or what Adam calls 'political propoganda'.

However, with the reach of social media and political parties, couldn't all the other age demographics be just as vulnerable? Debates in school could help youngsters decide for themselves what to do, as long as they represent each party fairly, and without bias.

In Scotland, for the 2013 referendum, the voting age was temporarily lowered to 16 and, two years later, a Bill was passed that made this permanent. The referendum was deemed a real success in getting young people interested in voting, which is why it was extended to happen full time.

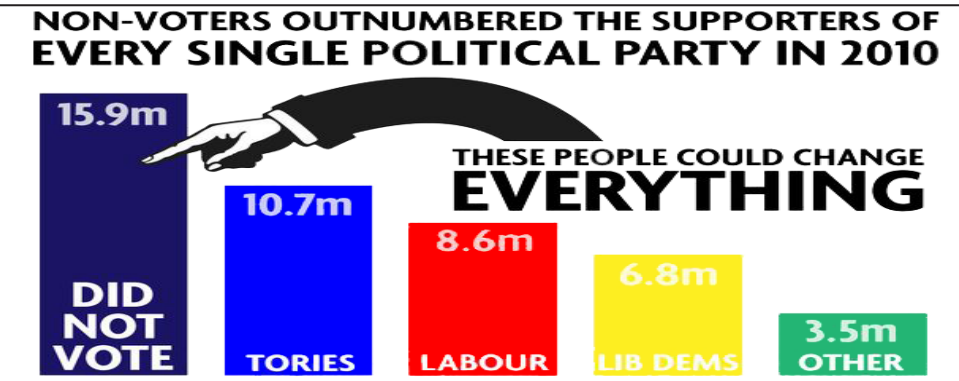
The main argument for lowering the voting age is that young people 'should be able to shape their own future'. In the EU referendum last year ¾ of 18-24 year olds polled voted 'remain'. That number was 39% amongst those aged 65 and over. This shows that the youngest age group wanted to remain in the EU and, though their voices were heard, they were outvoted by older people who will not have 50 or so years outside of the EU.

16 year olds may want a chance to vote, but the question remains – will they have enough maturity to vote, or will they be bothered to go to the Polling Station? 'I don't care,' says Jack. That's the problem. Huw Year 10

There are, of course, reasons why the voting age is where it is, and reasons why it shouldn't be. The main argument for not lowering it seems to be that we 16 and 17 year olds don't know enough about what we are actually voting for and shouldn't make a choice that we don't understand which, to an extent, I agree with. People should be making sure they know what they are voting for and the effects that vote will have.

However, I think there is a much better solution to that problem than denying us the right to vote completely, which is quite simply to educate us! If we don't know enough to vote, then teach us! Making politics mandatory alongside our other humanities would allow us to make a more informed decisions both before, and after, turning 18. I know I would much prefer to know exactly how and why my Prime Minister is spending her time and our money – there is a commitment to bring back fox hunting, but I also know how important I think issues to do with the homeless needing housing, and the funding and future of education and the NHS are. Personally, I want her to concentrate on these issues.

As you have probably guessed, I'm all for lowering the voting age. There are enough of us who do know about politics and who do know what we want to do with our voices and our vote, so that there just doesn't seem to be a valid answer telling me why we can't have it. The economy being built by those in power is the one the younger generation will live in. I, for one, would like a say in who does that. Pearl Year 11



This May and June, the political parties are presenting their campaigns; the news is full to the brim with politically-based stories and announcements and there is only one thing on everyone's mind: the General Election.

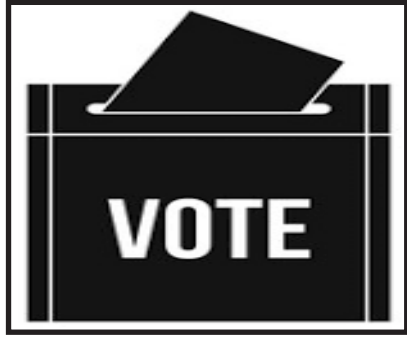
There are many aspects of the General Election that are open for discussion, but there is one particular debate which stands out to me, and that is whether sixteen year olds should have the vote.

At the moment, the opportunity to vote is only open for those of eighteen and over. In 2014, there were 1,534,192 16- and 17-year-olds in the UK, while the number aged 18 or over was 50,909,098, putting 16- and 17-year-olds at 2.9% of the 16+ population. (The Office of National Statistics estimates this percentage will fall to 2.8% in 2016.)

So the people whose futures will actually be affected by the General Election are not presented with the opportunity to have their voices heard, and listened to. Surely it makes far more sense to allow the people who will be affected by any political changes to have a say in who gets the vote, rather than leave out the only part of the population who will actually make choices based on the present and the future, without being influenced by events from the past?

I am, however, aware that it could be argued that some sixteen and seventeen year olds may not be well-informed enough to make a beneficial decision when voting but, then again, I believe the same could be said for some forty year olds... Olwyn Year 10

# POLLING STATION



As a young person, it's difficult to get a well-rounded education in politics so, when we're adults, not being properly informed about different political parties is a major factor in people becoming vulnerable to tedious propaganda.

Politics isn't taught in an engaging way at schools; it's not deemed as important as other subjects because, in the end, we don't get some form of qualification to show. But one of the reasons why it's so important is because we then leave our education to go into a society in which 35% of people don't vote, and will make ill-informed decisions. We need to be taught in a way that isn't swaying towards one party's beliefs; we need to be taught about the detail of each parties' manifestos, and how to vote strategically so as to benefit our own main causes of concerns within society.

In the up-coming snap election, Jeremy Corbyn has offered free university tuition, but I can't vote to say whether I can have this advantage. Instead, elderly people are deciding whether I'll be able to go into further education. The next time I will be able to vote in a general election is when I will be 20, and I will be halfway through my university course.

In secondary education, already creative arts departments are being very restrained under a Tory Government and, by 2019, KEVICC will have lost 20 members of staff. Struggling state schools are often the ones suffering the most.

Creativity is one of the most important parts of education and these are the departments suffering from educational cuts. Showing, and encouraging, children to express individuality is one of the singular parts of education, where there isn't always a black or white answer.

Teresa May supposedly wants to bring in more education on mental health to schools, as 1 in every 3 students suffers from a mental health issue. But how does she intend to do that when, by 2019/2020, the spending per pupil will fall by 6.5%?

We need to ensure that both my own, and future, generations come to have a strong education, so that we can face the up-coming challenges of wars and climate change, and not make improper decisions .... Iona Year 10

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