



UK Youth Parliament Campaign Briefings

This (year) UK Youth Parliament will be launching both campaigns at the same time, to give young people the chance to pick one campaign and carry out actions for the whole year.

The two topics to choose from are Votes at 16 (#Votesat16) and Curriculum for life (#C4L18).

This is not the first time that youth representatives have campaigned on Votes at 16 – this just further highlights how important the issue is! So we keep pushing, knowing that each small action will make a difference and will go down in history.

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Votes at 16

Last summer, over 100,000 young people prioritised Votes at 16 as a top issue; Members of Youth Parliament then 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.

What is the aim of the campaign?

- To Increase number of decision makers on record that support Votes at 16 at a local and regional level.
- To widen the conversation: the more young people having conversations about Votes at 16 and democracy the better, the more decision makers in the room the better!
- To showcase the amazing work young people have done so far!

The actions for the campaign:

- Write to your MP and let them know about the House of Commons Debate and what your campaign plans are for the year.
- Get your Council to pass a motion.
- Young people come together to write a regional letter to Metro Mayors; London Mayor; Scottish Parliament; and Assembly Members, telling decision makers how important Votes at 16 is, and ask them what they can do to help the campaign.
- Host a debate in school/youth group – invite local councillors to attend to get young people talking about democracy and Votes at 16.

Once you have completed your campaign actions let us know by completing our [campaign celebration link online](#).

Action 1: Write to your MP and let them know about the House of Commons Debate and what your campaign plans are for the year

It would be good for you to write to your MP and let them know about the House of Commons debate, what Members of Youth Parliament had to say about the priority issues and what you will be campaigning on.

You can find out who your MP is and their contact details [here](#)

You can find out what Members of Youth Parliament said about the priority issues [here](#)

Action 2 : Get your council to pass a motion

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 this 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 and 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 ukypg@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 Councillor 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!

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;

2. To promote this policy through its communications;

Action 3: Young people come together to write a regional letters to Metro Mayors; London Mayor; Scottish Parliament; and Assembly Members, telling decision makers how important Votes at 16 is, and ask them what they can do to help the campaign.

We know that different decision makers support Votes at 16! What we need them to do now, is tell us how they can help to move the campaign forward!

Why not come together with other youth representatives in your region or Nation and write a letter to decision makers? So where you have a Metro Mayor – write them a joint letter. In London? Write a joint letter to the Mayor of London. In Scotland? Write to MSPs. In Northern Ireland or Wales? Write to Assembly members.

Send a copy to ukyppg@byc.org.uk too! We want to celebrate your actions!

Action 4: Hosting a debate in School

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.

Other actions you can do:

Share your story- Tell us why democracy is important to you! We are keen to showcase how engaged young people are and how they already participate in democracy! Please email your 150 word case study to votesat16@byc.org.uk

Write to your local press - You can make a big impact by getting in touch with your local press to tell them about why Votes at 16 is a priority for young people. Why not write an open letter to your MP and ask your local newspaper to publish it?

Votes at 16 Information

What do we want?

- **Enable 16 and 17 year-olds to influence key decisions that affect their lives**
- **Bring equality between 16 and 17 year-olds 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**

Why?

Enable 16 and 17 year-olds 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 and 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.

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 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

Curriculum for life

Over the last 4 years, young people have voted having a curriculum for life as a priority issue. Following a vote by Members of Youth Parliament in November 2017, UK Youth Parliament will be campaigning on this issue over the next year.

What is the aim of the campaign?

- To keep young people at the heart of the changes being made to PSHE
- Help schools know what young people need from PSHE

The actions for the campaign:

- Write to your MP and let them know about the House of Commons Debate and what your campaign plans are for the year
- Write an open letter to local press called 'My hopes for PSHE are' expressing why it is important; and get other young people to sign it/contribute
- Hold a focus group in school about 'student's hopes for PSHE' and present it to your head of school

Once you have completed your campaign actions let us know by completing our [campaign celebration link online](#).

Action 1: Write to your MP

It would be good for you to write to your MP and let them know about the House of Commons debate, what Members of Youth Parliament had to say about the priority issues and what you will be campaigning on.

You can find out who your MP is and their contact details [here](#)

You can find out what Members of Youth Parliament said about the priority issues [here](#)

Action 2: Write an open letter to your local press called 'My hopes for PSHE are' expressing why it is important; and get other young people to sign it/contribute

It is important that young people's voices remain at the heart of the potential changes to PSHE. One way that you can get this to happen is by writing an open letter to local press, where you express what your hopes for PSHE are, and why young people need a curriculum for life. Write a letter to your local newspaper and ask them to publish it!

Send us a picture of your letter to ukyppg@byc.org.uk

Action 3: Hold a 15-minute group in school discussion about ‘student’s hopes for PSHE’ and present it to your head of school.

This action is for anyone – both those who are taught PSHE in school and those who are not.

****The session plan below can help you! Why not get some friends to help you run your session? If you have a School Council, why not get them involved too? You’ll need some people to help take some notes of what is being said. ****

****You’ll also need to ask a teacher if you can use a space in your school, and then let other students know. ****

Discussion plan

Resources:

Paper

1-3 Minutes:

Introduce yourself and what the discussion will be about.

5 Minutes

Ask students to imagine that they could be in charge of PSHE education, including RSE, in their school for a year, and that they have unlimited money and time to do whatever they wanted to improve PSHE and RSE education in the school.

5 Minutes

Ask students to consider one wish they have for PSHE and RSE education for the future; thinking about something they hope the next generation of students can be taught about. They should write their wish on a blank paper using one of the sentence starters: “One wish I have for the future of PSHE/RSE education is” and “If I could improve one thing about PSHE /RSE education, it would be...”

Wrap Up:

Thank everyone for coming and let them know that you will be putting their responses together to share with your Head of School.

At the end of your session: Take an ‘usie’ and share it on your social media page, and use #C4L18, so we can share it too!

After your session: Gather the thoughts up and get everyone to sign it, and send it to your head teacher. Ask them what they think, and let us know by emailing ukyppg@byc.org.uk!

Curriculum for Life Information

Why is having a curriculum that prepares young people for life so important?

- There are 12 statutory subjects that have statutory status – this means they have to be taught and assessed in schools. Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is a non-statutory subject. There has been a big campaign – supported by over 100 leading organisations including the British Youth Council, 92% of parents, by 92% of pupils, 88% of teachers and 85% of business leaders, the Children’s Commissioner, the Chief Medical Officer and the national police lead for child sexual exploitation, and leading Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, including the Commons Education Committee and the Home Affairs Committee and the chairs of Commons Health, Women and Equalities and Business, Innovation and Skills Committees.
- Due to its non-statutory status PSHE education is often squeezed from the curriculum in many schools, taught very irregularly or taught in ways outside the curriculum such as tutor time – which is not recommended by experts such as the PSHE Association, the subject’s national body. Teachers are not trained to teach PSHE – so the standard varies nationally. OFSTED have even said that the standard of PSHE is ‘not yet to a good standard in schools’ – demonstrating the overall picture of PSHE. The subject is slowly but surely being pushed out of schools and teachers are not being trained to deliver it.
- In 2014, the Youth Select Committee held an inquiry into the role of the education system and the national curriculum in equipping young people with the skills for later life. They concluded that:
 - PSHE should be taught in all schools – the type of school you go to or the place you live shouldn’t determine if you get a taught PSHE
 - Teachers need to be trained so that they are empowered to deliver quality lessons
 - Proper time should be set aside in the school timetable – PSHE should not just be a time filler or delivered as random lessons.
- Through the Children and Social Work Bill, Relationship and Sex education will be compulsory from September 2019 (YAY!). This is just the beginning though! The Government plans to consult on the same status to personal, social, health and economic education. Change is coming!