

Representation of the People (Young Persons' Enfranchisement and Education) Bill

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TO

Reduce the voting age to 16 in general elections, elections to the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the European Parliament, local government elections and referendums; to make provision about young people's education in citizenship and the constitution; and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

PART 1

YOUNG PERSONS' ENFRANCHISEMENT

1 Voting age (elections)

- (1) The Representation of the People Act 1983 is amended as follows—
- (a) in section 1(1)(d) (definition of voting age for parliamentary elections), for “18” substitute “16”; and 5
 - (b) for section 2(1)(d) and subsection 1A substitute—
“(d) is of voting age (that is, 16 years or over)”.
- (2) In the Representation of the People Act 1985, in section 1(5) (entitlement to vote of overseas electors), for “18” substitute “16”. 10

2 Voting age (referendums)

The voting age for referendums held in—

- (a) England;
 - (b) Northern Ireland;
 - (c) Scotland; 15
 - (d) Wales; or
 - (e) any combination thereof
- shall be 16.

3 Electoral registration

- (1) Electoral registration officers shall take all reasonable steps –
- (a) to register:
 - (i) 16 and 17 years olds enfranchised by this Act; and
 - (ii) 15 year olds in preparation for enfranchisement under this Act prior to the coming into force of Part 1 of this Act under section 6(3); and
 - (b) to store, use and share personal data collected under paragraph (a) in ways appropriate to the age of the persons to whom it relates.
- (2) The Secretary of State or other appropriate authority may issue guidance to electoral registration officers in relation to subsection (1).

PART 2

YOUNG PERSONS' EDUCATION (CITIZENSHIP AND THE CONSTITUTION)

4 Citizenship and the constitution education in maintained schools

- (1) In section 84 of the Education Act 2002 (“EA 2002”) in subsection (3) (foundation subjects), under paragraph (h) there is added –
- “(i) Citizenship and the constitution education (“CCE”).”
- (2) In section 85 of EA 2002 (curriculum requirements for the fourth key stage), in subsection (4) (foundation subjects), at the end there is inserted “, and
- “(d) Citizenship and the constitution education (“CCE”).”
- (3) Before section 86 of EA 2002 there is inserted –

“85B Citizenship and the constitution education

- (1) For the purposes of this Part, citizenship and the constitution education (“CCE”) shall comprise formal lessons which aim to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence of pupils to prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities of enfranchisement and participation in public life.
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, the topics to be covered under subsection (1) shall include, but not be limited to –
- (a) the ways in which societies and communities take collective decisions and concerted action;
 - (b) the role of democratic political structures in –
 - (i) identifying and defining the decisions to be made, and
 - (ii) gathering consensus or majority support in relation to such decisions;
 - (c) the evolution and development of the United Kingdom’s constitutional arrangements; and
 - (d) the United Kingdom’s current executive, democratic, legislative, judicial, legal and economic structures, including –
 - (i) constitutional arrangements and political system,
 - (ii) the electoral system and role of political parties,
 - (iii) the economy, public finances and money,
 - (iv) the judiciary, courts and other justice systems,

- (v) membership of the European Union, and
 - (vi) other international organisations and treaties to which the United Kingdom is party.
- (3) The detail of the curriculum under subsections (1) and (2) shall be determined by the governing body and head teacher. 5
- (4) The Secretary of State may –
 - (a) by order amend subsections (1) and (2), and
 - (b) issue guidance on the delivery of the objectives in subsection (1) and the topics in subsection (2).
- (5) The National Curriculum for England is not required to specify attainment targets or assessment arrangements for CCE (and section 84(1) has effect accordingly). 10
- (6) It is the duty of the governing body and head teacher of any school in which CCE is provided in pursuance of this section to ensure that the principles set out in subsections (7) to (9) are complied with. 15
- (7) The first principle is that information presented in the course of providing CCE should be accurate, balanced and politically impartial.
- (8) The second principle is that CCE should be taught in a way that is appropriate to the ages and backgrounds of the pupils concerned.
- (9) The third principle is that CCE should be taught in a way that – 20
 - (a) encourages acceptance of diversity and difference; and
 - (b) emphasises the importance of responsibilities and rights.
- (10) The Secretary of State shall issue guidance about the teaching of CCE and the exercise of functions under this Part of local authorities, governing bodies or head teachers. 25
- (11) The Secretary of State must –
 - (a) ensure that CCE is included in accredited initial and continuing teacher education; and
 - (b) issue guidance on best practice in delivering and inspecting CCE education. 30
- (12) The Secretary of State must review the guidance mentioned in subsection (11) at least annually, and in reviewing the guidance the Secretary of State must consult such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate and must amend and reissue the guidance if such a review concludes that considers it would otherwise not be fit for purpose.” 35

5 Citizenship and the constitution in other state-funded schools

In Chapter 4 of Part 7 of the Education Act 1996 (city colleges), after section 483A there is inserted –

“483B Citizenship and the constitution education 40

- (1) For the fourth key stage, the curriculum for a school to which this section applies shall include citizenship and the constitution education (“CCE”), comprising the matters set out in section 85B(1) and (2) of the Education Act 2002.

- (2) It is the duty of the proprietor and head teacher of a school in which CCE is provided in pursuance of this section to secure that the principles set out in section 85B(7) to (9) of the Education Act 2002 are complied with.
- (3) In carrying out functions exercisable by virtue of this section, the proprietor and head teacher of a school to which the section applies shall have regard to any guidance issued from time to time by the Secretary of State. 5
- (4) The schools to which this section applies are city technology colleges, city colleges for the technology of the arts and academy schools. 10
- (5) In this section the “fourth key stage” has the meaning given by section 82(1)(c) and (d) of the Education Act 2002.
- (6) Section 4 of the Representation of the People (Young Persons' Enfranchisement and Education) Act 2016 applies to schools mentioned in subsection (4) as though they were maintained schools.” 15

PART 3

GENERAL

6 Extent, commencement and citation

- (1) Part 1 of this Act extends to the whole of the United Kingdom.
- (2) Part 2 of this Act extends to England and Wales. 20
- (3) Parts 2 and 3 and section 3 of Part 1 of this Act come into force on the day after the day on which it receives Royal Assent.
- (4) The remainder of Part 1 of this Act comes into force on the first day of September in the second academic year following the coming into force of Part 2. 25
- (5) This Act may be cited as the Representation of the People (Young Persons' Enfranchisement and Education) Act 2016.

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To Reduce the voting age to 16 in general elections, elections to the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the European Parliament, local government elections and referendums; to make provision about young people's education in citizenship and the constitution; and for connected purposes.

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