

# Representation of the People (Young People's Enfranchisement) Bill

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**B I L L**

TO

Reduce the voting age to 16 in parliamentary and other elections; to make provision for auto-enrolment onto the electoral register for people aged 16 to 24; to make provision about the use of educational establishments as polling stations; and for connected purposes.

**B**E 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:—

**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
  - (b) for section 2(1)(d) (local government electors) 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”.

**2 Voting age (referendums)** 10

The voting age for referendums held in—

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

**3 Automatic electoral registration of students aged 16**

- (1) The Representation of the People Act 1983 is amended as follows.

- (2) After section 9A (registration officers: duty to take necessary steps) insert –
- “9AA Automatic electoral registration of students aged 16**
- (1) In carrying out the duties under section 9 and section 9A, each registration officer must ensure that all students who attend schools in the area for which the registration officer acts and who have reached the age of 16 are automatically placed on the electoral register. 5
- (2) The Secretary of State must by regulations impose a duty on schools requiring them to provide specified information to registration officers for the purposes of electoral registration of school students who have reached the age of 16.” 10
- 4 Automatic electoral registration of other persons aged 16 to 24**
- (1) The Secretary of State must make arrangements for the preparation of a report assessing how the law ought to be changed to bring about automatic electoral registration of persons aged 16 to 24 who would not be automatically placed on the electoral register by virtue of section 9AA of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (automatic electoral registration of students aged 16). 15
- (2) The Secretary of State must lay a copy of report prepared under subsection (1) before each House of Parliament within twelve months of the passing of this Act.
- (3) After the report under subsection (1) has been published, the Secretary of State may make regulations to change the law relating to automatic electoral registration of persons aged 16 to 24 who would not be automatically placed on the electoral register by virtue of section 9AA of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (automatic electoral registration of students aged 16). 20
- 5 Use of educational establishments as polling places** 25
- (1) The Secretary of State must make arrangements for the preparation of a report assessing how the law ought to be changed to make the process of voting as accessible as possible for people aged 16 to 24.
- (2) The report under this section must include, but is not limited to, an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of – 30
- (a) using educational establishments as polling places;
- (b) providing more limited opening hours for polling places which are educational establishments aligned with when students are attending the educational establishment; and
- (c) using buildings within a specified distance of educational establishments as polling places. 35
- (3) The Secretary of State must lay a copy of report prepared under this section before each House of Parliament within twelve months of the passing of this Act.
- (4) After the report has been published, the Secretary of State may make regulations to change the law relating to the process of voting to make it as accessible as possible for people aged 16 to 24. 40

## 6 Regulations

- (1) Regulations under this Act may –
  - (a) make different provision for different purposes;
  - (b) make incidental, consequential or supplemental provision (including provision amending provision made by or under an Act, whenever passed or made); 5
  - (c) make transitional or transitory provision or savings.
- (2) Regulations under this section are to be made by statutory instrument.
- (3) A statutory instrument containing regulations under this section may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament. 10

## 7 Financial provisions

*There is to be paid out of money provided by Parliament –*

- (a) *any expenditure incurred under or by virtue of this Act, and*
- (b) *any increase attributable to this Act in the sums payable under any other Act out of money so provided.* 15

## 8 Extent, commencement and short title

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- (2) Sections 1 and 2 come into force at the end of the period of six months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed. 20
- (3) Section 3 comes into force at the end of the period of twelve months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed, subject to subsection (4).
- (4) The power to make regulations under section 9AA(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 may be exercised at any time after the passing of this Act.
- (5) Sections 4, 5, 6 and this section come into force on the day on which this Act is passed. 25
- (6) This Act may be cited as the Representation of the People (Young People's Enfranchisement) Act 2018.

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To reduce the voting age to 16 in parliamentary and other elections; to make provision for auto-enrolment onto the electoral register for people aged 16 to 24; to make provision about the use of educational establishments as polling stations; and for connected purposes.

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