

# HOW TO PASS A MOTION TO SUPPORT VOTES AT 16



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## WHAT IS A 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 alter the official line ('Policy') on matters. This pack will explain how you can pass a motion to support votes at 16.

Groups that use motions as part of their policy process include:

- School Councils
- Youth organisations
- Youth Councils
- Residents groups
- Student Unions
- Local Councils

If you are a member of any of the above you can put forward a motion to ensure that they support Votes at 16. After reading this guide it is a good idea to go and talk to someone in your organisation to find out more about how they use motions, for example the Chair of your school council or your university's Democracy and Representation Coordinator, as every organisation has a slightly different process. This guide is an introduction to the basics of getting a motion on Votes at 16 passed.

Motions usually have at least three different sections, with numbered points beneath. This clearly breaks down what you are trying to say, and what you are asking your group to do:

- This group notes... **(FACTS)**. This must be factual information that can be independently seen to be true.
- This group believes... **(OPINIONS)**. This contains things that you consider to be true, but which other people may disagree with. You should be open-minded and accept that others may not agree with what you believe, even if you consider it to be 'fact'.
- This group resolves... **(ACTIONS)**. This section tells the group what action to take as a collective body.

## HOW TO PUT FORWARD A MOTION

There are five steps to take to put forward a motion:

### 1 Get the motion onto the agenda

Find out when the next meeting is when people can submit motions and the deadline for getting a motion onto the meeting agenda. When you submit the motion you'll usually need the names of two people, one to propose and one to second the motion. These people will need to be prepared to speak on the motion.

### 2 Write the motion

Here's an example:

#### **Motion: Support of the Votes at 16 Campaign**

*<Insert name of organisation> 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 the Votes at 16 Coalition consists of a wide range of youth and democracy organisations.

#### **This union branch 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 union branch believes;**

- 1 To join the Votes at 16 Coalition;
- 2 To write to the Leader of the Council, local MPs and the local media to inform them of this decision and ask them to support the campaign;
- 3 To promote this policy through its communications;
- 4 To run activities to raise awareness of and support for Votes at 16 in the local area.

### 3 Attend the meeting

Get as many supporters as you can along to the meeting: publicise it, and maybe hold an event like a debate beforehand to get people interested. Talk to people as they go into the meeting so that they know what the Votes at 16 campaign is about. Be prepared to answer questions during the debate. The discussion will probably take the form of you proposing the motion (speaking in favour), then a balanced debate of alternating discussions in favour and against. The motion can be amended, so if there is one sticking point you can delete it or vote on it separately and keep the rest (of course this means it can end up watered down - or occasionally improved!).

### 4 After the meeting

Meet up with people in the group to work out how they're going to follow through on what was voted on.

### 5 Let us know

If you succeed on getting a motion passed to support Votes at 16 let us know so we can add your organisation to the list of supporters!