

# E-BLAST

nipsa  
Youth



NIPSA Youth E-zine

August 2019

## #Vote 16

Should the Voting age be lowered to 16 Years of Age?

The Younger a person is the less their ability to make informed decisions!

18 is the age of adulthood!

16 year olds aren't mature enough!

At 16 I can get married!

I can leave home, work, pay taxes, legally have sex and potentially become a parent!

I can join the army.

Shouldn't I have a say in who makes policies!



## Election Turnouts

In Northern Ireland election turnouts are consistently low at all levels from local government to Westminster elections and apathy is a problem across all sections of society and age brackets. Consistently we hear people saying:



**“Sure what’s the point voting?”**

**“The same ones always get elected”**

**“It’ll make no difference anyway”**

**“What difference does one vote make?”**

These statements are heard consistently during every election. However, 16 year olds are generally enrolled in full time education, learning about politics, citizenship and sociology. Shouldn't we capture this interest in politics by engaging young people and permitting them to vote? This would undoubtedly increase overall turnout in elections and should increase percentage turnout also.

## Scotland & Austria

In Scotland where 16 and 17 year olds were eligible to vote in the recent independence referendum, three quarters of those who registered turned out on the day compared to 54% of 18-24 year olds. In Austria (the other European country to allow 16 year olds to vote), the turnout rates for under 18 year olds are markedly higher than 19-24 year olds.

## NIPSA Conference 2019 supports Votes at 16

At NIPSA Conference 2018 a poll was held and 87% of those who took part voted in favour of lowering the voting age to 16. Following on from this a motion was put to NIPSA Conference 2019 proposing NIPSA take a position of support in lowering the voting age, this motion was overwhelmingly adopted by conference. Assuming that the delegates at NIPSA Conference are representative of a cross section of our community, there is a genuine and overwhelming appetite to give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote. So why won't we as a society enable the debate and open the polls to making this positive change which has the potential to positively influence people of all ages.

We must ask the question is there a fear amongst elected representatives to take this bold step and if so why.

Is it because...

- Young people are traditionally more forward and progressively thinking
- Is there a fear that young people may actually vote for substantive change in society
- Might it threaten the position of those currently in power?

Or perhaps the most worrying prospect to our current political leadership

### **Might it actually make a change?**

Young people are equally impacted by the decision our elected representatives make day and daily so why not give them a say in who makes those decisions.

**Lowering the voting age would strengthen the voice of the young and show that their opinions matter. If you too support the proposal to lower the voting age to 16**



Tweet to @nipsayouth or post to the NIPSA Youth Facebook page using the hashtag

**#VOTE16**