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British Youth Council welcome Votes at 16 kick-off

The British Youth Council (BYC) have welcomed the launch of the Youth Citizenship Commission's consultation on Votes at 16, this morning, live at www.ycc.uk.net

The consultation paper 'Old enough to Make a Mark?' asks whether the voting age should be lowered, whether this should be only for local elections and whether this move might encourage young people to take part in elections.

The Youth Citizenship Commission's website features an interactive forum on Votes at 16 and the Commission will soon also be launching a Bebo application which will ask young people whether the voting age should be lowered.

BYC who are championing a Votes at 16 campaign have welcomed this initiative and placed the consultation paper on their website www.byc.org.uk/votesat16. They have placed a link to www.ycc.uk.net where young people can answer the Commission's consultation questionnaire and submit it online or take part in polling/discussions.

BYC Chair, Emily Beardsmore (23) said of the launch: "BYC believe that Votes at 16 is the way forward. Young people feeling that someone is listening to them and their point of view, will go a long way to renew their belief in politics.

"If young people were able to vote at 16, participate in a local youth council in every local authority in the UK, and had the opportunity to engage more with their elected representatives then we might see more engagement of young people".

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- The British Youth Council (BYC) is led by young people, for young people aged 16 and under across the UK. We connect with our community of member organisations and network of Local Youth Councils to empower all young people, wherever they're from, to have a say and be heard. Our take on training and volunteering and our powerful campaigns, both local and global, inspire young people to have a positive impact and make their voices count. For more information please see www.byc.org.uk

- There are over 600 youth-led youth councils across the UK. BYC's member organisations can reach a network of up to 7 million young people.
- In 2008, to celebrate 60 years of BYC empowering young people in the UK, BYC has been championing a "16 at 60" campaign to lower the voting age from 18 to 16. The delegates vote at BYC Annual Meeting 2008 means Votes at 16 will remain a priority campaign for 2008/09.
- BYC is also part of the Votes at 16 Coalition Steering Group. The Votes at 16 Coalition is made up of over 40 leading youth and democracy organisations including the Children's Rights Alliance for England, Electoral Reform Society, the National Union of Students and the National Youth Agency.
- Young people involved in BYC are asking their MPs to support EDM 2198 'Enfranchisement of 16 and 17 year olds in Jersey' which calls for Votes at 16 in the British Mainland. For more information view www.byc.org.uk/votesat16