Give Us Our Voice: Why 16 year olds deserve the vote

Amongst all the discourse pervading the media at the moment, one major issue has been ignored for too long: handing a democratic right to 16 and 17 year olds that they are entitled to. 16 year olds have a number of rights that younger people do not: they can buy cigarettes, they can join the armed forces, get married, buy lottery tickets and more. However, at the moment the right to vote is limited to people who are aged 18 or over.

Many of the concerns surrounding giving younger people this right appear to centre around maturity. Some opponents feel that at 16 you are not mentally ready to make such important decisions that affect the entire country. These attitudes exist despite 16 year olds being mature enough to pay income tax and National Insurance that both contribute towards budgets for public services, including such political bastions as the National Health Service.

My own son turns 16 son, and despite him being able to leave school to take part in full-time training, to be able to become a director of a company, or even join a trade union, he will not have any say on major political issues such as how public money that he is raising is spent and of course Brexit - which will inevitably affect his whole future how ever it turns out.

Jim Smith, CEO of charity Voices For The Youth agrees: "I think the reasons for handing the vote to younger people are obvious, numerous and well-elucidated. In contrast, the arguments for maintaining the status quo and preventing young adults getting their voices heard are outdated, flimsy and frivolous. Some people simply detest change and fear the unknown. We have got to continue to change mindsets and make the country understand handing 16 year olds the votes is something that should be embraced, not feared."

As a country we tend to be quite old-fashioned and conservative in our attitudes regarding making major changes to the way we operate in politics and as a society, but ask yourself whether you can think of any genuinely substantial reasons to prevent our younger members gaining what should naturally be theirs. It's likely you'll find it quite challenging.