

# Essential Skills Wales

## Essential Communication Skills (ECommS)

### Level 3 Controlled Task

#### Candidate Pack

Young Voters
--------------

### Sample

Version 2.0

Candidate name:
Candidate number:
Date registered for ECommS:
Unique Learner Number (ULN) <i>(if applicable)</i> :
Centre name <i>or</i> number:

### Instructions

- Make sure the boxes at the top of this page are filled in with your name, candidate number, ULN (if applicable) and centre name or number.
- Make sure you complete **all** parts of the task.

You have up to **8 hours in total** to complete this controlled task, although that time can be split over a number of sessions. Details of when each session started and ended **must** be recorded below:

Date controlled task <b>started</b> :							
Date controlled task <b>completed</b> <i>(no more than eight weeks later)</i> :							
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8
	<i>Date</i>						
<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Duration</i>
<b>Total</b> time spent:							

If more than eight sessions are required, any further dates/durations should be recorded on a separate sheet.

Produced jointly by the four Essential Skills awarding bodies:  
 Agored Cymru  
 City & Guilds  
 Pearson  
 WJEC



**This task pack contains a scenario, a set of instructions and some source material.**

- Make sure you read through the scenario, instructions and source material carefully before you start.
- You will be supervised throughout your time working on this task, although during that time you can use most of the equipment that would normally be available to you in a real-life situation (this may include accessing the internet).
- All work submitted must be **entirely** your own. You are not allowed to be given any help with the skills that are being assessed through this controlled task.
- Make sure you hand in all of your work at the end of **each** session. You are not allowed to take any task materials away with you, or have access to these between sessions.
- Make sure you **sign the declaration** at the back of this pack at the end of your final session working on this task.

## Task instructions: Young Voters

### What you need to find out

#### Scenario

The activities in this task are about voting in the UK.

### What you need to do – Part 1

#### Reading

You must read and synthesise information from the source documents. You must critically compare and evaluate the content, identifying possible bias.

You can look up the meaning of any words you do not understand.

- Read both source documents to help you prepare for and take part in a discussion on the topic: 'Should the voting age be lowered to 16?'
- Use the information from the source documents and the discussion to plan the writing of an article for a website about lowering the voting age.
- Show your preparation for the discussion. You could use a flow chart, spider diagram or make notes on the source documents to identify the main points, ideas, arguments and lines of reasoning.

Make sure you hand in all your work, including any notes or drafts, at the end of **each** session.

#### Resources you should use:

**Source 1:** Should 16 year olds be given the vote?

**Source 2:** Who has the time or inclination to vote? Have your say.

### **Speaking and listening**

Discussion (Minimum 15 minutes for a group of 3-5 people. For groups of 6 a minimum of 25 minutes is expected.)

Using information from both source documents, plan to take part in a discussion on the topic: 'Is it a good idea to lower the voting age?'

You must show how you have prepared for the discussion.

During the discussion, you must clearly communicate complex information by:

- providing explanations
- expressing feelings and opinions
- asking questions.

You must: make clear and relevant contributions; move the discussion forward; work towards agreement where appropriate; use suitable language and non-verbal communication.

### **Writing**

Write a letter to your local MP presenting your opinion/argument about whether the voting age should or should not be lowered.

**Your article should be at least 750 words in length.**

Use the information that you have critically evaluated and synthesised from the source documents and the discussion.

You must:

- produce a plan
- write/word process a first draft
- check your draft makes sense
- correct any mistakes
- produce a final document.

Make sure your letter is fit for purpose and audience. Your final version should have accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. You should use complete sentences and appropriate paragraphing.

Make sure you hand in all of your work, including any notes or drafts, at the end of **each** session.

## What you need to do – Part 2

### Writing

Write an article for a local newspaper about why people chose not to vote in the 2015 general election.

You should use your prior knowledge and/or independent research. You can use the internet (if available) or other resources to carry out any additional research.

Any research must be supervised and carried out within the eight consecutive weeks maximum working period, but can be in addition to the eight hours allocated for this controlled task.

You must:

- produce a plan
- write/word process a first draft
- check your draft makes sense
- correct any mistakes
- produce a final draft.

Make sure your article is fit for purpose and audience. Your final version should have accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. You should use complete sentences and appropriate paragraphing.

Make sure you hand in all of your work, including any notes or drafts, at the end of **each** session.

## What you need to do – Part 3

### Speaking and listening

Talk/Presentation (Minimum time 8 minutes per candidate, minimum audience of 3 people)

Prepare for and deliver a talk/presentation to others. Your talk/presentation should include an image or other support materials to enhance or aid understanding.

You may choose your own topic for the talk/presentation but some suggestions include:

- What role does social media have in influencing voters?
- Are men and women now equal?
- How can we live in a more sustainable way?
- Should the NHS be free at the point of delivery?
- Does CCTV really make us safer?

If you choose another topic, this should be one which allows you to include information at a complexity for this level.

You may use notes to prompt you when delivering your talk/presentation, but you must **not** read from them directly.

Your talk/presentation should be well structured and suitable for the purpose and audience.

You must keep to the point and illustrate the main points clearly, using a variety of strategies to deliver your message and engage the audience.

Make sure you hand in all of your work, including any notes or drafts, at the end of **each** session.

## Source 1

### Should 16 year olds be given the vote?

One of the prominent features of recent general elections has been the decreasing rate of turnout amongst young voters. The turnout for 18-24 year olds has fallen from 60% in the early 1990s to an average of 40% in the last decade. The question, therefore: is will lowering the age to 16 increase the number of young voters who actually cast a vote?

The Liberal Democrat Stephen Williams, who has championed the debate in parliament to cut the voting age to 16, said that by doing so it would be a 'vital step in the renewal of Britain's democracy'. He claimed that there is widespread support among MPs and youth charities to extend the vote to the 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds.

This may be so, but how will it help to engage young voters in politics and, more importantly, encourage them to go out and cast an informed vote in elections? Just giving 16 and 17 year olds the vote doesn't mean they will rush to the polling stations.

Perhaps, before there is talk about lowering the voting age, young citizens should be offered more opportunities to acquire political knowledge, skills and experience. This will help them make a decision on the political party that is best going to serve their needs now and in the future.

Citizenship education is a statutory subject only in England and Northern Ireland and provision across the UK is patchy and inconsistent, according to a report in The Guardian. In Scotland, only a third of young Scots take a modern studies course covering history, politics and current affairs. In Wales, all educational establishments are expected to include Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) as part of the curriculum.

Young people rarely get experience of politics before they vote. School councils often lack influence and cuts to local authority budgets mean there are fewer youth councils to join. The Welsh assembly has reduced funding for its youth national parliament, Funky Dragon. The UK Government is channelling scarce resources into a National Citizen Service programme that does not seek to promote political literacy or participation.

Political parties understand and represent the interests of older voters. These are the voters whose vote counts 'on the night'. In the 2015 general election, 78% of people over the age of 55 cast a vote whereas the turnout for 18-24 year olds was 43%. Consequently, which age group are political parties more likely to target?

According to political expert, Dr James Sloam, parties focus their policy appeals on parts of the electorate where they are already strong. However, it is interesting that the parties that paid most attention, in policy terms, to young people also scored better amongst that group.

So, maybe the younger age group are interested in politics. However, parties must understand that manifestos need to include topics, services and resources that are relevant to young people.

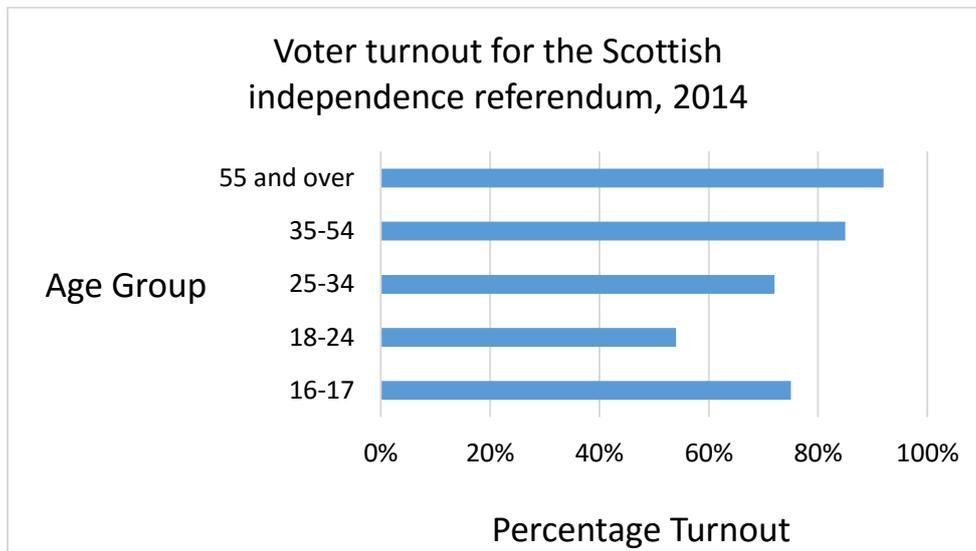
Dr Sloam believes that many young people are disillusioned about public policy. They have borne the brunt of cuts in public spending: from the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance in England, to increased university fees, removal of housing benefits for young adults and the closure of local youth centres.

But, as he rightly points out, many young people in the UK are active in alternative forms of civic and political engagements that have meaning for their everyday lives, including: volunteering for community projects, signing petitions and participating in demonstrations.

A report in The Guardian suggests that young people are relegated to youth wings, where their policy interests are often banished to the periphery. No other age groups are treated in this way. Scant political capital is invested in addressing the specific interests of young people. The limited number of youth-focused policies are typically developed from 'offices on high' by older people so is it surprising that young people have little connection with mainstream politics? Why lower the voting age if politicians can't even engage with the 18-24 age group, let alone 16 and 17 year olds?

Political parties need to do more to involve young people, giving them a realistic and comprehensive platform to proffer constructive input, for their vote to have any real meaning. The younger generation need to have a voice and feel included in the whole political process, not just be left out on the proverbial limb. The political workings in the UK are not currently geared up to embrace 16 and 17 year olds so perhaps politicians should stop relying on the older voters and look to future generations.

However, some argue that the voting age should match the age at which citizens are granted other adult rights. The argument put forward is that if 16-17 year olds can join the army, get married or pay tax, why shouldn't they be able to vote? However to join the army and get married at 16 or 17, parental permission is required and the age at which teenagers can buy cigarettes is now 18.



Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned from Scotland. They gave 16-17 year olds the right to vote and addressed issues that affected this age group, both now and in the future. 16-17 year olds were highly engaged with the campaigns and made a positive contribution to the public debate about Scotland’s constitutional future. Scotland’s former first minister, Alex Salmond, was so impressed that he said there was ‘not a shred of evidence for arguing that 16 and 17 year olds should not be allowed the vote’. The Guardian’s rather sceptical view is that it would have been highly surprising if young people had not been engaged in a referendum campaign that dominated Scottish public life for two years.

But what is lowering the voting age from 18 to 16 really all about? It is perhaps obvious that votes made by 16 and 17 year olds will potentially increase the number of people that turn out in elections but it will not necessarily address the issues of a still low turnout of 16-24 year olds. Many politicians feel it is a futile and potentially dangerous act to lower the voting age.

References

Ref: Guardian article ref

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/generalelection/general-election-2015-explained-turnout->

<http://www.electionanalysis.uk/uk-election-analysis-2015/section-2-voters/bringing-out-the-youth-vote-young-people-and-the-2015-general-election/>

## Source 2

### Who has the time or inclination to vote? Have your say.

Most political parties, youth organisations and even some newspapers support the proposition to lower the voting age in the UK to 16.

Are they thinking about embracing the 16-17 year olds or simply looking to increase turnout figures at an election and bolster the low turnout rate that is prevalent amongst the youth of today?

Possibly a sceptical view, but in reality what percentage of 16-17 year olds have the time to, or want to, engage in political activities or discourse?

We interviewed a random sample of 16-17 year olds around Wales, to get their views on the voting age being lowered to 16.

Bryan G, Newport:

'I would like to get more involved in politics, especially in my area, where there is work to be done but I am considered too young to stand for an election, walk the streets to persuade voters to vote for a particular party or become significantly involved in the issues. I was 16 at the time of the 2015 election and would like to have had a say and cast a vote. If more emphasis was placed on the importance of the younger age group having a say and this was facilitated, more people might endeavour to make the time to become involved'.

Sasha D, Cardiff:

'If I voted, I would just follow what generations of my family have done. I get hacked off and bored with the amount of propaganda on the TV around election time. How can you believe any of them? No-one really talks about what matters to our age group, what the real issues are. We're not buying houses, aren't paying tax yet or needing any hip replacements! Why should I engage in a process that is irrelevant to me? I know that is a negative attitude but there is too much going on in my life to listen to politicians who believe they are morally superior'.

Linda J, Swansea:

'Why do the politicians want us to vote? Is it to 'bump' up the numbers? I am 17 and am midway through my A-Levels. My qualifications are more important to me than an election that I don't believe will affect me. I spend all my time studying and can't spare the time to listen to all the parties and politicians and then make an informed choice. I appreciate that this could be seen as short-termism but that's just how I feel'.

Jac W, Porthmadog:

'I think it is great that we are being considered as mature people who can have a say. My concern is how I'd find out about the differences between the parties, what they offer me now and in the future and what effect they will have on Wales and the UK as a whole. I have two part-time jobs; I work two evenings a week in a restaurant and in a shop on Saturdays. That's on top of my full time course at college. Being 16 is tough! Having the added pressure of making a decision that can affect your country without the time to look into it would be really stressful'.

Aaron K, Fishguard:

'I think there's enough time in the future to have to get serious and understand what the politicians are talking about. I'm only 16, about to do my GCSEs and make a decision on what I'm going to do in the future. My main priorities at the current time are getting the qualifications I need and having a good time with my mates. I want to go travelling when I'm 18 so couldn't care less about politics.

Gwyn J, Builth Wells:

'I believe it is essential that our age group begin to understand the machinations of the political process, the manifestos put out by each party and listen to the people who represent or will potentially represent us in Parliament. The elected representatives will, as a body, shape the future of our society and that of future generations. It is onerous finding the time to keep up with the political maelstrom but it is important if our age group want to have a say in our future'.

## Declarations

The candidate and assessor declarations **must** be completed.

Candidate name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Candidate declaration:**

I confirm that this is entirely my own work and it was completed during the supervised sessions stated on the front cover.

Candidate signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For centre staff and awarding body use only

### **Assessor declaration:**

I confirm that this candidate has met the standard required for the controlled task. The controlled task was conducted under the specified conditions and completed within the working period and working time requirements.

Assessor signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Internal quality assurer (IQA) declaration:**

*(if sampled)*

I have internally quality assured this work and confirm that the standards have been met.

IQA signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **External quality assurer (EQA) declaration:**

*(if sampled)*

I have externally quality assured this work and confirm that the standards have been met.

EQA signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_