Green Party calls for votes at 16 in June election

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Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, is calling for the Government to bring in legislation to allow 16 and 17-year-olds vote in the snap General Election.

Lucas, whose party will begin their campaign tomorrow in Bristol, used an intervention in the House of Commons today to urge the Prime Minister to give young people a greater say in the future of the country. There are 1.5m young people who would be eligible to vote if 16 and 17-year-olds were given a vote on June 8.

Evidence from the Scottish independence referendum, substantiated by research from Austria and Norway, shows — aided by the encouragement of families and schools — 16 and 17-year-olds have higher rates of turnout than 18 to 24-year-olds [1].

Caroline Lucas said:

"Everything is at stake right now. Our relationship with Europe, our border policies, our position on the world stage — voters will be given the chance to decide what kind of nation we want to be. The election is especially important for young people as they will live with the decisions made on June 8th for their entire lives.

"Theresa May should give Britain's 1.5 million 16 and 17-year-olds — the first generation to have received citizenship education — a say in what will very much be their future. The Government should urgently change the law to expand the electorate — using the remaining parliamentary time to truly hand people control. After trebling tuition fees, cutting housing benefit for young people and slashing the educational maintenance allowance — surely the Government should give young people a chance to have a say on the policies that are affecting them.

"This should be a moment when we hand control to people and widen the scope of our democracy. Let's trust young people with a vote in June — and let them have a real say about the future direction of their country."

Notes:

1. http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/votes-at-16

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