

Tory Government is not doing enough to ensure young people are on the electoral register – Cat Smith

Cat

Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs, commenting on today's Electoral Registration Statistics, said:

"While the increase in electoral registration numbers following the EU referendum is welcome, this Tory Government is still not doing enough to ensure that young people are on the register.

"That is why the Lords voted in favour of a Labour motion to the Higher Education and Research Bill, requiring universities to give students the option to register to vote when they sign up at university.

"If the Tories are serious about making every voice matter they need to keep this sensible addition when the Bill comes back to the Commons."

Ends

Notes to editors:

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The total number of UK parliamentary electors increased by just over 1 million (2.3%) between December 2015 and December 2016, reflecting the high levels of public engagement with the EU referendum. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/bulletins/electoralstatisticsforuk/2016>

· A study from the Electoral Commission in 2014 found that young people were a particularly under-represented group on the electoral register http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf

· Before the Conservatives rushed the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, students were automatically enrolled by their universities. However, the Electoral Administration Act of 2013 did not provide for a suitable student registration to be put in place when the old system of household registration was

abolished.

· On Monday 7th March the House of Lords voted in favour of Baroness Royall's amendment to the Higher Education and Research Bill. The amendment was passed, defeating the Government, by a majority of 200 to 189. The amendment would require universities to offer students the opportunity to register to vote at the point of enrolment or re-registration as a student at their university, a proposal first made by Paul Blomfield MP in the Commons.