

Young people do not want US style written constitution in Britain, study finds

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Most 16-18 year olds are opposed to Britain adopting a written constitution, like that which defines the system of government in the United States and in most other countries, according to research at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The young people surveyed by the Department of Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway, were also more in favour of an unwritten constitution after they debated the subject.

Students from 10 schools across London Farnborough, Slough and Maidenhead took part in the New Magna Carta Debate, as the world celebrates the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta in Runnymede, home to Royal Holloway.

Of the 58 [teenagers](#) that were surveyed, 59% disagreed with Britain having a written constitution, or 'new Magna Carta'. However, 62% of those who agreed with the idea chose a US style codified constitution, the option most radically different from the current system.

The research suggests that any proposed change to the British system of government needs to be significantly different if it is to encourage young people to engage with the consultation.

The study also found that engagement events such as student debates help young people to question political ideas and make decisions about complex constitutional issues.

The findings come after the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee consulted the public on whether Britain needs a written constitution. The research, which was carried out at Royal Holloway in November last year, was included by the committee in its report 'Consultation on A new Magna Carta?', which was released this week.

Dr Nicholas Allen, from the Department of Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway, said: "We were surprised how cautious [young people](#) were in their views about constitutional reform. Politicians will need to work harder and tell a clearer story if they want to sell political change - or politics more generally - to the next generation."

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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