

Although I'm delighted that Scotland decided to remain part of the UK – and hopeful that we get the devolution that cities like Manchester need in order to grow – I have to confess to some feelings of envy.

Almost 85% of the Scottish electorate turned out to vote in the referendum. Turnout in a general election hasn't approached that figure since the 1950s.

Even more encouragingly, that figure includes Scotland's 16- and 17-year-olds, who were given the vote for the first time. We've become used to the stereotype that young people aren't interested in politics, and won't vote. But Scotland showed us that when you give people – whatever their age - a chance to make a real decision, they will use it.

But the first step is making sure they have the vote. That's why I was so pleased when Ed Miliband confirmed that the next Labour government will lower the voting age to 16.

We also need to make sure that once young people have a vote, they know how important it is to use it. I'm a real believer in better citizenship education: it's vital that everyone leaves school understanding what democracy is, how it was won, and - simply - how to vote.

Finally, we can't expect young people to feel engaged in politics unless we give them a motivation. One reason this government has hit young people disproportionately hard – from increasing tuition fees to scrapping Education Maintenance Allowance – is because young people haven't voted in the same numbers as older people. I believe Labour is offering real change for young voters: as many apprenticeship places as university places by 2025; fair pay; and a million green jobs. Voters in Scotland turned out in record numbers because they felt they could make a difference. We need to make sure young voters across the UK feel the same.