



## RESEARCH BRIEFING

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# Members' changes of allegiance in the House of Commons since 1979

Compiled by  
Sarah Priddy

This list notes when a Member has changed allegiance from one political party to another or decided to sit as an independent MP. Instances of Members losing or resigning a party whip are also noted.

### Is there a by-election if an MP changes party?

No, by-elections are not automatically triggered if an MP changes his or her party affiliation although a Member may choose to stand down and fight the ensuing by-election under a new party label or as an independent Member.

### Role of the Whips' Office

Information on the role of the Government and Opposition whips in the management of parliamentary business can be found in the [Commons Library briefing on The Whips' Office](#).

### Feedback

Due to the difficulties in compiling a comprehensive list of all floor-crossings, whip withdrawals and whip resignations, this list cannot be guaranteed to be definitive.

We are always happy to hear of any additions or amendments to the list. Please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk) with any comments. We also welcome suggestions for new lists.

## Members' changes of allegiance in the House of Commons since 1979

Date	Member	Constituency	Party (before)	Party (after)
<b>1979-1983 Parliament</b>				
01/11/1979	Gerry Fitt	Belfast West	SDLP	Ind Socialist
20/02/1981	Tom Ellis	Wrexham	Lab	SDP
20/02/1981	Richard Crawshaw	Liverpool Toxteth	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	Tom Bradley	Leicester East	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	John Cartwright	Woolwich East	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	John Horam	Gateshead West	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	Robert Maclennan	Caithness & Sutherland	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	John Roper	Farnworth	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	David Owen	Plymouth, Devonport	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	William Rodgers	Stockton	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	Neville Sandelson	Hayes & Harlington	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	Mike Thomas	Newcastle East	Lab	SDP
02/03/1981	Ian Wrigglesworth	Thornaby	Lab	SDP
16/03/1981	Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler	Norfolk North West	Con	SDP
19/03/1981	Edward Lyons	Bradford West	Lab	SDP
04/07/1981	James Wellbeloved	Erith & Crayford	Lab	SDP
07/09/1981	Michael O'Halloran	Islington North	Lab	SDP
	<i>Became Independent Labour Mar 1983</i>			
01/10/1981	Dickson Mabon	Greenock	Lab	SDP
05/10/1981	Bob Mitchell	Southampton, Itchen	Lab	SDP
06/10/1981	David Ginsburg	Dewsbury	Lab	SDP
07/10/1981	James Dunn	Liverpool Kirkdale	Lab	SDP
07/10/1981	Tom McNally	Stockport South	Lab	SDP
29/10/1981	Eric Ogden	Liverpool West Derby	Lab	SDP
16/11/1981	John Grant	Islington Central	Lab	SDP
30/11/1981	George Cunningham	Islington South	Lab	Ind Lab (SDP)
	<i>Joined SDP Jun 1982</i>			
02/12/1981	Ronald Brown	Hackney South	Lab	SDP
11/12/1981	Bruce Douglas-Mann	Mitcham	Lab	Ind SDP
11/12/1981	Jeffrey Thomas	Abertillery	Lab	SDP
22/12/1981	Ednyfed Hudson Davies	Caerphilly	Lab	SDP
22/01/1982	Bryan Magee	Leyton	Lab	Ind Lab
	<i>Joined SDP Mar 1982</i>			
02/08/1982	Robert Mellish	Bermondsey	Lab	Ind Lab
<b>1983-87 Parliament</b>				
31/01/1987	John Ryman	Blyth Valley	Lab	Ind
<b>1987-92 Parliament</b>				
March 1988	Robert Maclennan	Caithness & Sutherland	SDP	Lib Dem
March 1988	Charles Kennedy	Ross, Cromarty & Skye	SDP	Lib Dem
19/05/1988	Ron Brown*	Leith	Lab	Ind Lab
	<i>Whip withdrawn for 3 months</i>			
14/03/1990	Dick Douglas	Dunfermline West	Lab	Ind Lab
04/10/1990	Dick Douglas	Dunfermline West	Ind Lab	SNP
25/09/1991	Dave Nellist*	Coventry South East	Lab	-
25/09/1991	Terry Fields*	Broad Green	Lab	-
13/03/1992	John Browne*	Winchester	Con	Ind Con

**1992-97 Parliament**

23/07/1993	Rupert Allason <i>Whip restored Jul 1994</i>	Torbay	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Teresa Gorman* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Billericay	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Nicholas Budgen* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Wolverhampton South West	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Michael Cartiss* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Great Yarmouth	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Christopher Gill* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Ludlow	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Richard Shepherd* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Aldridge-Brownhills	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Antony Marlow* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Northampton North	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Sir Richard Taylor* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Southend East	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	John Wilkinson* <i>Whip restored Apr 1995</i>	Ruislip-Northwood	Con	Ind Con
29/11/1994	Sir Richard Body # <i>Whip restored 17 Jan 1996</i>	Holland with Boston	Con	Ind Con
08/10/1995	Alan Howarth	Stratford-on-Avon	Con	Lab
30/12/1995	Emma Nicholson	Torrige and West Devon	Con	Lib Dem
24/02/1996	Peter Thurnham	Bolton North East	Con	Ind
12/10/1996	Peter Thurnham	Bolton North East	Ind	Lib Dem
Nov 1996	Sir John Gorst	Hendon North	Con	Ind Con
08/03/1997	Sir George Gardiner	Reigate	Con	Ref

**1997-2001 Parliament**

21/11/1997	Peter Temple-Morris	Leominster	Con	Ind
21/06/1998	Peter Temple-Morris	Leominster	Ind	Lab
29/06/1997	Robert Wareing* <i>Whip suspended till Nov 1997</i>	Liverpool West Derby	Lab	Ind Lab
29/06/1997	Mohammed Sarwar* <i>Whip restored March 1999</i>	Glasgow, Govan	Lab	Ind Lab
09/09/1998	Thomas Graham	Renfrewshire West	Lab	Ind (Scottish)
26/03/1999	Dennis Canavan*	Falkirk West	Lab	Ind
18/12/1999	Shaun Woodward	Witney	Con	Lab
06/03/2000	Ken Livingstone*	Brent East	Lab	Ind
11/04/2001	Charles Wardle*	Bexhill and Battle	Con	Ind

## 2001-2005 Parliament

10/12/2001	Paul Marsden <i>Rejoined Labour Apr 2005</i>	Shrewsbury	Lab	Lib Dem
02/10/2002	Andrew Hunter <i>Joined the DUP Parliamentary</i>	Basingstoke	Con	Ind Con (DUP)
23/06/2003	Jeffrey Donaldson <i>Joined the DUP 5 Jan 2004</i>	Lagan Valley	UUP	Ind Unionist
23/06/2003	David Burnside # <i>Whip restored 9 Jan 2004</i>	South Antrim	UUP	Ind Unionist
23/06/2003	Rev. Martin Smyth # <i>Whip restored 9 Jan 2004</i>	Belfast South	UUP	Ind Unionist
23/10/2003	George Galloway <i>Formed the Respect Party - The Unity Coalition 25 Jan 2004</i>	Glasgow, Kelvin	Lab	Ind
25/02/2004	Ann Winterton* <i>Whip restored 31 Mar 2004</i>	Congleton	Con	Ind
15/01/2005	Robert Jackson	Wantage	Con	Lab
07/02/2005	Jonathan Sayeed* <i>Whip restored 7 Mar 2005</i>	Mid Bedfordshire	Con	Ind Con
25/03/2005	Howard Flight*	Arundel & South Downs	Con	Ind Con

## 2005-2010 Parliament

20/10/2006	Clare Short	Birmingham Ladywood	Lab	Ind Lab
26/06/2007	Quentin Davies	Grantham & Stamford	Con	Lab
16/09/2007	Robert Wareing	Liverpool, West Derby	Lab	Ind
26/09/2007	Andrew Pelling*	Croydon Central	Con	Ind
29/01/2008	Derek Conway*	Old Bexley & Sidcup	Con	Ind Con
12/03/2008	Bob Spink <i>UKIP Apr-Nov 2008</i>	Castle Point	Con	Ind (UKIP)
09/01/2010	Iris Robinson*	Strangford	DUP	-
14/05/2009	Elliot Morley*	Scunthorpe	Lab	Ind
16/05/2009	David Chaytor*	Bury North	Lab	Ind
16/06/2009	Jim Devine*	Livingston	Lab	Ind
22/03/2010	Stephen Byers*	North Tyneside	Lab	-
22/03/2010	Patricia Hewitt*	Leicester West	Lab	-
22/03/2010	Geoff Hoon*	Ashfield	Lab	-
22/03/2010	Margaret Moran*	Luton South	Lab	-
25/03/2010	Lady Sylvia Hermon <i>Resigned from UUP and stood as an independent candidate at the 2010 general election</i>	North Down	UUP	Ind

## 2010-2015 Parliament

19/05/2010	Eric Illsley*	Barnsley Central	Lab	-
14/10/2010	Denis MacShane*	Rotherham	Lab	-
23/02/2012	Eric Joyce*	Falkirk	Lab	Ind
02/11/2012	Denis MacShane* <i>Resigned from House of Commons 2 Nov 2012</i>	Rotherham	Lab	-
06/11/2012	Nadine Dorries* <i>Whip restored 8 May 2012</i>	Mid Bedfordshire	Con	Ind
31/05/2013	Patrick Mercer	Newark	Con	Ind
04/06/2013	Mike Hancock	Portsmouth South	Lib Dem	Ind
19/07/2013	David Ward* <i>Whip suspended until 14 Sep</i>	Bradford East	Lib Dem	Ind
10/09/2013	Nigel Evans # <i>Whip restored 28 Apr 2014</i>	Ribble Valley	Deputy	Ind

29/08/2014	Douglas Carswell	Clacton	Con	UKIP
	<i>Resigned from House of Commons 29 Aug 2014 triggering a by-election on 9 Oct 2014~</i>			
27/09/2014	Mark Reckless	Rochester and Strood	Con	UKIP
	<i>Resigned from House of Commons 27 Sep 2014 triggering a by-election on 20 Nov 2014~</i>			

### 2015 Parliament

29/09/2015	Michelle Thomson #	Edinburgh West	SNP	Ind
23/11/2015	Natalie McGarry #	Glasgow East	SNP	Ind
31/12/2015	Simon Danczuk*	Rochdale	Lab	Ind
27/04/2016	Naz Shah*	Bradford West	Lab	Ind
	<i>Whip restored 5 Jul 2016</i>			

### 2017 Parliament

10/07/2017	Anne Marie Morris*	Newton Abbot	Con	Ind
	<i>Whip restored 12 Dec 2017</i>			
25/10/2017	Jared O'Mara*	Sheffield Hallam	Lab	Ind
	<i>Whip restored 3 Jul 2018, resigned from Labour Party 12 July 2018</i>			
02/11/2017	Kelvin Hopkins*	Luton North	Lab	Ind
03/11/2017	Charlie Elphicke*	Dover and Deal	Con	Ind
23/11/2017	Ivan Lewis*	Bury South	Lab	Ind
30/04/2018	John Woodcock*	Barrow and Furness	Lab	Ind
	<i>Resigned from Labour Party 18 July 2018</i>			
14/07/2018	Andrew Griffiths*	Burton	Con	Ind
24/07/2018	Ian Paisley*	North Antrim	DUP	Ind
	<i>Whip restored 18 Sep 2018</i>			
30/08/2018	Frank Field #	Birkenhead	Lab	Ind

#### Key:

Con	Conservative Party
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
Ind	Independent
Lab	Labour Party
LD	Liberal Democrat Party
Ref	Referendum Party
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SNP	Scottish National Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UKIP	UK Independence Party

#### Notes:

\* Lost party whip for disciplinary reasons

# Resigned party whip

~ [See by-elections page on parliament website](#)

**Sources:** David Butler and Gareth Butler, Twentieth Century British Political Facts, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011; Members Database; Hansard; Press reports

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