



## BRIEFING PAPER

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# All-women shortlists

By Richard Kelly  
Isobel White

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## Summary

Since 1918, when women were first able to stand as Members of Parliament, only 291 women have been elected, but during the same period 4,363 men were elected. If it was possible to put all the women who have been elected into the House of Commons today, they would still be in the minority.

*Baroness Gale, House of Lords, 30 October 2008*

Since Baroness Gale made those comments two general elections and a number of by-elections have intervened: 450 women have been elected to the House of Commons since 1918.

This Note provides some information on the use of all-women shortlists by the Labour Party and reviews approaches adopted by other political parties to increase the number of women candidates and elected representatives.

This note looks at the background to the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* which allowed political parties to draw up all-women shortlists of candidates for elections. The Act included a “sunset clause” – the Act would have expired at the end of 2015, unless extended.

The *Equality Act 2010* extended the period in which all-women shortlists may be used until 2030.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002

The *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* amended the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* to allow political parties to use all-women shortlists to select candidates for parliamentary elections; elections to the European Parliament; elections to the Scottish Parliament; elections to the National Assembly for Wales; and most local government elections.<sup>1</sup>

The *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* included a “sunset clause” that provided for the Act to expire at the end of 2015, although there were provisions to extend the life of the Act by an order that had to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

The provisions were introduced after the use of all-women shortlists by the Labour Party in the selection of candidates for the 1997 General Election was found by an employment tribunal to breach the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* (the *Jepson* case).<sup>3</sup> The finding did not specifically cover the selection of candidates. Section 29(1) of the Act covers the provision of services to the public or a section of the public and prohibits discrimination in this field. However, political parties are exempted from section 29(1) by s33 of the Act, originally to ensure that women’s organisations within parties were not affected. Section 13(1) prohibits bodies or authorities conferring authorisation or qualification needed for engagement in a particular profession or trade from discriminating on grounds of sex. The tribunal found that the women-only shortlist policy contravened s13(1), holding that selection as a parliamentary candidate constituted an authorisation needed for the profession of Member of Parliament.

The *Equality Act 2010* extended the life of the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* which will now continue in effect until the end of 2030.<sup>4</sup> Its life can continue to be further extended by Order.

Section 106 of the *Equality Act 2010* also gave ministers the power to make regulations requiring political parties to publish data relating to the diversity of party candidates seeking selection. This section is not yet in force (see section 2.3 of this briefing paper).

A fuller account of the background to the Act can be found in the Library Research Paper *The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* (chapter 2), section 1

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, section 3

<sup>3</sup> *Jepson and Dyas-Elliott v the Labour Party and others* [1996] IRLR 166

<sup>4</sup> *Equality Act 2010* (chapter 15), section 105

<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Library Research Paper RP 01/75, [The Sex Discrimination \(Election Candidates\) Bill](#), 22 October 2001

## 1.2 Women MPs elected at general elections 1918 – 2015

Since 1918, 368 women have been elected as Members in the House of Commons. This is seven per cent of all MPs over the period.<sup>6</sup> The table below gives details of the number of women MPs elected in each general election since 1918. The table is taken from the Library Standard Note *Women in Parliament and Government* which has further information about the number of women in Parliament since 1918 and presents comparative data for women in Parliament and other elected bodies in the UK and internationally.

**Table 1 Women MPs elected at General Elections by party 1918 to 2015**

	Con	Lab	LD	Other	Total	% MPs
1918	0	0	0	1	1	0.1%
1922	1	0	1	0	2	0.3%
1923	3	3	2	0	8	1.3%
1924	3	1	0	0	4	0.7%
1929	3	9	1	1	14	2.3%
1931	13	0	1	1	15	2.4%
1935	6	1	1	1	9	1.5%
1945	1	21	1	1	24	3.8%
1950	6	14	0	1	21	3.4%
1951	6	11	0	0	17	2.7%
1955	10	14	0	0	24	3.8%
1959	12	13	0	0	25	4.0%
1964	11	18	0	0	29	4.6%
1966	7	19	0	0	26	4.1%
1970	15	10	0	1	26	4.1%
1974(F)	9	13	0	1	23	3.6%
1974(O)	7	18	0	2	27	4.3%
1979	8	11	0	0	19	3.0%
1983	13	10	0	0	23	3.5%
1987	17	21	2	1	41	6.3%
1992	20	37	2	1	60	9.2%
1997	13	101	3	3	120	18.2%
2001	14	95	5	4	118	17.9%
2005	17	98	10	3	128	19.8%
2010	49	81	7	6	143	22.0%
2015	68	99	0	24	191	29.4%

Source: Rallings and Thrasher, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*; House of Commons Library Research Papers 10/36 *General Election 2010* and CBP-7186 *General Election 2015*

### Commentary on the 2010 election results

The House of Commons Library Research Paper *General Election 2015* includes some details about the characteristics of Members elected in 2015:

<sup>6</sup> House of Commons Library Standard Note, [Women in Parliament and Government](#), SN/SG/1250, 5 January 2012



### Gender, ethnicity and new MPs

Of 650 MPs elected in the 2015 General Election, 191 (29.4%) are women, the highest number and proportion ever. The number of women MPs elected in 2015 was 48 more than in 2010. Women MPs by party include 99 Labour, 68 Conservative and 20 SNP; 43% of Labour MPs are women, 21% of Conservative MPs and 36% of SNP MPs.

Of all those elected in 2015, 468 (72%) had been MPs in the previous Parliament. Five MPs from earlier Parliaments were returned: Dawn Butler (Lab), Boris Johnson (Con), Rob Marris (Lab), Joan Ryan (Lab) and Alex Salmond (SNP). The remaining 177 (27%) have no previous House of Commons experience.

41 MPs elected in 2015 are from black and minority-ethnic (BME) groups, a rise on the 27 BME MPs in 2010.<sup>7</sup>

A similar commentary appeared in the Library Research Paper, *General Election 2010*.<sup>8</sup> In 2010, 144 women MPs were elected at the general election.<sup>9</sup>

In *Britain Votes 2015*, Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs commented on the increase in women's representation in the House of Commons as a result of the 2015 General Election:

In terms of the representation of women in politics, 2015 saw an increase in the percentage of women in the House of Commons from 22–29%. The Conservative Party increased the percentage of women in their benches from 16–21%, but the overall increase was largely driven by the Labour Party and the SNP who increased the percentage of women among their MPs from 35–43% and 17–36% respectively. The Labour Party delivered this increase through their continued use of all-women shortlists. The SNP did not use quotas – although they have recently voted to allow their use – but their landslide victory resulted in the party increasing their representation in parliament from six to 56 MP (leaving just three seats in Scotland not in SNP hands) creating an unprecedented situation where some candidates elected to Parliament had not even been party members prior to the referendum campaign in 2014. SNP successes also saw the election of the youngest MP (aged 20) since 1832. As such the 2015 General Election in Scotland provided a unique opportunity for women candidates to overcome both the incumbency disadvantage and entrenched party practices that discriminate against them in the rest of the UK. ...

... The Labour Party was considerably ahead of the other parties in terms of placing women in target seats (54% of their candidates in target seats were women compared with 33% overall). The Labour Party was followed by the SNP who placed women in 36% of their target seats, although given they took all but three seats in Scotland the notion of target seats might be somewhat redundant in this case. The Liberal democrats placed women in 35% of their target seats. However, none of these women candidates were returned as MPs. The Liberal Democrats' representation in the House of Commons fell dramatically from 56

<sup>7</sup> House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, [General Election 2015](#), CBP 7186, 28 July 2015

<sup>8</sup> House of Commons Library Research Paper, [General Election 2010](#), RP 10/36, Final Edition, 2 February 2011

<sup>9</sup> Including Anne McIntosh, whose election was delayed following the death of a candidate

to just eight with no women at all among the 2015 cohort. Historically the liberal Democrats have tended to place men in safer seats than women and this is probably the set explanation for why the residual Liberal Democrat MPs are all men. The Conservative Party placed women in 28% of their target seats, which was an improvement on their historic record but still considerably behind the other main parties. UKIP was by far the least representative party with just 14% women candidates and 20% women in their target seats.<sup>10</sup>

## “Sex and Power” – Equality and Human Rights Commission

In September 2008, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published *Sex and Power 2008*. The report came five years after the Equal Opportunities Commission’s (EOC) original *Sex and Power* report. It was the EHRC’s “first survey on women in positions of power and influence” but it was able to make comparisons with the earlier surveys by the EOC. The EHRC reported that at the current rate of progress it would take “around 200 years – another 40 elections – to achieve an equal number of women in Parliament”.<sup>11</sup>

Further reports were published in August 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015.<sup>12</sup> The 2015 report considered the general election and the outcomes for women in both the House of Commons and the Government.

Earlier editions had provided information on the proportion of women in particular political (and other) roles. Data from various editions of the *Sex and Power* series of reports is presented in Table 2.

<sup>10</sup> Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs, “All Aboard the Pink Battle Bus? Women Voters, Women’s Issues, Candidates and Party Leaders”, in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds), *Britain Votes 2015*, 2015, pp221-223. A similar commentary on the results of the 2010 General Election can be found in: Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs, “‘Wags’, ‘Wives’ and ‘Mothers’ ... But what about Women Politicians?”, in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds), *Britain Votes 2010*, 2010, pp185-186

<sup>11</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Sex and Power 2008](#), September 2008, available at

<sup>12</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Sex and Power 2011](#), August 2011; Centre for Women and Democracy, [Sex and Power 2013: Who runs Britain?](#), 2013; Centre for Women and Democracy, [Sex and Power 2014: Who runs Britain?](#), 2014; Centre for Women and Democracy, [Sex and Power 2015: Who runs Britain?](#), October 2015

**Table 2: Sex and Power: Women in selected 'top jobs' since 2003 – Politics**

	% women						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2010/11	2014
Members of Parliament	18.1	18.1	19.7	19.5	19.3	22.2	23
Members of the Cabinet	23.8	27.3	27.3	34.8	26.1	17.4	23
Members of the House of Lords	16.5	17.7	18.4	18.9	19.7	21.9	24
Members of the Scottish Parliament	39.5	39.5	39.5	38.8	34.1	34.9	35
Members of the National Assembly for Wales	50	50	50	51.7	46.7	41.7	42
Local authority council leaders	NA	16.6	16.2	13.8	14.3	13.2	13
UK Members of the European Parliament	24.1	24.4	24.4	25.6	25.6	31.9	41

Source: Centre for Women and Democracy, *Sex and Power 2014: Who runs Britain?*, 2014; Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Sex and Power 2011*, August 2011, p4; *Sex and Power 2008*, September 2008, p5;

### 1.3 Labour candidates selected through all-women shortlists

Table 3, below, summarises the number of Labour candidates selected and MPs elected from all-women shortlists in 1997, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

**Table 3: Labour candidates selected and MPs elected from all-women shortlists**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Labour all-women shortlists</b>	<b>MPs elected from all-women shortlists</b>
1997	38	35
2005	30	23
2010	63	28
2015	77	31

Lists of seats where female Labour candidates stood, having been selected through all-women shortlists, for the 1997, 2005, 2010 and 2015 elections are given in Appendix 1.



## 2. Background to the extension of the provisions which allow all-women shortlists

### 2.1 A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for an Equality Bill for Great Britain

In June 2007, the Government issued a consultation document on a proposed Equality Bill: *A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for an Equality Bill for Great Britain*.<sup>13</sup> In a chapter on “Balancing Measures”, the consultation document included a review of the operation of the existing provisions that allowed parties to select candidates from all-women shortlists.<sup>14</sup> It then asked for views on the question:

Do you agree that we should have a power to continue the operation of the current provision beyond 2015, if this is still necessary and proportionate?

Do you agree that we should widen the scope of voluntary positive measures for political parties to target the selection of candidates beyond gender?

The Government published the response to the consultation document on 21 July 2008.<sup>15</sup> It began its commentary on the response to the questions with:

5.25 The great majority (more than 90 per cent) of the nearly 150 respondents on the issue of women-only shortlists agreed that the existing provision should be extended. There was a general sentiment that the provisions should continue for as long as it was considered necessary and proportionate to retain them i.e. until a gender balance is achieved in Parliament. A number of respondents wanted similar provisions for all equality groups.<sup>16</sup>

Before the consultation response was published, the Government’s plans to extend the provision were already known:

- The decision to extend the amendment to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* that permitted all-women shortlists to 2030 was included in the Government’s *Draft Legislative Programme*, which was published in May 2008.<sup>17</sup>
- On 26 June 2008, Harriet Harman, the Minister for Women and Equality, made an oral statement, setting out the “key proposals

<sup>13</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Discrimination Law Review - A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for an Equality Bill for Great Britain – A Consultation Paper](#), June 2007

<sup>14</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Discrimination Law Review - A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for an Equality Bill for Great Britain – A Consultation Paper](#), June 2007, paras 4.27-4.30 and 4.52-4.58

<sup>15</sup> HM Government, [The Equality Bill – Government Response to the Consultation](#), July 2008, Cm 7454

<sup>16</sup> HM Government, [The Equality Bill – Government Response to the Consultation](#), July 2008, Cm 7454, para 5.25

<sup>17</sup> Office of the Leader of the House of Commons, [Preparing Britain for the Future – the Government’s Draft Legislative Programme 2008/09](#), May 2008, Cm 7372, p43,

for the Equality Bill".<sup>18</sup> The oral statement announced the publication of *Framework for a Fairer Future – The Equality Bill*.

## 2.2 Framework for a Fairer Future – The Equality Bill

*Framework for a Fairer Future – The Equality Bill* set out the measures that would be taken forward in the *Equality Bill*. The Government confirmed its intention to "extend the use of women-only shortlists, which are due to expire in 2015, to 2030" in the forthcoming Bill.<sup>19</sup> The Government also confirmed that the representation of women would be considered by the Speaker's Conference:

The Speaker agreed, at the Prime Minister's suggestion, to call a Speaker's Conference to consider, against the backdrop of a decline in voting turnout, a number of important issues including the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons. The Speaker's Conference and the taskforce will play a vital role in making progress in these areas.<sup>20</sup>

### Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Representation

The Speaker confirmed the terms of reference of the Speaker's Conference on 22 July 2008:

**Mr. Speaker:** It may be for the convenience of the House to know that the Prime Minister has suggested to me that I convene a Speaker's Conference. The following terms of reference have been agreed through the usual channels:

"To consider and make recommendations for rectifying the disparity between the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons and their representation in the UK population at large; and to consider such other matters as might, by agreement, be referred to for consideration."

It is proposed that the Conference will be set up as a Committee of the House. A motion to establish the Conference as a Committee of the House will be tabled by the Government in October for decision by the House.<sup>21</sup>

The Speaker's Conference held its first meeting on 20 January 2009. Its *Final Report* was published on 11 January 2010.<sup>22</sup> The conclusions the Speaker's Conference reached were summarised in a Library Standard Note, *Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary representation*.<sup>23</sup> The Speaker's Conference examined "Equality guarantees in UK law" (paras 121-156). It described all-women shortlists under the *Sex*

<sup>18</sup> HC Deb 26 June 2008 cc499ff

<sup>19</sup> Government Equalities Office, *Framework for a Fairer Future – The Equality Bill*, June 2008, Cm 7431, p28

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p29

<sup>21</sup> HC Deb 22 July 2008 c659

<sup>22</sup> Speaker's Conference (on Parliamentary Representation), *Final Report*, 11 January 2010, HC 239-I 2009-10

<sup>23</sup> House of Commons Library Standard Note, *Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary representation*, SN/PC6181

*Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* as “a type of self-imposed quota”,<sup>24</sup> and recorded that:

The Labour Party believes its use of all-women shortlists to be a “crucial” factor behind the rise in number of female Labour MPs from 9.1% of the party’s total in 1987, to 27.5% in 2005. The Prime Minister [Gordon Brown] stated that the “under-representation of women historically, we have found, can only be addressed by all-women shortlists”.<sup>25</sup>

It asked whether there was a case for compulsory quotas and discussed objections to quotas. The Speaker’s Conference fully supported the then proposed extension to the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* to 2030, and called for equivalent legislation to allow all-BME shortlists to be used.<sup>26</sup>

A Westminster Hall debate on the report was held on 30 March 2010.<sup>27</sup>

In line with a recommendation in the report that “there should be a debate on the Floor of the House every two years to review progress”,<sup>28</sup> debates were held on 12 January 2012,<sup>29</sup> and on 27 February 2014.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.3 The Equality Act 2010

The *Equality Bill* was published on 24 April 2009, and received Royal Assent before the House was dissolved for the 2010 General Election.

As well as extending the period in which all-women shortlists may be used until 2030, the Act also made provisions for political parties to make selection arrangements for candidates to address the under-representation of certain groups in elected bodies. Other than all-women shortlists, these arrangements cannot include shortlists restricted to people with other protected characteristics.<sup>31</sup> Under the legislation, political parties would, for example, be able to reserve places on shortlists of candidates for people on the grounds of race or disability but would not be able to have a shortlist comprised solely of people selected on these grounds.

The time limited provision in section 3 of the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002* (as amended) can still be changed by order.<sup>32</sup>

### Section 106

Section 106 of the *Equality Act 2010* also gave ministers the power to make regulations requiring political parties to publish data relating to

<sup>24</sup> Speaker’s Conference (on Parliamentary Representation), [Final Report](#), 11 January 2010, HC 239-I 2009-10, para 121

<sup>25</sup> Speaker’s Conference (on Parliamentary Representation), [Final Report](#), 11 January 2010, HC 239-I 2009-10, para 127

<sup>26</sup> Speaker’s Conference (on Parliamentary Representation), [Final Report](#), 11 January 2010, HC 239-I 2009-10, para 149

<sup>27</sup> HC Deb 30 March 2010 cc159WH-180WH

<sup>28</sup> HC Deb 12 January 2012 cc403-404

<sup>29</sup> HC Deb 12 January 2012 c403

<sup>30</sup> [HC Deb 27 February 2014 cc475-514](#)

<sup>31</sup> The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation (*Equality Act 2010*, section 4)

<sup>32</sup> *Equality Act 2010* (chapter 15), section 105

the diversity of party candidates seeking selection. This section is not yet in force.

The provision was inserted following the Speaker's Conference.

During the 2012 debate on the Speaker's Conference, Dame Anne Begg noted that candidate selection monitoring reports had not been published by the political parties, although some parties had provided limited information to her. She also noted that legislation was in place, although not commenced, to require such reports to be published.<sup>33</sup>

In her reply to the debate, Lynne Featherstone, then Minister for Equalities, said that the Government supported the principle that parties should publish diversity data but believed this should be achieved through a voluntary approach.<sup>34</sup>

During the 2014 debate, Anne Begg spoke again about Section 106:

One key recommendation of the Speaker's Conference that remains unresolved was aimed at ensuring that political parties choose a diverse range of candidates in potentially winnable seats: the publication by political parties of diversity data relating to candidate selections has not properly happened.<sup>35</sup>

The then Minister, Helen Grant, responded:

We have also secured commitments from the three main parties to provide greater transparency of candidate selection through the collection and publication of diversity data. I am very pleased that the main parties are acting on their agreement to publish the data ahead of the 2015 general election as an alternative to implementing section 106 of the Equality Act.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> [HC Deb 12 January 2012 cc406-407](#)

<sup>34</sup> [HC Deb 12 January 2012 c440](#)

<sup>35</sup> [HC Deb 27 February 2014 c478](#)

<sup>36</sup> [HC Deb 27 February 2014 c511](#)

### 3. Methods of 'positive action' used in candidate selection

Joni Lovenduski has identified three strategies for political parties that want to increase the number of women representatives. These were summarised in *Women at the Top 2005*.<sup>37</sup>

Type of strategy	Definition	Examples	Impact
Equality rhetoric	Public acceptance of claims for representation	Found in party campaign platforms; party political discourse; speeches and writings of political leaders (exhortation of women to come forward and seek selection)	Affects selectorate and aspirant candidates' attitudes and beliefs
Equality promotion	Attempts to bring those who are currently under-represented into political competition	Special training; financial assistance; the setting of targets	Enhances aspirant candidates' resources and motivation; affects selectorate attitudes
Equality guarantees	Requires an increase in the number or proportion of particular candidates; makes a particular social characteristic a necessary qualification for office	Party quotas, legislative quotas; reserved seats	Creates an artificial demand; may increase supply

Different types of systems have been proposed to redress the perceived imbalance in the representation of women in elective offices in the UK apart from all-women shortlists. These include:

<sup>37</sup> Sarah Childs, Joni Lovenduski and Rosie Campbell, *Women at the Top 2005 – Changing Numbers, Changing Politics?* Hansard Society, 2005, p24

- 'Twinning' where two local constituency parties select their candidates jointly, with a requirement that one man and one woman are selected.
- 'Zipping', which can potentially be used in list type elections, such as the European Parliament or the regional element of the Scottish Parliament or National Assembly for Wales, where the parties selecting the candidates on a list are required to alternate male and female candidates.
- Balanced shortlists where a certain proportion of women are required to be present on a shortlist.

In "No (Parliamentary) Gender Gap Please, We're British", Nicholas Allen and Jonathan Dean proposed the creation of two-member constituencies for the House of Commons with everyone voting twice, once for a man and once for a woman, to ensure gender balance. They suggested that "There would be no abrogation of political equality, just a revised formula of one person two votes".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Nicholas Allen and Jonathan Dean, "No (Parliamentary) Gender Gap Please, We're British", *Political Quarterly*, Vol 79, No 2, April-June 2008, p217 [pp21-220]



## 4. Party approaches

The UK political parties were slower to move towards positive action policies than European parties. There are particular difficulties in a First Past the Post electoral system with single member constituencies. It is relatively straightforward to institute such systems where a list type proportional representation system is used.

The use of positive action has caused controversy within parties. There has been strongest resistance within the Conservative Party but the Liberal Democrats and Labour have also been divided on occasion over the issue.<sup>39</sup>

### 4.1 Labour Party

At its 1993 Conference, the Labour Party adopted all-women shortlists for selecting parliamentary candidates. In 1995, Tony Blair announced that the policy would be in place for one general election only.<sup>40</sup>

But, as noted above, in 1996, the Labour Party was found to be in breach of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* by using all-women shortlists. Its practice ceased in the run up to the 1997 election but those candidates already selected on the basis of all-women shortlists retained their position.

Candidates selected for the 2001 General Election were selected from 50-50 shortlists.<sup>41</sup>

Following the passing of the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002*, the Labour Party again adopted all-women shortlists for the 2005 General Election.<sup>42</sup>

After the 2005 General Election, Kavanagh and Butler reported that:

Labour's 40-strong new intake of MPs bore the heavy imprint of the all-women shortlist policy: 26, or two-thirds, of the new MPs were women, 23 of whom had come from all-women shortlists. In fact, in the 48 seats where retiring Labour MPs had been replaced by new candidates, 33 of them had been women (30 of them from all-women shortlists), but seven of these seats were lost at the election.<sup>43</sup>

There is evidence that all-women shortlists have been important in increasing the number of women MPs. Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook also cited support for the case that all-women shortlists have been instrumental in increasing the representation of women. They repeated the following quotations in a case study on the *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002*:

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of debates within parties, see Meg Russell, *Women's Representation in UK Politics: What can be done within the law?*, Constitution Unit, 2000, pp 8-14. The debate within the Labour Party is discussed by M Eagle and J Lovenduski, *High Time or High Tide for Labour Women?*, Fabian Society, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Childs (ed), *Women and British Party Politics*, 2008, pp26-29

<sup>41</sup> David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 2001, 2002*, p195

<sup>42</sup> Dennis Kavanagh and David Butler, *The British General Election of 2005, 2005*, pp151-152

<sup>43</sup> Dennis Kavanagh and David Butler, *The British General Election of 2005, 2005*, p153

- “no other measure – we have tried all the others that I know – will work for Westminster selections and elections”; and
- “it is only through AWS that progress has actually been made”.<sup>44</sup>

In their review of the 2005 General Election Kavanagh and Butler reported that

... all-women shortlists, a practice that had been discontinued in 1996 after an industrial tribunal had declared it discriminatory and so unlawful. In consequence, it was alleged, the number of women elected in 2001 dropped for the first time since 1983”.<sup>45</sup>

After the 2010 General Election, Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs commented that:

... immediate and significant improvement in the sex composition at Westminster requires translating parties’ aspirant women candidates into candidates selected or a party’s held and winnable seats. Of the three main equality strategies available to political parties – equality rhetoric, equality promotion and equality guarantees – the most efficient is the latter.<sup>46</sup>

After the 2015 General Election, Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs again drew attention to the importance of all-women shortlists in securing an increase in the number of women elected:

In terms of the representation of women in politics, 2015 saw an increase in the percentage of women in the House of Commons from 22–29%. ... the overall increase was largely driven by the Labour Party and the SNP who increased the percentage of women among their MPs from 35–43% and 17–36% respectively. The Labour Party delivered this increase through their continued use of all-women shortlists.<sup>47</sup>

Gordon Brown’s evidence, when Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party, to the Speaker’s Conference that “under-representation of women historically, we have found, can only be addressed by all-women shortlists” has already been noted.

## 4.2 Liberal Democrats

At their party conference in September 2001 the Liberal Democrats rejected a proposal to select at least 40 per cent men and 40 per cent women candidates for the next General Election in seats requiring a 7.5% swing or less to win. A further proposal to select a woman candidate where the sitting MP stands down at the next General Election was also defeated. Instead the following motions were approved:

<sup>44</sup> Sarah Childs (ed), *Women and British Party Politics*, 2008, p134

<sup>45</sup> Dennis Kavanagh and David Butler, *The British General Election of 2005*, 2005, p151

<sup>46</sup> Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs, “‘Wags’, ‘Wives’ and ‘Mothers’ ... But what about Women Politicians?”, in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds), *Britain Votes 2010*, 2010, p184

<sup>47</sup> Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs, “All Aboard the Pink Battle Bus? Women Voters, Women’s Issues, Candidates and Party Leaders”, in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds), *Britain Votes 2015*, 2015, pp221–223. A similar commentary on the results of the 2010 General Election can be found in: Rosie Campbell and Sarah Childs, “‘Wags’, ‘Wives’ and ‘Mothers’ ... But what about Women Politicians?”, in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds), *Britain Votes 2010*, 2010, pp185–186

1. That a target of 40% of held seats where the sitting MP stands down, and seats requiring a swing of less than 7.5% to win, be fought by women candidates at the next general election; that a taskforce be established by the Federal Executive including members from the States Candidates Committees, the Campaigns Department and all relevant SAOs, with reasonable staff time and funding allocated to it, that reports to every meeting of the Federal Executive and to every Federal Conference on progress towards that target.

2. That the Joint States Candidates Committee<sup>48</sup>, in consultation with relevant SAOs, undertake an immediate and urgent review of the processes by which parliamentary candidates are sought and approved, specifically including post-selection support and training for candidates. (Such a review should include surveying those already approved, all Liberal Democrat principal councillors, and others to ascertain reasons for so few women and people from other under-represented groups being on the list of approved candidates, and to recommend relevant changes to the approval and candidate recruitment processes.<sup>49</sup>

An article in the *Journal of Liberal History* (Spring, 2009) by Lisa Harrison, suggested that the mechanisms for achieving the 40 per cent target of female candidates in winnable seats fuelled internal party disagreement. Harrison noted that the Liberal Democrats continued to reject all women shortlists and that there was no particular consensus in the party about how to promote women candidates. She commented that it might be more appropriate for the party “to discuss strategies, as opposed to a ‘one-technique-fits-all’ approach”.<sup>50</sup>

In 2011, the Liberal Democrats established a Candidate Leadership Programme:

The diversity motion that was overwhelmingly supported at Spring Conference in Sheffield proposed a Candidate Leadership Programme for candidates from under-represented groups. The Programme is designed specifically to identify and develop some of our best and brightest candidates within the Party. It is open to talented, motivated individuals from groups that are currently under-represented in the Parliamentary Party, and can demonstrate the combination of passion, drive and commitment that it takes to win a Parliamentary seat.<sup>51</sup>

However, some of the party’s senior members acknowledged that all-women shortlists may be necessary to increase the number of women MPs, particularly if the Candidate Leadership Programme was not successful.<sup>52</sup>

In February 2016, Mark Pack, a Liberal Democrat commentator and blogger, posted details of a motion for debate at the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference that would:

<sup>48</sup> That is, the devolved bodies responsible for candidate selection

<sup>49</sup> Liberal Democrat conference, 26 September 2001

<sup>50</sup> Selecting women candidates: a critical evaluation by Lisa Harrison. *Journal of Liberal History*, Issue 62, Spring 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Sal Brinton, “[Baroness Brinton writes: Towards a more diverse Parliamentary Party](#)”, *Liberal Democrat Voice*, 15 June 2011

<sup>52</sup> “[All-Women Shortlists May Be Necessary, Senior Lib Dems Accept](#)”, *Huffington Post*, 19 September 2011

- Extend support for individuals from under-represented groups seeking approval or selection as Westminster candidates;
- Create a "2020 Candidate Diversity Taskforce" to co-ordinate recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups; and
- Examine the Party's approval and selection processes.

He reported that conference would also be asked to recommend that:

Any local party should be able to vote for an all-women shortlist or an all-disabled shortlist, or reserve some spaces for candidates from other under-represented groups.<sup>53</sup>

### 4.3 Conservative Party

In *Women at the Top 2005*, the Conservative Party was described as "opposed to equality guarantees on the basis that such measures offend principles of meritocracy". The Party "preferred to use equality rhetoric and promotion measures to increase the number of its women candidates". Aspiring candidates had to be on the Party's Approved List and some "women only" training was available.<sup>54</sup>

Shortly after his election as leader of the Conservative Party, David Cameron restated his leadership campaign call for the Party to select more women candidates. The *Financial Times* reported a speech he made on 12 December 2006:

David Cameron has given the Conservative grassroots three months to pick more women to represent the party at the next election.

[...]

Setting out his plans to make the Conservatives more representative, Mr Cameron said he was prepared to take "further action" if, three months after constituencies started selecting candidates, they refused to pick from a centrally agreed "priority list" in safe and winnable seats."<sup>55</sup>

The Priority List (or A-List) has been criticised, notably on *Conservative Home* (a website which "aims to provide comprehensive coverage of Britain's Conservative Party"). In June 2006, David Cameron responded to that criticism.<sup>56</sup>

Subsequent changes allowed party members to choose shortlists of four – at least two of whom had to be women.<sup>57</sup> But in January 2007, further changes were made to boost the number of local candidates.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Mark Pack, [Details of Lib-Dem all-women shortlist plans released, and they're not just about women](#), 6, 7 and 23 February 2016

<sup>54</sup> Sarah Childs, Joni Lovenduski and Rosie Campbell, *Women at the Top 2005 – Changing Numbers, Changing Politics?* Hansard Society, 2005, p32

<sup>55</sup> Cathy Newman, "Cameron presses Tories on selection of women", *Financial Times*, 13 December 2005

<sup>56</sup> Conservativehome.com – Seats and Candidates, [David Cameron: Getting more women into Parliament remains top of my agenda](#), 2 June 2006

<sup>57</sup> Conservativehome.com – Seats and Candidates, [Party democracy is compromised in quest for more women MPs](#), 21 August 2006

<sup>58</sup> Conservativehome.com – Seats and Candidates, [Selection changes confirmed](#), 29 January 2007

## Conservative Reforms to Parliamentary Selection 2005-2010

In their book, *Sex, Gender and the Conservative Party*, Sarah Childs and Paul Webb provided a summary of the changes that were made to the Conservative Party's selection procedures.

Date	Reforms
May 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the creation of a 'priority list' of candidates, of whom at least 50 per cent would be women, with a 'significant' percentage from black/minority ethnicity and disabled communities. Associations in vacant Conservative-held target seats would be 'expected' to select from amongst the priority list candidates.</li> <li>(2) a three month progress review;</li> <li>(3) the use of headhunting, mentoring and guidance of local associations; and</li> <li>(4) the option of holding primaries (either open or closed) or 'community panels' to select candidates.</li> </ol>
August 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Constituency Associations with fewer than 300 members are expected to hold a primary;</li> <li>(2) where Associations choose not to employ a primary model, Members will draw up a shortlist of three or four candidates from a list of 12-15. The shortlist would be sex balanced: 2 women and 2 men; the final decision would be made by the EC on the basis of in-depth interviews; and</li> <li>(3) if the EC shortlists an AWS, the existing model of selection could be retained.</li> </ol>
January 2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Associations are permitted to choose from the full list of approved candidates with a requirement that at each stage of the selection process at least 50 percent of the candidates have to be women;</li> <li>(2) Associations could still choose to select solely from the Priority List.</li> </ol>
September 2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) All applications were to be sifted by Association Officers long with a Party Chairman and a representative of the Candidates' Department.</li> <li>(2) Six candidates were to go before (ideally) a Special General Meeting or Open Primary.</li> <li>(3) The Association Executive may meet to remove the 'completely unsuitable' and add a reserve in 'exceptional' circumstances; the final field could be reduced to four;</li> </ol>

- (4) Any seats where the sitting MP announces his or her retirement after January 1st 2010 will be selected by 'by-elections rules'; Associations would simply be presented with a list of three candidates by the party from which to choose.<sup>59</sup>

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## Assessments of the 'A' List policy

An article in *British Politics* in 2007 by Peter Dorey assessed the success of Cameron's 'A-List' policy:

Cameron's attempt at ensuring that a more socially diverse and representative range of Conservative parliamentary candidates were adopted in readiness for the next election entailed the drafting of an 'A list' of candidates, of whom 50% would be women and 10% from ethnic minority backgrounds. It was envisaged that the list would be 'consulted' by local Conservative associations in 'winnable seats', when they were selecting a candidate to contest the next election.

In this context, Cameron's initial efforts enjoyed only limited success (for reasons noted below), to the extent that during the first half of 2006, women candidates were adopted by Conservative constituency associations in 32% of winnable seats, while in almost half of the constituencies involved in candidate selection, a local Conservative was adopted in preference to those on the 'A list' presented by Central Office. Consequently, in August 2006, an evidently frustrated Cameron insisted that local Conservative associations in 'target seats' should ensure that on a short-list of four candidates, at least two should be women, after which the final selection would be made by the constituency's executive council. The council's choice would then be presented to a special meeting of the constituency party members, the expectation being that they would endorse the selected candidate. At the same time, Cameron sought to increase the proportion of women on the 'A list' from 50 to 60%, and hinted that if more women candidates were not adopted he might consider imposing all-women short-lists on recalcitrant Conservative constituency associations (*The Guardian*, 21 August 2006).

However, stipulating that at least 50% of candidates on the final constituency short-list should be women would not guarantee that local Conservative associations actually selected one of those women when making their final choice, a point illustrated in Folkestone during July 2006, when two of the three candidates on the final short-list to contest Michael Howard's seat (when he stands down at the next election) were women, but it was nonetheless the male candidate who was finally adopted.

By November 2006, a total of 39 candidates had been selected for seats since David Cameron's introduction of the 'A-list', of whom 15 (38.5%) were women, 24 (61.5%) were men, and 2 (5%) emanated from ethnic minority backgrounds. Moreover, of these 39 candidates, 23 (59%) were selected from the A-list, while 16 (41%) were local candidates (*the Daily Telegraph*, 10 November 2006).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Sarah Childs and Paul Webb, *Sex, Gender and the Conservative Party: From Iron Lady to Kitten Heels*, 2011, Box 3.2

<sup>60</sup> A New Direction or Another False Dawn? David Cameron and the Crisis of British Conservatism by Peter Dorey. *British Politics*, 2007 (2) 137-166



An article in the *Times* on 28 April 2009 commented on the lack of women in the Shadow Cabinet and said that some of the Conservative Party's most highly qualified women supporters were finding it difficult to find seats. The article also noted that "according to an analysis of the top 100 target seats by the *Times*, 26 have selected women candidates. In seats where the Tory candidate is standing down, about half are women."<sup>61</sup> David Cameron responded to the article the following day.<sup>62</sup>

On 20 October 2009 David Cameron gave evidence to the Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary representation. Mr Cameron said that the under-representation of women and ethnic minorities was a "real problem for Parliament and it's been an even greater problem for my party". He said the Conservative party's selection procedure had been altered so that new shortlists would be drawn up between Conservative Central Office and the relevant local association and added that it was his intention "if we continue as we are, that some of those shortlists will be all-women shortlists to help us boost the number of Conservative women MPs".<sup>63</sup>

The Conservative Party did not adopt all-women shortlists for the 2015 General Election. After the election, Women2Win noted that:

There are now 68 female MPs in the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, up from 49 in 2010. All were selected, and then won their seats, on merit. Women2Win (W2W) was set up ten years ago, when we had just 17 female MPs, to help encourage, support and mentor Conservative women into the House of Commons.<sup>64</sup>

## Women2Win

The *Women2Win* campaign is a Conservative campaign group committed to supporting David Cameron's policy of increasing the number of women selected to fight winnable seats.<sup>65</sup> After the 2015 General Election it outlined ways in which it offered support to candidates:

Women2Win has played a small but important role in supporting the 2015 female candidates in a variety of ways. Whether it was weekly training sessions for candidates from 2012-2015, one-on-one mentoring, or feisty mock hustings and financial support for female candidates' campaigns, the purpose is the same: to have a House of Commons that is more representative of modern Britain, and one that better reflects the Conservative party.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> How Cameron's conference stage has become a women-free zone, *Times*, 28 April 2009

<sup>62</sup> We will always fight the bias towards men, article by David Cameron. *Times*, 29 April 2009

<sup>63</sup> 'Cameron plans all-women lists', BBC Online, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8314322.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8314322.stm) and Speaker's Conference web page at [http://www.parliament.uk/business/speakers\\_conference.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/business/speakers_conference.cfm)

<sup>64</sup> Women2Win, *The new Conservative women MPs – selected on merit, slaying the big beasts*, 2 June 2015

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.women2win.com/>

<sup>66</sup> Women2Win, *The new Conservative women MPs – selected on merit, slaying the big beasts*, 2 June 2015

## 4.4 Scottish National Party

In 2014, the SNP elected its first female leader, Nicola Sturgeon. This was also the year in which the Scottish independence referendum was held.

In March 2015, the SNP conference voted to introduce measures to select more female candidates at elections. BBC News described these measures:

- Where any incumbent SNP constituency MSP announces their intention to stand down, the National Executive Committee may direct that an all-women shortlist should be submitted by the Constituency Branch or Association.
- In any constituency where more than one candidate is nominated, at least one of those candidates must be female. The National Executive Committee will have authority to add candidates to shortlists to achieve this.
- The National Executive Committee may take steps to balance the number of male and female candidates being submitted for regional list rankings, and will have authority to nominate additional candidates to achieve this.<sup>67</sup>

In April 2015, SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon launched the party's Women's Pledge, committing the SNP and its members to delivering policies that promote equality.<sup>68</sup>

### Before 2014

Academic experts Fiona Mackay and Meryl Kenny (University of Edinburgh) in 2009 provided this summary of the SNP's record on gender equality:

Women have been present and prominent in the party since its inception. It has a long and impressive track record of recruiting and promoting women, including Nordic-levels of female MSPs in the first Scottish Parliament, and women have held high-profile leadership position in both opposition and government. However, the transition to a major party has, after the first elections, been accompanied by an overall decline in women's representation. Furthermore, the party at grassroots level is disproportionately male. Finally, although electoral trends are uncertain post-1999, there is evidence that female voters still regard the SNP as a macho party.<sup>69</sup>

They note that at least since the 1970s, the SNP had attracted more male than female voters. However, devolution may have shifted this pattern: at the 2003 Holyrood election, women were more likely to vote SNP than men. (However, at the 2007 Holyrood election, women were once again less likely to vote SNP than men, although the proportion of women voting SNP had increased the proportion of men voting SNP had increased more.)

<sup>67</sup> 'SNP conference: party backs new gender balance rules', [BBC News](#), 29 March 2015

<sup>68</sup> 'Nicola Sturgeon launches SNP women's pledge', [SNP website](#), 25 April 2015

<sup>69</sup> Fiona Mackay and Meryl Kenny, 'Women's political representation and the SNP: gendered paradoxes and puzzles', in Gerry Hassan (ed) *The Modern SNP: from protest to power*, University of Edinburgh Press, 2009, p 51

Academics Robert Johns (University of Essex), Lynn Bennie (Aberdeen University), and James Mitchell (Strathclyde University) argue that a likely reason that women have been less likely to vote for the SNP than men is that they have been less likely to support the SNP's main policy: Scottish independence.<sup>70</sup>

Fiona Mackay and Meryl Kenny elsewhere show that between 1999 and 2007, the SNP selected fewer female candidates than male candidates at the elections for the Scottish Parliament. During this period, the proportion of women SNP MSPs fell from approximately 45 percent to approximately 25 percent. At the 2007 Holyrood election, the SNP did not have any gender equality measures in place with regards to constituency seats and only informal measures for regional lists:

The SNP operated an informal rule of thumb that the lists should be more-or less gender balanced. In 2007, around a third of all places on the SNP regional lists went to women. Furthermore women made up about 30 per cent of the top three places on each list. In terms of most election scenarios, it is the first and second place on each list that are most vital – and most likely to be won. In the case of the SNP: six of the eight regional lists were topped by men; in addition, seven of the eight regional lists also had men in second place. Only three of the top 16 (first and second) slots were allotted to women (18.7 per cent).<sup>71</sup>

The SNP saw demands for positive action grow during the 1990s, and:

A statement of principle supporting gender balance in any new Scottish Parliament was approved by Party Conference in 1995 and the party leadership had publicly pledged to deliver gender balance at a large rally organised by the 50:50 campaign in 1996. However, it was not until 1998 that any specific mechanism was discussed at the SNP conference. As the party was expected to gain the majority of its seats through the regional 'top up' lists, it had been widely anticipated that it would use the mechanism of 'zipping', whereby women and men are alternated on party lists. This proposal, moved on behalf of the Women's Forum, was brought before a Special Conference in May 1998. It had the support of a number of influential figures in the party, although the leadership took a neutral stance.<sup>72</sup>

The proposal failed, but the Party leadership encouraged the selection of women candidates.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Johns, Lynn Bennie and James Mitchell, 'Gendered nationalism: the gender gap in support for the Scottish National Party', *Party Politics*, 2011, 1-21

<sup>71</sup> Fiona Mackay and Meryl Kenny, '[Women's representation in the 2007 Scottish Parliament: Temporary setback or return to the norm?](#)', *Scottish Affairs*, 2007, 60:2, 80-93

<sup>72</sup> M Russel, F Mackay and L McAllister, '[Women's representation in the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales: Party dynamics for achieving critical mass](#)', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 8:2, p60

## 5. All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament

The [All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament](#) was established in 2010 and its purpose is “to increase the number of women in Parliament in all parties and to encourage women to get involved in public life”.

The Group published a report in 2014, [Improving Parliament: creating a better and more representative House](#). The executive summary described the inquiry:

This Inquiry was launched to investigate what could be done to create a more aspirational, modern and representative Parliament. While the main focus of the Inquiry has been on increasing the number of women in public life, many of the findings will be valid for all parliamentarians.

The Inquiry looks at improving the working environment of the House of Commons to help increase the recruitment and retention of politicians, both men and women. The hope is that through some of these changes, it will improve the public perception and image of Parliament to the outside world and thereby encourage a more diverse group of men and women to come forward for a role in public life.<sup>73</sup>

The report’s key recommendations were:

- **Create a zero tolerance response to unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber;**
- **Improve the online gateway to Parliament** to enhance the parliamentary online presence and encourage more women and other currently under-represented groups to consider a role in public life;
- **Reconnect with voters by rebalancing parliamentary and constituency priorities** given that the role and expectations of a MP have changed over time;
- **Establish a Women and Equalities Select Committee;**
- **Improve the predictability of the Parliamentary calendar;**
- **Ask the DCMS Select Committee and Independent Press Standards Organisation to review sexism in traditional and social media** including analysis of how female parliamentarians are represented;
- **Provide clarification on support available for MPs with primary caring responsibilities** within the new expenses

<sup>73</sup> [Improving Parliament: creating a better and more representative House](#), All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament, 2014

system and formalise parental leave to make it more family-friendly.

## 5.1 Women and Equalities Committee

The [Women and Equalities Committee](#) was established after the 2015 general election:

The Women and Equalities Committee was appointed by the House of Commons on 3 June 2015 to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Equalities Office (GEO).

The Committee fills “a gap” in previous accountability arrangements - the Minister for Women and Equalities and the GEO will now be held to account by a select committee for the Government’s performance on equalities (gender, age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status) issues. The Committee joins more than thirty Parliaments worldwide with dedicated equalities committees.

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## Appendix 1: Labour candidates, selected through all-women shortlists

**Table A: 1997**

Constituency	Candidate
Aberdeen South	Anne Begg
Amber Valley	Judy Mallaber
Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	Sandra Osborne
Basildon	Angela E Smith
Birmingham, Edgbaston	Gisela Stuart
Brentford and Isleworth	Ann Keen
Burton	Janet Dean
Calder Valley	Chris McCafferty
Cardiff North	Julie Morgan
Cleethorpes	Shona Mclsaac
Colne Valley	Kali Mountford
Conwy	Betty Williams
Crawley	Laura Moffat
Erewash	Liz Blackman
Falmouth and Camborne	Candy Atherton
Forest of Dean	Diana Organ
Isle of Wight	<i>Deborah Gardiner</i> (not elected)
Keighley	Ann Cryer
Lincoln	Gillian Merron
Liverpool, Garston	Maria Eagle
Liverpool, Riverside	Louise Ellman
Luton South	Margaret Moran
Mitcham & Morden	Siobhan McDonagh
Milton Keynes South West	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Northampton North	Sally Keeble
Oxford West and Abingdon	<i>Susan Brown</i> (not elected)
Peterborough	Helen Brinton (later Clark)
Plymouth, Sutton	Linda Gilroy
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Jackie Lawrence
Redditch	Rt Hon Jacqui Smith
Regent's Park and Kensington North	Karen Buck
Slough	Fiona Mactaggart
Stirling	Anne McGuire
Stockton South	Dari Taylor
Stourbridge	Debra Shipley
Welwyn Hatfield	Melanie Johnson
Wolverhampton South West	Jenny Jones
Woodspring	<i>Debbie Sander</i> (not elected)

- 35 (out of 38) AWS candidates were successful at the 1997 general election.

- *Sources:* Library Parliamentary Information List, *Labour women candidates in women-only seats 1997*

**Table B: 2005**

Constituency	Candidate
Birmingham, Yardley	Jayne Innes <i>(not elected)</i>
Bishop Auckland	Helen Goodman
Blaenau Gwent	Maggie Jones <i>(not elected)</i>
Bristol East	Kerry McCarthy
Burnley	Kitty Ussher
Durham, City of	Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods
Forest of Dean	Isabel Owen <i>(not elected)</i>
Gateshead East and Washington West	Sharon Hodgson
Hackney South and Shoreditch	Meg Hillier
Halifax	Linda Riordan
Hammersmith and Fulham	Melanie Smallman <i>(not elected)</i>
Hove	Celia Barlow
Islington South and Finsbury	Emily Thornberry
Kingston upon Hull North	Diana Johnson
Lancaster and Wyre	Anne Sacks <i>(not elected)</i>
Leeds North West	Judith Blake <i>(not elected)</i>
Llanelli	Nia Griffith
Newport East	Jessica Morden
North East Derbyshire	Natascha Engel
Plymouth, Devonport	Alison Seabeck
Portsmouth North	Sarah McCarthy-Fry
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Susan Hayman <i>(not elected)</i>
Sheffield, Hillsborough	Angela C Smith
South Swindon	Anne Snelgrove
Stourbridge	Lynda Waltho
Swansea East	Sïan James
Wakefield	Mary Creagh
West Ham	Lyn Brown
West Lancashire	Rosie Cooper
Worsley	Barbara Keeley

- 23 (out of 30) AWS candidates were successful at the 2005 general election.
- Seven AWS candidates were not successful at the 2005 general election: in Birmingham Yardley; Blaenau Gwent; Forest of Dean; Hammersmith and Fulham; Lancaster and Wyre; Leeds North West; and Preseli Pembrokeshire.
- *Sources:* 2006/11/27-RSS; 2007/5/7-PCC; David Cutts, Sarah Childs and Edward Fieldhouse, 'This what happens when you don't listen': all-women shortlists at the 2005 general election, *Party Politics 2008 14: 575-595*

**Table C: 2010**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	
Airdrie and Shotts	Nash, Pamela	
Ashfield	de Piero, Gloria	
Birmingham Ladywood	Mahmood, Shabana	
Birmingham Yardley	Kelly, Lynnette	<i>(not elected)</i>
Blackpool North and Cleveleys	Martin, Penny	<i>(not elected)</i>
Bolton West	Hilling, Julie	
Brighton Pavilion	Platts, Nancy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Burton	Smeeth, Ruth	<i>(not elected)</i>
Bury North	Khan, Maryam	<i>(not elected)</i>
Calder Valley	Booth, Steph	<i>(not elected)</i>
Camborne and Redruth	Robinson, Jude	<i>(not elected)</i>
Cannock Chase	Woodward, Susan	<i>(not elected)</i>
Cardiff Central	Rathbone, Jenny	<i>(not elected)</i>
Clwyd South	Jones, Susan Elan	
Clwyd West	Hutton, Donna	<i>(not elected)</i>
Colne Valley	Abrahams, Debbie (a)	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dudley South	Harris, Rachel	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dunbartonshire East	Galbraith, Mary	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dunbartonshire West	Doyle, Gemma	
Dundee East	Murray, Katrina	<i>(not elected)</i>
Durham North West	Glass, Pat	
East Lothian	O'Donnell, Fiona	
Edinburgh East	Gilmore, Sheila	
Erewash	Pidgeon, Cheryl	<i>(not elected)</i>
Erith and Thamesmead	Pearce, Teresa	
Finchley and Golders Green	Moore, Alison	<i>(not elected)</i>
Glasgow East	Curran, Margaret	
Gravesham	Smith, Kathryn	<i>(not elected)</i>
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	Hayman, Sue	<i>(not elected)</i>
Hemel Hempstead	Orhan, Ayfer	<i>(not elected)</i>
High Peak	Bisknell, Caitlin	<i>(not elected)</i>
Hornsey and Wood Green	Jennings, Karen	<i>(not elected)</i>
Houghton and Sunderland South	Phillipson, Bridget	
Ilford North	Klein, Sonia	<i>(not elected)</i>
Keighley	Thomas, Jane	<i>(not elected)</i>
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	Jamieson, Cathy	
Leeds North West	Blake, Judith	<i>(not elected)</i>
Leeds West	Reeves, Rachel	
Leicester West	Kendall, Elizabeth	
Lewisham East	Alexander, Heidi	
Liverpool Wavertree	Berger, Luciana	
Makerfield	Fovargue, Yvonne	
Manchester Withington	Powell, Lucy (b)	<i>(not elected)</i>

Constituency	Candidate	
Newcastle upon Tyne Central	Onwurah, Chi	
Newcastle upon Tyne North	McKinnell, Catherine	
Nottingham South	Greenwood, Lilian	
Nuneaton	Innes, Jayne	<i>(not elected)</i>
Reading East	Dodds, Anneliese	<i>(not elected)</i>
Rochester and Strood	Murray, Teresa	<i>(not elected)</i>
Scarborough and Whitby	David, Annajoy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Selby and Ainsty	Marshall, Jan	<i>(not elected)</i>
Sherwood	Oldknow, Emilie	<i>(not elected)</i>
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Harrison, Angela	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stevenage	Taylor, Sharon	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stretford and Urmston	Green, Kate	
Sunderland Central	Elliott, Julie	
Tyneside North	Glindon, Mary	
Vale of Glamorgan	Davies, Alana	<i>(not elected)</i>
Walsall South	Vaz, Valerie	
Walthamstow	Creasy, Stella	
Washington and Sunderland West	Hodgson, Sharon	
Wellingborough	Buckland, Jayne	<i>(not elected)</i>
Wigan	Nandy, Lisa	

(a) Subsequently elected at the Oldham East and Saddleworth by-election on 13 January 2011;

(b) Subsequently elected at the Manchester Central by-election on 15 November 2012

- 28 (out of 63) AWS candidates were successful at the 2010 general election.
- *Sources:* This information was provided by Rosie Campbell, Birkbeck College. She obtained the information directly from the Labour party Candidates Office

**Table D: 2015**

Constituency	Candidate	
Aberconwy	Wimbury, Mary Felicity	<i>(not elected)</i>
Argyll & Bute	Galbraith, Mary	<i>(not elected)</i>
Ashton-under-Lyne	Rayner, Angela	
Batley & Spen	Cox, Jo	
Birmingham Yardley	Phillips, Jess	
Blackburn	Hollern, Kate	
Bradford South	Cummins, Judith Mary	
Bradford West	Shah, Naseem Akhter	
Brigg & Goole	Crawford, Jacky	<i>(not elected)</i>
Brighton Kemptown	Platts, Nancy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Brighton Pavilion	Sen, Purna	<i>(not elected)</i>
Bristol South	Smyth, Karin	

Constituency	Candidate	
Bristol West	Debbonaire, Thangam	
Burnley	Cooper, Julie Elizabeth	
Cardiff Central	Stevens, Jo	
Cardiff North	Williams, Mari	<i>(not elected)</i>
Carlisle	Sherriff, Lee Barbara	<i>(not elected)</i>
Carmarthen West & Pembrokeshire South	Evans, Delyth	<i>(not elected)</i>
Colne Valley	East, Jane	<i>(not elected)</i>
Coventry North East	Fletcher, Colleen Margaret	
Croydon Central	Jones, Sarah	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dewsbury	Sherriff, Paula Michelle	
Dover	Hawkins, Clair	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dudley South	Millward, Natasha	<i>(not elected)</i>
Dulwich & West Norwood	Hayes, Helen Elizabeth	
Ealing Central & Acton	Huq, Rupa Asha	
Elmet & Rothwell	King, Veronica Marie	<i>(not elected)</i>
Enfield North	Ryan, Joan Marie	
Erewash	Atkinson, Catherine Helen	<i>(not elected)</i>
Falkirk	Whitefield, Karen	<i>(not elected)</i>
Glenrothes	Ward, Melanie	<i>(not elected)</i>
Gower	Evans, Liz	<i>(not elected)</i>
Great Grimsby	Onn, Melanie	
Great Yarmouth	Norris, Lara Caroline	<i>(not elected)</i>
Halesowen & Rowley Regis	Peacock, Stephanie Louise	<i>(not elected)</i>
Halifax	Walker-Lynch, Holly Jamie	
Hampstead & Kilburn	Siddiq, Tulip	
Harlow	Stride, Suzie	<i>(not elected)</i>
Harrow East	Kumaran, Uma	<i>(not elected)</i>
Hastings & Rye	Owen, Sarah Mei Li	<i>(not elected)</i>
High Peak	Bisknell, Caitlin Janette	<i>(not elected)</i>
Hornsey & Wood Green	West, Catherine Elizabeth	
Kettering	Keehn, Rhea Ann	<i>(not elected)</i>
Kingswood	McCarron, Jo	<i>(not elected)</i>
Lancaster & Fleetwood	Smith, Catherine Jane	
Lewisham Deptford	Foxcroft, Vicky	
Lincoln	Rigby, Lucy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Monmouth	Jones, Ruth Lorraine	<i>(not elected)</i>
Morecambe & Lunesdale	Lone, Amina	<i>(not elected)</i>
Neath	Rees, Christina	
Northampton North	Keeble, Sally	<i>(not elected)</i>
Norwich North	Asato, Jessica	<i>(not elected)</i>
Nuneaton	Fowler, Vicky	<i>(not elected)</i>
Peterborough	Forbes, Lisa	<i>(not elected)</i>

Constituency	Candidate	
Reading West	Groulef, Victoria	<i>(not elected)</i>
Redcar	Turley, Anna Catherine	
Redditch	Blake, Rebecca Mary	<i>(not elected)</i>
Rugby	Edwards, Claire	<i>(not elected)</i>
Salford & Eccles	Long Bailey, Rebecca	
Sheffield Heeley	Haigh, Louise	
South Ribble	Bennett, Veronica Lucy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Southampton Itchen	Davis, Rowenna	<i>(not elected)</i>
St Helens South & Whiston	Rimmer, Marie Elizabeth	
Stafford	Godfrey, Kate	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stevenage	Taylor, Sharon Jane	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stirling	Boyd, Johanna Catherine	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stockton South	Baldock, Louise	<i>(not elected)</i>
Stoke-on-Trent North	Smeeth, Ruth Laurence	
Swansea East	Harris, Carolyn	
Swindon South	Snelgrove, Anne	<i>(not elected)</i>
Tamworth	Dean, Carol Ann	<i>(not elected)</i>
Thurrock	Billington, Polly Jane	<i>(not elected)</i>
Weaver Vale	Tickridge, Julia	<i>(not elected)</i>
Wirral West	Greenwood, Margaret	
Worcester	Squires, Joy	<i>(not elected)</i>
Workington	Hayman, Sue	
York Central	Maskell, Rachael Helen	

- 31 (out of 77) AWS candidates were successful at the 2015 general election.
- Source: 2015 General Election dataset, Rosie Campbell, Birkbeck University



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