

Does Local Government Work for Women?

**Interim Report of the
Local Government Commission**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Only a third of councillors in England are women. Our analysis reveals that this figure has scarcely changed over the last two decades. Even fewer women progress to lead their councils. Councils do not reflect the diversity of our society, and disabled and ethnic minority women experience multiple discrimination.

New survey data reveals that within this male-dominated environment, sexism is worryingly commonplace in the council chamber and local parties. Women councillors experience barriers due to unpaid caring responsibilities and a lack of flexibility in how councils do business much more than their male counterparts. They are more excluded from informal networks, and are less confident that their voices will be heard.

Women councillors are no less ambitious to progress than men – but they feel pigeonholed on the basis of their gender, and held back by the way councils operate.

The evidence reveals an outdated culture which is holding local government back. It is ripe for change.

Why Local Government?

Local government has a powerful impact on all our lives. Councils spend £94bn of taxpayers' money each year, almost a quarter of public spending; they employ over 1.5 million people, 78% of whom are women.* The services they provide determine the support we receive from our first years to our dying days; and women are more dependent on those services.

But despite this, women remain underrepresented in all levels of local decision making. With budgets being cut dramatically, councils gaining new powers and the creation of new combined authorities and directly-elected metro mayors, it is vital that women are represented around the decision making table.

With so much real power over women's lives at stake, the Fawcett Society and the LGiU, funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, have partnered to ask: does local government work for women? We have established a year-long Commission of experts which has tasked itself to gather evidence on female representation across local government in England and Wales, identify the barriers women face and where real power lies in our town halls, and make recommendations on how to advance women's leadership in local government and encourage more women to stand and participate.

Throughout the Commission we have asked not just where are the women on our councils, but are they in positions of power and do these women represent their communities? For example, how well are Black, Asian and minority ethnic women (BAME), disabled, LGBTQ, younger or older women and women with caring responsibilities represented? What different and specific barriers do these groups of women face and what can we do to improve their representation?

Methodology

This interim report outlines key findings from data analysis of women's representation in councils across England and Wales, carried out by the Centre for Women and Democracy. It also presents the findings of an LGiU survey of 2,304 councillors, carried out between December 2016 and January 2017. A full report with the insight from our consultation and recommendations from the Commission will be published later this year.

* Local Government Association, <http://local.gov.uk/research-statistical-alert>, citing Office for National Statistics, Quarterly Public Sector Employee Survey, Q3 2016

Sexism in local councils

38%

of women councillors have experienced sexist comments within their party

33%

have experienced sexist comments from other councillors

10%

have experienced sexual harassment from councillors



Representation in local councils

28%



33%

1997

Since 1997 women's representation on councils has almost flat-lined

2016

18%



29%

while it has increased by half in Parliament

What barriers do councillors face?

28%
of women

18%
of men



say childcare is an issue

47%
of women

26%
of men



have clashes with other caring commitments

What age are women worst represented on councils?

Age 18-34



Women were most underrepresented in this age group – there are **3.5 times as many men as women**

Age 65-74



35% of councillors are in this age group – there are **2 men for every woman**

Incumbency benefits men

Of those who have been in office for 20 years or more, there are **three men** for every **one woman**



Progression in local councils

43%

of women councillors say they are held back by assumptions about their gender.



Though men and women are equally likely to want to progress to a more senior role, only **17% of council leaders are women**

KEY FINDINGS – Data on Women’s Representation in Local Government

Women are underrepresented in local government, and progress has stalled

- ▶ 33 percent of elected local councillors in England are women, an increase of just five percentage points since 1997.
- ▶ The percentage of women Members of Parliament has risen by more than 10 percentage points, from 18 to 29 percent, over the same period.
- ▶ Wales has only 26 percent women councillors, and has seen an increase of only 4 percentage points over the last 12 years.

There are significant differences by party

- ▶ 42 percent of Labour Party councillors elected in 2016 were women, up from 33 percent in 2008, suggesting that their adoption of quotas and targeting women candidates in winnable seats is beginning to see dividends.
- ▶ Over the same period the Conservatives have seen relative stagnation, going from 28 percent to 30 percent, and they continue to have the lowest representation overall.
- ▶ The Liberal Democrats’ share of councillors elected who are women is in reverse, having fallen from 37 to 33 percent.

Women’s representation varies by type of local authority and by region

- ▶ Women form only 27 percent of county councillors
- ▶ 32 percent of shire district councillors and 32 percent of unitary councillors are women
- ▶ But women form 39 percent of metropolitan borough and 37 percent of London borough councillors.
- ▶ Women are most likely to be elected to their local council in the north east and least likely in the south east.

Incumbency is a key issue

- ▶ 80% of councillors elected in any one year are incumbents. That leaves little room for change.
- ▶ Men were 1.6 times more likely to be long-term incumbent in the 2016 elections than women were.
- ▶ Of those who are in office for 20 years or more there are three men for every one woman

There are still few women leaders

- ▶ There are just 56 women council leaders in England – 17 percent of the total and just a three percentage point increase over the last ten years.
- ▶ There are only two women council leaders in Wales out of a total of 22 councils.
- ▶ Neither the Conservative Party nor the Labour Party has ever achieved a position in which 20 percent of their leaders are women.
- ▶ Elected mayors fare little better. Since 2002 just 5 elected mayors have been women, with four women currently in office out of the 16 elected mayors across the country.

KEY FINDINGS – Survey of Councillors

Diversity is an issue

Age

Our councillors (men and women) remain disproportionately aged over 55 and ethnically white. There are gender disparities between men and women councillors within age groups.

- ▶ 35% of councillors are aged between 65 and 74. Men outnumber women 2:1 in this age group. This accounts for the majority of the difference in overall gender representation.
- ▶ Women were most underrepresented in the 18- 34s, where there were 3.5 times as many men as women.

Disability

19 percent of female councillors said they have a disability or long-term health condition, as did 22 percent of male respondents. Disabled women councillors told us that they experience a double disadvantage, being much more likely to experience discrimination for reasons other than their gender compared to disabled men.

Ethnicity

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic women remain hugely underrepresented in local government.

- ▶ Only 5.5 percent of women councillors responding to our survey identified as BAME, slightly better than the 3.8 percent of men but vastly below the 14 percent of the England and Wales population which identifies as BAME.
- ▶ 50 percent of BAME women councillors say they have experienced discrimination beyond gender compared to 41 percent of BAME men, although sample sizes were low.

Women and men take different routes in but for similar reasons

- ▶ Women were more likely than men to become councillors following involvement in a community organisation, religious institution or charity.
- ▶ Fewer came up through parish councils than men.
- ▶ They are more likely to say they stood to improve the gender balance

But women and men are equally as likely to say their reasons for standing were:

- ▶ because someone asked them to, or
- ▶ because they were inspired by someone.

Women councillors are just as ambitious as men

Women aren't overall less likely to want to stand again, and are equally as likely to want to progress to senior roles as male councillors (at 45 percent compared with 47 percent).

And they have more influence than they expected

Two fifths of women say they have more influence than they expected before they became a councillor. But they differ with their male colleagues as to whether their council takes enough consideration of the impact their decisions have on women, with 19 percent compared with 10 percent of men thinking their council does not take enough consideration.

Sexism in local government is commonplace

A worrying proportion of the women councillors responding to our survey faced sexist comments at each stage of the process of becoming elected, and this is not a problem confined to a particular party – it cuts across political divides.

- ▶ 38 percent of women councillors overall experience sexist comments when engaging with their local parties.
- ▶ A third experience sexist comments in the council chamber.
- ▶ One in ten women councillors have experienced sexual harassment when interacting with their party
- ▶ The same proportion reported sexual harassment from other councillors. This was worse for women aged 35-44 – one fifth reported sexual harassment from their fellow councillors, although this represents a small sample size.
- ▶ When standing as a councillor, there was also a gender difference between councillors identifying ‘fear of violence’ (13 percent of women; 8 percent of men), or ‘harassment or abuse from the electorate’ (46 percent of women; 35 percent of men) as barriers.

The sexism that women councillors experienced when coming into a male-dominated environment impacts on how they speak up for their residents.

- ▶ 41 percent of women experience sexist assumptions on the basis of their gender when interacting with their parties.
- ▶ Women councillors are more likely to report that their contributions are ignored or not valued with 63 percent saying they experienced this, compared with 52 percent of men.
- ▶ 44 percent of women say they felt a lack of confidence in making their voice heard.

It also impacts on women’s ability to progress. Asked why there are few female council leaders:

- ▶ 42 percent of women in our sample felt that women councillors were pigeonholed into particular roles, 39 percent felt that council culture holds them back from showing their talents, and 29 percent felt that sexism from other councillors plays a significant part.

Women councillors are more likely to experience structural barriers

- ▶ Within their role as a councillor 28 percent of women report childcare as a barrier, compared with 18 percent of men.
- ▶ 47 percent of women report clashes with other caring commitments, almost double the proportion of men. Significantly, 32 percent of women aged 35-44 say that childcare was ‘often’ a problem (compared with 14 percent of men in that age group), while ‘clashes with other caring commitments’ is a bigger issue for women aged 45+.
- ▶ A ‘lack of maternity/paternity provisions or support’ is a barrier for women aged 18 to 44, a third of whom (compared with 16 percent of men in the age group) say it holds them back in fulfilling their role as a councillor.
- ▶ For women on county councils one of the biggest challenges is travel – the distances to meetings are an issue for almost half of them
- ▶ Both women and men experience challenges from balancing their paid work with their council commitments (14 percent of women and 16 percent of men say this is ‘often’ a problem) and insufficient councillor allowances (29 percent of women; 23 percent of men)

Almost half of women (47 percent) say a lack of access to informal networks is a barrier to them as councillors, compared with 36 percent of men. This suggests there may be some truth in the claim that real power in town halls is often held outside official meetings in ‘old boys’ networks’, and this impacts particularly on women.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Women's representation in local government as councillors and as council leaders has stalled.

Our evidence suggests that incumbency plays a part in the slow pace of change, and party decisions around positive action, such as quotas, have an impact on getting women in.

Diversity is an issue. Younger women, BAME women and disabled women are woefully underrepresented. Our research has shown that these women face multiple barriers to holding elected office.

In some council chambers, sexist attitudes towards women are commonplace. Female councillors are more likely to experience sexist comments and behaviour, and to have their contributions ignored in meetings. Outdated gendered assumptions hold women back from participating and progressing. Women are more likely to have unpaid caring responsibilities than men, which means that the lack of flexibility in how councils do business creates additional barriers.

Women are just as ambitious as men. Our research finds that women are as likely to stand for a second term as their male counterparts, and their motivations for standing in the first place are much the same as men's. Once there, women councillors continue to feel they have influence and are equally as ambitious to rise to the top.

Getting more women to stand and be selected for local government is key. Community and voluntary organisations are important pools of prospective female talent. That many women stand simply because they were asked is also an important reminder for political parties of how simple it can be to get more women into local government. But political parties should also note the barriers that women face in attending meetings or keeping up with the demands of local campaigning and be mindful of these when it comes to engaging more women.

An outdated culture is holding local government back. Local government's role is changing fast in response to budget cuts, devolution, and localism; yet the culture of local government in many of our council chambers is simply decades behind. By shining a light on local government with the work of this Commission we are revealing institutions ripe for change. The good news is we are also finding many women and men across local government who are ready to make that change happen.

Next steps – remaining evidence

In our final report we will incorporate oral evidence from commission meetings including the experiences of senior council officers alongside councillors. We will look at the number and roles of women at the top of local government in cabinet positions, and will include interviews with women council leaders, and those women who would be councillors but who have not so far decided to stand. Finally, we will publish the findings of our freedom of information request to local authorities, identifying which have maternity, paternity and parental leave policies in place for councillors. We'll also include an analysis of our wider consultation and will take another look at where the women are in devolution.

Next steps – emerging recommendations

The data explored in this report shows the challenges we need to overcome to get more women onto councils, to enable them to stay and thrive, and to empower them to progress into leadership. Emerging themes that the recommendations in our final report will address include:

Shifting the dial on representation: We will look at what structural changes, including at the level of party selection procedures and local election rules, are necessary to get more women elected as councillors. We want to encourage more women to come forward for selection as candidates, and will ask what more the parties, councils, local government organisations, and the government can do to bring women in.

Improving diversity: The women that are elected to councils are not representative of the wider population. We will look at what specific changes could support women with different intersectional identities to stand and progress.

Removing structural barriers to progress: We will look at the practical changes councils and the government need to make to how council chambers are run, from supporting caring responsibilities through better childcare, elder care, and maternity and parental leave, to enabling flexibility across the board, in order to make being a councillor and progressing to leadership roles work for women.

Challenging sexism: There is a harmful culture in some parts of local government politics which needs to be addressed. We will explore how this manifests itself so that we can raise awareness of it, and draw on evidence and ideas about how it can be confronted by women in local government and their allies.

Helping her – networks, mentoring, building confidence: Whilst we do not accept that we need to ‘fix the women’, we do recognise that there are informal networks in place for men from which women are excluded. Councillors themselves tell us that they feel mentoring, confidence-boosting measures and women’s networks would be helpful. We will look carefully at what might be most effective in this area.



ABOUT US

The Fawcett Society is the UK's leading campaign for equality between women and men. We trace our roots back to 1866, when Millicent Fawcett began her lifetime's work leading the peaceful campaign for women's votes. Today we remain the most authoritative, independent advocate for women's rights in the UK.

LGiU is a local government think tank and membership organisation. Our mission is simple: to strengthen local democracy, putting citizens in control of their own lives, communities and local services. We work with around 230 local councils and public services providers, along with a wider network of public, private and civil society organisations.

Our work encompasses a wide range of activities including: a regular policy briefing service; the annual Councillor Achievement Awards; providing the Secretariat for the Local Government APPG; learning and development seminars; a broad programme of policy events; peer challenge; research and consultancy.

The **Centre for Women & Democracy** works to increase women's access to political office and political power at all levels, and, in particular to change the ways in which the gateways to public office are controlled by political parties, the law and electoral systems. Together with partners we inform, engage and campaign to promote our aims, to celebrate women's achievements, and to amplify women's voices. We also produce a variety of publications including reports on elections, and, most recently, a collection of women's political quotations.

We are grateful to the **Barrow Cadbury Trust** for funding the Commission. The Barrow Cadbury Trust is an independent charitable foundation committed to bringing about socially just change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to **Jemima Olchawski**, Head of Policy & Insight, Fawcett Society, for her work in steering the commission from the outset.

COMMISSIONERS

We are grateful to our Women in Local Government commissioners for their continuing input and insight with this work:

Cllr Gillian Keegan, Chichester District Council, Co-Chair of the Commission

Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret Hodge MP, Co-Chair of the Commission

Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece, Liberal Democrats

Baroness Anita Gale, Labour Party

Cllr Angela Mason, London Borough of Camden

Binita Mehta-Parmar, former Councillor and Leader of the Conservative Group, Watford Borough Council

Heather Wakefield, Unison

Nan Sloane, Centre for Women and Democracy

Pam Cole, Women's Budget Group

Cllr Rita Patel, Operation Black Vote

Sarah Pickup, Local Government Association

Dr Shaminder Takhar, London South Bank University

Halla Gunnarsdóttir, Women's Equality Party

Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council

Anne Baldwin, Women's Local Government Society

Simon Woolley, Operation Black Vote

Chris Naylor, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Cllr Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council

Cllr Marie Pye, London Borough of Waltham Forest

THE COMMISSION

Local government has a powerful impact on all our lives. Councils spend £94bn of taxpayers' money each year, almost a quarter of public spending; they employ over 1.5 million people, 78% of whom are women.¹ The services they provide determine the support we receive from our first years to our dying days; and women are more dependent on those services.

But despite this constant impact, women are historically underrepresented as local councillors, as in so many positions of power in society. This is a time of considerable change for councils across the country. Budgets are being cut faster than other parts of the public sector, with the impact falling disproportionately on women.² Councils are gaining new powers, including under the Localism Act, even as their role in other areas like education are being reduced. And in many parts of the country, devolution is moving even more powers into the hands of local council leaders and directly elected mayors.

With all of these changes being made, and so much real power over women's lives at stake, the time was right for us to ask the question: does local government work for women? Funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, we established a year-long Commission of experts which has tasked itself to:

- ▶ Gather and publish evidence on female participation and representation across local government and identify the barriers to women's representation.
- ▶ Make recommendations on how to advance women's leadership in local government and establish a pipeline for power, including positive steps to support and inspire women to stand for elected office.
- ▶ Demonstrate the impact of decision-making at the local level for women's lives.
- ▶ Reinvigorate the role of women in local government and encourage more women to stand and participate.

We have focussed on the situation in England and Wales, as we did not have sufficient resources to include Scotland in our work, however we recognise this work needs to be done. Throughout the Commission we have asked not just *where* are the women on our councils, but do these women represent their communities? How well are Black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled, LGBTQ, or younger or older women, women with caring responsibilities, and women of different religions represented? What different and specific barriers do these groups of women face and what can we do to improve their representation?

To answer these questions the Commission began a year-long programme of research and consultation. This interim report presents the findings of the quantitative research elements of that work while they remain current ahead of the May 2017 local elections. It tells us where the women are (and aren't) in local government; which women are in local government; what barriers they tell us that they face; and what changes they think will help to 'move the dial' on representation.

Our final report in the summer will combine this insight with the lived experiences of women who participated in our evidence sessions; our open consultation; in-depth interviews with women council leaders; focus groups with voters; and desk based research, and will make recommendations that, if adopted, would deliver local government that works for women.

1 Local Government Association, <http://local.gov.uk/research-statistical-alert>, citing Office for National Statistics, *Quarterly Public Sector Employee Survey*, Q3 2016

2 Rachel Salmon, 'The Impact of Public Spending Cuts on Women', LGiU (2014), <http://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The-impact-of-public-spending-cuts-on-women.pdf>

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on new research:

Data on women's representation in local government

The Centre for Women and Democracy has compiled a detailed picture of women's representation in local government year on year by carrying out desk research conducted annually between 2007 and 2016, both published and unpublished. This research involves counting and tabulating the gender of those standing for and elected in council elections across the country, primarily from local government websites.

In the case of council election candidates, this has been supplemented where necessary by reports published by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher for the Elections Centre at Plymouth University. Details of council leaders and deputies have been drawn from individual council websites, as have details of mayoral candidates.

Other sources used include the Local Government Association's *Census of Local Authority Councillors* series, and the series of Sex & Power reports published, first by the now-defunct Equal Opportunities Commission, then by the Equalities & Human Rights Commission, and, most recently by the Centre for Women & Democracy for the Counting Women In Coalition.

Basic demographic data on our local elected representatives is not routinely collected,³ meaning that this work is required, and meaning that we have to rely on survey data for basic information like the ethnicity, age, or disability status of councillors.⁴

Survey of councillors

The LGiU undertook an online survey of councillors on behalf of the commission. The survey was in the field between the 13th December 2016 and 27th January 2017 and was sent to all councillors (women and men) in England and Wales. Of the 18,947 recipients of the survey, there were 2,304 responses, a 12.2% response rate. This survey asked councillors about their demographic characteristics, their experiences across the whole of the pipeline of local government, and their opinions on changes they believe would have an impact.

Responses were broadly representative in terms of council type and party splits, and were similarly in line with the LGA's *Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013* (see table below). Conservative councillors appear to be slightly underrepresented, although differences also reflect changes in the makeup of councillors following intervening elections.

Table 1: Comparison of Survey Populations

Characteristic	Commission survey (2017) respondents	LGA census (2013) respondents
Conservative councillors	40%	46%
Labour councillors	34%	32%
Liberal Democrat councillors	12%	15%
Independent/Residents' Association	7%	5%
Other (inc. UKIP and Greens)	5%	3%
Retired councillors	45%	47%
White British councillors	94%	94%

Figures may not sum due to rounding

3 Parliamentary Written Answer to Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP, HC Deb, 27 February 2017, cW, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2017-02-22.65008.h&s=councillors+women#g65008.q0>

4 Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, which the government has not yet brought into force, makes provision for this data to be collected for the Westminster Parliament, Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, and European Parliament, but not local government.

PART 1 – DATA ON WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women’s representation in local government has stalled.

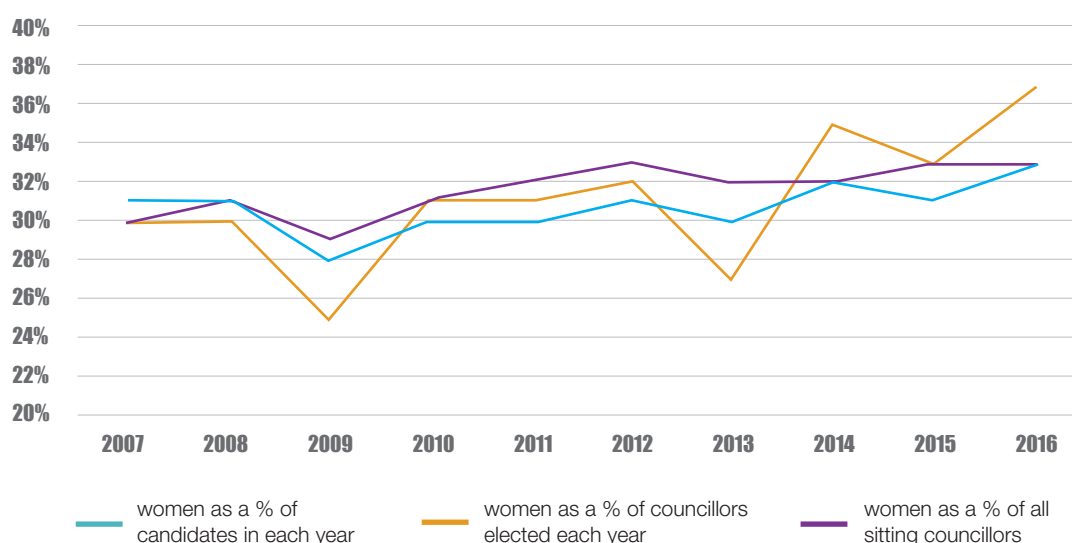
As of May 2016, 33 percent⁵ of elected local councillors in England are women, an increase of just five percent on the 1997 level of 28 percent.⁶ By comparison, during the same period of time the percentage of women Members of Parliament has risen by more than 10 percentage points, from 18 to 29 percent.⁷

Women Councillors and Candidates in England

Local government elections occur somewhere in England every year, and in theory this means that there is the opportunity annually for the representation of women to improve. In practice, however, it means that because each year’s elections vary in terms of type of authority, region and starting point, progress is likely to be affected by a range of issues; in particular, since the political parties vary in terms of their success in fielding women candidates in winnable seats, there may be differences caused by their differing electoral fortunes, as happened in 2012 when Labour did well, or 2013 when UKIP did well at Labour’s expense. In addition, major local government reorganisation (in 2009, for instance) can have an immediate and visible effect on both the percentage of women candidates and the percentage of women councillors. Appendix 1 gives some additional background information on the structure of local government in England and Wales.

Figure 1 compares the percentage of council election candidates who are women, and the percentage of successfully elected councillors in each year’s elections who are women, in each election over a ten-year period. It also shows the proportion of sitting councillors who are women after each year’s elections, showing how variations in each year’s election cycle impacts on overall gender representation.

Figure 1: Women as a percentage of candidates, councillors elected each year, and all sitting councillors, 2007-2016



5 5,797 women out of the total 17,757 councillors in England.

6 *National census of local authority councillors 2008*, Local Government Association, p 36.

7 It has since risen to 30 percent due to by-elections.

The low point of 2009 occurred when a major reorganisation of local government was carried out in the north east, north west and south west, resulting in a substantial fall in the total number of councillors. Elections for the 32 London councils, which are all-out on a four-yearly cycle, were held in 2010 and 2014. 2009 and 2013 were both fallow years for the metropolitan authorities – that is, years when they had no local elections. Local elections coincided with general elections in 2010 and 2015.

There are a number of reasons for this slow (if steady) rate of improvement, including the fact that, although some of the political parties are getting more women elected, this is balanced out to some extent by women elsewhere losing their seats or retiring. Women from one party may defeat female sitting councillors from another, and a good electoral year for parties with low levels of women candidates may result in women councillors from those with higher levels of representation being defeated.

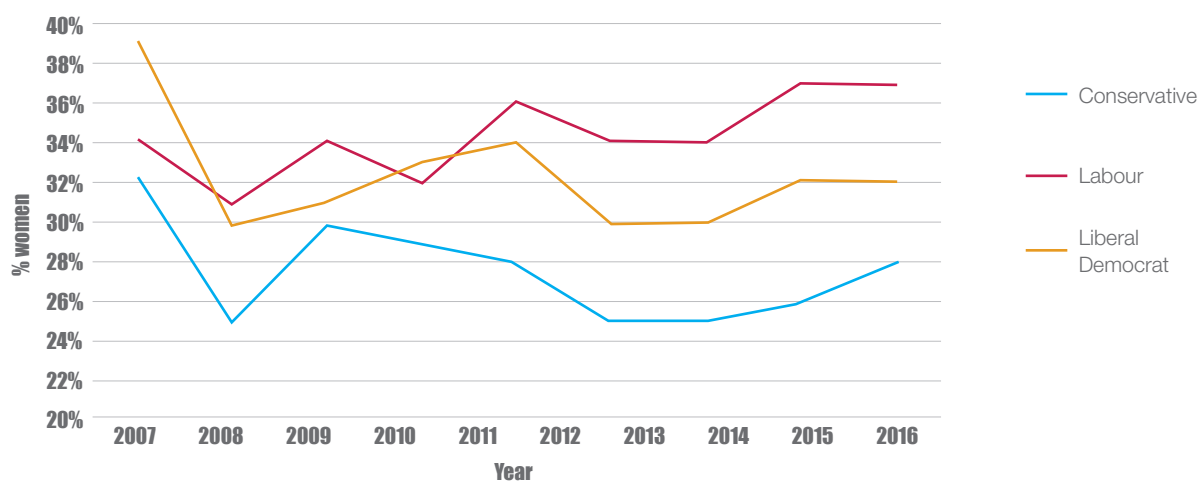
Thus the net gain of female councillors each year tends to be much smaller than the number newly elected; faster progress is unlikely to be made until all the parties who are likely to win seats field much higher numbers of women candidates.

Women’s representation varies by political party

The vast majority of both candidates (66 percent in 2016) and councillors elected (92.5 percent in 2016) are drawn from one of the three largest parties – the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats.⁸ These organisations – together with the Green Party and the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which both have much lower numbers of candidates elected – are therefore the principal gatekeepers to public office.

The main parties have quite different stories in the last five years in terms of their success in encouraging women to stand, as shown in Figure 2. The Labour Party’s policy of fielding 50 percent women candidates in winnable and target seats appears to have had an impact. Coming from a high base in 2008, the share of Liberal Democrat candidates who are women has fallen and then stayed flat, and the proportion of Conservative women candidates has fallen slightly over the period.

Figure 2: Women Candidates for the Main Political Parties 2008-16

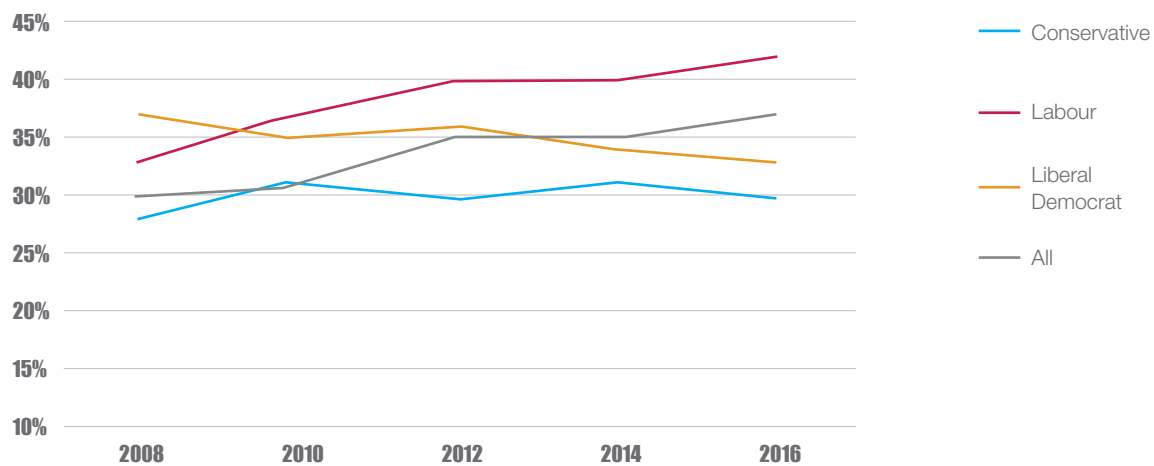


⁸ The Liberal Democrats have declined in parliamentary terms during the period of this study. However, they remain a presence in local government, with well over 2,000 councillors, as opposed to UKIP (300+) or the Green Party (150+).

The level of women candidates is one measure of how successful (or unsuccessful) political parties are in attracting, engaging and promoting women; in terms of access to elected power, the percentage of candidates who are women who were successfully elected is also important, which is shown in Figure 3. This reflects how well parties are doing at ensuring that women candidates are placed in seats they can have a reasonable prospect of winning – that is, seats which are either target marginals or in which the sitting councillor is retiring.

It should be noted that Figure 3 includes incumbent councillors who are re-elected, who, for both sexes, constitute the majority of councillors elected, but not the majority of candidates. The issue of incumbency is dealt with later in the report. The ‘All’ line in Figure 3 includes the Green Party, UKIP Independents and others. Data is shown for every other year’s elections.

Figure 3: Percentage of councillors elected who are women for each main political party, 2008-2016



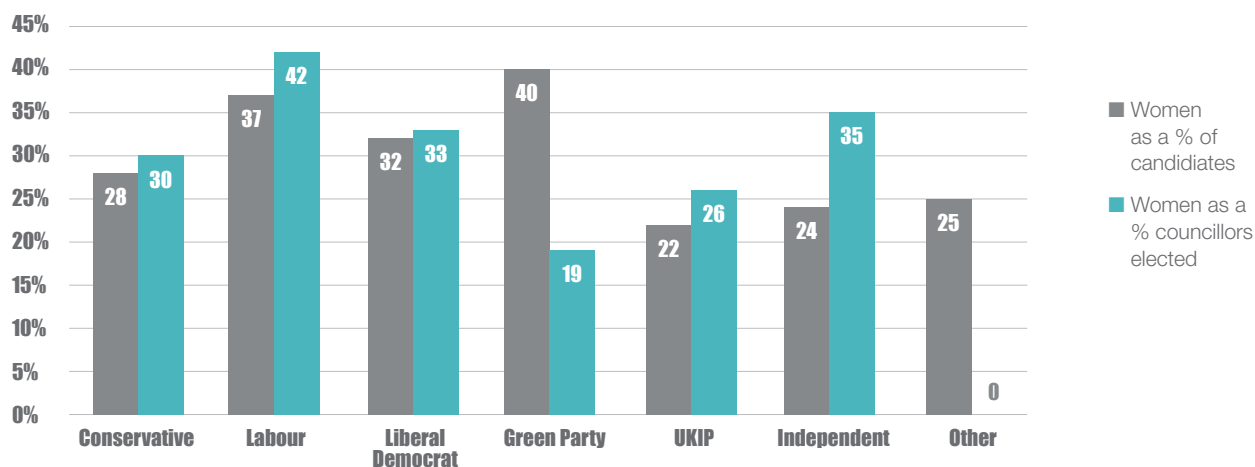
Since 2004 the Labour Party has used positive action measures to place women candidates in ‘winnable’ seats – that is, seats which they identify as target marginals, or in which the incumbent councillor is retiring. This policy is not always implemented as consistently as it might be, but overall it does have a visible effect in terms of getting women elected. The Labour Party passed the 40 percent threshold in terms of councillors elected at the 2016 election, as part of a gradual trend of improvement over the last 8 years.

Neither the Liberal Democrats nor the Conservatives use formal positive action in this way, although the Liberal Democrats have traditionally been the better of the two at attracting women candidates. The recent dip in their line in Figure 3 reflects the effect of the absence of positive action in years of poor election results.

Both the Green Party and UKIP field a significant number of women candidates, but are much less likely to see them elected. There is also a plethora of smaller parties which may or may not exist from one election to another, and who have not therefore been specifically tracked in this survey.

At every election, there are a number of Independent candidates. In some local authorities they enjoy a degree of success, but generally speaking they are only infrequently elected.

Figure 4: Women as a % of candidates and a % of councillors elected for each party, 2016 elections



Women’s representation varies by type of authority and election cycles

Some types of local authority are markedly more likely to elect women councillors than others – counties, for instance, seem to do less well overall than metropolitan authorities. As explored below, this is because metropolitan authorities are also more likely to elect councillors from those parties which field larger numbers of women candidates, but may also relate to other factors such as geography, the local economy, the availability of childcare, etc.

Table 2: Women as a percentage of councillors by type of authority (2016)

Type	Total councillors	No. Women councillors	% of councillors who are women
Counties	1803	484	26.8
London Borough	1851	688	37.2
Metropolitan	2941	931	38.5
Shire Districts	8583	2703	31.5
Unitary	3101	992	31.9

Overall, women are marginally more likely to be elected in councils which elect by thirds⁹ (where 34.5 percent of councillors are women) than in authorities which hold whole council elections¹⁰ (31.8 percent).

The data in Figures 5 to 7 seem to suggest that the type of authority involved may make more of a difference – women candidates standing in whole council elections in London have a significantly higher chance of being elected than those standing in whole council elections in the counties. Again, a number of factors may be at play, including significant differences in population, diversity and culture, and the electoral fortunes of the different parties will also have an influence. The next graphs look at this issue.¹¹

9 All metropolitan districts except Doncaster and Rotherham, 61 shire districts and 17 unitaries.

10 All London boroughs and county councils, 133 shire districts, 38 unitaries and 2 metropolitan districts.

11 2015 is omitted from these figures because the necessary detail was not available at the time of writing.

Figure 5: Women as a % of Labour Councillors Elected – Council Type by Year

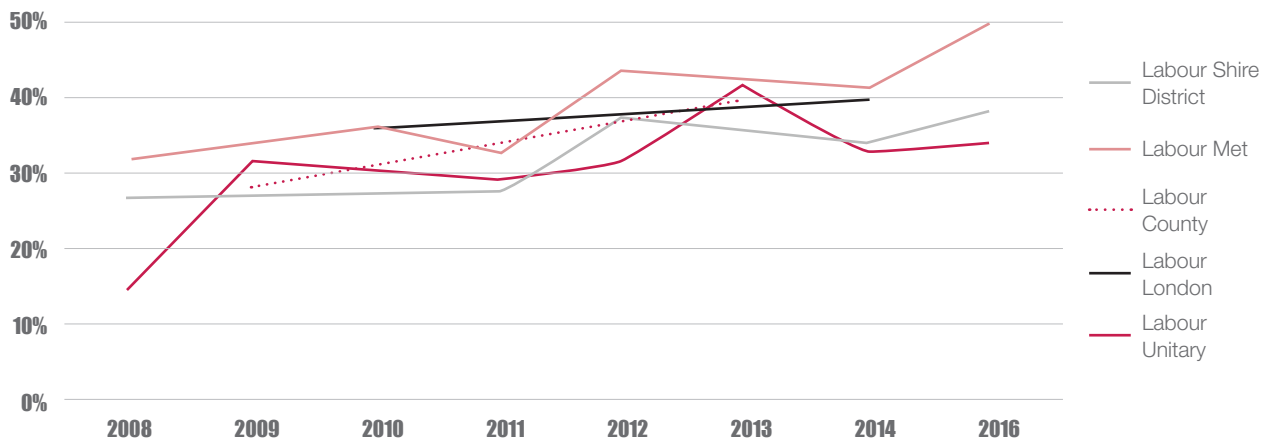


Figure 6: Women as a % of Conservative Councillors Elected – Council Type by Year

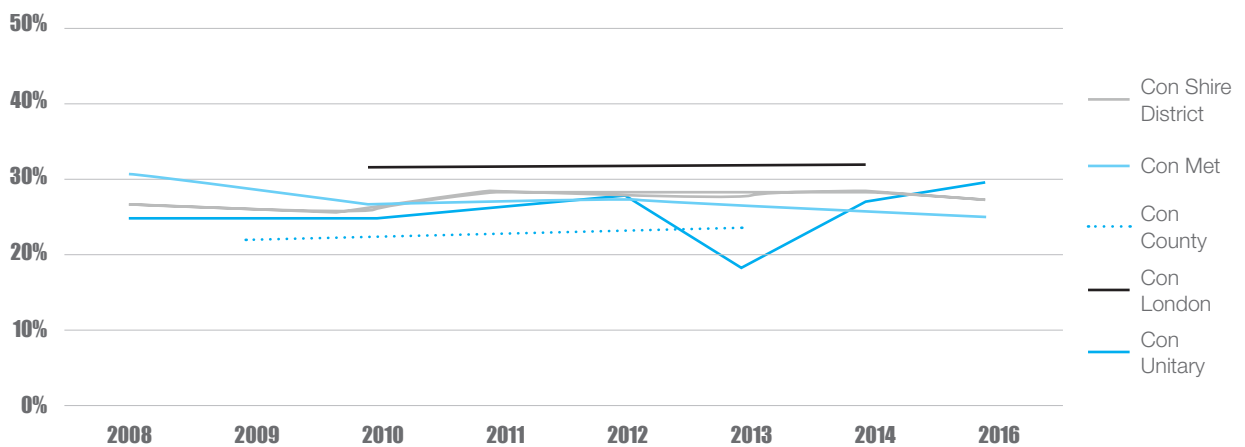
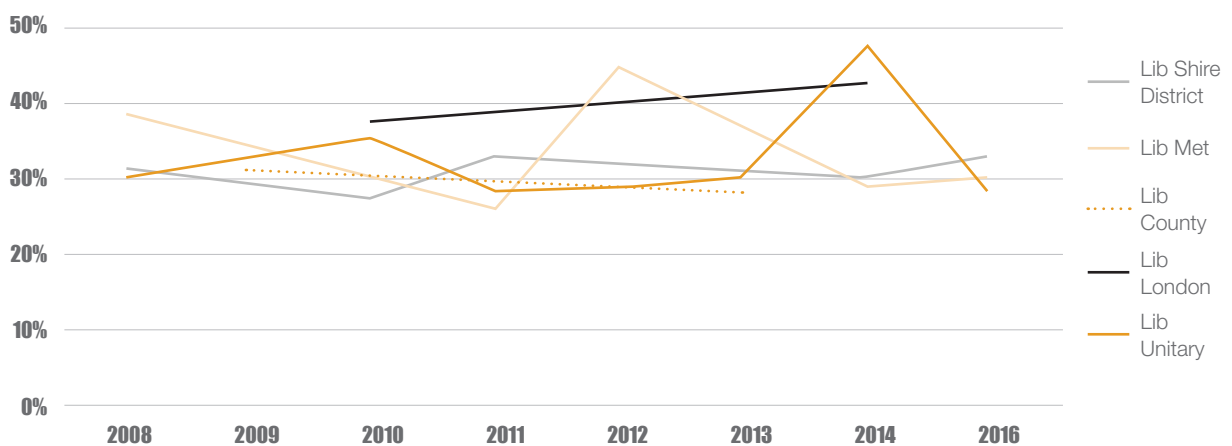


Figure 7: Women as a % of Liberal Democrat Councillors Elected – Council Type by Year

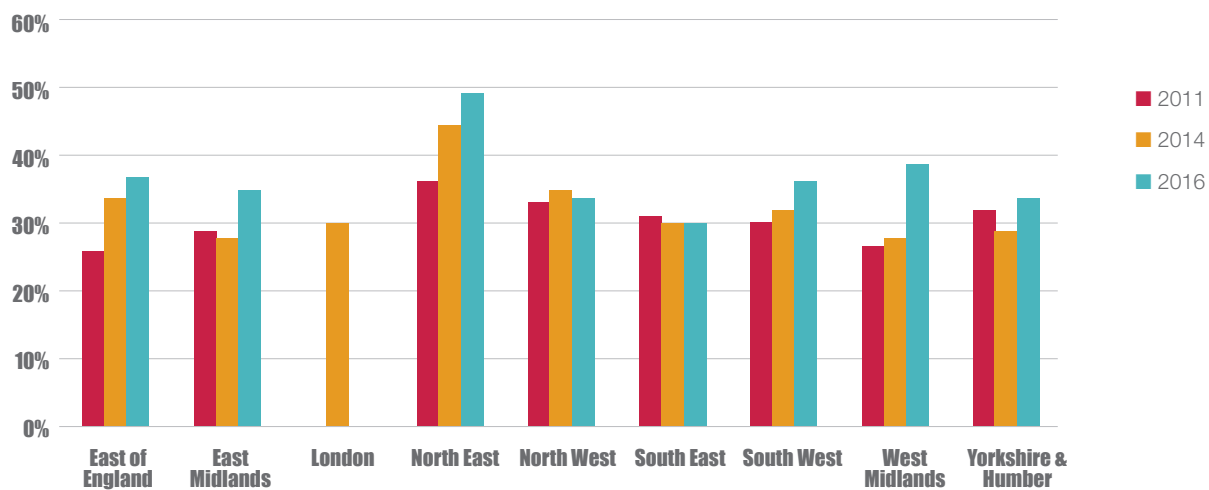


Geographic differences may also have an effect; the travel distance from work or home to meetings, for instance, may be much greater in geographically large county areas than in a London borough or an urban metropolitan authority, and the propensity to stand may therefore be more influenced by factors such as the availability of public transport or the timing of meetings than the selection processes of the various political parties.

Women's representation varies by region

Women are most likely to be elected to their local council in the north east and least likely in the south east, but, as Figure 8 shows, there is some variation across regions as a whole. Figure 8 covers elections in three years with different combinations of election.¹²

Figure 8: Women as a percentage of councillors elected in 2011, 2014, and 2016, by region



Incumbency is a significant issue

Regardless of all other factors, the vast majority – over 80 percent – of councillors elected in any one year are incumbents.

Many councillors remain in office for significant periods of time, and although some seats change hands at every election they are never enough to create real change in the gender composition of local elected members. This goes some way to explaining why the rate of progress has been so slow.

Incumbency rates are difficult to identify, given that councillors can change seats between elections, change their parties, and change their names.

In order to get an idea of how incumbency affects gender representation, we conducted an analysis of 1,703 councillors elected in district, metropolitan, and unitary councils electing by thirds in 2016, a year when 37 percent of all councillors elected were women. This shows that 60 percent of councillors were short-term incumbents (i.e. they had also been elected in 2012).¹³ Of these, 37 percent were women, so around the same proportion as were elected overall.

¹² London had elections only in 2014.

¹³ The years 2012 and 2004 are used as a comparator here because elections in these authorities work on a four-yearly cycle.

However, 23 percent of councillors elected in 2016 had also been elected *in 2004* and had served continuously during the intervening period. Of these, 27 percent were women, a substantially smaller proportion of women than were elected overall in 2016.

To cut the data another way, 17 percent of women elected in 2016 had also been elected in 2004, and had served continuously since then. This applied to 27 percent of men elected in 2016, meaning that men were 1.6 times more likely to be long-term incumbent at the most recent elections. Incumbency clearly benefits men's representation on councils over women's representation.

As stated, the above figures should be taken only as a guide. Nor do the figures alone give any indication as to the reasons for continued (or discontinued) incumbency; apart from anything else, the electoral fortunes of the particular parties have a considerable impact on the rates of election for both women and men.

However, broadly speaking this pattern can be replicated to a greater or lesser degree across all types of authority, and demonstrates how narrow the room for real progress is in any one election.

The gender-split between short term incumbents noted above matches that of the overall representation of women in local councils and therefore suggests that women and men stop being councillors after only one term at similar rates. However, this is not to say that the widely-held view that women are more likely to retire after only one term is not also the case, but – given the fact that people cease to be councillors for many reasons, including losing their seats, and that women do not always retain the same name throughout their politically active lives – tracking this would require a separate (and qualitative) study.

Women Councillors and Candidates in Wales

Women's representation in local government in Wales is worse than in England.

In 2012, 26 percent of councillors elected in Wales were women, up from 22 percent in 2004.

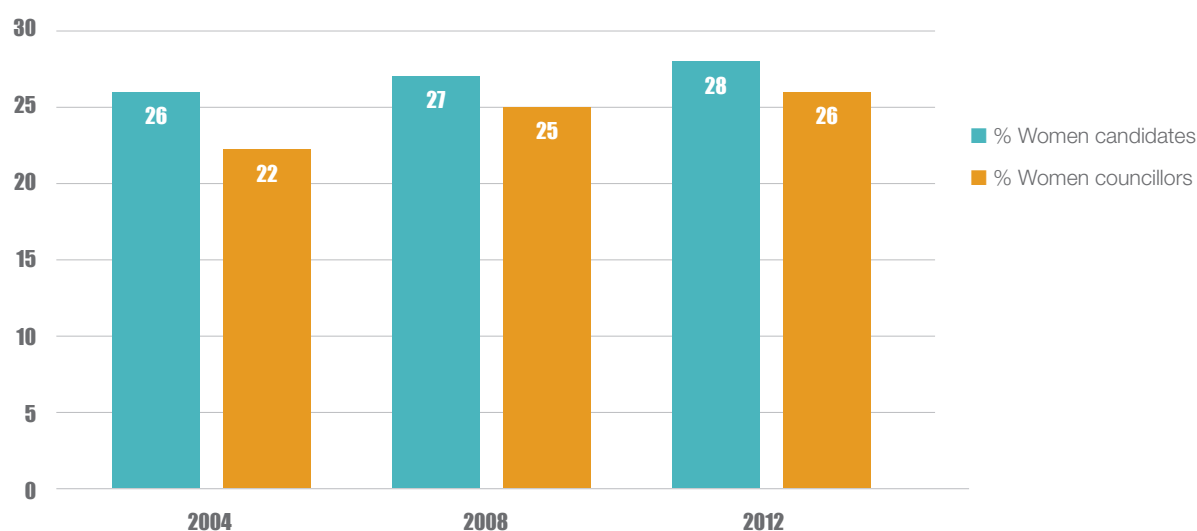
Although the percentage of women councillors in Wales has risen slightly, the increase is not sufficient to bring it up to the same level as England (33 percent in both 2012 and 2016).

Only four local authorities have councils which are more than 30 percent female: Swansea (39 percent), Rhondda/Cynon/Taff (37 percent), Cardiff (37 percent) and Bridgend (31 percent). All four are Labour controlled.

Three authorities have below 15 percent women: Ceredigion (14 percent), Merthyr Tydfil (12 percent) and Wrexham (11 percent). Ceredigion and Wrexham have no party in overall control, whilst Merthyr Tydfil has a Labour majority. A list of Welsh authorities and the percentages of women members is attached as Appendix 4.

The percentage of women candidate in Wales has, overall, remained stable across the last three elections.

Figure 9: Women as a percentage of candidates and a percentage of councillors, 2004, 2008, and 2012



The main political parties – Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru all field significant numbers of candidates. However, unlike in England, there are also significant numbers of Independent candidates.

Table 3: Women candidates by political party, 2008 & 2012

	2008			2012		
	candidates	women	% women	candidates	women	% women
Conservative	502	155	31	568	170	30
Labour	854	227	27	879	265	30
Liberal Democrats	425	154	36	338	115	34
Plaid Cymru	494	129	26	552	142	26
Independent	763	156	20	809	181	22
Green	36	17	47	68	22	32
UKIP	6	1	17	13	2	15
Other	51	9	18	43	4	9
All	3131	848	27	3270	901	28

As is often the case, the percentage of women elected mirrors that of the percentage of candidates, so that access to candidacy remains the key driver in terms of getting more women into office. The overall proportion of women elected in 2012 is slightly higher than the proportion of women councillors, because Ynys Mon did not elect in 2012.

Table 4: Women councillors elected by political party, 2008 & 2012

	2008 elected			2012 elected		
	all	women	% women	all	women	% women
Conservative	172	46	27	104	21	20
Labour	330	81	24	578	174	30
Liberal Democrats	162	55	34	71	23	3
Plaid Cymru	193	52	27	159	41	26
Independent	268	73	27	307	68	22
Green	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKIP	0	0	0	2	0	0
Other	5	1	20	1	0	0
All	1130	308	27	1222	327	27

Wales is much more likely than England to elect Independent councillors; for example, in 2012, 25 percent of those elected were Independent,¹⁴ whereas in England in the same year that figure was just four percent. This certainly plays a part in breaking down the hegemony of the political parties, but it also provides a significant and unique sample of Independent candidates to examine, particularly in terms of ascertaining the reasons for the high levels of women, and for their relative success. A list of Welsh authorities and the numbers and percentages of women Independent members is attached as Appendix 5.

The elections planned for 2017 will give Welsh political parties and voters the opportunity to make significant progress in increasing the gender diversity of council members. However, it should also be borne in mind that reorganisation in some parts of England in 2009 resulted in a fall in the percentages of both women candidates and women elected,¹⁵ as did the Northern Ireland reorganisation of 2015, which saw a fall in women councillors from 27 percent to 22 percent.¹⁶

Women in Leadership

Women are significantly under-represented in leadership positions.

There are just 56 women leading local authorities in England¹⁷ – 17 percent of the total (333) representing a three percent net increase over the last ten years. In numerical terms, this means that there are now only four more women leaders than there were in 2006, when there were 52.

Just 4 of 16 elected Mayors in England are women.

Only 2 of the 22 Welsh local authorities are led by women.

All but 16 local councils in England are led by a council leader working with a small executive (or cabinet) of senior councillors.

¹⁴ 26 percent in 2008

¹⁵ Down to 28 percent (from 31 percent in 2008) and 29 percent (31 percent in 2008) respectively.

¹⁶ Sex & Power 2014: who runs Britain? p49, Centre for Women & Democracy for CWI coalition.

¹⁷ Excluding elected executive mayors.

Council leaders are always councillors, and are chosen by their political party groups before being formally confirmed at meetings of the full council. In the majority of cases they come from the party grouping with the most councillors, but in a small number of cases where the council has no single party in overall control the leader may come from one of the smaller parties, if it is able to put together enough votes at the council meeting.

As with local councillors, progress is often impeded by the fact that as one new woman leader is appointed, so another may be removed, keeping the net increase low at any one point,¹⁸ and, in bad years (e.g. 2010 and 2012) resulting in net decreases.

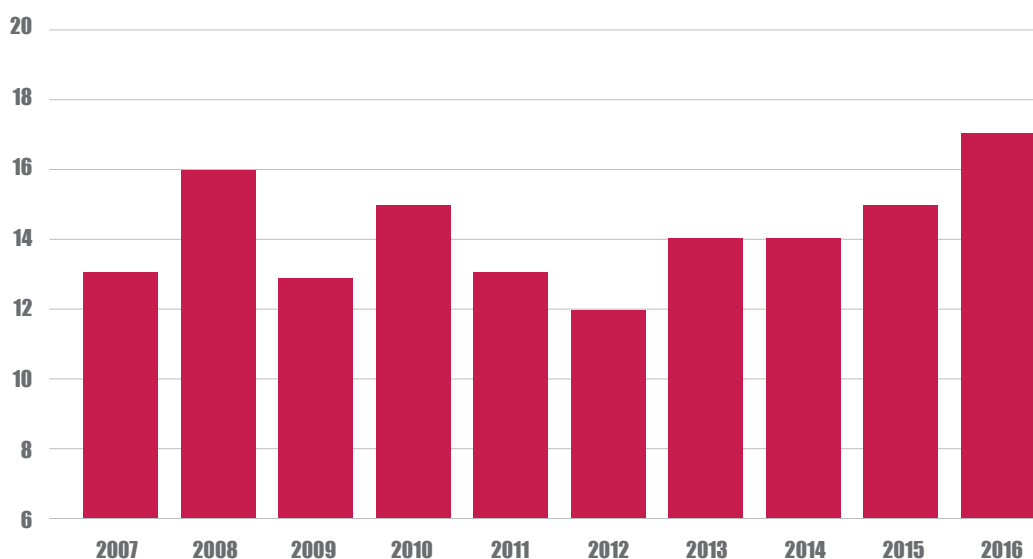
In the 16 councils which have directly elected executive mayors the role of the council leader is usually replaced by a 'chair' role and ceases to have an executive function, and these authorities are therefore excluded from this section.

Epsom and Ewell Council has also been excluded because it does not operate a system based on political parties, and has no leader.

The number of councils included in this section of the report reduces over the period examined, partly because of a very small but steady increase in the number of councils with directly elected executive mayors, but mainly because local government reorganisation in 2009 significantly decreased the number of councils in some parts of the country.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of women leaders in England over the last ten years.

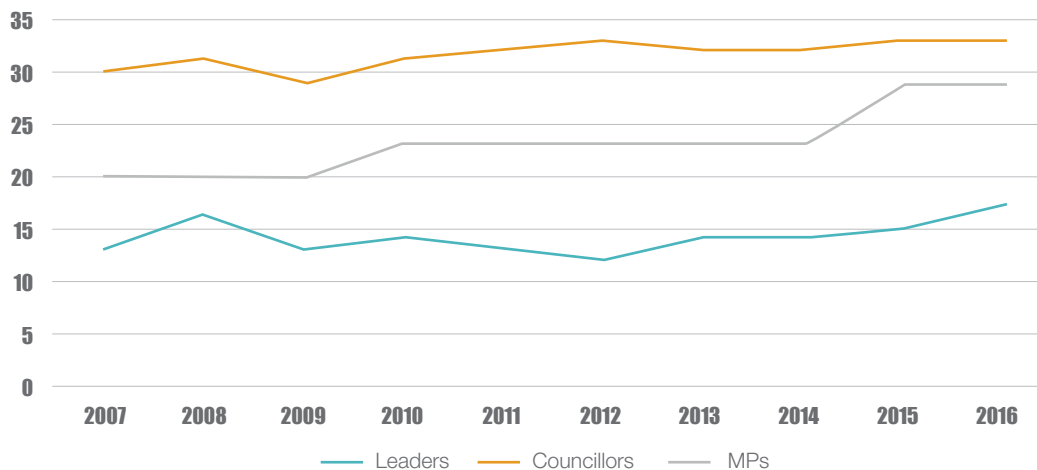
Figure 10: Women as a percentage of council leaders in England, 2007-2016



Changes in the level of women in local government leadership roles show a slightly different – and less promising – pattern even than that for councillors (and Members of Parliament), as can be seen from Figure 11.

¹⁸ In 2016, for instance, the election of a new female Labour leader in Bradford was effectively cancelled out by the removal of the female Labour leader of Coventry.

Figure 11: Women as a percentage of council leaders, councillors and MPs, 2007-2016



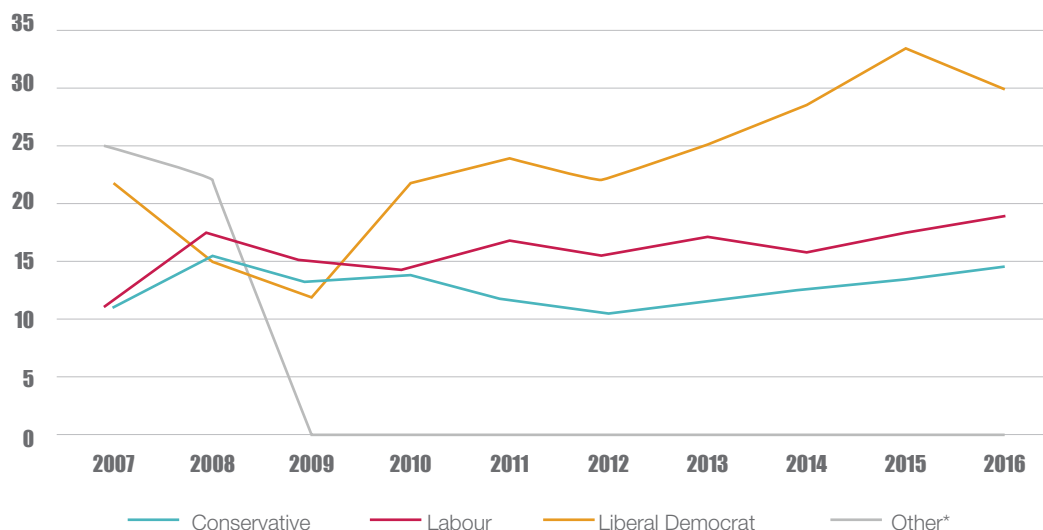
There is a general perception that voters are moving away from the larger political parties and towards small parties or independent politicians. This may well be the case, but so far it is not manifesting itself in terms of council leadership roles.

Currently 95% (318 out of 333) of Council leaders are from either the Conservative or the Labour Parties. This trend has been increasing in recent years as the number of councils controlled by the Liberal Democrats – who have historically had a relatively high number of women council leaders – has fallen.

Although the Liberal Democrats still have the highest percentage of women leaders (30 percent) it should be noted that this represents a very small number (3 out of 10 leaders).

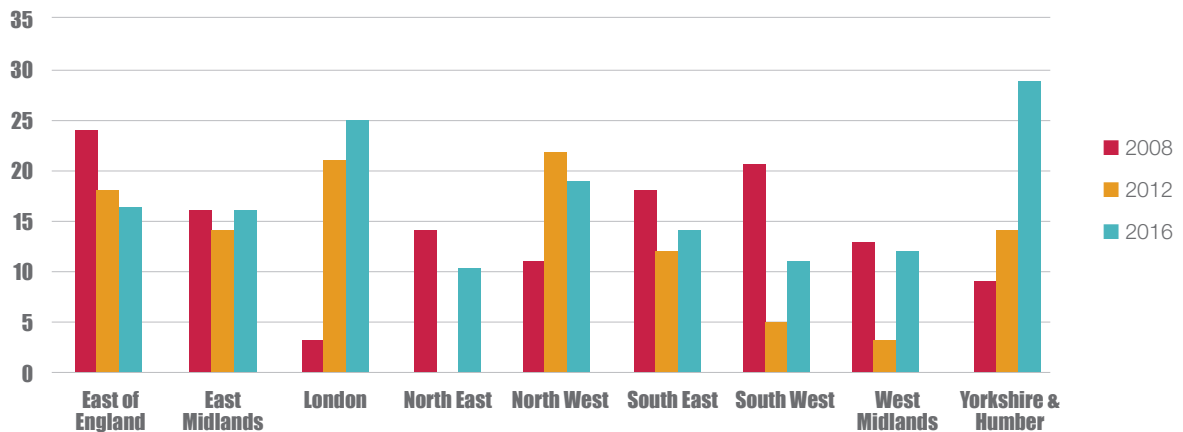
Figure 12 shows women as a percentage of leaders for each political party. As has been said above, the vast majority of leaders are drawn from the two big parties; the fact that Labour has been consistently ahead of the Conservatives in percentage terms means very little, given that neither the Conservative Party (currently 15 percent women leaders) nor the Labour Party (19 percent) has ever achieved a position in which 20 percent of their leaders are women.

Figure 12: Women as a percentage of council leaders by political party, 2007-2016



Women are at present most likely to lead local authorities in Yorkshire & the Humber (29 percent of their leaders are women) and least likely to do so in the North East region, despite that region having the largest number of women councillors, suggesting that more needs to be done to get them into leadership positions. The regional picture is particularly vulnerable to electoral fortunes, as well as to local factors which may influence political parties in their choice of leader.

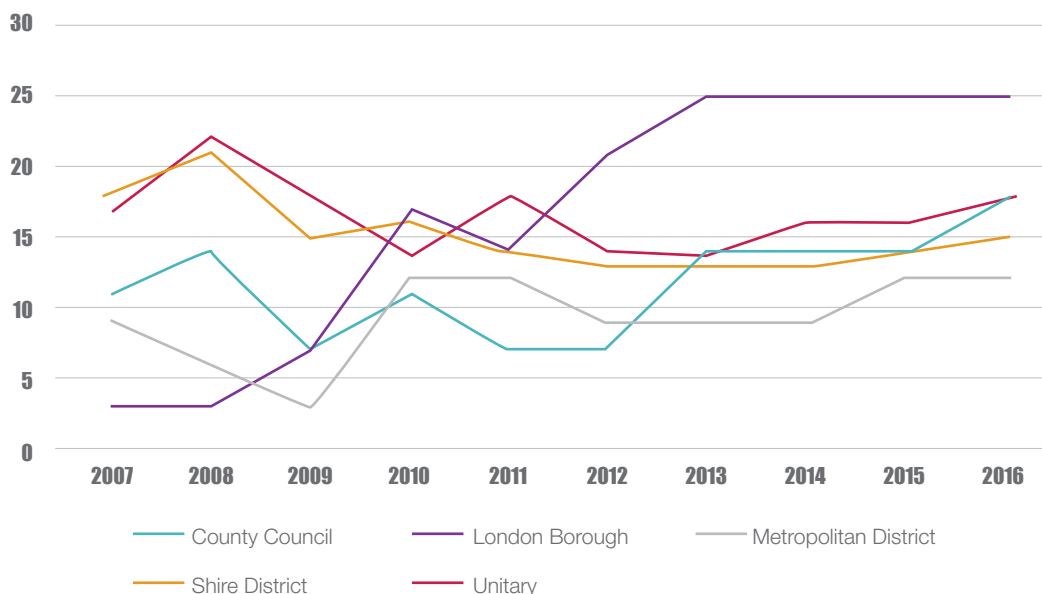
Figure 13: Women as a percentage of council leaders by English region, 2008, 2012, & 2016



As Figure 13 shows, the combination of electoral fortunes and internal political changes can easily result in quite dramatic changes, as happened in the north east, where, in 2012, there were no women leaders at all.

Women are now doing well in London, although this has not always been the case. They do significantly less well, however, in the largely urban and industrial or post-industrial metropolitan authorities. The reasons for this are not immediately clear, although the absence of women from key points of the pipeline to leadership may be a factor.¹⁹

Figure 14: Women as a percentage of council leaders by type of authority 2007-2016



¹⁹ See *Leadership & Diversity in Local Government in England* in 2010/11, Centre for Women & Democracy, 2011

Women are more likely than men to retain leadership for extended periods of time. 26 percent of current male leaders were leading their councils in 2009, compared with 30 percent of female leaders.

Leaders may cease to hold office for a variety of reasons, including retirement, loss of political control at an election, and transferring to another political role such as MP or elected mayor. At this stage, it is not possible to assign reasons for the difference between male and female retention rates, but, if nothing else, it suggests that the view held by some people that women lack stamina in political leadership roles is, to say the least of it, open to question.

Elected Mayors in England

There are 16 English local authorities with elected executive mayors;²⁰ these are different from the Mayor of London, which is effectively a region, or the new (and yet-to-be-elected at the time of publication) metro mayors, who will cover groups of local authorities known as city regions. They are directly elected by voters across the whole local authority, giving them a large direct mandate and meaning that they do not rely on support from councillor colleagues for their position, meaning that the factors affecting their election may be quite different to council leaders.

The first mayors were elected in 2002, and since then the number has risen very slowly. As a result, the number included in this study is very small and it should not be assumed that, were the numbers to rise significantly in the future, the patterns identified here would remain the same.

Two authorities (Stoke-on-Trent and Hartlepool) have voted to abolish their elected mayor, but are included in this report, so that the total number of authorities included is 18 rather than 16

Since 2002 just 5 elected mayors have been women,²¹ with four currently in office.²²

Women are significantly less likely to be candidates in mayoral elections than in any other – only those for Police and Crime Commissioners fare worse. This includes candidates for all the main political parties, none of whom use any form of positive action such as all women shortlists in their candidate selection procedures. There are also clearly wider questions about the level of women standing for single executive posts generally, as the 2016 Police & Crime Commissioner elections (not included in this study) show.²³

Although there are several women mayors, it is the case that in a number of authorities (Copeland, Liverpool and Tower Hamlets, for instance) there has never been a female candidate in any mayoral election.

20 Bedford, Bristol, Copeland, Doncaster, Hackney, Leicester, Lewisham, Liverpool, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Newham, North Tyneside, Salford, Torquay, Tower Hamlets, and Watford.

21 Watford, North Tyneside (both Labour and Conservative mayors), Doncaster and Mansfield.

22 Dorothy Thornhill in Watford, Linda Redfern in North Tyneside, Ros Jones in Doncaster and Kate Allsop in Mansfield.

23 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/17/conservatives-labour-fewer-women-police-chief-elections-female-candidates-crime-commissioners> accessed 31 August 2016

Table 5: Women candidates in mayoral elections 2007-2016²⁴

Year	Authorities	Total candidates	No. Women candidates	% Women
2007	Bedford, Mansfield, Middlesbrough	14	4	29
2009	Doncaster, Hartlepool, North Tyneside	19	3	16
2010	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Watford	27	4	15
2011	Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay	34	5	18
2012	Bristol, Liverpool, Salford	37	2	8
2013	Doncaster, North Tyneside	13	4	31
2014	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Watford	34	6	18
2015	Bedford, Copeland, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay	41	7	17
2016	Bristol, Liverpool, Salford	29	4	14

The number of elected mayors is so small that it is difficult to come to a firm conclusion about whether or not they are good for women in leadership roles. However, it is clear that political parties in some areas have difficulty in promoting (or selecting) women candidates. Moreover, the absence of any positive action measures in mayoral (or PCC) elections makes it difficult for parties to ensure that they do stand female candidates in winnable seats.

It should be added that the candidates declared so far for the 2017 metro mayor elections do nothing to dispel this conclusion. Of the six authorities electing,²⁵ seven women candidates have been put forward out of a total of 39 announced so far.²⁶ Analysis in June 2016 by the Fawcett Society of the leaders of the Northern Powerhouse found that only one amongst the seven chairs of the established and proposed combined authorities was a woman, and due to the rotating nature of that chair it is now held by a man,²⁷ and the Electoral Reform Society finds that 93 percent of roles in combined authorities will be held by men.²⁸

Women Council Leaders in Wales

There are currently two women leading Welsh local authorities – Ellen ap Gwynn (Plaid Cymru) in Ceredigion and Debbie Wilcox (Labour) in Newport. This represents 9 percent of the total, and is below the current 17 percent in England.

In 2007 14 percent (three) Welsh councils were led by women, and by 2012 this had fallen to five percent (one).

Experience in England in 2009 suggests that the projected reorganisation is unlikely to favour women in leadership roles. Steps should therefore be taken to consider what action would improve this, particularly since the Welsh Assembly has a good record in terms of women's membership, achieving 50:50 representation in 2003 and, despite recent decreases, remaining one of the more successful elected bodies in the UK in this respect.

24 There were no mayoral elections in 2008.

25 West Midlands, Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester, Tees Valley, West of England, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

26 Terry, Chris, *From City Hall to Citizens' Hall: Democracy, diversity, and English devolution*, (Electoral Reform Society, 2017)

27 Trenow, Polly, and Olchawski, Jemima, 'The Northern Powerhouse: an analysis of women's representation', (Fawcett Society, 2016)

28 Terry, Chris, *From City Hall to Citizens' Hall*, Ibid.

PART 2 – SURVEY OF COUNCILLORS

The findings presented here are new data from the LGiU survey of councillors across England and Wales which was carried out in December 2016 and January 2017. The survey explores the background, progress and experiences of the people running our councils, including the barriers they face.

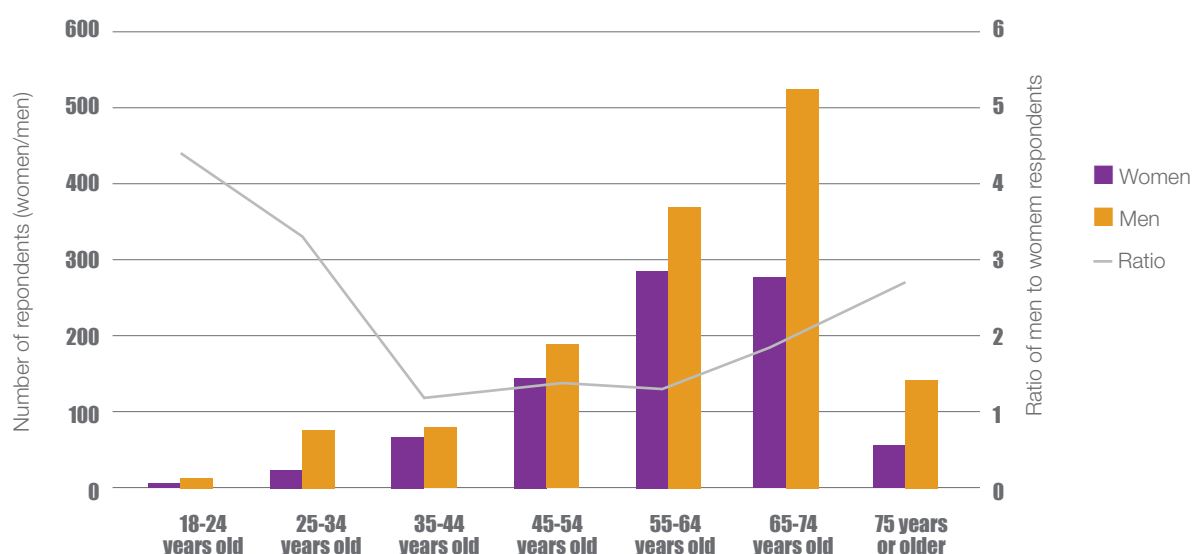
Of the 18,947 recipients of the survey, there were 2,304 responses. This survey does not constitute a census of local government councillors but with a response rate of 12 percent, and a broadly representative sample,²⁹ it does enable us to draw some general conclusions about composition and backgrounds of the 33 percent of councillors who are women.

How Representative is Local Government?

Age

Women councillors are an older population in comparison to age distribution across the overall population of England and Wales, but they are younger than councillors responding who were men. The majority of women and men councillors are aged between 55 and 74 (65 percent of women and 64 percent of men), but the men

Figure 15: Age of Councillors by Gender



are slightly older – the most common age group for men is 65-74 years olds (38 percent) while women are most likely to be slightly younger at 55-64 (33 percent of women).

Between the ages of 35 and 64, the ratio of men to women councillors is the closest to 50:50 representation. At the younger and the older ends, however, the ratios diverge.

- ▶ In the cohort between the ages of 18 and 34 there are 3.5 times as many men as women – the greatest gender inequality of any group;
- ▶ Among those aged between 35 and 64 there are 1.25 men for every woman;

²⁹ See table in the 'Methodology' section.

- ▶ Among those between 65 and 74 there are 2 men for every woman;
- ▶ Among those aged over 75 there are 2.5 men for every woman.

Given that 35 percent of all councillors are in the 65-74 age range, this group accounts for the majority of the difference between the total number of male and female councillors at all ages. This picture reflects the additional barriers to becoming and staying a councillor that younger women experience, which are outlined later in this report.

Disability

A similar proportion of male and female councillors have a disability or long-term health condition, including issues relating to age. 19 percent of female respondents say they do compared to 22 percent of male respondents.

Disabled women councillors experience a double disadvantage in terms of discrimination relating to factors other than their gender. 55 percent of disabled women report additional discrimination beyond gender discrimination, compared with 26 percent of disabled men.

Ethnicity and race

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic women are hugely underrepresented in local government. Only 5.5 percent of women councillors responding identify as BAME, slightly better than the 3.8 percent of men but vastly below the 14 percent of the England and Wales population which identifies as BAME.³⁰

The very small numbers of respondents to the survey who are BAME unfortunately means we cannot draw statistically significant conclusions from our data. 24 of our 48 BAME women respondents say they have experienced discrimination based on their protected characteristics³¹ other than gender, and 22 of our 53 of BAME men councillor respondents say that they have.

LGBTQ+

4.5 percent of all councillors identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, and only 2 percent of women councillors. Measuring LGB identity in the wider population is complex, with government estimates ranging from 1.4 percent to 5-7 percent.³² As above, our sample size does not enable us to draw statistically significant conclusions, but 70 percent of the LGB women we surveyed say they experienced additional discrimination aside from discrimination based on their gender. A very small number (less than 0.1 percent) of the respondents in our sample identify as trans.

Caring Responsibilities

Women councillors are more likely to have caring responsibilities than their male counterparts. The vast majority of male respondents have no caring responsibilities for either an adult or a child (76 percent) compared with just under two thirds of women (62 percent). This difference is wider for younger councillors, with half of women between 18 and 44 having caring responsibilities, compared with a third of men.

Employment & trade union membership

30 Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census data, accessed via Nomis web www.nomisweb.co.uk

31 The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

32 LGBT Foundation, 'Community Leaders: LGB&T population statistics', accessed 8th March 2017 <http://lgbt.foundation/Take-Action/communityleaders/community-leaders-lgbt-population-statistics/>

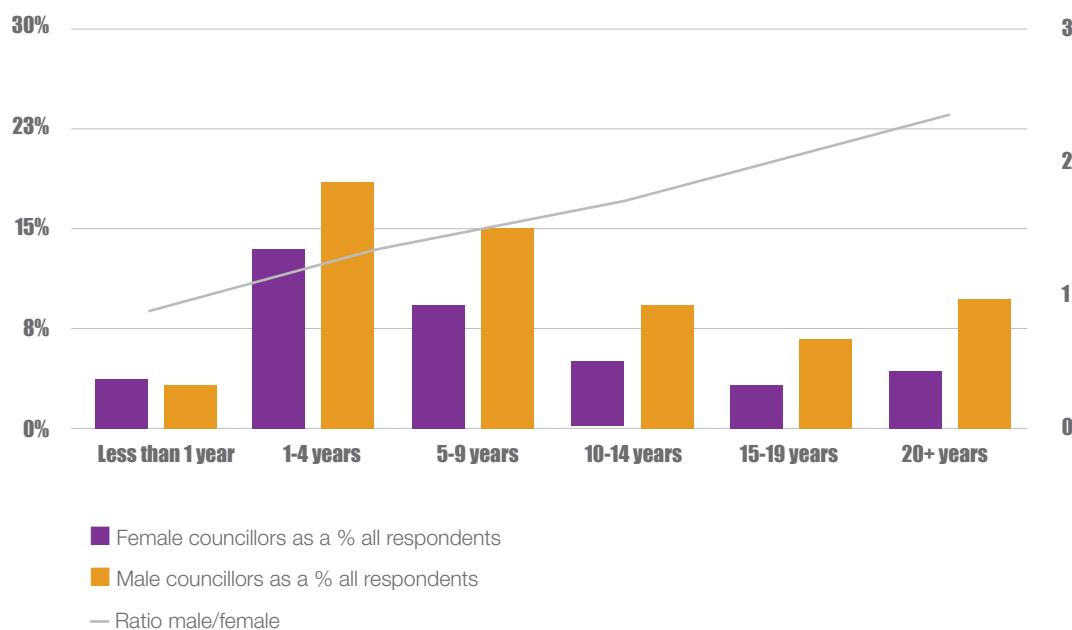
For both men and women, “retired” is by far the most common employment status (48 percent of men and 42 percent of women). Full-time employment is the second most common status for men (19 percent, compared with 12 percent of women), while for women it is part-time employed (16 percent compared with 9 percent for men). 44 percent of men are in any sort of paid employment compared with 40 percent of women.

Women are more likely to be a member of a trade union – 38 percent of women compared with 30 percent of men.

Tenure – men are in office longer than women

45 percent of women responding to our survey have been in office for less than 4 years, compared with 35 percent of men. This could be interpreted as an encouraging sign that women are starting to make their way into local government, or it could imply that women are more likely to remain in office for a shorter period of time than men.

Figure 16: How long have you been a councillor (in your current time in office)?



The proportion of men and women in office steadily worsens when we look at councillors with a longer period of tenure. For those who have been a councillor for less than a year, the ratio is about the same, but those who have been in for one to four years the ratio has already dropped to seven women for every ten men. As Figure 16 shows, by the time we get to those who have been in office for more than 20 years, there are only four women for every ten men.

Male respondents to our survey are roughly four times more likely than women to be or have been a council leader, and three times as likely to be or have been the opposition or party group leader. Men are twice as likely to be Deputy Leader, a cabinet or executive member, a member of the shadow cabinet, or a committee chair.

Responses were more proportional when looking at committee members, members of local partnership boards and groups, and ceremonial mayors, but these roles are still more likely to be filled by a male councillor.

Why Do Women Stand, and What Impact Do They Have?

Our survey asked councillors a number of questions about their careers in local government, in order to understand the differences in the pools of talent from which women and men are selected, what motivates them once they are in their roles, and the influence and impact they feel that they have. We also wanted to hear what they have to say about their own ambitions and plans within their council roles.

Previous roles

We asked whether councillors had held positions of responsibility within their communities or in politics before running for office. There are two clear distinctions between the male and female responses to this questions:

- ▶ Men are more likely to be parish councillors prior to running for the council. Just under a third (29 percent) of men had taken this route, as opposed to twenty percent of women.
- ▶ Over half of women (50 percent) have been involved in a community organisation, religious institution or charity, as opposed to 39 percent of men.

This suggests that parish and town councils could do more to get women in, and to support them to progress to becoming councillors at district level and above. It also shows both a clear strength of women councillors' involvement, given the ties to grassroots organisations represented by their community involvement, and also an indication of a fruitful route to identifying more women who might be interested in considering standing.

Women are slightly more likely to have been a school governor, and slightly less likely to have been a trade union representative (as opposed to a trade union member), than men.

Motivations

Women and men have the same motivations for standing. The number one response for both men and women is 'to contribute to my local area' (89 percent of men and 86 percent of women).

'Because I was asked to stand' is the second most popular response (44 percent of women and 40 percent of men). Women are also slightly more likely to have gone into politics to address a 'specific issue'.

Women are also slightly more likely to identify being inspired by someone as a reason (22 percent of women and 18 percent of men), and are much more likely to choose to stand to 'improve the gender balance on my local council' (16 percent compared to less than one percent of men). Men and women are also equally likely to see local election as a pathway into national politics.

Ambitions and Future Plans

We asked councillors about their intention to stand again. We found no significant gender differences with 66 percent of women and 67 percent of men saying that they planned to stand again, 13 percent of both men and women saying they did not, and the rest saying they are 'not sure'.

However, 65 percent of women who had been councillors for between one and nine years plan to stand again compared to 71 percent of men. Newly elected women are most likely to plan to run again (75 percent compared with 63 percent of men), and women who had been councillors for twenty or more years are more likely (68 percent of them) than men who had been councillors for as long (57 percent) to say they would stand again.

45 percent of women and 47 percent of men say they would like a more senior role in the council, indicating that women are as ambitious as men.

However, 79 percent of men feel they had been able to progress as they had hoped, compared with 73 percent of women.

Influence and Impact

We asked councillors whether their expectations about being able to change things in their community had been met.

Two fifths of women feel that they have more influence to change things in their area than they expected before they became a councillor (about the same proportion as their male counterparts). Slightly more women than men feel they have less influence than they anticipated – 26 percent of women compared with 22 percent of men. While men and women do not differ noticeably in how much influence they felt they had compared with expectations, it is notable that the majority of women do feel that they are able to have an influence.

We asked councillors if they thought 'my council takes due consideration of the impact its decisions have on women'. Most respondents feel their councils take due consideration. However, 54 percent of men agree or strongly agree compared with 41 percent of women. Women are almost twice as likely as men to disagree. 19 percent of women disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, compared with 10 percent of men

What Barriers do Women Councillors Face?

Fawcett has reported in the past on some of the sexist and sexually harassing comments that women in local government have received.³³

We asked councillors about different barriers that they may have faced at each stage of their experience of elected office: interacting with their local party (if they have one); standing for selection within their party; standing for election by the public; and being a councillor. Few councillors say they experienced no barriers overall – only ten percent of men, and five percent of women. Others experienced one or more barriers 'sometimes' or 'often'.

When engaging with their local party the barriers most frequently identified were roughly the same for men and women, though for men difficulty balancing party engagements with work commitments was second in priority:

1. I don't have enough time because of other commitments
2. My local party asks for too much time on campaign work
3. Difficulty balancing party engagements with work commitments

When it came to being a councillor, both men and women regularly report that 'balancing the role with work commitments' (14 percent of women; 16 percent of men) and insufficient councillor allowances (29 percent of women; 23 percent of men) are 'often' a problem.

Outside of these commonly reported problems, we found that women councillors face a host of obstacles thrown up by the institutions and the political environment that they work in, where men are in a considerable majority. Based on responses and informed by the discussions at the commission's evidence sessions so far, we have divided the barriers women councillors face into three key themes: sexism and hostility; exclusion, voice, and confidence; and institutional barriers.

33 Fawcett Society, 'Sexism and Local Government – Briefing Paper', <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Fawcett-Society-Sexism-and-Local-Government.pdf>

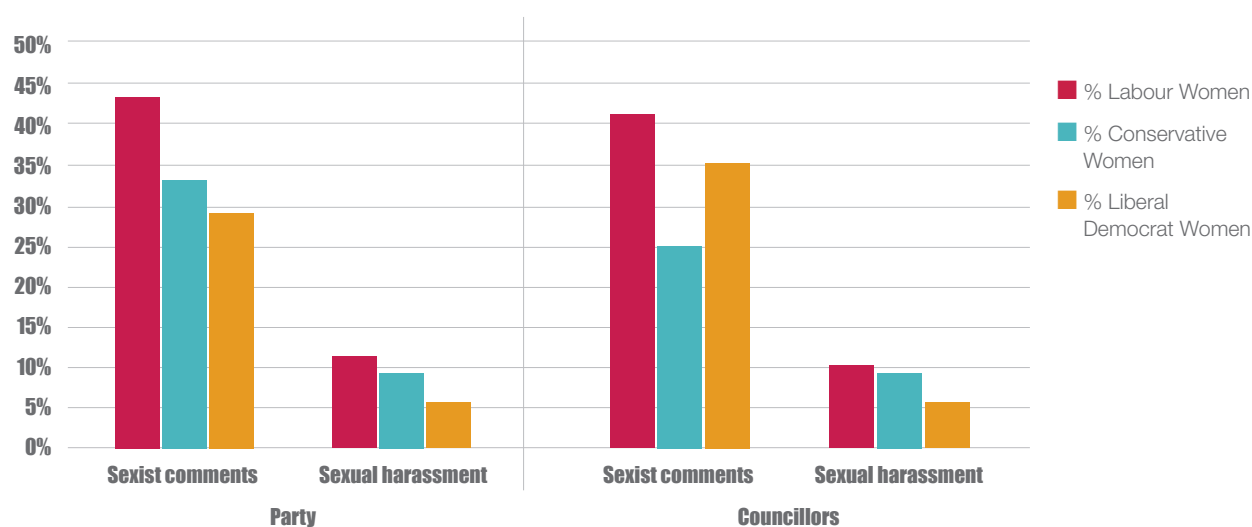
Sexism and Hostility

According to our survey, many women councillors face sexist comments at each stage of the process of becoming elected. Well over a third – 38 percent – of women councillors overall say they have experienced sexist comments when engaging with their local parties. This is not a problem confined to a particular party – 33 percent of Conservative women, 44 percent of Labour women and 29 percent of Liberal Democrats reported experiencing such comments. This may be because Labour women are more ready to identify sexist behaviour, or it may reflect a genuinely worse culture within the party – we cannot say from this data, but it is nonetheless concerning.

14 percent of women say they have ‘often’ experienced hostility from other people in their party, as opposed to 7 percent of men. 51 percent of Conservative women, 67 percent of Labour and 37 percent of Liberal Democrats report this ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’.

When standing for election as a councillor, sexist comments are less frequent, but 19 percent of women still report them as a barrier. Women’s experiences of sexist comments are worse in and around the council chamber. A third of female councillors report that sexist comments from other councillors are sometimes or often a barrier to them fulfilling their role. 25 percent of Conservative women, 41 percent of Labour women and 35 percent of Liberal Democrat women report this as a barrier.

Figure 17: % of Female Councillors Experiencing



The hostile environment within some local political parties goes further than sexist comments. Just over ten percent of women say they have experienced sexual harassment when interacting with their party (as opposed to 1 percent of men). 9 percent of Conservative women, 11 percent of Labour and 5 percent of Liberal Democrats report this. Nearly a tenth of female councillors report sexual harassment *from other councillors*. For women aged 35-44 this is more of a problem – one fifth report sexual harassment from their fellow councillors, although this represents a small sample size.³⁴

When standing as a councillor, there is a gender difference between councillors identifying ‘fear of violence’ (13 percent of women; 8 percent of men), or ‘harassment or abuse from the electorate’ (46 percent of women; 35 percent of men) as barriers.

³⁴ 19 percent of 67 respondents.

We asked councillors whether pressure from their family or community not to stand is a barrier they had experienced. Overall this is less frequently an issue for women than men (23 percent compared with 27 percent), but it is more of an issue for BAME women councillors, with 32 percent of BAME women councillors reporting it as a barrier ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’.

Exclusion, Voice, and Confidence

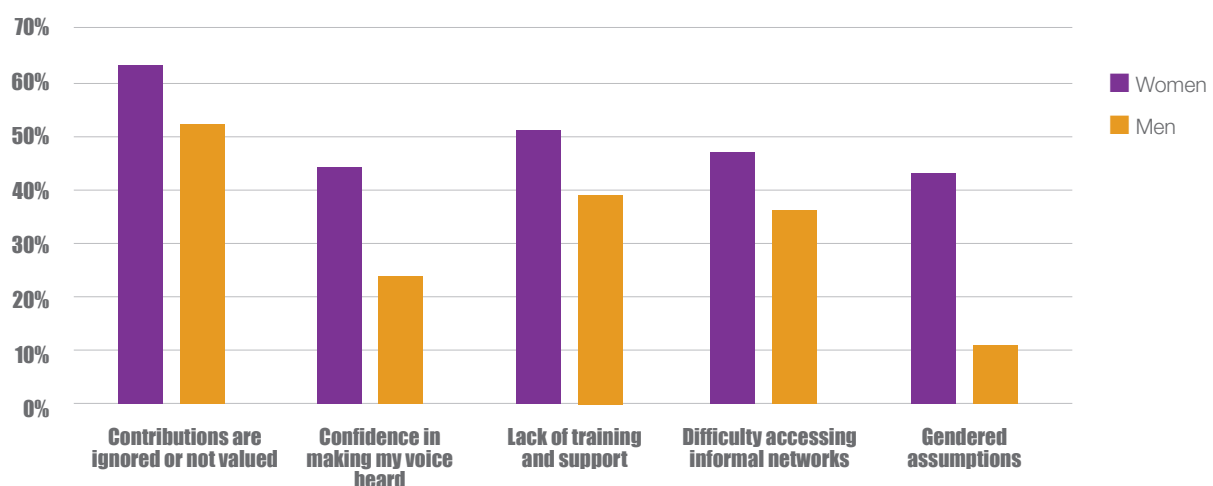
Assumptions about what councillors can do or are interested in as a result of their gender begin within political parties. At this level, 41 percent of women councillors in our survey say they experience such assumptions, with 40 percent of Conservative women, 45 percent of Labour and 31 percent of Liberal Democrats reporting this ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’.

This continues in the council chamber, where 43 percent of women respondents say they experience gendered assumptions. Few men say they had experienced this – 14 percent when engaging with their party and 11 percent in their role within the council.

Conservative women report a lack of support from their party during the election process as a barrier ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ 34 percent of the time, compared with 26 percent of Conservative men, while Labour women report it about as often as Labour male councillors (34 percent and 32 percent), and both Liberal Democrat women and men report a lack of support less often (23 percent and 20 percent).

Within the council chamber, women are more likely to report that their contributions are ignored or not valued (63 percent of women; 52 percent of men). Women also say that they feel less confident in making their voice heard (44 percent of women; 24 percent of men reported a lack of confidence ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’). This is more of a problem for younger women (68 percent of under 25s), becoming steadily less important for older age brackets, down to 38 percent of women aged over 75. Overall, Conservative women report this slightly less (39 percent) than Labour and Liberal Democrat women (both at 48 percent).

Figure 18: Exclusion, Voice and Confidence as a Barrier



Women also cite ‘a lack of training and support’ as a barrier in fulfilling their role as a councillor far more often than men (51 percent of women; 38 percent of men).³⁵

³⁵ Early insight from our open consultation suggests that women feel the lack of training that is available for new councillors as a result of budget reductions more acutely, and that this is related to the lack of confidence many women experience.

Institutional Barriers

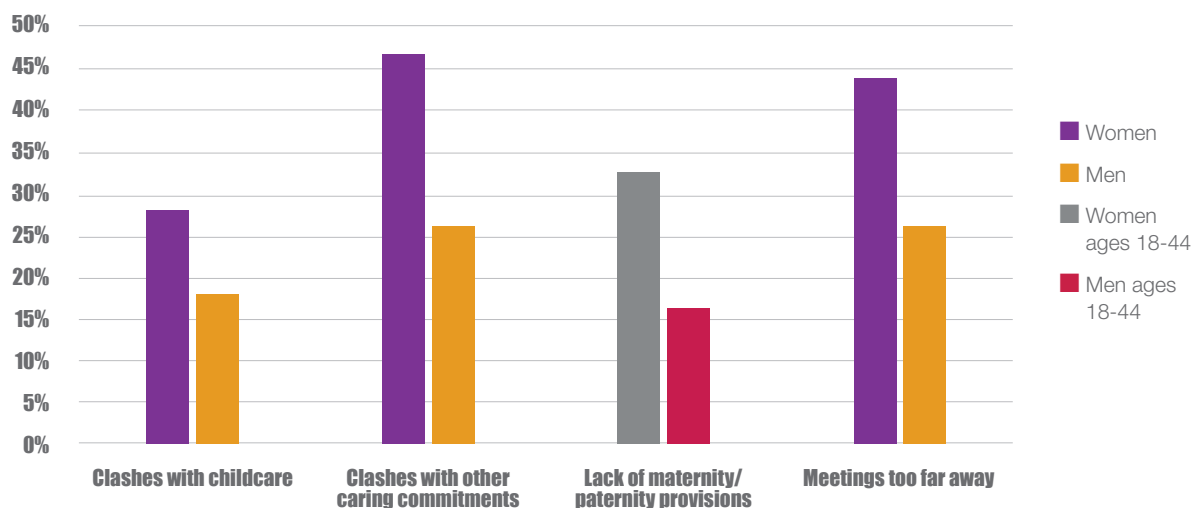
The male-dominated environment at a political level in local government, as well as its older age profile, is reflected in the way it does business. Women typically still perform a larger proportion of family caring responsibilities than men and this affects their ability to engage with council business, most of which still takes place in evenings and in the form of meetings. Councillor childcare allowances – which would help some of those with caring responsibilities – vary between councils, and our research suggests that in many places they are not sufficient to overcome caring as a barrier; and the same applies to maternity and paternity leave policies, which are not nationally mandated. There is evidence to suggest that these institutional structures could be playing a role in excluding women from staying and progressing on councils.

Female respondents to our survey say that balancing party engagement with their childcare commitments is a barrier ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ far more than men (28 percent compared with 17 percent). 23 percent of Conservative women say this compared with 33 percent of Labour representatives. When looking at other caring commitments, just over 40 percent of women experience them as a barrier to party engagement compared to only a quarter of men.

Similarly, within their role as a councillor, 28 percent of women report clashes with childcare as a barrier, compared with 18 percent of men, and 47 percent of women report clashes with other caring commitments, compared with 26 percent of men.

Significantly, 32 percent of women aged 35-44 say that clashes with childcare are ‘often’ a problem (compared with 14 percent of men) within their role as a councillor. This age bracket has the most difficulty with this issue, followed by 45-54 year olds.

Figure 19: Institutional Barriers

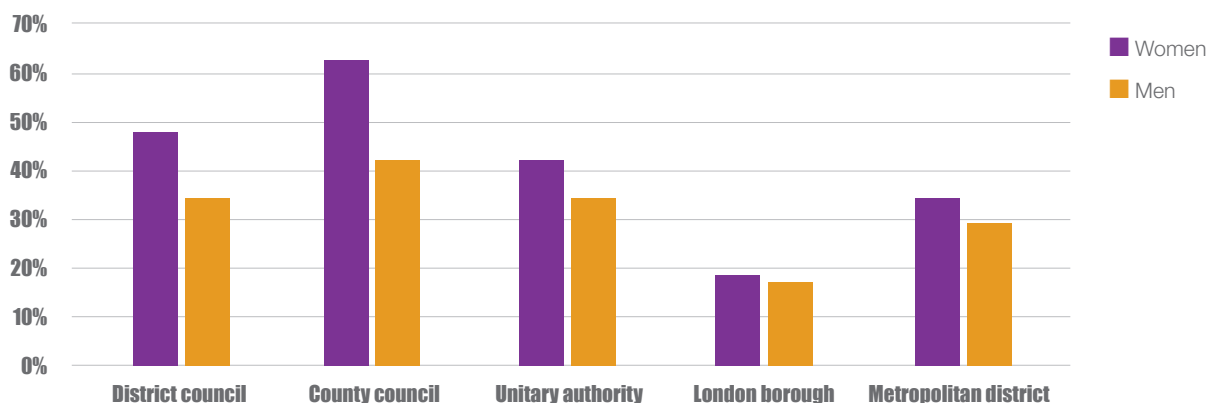


‘Clashes with other caring commitments’ seem to become an issue for women aged 45+ in fulfilling their role as a councillor, with between 40 and 55 percent of women reporting this in each older age bracket. For men over 45 those reporting this as an issue never strays above 31 percent.

When looking at councillors aged 18 to 44, 33 percent of women and 16 percent of men say that a ‘lack of maternity/paternity provisions or support’ is ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ a barrier in their ability to fulfil their role as a councillor.

The issue of meetings being held too far away is cited as a challenge for far more women than men (44 percent of women compared to 26 percent of men). In county councils over 50 percent of women report this to be an issue ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’. The long distances county councillors have to travel is clearly a barrier for all of them, but for women, who are less likely in the overall population to drive, this barrier is far worse.³⁶ This issue is replicated at the level of party engagement, although the difference is smaller there.

Figure 20: ‘Meetings being held too far away’ as a Barrier by Council Type



A familiar critique of government is that power is invested in ‘old boys clubs’, with decision-making taking place outside formal structures, excluding those without access to these networks.

Our research suggests that women are more likely than men to feel excluded by such informal networks. At the level of party selection, just under a third (31 percent) of women say they have ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ experienced a ‘lack of access to informal networks within the party’, slightly more than the quarter of men who see it as a barrier. Female Labour councillors are more likely to report this as an issue than their counterparts in other parties. A lack of transparency in the selection process itself is perceived as a barrier to women too, with 39 percent identifying it as a barrier to selection compared with 31 percent of men.

Within the town hall setting, the negative influence of informal networks on gender equality is felt to be greater still. 47 percent of women – almost half – say this is a barrier to them performing their role as councillors, compared with 36 percent of men.

What Solutions Do Women Councillors Want To See?

Our research demonstrates that female councillors experience an alarming level of sexism and sexual harassment while engaging in local politics, running for office and performing their role as locally elected representatives; many female councillors feel that their voices are silenced in discussions in political parties and in town halls; and that the institutions of our councils are structured in such a way as to make their participation more difficult. We asked councillors: what would change this picture?

Becoming councillors

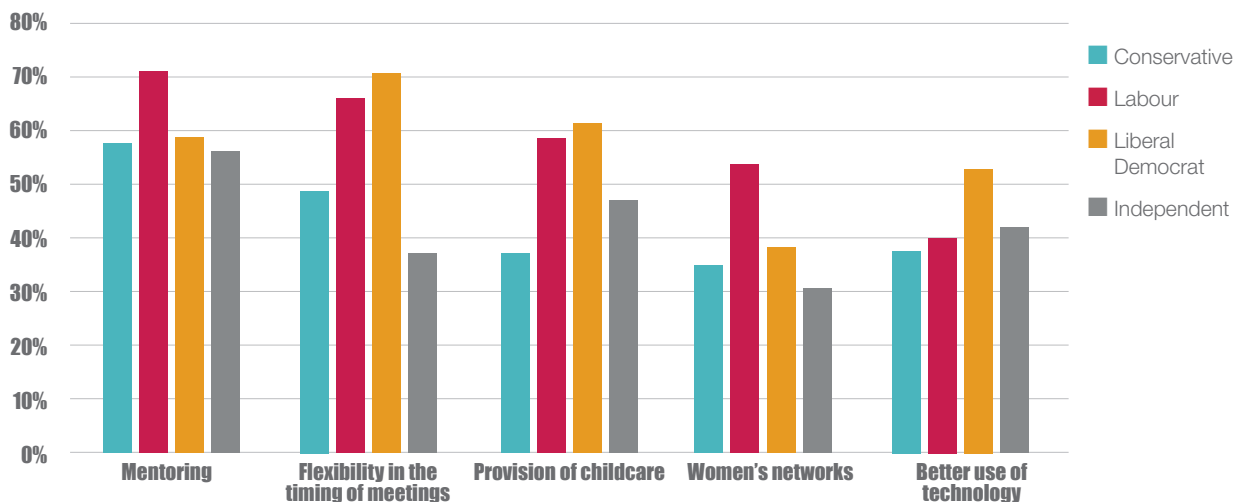
Women and men who are councillors both identify the following suggestions as their top priorities in supporting more women to become councillors:

³⁶ Department for Transport, National Travel Survey 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551437/national-travel-survey-2015.pdf

- ▶ Mentoring (64 percent of women; 57 percent of men). Support for this option is cross-party. Although Labour women are more likely to be in favour, 58 percent of Conservative women support it.
- ▶ More flexibility in the timings of meetings (59 percent of women; 59 percent of men). Labour and Liberal Democrat women are most likely to support this change, although 49 percent of Conservative women councillors feel it would make a difference.
- ▶ Provision of childcare (52 percent of women; 65 percent of men). This is notably more than the proportion of women saying that childcare is an issue for them personally – the extent to which a lack of provision for childcare holds back younger women is clearly perceived by all councillors.

Women are more supportive of a wider range of options, with 44 percent of women saying women’s networks would make a difference compared with 35 percent of men. 41 percent of women support ‘better use of technology, for example remote voting or Skype meetings’. Notably, 38 percent of Conservative women support this idea, making it the third most popular idea amongst them, and support is even across party lines, from UKIP to the Green Party.

Figure 21: What would make it easier for women to become councillors?



Support for ‘seats or places on shortlists which are reserved for women only’ is high amongst women in the Labour Party at 54 percent (and men, at 40 percent), but low otherwise.

Progressing into leadership

As outlined above, progression for women councillors into senior leadership positions is poor. We asked councillors what they feel lies behind this.

There is consensus between male and female respondents when asked for their top three explanations for there being fewer female council leaders. Both male and female respondents agree that the top reasons are that ‘there aren’t enough female councillors to choose from’ (62 percent of women and 78 percent of men put this in their top three reasons); and that ‘women don’t put themselves forward for senior roles’ (61 percent of women and 66 percent of men put this in their top three reasons).

Equally, when looking at the answer selected as the number one reason (as opposed to second or third), the same two choices are identified by both men and women. However, men are far more likely to identify the ‘pipeline’ issue of there not being enough female councillors to select from (45 percent of men and 29 percent of

women), while a similar proportion of men and women identify women not putting themselves forward for senior roles (28 percent of men and 27 percent of women).

Women's reasons are more diverse: they feel more strongly that women councillors are 'pigeonholed into particular types of senior roles' (42 percent of women and 35 percent of men put this in their top three reasons), that 'the way the council works makes it hard for women to show their talents' (39 percent of women and 30 percent of men), and that 'sexism on the part of other councillors' plays a role (29 percent compared with 19 percent of men).

We asked respondents what they think would make it easier for women to progress into leadership roles. The top priorities are broadly the same for both men and women:

- ▶ Mentoring (55 percent of women; 49 percent of men). Party support ranges from 46 percent of Conservative women councillors to 61 percent of Labour women councillors.
- ▶ More flexibility in the timings of meetings (47 percent of women; 48 percent of men). 37 percent of Conservative women councillors, 53 percent of Labour women councillors, and 58 percent of Liberal Democrat women councillors are in favour.
- ▶ Provision of childcare (41 percent of women; 51 percent of men)

However, again women support a much wider range of options. This includes women's networks (37 percent of all women councillors, and Conservative women's third highest preference at 30 percent), better use of technology (32 percent) and better pay and terms and conditions, such as maternity leave and pensions, in cabinet roles (38 percent). 47 percent of Labour women councillors and 48 percent of Liberal Democrat support better pay and conditions.

39 percent of women overall support a requirement for a gender-balanced Cabinet compared with 19 percent of men, but this is supported primarily by Labour women of whom 59 percent were in favour. Term limits for councillors (an example of a three term limit was given) are supported by 32 percent of women (with at least a quarter of women councillors in favour in each party) and 20 percent of men respectively.

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

Women's representation in local government as councillors and as council leaders has stalled.

Our evidence suggests that incumbency plays a part in the slow pace of change, and party decisions around positive action, such as quotas, have an impact on getting women in.

Diversity is an issue. Younger women, BAME women and disabled women are woefully underrepresented. Our research has shown that these women face multiple barriers to holding elected office.

In some council chambers, sexist attitudes towards women are commonplace. Female councillors are more likely to experience sexist comments and behaviour, and to have their contributions ignored in meetings. Outdated gendered assumptions hold women back from participating and progressing. Women are more likely to have unpaid caring responsibilities than men, which means that the lack of flexibility in how councils do business creates additional barriers.

Women are just as ambitious as men. Our research finds that women are as likely to stand for a second term as their male counterparts, and their motivations for standing in the first place are much the same as men's. Once there, women councillors continue to feel they have influence and are equally as ambitious to rise to the top.

Getting more women to stand and be selected for local government is key. Community and voluntary organisations are important pools of prospective female talent. That many women stand simply because they were asked is also an important reminder for political parties of how simple it can be to get more women into local government. But political parties should also note the barriers that women face in attending meetings or keeping up with the demands of local campaigning and be mindful of these when it comes to engaging more women.

An outdated culture is holding local government back. Local government's role is changing fast in response to budget cuts, devolution, and localism; yet the culture of local government in many of our council chambers is simply decades behind. By shining a light on local government with the work of this Commission we are revealing institutions ripe for change. The good news is we are also finding many women and men across local government who are ready to make that change happen.

Next steps – remaining evidence

In our final report we will incorporate oral evidence from commission meetings including the experiences of senior council officers alongside councillors. We will look at the number and roles of women at the top of local government in cabinet positions, and will include interviews with women council leaders, and those women who would be councillors but who have not so far decided to stand. Finally, we will publish the findings of our freedom of information request to local authorities, identifying which have maternity, paternity and parental leave policies in place for councillors. We'll also include an analysis of our wider consultation and will take another look at where the women are in devolution.

Next steps – emerging recommendations

The data explored in this report shows the challenges we need to overcome to get more women onto councils, to enable them to stay and thrive, and to empower them to progress into leadership. Emerging themes that the recommendations in our final report will address include:

Shifting the dial on representation: We will look at what structural changes, including at the level of party selection procedures and local election rules, are necessary to get more women elected as councillors. We want to encourage more women to come forward for selection as candidates, and will ask what more the parties, councils, local government organisations, and the government can do to bring women in.

Improving diversity: The women that are elected to councils are not representative of the wider population. We will look at what specific changes could support women with different intersectional identities to stand and progress.

Removing structural barriers to progress: We will look at the practical changes councils and the government need to make to how council chambers are run, from supporting caring responsibilities through better childcare, elder care, and maternity and parental leave, to enabling flexibility across the board, in order to make being a councillor and progressing to leadership roles work for women.

Challenging sexism: There is a harmful culture in some parts of local government politics which needs to be addressed. We will explore how this manifests itself so that we can raise awareness of it, and draw on evidence and ideas about how it can be confronted by women in local government and their allies.

Helping her – networks, mentoring, building confidence: Whilst we do not accept that we need to ‘fix the women’, we do recognise that there are informal networks in place for men from which women are excluded. Councillors themselves tell us that they feel mentoring, confidence-boosting measures and women’s networks would be helpful. We will look carefully at what might be most effective in this area.

APPENDIX 1: Councils in England and Wales

England

Each councillor is elected to serve for a period of four years. Local elections are held at varying intervals depending upon the type and practice of authority; for instance, London boroughs and county councils elect the whole council once every four years, with only occasional by-elections in between, whilst almost all metropolitan boroughs hold elections three years out of four, with a third of the council seats up for election each year, and a 'fallow' year in the fourth. A few councils elect half the council members every two years.

Local authorities also vary considerably in terms of size, from relatively small shire districts, which usually function as part of a two-tier system with county councils, to very large councils in the conurbations of the west midlands, Yorkshire, the north west and north east.

The five types of council are:

- County councils, which are responsible for the 'shire' counties and operate in a two-tier system with a number of shire districts with whom they share responsibility for services. Counties elect all their members every four years;
- London boroughs, which have elections every four years, and cover all the local authorities in the London region;
- Metropolitan authorities, which cover the large conurbations of the West Midlands and the northern regions (Yorkshire & the Humber, the North East and the North West), almost all of which elect their councillors by thirds;
- Shire Districts, which are smaller authorities sharing service provision responsibilities with counties, and which elect on a variety of patterns – whole council, by thirds, and by halves;
- Unitary councils, which are smaller than the metropolitan authorities, but do not share service delivery with a county. Unitaries elect either on a whole council basis, or by thirds.

Table 1: Councils in England by type and pattern of election

Type	Total	Whole council	Thirds	Halves
London Borough	32	32	0	0
Metropolitan District	36	2	34	0
County	27	27	0	0
Shire District	201	133	61	7
Unitary	55	38	17	0
Total	351	232	112	7

95 percent of councils in England are led using a Leader and Cabinet model, but a small number (16) are led by an elected executive Mayor. Both leadership models are examined in detail in later sections of this report.

Wales

There are currently 22 local authorities in Wales. Proposed reorganisation would have more than halved this number, but plans have recently been shelved pending further discussion. All Welsh councils are elected on a whole-council basis every four years, but since the 2016 elections were deferred to 2017 together with the review, the last year for which full election results are available is 2012.

All Welsh councils are led using the leader and cabinet/executive model; none have executive elected mayors.

Note: Yns Mon (Anglesey) has been excluded from this study, because it did not hold elections in 2012.

APPENDIX 2: Councillor Counting Additional Tables (England)

Table 1: Women Candidates and Total Sitting Councillors 2007-2016

Year	% women candidates	% women councillors
2007	31	30
2008	31	31
2009	28	29
2010	30	31
2011	30	32
2012	31	33
2013	30	32
2014	32	32
2015	31	33
2016	33	33

Table 2: Women candidates by major political party 2008-2016

	2008 (%)	2010 (%)	2012 (%)	2014 (%)	2016 (%)
Con	32	30	28	25	26
Lab	34	34	36	34	39
LD	39	31	34	30	33

Table 3: Proportion of councillors elected who are women by major political party 2008-2016

	2008 (%)	2010 (%)	2012 (%)	2014 (%)	2016 (%)
Con	28	31	30	31	30
Lab	33	37	40	40	42
LD	37	35	36	34	33

Table 4: Women candidates for smaller parties and independents, 2016

	Women as % of candidates	Women as % of councillors elected
Green Party	40	19
UKIP	22	26
Independent	24	35
Other	29	0

Table 5: Women as a percentage of councillors elected by region

	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2016 (%)
East of England	26	3	37
East Midlands	29	28	35
London*	n/a	30	n/a
North East	36	45	49
North West	33	35	34
South East	31	30	30
South West	30	32	36
West Midlands	27	28	39
Yorkshire & Humber	32	29	34

* London had no elections in 2011 or 2016.

Table 6: Women as a percentage of leaders, councillors & MPs, 2007-2016

	Leaders (%)	Councillors (%)	MPs (%)
2007	13	30	20
2008	16	31	20
2009	13	29	20
2010	14	31	23
2011	13	32	23
2012	12	33	23
2013	14	32	23
2014	14	32	23
2015	15	33	29
2016	17	33	29

Table 7: Women as a percentage of council leaders by political party, 2007-2016

	Conservative (%)	Labour (%)	Liberal Democrat (%)	Other* (%)
2007	11	11	22	25
2008	15	18	15	22
2009	13	15	12	0
2010	14	14	22	0
2011	11	17	24	0
2012	11	15	22	0
2013	12	17	25	0
2014	13	16	29	0
2015	13	18	33	0
2016	15	19	30	0

*Includes Independents, the Green Party and other smaller parties.

Table 8: Women as a percentage of council leaders by region

	2008 (%)	2012 (%)	2016 (%)
East of England	24	18	16
East Midlands	16	14	16
London	3	21	25
North East	14	0	10
North West	11	22	19
South East	18	12	14
South West	21	5	11
West Midlands	13	3	12
Yorkshire & Humber	9	14	29

Table 9: Women as a percentage of council leaders by type of authority, 2007-2016

	County Council (%)	London Borough (%)	Met District (%)	Shire District (%)	Unitary (%)
2007	11	3	9	18	17
2008	14	3	6	21	22
2009	7	7	3	15	18
2010	11	17	12	16	14
2011	7	14	12	14	18
2012	7	21	9	13	14
2013	14	25	9	13	14
2014	14	25	9	13	16
2015	14	25	12	14	16
2016	18	25	12	15	18

Table 10: Women candidates in Mayoral elections 2005-2016

Year	Authorities	% Women Candidates
2005	Doncaster, Hartlepool, North Tyneside, Stoke-on-Trent	16
2005	Torbay (October)	21
2006	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Watford	23
2007	Bedford, Mansfield, Middlesbrough	29
2009	Doncaster, Hartlepool, North Tyneside	30
2009	Bedford By-election	17
2010	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Watford	15
2011	Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay	21
2012	Bristol, Liverpool, Salford	8
2013	Doncaster, North Tyneside	31
2014	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Watford	19
2015	Bedford, Copeland, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay	13
2016	Bristol, Liverpool, Salford	12

Appendix 3: Women Councillors in English Local Authorities

Percentage of women members of each English local authority, as at August 2016

KEY:

Authority type: cc – county council, l – London borough, m – metropolitan district, sd – shire district, u – unitary

Region: ee – East of England, em – East Midlands, l – London, ne – North East, nw – North West, se – South East, sw – South West, wm – West Midlands, y – Yorkshire & Humber

Political control: c – Conservative, l – Labour, ld – Liberal Democrat, noc – No Overall Control, ukip – UKIP

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Adur	29	sd	se	Halves	c	7	24.1
Allerdale	56	sd	nw	Whole	noc	15	26.8
Amber Valley	45	sd	em	Thirds	c	12	26.7
Arun	54	sd	se	Whole	c	16	29.6
Ashfield	35	sd	em	Whole	l	13	37.1
Ashford	43	sd	se	Whole	c	10	23.3
Aylesbury Vale	59	sd	se	Whole	c	13	22.0
Babergh	43	sd	se	Whole	c	11	25.6
Barking & Dagenham	51	l	l	Whole	l	21	41.2
Barnet	63	l	l	Whole	c	24	38.1
Barnsley	63	m	y	Thirds	l	24	38.1
Barrow-in-Furness	36	sd	nw	Whole	l	14	38.9
Basildon	42	sd	ee	Thirds	c	9	21.4
Basingstoke & Deane	60	sd	se	Thirds	c	18	30.0
Bassetlaw	48	sd	em	Whole	l	23	47.9
Bath & North East Somerset	65	u	sw	Whole	c	20	30.8
Bedford	40	u	ee	Whole	noc	13	32.5
Bexley	63	l	l	Whole	c	22	34.9
Birmingham	120	m	wm	Thirds	l	41	34.2
Blaby	39	sd	em	Whole	c	12	30.8
Blackburn with Darwen	64	u	nw	Thirds	l	14	21.9
Blackpool	42	u	nw	Whole	l	12	28.6
Bolsover	37	sd	wm	Whole	l	15	40.5
Bolton	60	m	nw	Thirds	l	17	28.3
Boston	30	sd	em	Whole	noc	9	30.0
Bournemouth	54	u	sw	Whole	c	14	25.9
Bracknell Forest	42	u	se	Whole	c	15	35.7
Bradford	90	m	y	Thirds	l	32	35.6
Braintree	49	sd	ee	Whole	c	18	36.7
Breckland	49	sd	ee	Whole	c	12	24.5
Brent	63	l	l	Whole	l	25	39.7
Brentwood	37	sd	ee	Thirds	c	15	40.5
Brighton & Hove	54	u	se	Whole	noc	25	46.3
Bristol	70	u	sw	Whole	l	28	40.0
Broadland	47	sd	ee	Whole	c	10	21.3
Bromley	60	l	l	Whole	c	21	35.0
Bromsgrove	31	sd	wm	Whole	c	11	35.5
Broxbourne	30	sd	ee	Thirds	c	9	30.0
Broxtowe	44	sd	em	Whole	c	16	36.4
Buckinghamshire	49	cc	se	Whole	c	14	28.6
Burnley	45	sd	nw	Thirds	l	14	31.1
Bury	51	m	nw	Thirds	l	22	43.1
Calderdale	51	m	y	Thirds	noc	19	37.3
Cambridge	42	sd	ee	Thirds	l	15	35.7
Cambridgeshire	69	cc	ee	Whole	noc	17	24.6
Camden	54	l	l	Whole	l	23	42.6
Cannock Chase	41	sd	wm	Whole	l	15	36.6
Canterbury	39	sd	se	Whole	c	13	33.3

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Carlisle	52	sd	ne	Thirds	l	18	34.6
Castle Point	41	sd	se	Thirds	c	7	17.1
Central Bedfordshire	59	u	ee	Whole	c	13	22.0
Charnwood	52	sd	em	Whole	c	19	36.5
Chelmsford	57	sd	ee	Whole	c	18	31.6
Cheltenham	40	sd	sw	Halves	ld	9	22.5
Cherwell	48	sd	se	Thirds	c	10	20.8
Cheshire East	82	u	nw	Whole	c	30	36.6
Cheshire West & Chester	75	u	nw	Whole	l	28	37.3
Chesterfield	48	sd	em	Whole	l	19	39.6
Chichester	48	sd	se	Whole	c	17	35.4
Chiltern	40	sd	se	Whole	c	12	30.0
Chorley	47	sd	nw	Thirds	l	15	31.9
Christchurch	24	sd	sw	Whole	c	11	45.8
Colchester	51	sd	se	Thirds	noc	17	33.3
Copeland	51	sd	nw	Whole	l	13	25.5
Corby	29	sd	em	Whole	l	9	31.0
Cornwall	123	u	sw	Whole	noc	29	23.6
Cotswold	34	sd	sw	Whole	c	9	26.5
County Durham	126	u	ne	Whole	l	51	40.5
Coventry	54	m	wm	Thirds	l	13	24.1
Craven	30	sd	y	Thirds	c	4	13.3
Crawley	37	sd	se	Thirds	l	12	32.4
Croydon	70	l	l	Whole	c	25	35.7
Cumbria	84	cc	nw	Whole	noc	25	29.8
Dacorum	51	sd	ee	Whole	c	19	37.3
Darlington	50	u	ne	Whole	l	21	42.0
Dartford	44	sd	se	Whole	c	9	20.5
Daventry	36	sd	em	Thirds	c	9	25.0
Derby	51	u	em	Thirds	l	12	23.5
Derbyshire	64	cc	em	Whole	l	24	37.5
Derbyshire Dales	39	sd	em	Whole	c	15	38.5
Devon	60	cc	sw	Whole	c	14	23.3
Doncaster	55	m	y	Thirds	l	22	40.0
Dorset	46	cc	sw	Whole	c	14	30.4
Dover	45	sd	se	Whole	c	11	24.4
Dudley	72	m	wm	Thirds	noc	24	33.3
Ealing	69	l	l	Whole	l	20	29.0
East Cambridgeshire	39	sd	ee	Whole	c	12	30.8
East Devon	59	sd	sw	Whole	c	15	25.4
East Dorset	29	sd	sw	Whole	c	7	24.1
East Hampshire	44	sd	se	Whole	c	13	29.5
East Hertfordshire	50	sd	ee	Whole	c	14	28.0
East Lindsey	55	sd	em	Whole	c	16	29.1
East Northamptonshire	40	sd	em	Whole	c	17	42.5
East Riding of Yorkshire	67	u	y	Whole	c	29	43.3
East Staffordshire	39	sd	wm	Whole	c	12	30.8
East Sussex	49	cc	se	Whole	noc	11	22.4
Eastbourne	27	sd	se	Whole	ld	7	25.9
Eastleigh	44	sd	se	Thirds	ld	20	45.5
Eden	38	sd	nw	Whole	c	14	36.8
Elmbridge	60	sd	se	Thirds	noc	15	25.0
Enfield	63	l	l	Whole	l	23	36.5
Epping Forest	58	sd	ee	Thirds	c	21	36.2
Epsom & Ewell	38	sd	n/a	Whole	noc	10	26.3
Erewash	47	sd	em	Whole	c	18	38.3
Essex	75	cc	ee	Whole	c	19	25.3
Exeter	39	sd	sw	Thirds	l	13	33.3
Fareham	31	sd	se	Halves	c	12	38.7
Fenland	39	sd	ee	Whole	c	12	30.8
Forest Heath	27	sd	ee	Whole	c	6	22.2
Forest of Dean	48	sd	sw	Whole	noc	12	25.0

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Fylde	51	sd	nw	Whole	c	20	39.2
Gateshead	66	m	ne	Thirds	l	32	48.5
Gedling	41	sd	em	Whole	l	16	39.0
Gloucester	39	sd	sw	Whole	c	15	38.5
Gloucestershire	53	cc	sw	Whole	noc	9	17.0
Gosport	34	sd	se	Halves	c	7	20.6
Gravesham	44	sd	se	Whole	c	12	27.3
Great Yarmouth	39	sd	ee	Thirds	noc	16	41.0
Greenwich	51	l	l	Whole	l	19	37.3
Guildford	48	sd	se	Whole	c	15	31.3
Hackney	57	l	l	Whole	l	22	38.6
Halton	56	u	nw	Thirds	l	19	33.9
Hambleton	28	sd	y	Whole	c	6	21.4
Hammersmith & Fulham	46	l	l	Whole	c	18	39.1
Hampshire	78	cc	se	Whole	c	15	19.2
Harborough	37	sd	em	Whole	c	14	37.8
Haringey	57	l	l	Whole	l	24	42.1
Harlow	33	sd	ee	Thirds	l	9	27.3
Harrogate	54	sd	y	Thirds	c	14	25.9
Harrow	63	l	l	Whole	l	25	39.7
Hart	33	sd	se	Thirds	noc	7	21.2
Hartlepool	33	u	ne	Thirds	l	9	27.3
Hastings	32	sd	se	Halves	l	7	21.9
Havant	38	sd	se	Thirds	c	14	36.8
Havering	54	l	l	Whole	c	14	25.9
Herefordshire	53	u	wm	Whole	c	15	28.3
Hertfordshire	78	cc	ee	Whole	c	24	30.8
Hertsmere	39	sd	ee	Thirds	c	12	30.8
High Peak	43	sd	em	Whole	c	11	25.6
Hillingdon	65	l	l	Whole	c	18	27.7
Hinckley & Bosworth	34	sd	em	Whole	c	11	32.4
Horsham	44	sd	se	Whole	c	7	15.9
Hounslow	60	l	l	Whole	l	22	36.7
Huntingdonshire	52	sd	ee	Thirds	c	11	21.2
Hyndburn	35	sd	nw	Thirds	l	13	37.1
Ipswich	48	sd	ee	Thirds	l	12	25.0
Isle of Wight	40	u	se	Whole	noc	5	12.5
Islington	48	l	l	Whole	l	19	39.6
Kensington & Chelsea	50	l	l	Whole	c	20	40.0
Kent	81	cc	se	Whole	c	16	19.8
Kettering	36	sd	em	Whole	c	12	33.3
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	62	sd	ee	Whole	c	17	27.4
Kingston upon Hull	59	u	y	Thirds	l	26	44.1
Kingston Upon Thames	48	l	l	Whole	ld	17	35.4
Kirklees	69	m	y	Thirds	noc	27	39.1
Knowsley	45	m	nw	Thirds	l	20	44.4
Lambeth	63	l	l	Whole	l	30	47.6
Lancashire	84	cc	nw	Whole	noc	25	29.8
Lancaster	60	sd	nw	Whole	noc	25	41.7
Leeds	99	m	y	Thirds	l	42	42.4
Leicester	54	u	em	Whole	l	19	35.2
Leicestershire	55	cc	em	Whole	c	13	23.6
Lewes	41	sd	se	Whole	c	12	29.3
Lewisham	54	l	l	Whole	l	20	37.0
Lichfield	47	sd	wm	Whole	c	17	36.2
Lincoln	33	sd	em	Thirds	l	14	42.4
Lincolnshire	77	cc	em	Whole	noc	23	29.9
Liverpool	90	m	nw	Thirds	l	42	46.7
Luton	48	u	ee	Whole	l	14	29.2
Maidstone	55	sd	se	Thirds	noc	20	36.4
Maldon	31	sd	ee	Whole	c	9	29.0
Malvern Hills	38	sd	wm	Whole	c	14	36.8

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Manchester	96	m	nw	Thirds	l	49	51.0
Mansfield	36	sd	em	Whole	l	9	25.0
Medway	55	u	se	Whole	c	13	23.6
Melton	28	sd	em	Whole	c	12	42.9
Mendip	47	sd	sw	Whole	c	9	19.1
Merton	60	l	l	Whole	l	23	38.3
Mid Devon	42	sd	sw	Whole	c	15	35.7
Mid Suffolk	40	sd	ee	Whole	c	16	40.0
Mid Sussex	54	sd	se	Whole	c	16	29.6
Middlesbrough	46	u	ne	Whole	l	19	41.3
Milton Keynes	57	u	se	Thirds	noc	21	36.8
Mole Valley	41	sd	se	Thirds	c	15	36.6
New Forest	60	sd	se	Whole	c	21	35.0
Newark & Sherwood	39	sd	em	Whole	c	14	35.9
Newcastle Upon Tyne	78	m	ne	Thirds	l	34	43.6
Newcastle-under-Lyme	60	sd	wm	Thirds	l	24	40.0
Newham	60	l	l	Whole	l	23	38.3
Norfolk	84	cc	ee	Whole	noc	19	22.6
North Devon	43	sd	sw	Whole	noc	12	27.9
North Dorset	33	sd	sw	Whole	c	15	45.5
North East Derbyshire	53	sd	em	Whole	l	18	34.0
North East Lincolnshire	42	u	y	Thirds	noc	12	28.6
North Hertfordshire	49	sd	ee	Thirds	c	14	28.6
North Kesteven	43	sd	em	Whole	c	18	41.9
North Lincolnshire	43	u	y	Whole	c	13	30.2
North Norfolk	48	sd	ee	Whole	c	17	35.4
North Somerset	51	u	sw	Whole	c	18	35.3
North Tyneside	60	m	ne	Thirds	l	31	51.7
North Warwickshire	35	sd	wm	Whole	c	8	22.9
North West Leicestershire	38	sd	em	Whole	c	7	18.4
North Yorkshire	72	cc	y	Whole	c	16	22.2
Northampton	45	sd	wm	Whole	c	13	28.9
Northamptonshire	57	cc	em	Whole	c	15	26.3
Northumberland	67	u	ne	Whole	noc	22	32.8
Norwich	39	sd	ee	Thirds	l	17	43.6
Nottingham	55	u	em	Whole	l	21	38.2
Nottinghamshire	67	cc	em	Whole	noc	19	28.4
Nuneaton & Bedworth	34	sd	wm	Halves	l	12	35.3
Oadby & Wigston	26	sd	em	Whole	ld	8	30.8
Oldham	60	m	nw	Thirds	l	18	30.0
Oxford	48	sd	se	Halves	l	20	41.7
Oxfordshire	63	cc	se	Whole	noc	21	33.3
Pendle	49	sd	nw	Thirds	noc	11	22.4
Peterborough	60	u	ee	Thirds	c	14	23.3
Plymouth	57	u	sw	Thirds	noc	16	28.1
Poole	42	u	sw	Whole	c	17	40.5
Portsmouth	42	u	se	Thirds	noc	9	21.4
Preston	57	sd	nw	Thirds	l	18	31.6
Purbeck	25	sd	sw	Whole	c	9	36.0
Reading	46	u	se	Thirds	l	22	47.8
Redbridge	63	l	l	Whole	noc	17	27.0
Redcar & Cleveland	59	u	ne	Whole	noc	22	37.3
Redditch	29	sd	wm	Thirds	l	14	48.3
Reigate & Banstead	51	sd	se	Thirds	c	12	23.5
Ribble Valley	40	sd	nw	Whole	c	16	40.0
Richmond Upon Thames	54	l	l	Whole	c	23	42.6
Richmondshire	34	sd	y	Whole	c	11	32.4
Rochdale	60	m	nw	Thirds	l	21	35.0
Rochford	39	sd	ee	Thirds	c	10	25.6
Rossendale	36	sd	nw	Thirds	l	19	52.8
Rother	38	sd	se	Whole	c	10	26.3
Rotherham	63	m	y	Thirds	l	26	41.3

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Rugby	42	sd	wm	Thirds	c	20	47.6
Runnymede	42	sd	se	Thirds	c	13	31.0
Rushcliffe	44	sd	em	Whole	c	13	29.5
Rushmoor	39	sd	se	Thirds	c	9	23.1
Rutland	26	u	em	Whole	c	4	15.4
Ryedale	30	sd	y	Whole	c	10	33.3
Salford	60	m	nw	Thirds	l	18	30.0
Sandwell	72	m	wm	Thirds	l	34	47.2
Scarborough	50	sd	y	Whole	c	13	26.0
Sedgemoor	48	sd	sw	Whole	c	17	35.4
Sefton	66	m	nw	Thirds	l	24	36.4
Selby	31	sd	y	Whole	c	7	22.6
Sevenoaks	54	sd	se	Whole	c	16	29.6
Sheffield	84	m	y	Thirds	l	28	33.3
Shepway	30	sd	se	Whole	c	10	33.3
Shropshire	74	u	wm	Whole	c	20	27.0
Slough	42	u	se	Thirds	l	14	33.3
Solihull	51	m	wm	Thirds	c	15	29.4
Somerset	55	cc	sw	Whole	c	11	20.0
South Bucks	28	sd	se	Whole	c	7	25.0
South Cambridgeshire	57	sd	ee	Thirds	c	15	26.3
South Derbyshire	36	sd	em	Whole	c	9	25.0
South Gloucestershire	70	u	sw	Whole	c	25	35.7
South Hams	31	sd	sw	Whole	c	7	22.6
South Holland	37	sd	em	Whole	c	8	21.6
South Kesteven	56	sd	em	Whole	c	22	39.3
South Lakeland	51	sd	nw	Thirds	ld	18	35.3
South Norfolk	46	sd	ee	Whole	c	9	19.6
South Northamptonshire	42	sd	em	Whole	c	17	40.5
South Oxfordshire	36	sd	se	Whole	c	12	33.3
South Ribble	50	sd	nw	Whole	noc	15	30.0
South Somerset	60	sd	sw	Whole	noc	17	28.3
South Staffordshire	49	sd	wm	Whole	c	14	28.6
South Tyneside	54	m	ne	Thirds	l	27	50.0
Southampton	48	u	se	Thirds	l	12	25.0
Southend-on-Sea	51	u	ee	Thirds	noc	14	27.5
Southwark	63	l	l	Whole	l	29	46.0
Spelthorne	39	sd	se	Whole	c	15	38.5
St. Albans	58	sd	ee	Thirds	c	19	32.8
St. Edmundsbury	45	sd	ee	Whole	c	17	37.8
St. Helens	48	m	nw	Thirds	l	17	35.4
Stafford	40	sd	wm	Whole	c	14	35.0
Staffordshire	62	cc	wm	Whole	c	17	27.4
Staffordshire Moorlands	56	sd	wm	Whole	c	21	37.5
Stevenage	39	sd	ee	Thirds	l	17	43.6
Stockport	63	m	nw	Thirds	noc	20	31.7
Stockton-on-Tees	56	u	ne	Whole	l	24	42.9
Stoke-on-Trent	44	u	wm	Whole	noc	18	40.9
Stratford-on-Avon	36	sd	wm	Whole	c	9	25.0
Stroud	51	sd	sw	Whole	noc	18	35.3
Suffolk	75	cc	ee	Whole	c	21	28.0
Suffolk Coastal	42	sd	ee	Whole	c	14	33.3
Sunderland	75	m	ne	Thirds	l	33	44.0
Surrey	81	cc	se	Whole	c	30	37.0
Surrey Heath	40	sd	se	Whole	c	11	27.5
Sutton	54	l	l	Whole	ld	20	37.0
Swale	47	sd	se	Whole	c	10	21.3
Swindon	57	u	sw	Thirds	c	20	35.1
Tameside	57	m	nw	Thirds	l	25	43.9
Tamworth	30	sd	wm	Thirds	c	5	16.7
Tandridge	42	sd	se	Thirds	c	16	38.1
Taunton Deane	56	sd	sw	Whole	c	18	32.1

Authority	Council size	Authority type	Region	Electoral cycle	Political control	No. women	% women
Teignbridge	46	sd	sw	Whole	c	14	30.4
Telford & Wrekin	54	u	wm	Whole	noc	16	29.6
Tending	60	sd	ee	Whole	noc	15	25.0
Test Valley	48	sd	se	Whole	c	13	27.1
Tewkesbury	38	sd	sw	Whole	c	12	31.6
Thanet	56	sd	se	Whole	ukip	19	33.9
Three Rivers	39	sd	ee	Thirds	noc	17	43.6
Thurrock	49	u	ee	Thirds	noc	14	28.6
Tonbridge & Malling	54	sd	se	Whole	c	16	29.6
Torbay	36	u	sw	Whole	c	11	30.6
Torridge	36	sd	sw	Whole	c	7	19.4
Tower Hamlets	45	l	l	Whole	l	13	28.9
Trafford	63	m	nw	Thirds	c	21	33.3
Tunbridge Wells	48	sd	se	Thirds	c	16	33.3
Uttlesford	39	sd	ee	Whole	c	13	33.3
Vale of White Horse	38	sd	se	Whole	c	16	42.1
Wakefield	63	m	y	Thirds	l	29	46.0
Walsall	60	m	wm	Thirds	noc	17	28.3
Waltham Forest	60	l	l	Whole	l	19	31.7
Wandsworth	60	l	l	Whole	c	26	43.3
Warrington	57	u	nw	Whole	l	24	42.1
Warwick	46	sd	wm	Whole	c	15	32.6
Warwickshire	57	cc	wm	Whole	noc	18	31.6
Watford	36	sd	ee	Thirds	ld	14	38.9
Waveney	48	sd	ee	Whole	c	17	35.4
Waverley	57	sd	se	Whole	c	15	26.3
Wealden	55	sd	se	Whole	c	18	32.7
Wellingborough	36	sd	em	Whole	c	10	27.8
Welwyn Hatfield	48	sd	ee	Thirds	c	18	37.5
West Berkshire	52	u	se	Whole	c	10	19.2
West Devon	31	sd	sw	Whole	c	8	25.8
West Dorset	42	sd	sw	Whole	c	11	26.2
West Lancashire	54	sd	nw	Thirds	l	18	33.3
West Lindsey	37	sd	em	Whole	c	11	29.7
West Oxfordshire	49	sd	se	Thirds	c	11	22.4
West Somerset	28	sd	sw	Whole	c	6	21.4
West Sussex	71	cc	se	Whole	c	20	28.2
Westminster	60	l	l	Whole	c	23	38.3
Weymouth & Portland	36	sd	sw	Thirds	noc	15	41.7
Wigan	75	m	nw	Thirds	l	22	29.3
Wiltshire	98	u	sw	Whole	c	24	24.5
Winchester	45	sd	se	Thirds	c	23	51.1
Windsor & Maidenhead	57	u	se	Whole	c	14	24.6
Wirral	66	m	nw	Thirds	l	22	33.3
Woking	30	sd	se	Thirds	c	11	36.7
Wokingham	54	u	se	Thirds	c	11	20.4
Wolverhampton	60	m	wm	Thirds	l	23	38.3
Worcester	35	sd	wm	Thirds	noc	8	22.9
Worcestershire	57	cc	wm	Whole	c	14	24.6
Worthing	37	sd	se	Thirds	c	10	27.0
Wychavon	45	sd	wm	Whole	c	13	28.9
Wycombe	60	sd	se	Whole	c	12	20.0
Wyre	50	sd	nw	Whole	c	25	50.0
Wyre Forest	33	sd	wm	Thirds	c	12	36.4
York	47	u	y	Whole	l	17	36.2
Totals	17757					5798	32.7

APPENDIX 4: Women Councillors on Welsh Local Authorities

Representation of women on Welsh local authorities as at May 2012.

Authority	All seats	Women	% Women
Blaenau Gwent	42	8	19.0
Bridgend	54	17	31.5
Caerphilly	73	21	28.8
Cardiff	75	28	37.3
Carmarthenshire	74	20	27.0
Ceredigion	42	6	14.3
Conwy	59	15	25.4
Denbighshire	47	12	25.5
Flintshire	70	19	27.1
Gwynedd	74	17	23.0
Merthyr Tydfil	33	4	12.1
Monmouthshire	44	13	29.5
Neath & Port Talbot	64	18	28.1
Newport	50	12	24.0
Pembrokeshire	60	9	15.0
Powys	73	21	28.8
Rhondda/Cynon/Taff	75	28	37.3
Swansea	72	28	38.9
Torfaen	44	12	27.3
Vale of Glamorgan	47	14	29.8
Wrexham	52	6	11.5

APPENDIX 5: Independent Councillors in Welsh Local Authorities

Independent councillors as a percentage of members of each council, and women as a percentage of Independent councillors.

Authority	All seats	All Independent	Independent % council	Women Independents	% women Independents
Blaenau Gwent	42	8	19.0	0	0.0
Bridgend	54	11	20.4	6	54.5
Caerphilly	73	3	4.1	2	66.7
Cardiff	75	4	5.3	3	75.0
Carmarthenshire	74	23	31.1	6	26.1
Ceredigion	42	15	35.7	1	6.7
Conwy	59	19	32.2	4	21.1
Denbighshire	47	12	25.5	2	16.7
Flintshire	70	23	32.9	7	30.4
Gwynedd	74	30	40.5	7	23.3
Merthyr Tydfil	33	9	27.3	1	11.1
Monmouthshire	44	10	22.7	3	30.0
Neath & Port Talbot	64	3	4.7	1	33.3
Newport	50	2	4.0	0	0.0
Pembrokeshire	60	44	73.3	6	13.6
Powys	73	48	65.8	13	27.1
Rhondda/Cynon/Taff	75	4	5.3	0	0.0
Swansea	72	7	9.7	3	42.9
Torfaen	44	6	13.6	1	16.7
Vale of Glamorgan	47	7	14.9	0	0.0
Wrexham	52	19	36.5	2	10.5

APPENDIX 6: EXPERIENCE OF COUNCILLORS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY

The text of the online survey conducted by the LGiU for this report is below. This survey was conducted online through Survey Monkey, and shared via email with all councillors in England and Wales.

'The LGiU is working on a cross-party Commission to explore the representation of women as councillors in local government. As part of this research, we are keen to find out more about both men and women's experiences of engaging with local political parties, running to be a councillor and of acting in elected office.'

We value your experience of working in local government and would be very grateful if you could take the time to respond to this survey, which should take about fifteen minutes to complete. All responses will be confidential and will be used to inform the recommendations of the report.

This survey is designed to help us to understand the experiences that different types of people have of being a councillor, from their initial involvement with their local party, to their selection and election, through to whether they have been able to progress as they would have liked, for example into Cabinet positions.

About you

1. Which tier of local government do you represent? Please tick all that apply.

- District Council
- County Council
- Unitary Authority
- London Borough Council
- Metropolitan District Council
- Other (Please specify)

2. Which political party do you currently represent?

- Conservative
- Labour
- Liberal Democrats
- UKIP
- SNP
- Plaid Cymru
- Green
- Independent
- A resident's group
- Other (Please specify)

3. How long have you been a councillor (in your current time in office)?

- Less than one year
- One to five years
- Five to ten years
- Ten to fifteen years
- Fifteen to twenty years
- More than twenty years

4. Do you hold, or have you held, any of the

following roles in your local authority? Please tick all that apply (Matrix of 'Now' and 'In the past but not now')

- Leader
- Executive Mayor
- Deputy Leader
- Cabinet member or executive member
- Member of Shadow Cabinet
- Opposition or Party Group leader
- Committee Chair
- Member of Scrutiny, Planning, or other Committee
- Ceremonial Mayor
- Party group leader
- Member of a local partnership group or board, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Enterprise Partnership, or Community Safety Board
- Other (please specify)

5. What is your employment status outside of your role as a councillor?

- Working part-time in paid employment
- Working full-time in paid employment
- Self-employed
- Not in paid employment, and looking for paid work
- Not in paid employment, and not looking for paid work
- Full or part-time student
- Working on a voluntary basis for a charity or other organisation
- Retired

6. Are you a member of a trades union?

- No
- Yes, Unite
- Yes, UNISON
- Yes, GMB
- Yes, RCN
- Yes, USDAW
- Yes, PCS
- Yes, Other (please describe)

7. Which gender do you identify as?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify) _____
- Prefer not to say

8. What is your age?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older
- Prefer not to say

Your local party

Firstly, we'd like you to think about your experience of engaging with your political party's local group.

9. To what degree, if any, have you experienced any of the following barriers to engaging with your local party?

(Often, sometimes, never)

- Difficulty balancing party engagement with childcare commitments
- Difficulty balancing party engagement with other caring commitments
- Difficulty balancing party engagement with work commitments
- Meetings are held too far away
- I don't have enough free time because of other commitments
- My local party asks for too much time on campaign work
- Assumptions about what I can do or am interested in as a result of my gender
- Sexist comments
- Sexual harassment
- Hostility from other people within my party

- Pressure from my family or community not to be involved
- Other (please specify)
- I have not experienced any of these barriers to engaging with my local party

Becoming a councillor

We'd like you to think about your experience of the process of standing for selection and then election as a local councillor.

10. Why did you choose to become a councillor?

Please tick all that apply.

- To contribute to my local area
- To address a specific issue
- Because I was asked to stand
- As a pathway to national politics
- Because I was inspired by someone
- To improve the gender balance on my local council
- Other (please describe)

11. Prior to your election, had you ever held a position of responsibility within your community and politics more generally?

Please tick all that apply.

- Trade union/professional representative
- School governor
- Magistrate
- MP/MEP
- Parish councillor
- Community organisation, religious institution, or charity
- No
- Other (Please specify) [Insert]

12. To what degree, if any, have you experienced any of the following barriers to standing for selection as a councillor within your party?

(Often, sometimes, never)

- Lack of access to informal networks within the party
- Lack of transparency of process
- Lack of support from my party
- Pressure from family or community not to stand
- Other (please specify)
- I have not experienced any of these barriers to being selected as a councillor

13. To what degree, if any, have you experienced any of the following barriers to standing for election as a councillor?

- Commitment of time required for campaigning
- Distance to travel
- Fear of violence during campaign work
- Harassment or abuse from the electorate
- Sexist comments from the electorate
- Lack of support from my party
- Other (please specify)
- I have not experienced any of these barriers to being elected as a councillor

14. In your view, what would make it easier for women to become councillors? Please tick all that apply.

- Women's networks
- Mentoring
- More flexibility in the timing of meetings
- Provision of childcare
- Better use of technology, for example remote voting or Skype meetings
- Seats or places on shortlists which are reserved for women only
- Caps on spending in election campaigns
- Other (please state)
- [Free text comments box]

15. Do you intend to stand again?

- Yes
- No

Being a councillor

We would like you to think about your experiences in your role as a councillor, both in the council chamber and in your work in the community.

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about the local authority that you represent (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- The council takes due consideration of the impact its decisions have on women in the local area

17. To what degree, if any, have you experienced any of the following barriers to fulfilling your role as a councillor?

(Often, sometimes, never)

- Difficulty balancing the role with childcare
- Difficulty balancing the role with other caring commitments
- Difficulty balancing the role with work commitments
- Meetings are held too far away
- Councillor allowances are not sufficient for the work I do
- Lack of maternity or paternity provisions or support
- Pressure from family or community
- Difficulty accessing informal networks within the council
- Public harassment on social media
- Lack of confidence in making my voice heard
- Feeling like my contributions are ignored or not valued
- A lack of training or support in my role
- Sexist comments from other councillors
- Sexual harassment from other councillors
- Assumptions about what I can do or am interested in as a result of my gender
- Other (please specify)
- I have not experienced any of these barriers in my role as a councillor.

18. Which statement best describes your view of your influence as a councillor? Please choose one.

- I feel that I have more influence to change things in my area than I expected before I was elected
- I feel that I have less influence to change things in my area than I expected before I was elected
- I feel that I have about as much influence to change things in my area as I expected before I was elected

Progressing in office

Now we would like you to think about your progression as a councillor, and the different roles that councillors might hold within their organisation.

19. Would you like to progress to a more senior position in the council (such as leader, executive mayor, cabinet member, committee chair).

- Yes
- No, I am happy with my current position
- No, I have already progressed to the top of the council.

20. Do you feel you have been able to progress as you hoped when you entered local government?

- Yes
- No

21. In your opinion, what are the top three reasons for there being fewer female Leaders than male Leaders of councils? Please select in order of importance.

- Female councillors are not supported enough in their roles
- The way the council works makes it hard for women to show their talents
- Women not putting themselves forward for senior roles like cabinet posts or committee chairs
- Women being pigeonholed into particular types of senior role
- Sexism on the part of other councillors
- Not enough female councillors to select from
- Other (please explain)

22. In your view, what would make it easier for women to progress to leadership roles as councillors? Please tick all that apply and identify the one which you feel is most important.

- Women's networks
- Mentoring
- More flexibility in the timing of meetings
- Provision of childcare
- Better use of technology, for example remote voting or Skype meetings
- A requirement for a gender-balanced Cabinet
- Better pay and terms and conditions, such as pensions or maternity leave, in Cabinet roles
- Term limits for councillors, so that councillors have to step down after (for example) three terms
- Other (please state)

Free text comments box

Your thoughts

23. Do you have any comments or examples of good practice in engaging women in relation to the areas covered in this survey. Just to remind you, those areas are:

- Your local party;
- Becoming a councillor;
- Being a councillor;
- Progressing in office?

Free text response box

24. Have you experienced any barriers over the course of your experience as a councillor due to discrimination based on your disability, ethnicity, sexuality, age, gender reassignment, or religion/beliefs? (no/yes/which of the above)

- In my local party
- In becoming a councillor
- Whilst being a councillor
- In terms of progression in office
- (If yes to any, free text box to give more comments)

25. We will be developing examples of best practice and case studies as part of this research. Would you be willing to be contacted by us in order to obtain further information on any of the examples of best practice that you have described?

- Yes
- No
- Email address

26. Please use this space to outline any further comments that you would like to make on the issues raised in this survey.

Free text box

Monitoring questions

We would be very grateful if you could also complete the following monitoring questions. We know it's a pain, but it will help us hugely when we come to analyse your responses!

27. Choose one or more that best describes your ethnic background:

- A) White
 - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
 - Irish
 - Gypsy/Irish Traveller
 - Any other white background [Insert]
- B) Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
 - White and black Caribbean
 - White and black African
 - White and Asian
 - Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background [Insert]
- C) Asian/Asian British
 - Indian
 - Pakistani
 - Bangladeshi
 - Chinese
 - Any other Asian background [Insert]
- D) Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
 - Black African
 - Black Caribbean
 - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background [Insert]
- E) Other ethnic group
 - Arab
 - Any other ethnic group [Insert]
 - Prefer not to say

28. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health condition? This may include issues relating to age.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

29. Do you have caring responsibilities?

- Yes (for a child)
- Yes (for an adult)
- No
- Prefer not to say

30. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual/straight
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Other
- Prefer not to say

31. Do you identify as trans?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

The Fawcett Society is the UK's leading campaign for equality between women and men. We trace our roots back to 1866, when Millicent Fawcett began her lifetime's work leading the peaceful campaign for women's votes. Today we remain the most authoritative, independent advocate for women's rights in the UK.

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