



Women in Parliament and Government

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This note shows how the number of women in Parliament has changed since 1918, when women first became eligible to be elected as MPs. It presents comparative data for women in Parliament and other elected bodies in the UK and internationally. It also looks at some milestones over the last 100 years for women in Parliament and Government in the UK.

Currently just over one in five Members of Parliament are women, compared with just over one half of the adult population. The 2010 General Election returned a higher number and proportion of female MPs than any previous general election. Prior to 1987 women had never made up more than 5% of MPs.

As of the July 2014 Cabinet reshuffle, 25 per cent of serving ministers are women. Five women currently hold Cabinet positions. The highest number of female ministers to have ever held Cabinet positions concurrently is eight, in 2007.

Historically, women found it difficult to be adopted as candidates by the main UK political parties and when they did find a seat, it was likely to be less winnable than those for which men were selected. In the 2005 and 2010 general elections, the all-women short-list policy appears to have helped change this for Labour and to have broken down the association of candidates' gender and seat marginality.

The UK has the fifteenth highest proportion of women MPs out of the 28 EU Member States. 41% of UK MEPs elected in 2014 are women, compared to 37% of MEPs across all 28 EU Member States that took part. Internationally, the UK Parliament ranks 74th out of the 190 countries included in the Inter Parliamentary Union's 1 February 2014 monitoring report.

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Recent Updates:

April 2014: corrected errors in international parliaments ranking table.

July 2014: section 1 updated to include 2014 election results to the European Parliament.

July 2014: section 4 on women ministers updated to take in to account the July 2014 reshuffle.

1 Women and men in Parliament and elected bodies

1.1 Parliaments and devolved legislatures

143 women MPs were elected at the 2010 General Election, more than at any previous election. Currently there are 147 women in the House of Commons, just over one-fifth of all MPs (23%). A similar proportion of Members of the House of Lords are women.

Just over one-third (35%) of members in the Scottish Parliament are women, compared to two-fifths of members of National Assembly for Wales. Following the 2014 European Parliament elections, women comprised two-fifths of UK MEPs.

Table 1 shows the gender breakdown by party in the House of Commons and other elected bodies in the UK. For the House of Commons, MPs have been assigned to parties for which they contested the 2010 election or a subsequent by-election.

Table 1 Men and women in the UK Parliament and devolved legislatures

	Con	Lab	LD	Other	Total
Male					
House of Commons	256	171	48	28	503
House of Lords	178	153	67	195	593
National Assembly for Wales	10	15	4	7	36
Scottish Parliament	9	20	4	51	84
Northern Ireland Assembly				88	88
London Assembly	8	7	1	1	17
European Parliament (UK Members)	13	9	0	21	43
Female					
House of Commons	48	86	7	6	147
House of Lords	41	65	33	43	182
National Assembly for Wales	4	15	1	4	24
Scottish Parliament	6	17	1	21	45
Northern Ireland Assembly				20	20
London Assembly	1	5	1	1	8
European Parliament (UK Members)	6	11	1	12	30
% female					
House of Commons	16%	33%	13%	18%	23%
House of Lords	19%	30%	33%	18%	23%
National Assembly for Wales	29%	50%	20%	36%	40%
Scottish Parliament	40%	46%	20%	29%	35%
Northern Ireland Assembly				19%	19%
London Assembly	11%	42%	50%	50%	32%
European Parliament (UK Members)	32%	55%	100%	36%	41%

Notes:

1. Membership of the House of Commons in November 2013. Includes MPs without party whip under 'Other'.

2. House of Lords membership as of 18th July 2014.

3. Membership of devolved assemblies following May 2011 elections.

4. Membership of the European Parliament following the May 2014 elections.

Sources:

Houses of Parliament 'Members Names' database

House of Commons Library Research Papers RP11/41 Scottish Parliament Elections: 2011; RP11/42 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections: 2011; RP11/43 National Assembly for Wales Elections: 2011; RP14/32 European Parliament Elections 2014

1.2 Local Government

a. Current position

Women's representation in local government in England is higher than in Parliament. In 2010, 31% of local authority councillors in England were women. The proportion of female councillors was greatest in London boroughs (36%) and metropolitan districts (33%) and lowest in shire counties (25%).¹ In Scotland, 24% of councillors elected at the 2012 local government elections were women.² Women held 26% of council seats in Wales following the 2012 local elections.³ In Northern Ireland in 2011, 23% of councillors in local government districts were women.⁴

b. Historical background

Between 1869 and 1907 legislation was passed which extended the range of authorities to which women were eligible to stand for election. The *Municipal Franchise Act* of 1869 extended the vote to women ratepayers in local elections and also enabled women to serve as Poor Law Guardians. The 1870 *Education Act* allowed for married women ratepayers to stand as candidates to local school boards, the first contested election of which took place in Manchester on 1 December 1870.⁵ The *Local Government Act 1894* allowed women to serve on parish and district councils, but it was not until the *Qualification of Women Act* was passed in 1907 that women (ratepayers) were permitted to be members of County and Borough Councils.⁶ Three months after this Act was passed five women were elected to these bodies in England (Aldeburgh, Reading, Bewdley, Oxford and Oldham).⁷ One of the successful women was Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in Aldeburgh where she went on to be the first female elected mayor in 1908.

In Scotland the *Qualification of Women (County and Town Councils) (Scotland) Act* was passed in August 1907. This allowed women to be elected as town and county councillors. Lavinia Malcolm was elected unopposed to the town and parish councils of Dollar (Clackmannanshire), the only woman in Scotland to be elected at that time.⁸

¹ LGA, *National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010*
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=15003600>

² Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), *Local Government Elections 2012*
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB12-38.pdf>

³ Electoral Reform Society, *Spotlight on Wales: Women and local government* <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/images/dynamicimages/file/Wales/Women%20and%20local%20government%20in%20Wales.pdf>

⁴ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister/NISRA, *Gender Equality Strategy Statistics: 2011 Update*
http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/gender_equality_strategy_statistics_2011_update.pdf#page=124

⁵ *Votes for Women* Virago Book of Suffragettes, ed Joyce Marlow p19

⁶ The 1907 Act followed years of uncertainty and confusion, which included challenges in the courts when women first tried to stand for the LCC, women losing their influence on education matters when free-standing boards were absorbed into councils, and losing their places on Urban District Councils when towns grew and sought borough status.

⁷ *Ladies Elect: women in English local government 1865 to 1914*, Patricia Hollis

⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, OUP, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55608>, accessed 5 Feb 2008

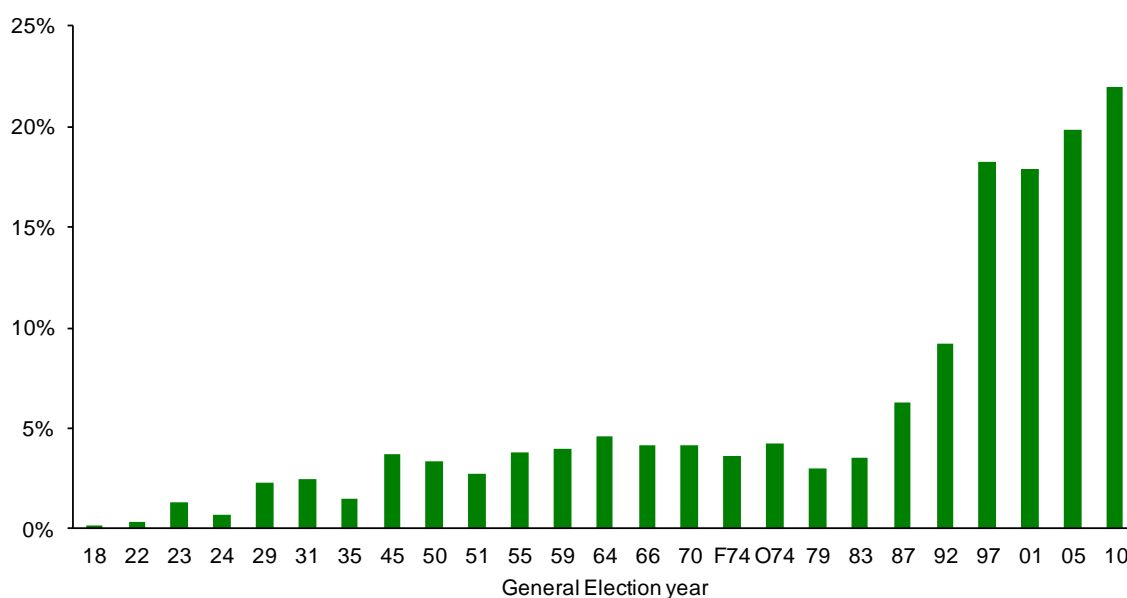
2 Women MPs since 1918

Since 1918, 369 women have been elected as Members in the House of Commons.⁹ This is around 8% of all MPs over the period. 224 women (61%) have been Labour MPs, defined as the party of first election.

Until 1997 women had never comprised more than 10% of all MPs, and until the 1980s the proportion had always been below 5%. The proportion rose to 18% following the 1997 General Election when 120 women were elected.

143 women were elected in the 2010 General Election, 22.0% of all MPs. Following by-elections 147 seats are held by women (23%), the highest ever proportion.

Figure 1: Women MPs as a percentage of total 1918-2010



⁹ Two of these (Countess Constance Markievicz in 1918 and Michelle Gildernew in 2001) were elected as Sinn Féin MPs but did not take their seats.

Table 2 Women MPs elected at General Elections by party 1918 to 2010

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

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

3 Women General Election candidates

In the 2010 General Election 874 women candidates stood across all parties; 21% of all (4,150) candidates. The number and proportion of women candidates was higher than at any earlier General Election. The previous record was in 2005, when 720 women stood for election.

Table 3 Women candidates by party 1918 to 2010

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal Democrat		SNP		PC		Other		All	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1918	1	0%	4	1%	4	1%	-	-	-	-	8	2%	17	1%
1922	5	1%	10	2%	16	3%	-	-	-	-	2	3%	33	2%
1923	7	1%	14	3%	12	3%	-	-	-	-	1	4%	34	2%
1924	12	2%	22	4%	6	2%	-	-	-	-	1	2%	41	3%
1929	10	2%	30	5%	25	5%	-	0%	-	0%	4	7%	69	4%
1931	16	3%	36	7%	5	4%	1	20%	-	0%	4	6%	62	5%
1935	19	3%	33	6%	11	7%	-	0%	-	0%	4	9%	67	5%
1945	14	2%	41	7%	20	7%	-	0%	1	14%	11	8%	87	5%
1950	29	5%	42	7%	45	9%	-	0%	-	0%	11	7%	127	7%
1951	25	4%	41	7%	11	10%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	77	6%
1955	33	5%	43	7%	14	13%	-	0%	1	9%	1	2%	92	7%
1959	28	4%	36	6%	16	7%	-	0%	-	0%	1	2%	81	5%
1964	24	4%	33	5%	24	7%	-	0%	1	4%	8	8%	90	5%
1966	21	3%	30	5%	20	6%	-	0%	-	0%	10	10%	81	5%
1970	26	4%	29	5%	23	7%	10	15%	-	0%	11	7%	99	5%
1974(F)	33	5%	40	6%	40	8%	8	11%	2	6%	14	5%	137	6%
1974(O)	30	5%	50	8%	49	8%	8	11%	1	3%	23	8%	161	7%
1979	31	5%	52	8%	52	9%	6	8%	1	3%	74	11%	216	8%
1983	40	6%	78	12%	75	12%	9	13%	6	16%	72	13%	280	11%
1987	46	7%	92	15%	106	17%	6	8%	9	24%	70	22%	329	14%
1992	63	10%	138	22%	143	23%	15	21%	7	20%	205	22%	571	19%
1997	69	11%	157	25%	140	22%	15	21%	7	18%	284	17%	672	18%
2001	92	14%	149	23%	139	22%	16	22%	7	18%	233	18%	636	19%
2005	122	19%	166	26%	144	23%	13	22%	4	10%	271	17%	720	20%
2010	153	24%	191	30%	134	21%	17	29%	7	18%	372	17%	874	21%

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

At the 2010 General Election the number of female MPs increased to 143, which was the highest number and proportion ever. The Conservative and Labour Parties each had more women candidates than at previous elections, and the percentage of female MPs in each party increased. This was due in part to the Labour Party's continuation of all-women shortlists to replace retiring male MPs in regions of England and Wales with less than 25% female Labour MPs, as well as the Conservative Party's promotion of women candidates included in a candidate 'A-list'.

Women comprised 30% of Labour candidates and 31% of Labour MPs in 2010, but for the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, women were under represented among MPs relative to candidates. 24% of Conservative candidates were women compared to 16% of those elected as Conservative MPs. 22% of Liberal Democrat candidates were women compared to 12% of their MPs.

Table 4 Women candidates and MPs by party, 2010 General Election




	% women	
	Candidates	MPs
 Conservatives	24	16
 Labour	30	31
 Liberal Democrats	22	12

Table 5 shows the balance of men and women candidates for each of the seats in England, Scotland and Wales in 2010 by marginality to their party at the previous general election. Marginality is measured as the difference in percentage vote share¹⁰ of the party's candidate from the winning candidate or, in seats won by the party, from the candidate in second place at the 2005 election. A positive marginality means the party won the seat in 2005. Seats with a negative marginality are those that party did not win in 2005 – a seat with marginality between -0% to -10% should be easier for that party to win than one where the marginality is between -20% to -30%.

¹⁰ A notional 2005 vote share is used for constituencies in England and Wales, as the 2005 and 2010 General Elections were contested on different constituency boundaries.

Table 5 Candidates by gender and party – Great Britain, 2010 General Election

Marginality	Conservative		Labour		Liberal Democrat	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Number of candidates						
<-40%	46	30	14	2	54	16
-40 to -30%	52	20	56	20	148	32
-30 to -20%	58	19	72	9	161	46
-20 to -10%	71	29	49	15	60	20
-10 to -0%	73	23	19	26	21	10
0 to 10%	40	10	53	35	20	8
10 to 20%	65	11	65	25	20	4
20 to 30%	64	6	47	33	6	0
>30%	12	1	66	24	4	0
All	481	150	442	189	494	137
%men and women						
<-40%	61%	39%	88%	13%	77%	23%
-40 to -30%	72%	28%	74%	26%	82%	18%
-30 to -20%	75%	25%	89%	11%	78%	22%
-20 to -10%	71%	29%	77%	23%	75%	25%
-10 to -0%	76%	24%	42%	58%	68%	32%
0 to 10%	80%	20%	60%	40%	71%	29%
10 to 20%	86%	14%	72%	28%	83%	17%
20 to 30%	91%	9%	59%	41%	100%	0%
>30%	92%	8%	73%	27%	100%	0%
All	76%	24%	70%	30%	78%	22%

For Labour, the proportion of women candidates was lower in less winnable seats. In the most winnable seats not currently held by the party (of marginality between -10% and 0%) the proportion of women candidates rose to 58%, very much above the party's average of 30%.

For the Conservatives, the proportion of women candidates tended to be higher in less winnable seats, so that their safest seats were less likely to have women standing as candidates.

The safest Liberal Democrat seats were also less likely to have women standing as candidates. However the proportion of women candidates rose to 32% in the most winnable seats not currently held by the party (of marginality between -10% and 0%) compared to the party's average of 22% women candidates.

4 Women ministers

Currently, five out of 22 Cabinet posts¹¹ (23 per cent) are held by women (in addition there are 11 ministers who attend Cabinet, 3 of whom are women: Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE, Baroness Stowell of Beeston and Esther McVey MP).

In 2010, David Cameron's first Cabinet included four women. This total rose to five female ministers in October 2011 before falling back, in September 2012, to four. In April 2014 the total then fell again, to three.

Immediately prior to the 2010 General Election there were four women in Gordon Brown's Cabinet; Tony Blair's final Cabinet, in comparison, included eight women.

Of 122 Government ministers, including the Cabinet, whips, Lords in waiting and unpaid positions, 30 (or 25 per cent) are women.¹² This figure is up by three percentage points on the percentage of female ministers in office before the July 2014 reshuffle; however, it remains below the total of 30 per cent immediately prior to the 2010 General Election.

Table 6 shows all women ministers who have been appointed to Cabinet posts. Margaret Bondfield was the first ever woman appointed to the Cabinet in 1929, having been previously the first woman non-Cabinet minister in 1924.

Table 6 Women Cabinet Ministers, 1929 to 2014

1929-31	Margaret Bondfield	2001-07	Hilary Armstrong
1945-47	Ellen Wilkinson	2001-07 & 2009-10	Tessa Jowell
1953-54	Florence Horsbrugh	2003-07	Baroness Amos
1964-70 & 1974-76	Barbara Castle	2004-08	Ruth Kelly
1968-69	Judith Hart	2006-09	Hazel Blears
1970-74 & 1979-90	Margaret Thatcher	2006-09	Jacqui Smith
1974-79	Shirley Williams	2007-08	Baroness Ashton
1982-83	Baroness Young	2008-10	Yvette Cooper
1992-97	Virginia Bottomley	2008-10	Baroness Royal
1992-97	Gillian Shephard	2010-12	Caroline Spelman
1997-98	Ann Taylor	2010-12	Cheryl Gillan
1997-98 & 2007-10	Harriet Harman	2010-12	Baroness Warsi
1997-2001	Mo Mowlam	2010-	Theresa May
1997-2003	Clare Short	2011-	Justine Greening
1997-2007	Margaret Beckett	2012-14	Maria Miller
1998-2001	Baroness Jay	2012-	Theresa Villiers
2001-03	Helen Liddell	2014-	Nicky Morgan
2001-02	Estelle Morris	2014-	Elizabeth Truss
2001-07	Patricia Hewitt		

Source: David Butler and Gareth Butler, *British Political Facts*;
www.gov.uk/government/ministers, accessed 14:00 on 16/07/2014

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first woman Prime Minister. At the same time the 1979 election returned the lowest number of women MPs for nearly thirty years. One other woman held Cabinet office during the time that Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister.

¹¹ Including Prime Minister; <https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers>, accessed 17th July 2014

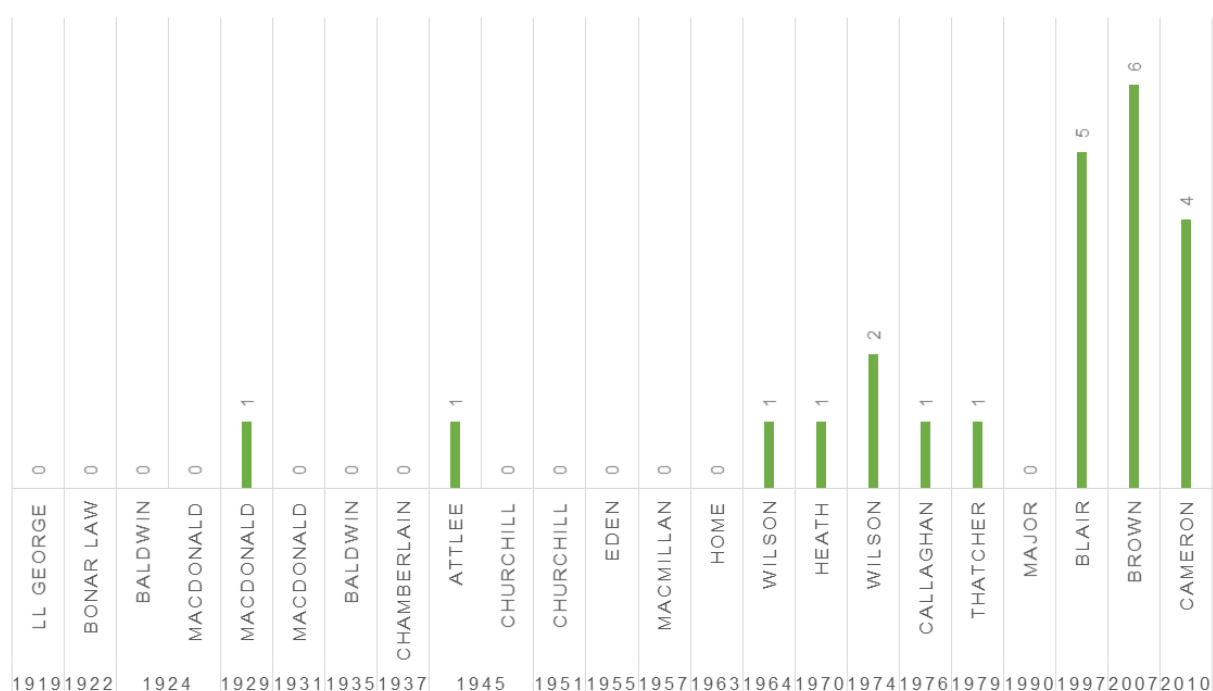
¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers>, accessed at 17/07/2014

This was Baroness Young, who was Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords in 1982-83.¹³

Figure 2 shows the number of female cabinet ministers serving at the time of a prime minister first taking office in a new government. Tony Blair's 1997 Cabinet was the first to include more than two female ministers at time of initial appointment; this was, at the time, also the highest number of female cabinet ministers to have ever served concurrently.

This chart does not, however, reflect the total number of female cabinet ministers to have served under each of the listed prime ministers. Many Prime Ministers have appointed more women during their time in office. Harold Wilson, Margaret Thatcher and John Major all included two female ministers within their Cabinets concurrently during their administrations. The highest number of women to have ever held Cabinet positions concurrently is eight (36 per cent), in 2007 under Tony Blair.

Figure 2: Number of female cabinet ministers at the time of a prime minister taking office



Source: Butler & Butler British Political Facts, p.79

¹³ House of Commons Factsheet M4, *Women in the House of Commons*

Parliamentary and Political Firsts for women

Table 8 sets out a number of “firsts” and significant events over the last century for women in Parliament and political life.^{14,15}

Table 8 Timeline of significant events since 1907

- 1907 *Qualification of Women Act* allowing women to be County and Borough councillors – many stood in 1 Nov elections
- 1908 Elected Mayor in England (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson)
- 1918 Women able to stand for Parliament and those over 30 given the right to vote
- 1918 Member of Parliament elected (Countess Constance de Markievicz)¹⁶
- 1919 Member of Parliament to take seat (Nancy Astor)
- 1924 Minister (Margaret Bondfield)
- 1928 Vote given to women on same terms as men
- 1929 Cabinet minister, and privy counsellor (Margaret Bondfield)
- 1948 Chair of Committee of Whole House (Florence Paton)
- 1958 Life Peerages Act; first women life peers to take seats (Lady Reading and Baroness Wooton)
- 1964 Parliamentary Whip (Commons) (Harriet Slater)
- 1965 Parliamentary Whip (Lords) (Baroness Phillips)
- 1970 Deputy Speaker (Betty Harvie Anderson)
- 1975 Leader of the Opposition (Margaret Thatcher)
- 1979 Prime Minister (Margaret Thatcher)
- 1981 Leader of the House of Lords (Baroness Young)
- 1992 Speaker of the House of Commons (Betty Boothroyd)
- 1997 Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Margaret Beckett)
- 1997 Secretary of State for Social Security (Harriet Harman)
- 1997 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mo Mowlam)
- 1997 Full-time Minister for Women (Joan Ruddock)
- 1998 Chief Whip (Ann Taylor)
- 2001 Secretary of State for Scotland (Helen Liddell)
- 2006 Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Margaret Beckett)
- 2006 First House of Lords Lord Speaker (Baroness Hayman)
- 2007 Secretary of State for Home Affairs (Jacqui Smith)
- 2007 Attorney-General (Baroness Scotland)
- 2009 EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy (Baroness Ashton)
- 2010 Secretary of State for Wales (Cheryl Gillan)

A list of women holding various posts in parliament, politics and public life is available from the [Centre for the Advancement of Women in Politics](http://www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/index.html).¹⁷ BBC Woman's hour [Women's history timeline](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/timeline/timeline.shtml) provides a list of key events by decade since 1900.¹⁸

¹⁴ COI, *Women in Britain*, 2nd edition, 1996

¹⁵ Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/index.html>

¹⁶ Elected in the General Election but along with 72 other Sinn Féin MPs she did not take her seat.

¹⁷ <http://www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/observatory.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/timeline/timeline.shtml>

5 International context

5.1 National Parliaments

Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows the proportion of women in the lower (or single) House of different countries' legislatures following the most recent elections. The UK is ranked 74th. Rwanda is ranked first, followed by Andorra, Cuba and Sweden. Four countries in the ranking have no women in their lower or single house, while 39 have fewer than 10% women. – including two European countries (Hungary and Ukraine).

Table 9 Women in National Parliaments, as of 1 February 2014

World Classification

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	9 2013	80	51	63.8%	9 2011	26	10	38.5%
2	Andorra	4 2011	28	14	50.0%	---	---	---	---
3	Cuba	2 2013	612	299	48.9%	---	---	---	---
4	Sweden	9 2010	349	157	45.0%	---	---	---	---
5	South Africa*	4 2009	400	179	44.8%	4 2009	53	18	34.0%
6	Seychelles	9 2011	32	14	43.8%	---	---	---	---
7	Senegal	7 2012	150	65	43.3%	---	---	---	---
8	Finland	4 2011	200	85	42.5%	---	---	---	---
9	Ecuador	2 2013	137	57	41.6%	---	---	---	---
10	Belgium	6 2010	150	62	41.3%	6 2010	71	28	39.4%
11	Nicaragua	11 2011	92	37	40.2%	---	---	---	---
12	Spain	11 2011	350	139	39.7%	11 2011	266	89	33.5%
13	Iceland	4 2013	63	25	39.7%	---	---	---	---
14	Norway	9 2013	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	---
15	Mozambique	10 2009	250	98	39.2%	---	---	---	---
16	Denmark	9 2011	179	70	39.1%	---	---	---	---
17	Netherlands	9 2012	150	58	38.7%	5 2011	75	27	36.0%
18	Costa Rica	2 2010	57	22	38.6%	---	---	---	---
19	Timor-Leste	7 2012	65	25	38.5%	---	---	---	---
20	Mexico	7 2012	500	187	37.4%	7 2012	128	44	34.4%
21	Angola	8 2012	220	81	36.8%	---	---	---	---
22	Argentina	10 2013	257	94	36.6%	10 2013	72	28	38.9%
23	Germany	9 2013	631	230	36.5%	N.A.	69	19	27.5%
24	Tanzania	10 2010	350	126	36.0%	---	---	---	---
25	Uganda	2 2011	386	135	35.0%	---	---	---	---
26	Macedonia	6 2011	123	42	34.1%	---	---	---	---
27	New Zealand	11 2011	121	41	33.9%	---	---	---	---
28	Serbia	5 2012	250	84	33.6%	---	---	---	---
29	Grenada	2 2013	15	5	33.3%	3 2013	13	2	15.4%
=	Slovenia	12 2011	90	30	33.3%	11 2012	40	3	7.5%
31	Austria	9 2013	183	59	32.2%	N.A.	62	18	29.0%
32	Algeria	5 2012	462	146	31.6%	12 2012	144	10	6.9%
33	Zimbabwe	7 2013	270	85	31.5%	7 2013	80	38	47.5%
34	Italy	2 2013	630	198	31.4%	2 2013	317	92	29.0%
35	Guyana	11 2011	67	21	31.3%	---	---	---	---
36	Portugal	6 2011	230	72	31.3%	---	---	---	---
37	Cameroon	9 2013	180	56	31.1%	4 2013	100	20	20.0%
38	Switzerland	10 2011	200	62	31.0%	10 2011	46	9	19.6%
39	Burundi	7 2010	105	32	30.5%	7 2010	41	19	46.3%
40	Nepal	11 2013	575	172	29.9%	---	---	---	---

41	Trinidad and Tobago	5 2010	42	12	28.6%	6 2010	31	6	19.4%
42	Luxembourg	10 2013	60	17	28.3%	---	---	---	---
43	Tunisia	10 2011	217	61	28.1%	---	---	---	---
44	Ethiopia	5 2010	547	152	27.8%	5 2010	135	22	16.3%
45	Afghanistan	9 2010	249	69	27.7%	1 2011	102	28	27.5%
46	Philippines	5 2013	289	79	27.3%	5 2013	24	6	25.0%
47	Lesotho	5 2012	120	32	26.7%	6 2012	33	9	27.3%
48	Belarus	9 2012	109	29	26.6%	8 2012	57	20	35.1%
49	South Sudan	8 2011	332	88	26.5%	8 2011	50	5	10.0%
50	Turkmenistan	12 2013	125	33	26.4%	---	---	---	---
51	El Salvador	3 2012	84	22	26.2%	---	---	---	---
52	France	6 2012	577	151	26.2%	9 2011	347	78	22.5%
53	Australia	9 2013	150	39	26.0%	9 2013	75	31	41.3%
54	Honduras	11 2013	128	33	25.8%	---	---	---	---
55	Namibia	11 2009	78	20	25.6%	11 2010	26	7	26.9%
56	Bolivia	12 2009	130	33	25.4%	12 2009	36	17	47.2%
57	Singapore	5 2011	99	25	25.3%	---	---	---	---
58	Iraq	3 2010	325	82	25.2%	---	---	---	---
59	Kazakhstan	1 2012	115	29	25.2%	8 2011	47	3	6.4%
60	Mauritania	11 2013	147	37	25.2%	11 2009	56	8	14.3%
61	Canada	5 2011	307	77	25.1%	N.A.	96	38	39.6%
62	Laos	4 2011	132	33	25.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Latvia	9 2011	100	25	25.0%	---	---	---	---
64	Bulgaria	5 2013	240	59	24.6%	---	---	---	---
65	Poland	10 2011	460	112	24.3%	10 2011	100	13	13.0%
66	Vietnam	5 2011	498	121	24.3%	---	---	---	---
67	Sudan	4 2010	354	86	24.3%	5 2010	29	5	17.2%
68	Lithuania	10 2012	141	34	24.1%	---	---	---	---
69	Equatorial Guinea	5 2013	100	24	24.0%	5 2013	75	8	10.7%
70	Croatia	12 2011	151	36	23.8%	---	---	---	---
71	China	3 2013	2987	699	23.4%	---	---	---	---
72	Kyrgyzstan	10 2010	120	28	23.3%	---	---	---	---
73	Madagascar	12 2013	147	34	23.1%	---	---	---	---
74	United Kingdom	5 2010	650	147	22.6%	N.A.	779	182	23.4%
75	Israel	1 2013	120	27	22.5%	---	---	---	---
76	Peru	4 2011	130	29	22.3%	---	---	---	---
77	Malawi	5 2009	193	43	22.3%	---	---	---	---
78	Eritrea	2 1994	150	33	22.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Uzbekistan	12 2009	150	33	22.0%	1 2010	100	15	15.0%
80	Guinea	9 2013	114	25	21.9%	---	---	---	---
81	Bosnia & Herzegovina	10 2010	42	9	21.4%	6 2011	15	2	13.3%
82	Greece	6 2012	300	63	21.0%	---	---	---	---
83	Cabo Verde	2 2011	72	15	20.8%	---	---	---	---
=	Monaco	2 2013	24	5	20.8%	---	---	---	---
85	Dominican Republic	5 2010	183	38	20.8%	5 2010	32	3	9.4%
86	Pakistan	5 2013	323	67	20.7%	3 2012	104	17	16.3%
87	Cambodia	7 2013	123	25	20.3%	1 2012	61	9	14.8%
88	Albania	6 2013	140	28	20.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Liechtenstein	2 2013	25	5	20.0%	---	---	---	---
90	Saudi Arabia	1 2013	151	30	19.9%	---	---	---	---
91	Czech Republic	10 2013	200	39	19.5%	10 2012	81	14	17.3%
92	Kenya	3 2013	350	67	19.1%	3 2013	68	18	26.5%
93	Estonia	3 2011	100	19	19.0%	---	---	---	---
94	Burkina Faso	12 2012	127	24	18.9%	---	---	---	---
95	Mauritius	5 2010	69	13	18.8%	---	---	---	---
96	Republic of Moldova	11 2010	101	19	18.8%	---	---	---	---
97	Slovakia	3 2012	150	28	18.7%	---	---	---	---
98	Indonesia	4 2009	560	104	18.6%	---	---	---	---
99	San Marino	11 2012	60	11	18.3%	---	---	---	---
100	USA	11 2012	432	79	18.3%	11 2012	100	20	20.0%

101	Sao Tome and Principe	8 2010	55	10	18.2%	---	---	---	---
102	United Arab Emirates	9 2011	40	7	17.5%	---	---	---	---
103	Venezuela	9 2010	165	28	17.0%	---	---	---	---
104	Morocco	11 2011	395	67	17.0%	10 2009	270	6	2.2%
105	Barbados	2 2013	30	5	16.7%	3 2013	21	6	28.6%
=	Saint Lucia	11 2011	18	3	16.7%	1 2012	11	2	18.2%
107	Libya	7 2012	200	33	16.5%	---	---	---	---
108	Togo	7 2013	91	15	16.5%	---	---	---	---
109	Tajikistan	2 2010	63	10	15.9%	3 2010	34	4	11.8%
110	Chile	11 2013	120	19	15.8%	11 2013	38	7	18.4%
111	Thailand	7 2011	500	79	15.8%	4 2011	149	23	15.4%
112	Republic of Korea	4 2012	300	47	15.7%	---	---	---	---
113	Ireland	2 2011	166	26	15.7%	4 2011	60	19	31.7%
114	North Korea	3 2009	687	107	15.6%	---	---	---	---
115	Azerbaijan	11 2010	122	19	15.6%	---	---	---	---
116	Gabon	12 2011	120	18	15.0%	1 2009	102	17	16.7%
=	Paraguay	4 2013	80	12	15.0%	4 2013	45	9	20.0%
118	Chad	2 2011	188	28	14.9%	---	---	---	---
119	Mongolia	6 2012	74	11	14.9%	---	---	---	---
120	Montenegro	10 2012	81	12	14.8%	---	---	---	---
121	Turkey	6 2011	548	79	14.4%	---	---	---	---
122	Malta	3 2013	70	10	14.3%	---	---	---	---
123	Somalia	8 2012	275	38	13.8%	---	---	---	---
124	Russia	12 2011	450	61	13.6%	N.A.	163	13	8.0%
125	Romania	12 2012	407	55	13.5%	12 2012	176	13	7.4%
126	Guatemala	9 2011	158	21	13.3%	---	---	---	---
127	Niger	1 2011	113	15	13.3%	---	---	---	---
128	Bahamas	5 2012	38	5	13.2%	5 2012	16	4	25.0%
129	Uruguay	10 2009	99	13	13.1%	10 2009	31	2	6.5%
130	St Vincent & Grenadines	12 2010	23	3	13.0%	---	---	---	---
131	Dominica	12 2009	31	4	12.9%	---	---	---	---
132	Djibouti	2 2013	55	7	12.7%	---	---	---	---
133	Jamaica	12 2011	63	8	12.7%	9 2007	21	6	28.6%
134	Cyprus	5 2011	56	7	12.5%	---	---	---	---
135	Colombia	3 2010	165	20	12.1%	3 2010	100	16	16.0%
136	Sierra Leone	11 2012	124	15	12.1%	---	---	---	---
137	Georgia	10 2012	150	18	12.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Jordan	1 2013	150	18	12.0%	10 2013	75	9	12.0%
=	Syria	5 2012	250	30	12.0%	---	---	---	---
140	Suriname	5 2010	51	6	11.8%	---	---	---	---
141	India	4 2009	545	62	11.4%	1 2012	245	28	11.4%
142	Guinea-Bissau	11 2008	100	11	11.0%	---	---	---	---
143	Liberia	10 2011	73	8	11.0%	10 2011	30	4	13.3%
144	Ghana	12 2012	275	30	10.9%	---	---	---	---
145	Zambia	9 2011	158	17	10.8%	---	---	---	---
146	Armenia	5 2012	131	14	10.7%	---	---	---	---
147	Dem. Rep. Congo	11 2011	498	53	10.6%	1 2007	108	6	5.6%
148	Antigua and Barbuda	3 2009	19	2	10.5%	4 2009	17	5	29.4%
149	Malaysia	5 2013	222	23	10.4%	N.A.	59	16	27.1%
150	Bahrain	10 2010	40	4	10.0%	11 2010	40	11	27.5%
151	Ukraine	10 2012	442	43	9.7%	---	---	---	---
152	Botswana	10 2009	63	6	9.5%	---	---	---	---
152	Mali	11 2013	147	14	9.5%	---	---	---	---
154	Cote d'Ivoire	12 2011	254	24	9.4%	---	---	---	---
155	Gambia	3 2012	53	5	9.4%	---	---	---	---
156	Hungary	4 2010	384	36	9.4%	---	---	---	---
157	Kiribati	10 2011	46	4	8.7%	---	---	---	---
158	Brazil	10 2010	513	44	8.6%	10 2010	81	13	16.0%
159	Bhutan	7 2013	47	4	8.5%	4 2013	25	2	8.0%
160	Panama	5 2009	71	6	8.5%	---	---	---	---

161	Benin	4 2011	83	7	8.4%	---	---	---	---
162	Japan	12 2012	480	39	8.1%	7 2013	242	39	16.1%
163	Congo	7 2012	136	10	7.4%	10 2011	72	10	13.9%
164	Maldives	5 2009	74	5	6.8%	---	---	---	---
165	Nigeria	4 2011	360	24	6.7%	4 2011	109	7	6.4%
=	Saint Kitts and Nevis	1 2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
=	Tuvalu	9 2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
168	Bangladesh	1 2014	297	19	6.4%	---	---	---	---
169	Swaziland	9 2013	65	4	6.2%	10 2013	30	10	33.3%
170	Sri Lanka	4 2010	225	13	5.8%	---	---	---	---
171	Myanmar	11 2010	429	24	5.6%	11 2010	224	4	1.8%
172	Nauru	6 2013	19	1	5.3%	---	---	---	---
173	Kuwait	7 2013	65	3	4.6%	---	---	---	---
174	Haiti	11 2010	95	4	4.2%	11 2010	20	0	0.0%
175	Samoa	3 2011	49	2	4.1%	---	---	---	---
176	Tonga	11 2010	28	1	3.6%	---	---	---	---
177	Belize	3 2012	32	1	3.1%	3 2012	13	5	38.5%
=	Lebanon	6 2009	128	4	3.1%	---	---	---	---
179	Iran	5 2012	290	9	3.1%	---	---	---	---
180	Comoros	12 2009	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Marshall Islands	11 2011	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
182	Papua New Guinea	6 2012	111	3	2.7%	---	---	---	---
183	Solomon Islands	8 2010	50	1	2.0%	---	---	---	---
184	Oman	10 2011	84	1	1.2%	10 2011	83	15	18.1%
185	Yemen	4 2003	301	1	0.3%	4 2001	111	2	1.8%
186	Fed. States Micronesia	3 2013	14	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Palau	11 2012	16	0	0.0%	11 2012	13	3	23.1%
=	Qatar	7 2013	35	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
=	Vanuatu	10 2012	52	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---

Notes:

* Figures correspond to the number of seats currently filled in Parliament

1 - South Africa: The figures on the distribution of seats do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis, and all percentages given are therefore calculated on the basis of the 54 permanent seats.

Source: Source: Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) -- as of 1 Feb 2014

Women Speakers of National Parliaments

At 1 February 2013, 38 women presided over one of the Houses of the 188 existing national parliaments, 78 of which are bicameral. This represents 13.9% of the 274 posts of presiding officer. The relevant countries are:

Antigua and Barbuda (both chambers)	Mozambique
Australia	Netherlands (Both chambers)
Austria	Poland
Bahamas	Portugal
Bangladesh	Russian Federation
Barbados	Rwanda
Belgium	San Marino
Bolivia (both chambers)	Singapore
Botswana	Suriname
Dominica	Swaziland
Ecuador	Switzerland
Equatorial Guinea	Turkmenistan
Estonia	Uganda
Gabon	United Kingdom
India	United Republic of Tanzania
Italy	Uzbekistan
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Zimbabwe
Latvia	

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union Women in National Parliaments, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/speakers.htm>

5.2 Women Presidents and Prime Ministers

At 18 April 2014, a woman holds the post of president or prime minister in 18 countries.¹⁹

- 9 countries have female presidents: Argentina, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Liberia, Lithuania, Malawi and South Korea.
- 9 countries have female prime ministers: Bangladesh, Denmark, Germany, Jamaica, Latvia, Norway, Senegal, Slovenia and Trinidad & Tobago.

The [Centre for Women and Democracy](#) has also published international comparisons for the number of women Cabinet ministers, at October 2013.²⁰

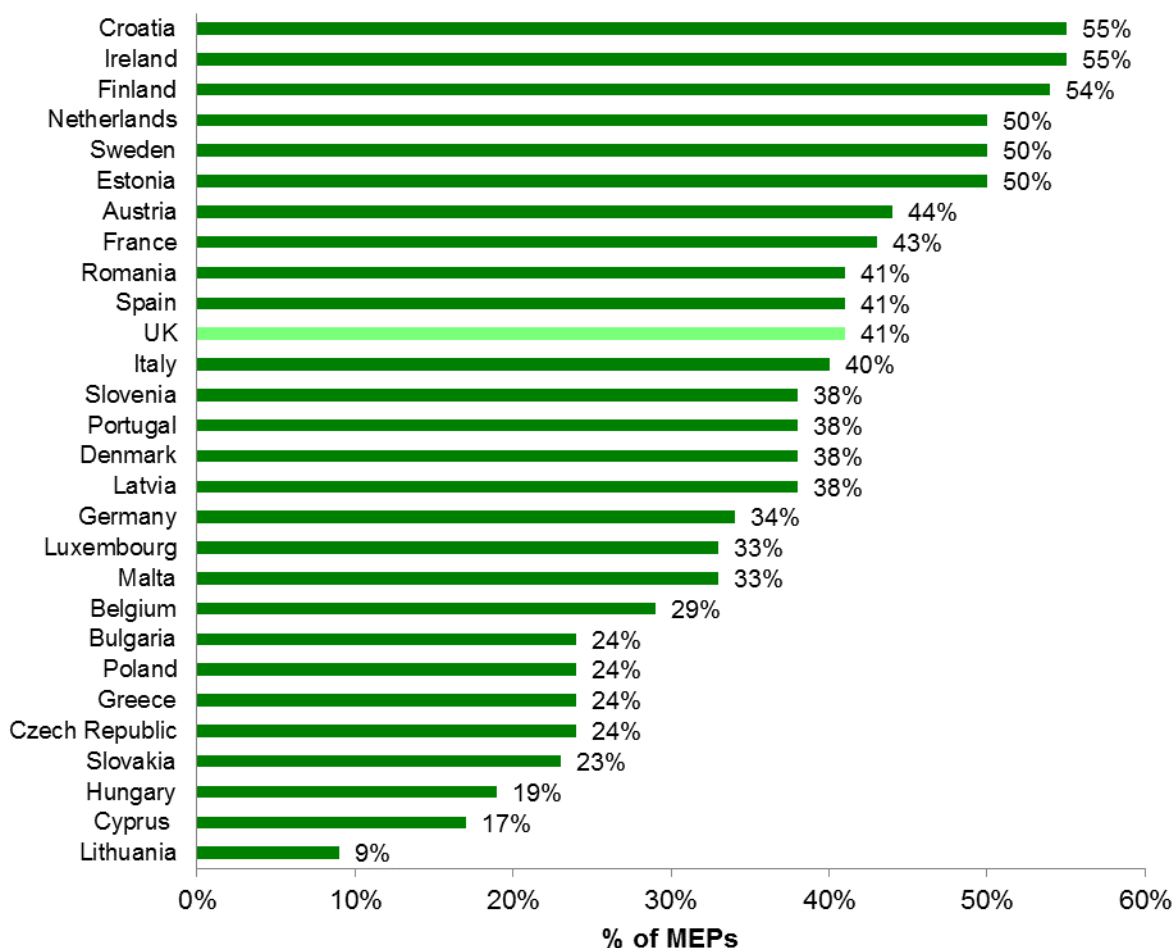
¹⁹ Centre for Women and Democracy, *Women Presidents and Prime Ministers August 2012 Factsheet* <http://www.cfd.org.uk/uploads/pdfs/WomenWorldLeadersAugust2012.pdf> , BBC Online Park [Geun-hye sworn in as South Korea president](#) 25 February 2013

²⁰ <http://www.cfd.org.uk/uploads/WomenCabinetMinistersInternationalOct2013.pdf>

5.3 European Parliament

In May 2014, 37% of MEPs were women. The proportion varied from 55% in Ireland and Croatia to 9% for Lithuania. Two-fifths of the 73 UK MEPs elected in 2014 were women, so that the UK had the 9th highest ratio of the 28 EU Member following elections in May 2014.

Figure 3: % of women MEPs by country, May 2014



6 Related Library publications

Further information on political representation of women and other groups can be found in the following Library publications:

- Women in public life, the professions and the boardroom

www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05170

- Women: International Women's Day 2014, background & statistics
<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN02936>
- Women in the House of Lords (House of Lords Library Note)
<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/LLN-2012-005>
- Ethnic minorities in politics and government
www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN01156
- Social background of Members of Parliament
www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN01528
- UK Election Statistics: 1918-2012
www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP12-43