

Women in the 2012 Local Elections in the English Metropolitan Authorities

The 36 metropolitan authorities in England are located in the cities of the north and midlands, and together they have a population of in excess of 22 million people. A full list of metropolitan councils, together with percentages of women members, is given at the end of this report.

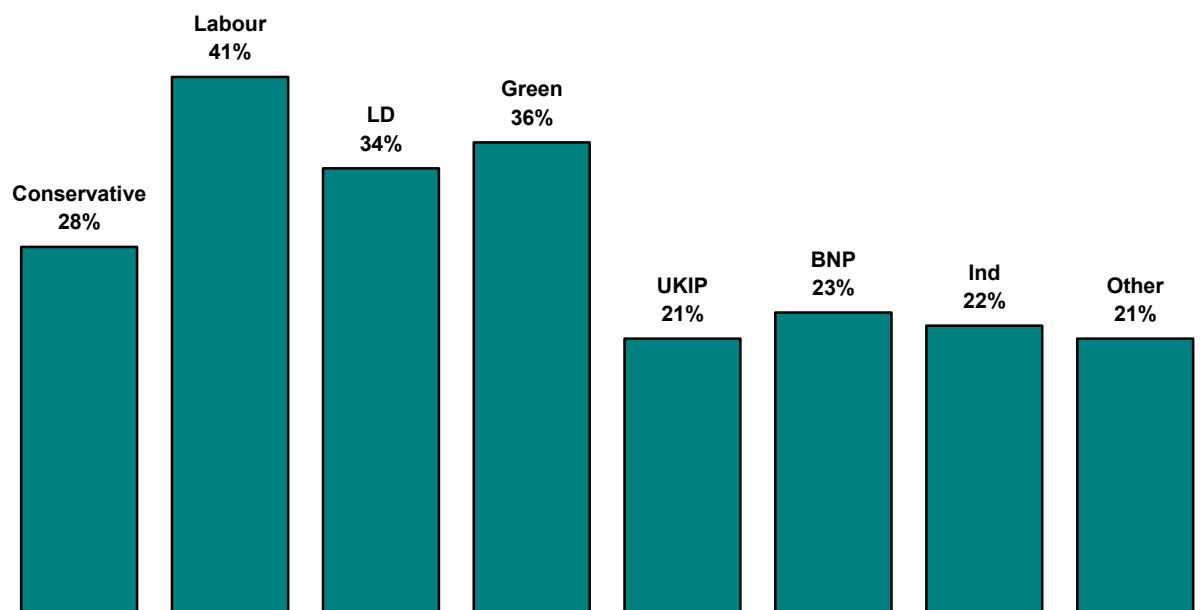
There are a total of 2,445 council seats on these 36 authorities; these come up for election by thirds with a fourth year 'fallow'. All-out elections on new boundaries were held in 2004, and this provides a useful baseline from which to judge recent progress. The two fallow years were 2005 and 2009.

2012 Local Elections

32% of candidates in the 36 English metropolitan authorities are women, an increase of 2% on 2011 but virtually nothing on 2008, which is when these particular seats were last contested.

Chart 1 shows how well (or badly) each political party did in 2012 in terms of the percentage of women candidates fielded.

Chart 1: Percentage of Women Candidates for Each Political Party 2012

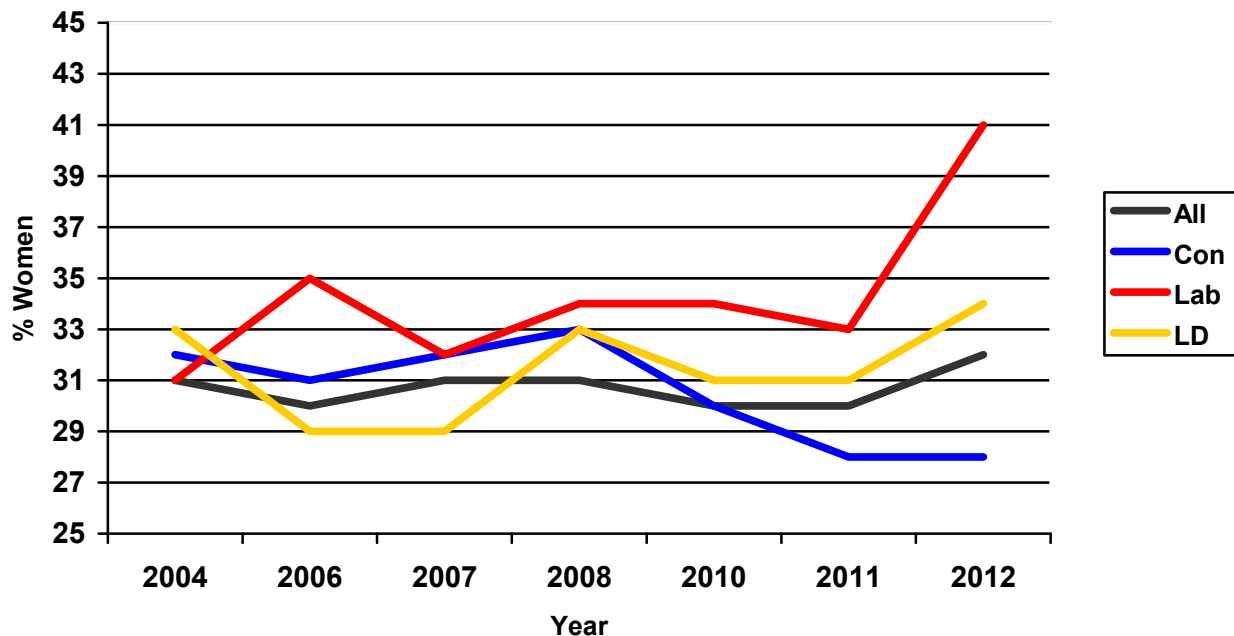


Overall, this is the highest level of candidates since the all-out elections in 2004 - but that is not saying very much, since, as Chart 2 below shows, there has been hardly any variation at all in the last 8 years.

Labour's 41% is its highest level ever for these authorities, and reflects the effects of 8 years of positive action in selections for the relevant wards.

Other parties are not doing so well, and Graph 1 shows how the percentage of candidates for the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats have fluctuated since 2004.

Graph 1: Women Candidates for the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Parties 2004-2012



In terms of the smaller parties, the Greens have maintained a generally high level of women candidates over the last 8 years, though very few are elected. UKIP's percentage of women candidates has risen since 2004, though it is no nowhere near its 2007 high point of 29%. The number of BNP candidates in these authorities has fallen by almost two-thirds, but the number of women has only halved, with the result that the BNP's net percentage of women candidates has risen significantly since 2004.

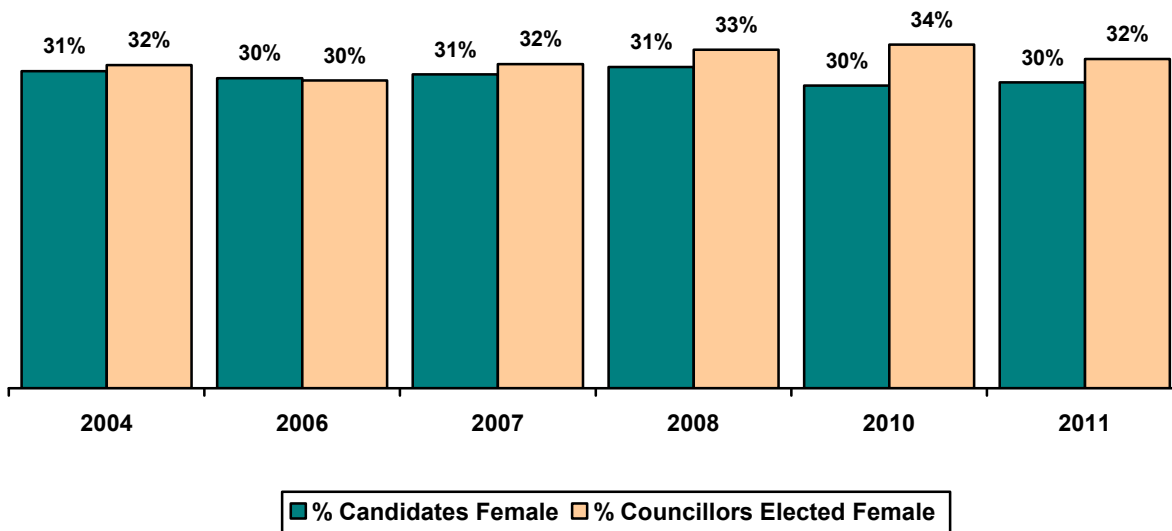
Women continue to be less likely to stand either as Independent candidates or as candidates for very small parties, although in both of these categories the level of women has risen since 2004.

As a general rule, the percentage of women elected at each set of elections roughly mirrors the percentage of women candidates, although differences in party fortunes may affect this marginally either way. The rate at which women do not seek re-election,

together with the rate at which parties replace retiring candidates of both sexes with women also affect the outcomes.

Chart 2 compares the level of women as a percentage of candidates with that of women as a percentage of councillors elected between 2004 and 2011.

Chart 2: Women as a percentage of candidates and a percentage of councillors elected 2004-2011



In numerical terms, there was an increase of just 48 women councillors in these 36 authorities between 2004 and 2011. As will be seen from the list at the end of this report, some councils now have fewer women than in 2004 (Oldham, Calderdale, Solihull, Wolverhampton, Stockport, the Wirral, Coventry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sheffield and Trafford) whilst even the largest increases - in Manchester (5), Bradford (7) and Liverpool (8) - fail to reach double figures.

This initial report relates only to the metropolitan authorities, but experience suggests that, once the figures for the smaller unitary and district councils in England are added, the total percentage of women candidates will be lower.

CFWD will be reporting on the outcomes of all elections in England in terms of women's participation. We will also be taking a detailed look at why both the levels of women candidates and the levels of women elected continue to be more or less static, and in particular we will be investigating retirement and retention rates and the effect these either have or could have on the gender diversity of councillors in this group of authorities.

Metropolitan Authorities in England

The list below shows the 36 English Metropolitan authorities, together with the number and percentage of women members after 2004 all-out elections and 2011, the last year for which election results are available. The table will be updated after the 2012 results are published.

Council	No. Cllrs	2004		2011	
		No. Women	% Women	No. Women	% Women
Barnsley	63	16	25.4%	20	32%
Birmingham	120	38	31.7%	39	33%
Bolton	60	13	21.7%	16	27%
Bradford	90	22	24.4%	29	32%
Bury	51	15	29.4%	15	29%
Calderdale	51	18	35.3%	14	27%
Coventry	54	17	31.5%	16	30%
Doncaster	63	23	36.5%	27	43%
Dudley	72	23	31.9%	27	38%
Gateshead	66	21	31.8%	23	35%
Kirklees	69	21	30.4%	25	36%
Knowsley	63	15	23.8%	17	27%
Leeds	99	27	27.3%	31	31%
Liverpool	90	28	31.1%	36	40%
Manchester	96	23	24.0%	28	29%
Newcastle upon Tyne	78	23	29.5%	22	28%
North Tyneside	60	26	43.3%	26	43%
Oldham	60	17	28.3%	11	18%
Rochdale	60	25	41.7%	25	42%
Rotherham	63	17	27.0%	21	33%
Salford	60	13	21.7%	17	28%
Sandwell	72	26	36.1%	26	36%
Sefton	66	11	16.7%	15	23%
Sheffield	84	29	34.5%	28	33%
Solihull	51	12	23.5%	9	18%
South Tyneside	54	16	29.6%	18	33%
St Helens	48	17	35.4%	17	35%
Stockport	63	20	31.7%	18	29%
Sunderland	75	21	28.0%	23	31%
Tameside	57	16	28.1%	19	33%
Trafford	63	23	36.5%	22	35%
Wakefield	63	19	30.2%	23	37%
Walsall	60	17	28.3%	18	30%
Wigan	75	18	24.0%	18	24%
Wirral	66	20	30.3%	18	27%
Wolverhampton	60	20	33.3%	17	28%
Totals	2445	726	29.7%	774	31.7%