

Leadership & Diversity in Local Government in England in 2010/11



A Report by the
Centre for Women & Democracy

www.cfwd.org.uk

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Introduction

The typical local government leader is male, white and heterosexual. He does not have a disability, he is aged between 56 and 65, and he probably has children, although they are unlikely to be very young. He became leader when he had been a councillor for less than ten years. He is likely to have been deputy leader prior to his election and he is very likely to have held either the finance, economic development or corporate services portfolio (or equivalent). He is a member of a political party (at present most likely Conservative), and became leader whilst his political group was in control of the Council. He will have a background in business, finance or management, but is very unlikely to have worked in the public sector.

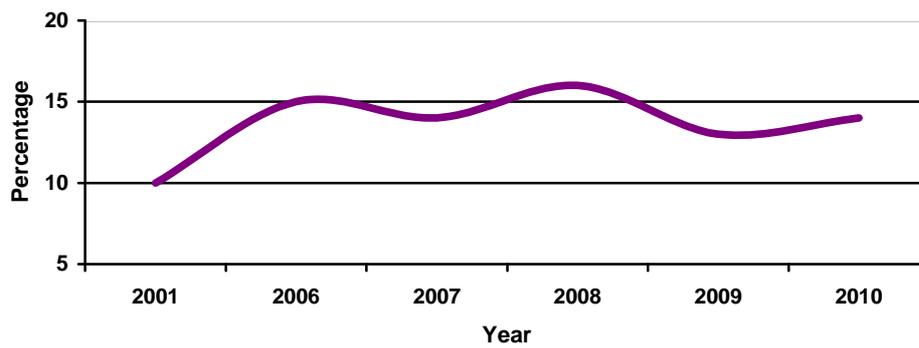
The roughly one in seven council leaders who are women will conform to this template in many respects, although with differences of degree. A woman leader is much less likely than her male counterpart to have children of school age (and almost certainly none under the age of ten). She is more likely to have been deputy leader before becoming leader, and much more likely to have been elected when her political group was in control. She is more likely to have held a service delivery portfolio and much less likely to have led on finance. Her employment background will be much the same as that of her male neighbour, except that she is slightly less likely to have come from business or management, and slightly more likely to have worked in finance, the law or the public sector.

The most striking thing about this superficial comparison of male and female leaders above is not the differences, but the similarities. The standard route into becoming the political leader of a local authority is clear, and is not in itself unreasonable, developing as it does the key knowledge and skills an effective leader is likely to need. But access to it is so restricted that those who come through it are the least diverse group of political office-holders in the country, and progress towards improving gender balance in particular has been more or less stalled for the last decade.

If that trend is to be halted or reversed it needs to be understood, and this study both considers the current nature of the route into local political leadership, and makes recommendations for broadening it.

Each year since 2007 the Centre for Women & Democracy (CFWD) has produced an analysis of the gender breakdown of local authority leaders in England. As Chart 1 shows, the results have not been encouraging.

Chart 1: % Women Council Leaders in England 2001-2010



Currently, there are 48 women leading local authorities. Women constitute 14.4% of council leaders.

The gender diversity of local authority leaders - including elected mayors¹ - is now seriously out of kilter with that of other parts of the political system. 22% of MPs are women, 22% of the House of Lords, 21% of the Cabinet, and 31% of councillors. These levels are not good, and progress in all of them has more or less stalled (e.g., in 2001 18% of MPs were women and 29% of councillors in England), but even so local government leadership stands out as lagging behind.

Yet there is general agreement that the diversity of local government decision-makers matters. Various strategies have been tried over recent years to increase the number of women councillors and, within that, to increase the diversity of those women, and government, local government agencies and political parties all agree that it ought to be possible to improve women's representation at all levels. Yet, although there has been a national inquiry², a special task force to encourage women from BME communities³, positive action measures from at least one political party⁴ and a good deal of hand-wringing on all sides, the percentage of women councillors has remained stubbornly static, whilst that of women leaders has barely moved over the last decade.

Over 90% of councillors are drawn from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. This is even more the case with local government leaders, and even directly elected mayors - who were initially intended to be drawn from independent local people - are predominantly party political. As a result, the actions parties take to increase the diversity of their public representatives has a direct effect on the face of local government leadership, and whilst some parties are better than others at encouraging and supporting women candidates to stand for election, they are all

¹ 2 out of 12 elected mayors are women.

² *Representing the Future: Councillors Commission Report, 2007*

³ Ethnic Minority Women Councillors Taskforce, set up by Government 2008/9

⁴ The Labour Party brought in positive action requirements for local government selections for the 2004 round of elections, and has continued to use these mechanisms.

much less effective at ensuring that women are in the right position to seek election to leadership roles with any success.

Recent research from the Hansard Society⁵ found that women are half as likely as men to join a political party, and all parties are predominantly male in character. Yet women are involved in community activities, from school governorships, where they are in the majority⁶, to organising community groups and campaigns on single issues. In business, where they are a minority, both business leaders and government believe that more needs to be done to improve the situation, and are even on occasion prepared to consider positive action, yet in local government the absence of women in leadership roles barely seems to cause comment.

This absence affects more than just local councils; it impacts upon wider areas, too. Members of the boards of the new Local Enterprise Partnerships have yet to be established (not all local authority leaders, for instance, will be members of their local LEP Board), but it is already clear that, since the majority of Leaders are male, board membership will be heavily male also, since it is unlikely that the deficit will be filled by members from an already gender-unbalanced private sector. There are to be more directly elected mayors, drawn in the first instance from the ranks of leaders, and, again, these will be overwhelmingly male. There is a real danger that women will be next to invisible in terms of economic strategy and regional decision-making, and the fact that the kind of structural and cultural change needed to improve the situation will take time to feed through only makes the case for action more urgent.

Local authority leaders are, and will remain, overtly political, and in terms of the building up of a body of work and experience their political history matters. Much of this report therefore concentrates on this particular aspect of leadership, and identifies both the main routes towards achieving it and the principal barriers along those roads. This is not the first time this has been done, since there have been academic studies in the past⁷, but this report looks at the issues in a political context, includes elected mayors and future developments, and makes recommendations for what the various agencies and individuals involved could do to improve matters.

The report is divided into a series of sections; the first part outlines the results of our statistical analysis of where leaders are and how this compares with previous years, before examining the results of our survey of leaders and interviews we carried out with a small number. The second part looks at the main routes into leadership, and looks at how well women are represented on them, and the third outlines the main barriers to women's participation. The fourth section considers a number of other related issues, whilst the fifth deals specifically with elected mayors. The

⁵ Hansard Society, Audit of Political Engagement 6, 2009

⁶ 56% in 2007, unpublished CFWD research

⁷ Most notably by Catherine Bochel and Hugh Bochel

recommendations are distributed at appropriate intervals throughout the report, and are also summarised in the Executive Summary.

Throughout work on this report we have been helped by a number of people, particularly at Local Government Ideas and Development, without whose support, financial and otherwise, it would not have been possible. We are grateful to staff in many local authorities who answered our questions with great patience. We would also like to thank all the Leaders who completed the survey and agreed to be interviewed, and we were encouraged by how many agreed with us that the diversity of local government leadership is a serious issue. We hope that this report will help them, their members, their authorities and their parties to make some real progress for the future.

Finally, we would particularly like to thank Olivia Szostak, who carried out much of the research for this project, but who moved on to a new job before it was completed. Amongst other things she became an expert on the vagaries of local authority websites - an alarming number of which seem determined to prevent members of the public from finding out anything at all about their political leadership - and her contribution to the final report cannot be over-estimated.

Nan Sloane
Director, Centre for Women & Democracy

February 2011

Executive Summary

1. The typical local government leader is male, white and heterosexual. He does not have a disability, he is aged between 56 and 65, and he probably has children, although they are unlikely to be very young. He became leader when he had been a councillor for less than ten years. He is likely to have been deputy leader prior to his election and he is very likely to have held either the finance, economic development or corporate services portfolio (or equivalent). He is a member of a political party (at present most likely Conservative), and became leader whilst his political group was in control of the Council. He will have a background in business, finance or management, but is very unlikely to have worked in the public sector.
2. The roughly one in seven council leaders who are women will conform to this template in many respects, although with differences of degree. A woman leader is much less likely than her male counterpart to have children of school age (and almost certainly none under the age of ten). She is more likely to have been deputy leader before becoming leader, and much more likely to have been elected when her political group was in control. She is more likely to have held a service delivery portfolio and much less likely to have led on finance. Her employment background will be much the same as that of her male neighbour, except that she is slightly less likely to have come from business or management, and slightly more likely to have worked in finance, the law or the public sector.
3. Any councillor who aspires to leadership should thus ensure that s/he holds one of the key corporate or economic portfolios, serves as deputy leader at some point, has an employment background in business, management or finance, and is, in the case of women, unencumbered by domestic responsibility. Women should also ensure that the leadership vacancy occurs when their party is in power.
4. Women councillors are significantly less likely than men to hold a key portfolio (e.g., women hold the most important 'leadership' portfolio of economic development/regeneration in just 12% of authorities, that of corporate services in 17%, and that of finance in 7%), and more likely to hold one of those least regarded in leadership terms (e.g., women hold the education/children's services portfolio in 24% of authorities, and Health & Social Care in 23%)
5. Access to the standard route into leadership for both male and female councillors is so restricted that those who come through it are the least diverse group of political office-holders in the country, and progress towards improving gender balance in particular has been more or less stalled for the last decade.
6. There are 48 women leading local authorities in England; 14.4% of the total. In 2001, 10% of leaders were women, and in 2008, the highpoint, it was 16% (59 women).

7. 31% of local councillors are women, and 22% of MPs.
8. 19% of deputy leaders are female; down from 23% in 2009.
9. The East of England region has the highest percentage of women leaders (27%). There are no women council leaders in the North East, and have not been since 2009.
10. 70.3% of local authority leaders in England are from the Conservative Party, 16.2% from the Labour Party, and 12.4% from the Liberal Democrats.
11. 13.4% of Conservative leaders are women, 14.5% of Labour leaders and 21.4% of Liberal Democrat.
12. 76% of leaders appointed in 2010 were men replacing men; in 1% a woman replaced a woman.
13. Just under half (46.2%) of Council Leaders are aged between 56 and 65. Only 3.4% are below 35 and 17.6% are over 65. The average age of councillors is 59; the average age of the population as a whole in mid-2009 was 39, and the average age of MPs is 50.
14. Women leaders are very unlikely to have children of school age; 4% have children of school age (as against 17% of male leaders). 17% of women councillors overall have childcare responsibilities, and 12% of men.
15. There are a total of 2,804 portfolio-holders in England; of these 726 (25.9%) are women. Over half of councils have between 10% and 29% women in their cabinets; 31% of councillors overall are women. G26
16. Women leaders are more likely to appoint women portfolio-holders. 36% of women leaders have cabinets at least half of whose members are women, but only 19% of male leaders. 55% of cabinets led by women are 30% or above female, and 37% of cabinets led by men.
17. However, women leaders are no more likely than men to give women the key portfolios; of the 88 women appointed to cabinets led by women in 2010 just 12.5% (11) held either the Finance, Economic or Corporate portfolios.
18. Although some political groups have very few women, there is no direct correlation between the number of women councillors and the number of women portfolio-holders. The percentage of women members of groups with no women in their cabinets ranges from 16% (Horsham) to 30% (Rotherham).

19. There are six authorities in which both the leader and the deputy leader are female (plus two in which one of two deputies is female), and 202 in which they are both male.
20. 15.7% of Conservative Deputies are women, 25.5% of Labour and 28.2% of Liberal Democrat.
21. Only 4% of women leaders have school-age children, as opposed to 17% of men.

Recommendations

- R1 Political parties should develop clear guidelines for Leaders choosing portfolio-holders, and these should include advice on ensuring that women as well as men have access to the key strategic responsibilities of finance, economic development and corporate services.
- R2 Political parties should also produce guidelines for local council groups which elect portfolio-holders requiring them to consider relevant representational issues when filling cabinet and shadow cabinet positions, so that the possibility of cabinets filled entirely by white men is eliminated.
- R3 Leaders should seek to provide as many practical opportunities for development as possible, and should ensure that these are available to both male and female councillors. This should include the appointment of both portfolio-holders and scrutiny chairs. Full use should also be made of leadership training opportunities offered by Local Government Ideas and Development and others
- R4 The IDEA's Census of Local Councillors should be extended to include information about portfolio-holders, and this information should relate at least to age, ethnicity and disability as well as gender.
- R5 There should be a clear view of what deputy leadership actually is, and it should be regarded as a role in its own right as well as a stand-in for the leader or a waiting room for leadership itself.
- R6 Leaders should take steps to ensure that deputies are equipped to stand in for them, and, in particular, should consider giving them appropriate experience in relevant areas regardless of portfolio responsibilities.
- R7 Political parties should give clear guidance to council groups about gender balance in leadership teams, which should be regarded as at least desirable.

- R8 Councils should consider the timing of their meetings so as to enable as many members as possible to attend them without undue difficulty.
- R9 Central government, political parties and local authorities should consider as a matter of urgency how to address the current exclusion of women with children or other dependents from leadership roles. Whilst it is recognised that the solution is unlikely to be financial in the current climate, it is also unacceptable that women with children under 18 should effectively be unable to take on the leadership of their local authority, whilst this bar does not apply to their male colleagues.
- R10 Leadership training at all levels should include core management skills such as delegation, time management, team building and communication. Some of these are already included in the Local Government Ideas and Development Leadership Academy programme, but should also be incorporated into training provided by local authorities and political parties.
- R11 Both the political parties and local government as a whole should take steps to reduce the ‘presenteeism’ culture prevalent in many authorities, and should identify and share good practice where it occurs. This should include reviewing the number and timing of meetings, diary management skills, and delegation.
- R12 Leaders should take responsibility for the style and culture of politics in their authority, and should take the lead in working with their own members and the opposition consciously to improve it so as to attract a wider range of both women and men.
- R13 Both local authorities and political parties should consider what further measures they could take to address bullying and sexism, and should have clear procedures for their members to follow should complaints arise.
- R14 Experience as a scrutiny chair should be regarded as having the same value as portfolio-holding when considering suitability for leadership.
- R15 The Centre for Public Scrutiny should include questions about gender in its surveys, and should publish outcomes.
- R16 More work should be done in CFWD’s next leadership report (2011/12) on the relationship between scrutiny and leadership.
- R17 Political parties should give consideration to changing internal systems so that Leaders are elected by a mechanism which involves the whole party membership in the local authority area as well as members of the political group. This would bring practice in the election of local government group leaders into line with that for parties’ national leaders.

- R18 Political parties should examine their selection procedures for mayoral candidates to identify ways in which their diversity could be increased. At the very least they should encourage local parties to identify and develop potential women mayoral candidates.
- R19 Government should develop strategies for improving the diversity of mayoral candidates, and in particular should look for ways of increasing the diversity of independent candidates.

1. Local Authority Leaders

The vast majority (340) of local authorities in England are led by a leader chosen in law by the full Council (i.e., all the elected members regardless of party), but in fact by the members of their own political group on that Council. These leaders in turn appoint a cabinet or executive; in law these are actually chosen by them and although many leaders do indeed choose their own cabinets, many more either appoint people elected by their political groups or submit their lists to their groups for ratification.

Cabinets in authorities with a leader act as an executive, and may be called by either name. Both are referred to as cabinets throughout this report since, for purposes of analysing routes into leadership, they are interchangeable.

The majority of cabinet members are also portfolio-holders - that is, they have specific responsibility to lead on an area of the council's work. In most authorities there is a deputy leader, who may or may not have a portfolio responsibility, and in some the leader him/herself leads on a particular issue. Patterns of portfolio-holding are an important element in leadership, and are considered in detail further on, as is deputy leadership.

Political groups in opposition choose a shadow administration locally as they do nationally, and the distribution of shadow portfolio responsibilities is therefore of interest for leadership purposes. It was not possible to conduct a full analysis of shadow portfolio-holding patterns, but, as part of the survey detailed below, council leaders were asked for their portfolio history as a whole.

In 12 authorities there is a directly elected mayor rather than a leader. Mayors appoint a cabinet to assist them but exercise executive responsibility themselves. They are chosen using a very different mechanism from that for leaders, and are less likely to be from one of the main political parties. Elected Mayors are considered separately in this report, and are not included in any of the statistics, surveys or analyses relating to leaders.

1.1 Who and Where the Leaders Are

There are currently 340 local authorities in England with a leader effectively elected by political party groups; of these, 48 (14.4%) are led by women.

Although this percentage has changed very little over the last few years, the actual numbers have decreased. This is largely because the creation of new super-unitaries - now halted - involved the abolition of a significant number of the type of authority women were most likely to

lead; between 2007 and 2009 the number of authorities with leaders fell from 375 to 340. 20% (7) of abolished authorities had been led by women.

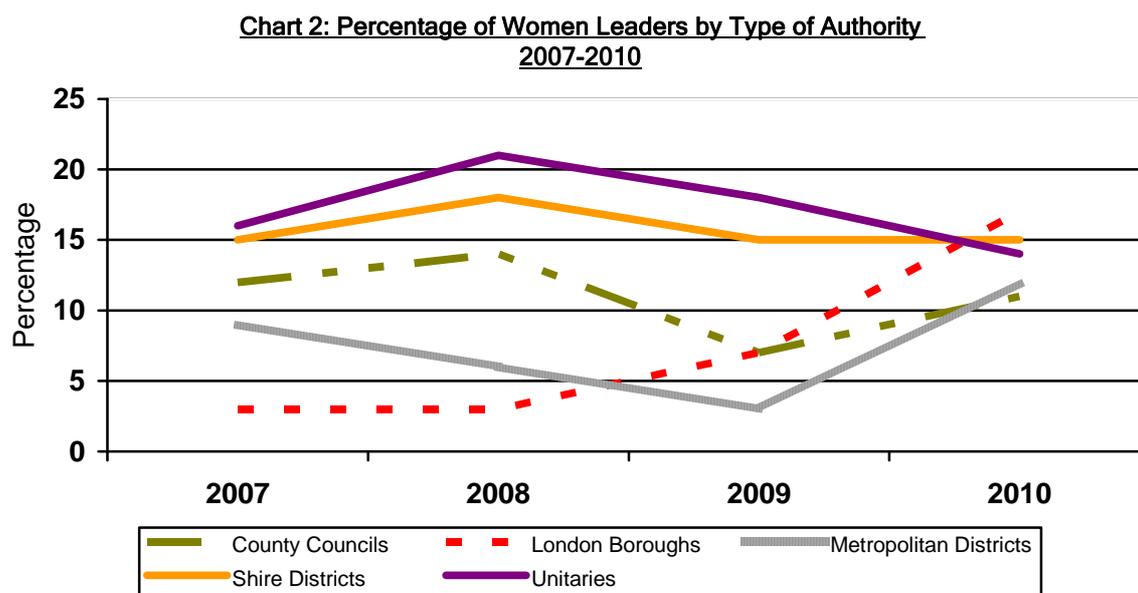
Appendix 1 gives a list of current women leaders and their authorities and political affiliation.

a) Type of Authority

Women are most likely to lead London boroughs (17.2%) and least likely to lead shire counties (10.7%).

This is a significant change from previous years, when women leaders in London have been very thin on the ground, and although it is tempting to believe that this reflects the increase in women councillors in London at the 2010 elections, there does not seem to be any evidence for such a correlation.⁸

Chart 2 shows the changes between 2007 and 2010.



b) Region

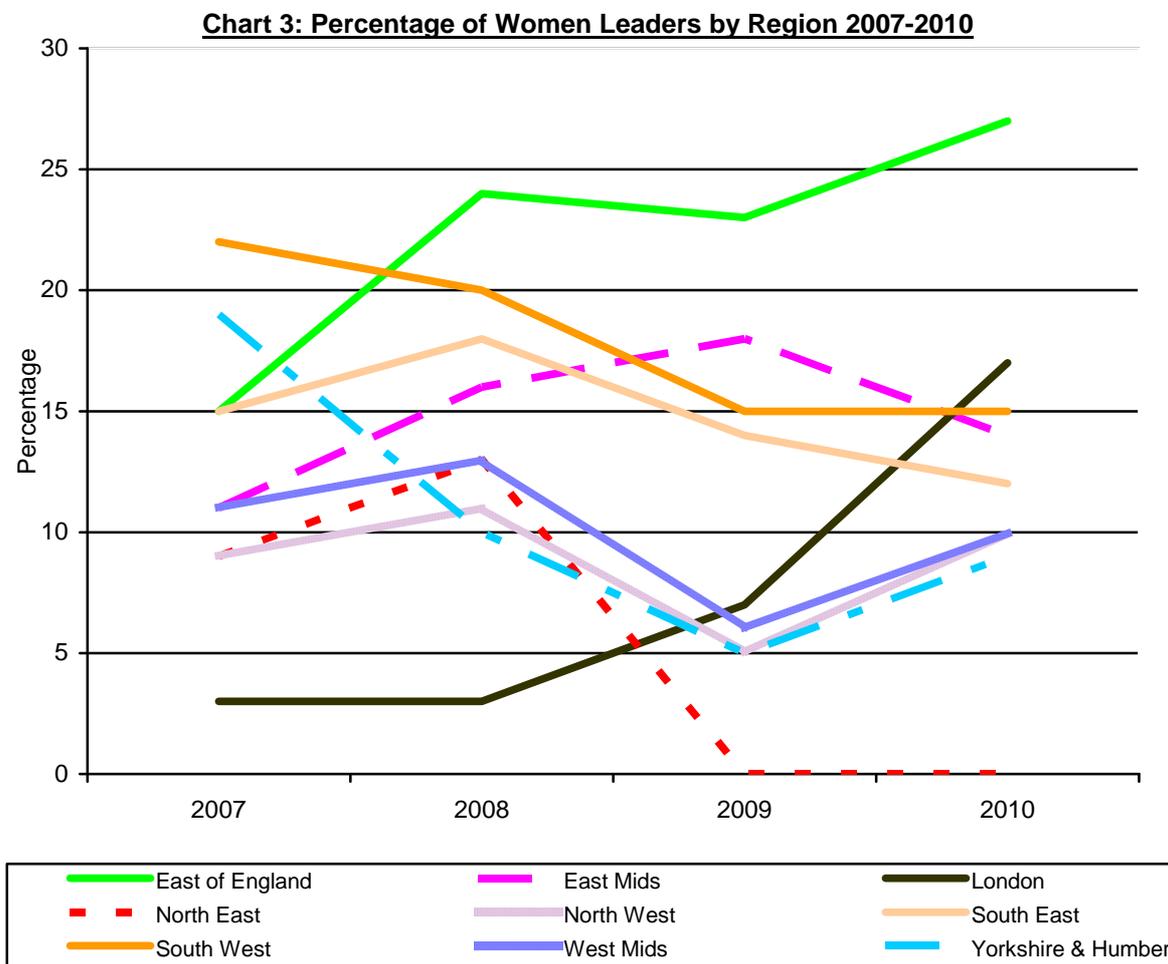
In geographic terms, the East of England continues to lead the way at 27%, with the North East continuing to bring up the rear with no women leaders at all.

The fall in women leaders in the North East occurred in 2009 at the point at which a number of smaller district councils were abolished to create the large new unitaries of County Durham and

⁸ See 2.3b below

Northumberland. Prior to then there had been four women council leaders, but none lead the new authorities and only one⁹ still a councillor.

Chart 3 shows the percentages of women leaders for each English region in recent years.



The significant rise in London coincided with a major push to recruit more women and minority community councillors, and although, as indicated above, there is little evidence across the country as a whole to link the percentage or number of women councillors on a council with the likelihood of that council having a female leader, increased diversity may be a factor in London.

c) Political Parties

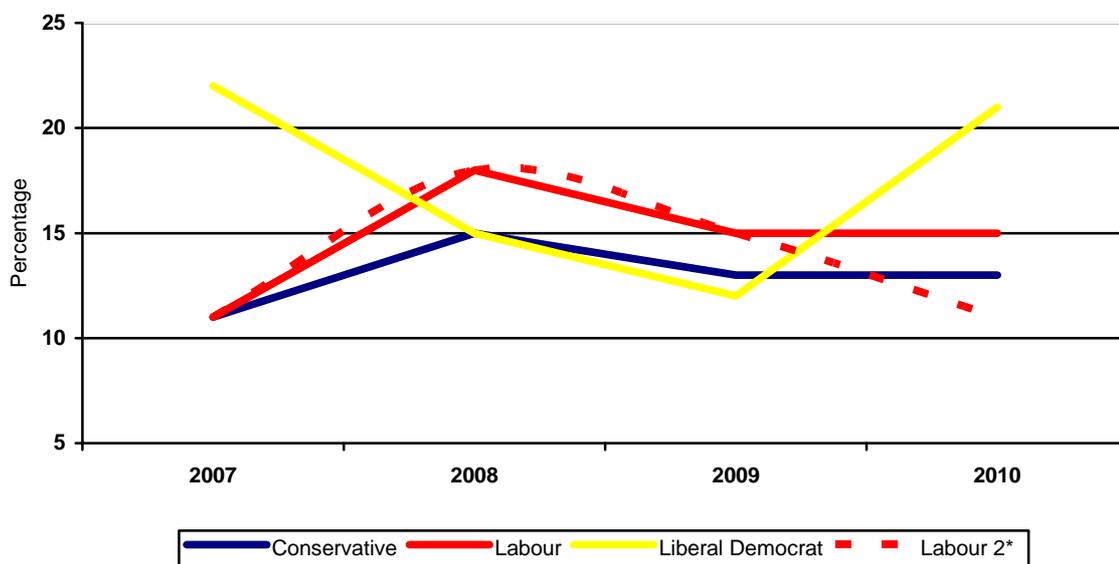
70.3% of local authority leaders in England are from the Conservative Party, 16.2% from the Labour Party, and 12.4% from the Liberal Democrats.

13.4% of Conservative leaders are women, 14.5% of Labour leaders and 21.4% of Liberal Democrat.

⁹ Isabel Hunter in Northumberland, formerly leader of Berwick-upon-Tweed District

The number of Labour women leading London boroughs rose significantly in 2010; the immediate effect of this was to halt Labour's otherwise downward trend. Chart 4, which shows changes in the pattern of women leaders by party between 2007 and 2010, also shows what would have happened in Labour's case had these women not come into office.

Chart 4: Women as Percentage of Each Political Party's Leaders 2007-2010



* shows where Labour would be without the increase in women leaders in London in 2010.

The number of authorities changing political control has increased in recent years, and is reflected to some extent in the above chart, particularly in relation to the Liberal Democrats. It is also the case that, since the overall numbers of women leaders are so low, relatively small events can have a disproportionate effect, as red dotted Labour2 line in Chart 2 demonstrates.

d) Turnover of Leaders

76 authorities in England (22%) had a change of leader in May 2010.

The rate at which leaders change varies considerably between one year and another, depending on the number of authorities with elections, the amount of political change, internal factors within specific groups, and structural change such as the abolition of some authorities and the creation of new ones. 39% of leaders changed in 2008, but in 2009, when over 40 authorities were abolished, there were changes in only 13%.

In 76% of authorities with a change, an outgoing male leader was replaced by an incoming male. In 1% a woman replaced a woman, in 15% men replaced women and in 8% women replaced men.

The majority of leadership changes in 2010 were caused, not by gains or losses of political control, but by internal leadership changes within parties. This bears out findings in previous CFWD research, and suggests that, as a general rule, electoral change is not as great a factor as might usually be supposed.

There were 46 authorities in which the leader changed for internal reasons; these changes were the result of a variety of factors, including the leader becoming an MP at the General Election (e.g., Heather Wheeler in South Derbyshire). In only one case (South Northamptonshire) was a woman replaced by a woman; in 35 outgoing male leaders were replaced by men. However, 6 outgoing men were replaced by women, and only 4 outgoing women by men.

30 new leaders arrived as a result of a change of political control after the elections; in 5 of these male leaders were replaced by female, and in 2 female by male. In 23 authorities both the outgoing and the incoming leaders were male.

The net effect of these changes was to increase the number of women leaders by 5 from 43 in 2009/10 to 48 in 2010/11.

Given that the majority of changes in leader each year happen without there being a change of political control, the mechanisms by which leaders are chosen are relevant, and were therefore included in this study.

1.2 Survey of Council Leaders

An initial survey of Council Leaders was carried out as part of the project, with 120 (35.3%) responding. These constituted a representative sample of leaders, with the leaders of London Boroughs being the only group significantly under-represented.

Table 1 shows the listed groups as a percentage of all 340 leaders included in the study, as a percentage of respondents.

Table 1: Respondents to CFWD Survey of Council Leaders

	All Leaders	Respondents
Male	85.6%	79.2%
Female	14.4%	20.8%
Conservative	70.3%	69.2%
Labour	16.2%	16.6%
Liberal Democrat	12.4%	13.3%
County Councils	8.5%	8.3%
London Boroughs	8.5%	1.7%
Metropolitan	10.0%	12.5%
Shire Districts	57.9%	59.2%
Unitaries	15.0%	18.3%

Following this, a small number of Leaders were interviewed by phone to establish their views on leadership, what training they had had, what training their local authority or party provided, and why women were well/poorly represented in their cabinet or executive.

A statistical breakdown of the results of the survey can be found in Appendix 2, and the outcomes of the interviews are detailed in 1.3. Sections a) to j) below contain an analysis of the survey findings.

a) Council Experience

Most Leaders are relatively long-serving councillors, with 41% of them having served for between 10 and 20 years, and a further 34.2% for in excess of 20 years. Table 2 shows the breakdown of length of service by gender.

By and large, extensive experience seems to be fairly low down on the list of qualities political groups look for when selecting a leader. 61% of male respondents had been members of council for less than 10 years at the point of their election as leader, and the figure for women was even higher at 64%.

Table 2: Length of Council Service to Present

Total years served as a councillor to date	Male	Female
Less than 5	6.5%	8.0%
5 - 10 Years	16.3%	24.0%
10 - 20 Years	41.3%	40.0%
In excess of 20 Years	35.9%	28.0%

Table 3: Years served as a Councillor before becoming Leader

Years served before election as leader	Male	Female
Less than 10	61.0%	64.0%
10 - 20 Years	32.2%	36.0%
In excess of 20 Years	7.5%	0%

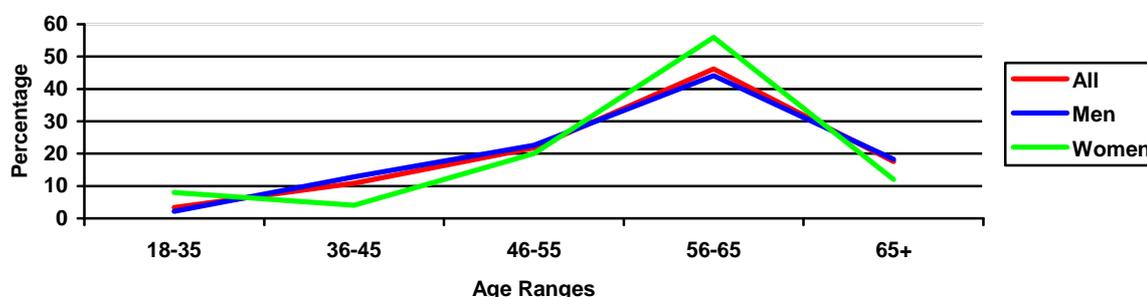
b) Age

Just under half (46.2%) of Council Leaders are aged between 56 and 65. Only 3.4% are below 35 and 17.6% are over 65.

According to Local Government Improvement and Development's most recent National Census of Local Authority Councillors (2008), the average age of councillors is 59; the average age of the population as a whole in mid-2009 was 39¹⁰, and the average age of councillors is rising more quickly than that of the population it serves.¹¹ As a comparison in, the average age of Members of Parliament reduced (from 51) to 50 at the last General Election¹².

Given this, the age profile of leaders is perhaps not surprising, though there is a marked difference in the ages of male and female leaders, as Chart 5 shows.

Chart 5: Ages of Leaders



¹⁰ Office of National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=949>

¹¹ The average age of councillors has risen by 5 years since 1997 (IDEA National Census of Councillors 2004/6/8); the average age of the population has risen by 4 years since 1984 (ONS)

¹² House of Commons Library, General Election 2010 Detailed Analysis, Research Paper 10/36 8 July 2010

c) Ethnicity

94% of Council Leaders who responded defined themselves as 'White British', 0.9% as Asian British and 5.1% as 'Other' (3 English, 1 Irish, 1 Italian and 1 'member of the human race').

All women Leaders defined themselves as 'White British'.

3% of councillors are from BME communities, and 8% of the population as a whole.¹³

d) Sexual Orientation

90.6% of respondents defined themselves as 'Heterosexual' and 2.8% as 'Lesbian or Gay', with 6.7% preferring not to say.

All women Leaders defined themselves as 'Heterosexual'.

e) Disability

6.1% of respondents defined themselves as having a disability; of these, nearly half (42.8%) were women and only one under the age of 50.

f) Children

70.8% of Leaders said that they had children of any age with 81.2% of these indicating that they had children over the age of 18.

No women Leaders had children under the age of 10, and only one of the 25 female respondents had children at high school. 15 had adult children, including the one with children at high school.

Table 4: Age Range of Leaders' Children¹⁴

Age Range of Children	% all Leaders	% Female Leaders	% Male Leaders
Under 10 years	7.5%	0.0%	9.5%
11 - 18 years	14.2%	4.0%	16.8%
Over 18 years	57.5%	60.0%	56.8%

g) Political Posts Held Prior to Election as Leader

72.5% of respondents had held some form of political group office - deputy leader, chief whip, secretary, etc - prior to becoming leader.

53.3% of leaders had served as deputy leader - 60% of women leaders and 51.6% of men.

¹³ Office of National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

¹⁴ Leaders may have been counted more than once if they have children in more than one age group; this number is, however, small.

Other group offices were much less likely to lead to leadership, with chief whip coming at the bottom - just 6.7% of leaders had previously held this post.

As will be seen in 2.2 below, the level of women deputy leaders is currently falling, and clearly this is going to have implications for women as local authority leaders if it continues.

h) Political Control

Local authority leaders achieve office by being elected by their political groups, either when that group is in power, or in opposition.

69% of leaders achieved their position when their political group was in control of the Council, 65% of male leaders and 80% of female.

The reasons for this disparity are not immediately as clear as the disparity itself, although there may be some connection with the fact that 60% of women leaders had served as deputies, and that political groups electing a new leader when in control are more likely to be looking for continuity and stability than those electing in opposition.

The disparity may also reflect the possibility, however, that groups electing a leader in opposition are looking for someone with an combative style to lead an effective attack strategy, and do not generally see women as having these attributes. Certainly it seems to be rather unexpectedly the case that women are more likely to be elected by groups looking for the qualities needed to run a council and less likely when they're looking for those required to gain control of one. It was not possible to investigate this further as part of this study, but would be an interesting area to look at as part of future projects.

i) Portfolio-Holding

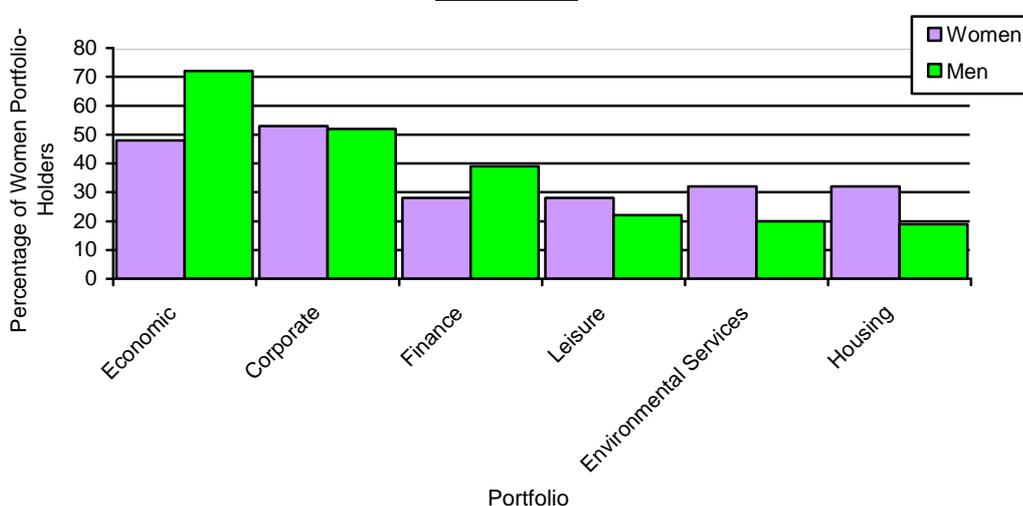
Leaders were asked which portfolios they had held or shadowed prior to becoming Leader of their political group or authority. 10 did not respond (nine men and one woman), but of the remainder a significant proportion had held the corporate services (57%), finance (40.0%) or economic development (30.9%) portfolios. However, as can be seen from Table 5, there were some real differences in patterns of portfolio-holding by gender¹⁵.

¹⁵ It should be noted that, because local authorities call different portfolios by different names, and group services together differently within them, it is difficult to identify exactly what functions are carried out under which heading. For this reason, therefore, we established our own grouping method, and this has been used throughout the report.

Table 5: Portfolios Held Prior to Becoming Leader¹⁶

Portfolio	All	% of Male Leaders	% of Female Leaders
Economic Development/Regeneration ¹⁷	72.8%	71.6%	48.0%
Corporate Services ¹⁸	57.3%	52.6%	52.0%
Finance	40.0%	38.9%	28.0%
Leisure	25.4%	22.1%	28.0%
Environmental Services	24.5%	20.0%	32.0%
Housing	23.6%	18.9%	32.0%
Planning	22.7%	17.9%	32.0%
Community ¹⁹	21.0%	20.0%	16.0%
Health & Social Care ²⁰	21.0%	17.9%	24.0%
Education & Children	14.5%	12.6%	16.0%

Chart 6: Top 6 Portfolios Held by Female and Male Councillors Pre-Leadership



From this it is clear that, for both men and women, the path to local government leadership is through economic, financial and corporate routes rather than service delivery experience. This is despite the fact that much of a back bench councillor’s day-to-day work revolves around delivery issues, and they might therefore be expected to value a sound knowledge and understanding of the issues involved in running frontline services. However, councillors actually seem to view the leader’s role as predominantly corporate, and therefore look specifically for those skills. This whole area, which is key to women’s chances of becoming local authority leaders, is discussed further in 2.1 below.

¹⁶ Individuals are likely to have held more than one portfolio whilst a councillor. Portfolio names vary greatly from council to council, and the list given here therefore covers general areas rather than specific names.

¹⁷ Including Strategic Planning and Transport

¹⁸ Including Performance, Customer Service, Property, Democratic Services, and Equalities.

¹⁹ Including Community Engagement, Community Cohesion, Community Safety, and Partnership

²⁰ Including Adult Services and Adult Care

This survey did not look specifically at whether or not women are well-represented as chairs of scrutiny panels or committees, but only 5 leaders (4 men and 1 woman) who responded to the survey reported having been a scrutiny chair. Figures on the diversity of these posts are hard to find, and there is very little evidence that they form part of the current route to leadership. The role of scrutiny is considered further in Section 4.4.

j) Employment Background

Chart 7 shows the employment backgrounds from which leaders are drawn, and Chart 8 gives the same information for women leaders. As can be seen, the majority of leaders are from business, finance or management rather than the public, trade union or voluntary and community sectors.

Chart 7: Employment Backgrounds of All Leaders

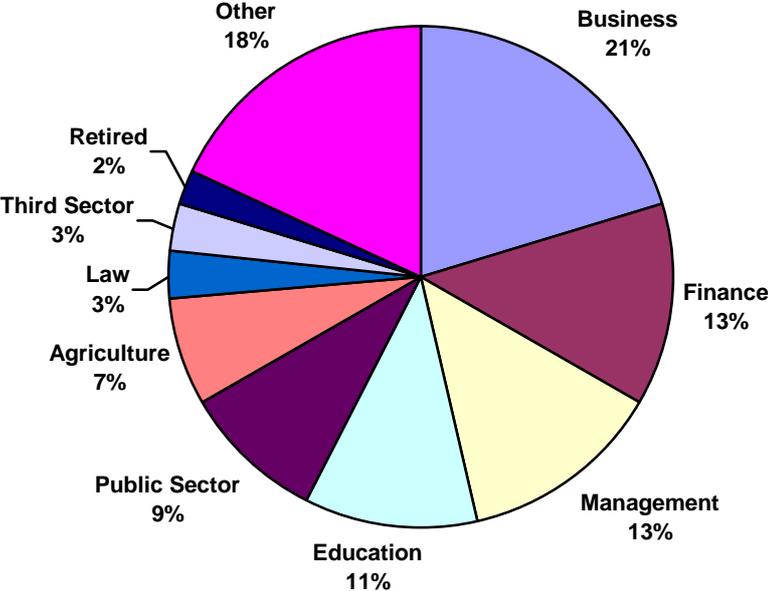
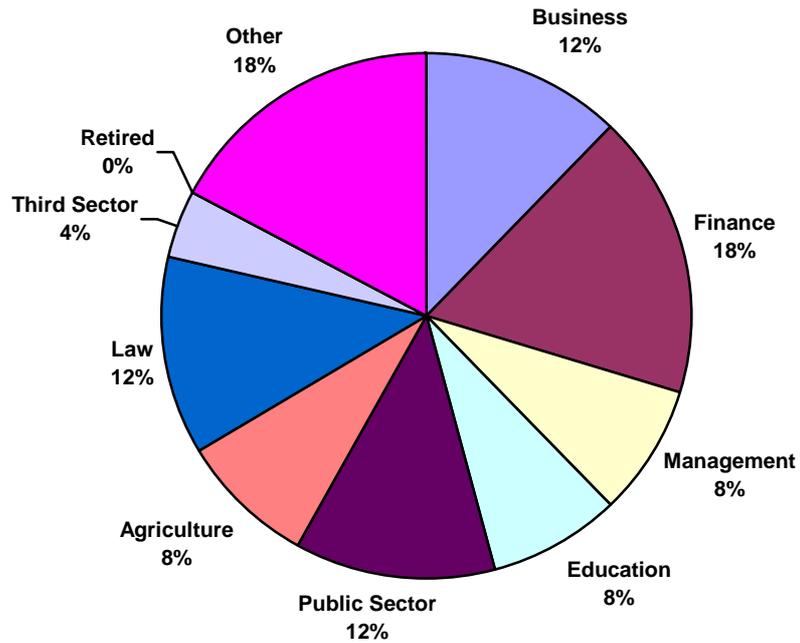


Chart 8: Employment Backgrounds of Women Leaders



This distribution of leaders' employment backgrounds - for both men and women, and across all parties - is rather different from that for councillors. It is true that the majority of elected members in employment (69%) are drawn from the private sector, although this is more markedly the case for men (73%) than for women (57%). Male councillors are also markedly more likely to be drawn from managerial or professional ranks (74%) than women (58%), and the implications of this pattern are discussed in 4.3 below²¹.

²¹ Figures on the employment backgrounds of councillors are from the Local Government Ideas and Development 2008 Census of Local Councillors

Interviews with Leaders

Qualitative interviews were carried out with a small number of leaders - 7 men and 6 women - to explore both their views about leadership, and what support or advice they receive or have received.

a) Qualities Leaders Need

Leaders were asked what qualities they thought a good leader needed; the lists below contain the key words used to describe these.

Men

Resilience, clarity of purpose, ability to collaborate and work with others, patience, determination, clear vision, ability to communicate, persistence, charm, charisma, combination of hard and soft skills, ability to know when to lead and when to negotiate, ability to delegate, diplomacy, decisiveness, persuasiveness, ability to get on with people, ability to listen, strength

Women

Commitment, willingness to participate, willingness to learn, problem-solving abilities, clear vision, objectivity, ability to get the best out of people, teamwork, management skills, ability to communicate, patience, empathy, decisiveness, ability to make difficult decisions, good working relationships, integrity, clarity of purpose, trustworthiness, astuteness, ability to deal with different cultures, stamina, sense of humour, negotiating skills, ability to compromise and bring other views on board

b) Qualities Groups look for when Electing Leaders

Leaders were asked what qualities they thought their Group looked for when elected a new leader; again, the two lists were similar but by no means the same.

Men

Leadership, someone who's inclusive and decisive, safe pair of hands, ability to inspire others, someone to listen to them and make sure they're involved, someone who can guide them but also take their views into account, flexibility, someone who's able to give the time, someone who'll attack the opposition, someone who will consult, someone who'll give them a job, someone they can feel proud of, hard worker.

Women

Ability to bring the group together, ability to deal with sensitive issues in a sensitive way. conscience, ability to take people along, ability to deal with officers, strategic, ability to

debate, approachable, willing to discuss, democratic, inclusive, ability to make tough decisions, likeable, someone who actually wants to do the job, commitment, fairness, appropriate behaviour.

c) Training for new members, new cabinet members and scrutiny chairs

All leaders interviewed said that their authority provided some training for new councillors, although the extent of it varied. In a number of cases leaders said that there was a personal development plan scheme for all councillors, whilst others said that their authority had good induction and training procedures, especially for councillors dealing with quasi-judicial areas such as planning and licensing.

However, there was much less training available for cabinet members; in one authority a cabinet member development programme was about to start, and others made provision through external agencies, but overall there was no coherent training provision for members either working at, or aspiring to, executive or cabinet office.

Only one leader mentioned making use of externally provided peer mentors; several pointed out that training was voluntary and that they could not force members to attend, even where they thought it would be beneficial.

Leaders were also asked about what provision their political parties made for training. Most leaders thought that their parties provided some support prior to election, but very little afterwards, and almost none to cabinet members or those seeking to achieve that level.

d) Training for Leaders

Leaders were asked what training they themselves had had, either before or after taking office. Most said none at all; one said that there had been:

‘nothing, not even from the existing leader, whom I could have shadowed. Despite repeated requests before he went he wouldn’t have it. By the end of my first six weeks I was exhausted.’

Another reported being ‘dumped in unexpectedly as leader’ and having suddenly to take on the role with no previous experience, and another referred to himself as ‘entirely self-taught’.

The minority of leaders who had had training had by and large received it after taking office. One had had a ‘brief course in local government finance’. whilst another had found a four-week course at the Leeds Castle Leadership Centre ‘very helpful’ and had also had support from Common Purpose.

In one case, the leader described himself as 'not enamoured' of training, and thought that by and large members of his party didn't want to be trained, since they had been elected to do the job and were in any case 'resistant to being moulded'. He thought that it was up to individuals to identify their own training needs and flag them up as necessary.

One female leader said that she thought mentoring or networking rather than training would be useful, and that the opportunity to discuss relevant issues (e.g., time management and domestic responsibilities) with other women in the same position would be useful.

e) Gender Balance of Cabinets

Leaders were asked about the gender balance of their cabinets or executives; those interviewed ranged from one with no women at all in the cabinet to one with a significant majority of women.

The leaders of these two cabinets gave almost identical answers when asked what they thought the reasons for their cabinet's gender balance was.

'We just get the best people for the jobs. We're gender blind.'

'We go by individual ability and availability, I think we're gender blind.'

Both of these leaders were male, and both chose portfolio-holders themselves, rather than accepting those elected by their group.

Leaders with very low levels of women cabinet members were divided on whether or not this was a problem, and none could see what more could be done to address it. All led political groups which were less than 25% female, and all said that they thought there was a lack of women candidates to choose from.

'We'd like to have more, an all-male cabinet is not a healthy situation, but just being a councillor now is very time-consuming and much more onerous. We have had 50% in the past.'

'It does matter ... we've tried to encourage them, but they're more reserved and don't put themselves forward. It's very frustrating.'

'It doesn't matter because we get the best available.'

'I don't think it really matters - we have women vice chairs and they're some of the busiest people we've got.'

One (male) leader thought that women could offer something different as cabinet members:

‘Women are less confrontational, more sharing and more logical. Men are more likely to grandstand, they show off more, so perhaps they’re more likely to be heard.’

Leaders with high numbers of women portfolio-holders were on the whole clear that having a diverse cabinet was a good thing, but that generally speaking it needed to be worked at. Those who had the highest levels of women were also likely to be most aware of the need to balance the cabinet in other ways also - ethnicity, for instance, and a geographical balance across the authority. All thought that their cabinets or executives worked well, and that diversity as well as ability contributed to this:

‘I’m pleased with the cabinet at the moment, it has good general experience at senior level and a good balance. They’re more interested in problem-solving now than scoring points.’
(male leader)

‘The men in the Group have never really been interested in equalities before, but since we got more women in the cabinet they are - some of them are worried about being under-represented.’ *(female leader)*

‘The make-up of the cabinet is a statement in itself. It ought to represent the population, and though it doesn’t in other ways (age, for instance) it does in this.’ *(female leader)*

‘It’s right to replicate the make-up of the Group in the cabinet. I’ve been fairly autocratic about it and acted positively in favour of women, but the Group’s accepted it.’ *(male Leader)*

f) Guidance from Political Parties

Leaders were asked whether or not their political party offered any guidance for groups on choosing a leader or cabinet, or to leaders on choosing portfolio-holders.

The general consensus across all parties was that, apart from a set of rules or a framework for the actual procedures, there was no advice on equalities or diversity, although one said that there might be, but if there was he hadn’t read it.

g) General Comments

Leaders were asked if they had any other comments on either leadership or the issue of the diversity of their cabinets. Their responses, some of which are quoted below, covered a number of areas.

‘It can be a lonely world, you need to be able to relate to the group, the officers and the public and the decisions you take can make you unpopular.’ *(female leader)*

'The really difficult bit is people, managing the Group. You have more control in industry.'
(male leader)

'When I became leader of the council I'd been leader of the opposition for more than ten years....I think there's insufficient training for opposition leaders.'
(female leader)

'You have to be flexible and bend with changing times.'
(male leader)

'There are going to be changes to both leadership and the powers of the executive. We're going to need more training in the day-to-day working of the authority.'
(male leader)

'Nowadays so many meetings are held during the day - I'm sure that works against women in particular.'
(female leader)

'Day-time meetings are a problem for men as well as women; one of our male councillors has had to quit to concentrate on his career.'
(female leader)

'We need to work on the age profile as well, if we're meant to be representing the people.'
(male leader)

2. Routes into Leadership

This section of the report looks at two key areas: council experience, and what the barriers to women taking leadership roles are; before making recommendations for what could be done to improve the situation.

2.1 Portfolio-Holding

Portfolio-holders are almost always members of a cabinet or executive established as part of the governance arrangements for the authority. They are usually chosen by the leader, though they may also be elected by the political group; it seems likely that about 20% are chosen by the elective method.

There are a total of 2,804 portfolio-holders in England; of these 726 (25.9%) are women.

The size of cabinets ranges from 3 (Mole Valley) to 13 (Harlow). The average size is 8, and the average number of women members is 2.

Table 9 shows how many and what percentage of 335 councils have different levels of women portfolio-holders. Over half of councils have between 10% and 29% women in their cabinets; 31% of councillors overall are women.

Table 9: Number and Percentage of Councils with Different Levels of Women Portfolio-Holders

% Women Portfolio-Holders	Number of Councils	% of Councils
50% + ²²	28	8.4%
40%- 49%	34	10.1%
30% - 39%	75	22.4%
20% - 29%	87	26.0%
10% - 19%	95	28.4%
0% ²³	16	4.8%

For many years there has been a belief, borne out by some research, that women are more likely to hold the 'caring' portfolios and less likely to hold those relating to finance, corporate services or economic development. As Table 10 shows, this is indeed the case.

Nor is the pattern outlined there new. Research published in 2008²⁴ showed that in 2001 the top portfolios for women were Social Services, Community and Education. whilst those for men were

²² There are 7 councils with 60% or more women in their cabinets/executives; these are Haringey (75%), Mole Valley and Winchester (67%), North Warwickshire and Sevenoaks (63%) and Camden and Lambeth (60%)

²³ The authorities with no women in their cabinets in 2010/11 are Ashford, Bradford, Bromley, Cheltenham, Chesterfield, Fenland, Great Yarmouth, Harrogate, Horsham, Rossendale, Rotherham, South Derbyshire, South Hams, Southampton, Thanet and Wellingborough.

²⁴ Women 'Leaders' in Local Government in the UK, Catherine Bochel and Hugh Bochel, published in Parliamentary Affairs Vol. 61 No. 3, 2008, 426-441

Housing, Economic Development and Culture & Leisure. In 2006 women were most likely to hold the Health, Social Services or Housing portfolios, whilst men were most likely to hold those for Corporate Services, Regeneration and Education.

Table 10: Women Portfolio-Holders

Portfolio	No. of Women holding this Portfolio	Women as a % of all holding this Portfolio	% of Women Cabinet Members holding this portfolio
Community ²⁵	82	24.5%	15.4%
Education & Children	80	23.9%	15.0%
Health & Social Care ²⁶	78	23.3%	14.6%
Corporate Services ²⁷	59	17.6%	11.1%
Leisure	51	15.2%	9.6%
Environmental Services	50	14.9%	9.4%
Economic Development/Regeneration ²⁸	41	12.2%	7.7%
Housing	40	11.9%	7.5%
Finance	23	6.9%	4.3%
Planning	17	4.7%	3.2%

This history of different experience, especially when combined with the very low level of women deputy leaders, has serious implications for women aspiring to leadership roles. These are discussed in detail further on in this report.

Less than a quarter (24%) of leaders have not either served as deputy leader, or held one of the key corporate portfolios, or both. Women are slightly more likely than men to be elected without some combination of these experiences (28% as opposed to 23%), but for both genders success in the leadership stakes is much more difficult for those who do not have it.

Almost half (47.9%) of leaders who responded to the survey said that they choose portfolio-holders. A further 27.4% said that they chose them, but sought a confirmatory vote from the group, whilst 19.7% said that portfolio-holders were entirely elected by the group. There appeared to be very little difference in terms of outcome; women were as likely (or unlikely) to hold key portfolios whether elected by their group or appointed by their leader.

Leaders are thus clearly the key decision-makers in the majority of cases, though they may often act in consultation with others or require the agreement of their group. Interestingly, all but one of the leaders interviewed said that they made their decisions on merit - two (one with a high number of women cabinet members and one with none) said that they were 'gender blind'. Yet the pattern of portfolio-holding suggests that the majority of leaders (or, where the political group elects cabinets, councillors) are not; the predominance of women in 'traditional' portfolio areas even

²⁵ Including Community Engagement, Community Cohesion, Community Safety, and Partnership

²⁶ Including Adult Services and Adult Care

²⁷ Including Performance, Customer Service, Property, Democratic Services, and Equalities.

²⁸ Including Strategic Planning and Transport

where there is a high percentage of women in the cabinet, is indicative of a decision-making process based on other criteria.

Neither the Conservative nor the Liberal Democrat parties offer their leaders any real guidance on the make-up of cabinets or the pattern of portfolio-holding, and although the Labour Party's rule book says that

'The Labour Party expects Labour cabinets to reflect the diversity of the area represented by the local authority as far as possible',

the fact that only nine of the 55 authorities with Labour leaders have more than 50% women portfolio-holders (and indeed two - Bradford and Rotherham - have no women in their cabinets at all, whilst a further seven have only one) suggests that this requirement is largely neither honoured nor enforced.

Of the 27²⁹ cabinets which have 50% or more women members, 9³⁰ are led by women. 36% of women leaders have cabinets at least half of whose members are women, but only 19% of male leaders achieve this level. 55% of cabinets led by women are 30% or above female, and 37% of cabinets led by men. At the other end of the scale, 28% of cabinets (96) have only one woman member, and in just 7³¹ is that woman herself the leader.

Thus there is some evidence to suggest that women leaders are more likely to appoint or attract women portfolio-holders, although there is also some evidence to suggest that women leaders are no more likely than men to give women the key portfolios; of the 88 women appointed to cabinets led by women in 2010 just 12.5% (11) held either the Finance, Economic or Corporate portfolios.

For many leaders - both male and female - the lack of women in their cabinets matters, but they also seem at a loss as to what to do about it. In groups where there are very low numbers of women members this is understandable, and political parties in local areas need to ensure that they field enough women candidates in winnable seats to rectify this. But in most political groups - particularly the larger ones - there are reasonable numbers of women councillors, even in many of the groups where there are no women portfolio-holders at all.³²

²⁹ Haringey (75%), Winchester (67%), North Warwickshire and Sevenoaks (both 63%), Camden and Lambeth (both 60%), Kingston-upon-Thames, South Oxfordshire, Stroud, Wakefield and Wealden (all 57%), Epping Forest, Exeter, Ipswich and Richmond upon Thames (all 56%), Bolton, Brighton & Hove, Colchester, High Peak, Mid-Suffolk, Norwich, Redcar & Cleveland, Stevenage, Waltham Forest, West Devon, Wolverhampton and Wychavon (all 50%)

³⁰ Haringey, Winchester, South Oxfordshire, Stroud, Epping Forest, Ipswich, Brighton & Hove, Colchester and Stevenage.

³¹ Corby, South Ribble, Arun, Bath & North Somerset, Lewes, Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire.

³² For example, in the controlling Conservative groups of Bromley and Horsham there are 16 (30%) and 5 (16%) women members respectively, in the Liberal Democrat groups in Cheltenham and Chesterfield there are 7 (28%) and 12 (32%) respectively, and in the Labour groups in Bradford and Rotherham there are 11 (28%) and 15 (30%) respectively. None of these authorities have any women in their cabinets.

One leader explained the lack of women in his cabinet as a problem of time - women in his group were extremely busy and did not have the time to commit. If domestic responsibilities are indeed more of an issue for women than for men (this is considered further in the section on Barriers), and if women councillors are also trying to juggle a job as well as family and council duties, lack of time may indeed also be a factor. However, it was male, not female leaders who said that political groups looked for someone with 'time' when choosing a leader; women talked more about commitment and a willingness to do the job, and at least a quarter of both male and female leaders are holding down jobs as well as leading their authorities. On the other hand, the fact that hardly any women leaders have children under the age of 18 suggests that the same may be true of many portfolio-holders, and the issue of caring responsibilities is therefore key.

Recommendations

- R1 Political parties should develop clear guidelines for Leaders choosing portfolio-holders, and these should include advice on ensuring that women as well as men have access to the key strategic responsibilities of finance, economic development and corporate services.
- R2 Political parties should also produce guidelines for local council groups which elect portfolio-holders requiring them to consider relevant representational issues when filling cabinet and shadow cabinet positions, so that the possibility of cabinets filled entirely by white men is eliminated.
- R3 Leaders should seek to provide as many practical opportunities for development as possible, and should ensure that these are available to both male and female councillors. This should include the appointment of both portfolio-holders and scrutiny chairs. Full use should also be made of leadership training opportunities offered by Local Government Ideas and Development and others
- R4 The IDEA's Census of Local Councillors should be extended to include information about portfolio-holders, and this information should relate at least to age, ethnicity and disability as well as gender.

2.2 Deputy Leaders

306 English Local Authorities have one or more Deputy Leader; of these 59 (19.3%) are female. This is a reduction from the 70 (23%) in 2009/10 and 2008/9, when there were 70 women deputies constituting 20% of a larger number of authorities than exist now³³.

15.7% of Conservative Deputies are women, 25.5% of Labour and 28.2% of Liberal Democrat.

³³ CFWD, Leadership & Gender 2009/10, Leadership & Gender in Local Government in England 2008/9

There are six authorities in which both the leader and the deputy leader are female (plus two in which one of two deputies is female), and 202 in which they are both male.

Over 50% of current local government leaders had been deputy at some point prior to becoming leader, and the low incidence of women in that post is therefore significant. This is considered in more detail further on in this report.

60% of women leaders and 51% of men had held office as deputy leader prior to becoming leader. This suggests that political groups are looking for some demonstration of both leadership skills and teamwork when making decisions, and regard a successful deputy as a potential leader. But the number of women in this role has actually decreased in recent years (down from 70 in 2009 to 59 in 2011), and there is at present no reason to believe that this is going to improve in the short-term unless some action is taken.

Like leaders, deputies are usually elected by their political group, although leaders themselves generally have a view on who their deputy should be, and can reasonably expect in normal circumstances to get the person they want. But although some political parties have job descriptions for key roles, and in the case of the Labour Party provide guidance on the make-up of group officers and cabinets,³⁴ most leaders (and therefore probably most political groups) were either unaware of it or chose not to follow it - one said 'We tend to plough our own furrow.'

In the vast majority of authorities there is just one deputy leader³⁵, and the role of that deputy varies from authority to authority, depending upon what the role of the leader is, what role s/he requires the deputy to fulfil, and what the group's expectations are. Some authorities provide a job description for deputy leaders; in York, for instance, it is merged with that for the Leader, which makes it impossible to see what the specific contribution of the deputy might be, but in Havering the deputy is expected to 'assist and work with' the Leader, to deputise for him (sic), and to 'undertake portfolio responsibility' in addition to deputy duties. Meanwhile in Kirklees the deputy is required to do much the same. None of these suggest a distinct and separate role for the deputy, and none include other attributes leaders might also be looking for, such as loyalty and discretion.

Some political parties also provide job descriptions, including person specifications or lists of skills required, for various posts, including deputy leader. These may or may not be at variance with those produced by local authorities, and political groups, when electing a deputy leader may be aware of either both or none. Moreover, it would probably be impossible for any individual candidate to meet the criteria required by both types of specification, and groups are therefore unlikely to take a great deal of notice of either.

³⁴ Labour Party Rule Book 2011, Chapter 13

³⁵ There are 4 (Hyndburn, Leeds, Lincolnshire and Manchester) in which there are 2 deputies.

Political groups have a variety of reasons for choosing a particular deputy leader, but the frequency with which deputies - particularly women - eventually succeed to leadership suggests that, even at this stage, they are looking for potential leaders, and that they therefore consider a candidate's portfolio-holding history as well as their political and personal qualifications. If a candidate has not already led in the required areas before becoming deputy leader it is unlikely that she will do so whilst in post; of the 59 women deputies looked at in this research 14 had no portfolio, 13 had one of the key corporate portfolios, and 32 held the portfolios least likely to help in any later leadership bid.

Leaders also often prefer to have deputies who can complement their own areas of expertise; 53 male leaders have female deputies, and of these women only one has the finance brief, with a further nine holding corporate or economic portfolios. In the six authorities where both leader and deputy are female, all of the deputies have service delivery portfolios.

Given that job descriptions for deputy leaders appear to identify the ability to assist and stand in for the leader as the major feature of the role, this seems contrary; deputies without corporate experience might be expected to have difficulty in standing in for a leader who does. In Kirklees the deputy leader is specifically responsible for 'ensuring that the appropriate developmental steps are taken to equip them with the knowledge and skills to carry out the role of leader when called upon', and it is unlikely that leaders generally view themselves as mentors to their deputies.

In a very small number of councils there are two or more deputy leaders. There are currently four authorities using that model, but in only two of them is one of the of the deputies female, and in neither case does she hold strategic or corporate portfolios. Moreover, the legislation requires that there should be one named statutory deputy, and in only one case (Leeds) is this post filled by the woman.

Deputy leadership is clearly one of the key routes into leadership, particularly for women, and particularly combined with responsibility for a corporate, financial or economic portfolio. It is currently one of the most neglected roles in local government, and this needs to be addressed if the diversity of leaders is to be improved.

Recommendations

R5 There should be a clear view of what deputy leadership actually is, and it should be regarded as a role in its own right as well as a stand-in for the leader or a waiting room for leadership itself.

- R6 Leaders should take steps to ensure that deputies are equipped to stand in for them, and, in particular, should consider giving them appropriate experience in relevant areas regardless of portfolio responsibilities.
- R7 Political parties should give clear guidance to council groups about gender balance in leadership teams, which should be regarded as at least desirable.

3. Barriers to Leadership

For many women (and some men) the barriers to full participation in public life are so great that they are unlikely even to aspire to public office, let alone a leadership role in it. These barriers were examined in depth in the Councillors' Commission Report published in 2007, and sadly have not changed since. The sections which follow examine two key areas as they apply to leadership.

3.1 Caring and Childcare

Over half of women leaders responded to the survey; of these, none had children of primary school age or younger, and only one had children at high school. The remaining 24 either had adult children or no children at all. On the other hand, 26% of the 95 male leaders who responded had children under the age of 18.

For most women with children of school age, or with other demanding care responsibilities, the requirement to combine childcare, being a councillor and leadership is likely to be insuperable, even with the most dedicated and extensive support. Of all groups, therefore, women councillors with children under ten are least likely to lead their authorities, regardless of any other criteria, and women with caring responsibilities also least likely in any community to become councillors in the first place, regardless of what other provision is in place

The 2008 Census of Local Authority Councillors says that only 26% of councillors identify themselves as having caring responsibilities of any kind, with just 13.5% saying that they have responsibility for children. The detail of these figures³⁶, which includes a breakdown by gender, is illuminating.

Table 11: Breakdown of Councillors' Caring Responsibilities

Caring responsibilities:	Male	%	Female	%
Child/Children	1590	11.9	1038	17.2
Partner	1280	9.5	534	8.8
Relative	750	5.6	617	10.2
Other	189	1.4	132	2.2
One or more caring responsibility	3156	23.5	1918	31.8
No caring responsibilities	10261	76.5	4120	68.2

Although women are thus marginally less likely to be combining council work with caring for a partner, they are much more likely to be caring for children or dependent relatives. But the most

³⁶[National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2008 - analyses by gender, ethnicity and disability \(XLS, 92KB\)](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1095015) available from <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1095015>

striking figures in the table are that 68% of women councillors regard themselves as having no caring responsibilities at all, whilst just 17% of women have childcare responsibilities.

This is by no means the pattern for the population as a whole. According to figures from the Office of National Statistics³⁷ (ONS), 80% of women will have children at some point between the ages of 16 and 45, with the average age for women having their first child now being 29. Childcare has always been identified as one of the main barriers to women entering public life, and this is particularly the case for women bringing up children on their own, i.e., over 80% of all lone parents. But even in families with two parents, the main burden of childcare is likely to fall on the mother, despite the fact that men are now willing to take a much greater share of the work than historically was the case.

Women councillors were also more likely to be combining more than one care responsibility, often probably for both children and an elderly relative.

The almost complete absence of women with children at home from the ranks of local government leaders is therefore hardly surprising, but it must be of concern, if only because it also means that the great majority of women between these ages are effectively absent from council leadership, and as a result, from bodies into which local government feeds - the new Local Enterprise Partnerships, for instance, are likely to have very few women on them at all, and even fewer with domestic responsibilities.

Issues raised by women councillors over the years range from the availability of child and after-school care, which is not always easy to arrange and is often expensive, to the timing of meetings. Unfortunately, in the case of the latter, there is no easy answer; women with children at primary school, for instance, will face different problems from those with babies. Women who are in employment, on the other hand, are likely to have difficulty with daytime meetings, and would prefer them to be in the early evening, which is precisely when many parents have greatest difficulty.

Clearly it is not possible for councils to time meetings to suit everyone; nor, in the current financial climate, would it be acceptable for them to increase payments to those with children or dependents to cover care costs. It is also recognised that some of the issues relate to wider questions which affect society as a whole; changes to provision for the care of dependent adults, for example, will inevitably impact upon the ability of carers to become involved in local politics or to take up high-profile roles. But answers to these problems must be found if women are not effectively to be excluded at least in part from public office, and wholly from leadership roles, during their child-bearing years, thus ensuring that some of the principal consumers of council services are not represented at the table when decisions are taken.

³⁷ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/cohfer1210.pdf>

Recommendations

- R8 Councils should consider the timing of their meetings so as to enable as many members as possible to attend them without undue difficulty.
- R9 Central government, political parties and local authorities should consider as a matter of urgency how to address the current exclusion of women with children or other dependents from leadership roles. Whilst it is recognised that the solution is unlikely to be financial in the current climate, it is also unacceptable that women with children under 18 should effectively be unable to take on the leadership of their local authority, whilst this bar does not apply to their male colleagues.

2.2 The Culture and Cult of Leadership

Childcare, daycare or respite care alone would not resolve the difficulties for most women; the culture of local government leadership is itself a significant barrier.

Council leaders are expected to work long hours, and are often required to be at meetings or civic events during the evenings and at weekends. Most will also be expected by their party to engage in political meetings and campaigns, and on top of all this there are conferences and national meetings. In addition, there are wider cultural expectations of leadership which are often rooted in masculinity, and which some women find it difficult to meet (even if they want to). Addressing these issues successfully will require significant changes in both the culture and the expectations of local government leadership.

One cultural issue which formed very little part of this study is sexism itself. Although local women politicians are less likely than their national counterparts to complain about sexist behaviour, surveys conducted from time to time suggest that it is sometimes off-putting and at others actually offensive and distressing.³⁸ It is impossible to tell how many complaints are made to Chief Whips, nor how they are dealt with, since these statistics are not collected, and the Standards Board for England produces no figures of complaints received (if any) about this type of issue. None of the women leaders in this study identified sexism per se as a specific problem, though this was not the case for individuals interviewed for the New Local Government Network's research in (2009), when one leader observed that:

'The bullying factor did not like the idea of a woman becoming leader, and jibes about "shouldn't you be at home looking after the children" were rife, and still are.'³⁹

³⁸ A survey carried out for the Local Government Chronicle in June 2008 found that one in ten women councillors felt that they had been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination, whilst 41% of women councillors felt that they had been bullied at some stage in their council career.

³⁹ Quoted in *First Among Equals*, Anna Turley for NLGN, April 2009

Although gender may play a role in the way in which portfolio-holders are chosen, it is impossible to judge the extent, if any, to which it operates in the selection and election of leaders. However, there are some grounds for believing that it actually plays very little in any direct way. Leaders of both sexes seem to be required to have the same set of qualifications for leadership, and, despite the fact that there are issues of degree (e.g., women are much more likely to need experience as deputy leader than men), it does seem probable that most political groups actually do choose the person whom they see as best for the job, regardless of gender. This does not mean that leadership elections are gender-blind (far from it), but that if there are cultural issues at work they are less likely to be about sexism and more likely to be about leadership itself, for both women and men.

The current culture of leadership requires, as noted above, a very considerable personal commitment, and it is no coincidence that so many leaders identified time, in particular, as an essential element. In local government as in national politics and some areas of business, a highly macho 'presenteeism' culture is very prevalent, and the current vogue for strong and controlling leadership, much prized in some parts of the media, makes it very difficult for leaders to achieve more sensible working hours or less draining levels of activity. This is despite the fact that cultural change of this type would probably help both men and women to achieve a better work/life balance, as well as allow time for both mental and physical rest and recuperation.

It is noticeable that in recent years the concept of life/work balance as an issue for both sexes has begun to gain ground. In politics, however, it is rarely connected to the need to develop good business and management practice amongst leaders and leadership hopefuls; indeed, some of the skills currently advocated by leadership coaches, trainers and practitioners are precisely those which seem least likely to find favour with either politicians or commentators, and which are unlikely to form a major element of political leadership courses.

For instance, only one (male) leader included delegation in his list of qualities a leader should have. Yet the ability to delegate effectively is widely considered one of the key skills for good management, of both time and other fields. The website BusinessLink says that:

'By delegating specific business tasks to others, you take some of the pressure off yourself. Delegation also makes good business sense. It frees you up for innovative business thinking and helps you make the most of your employees.'⁴⁰

Some leaders may find delegation difficult because the culture of the 'strong' political leader is so all-pervading, and certainly one of the attractions for many people of the elected executive mayor model is precisely that centralising and all-encompassing aspect. 'Strength' is seen as an essentially male attribute; women are often described as 'strong' in business or political contexts

⁴⁰ <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=5001322946&site=181&type=RESOURCES>

when they display what are seen as male characteristics (e.g., as the ‘best man in the cabinet’⁴¹). Many women politicians have complained over the years about the pressure to be conform to masculine expectations in order to succeed,⁴² and there is no reason to believe that this pressure is any less at local than at national level.

By no means all council leaders are full-time politicians; many combine leadership with other work and some regard it as essential to do so. It is, however, difficult to do, and relies upon both an understanding employer (or to be self-employed) and good time management skills. In larger councils the combination may well be next to impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, some of the skills required may well be transferable, and this should perhaps be explored further.

Some women leaders identified the timing of meetings as a problem; unfortunately, they did not agree on what the problem was, with some feeling that daytime meetings were a barrier for women with children or women in employment, and others that evening and weekend commitments were more of an issue. This issue has already been dealt with from the point of view of councillors in the section on childcare, but from the point of view of leaders it relates at least in part to the sheer volume of meetings rather than the detail of their timing.

Finally, one (female) council leader thought that the culture of politics as a whole had something to answer for.

‘Politics is often shown as very aggressive, and that puts women off because most of us aren’t that aggressive, so we aren’t attracted. We need to learn to behave much better in council chambers.’

This was echoed in the NLGN study referred to above, in which one woman leader observed that:

‘The awful thing is that as a woman you’ve got to be tougher than anyone else, but you don’t want to become a bloke, you want to retain your femininity, so I tend to make progress by charm rather than aggression.’

Another said:

‘When I first became a councillor we had a good woman leader, but we still had to behave like men.’

Much of the cultural issue is to do with issues and perceptions outside local government itself, and is not capable of resolution in council chambers or political parties alone. But there are steps that

⁴¹ ‘She is so clearly the best man among them.’ said by Barbara Castle of Margaret Thatcher in 1975. ‘She is the best man in England.’ said of Margaret Thatcher by Ronald Reagan.

⁴² See, for instance, *Women In Parliament: the New Suffragettes*, (Boni Sones with Margaret Moran and Joni Ludowenski, 2005)

current leaders (of both sexes) themselves could take to challenge the culture of leadership, even if only locally, and which would benefit both men and women at all levels.

Recommendations:

- R10 Leadership training at all levels should include core management skills such as delegation, time management, team building and communication. Some of these are already included in the Local Government Ideas and Development Leadership Academy programme, but should also be incorporated into training provided by local authorities and political parties.
- R11 Both the political parties and local government as a whole should take steps to reduce the 'presenteeism' culture prevalent in many authorities, and should identify and share good practice where it occurs. This should include reviewing the number and timing of meetings, diary management skills, and delegation.
- R12 Leaders should take responsibility for the style and culture of politics in their authority, and should take the lead in working with their own members and the opposition consciously to improve it so as to attract a wider range of both women and men.
- R13 Both local authorities and political parties should consider what further measures they could take to address bullying and sexism, and should have clear procedures for their members to follow should complaints arise.

4. Other Issues

There are a number of other issues which need to be considered in the context of women in leadership roles. Some - such as the number of women councillors - do not necessarily have any direct bearing on the number of women leaders, but need to be taken into account. Others, such as the employment history of leaders and councillors, arise from wider cultural issues and any action local government took would have a very limited effect.

Although any consideration of routes into leadership would be incomplete without these areas, recommendations for action have not been made for all of them, since in some there is none which could reasonably or effectively be taken.

4.1 The Number of Women Councillors

It might be thought that women are more likely to lead authorities where there are a high number of women councillors; however, previous research⁴³ has found no basis for this, and this study has borne this out.

Approximately 31% of local councillors are women; this varies between types of authority, with women most likely to serve in London boroughs (36%) and least likely to do so in the shire counties (26%)⁴⁴

At present, this pattern exactly mirrors that for women leaders, with women being most likely to lead London boroughs (17%) and least likely to lead shire counties (11%). However, some caution should be exercised in determining what this means; in 2008 women were most likely to lead unitary councils (21%) and least likely to lead London boroughs; the abolition of 40 unitary councils (11 of which were lead by women) coupled with an increase in the number of women councillors in London in 2010 have led in part to changes in the profile.

It is also the case that, whilst the percentage of women councillors has been fairly static at around the 30% mark in recent years, the percentage of women leaders has varied only a little more - 15% in 2006⁴⁵ 13% in 2007, 16% in 2008, 13% in 2009 and 14% in 2010.

A more detailed examination of the percentages of women in the political groups of the 48 women council leaders does not identify any direct relationship between the level of women councillors and the fact of a woman leader. For instance, the Conservative group controlling Brighton & Hove has 52% women members, the Liberal Democrat group in North Norfolk 50% and the Labour group in Stevenage 48%, whilst the Conservative groups in Bath & North East Somerset, Nottinghamshire

⁴³ Catherine Bochel and Hugh Bochel, *Women 'Leaders' in Local Government in the UK 2008*

⁴⁴ Local Government Ideas and Development, *Census of Local Authority Councillors 2008*

⁴⁵ Bochel & Bochel, *Women 'Leaders' In Local Government*, published in *Parliamentary Affairs* March 2008

and North Herefordshire had 16%, 17% and 18% respectively. All six authorities have women leaders.

Controlling groups with women leaders did tend to have a slightly higher level of women councillors than the average - 32% as opposed to 31%, but this difference is nowhere near significant enough to suggest a causal link.

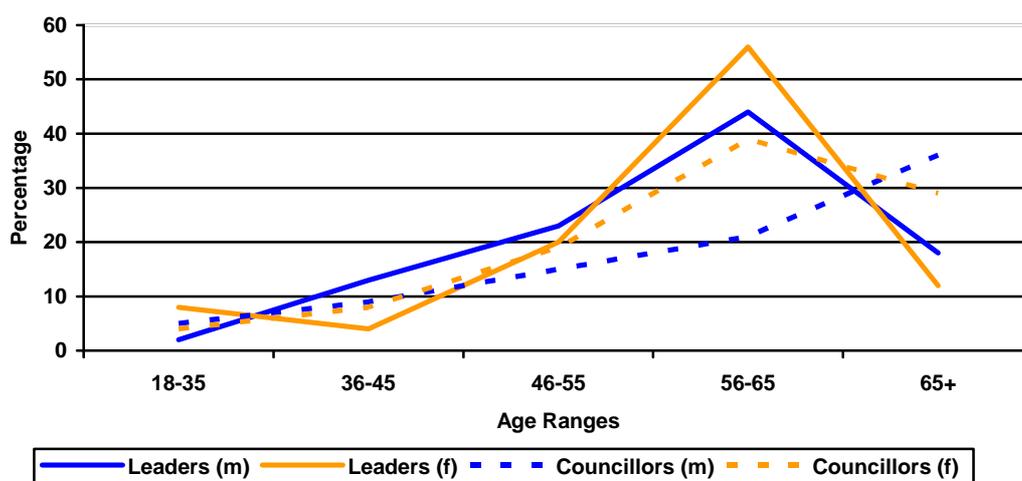
Conservative controlling groups with women leaders had an average of 30% women members, Labour groups 37%, and Liberal Democrat Groups 35%. Nationally, 28.5% of Conservative councillors are women, 33.8% of Labour councillors and 34.9% of Liberal Democrat⁴⁶; again, the difference is not so great as to suggest that a high base of women councillors is a pre-requisite for a female leader.

Thus, although there are many reasons why there should be more women councillors, and although it is certainly the case that women cannot be elected if they are not eligible in the first place (i.e., are present as councillors), there is no evidence that increasing either the number or the percentage of women councillors would in and of itself lead to any increase in the number of women leaders.

4.2 Age

Both men and women leaders are most likely to be aged between 50 and 65, but this likelihood is much more marked in the case of women. Chart 9 compares the levels of men and women leaders and councillors in different age groups.

Chart 9: Ages of Male and Female Councillors and Leaders



⁴⁶ Local Government Ideas and Development, *Census of Local Authority Councillors 2008*

It is noticeable that the lines for women councillors and leaders mirror each other much more closely than those for men. This perhaps reflects the figures for care responsibilities referred to earlier, together with the fact that both men and women are likely to find employment commitments slightly easier to juggle once they have achieved a certain degree of seniority. It also reflects the fact that women are more likely to defer a political career until after their children have left home.

4.3 Employment Backgrounds

As has been seen, both male and female leaders are predominantly drawn from what might be termed 'professional' occupations. They have, on the whole, had careers prior to (or parallel with) becoming councillors, and they bring to local government the skills and expertise which their various occupations have to offer.

However, there are considerable differences between the employment patterns for councillors as a whole and leaders in particular. For one thing, 43% of councillors identified themselves as 'retired', compared with only 1% of leaders.⁴⁷ No women leaders identified themselves as 'retired', as against 42% of women councillors. Leaders are significantly more likely to be drawn from the working population than councillors; this is partly a function of the fact that they are likely to be younger than the average age of their group.

The employment patterns of those councillors who are not retired does not mirror that of leaders. For example, 12% of councillors who worked defined themselves as 'administration, clerical or sales staff'. For women councillors this rose to 25%. Yet only two leaders identified themselves as being or having been in this category. 73% of male councillors and 58% of female said that they were from business, managerial or professional backgrounds, and although they were more likely than men to come from educational backgrounds, they were least likely to come from a manual trade.

It is well known that women are under-represented in business, whether as managers or business owners. Only 12.5% of FTSE 100 company boards are female, and the position is not much better further down the chain. Only 13% of businesses are majority-owned by women, and only 8% of women own or manage their own business (as against 16% of men).⁴⁸ Similarly, women are under-represented in many professions, or in the upper echelons of those in which they are present in any numbers - for instance, 45% of solicitors are female, but only 21% of partners.⁴⁹

If a professional, managerial or business background is a pre-requisite for all leaders, regardless of gender, the partial exclusion of women from many of the relevant fields is material, particularly

⁴⁷ In 1997 just 34% of councillors identified themselves as 'retired'

⁴⁸ UK Women's Enterprise Taskforce http://www.womensenterprise.co.uk/stats_wetf.asp

⁴⁹ Women In Law <http://womeninlaw.com/WIL/?p=669>

since council political groups will continue for the foreseeable future to regard business or managerial experience as important.

Broadening the base from which councillors are drawn might help to change the employment profile of leaders, as might changing the perception of the qualifications a leader requires. On the other hand, neither of these developments is likely to happen in the short-term, and both would require a cultural as well as a political shift.

4.4 Scrutiny Chairs

As indicated earlier, figures for the diversity of chairs of scrutiny panels or committees are hard to find. However, there is very little evidence that scrutiny forms part of the main routes into leadership, although it could certainly be argued that it should, since it enables members to gain detailed understanding of the workings of the authority and its corporate and community activities.

In addition, scrutiny chairs are by no means always drawn from the controlling group, and should therefore provide an excellent means by which councillors in opposition can gain valuable insight and experience. The fact that only five leaders surveyed had served as scrutiny chairs suggests that this is an opportunity which is not being fully used, but until more detailed information is available in this area it is difficult to be precise.

Recommendations

- R14 Experience as a scrutiny chair should be regarded as having the same value as portfolio-holding when considering suitability for leadership.
- R15 The Centre for Public Scrutiny should include questions about gender in its surveys, and should publish outcomes.
- R16 More work should be done in CFWD's next leadership report (2011/12) on the relationship between scrutiny and leadership.

4.5 Leadership Election Mechanisms

Local authority Leaders are chosen by very small closed electorates (i.e., their political group) who may decide upon a candidate for a variety of reasons, including political principle, competence and the expectation or anticipation of promotion or other favour. The particular criteria for which they look, the majority of which relate to council experience, have already been explored but there is also an issue with the actual election mechanism used.

Each political group of councillors - whether in control or not - chooses a leader. Elections are held by secret ballot, and the electorate is usually confined to councillors of that party. The leader of a

particular group will then become the leader of his or her local authority either when the party gains outright control of the council, or, in councils with no overall control, when the necessary agreements are made with other parties.

Council leaders are thus the last major political office-holders elected by such a restricted franchise; their national equivalents who used to be elected by their respective groups of MPs, are now all elected by ballot of the membership in one form or another. In most parties mayoral candidates are selected by a ballot of the membership in the relevant local government area, and council candidates are overwhelmingly also selected by local party memberships.

The argument for leaders - at all levels - being elected by the groups of councillors or MPs they are to lead is that these are their peers, and see them on a more or less daily basis so that all their good and bad points are known. These colleagues are therefore believed to be best placed to select one of their number to lead them. But this principle has already been partially abandoned for parliamentary leadership elections, and there seems no good reason other than custom and practice for it to be preserved locally.

Political groups, as will be seen, look for very specific qualities in a leader, and whilst these may be the correct ones, at least in part, they produce leaders chosen from a very narrow base. Opening up the electoral mechanism may enable people with a broader range of experience to be successful; party members would almost certainly be looking for service delivery and campaigning as well as corporate experience, and although in the majority of cases the outcome would be the same regardless of method, a change would open up the possibility of different, more balanced criteria being used to determine leadership.

Recommendation

R17 Political parties should give consideration to changing internal systems so that leaders are elected by a mechanism which involves the whole party membership in the local authority area as well as members of the political group. This would bring practice in the election of local government group leaders into line with that for parties' national leaders.

5. Elected Mayors

There are currently (excluding London) 12 elected executive mayors in England, of whom two (the Conservative Linda Arkley in North Tyneside and the Liberal Democrat Dorothy Thornhill in Watford) are women.

Executive mayors are directly elected by the population of a given local authority, who choose from candidates fielded by political parties and independents. Mayors serve for a term of four years and run the authority in consultation with councillors. Local authority areas can move to an executive mayor system following a 'yes' vote in a referendum, although this will change if provisions in the Localism Bill come into effect (see 5.4 below).

5.1 Mayoral Elections

Women are significantly less likely than men to stand as candidates in mayoral elections; in 2010, for example, there were 5 mayoral elections⁵⁰ at which just 14.8% of candidates were women (as opposed to 29.6% of candidates at the local elections held on the same day as most of the mayoral contests). Four out of the five mayoral contests were won by candidates from the main three parties (3 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Independent), but only two of the twelve candidates fielded by those parties were women (one of whom, the Liberal Democrat incumbent in Watford, was elected).

In the three mayoral elections in 2009⁵¹ three of the eight candidates fielded by the main parties were women; one (the Conservative candidate in North Tyneside) was successful.

This pattern is repeated in each year in which there are mayoral elections. Women are less likely to win these elections because, apart from anything else, they are less likely to be fielded as candidates by parties who are likely to win, and although there was originally an anticipation that elected mayors would be independent local figures, seven are now from the main parties (3 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrats and 2 Conservative), and 1 from a smaller party (English Democrats), One of the independents is a former Labour council leader who may apply to rejoin. This leaves just three - in Hartlepool, Mansfield and Middlesbrough - who could be described as genuinely independent.

5.2 Deputy Mayors

Deputy mayors are appointed by the mayor, and may not necessarily be from his or her own political party. The deputy will, however, be a councillor, and will most probably be from the largest party on the council.

⁵⁰ Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford

⁵¹ Hartlepool, Doncaster and North Tyneside

Three deputy mayors are women - those in Doncaster, Hackney and North Tyneside. North Tyneside is one of the two authorities with a female mayor, and is the only one of the 12 in which both the mayor and her deputy are women.

The fact that a quarter of deputy mayors are women is encouraging, but probably not significant. There is virtually no evidence so far about what happens when incumbent mayors stand down and a new mayoral candidate is selected by the relevant political party. Even in Doncaster, where Labour fielded a female candidate, the outgoing mayor had already become Independent, and the selected candidate had not been his deputy. However, there is no reason to suppose that deputies are likely to succeed, and particularly not where the deputy is from a different political party (or none).

5.3 Portfolio-Holding in Mayoral Authorities

Elected mayors are able to appoint a cabinet to advise them, but they do not need to choose that cabinet from any particular party group. Thus Independent mayors have cabinets composed of members from parties to which they themselves do not belong, and the English Democrat Mayor of Doncaster (whose cabinet of seven includes three women) has appointed three Conservative portfolio-holders, two independents and one Liberal Democrat.

At present, women tend to do well as cabinet members in a mayoral system, although the sample is so small that it is difficult to generalise. 34% of portfolio-holders appointed by elected mayors are women, as opposed to 26% of those appointed /elected by leaders and their groups, although they are also more likely to be confined to education/social services/community roles, with only 3 of the 35 women holding the Corporate Services portfolio or equivalent, and just one holding Regeneration.

There are no all-male mayoral cabinets; percentages range from 63% (Hackney) to 17% (Newham).

5.4 The Localism Bill

The government's Localism Bill contains proposals for the creation of 12 new 'shadow' executive mayors pending a referendum and, if there is a 'yes' vote, subsequent elections⁵². The shadow mayors would be the leaders in post at the point of the change (probably January 2012); at present only one (Bristol) is female. Assuming that the leaders currently in post remain after the 2011 local elections, this change would reinforce the perception of elected mayors as essentially 'male'. In addition, it is probable that those male shadow mayors would become their parties' candidates in

⁵² These would be created in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Coventry, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wakefield

any subsequent mayoral election. It remains to be seen whether the doubling of mayoral elections will also improve the rate at which women stand in them.

Recommendations

- R18 Political parties should examine their selection procedures for mayoral candidates to identify ways in which their diversity could be increased. At the very least they should encourage local parties to identify and develop potential women mayoral candidates.
- R19 Government should develop strategies for improving the diversity of mayoral candidates, and in particular should look for ways of increasing the diversity of independent candidates.

Sources

The principal sources of information about leaders, deputy leaders and chief executives in this report were local authority websites, supplemented by phone calls to individual authorities and, occasionally, local newspapers. This is the fourth year in which we have conducted this research, and, despite some improvements and some good practice, it remains striking how difficult it is to access basic information about public representatives on some council websites.

Other sources have also informed this report, and these are listed below.

Bochel, Catherine and Bochel, Hugh: *Women 'Leaders' in Local Government in the UK*, Parliamentary Affairs Vol. 61 No. 3, 2008

Centre for Women & Democracy: *Leadership & Gender in Local Government in England*, March 2007, 2008 and 2009.

IDEA : *National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2008* January 2009

Audit of Political Engagement 6 2009 Hansard Society

Representing the Future: Report of the Councillors' Commission, December 2007

New Local Government Network: *First Among Equals*, March 2009

New Local Government Network, *Directly Elected, Direct Results*, Ed. Lucy Mott, June 2008

Michael Lodge & Guy Kenny, *Mayors Rule*, in Public Policy Research, April 2008

General Election 2010 House of Commons Library

Websites:

Centre for Women & Democracy www.cfwd.org.uk

Local Government Improvement & Development www.idea.gov.uk

Office of National Statistics www.ons.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Women Leaders 2010/11

Authority	10/11 Leader	Party
Arun	Gillian Brown	c
Barnet	Lynne Hillan	c
Bath & North East Somerset	Francine Haeberling	c
Bexley	Teresa O'Neill	c
Brentwood	Louise McKinlay	c
Brighton & Hove	Mary Mears	c
Cambridgeshire	Jill Tuck	c
Castle Point	Pam Challis	c
Central Bedfordshire	Patricia Turner	c
Dudley	Anne Millward	c
East Devon	Sara Randall-Johnson	c
East Lindsey	Doreen Stephenson	c
Epping Forest	Diana Collins	c
Ipswich	Elizabeth Harsant	c
Maldon	Penny Channer	c
North Hertfordshire	Lynda Needham	c
North Kesteven	Marion Brighton	c
Nottinghamshire	Kay Cutts	c
Plymouth	Vivien Pengelly	c
Redditch	Carole Gandy	c
Reigate & Banstead	Joan Spiers	c
Richmondshire	Fleur Butler	c
South Kesteven	Linda Neal	c
South Northamptonshire	Mary Clarke	c
South Oxfordshire	Ann Ducker	c
South Ribble	Margaret Smith	c
Staffordshire Moorlands	Sybil Ralphs	c
Stroud	Frances Roden	c
Surrey Heath	Moira Gibson	c
West Sussex	Louise Goldsmith	c
Wiltshire	Jane Scott	c

Authority	10/11 Leader	Party
Wycombe	Lesley Clarke	c
Brent	Ann John	l
Copeland	Elaine Woodburn	l
Corby	Patricia Fawcett	l
Haringey	Claire Kober	l
Islington	Catherine West	l
Luton	Hazel Simmons	l
St Helens	Marie Rimmer	l
Stevenage	Sharon Taylor	l
Bristol	Barbara Janke	ld
Calderdale	Janet Battye	ld
Cambridge City	Sian Reid	ld
Colchester	Anne Turrell	ld
Lewes	Ann de Vecchi	ld
North Norfolk	Virginia Gay	ld
Three Rivers	Ann Shaw	ld
Winchester	Kelsie Learney	ld

Appendix 2:

Survey of Council Leaders Responses

The tables below show the numerical and percentage responses to the Leaders' Survey carried out as part of this project.

A. Gender of Respondents:		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	79.2%	95
Female	20.8%	25
	<i>answered question</i>	120
	<i>skipped question</i>	1

B. Age Groups of Respondents:		
	Response Percent	Response Count
18-35	3.4%	4
36-45	10.9%	13
46-55	21.8%	26
56-65	46.2%	55
65+	17.6%	21
	<i>answered question</i>	119
	<i>skipped question</i>	2

C. Ethnicity		
	Response Percent	Response Count
White British	94.0%	110
Black British	0.0%	0
Asian British	0.9%	1
Other (please specify)	5.1%	6
	<i>answered question</i>	117
	<i>skipped question</i>	4

D. Sexual Orientation:		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Heterosexual	90.6%	106
Lesbian/Gay	2.6%	3
Bi-sexual	0.0%	0
Would rather not say	6.8%	8
	<i>answered question</i>	117
	<i>skipped question</i>	4

E. Defined Self as Disabled		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	6.1%	7
No	93.9%	108
	<i>answered question</i>	115
	<i>skipped question</i>	6

F. Age Ranges of Any Children		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 10	10.6%	9
11-18	20.0%	17
18+	81.2%	69
	<i>answered question</i>	85
	<i>skipped question</i>	36

G. Length of Time as a Councillor		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years	6.8%	8
5-10 years	17.9%	21
10-20 years	41.0%	48
20 years +	34.2%	40
	<i>answered question</i>	117
	<i>skipped question</i>	4

H. Length of Service as a Councillor Before Becoming Group Leader		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 10 years	61.0%	72
10-20 years	33.1%	39
20 years +	5.9%	7
	<i>answered question</i>	118
	<i>skipped question</i>	3

I. Posts Held Before Becoming Leader		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Deputy Leader	73.6%	64
Chief Whip	9.2%	8
Group Secretary	13.8%	12
Other Political Group Office	34.5%	30
	<i>answered question</i>	87
	<i>skipped question</i>	34

J. Position of Group When Respondent Became Leader:		
	Response Percent	Response Count
In control	68.7%	79
In opposition	31.3%	36
	<i>answered question</i>	115
	<i>skipped question</i>	6

K. Length of time for which Group has been in control of the Council		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 year	11.3%	13
2-5 years	27.8%	32
6-10 years	30.4%	35
10-15 years	13.9%	16
More than 15 years	16.5%	19
	<i>answered question</i>	115
	<i>skipped question</i>	6

L. Mechanism used by Group use to choose Portfolio-holders (or equivalent)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
The Leader chooses them	47.9%	56
The Leader chooses them and seeks an affirmative vote from the Group	27.4%	32
The Group elects them	19.7%	23
Other (please specify)	5.1%	6
<i>answered question</i>		117
<i>skipped question</i>		4

M. Portfolios held (or shadowed) before becoming Leader.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Finance	40.0%	44
Economic Development	30.9%	34
Performance	27.3%	30
Environmental Services	23.6%	26
Housing	23.6%	26
Leisure	23.6%	26
Planning	22.7%	25
Personnel	19.1%	21
Strategic Planning	18.2%	20
Community Cohesion	17.3%	19
Regeneration	15.5%	17
Education	14.5%	16
Social Services	12.7%	14
Health	8.2%	9
Transport	7.3%	8
Equalities	5.5%	6
Other (please specify)	19.1%	21
<i>answered question</i>		110
<i>skipped question</i>		11

N. Job or Profession (Number in brackets denotes number of respondents - not all respondents answered this question).		
Accountant (4)		
Anglican Clergyman		

Banking (5)
Building Surveyor
Business (6)
Charity Worker
Chartered Accountant (2)
Chartered Engineer and Builder
Civil Servant (4)
Commercial Interior Designer
Communications Industry Projects Director
Community Worker
Company Director (5)
Facilities Manager
Farmer (6)
Finance
Financial adviser
Fruit grower
Funeral Director
H R Manager (4)
Head of Public Policy for National Charity
Health and Safety Advisor
HM Forces
Housewife
Independent Financial Advisor
Industrial Manager
Investment Manager
IT Manager
Lawyer (3)
Lecturer (3)
Livestock Auctioneer
Local Government Officer
Machine Tool Fitter
Managing Director (4)
Mortgage Broker
NHS Office Administrator
Office Manager
Oil Company Executive
Pharmacist
Photographer
Police Officer

Political Organiser
Post Office Clerk
Prison Service
Professor of Engineering Design
Project Manager
Property Manager
Research Assistant
Residential Conveyancer
Retail Business (2)
Retired
Retired from Royal Air Force
Salesman
School Social Inclusion Teacher
Schoolmaster
Self Employed (Driver)
Self Employed (Family Holiday Park)
Self Employed (no field given) (3)
Self-employed (Training and Management Consultant)
Senior IT Manager
Senior Manager in Industry
Social worker
Teacher (7)
Textile Manufacturer
Trade Union Official
Training Programme Manager
Transport Operations Director
TV/Video Engineer
University Administrator -- Head of Marketing and Sales
University Management
Youth Worker
Various



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