

Local Elections 2014

Local Elections will take place on 22 May 2014 in a total of 162 English local authorities. These comprise 32 London boroughs, 36 metropolitan boroughs, 74 shire districts and 20 unitary districts. There will also be mayoral elections in Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford.

There are no local elections in Scotland or Wales, but, following a major local government reorganisation, there will be elections for 11 new shadow councils in Northern Ireland on the same day.

All council elections in England are held using the [first-past-the-post](#) system; mayoral elections use the [supplementary vote](#), and in Northern Ireland local elections use the [single transferable vote](#).

Currently just over 30% of councillors in England and Wales are women; this figure has been more or less static for the last decade.

The tables in the sections which follow show women as a percentage of candidates and as a percentage of councillors elected in recent years. The final column shows the percentage of women candidates elected; although not shown here, it should be noted that the percentage of male candidates elected is usually similar to the percentage for women.

With the exception of the section on the mayoral elections, the tables do not include 2014 figures as, at the time of writing, the closing date for nominations has not yet been reached. However, there will be detailed analyses in CFWD reports scheduled to be published between June and September 2014.

a) English Mayoral Elections

Elected Mayors come up for election on a four-yearly cycle. Of the 5 incumbents up for re-election this year, 4 are male and 1 (Watford) is female. 18% candidates in the 2014 mayoral elections are women.

Table 1: Women mayoral candidates in 2014 by authority

Authority	Total Candidates	No. Women Candidates	% Women Candidates
Hackney	5	2	40%
Lewisham	7	0	0%
Newham	8	2	25%
Tower Hamlets	10	0	0%
Watford	4	2	50%
Totals	34	6	18%

Women are on average much less likely to stand as mayoral candidates than as councillors; as Table 2 shows, this is one area in which the overall level of women candidates has tended to fall in recent years.

Table 2: % women candidates in mayoral elections 2006 - 2014

Year	Authorities with mayoral elections	% Women candidates
2006	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Watford	23%
2007	Bedford, Mansfield, Middlesbrough	29%
2008	London	20%
2009	Doncaster, Hartlepool, North Tyneside	30%
2010	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Watford	18%
2011	Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay	21%
2012	Liverpool, London, Salford	15%
2013	Doncaster, North Tyneside	30% ¹
2014	Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Watford	18%

b) Political Parties

It remains the case that the political parties act as the gatekeepers to public office; the vast majority - 84% in 2013, when UKIP did particularly well - of councillors elected are still from either the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat parties.

The varying fortunes of the political parties are a key factor in the number of women ultimately elected. Labour uses a form of positive action in order to ensure that about a third of its candidates are women, but despite this it is sometimes outstripped by either the Greens or the Liberal Democrats or both. However, because Labour also tends to field women in more winnable seats, they do fare better than the other parties in terms of levels of women elected.

Table 3: Women as a percentage of candidates by political party 2010-2013².

Year	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green	UKIP
2011	29%	32%	33%	38%	25%
2012	28%	36%	34%	37%	20%
2013	25%	34%	30%	33%	19%

Figures for candidates in the 2014 local elections are not yet available, but a detailed analysis of them will form part of CFWD's report to be published in the summer.

¹ The unusually high level of women candidates in these 2 authorities was caused by the rare fact of both the incumbent and the main challenger in North Tyneside being women. It was also a rare election in that women won both contests - Ros Jones in Doncaster and Linda Redfean in North Tyneside. Together with Dorothy Thornhill in Watford (who is up for election in 2014) they remain the only women elected mayors.

² All data in these tables is taken from either CFWD research or Local Elections Handbooks published by Rallings & Thrasher at the Elections Centre at Plymouth University.

c) London Boroughs

These authorities elect the whole council on a 4-year cycle, and therefore last held elections in 2010 and, prior to that in 2006. As Table 4 shows, there have been slight changes in the rates of women candidates fielded and elected, but there has been very little change overall.

Table 4: Women as candidates in the London Boroughs 2006 and 2010

Year	Women as % Candidates	Women as % Councillors elected	% of Women Candidates Elected
2006	33.2%	32.6%	28.7%
2010	32.2%	33.4%	28.2%

d) Metropolitan Boroughs

These elections are held by thirds on a four-yearly cycle, so that, of the total 2,445 seats on these councils, 815 are up for election on 22 May. This group of seats were last up for election in 2010, and, prior to that, in 2006. There were no elections in the metropolitan authorities in 2013, that being the 'fallow' year.

As the table shows, there was a significant increase in the percentage of women councillors elected between 2011 and 2012; this was caused partly by the cumulative effect of the Labour Party's use of positive action mechanisms since 2004, and partly by the strength of the swing towards Labour - 41.2% of whose candidates in that year were women - and away from the Conservatives, for whom 28.5% of candidates were female. 44% of Labour councillors elected were women, as opposed to 27.8% of Conservatives councillors.

Table 5: Women as candidates in the metropolitan authorities 2006 - 2010

Year	Women as % Candidates	Women as % Councillors elected	% of Women Candidates Elected
2006	30.5%	30.2%	25.7%
2010	28.7%	33.5%	26.2%
2011	29.9%	32.4%	32.1%
2012	32.1%	40.6%	31.0%

e) Unitary Authorities

Unitary districts are also electing by thirds this year, though in 2 cases there will be whole-council elections following reorganisations.

Table 6 shows the detail for this type of authority between 2006 and 2012.

Table 6: Women as candidates in the unitary authorities 2006 - 2010

Year	Women as % Candidates	Women as % Councillors elected	% of Women Candidates Elected
2006	26.5%	28.1%	29.2%
2010	27.2%	29.8%	26.7%
2011	30.0%	31.2%	32.7%
2012	27.3%	30.1%	30.1%
2013	29.8%	28.1%	28.5%

f) Shire Districts

Shire districts elect in a combination of whole-council, half-council and thirds. Table 7 shows women as candidates and as councillors elected between 2006 and 2012. There were no elections in these authorities in 2013.

Table 7: Women as candidates in the shire district authorities 2006 - 2010

Year	Women as % Candidates	Women as % Councillors elected	% of Women Candidates Elected
2006	32.8%	30.2%	28.9%
2010	29.6%	26.9%	27.1%
2011	31.5%	29.6%	38.2% ³
2012	30.9%	32.2%	31.4%

g) Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's 26 district councils are being replaced in 2015 by 11 new ones, and the 2014 elections are therefore to choose shadow authorities to work with the outgoing councils during the transition.

Currently, 24% of Northern Ireland's councillors are women.

CFWD will be publishing a report on these elections - including a comparison with what happened in terms of women's representation in recent English local government reorganisations.

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³ This spike also applied to men, with 41.4% of all male candidates being elected. .