

Election 2010: Where the Women Candidates Are



A Report from the
Centre for Women & Democracy

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This report looks at the numbers and percentages of women candidates overall, and the number and percentage of women standing for each party and as Independents. In the case of the larger parties possible outcomes in terms of women MPs are projected, and in the case of smaller parties regional differences are indicated.

Detailed tables showing the figures for each party are in Appendix A of this report. Appendix B lists the smaller parties, and Appendix C deals with Independents and Others.

Candidates in the Thirsk and Malton constituency have been excluded from the study, since the death of the UKIP candidate after the close of nominations means that this election has been postponed.

Key Findings

There are more candidates standing at this election than ever before (4,134).

There are more women candidates than ever before (877), constituting a greater percentage of candidates than previously (21% as against 20% in 2005, 18% in 1997 and 8% in 1979).

The Green Party has the highest percentage of women candidates (33%) followed by Labour (30%), the Conservative Party (24%) and the Liberal Democrats (21%).

Labour and the Conservatives are standing record numbers and percentages of women candidates, but the Liberal Democrats are standing fewer than in 2005.

50% of candidates standing for Labour or the Liberal Democrats in constituencies where the sitting MP has retired are women (51 out of 103 for Labour and 4 out of 8 for the Liberal Democrats). 25% of candidates in Conservative seats where the MP has retired are women (10 out of 41).

At the 2005 General Election there were 484 candidates standing for smaller parties or as Independents or others. 17% were women.

At this election there are 711 candidates in this bracket, of whom 14% are women (although there is a numerical rise from 80 to 103). 11% of Independent candidates are women,¹ 20% of candidates standing for smaller parties², and 8% of Others³.

Women are significantly more likely to engage with and become a candidate for one of the larger parties; this makes those parties' approach to improving the balance of representation after the election of particular interest.

The Centre for Women & Democracy (CFWD) is predicting that the percentage of women in the next parliament will not reach 25%. In the last parliament it was 19.5%.

¹ For the purposes of this report, 'Independents' are defined as individuals who define themselves as such, or who identify as local independents. See Appendix C for details.

² For the purposes of the report, 'Smaller Parties' are those fielding more than 2 candidates but fewer than 100. See Appendix B for list.

³ i.e., any 'party' for whom there is only one candidate; see Appendix C for list



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