

Women benefit most from Labour winning elections

[Research by Progress](#) has revealed that, had Labour won all its target seats in England and Wales in May this year, the party's ranks would have been boosted by an additional 35 women. If it had not lost any seats to the Tories, it would have been 39.

	Gain in women had Labour won	Loss of women had Labour won	All-woman contest
Totals	39	9	7
Targets	35	7	7
Losses	4	2	
Net gain	30		

The House of Commons, with its net gain of 30 women, would now boast a third, 34 per cent, of its membership as female. Instead women make up just 29 per cent of the famous green benches.

This would have markedly improved our international standing. Currently the Commons is 38th in the league table. Under Labour it would be 26th, joint with Serbia and one place below Uganda. This would have seen the United Kingdom leapfrog ahead of three European Union member states – Portugal, Italy and Austria – and seen it ahead of New Zealand – which remains one of the few countries to elect a woman Labour prime minister.

Rank	Country	Last election (mm yyyy)	Total seats	No of women	Percentage
37	Nepal	11 2013	599	177	29.5%
38	United Kingdom	5 2015	650	191	29.4%
39	Trinidad and Tobago	5 2010	42	12	28.6%

Had Labour triumphed in these 79 seats – and the candidates not been let down by their party leadership – 2015 would have amounted to another step-change in the character of parliament.

Secretary of state for education Nicky Morgan was one of only six Conservative women where the Labour candidate – with all the resources of a target seat – was male.

First name	Surname	Seat	First name	Surname	Party
Janos	Toth	Cannock Chase	Amanda	Milling	Tory
Matthew	O'Callaghan	Loughborough	Nicky	Morgan	Tory
Pete	Lowe	Stourbridge	Margot	James	Tory

Darren	Jones	Bristol North-west	Charlotte	Leslie	Tory
Will	Martindale	Battersea	Jane	Ellison	Tory
Tristan	Osborne	Chatham and Aylesford	Tracey	Crouch	Tory

Labour's Polly Billington was in all-female head-to-head fight. Had we won Hastings, Labour could have replaced Amber Rudd without parliament losing women's representation. There were seven such fights among Labour's English and Welsh targets, including in Brighton Pavilion which the Green party's only MP represents.

First name	Surname	Seat	First name	Surname	Party
Polly	Billington	Thurrock	Jackie	Doyle-Price	Tory
Purna	Sen	Brighton Pavilion	Caroline	Lucus	Green
Sarah	Owen	Hastings and Rye	Amber	Rudd	Tory
Catherine	Atkinson	Erewash	Maggie	Throup	Tory
Jess	Asato	Norwich North	Chloe	Smith	Tory
Veronica	Bennett	South Ribble	Seema	Kennedy	Tory
Rebecca	Blake	Redditch	Karen	Lumley	Tory

Labour led the way for women's representation. Not the first woman member of parliament, but the first in the cabinet and soon by far the largest group of women MPs in the House of Commons. The party stands on the shoulders of giants who entered Westminster in tougher times. Harriet Harman joined parliament in 1982 and was quickly derided for raising issues then deemed non-political, such a childcare.

In 1997 a huge breakthrough took place and over the 13 years that followed most big offices of state were headed by a woman at some point. We had the first black woman in the cabinet and appointed Britain's first woman European commissioner; Valerie Amos now heads up a United Nations agency and Cathy Ashton last year completed her term as first vice-president of the European Union. That government transformed women's lives and these women transformed the policy environment we now live in. When Labour wins, women win.

Notes

1. The table forming the basis of the research was compiled by director of Progress Richard Angell and can be viewed [here](#)
2. The league table data in the table below has been compiled by the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) on the basis of information provided by national parliaments by 1 August 2015. The league table can be viewed [here](#)