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# The Democratic Deficit

## A Report on the Under-representation of Women in Local Authorities in Scotland, Wales and England

Harriet Harman MP

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## **Introduction**

Women are not fully represented in our local democracy. Does this matter? The answer is "yes".

### **Local government must move with the times**

Local government lacks credibility if it appears out of touch with the society it represents. Equality of representation of women in local government must be part of the agenda of modernisation of local democracy, giving it new vigour and relevance.

### **Women's lives are changing**

Women's lives and their aspirations have changed. They go out to work as well as care for children and elderly relatives. They are in all senses equal citizens and have a right to have a say in decisions which effect their lives.

### **Women are doing much of the work in local communities and in families - their expertise and involvement is vital.**

Women are active in their local community, as governors of local schools, as members of the PTA, in tenants and residents associations. Within the family women take the lion's share of responsibility for day to day care of their children, including supervising their education and shoulder most of the responsibility of caring for elderly and disabled relatives. And yet important decisions on local education, housing and social services are made in councils and committees overwhelmingly dominated by men. Women's expertise is vital to improve the quality of decision-making at local level.

## **New Labour policies for women and families.**

The Labour Government is establishing nationwide provision of childcare which will be implemented at local level. Local councils are set to take a leading role in strategies to tackle domestic violence. The New Deal for Communities is set to regenerate communities where the main community activists are women. The delivery of these policies and much else of new labour's agenda needs the involvement of women as well as men.

## **Time for debate and action**

The figures in this report show a wide variation in the representation of women. In theory it should be easy for women to play a part in the political institution which is closest their home. Why can some councils involve women fully and others not? How can councils where women are not involved change to make themselves more representative? Should there be targets and timetables to bring about the change? This is the first time these figures have been published council by council. They should be published by government every year and progress led and monitored.

## **Summary of findings**

There are 468 local authorities in the UK.

There are over 21,000 local councillors.

Women make up 50% of the population but only 27% of councillors are women and 73% are men.

The council with the lowest percentage of women is Anglesey with only 5%.

There is only one council with a majority of women, Horsham, with 55%.

Wales, where only 21% of councillors are women, has a lower proportion of women councillors than Scotland or any of the English regions.

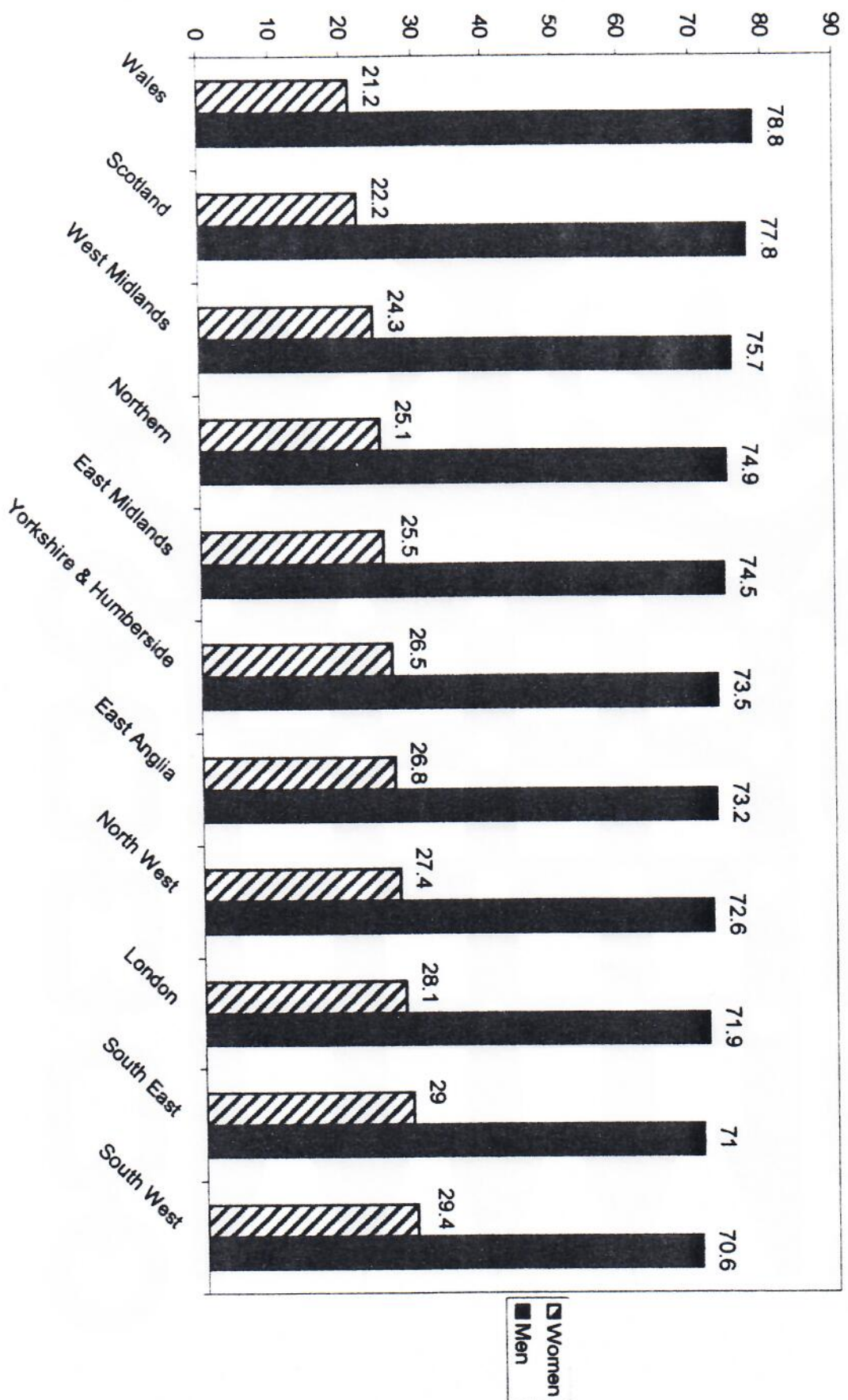
### Percentage of Women Councillors in Local Authorities by region

South West:	29.4%
South East:	29.0%
London:	28.1%
North West:	27.4%
East Anglia:	26.8%
Yorkshire & Humberside:	26.5%
East Midlands:	25.5%
Northern:	25.1%
West Midlands:	24.3%
Scotland:	22.2%
Wales:	21.2%

### Percentage of Women Councillors in Local Authorities by type

Shire Counties:	24%
Metropolitan Districts:	25%
Unitary Authorities:	27%
Shire Districts:	28%
London Boroughs:	30%

Percentage of women and men on councils by region



### The Councils with the Lowest Percentage of Women

Anglesey:	5%
Midlothian:	7%
North Lanarkshire:	7%
Blanaeu Gwent:	7%
Argyll & Bute:	9%
Castle Morpeth:	9%
Wansbeck:	9%
Newport:	9%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:	10%
Carmarthenshire:	10%
Pembrokeshire:	10%

### The Councils with the Highest Percentage of Women

Horsham	55%
Islington:	50%
Derbyshire Dales:	46%
Purbeck:	45%
Mid Suffolk:	45%
Wiltshire:	43%
Daventry:	43%
Barnet:	42%
Barrow-in-Furness:	42%
South Somerset:	42%

# Councils where the percentage of women is 20% or under

Anglesey:	5%	East Renfrewshire:	15%
Midlothian:	7%	Highland:	15%
North Lanarkshire:	7%	Inverclyde:	15%
Blanaeu Gwent:	7%	West Lothian:	15%
Argyll & Bute:	9%	North West Leicester:	15%
Castle Morpeth:	9%	Wellingborough:	15%
Newport:	9%	Chester-le-Street:	15%
Wansbeck:	9%	Slough:	15%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:	10%	South Holland:	16%
Carmarthenshire:	10%	Cumbria:	16%
Pembrokeshire:	10%	Durham:	16%
Dumfries & Galloway:	11%	Eden:	16%
West Lindsey:	11%	Forest Heath:	16%
Berwick-upon-Tweed:	11%	Milton Keynes:	16%
Halton:	11%	Clackmannanshire:	17%
Scottish Borders:	12%	East Lothian:	17%
Gwynedd:	12%	East Lindsey:	17%
Leicestershire:	13%	Tamworth:	17%
North Norfolk:	13%	Gateshead:	17%
West Dunbartonshire:	14%	Sefton:	17%
Bolsover:	14%	Neath Port Talbot:	17%
Shropshire:	14%	Nottinghamshire:	17%
Sedgefield:	14%	Thurrock:	17%
Barnsley:	14%	Arun:	18%
Wakefield:	14%	Leicester:	18%
Mendip:	14%	Dudley:	18%
Torridge:	14%	Herefordshire:	18%
City of London:	15%	Sandwell:	18%

Warwickshire:	18%
Ashford:	18%
Hertfordshire:	18%
Portsmouth:	18%
Rushmoor:	18%
Cornwall:	18%
Redbridge:	19%
Angus:	19%
Perth & Kinross:	19%
Rugby:	19%
Sunderland:	19%
Flintshire:	19%
East Cambridgeshire:	19%
Kent:	19%
Luton:	19%
Enfield:	20%
East Ayrshire:	20%
North Ayrshire:	20%
Rushcliffe:	20%
Lichfield:	20%
Nuneaton:	20%
Stoke-on-Trent:	20%
Wychavon:	20%
Northumberland:	20%
Knowsley:	20%
Salford:	20%
North Yorkshire:	20%
East Sussex:	20%
Caradon:	20%

Percentage of Women Councillors in Local Authorities, by region:

**London**

Barking & Dagenham:	33%
Barnet:	42%
Bexley:	32%
Brent:	23%
Bromley:	27%
Camden:	37%
City of London:	15%
Croydon:	27%
Ealing:	27%
Enfield:	20%
Greenwich:	23%
Hackney:	30%
Hammersmith & Fulham:	28%
Haringey:	39%
Harrow:	32%
Havering:	27%
Hillingdon:	25%
Hounslow:	25%
Islington:	50%
Kensington & Chelsea:	24%
Kingston:	31%
Lambeth:	28%
Lewisham:	31%
Merton:	30%
Newham:	22%
Redbridge:	19%
Richmond:	38%
Southwark:	31%
Sutton:	38%
Tower Hamlets:	24%
Waltham Forrest:	22%
Wandsworth:	26%
Westminster:	32%

**Average: 28.14**

## Scotland

Aberdeen City:	30%
Aberdeenshire:	30%
Angus:	19%
Argyll & Bute:	9%
Clackmannanshire:	17%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:	10%
Dumfries & Galloway:	11%
Dundee City:	25%
East Ayrshire:	20%
East Dunbartonshire:	23%
East Lothian:	17%
East Renfrewshire:	15%
Edinburgh, City of:	33%
Falkirk:	22%
Fife:	36%
Glasgow City:	30%
Highland:	15%
Inverclyde:	15%
Midlothian:	7%
Moray:	39%
North Ayrshire:	20%
North Lanarkshire:	7%
Orkney Islands:	25%
Perth & Kinross:	19%
Renfrewshire:	30%
Scottish Borders:	12%
Shetland Island:	23%
South Ayrshire:	40%
South Lanarkshire:	24%
Stirling:	35%
West Dunbartonshire:	14%
West Lothian:	15%

**Average: 22.2%** (of total councillors)

## Wales

Anglesey:	5%
Blanaeu Gwent:	7%
Bridgend:	29%
Caerphilly:	21%
Cardiff:	35%
Carmarthenshire:	10%
Ceredigion:	31%
Conwy:	23%
Denbighshire:	21%
Flintshire:	19%
Gwynedd:	12%
Methyr Tydfil:	21%
Monmouthshire:	31%
Neath Port Talbot:	17%
Newport:	9%
Pembrokeshire:	10%
Powys:	23%
Rhondda:	27%
Swansea:	23%
Torfaen:	41%
Vale of Glamorgan:	21%
Wrexham:	31%

**Average: 21.23**

## East Midlands

Amber Valley:	26%
Ashfield:	30%
Bassetlaw:	33%
Blaby:	36%
Bolsover:	14%
Boston:	32%
Broxtowe:	39%
Charnwood:	35%
Chesterfield:	23%
Corby:	23%
Daventry:	43%
Derby:	30%
Derbyshire Dales:	46%
Derbyshire:	22%
East Lindsey:	17%
East Northamptonshire:	22%
Erewash:	29%
Gedling:	26%
Harborough:	24%
High Peak:	32%
Hinckley-Bosworth:	26%
Kettering:	27%
Leicester:	18%
Leicestershire:	13%
Lincoln:	21%
Lincolnshire:	25%
Mansfield:	24%
Melton:	23%
Newark & Sherwood:	31%
North East Derbyshire:	26%
North West Leicester:	15%
North Kesteven:	36%
Northampton:	23%
Northamptonshire:	Not available
Nottingham:	27%
Nottinghamshire:	17%
Oadby & Wigston:	31%
Rushcliffe:	20%
Rutland:	25%
South Derbyshire:	21%
South Holland:	16%
South Kesteven:	28%
South Northamptonshire:	20%
Wellingborough:	15%
West Lindsey:	11%

**Average: 25.47**

## West Midlands

Birmingham:	23%
Bridgnorth:	21%
Bromsgrove:	36%
Cannock Chase:	29%
Coventry:	22%
Dudley:	18%
East Staffordshire:	26%
Herefordshire:	18%
Lichfield:	20%
Malvern Hills:	26%
Newcastle-under-Lyme:	29%
North Warwickshire:	24%
North Shropshire:	25%
Nuneaton:	20%
Oswestry:	Not available
Redditch:	28%
Rugby:	19%
Sandwell:	18%
Shrewsbury:	25%
Shropshire:	14%
Solihull:	31%
South Staffordshire:	28%
South Shropshire:	25%
Stafford:	22%
Staffordshire:	Not available
Staffordshire Morrlands:	39%
Stoke-on-Trent:	20%
Stratford-on-Avon:	24%
Tamworth:	17%
Telford:	24%
Walsall:	28%
Warwick:	22%
Warwickshire:	18%
Wolverhampton:	28%
Worcester:	31%
Worcestershire:	25%
Wychavon:	20%
Wyre Forest:	31%

**Average: 24.28**

## Northern

Allerdale:	39%
Alnwick:	38%
Barrow-in-Furness:	42%
Berwick-upon-Tweed:	11%
Blyth Valley:	28%
Carlisle:	27%
Castle Morpeth:	9%
Chester-le-Street:	15%
Copeland:	25%
Cumbria:	16%
Darlington:	37%
Derwentside:	36%
Durham:	Not available
Durham City:	16%
Easington:	22%
Eden:	16%
Gateshead:	17%
Hartlepool:	27%
Middlesborough:	23%
Newcastle-upon-Tyne:	32%
North Tyneside:	37%
Northumberland:	20%
Redcar:	29%
Sedgefield:	14%
South Lakeland:	29%
South Tyneside:	33%
Stockton on Tees:	28%
Sunderland:	19%
Teesdale:	23%
Tynedale:	34%
Wansbeck:	9%
Wear Valley:	28%

**Average: 25.13**

## North West

Blackburn:	31%
Blackpool:	23%
Bolton:	22%
Burnley:	29%
Bury:	29%
Cheshire:	23%
Chester:	27%
Chorley:	31%
Congleton:	24%
Crewe & Nantwich:	33%
Ellesmere Port:	24%
Fylde:	31%
Halton:	11%
Hyndburn:	28%
Knowsley:	20%
Lancaster:	38%
Lancashire:	Not available
Liverpool:	30%
Macclesfield:	30%
Manchester:	23%
Oldham:	22%
Pendle:	37%
Preston:	23%
Ribble Valley:	28%
Rochdale:	27%
Rossendale:	Not available
Salford:	20%
Sefton:	17%
South Ribble:	31%
St. Helens:	35%
Stockport:	29%
Tameside:	28%
Trafford:	40%
Vale Royal:	35%
Warrington:	27%
West Lancs:	35%
Wigan:	21%
Wirral:	29%
Wyre:	22%

**Average: 27.38**

## Yorkshire & Humberside

Barnsley:	14%
Bradford:	24%
Calderdale:	33%
Craven:	35%
Doncaster:	22%
East Riding:	37%
Hambleton:	30%
Harrogate:	24%
Kingston-upon-Hull:	30%
Kirklees:	24%
Leeds:	27%
North Lincolnshire:	21%
NE Lincolnshire:	21%
North Yorkshire:	20%
Richmondshire:	35%
Rotherham:	26%
Ryedale:	35%
Scarborough:	31%
Selby:	24%
Sheffield:	34%
Wakefield:	14%
York:	21%

**Average: 26.45**

## East Anglia

Babergh:	38%
Breckland:	26%
Broadland:	24%
Cambridge:	Not available
Cambridgeshire:	31%
East Cambridgeshire:	19%
Fenland:	23%
Forest Heath:	16%
Great Yarmouth:	21%
Huntingdon:	36%
Ipswich:	21%
King's Lynn:	22%
Mid Suffolk:	45%
Norfolk:	25%
North Norfolk:	13%
Norwich:	31%
Peterborough:	25%
South Norfolk:	37%
South Cambridgeshire:	31%
St. Edmundsbury:	26%
Suffolk:	29%
Suffolk Coastal:	25%
Waveney:	25%

**Average: 26.77**

## South East

Adur:	31%	Kent:	19%
Arun:	18%	Lewes:	35%
Ashford:	18%	Luton:	19%
Aylesbury Vale:	33%	Maidstone:	31%
Basildon:	24%	Maldon:	23%
Basingstoke:	33%	Medway:	31%
Bedford:	25%	Mid Bedfordshire:	28%
Bedfordshire:	Not available	Mid Sussex:	31%
Bracknell Forrest:	25%	Milton Keynes:	16%
Braintree:	28%	Mole Valley:	34%
Brentwood:	22%	New Forest:	28%
Brighton & Hove:	37%	North Hertfordshire:	24%
Broxbourne:	31%	Oxford:	35%
Buckinghamshire:	30%	Oxfordshire:	34%
Canterbury:	31%	Portsmouth:	18%
Castle Point:	23%	Reading:	29%
Chelmsford:	25%	Reigate:	37%
Cherwell:	31%	Rochford:	30%
Chichester:	36%	Rother:	29%
Chiltern:	36%	Runnymede:	31%
Colchester:	33%	Rushmoor:	18%
Crawley:	22%	Sevenoaks:	30%
Dacorum:	28%	Shepway:	25%
Dartford:	26%	Slough:	15%
Dover:	38%	South Bedfordshire:	25%
East Hampshire:	36%	South Bucks:	38%
East Sussex:	20%	South Oxfordshire:	32%
East Hertfordshire:	22%	Southampton:	38%
Eastbourne:	24%	Southend-on-sea:	36%
Eastleigh:	32%	Spelthorne:	28%
Elmbridge:	27%	St. Albans:	30%
Epping Forest:	29%	Stevenage:	33%
Epsom-Ewell:	26%	Surrey:	33%
Essex:	25%	Surrey Heath:	Not available
Fareham:	24%	Swale:	29%
Gosport:	27%	Tandridge:	36%
Gravesham:	27%	Tendring:	30%
Guildford:	40%	Test Valley:	23%
Hampshire:	26%	Thanet:	28%
Harlow:	33%	Three Rivers:	29%
Hart:	29%	Thurrock:	17%
Hastings:	22%	Tonbridge:	38%
Havant:	36%	Tunbridge Wells:	21%
Hertfordshire:	18%	Uttlesford:	29%
Hertsmere:	31%	Watford:	28%
Horsham:	55%	Waverley:	37%
Isle of Wight:	29%	Wealden:	33%
		Welwyn:	26%
		West Berkshire:	28%

West Oxfordshire:	27%
West Sussex:	27%
White Horse:	41%
Winchester:	41%
Windsor & Maidenhead:	33%
Woking:	31%
Wokingham:	28%
Worthing:	25%
Wycombe:	35%

**Average: 28.98**

### **South West**

Bath & NE Somerset:	35%
Bournemouth:	30%
Bristol:	31%
Caradon:	20%
Carrick:	27%
Cheltenham:	37%
Christchurch:	32%
Cornwall:	18%
Cotswold:	40%
Devon:	26%
Dorset:	26%
East Devon:	27%
East Dorset:	36%
Exeter:	33%
Forest of Dean:	29%
Gloucester:	23%
Gloucestershire:	22%
Isles of Scilly:	30%
Kennet:	23%
Kerrier:	23%
Mendip:	14%
Mid Devon:	30%
North Cornwall:	21%
North Somerset:	31%
North Devon:	27%
North Dorset:	24%
North Wiltshire:	40%
Penwith:	29%
Plymouth:	25%
Poole:	33%
Purbeck:	45%
Restormel:	30%
Salisbury:	22%
Sedgemoor:	24%
Somerset:	30%

South Gloucestershire:	36%
South Hams:	27%
South Somerset:	42%
Stroud:	36%
Swindon:	31%
Taunton:	30%
Teignbridge:	35%
Tewkesbury:	31%
Torbay:	33%
Torridge:	14%
West Devon:	40%
West Dorset:	24%
West Somerset:	25%
West Wiltshire:	37%
Weymouth:	23%
Wiltshire:	43%

**Average: 29.41**

Source: Answers to Parliamentary Questions and information direct from local authorities from the 67 local authorities who had not replied to the government.

Information on the gender of the Chairs of Education was requested but is not collected by the Department for Education and Employment.

Information on the gender of the Chairs of Housing was requested but is not collected by the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Information on the gender of the Chairs of Social Services was requested but is not collected by the Department of Health.