IMPROVING PARLIAMENT

CREATING A BETTER AND MORE REPRESENTATIVE HOUSE

ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
ABOUT THE APPG
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Women in Parliament was set up in 2010. Its aim is to make Parliament more representative of the country it serves. The APPG endeavours to reach out to women to encourage them into public life and to look at ways to increase the number of women in Parliament. Whilst the current number of female Parliamentarians has increased to 22.6% in the House of Commons and 22.8% in the House of Lords, all political parties agree that there is much more to do to create a modern, aspirational and representative Parliament.

July 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank everyone who submitted evidence to this Inquiry. They would particularly like to thank the witnesses who took the time to give oral evidence, as well as Professor Sarah Childs and Alda Barry for their expert advice at all stages of the Inquiry. A special thanks to Annabelle Miles for her assistance in the preparation of this report. Lastly, they would like to express their gratitude to Aberdeen Asset Management, EY and LEWIS PR for sponsoring the publication of the report.

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In 2010, we set up the All Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament to raise awareness of the need for more women in public life and secure more female MPs at the next General Election.

The business world has more recently largely grasped that gender balance is good for overall performance and we believe the same priority should be given to increasing the representation of women in politics. Parliament needs to be representative of the country it serves – a place where anyone from any background can aspire to serve as a Member of Parliament.

At a time when the public still often see politicians as ‘out of touch’, increasing the number of female MPs is a vital step to help us reconnect with voters and improve our democracy.

All political parties are united in their belief that gender parity is critical to having a modern, aspirational and representative Parliament. They are all taking positive steps to increase the selection of female candidates, the results of which will hopefully be seen following the 2015 General Election.

However, we believe that more can be done to outreach to women across the country and to create a working environment that encourages more women to consider political life.

We want to build on the great history and traditions of Parliament, continue the passion and conviction in debate, but change aspects that act as unnecessary barriers to women in politics.

Parliament can and does change over time. The recommendations of this Inquiry focus on what we can do right now that will really make a difference to increase the number of women on our green benches.

Our Inquiry has taken evidence from a wide audience within politics, public affairs, academia and business. We would like to thank the many MPs (both current and former), Peers, candidates and others who have participated in this Inquiry. I would also like to thank our sponsors Aberdeen Asset Management, EY and LEWIS PR who have supported the work and those that have helped to prepare this report.

Our hope is that this report acts as a catalyst for positive and immediate change for the existing and future generation of female MPs, so that at long last, we can allow women across this country to achieve their potential in politics, and achieve a representative and diverse Parliament that reflects our nation and the many people in it.

Mary Macleod MP
Chairman APPG Women in Parliament
FOREWORD

As the Speaker of the House of Commons, I deeply respect the history and traditions of the House. Parliament’s 750 year history and its continuing survival is testament to its ability to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of the age, elegantly incorporating the modern, or different, to meet its objectives.

An important part of the work for the individual holding the office of Speaker is to be a champion of democracy, an advocate for the House of Commons and a public catalyst for participation in politics. As Speaker I have tried to encourage greater participation in politics from the widest possible range of people.

I firmly believe that Parliament gains strength from diversity in its composition. To this end, it is important to ensure that excellent candidates, from all walks of life, are not deterred from playing a role in politics.

In the five years that I have had the honour of being the Speaker, I have been proud to oversee a number of significant and positive steps. The Speaker’s Conference in 2010 looked at how to increase the diversity in Parliament. Following this, we made changes to the sitting hours to be more in line with business hours and have introduced a Parliament nursery and a helpline for staff. We have also put in place four workplace equality networks – for LGBT, disability, gender and race, ethnicity and cultural heritage.

I am looking forward to the opening of a new Education Centre in 2015 which will allow us to more than double the number of children and students that are able to visit Parliament from 45,000 to 95,000 a year. Whilst the 2010 intake of Members is more representative of modern Britain than previous intakes, we must continue to ensure that all citizens are encouraged to be active participants in the UK’s democracy.

I am a great supporter of equality and diversity within the House of Commons and I would like to commend the All Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Parliament for undertaking this Inquiry. I was delighted to give evidence and I look forward to the House considering the implementation of its recommendations.

Rt Hon. John Bercow MP
Speaker of the House of Commons
FOREWORD

Parliament needs to be more representative of our country - so we need more women in Parliament. This is something all parties must address and I am grateful for the work that the APPG has done on this important issue.

Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Leader of the Conservative Party

It is vital that all of our public institutions are representative of the public they serve, but nowhere is this more vital than our Parliament. The increasing number of women in Parliament has played a role in ensuring that important issues such as domestic violence, discrimination and childcare have risen to the top of the political agenda, greatly improving the lives of millions of women across the country. However, achieving a more representative Parliament is a job that is still far from complete, and I welcome the renewed focus that this Inquiry has put on how all parties can and should redouble their efforts.

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Leader of the Labour Party

It’s almost 100 years since the first woman was elected to Parliament, yet still less than a quarter of our MPs are women. This has to change. So I welcome the APPG’s latest report, “Improving Parliament”, which highlights the barriers and issues that many women still face in becoming MPs.

Slowly, the House of Commons is reforming. But every political party – including the Liberal Democrats – needs to do more to make this a modern workplace fit for the 21st century.

In my party, we’ve already committed to provide more mentoring and support to our female candidates. We’ve selected female candidates to run in the majority of constituencies where current Lib-Dem MPs are retiring, and we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that everyone in this country – regardless of their gender, race or circumstances – feels like they have a voice and a chance to get on. Working together, with organisations like the APPG for Women in Parliament, I am sure progress can be made.

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Changing Role of a MP</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply: Key Recommendations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection: Key Recommendations</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention: Key Recommendations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: Top 70 Ranking Countries In Percentage Of Women In Parliament</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: List Of Those Invited To Give Evidence</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace”

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, 15 September 1995

This Inquiry was launched to investigate what could be done to create a more aspirational, modern and representative Parliament. While the main focus of the Inquiry has been on increasing the number of women in public life, many of the findings will be valid for all parliamentarians.

The Inquiry looks at improving the working environment of the House of Commons to help increase the recruitment and retention of politicians, both men and women. The hope is that through some of these changes, it will improve the public perception and image of Parliament to the outside world and thereby encourage a more diverse group of men and women to come forward for a role in public life.

BACKGROUND

There are currently 147 women in the House of Commons, the highest number and proportion ever. While this progress is welcomed, even if the current rate of increase in the number of women elected to the UK Parliament were to be maintained, it would still be several electoral cycles before parity is reached.

All political parties are focused on increasing their numbers of female candidates for the 2015 General Election. This needs to remain a priority at senior political levels for continued progress to be made. To date, 41 MPs have announced that they will not be standing at the next election, of which 12 are women. This Inquiry wants to reach out to women across the country, to encourage them to become involved and take the opportunity of making a difference to their local communities and the country, by standing for election.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was sent out to all Members of the House of Commons and to the 146 Peers who are former MPs. 109 responses were received, a response rate of 13.69%.
The Inquiry’s scope was to look at the elected House of Commons and identify barriers, challenges and improved ways of working for the future. It was examined in three stages:

1. **Supply** – outreach to women from all backgrounds and changing the perception of MPs
2. **Selection** – a review of progress in each of the political parties since the Speaker’s Conference 2008-2010
3. **Retention** – how the working environment in Parliament can be improved

Firstly, the Inquiry focused on the supply of women, specifically the factors to explain the low numbers of women who seek to participate in elected politics. All parties felt the need for more women to come forward. Consideration was given to various outreach methods used to diversify the pool of Parliamentary candidates and how these efforts could be enhanced to give a greater chance of a more representative Parliament at Westminster. Consistent themes arose which highlighted the reasons why fewer women in particular seek election:

- Increased media scrutiny of MPs and their families
- The poor public perception of MPs
- A lack of readily available information on the role
- A sense that Parliament is not a place for ‘people like for me’
- The substantial financial costs and time demands of seeking selection

Secondly, the selection of female parliamentary candidates by the political parties was reviewed. It was recognised that the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation of 2008-2010 had already analysed parties’ selection processes and identified key recommendations. The focus was therefore to build on this and assess progress in each political party.

Finally, the retention of female MPs was explored, in particular, examining if there was anything about the style of parliamentary politics and the workings of the House of Commons that detrimentally impacts women. A number of factors were identified which, together increase pressure upon Members and in some cases, prompt them to consider that life as a Parliamentarian is not something they wish to continue:

- An unpredictable Parliamentary calendar
- The challenges of managing two, often geographically distant, workplaces
- The poor public perception of MPs
- The changing role of a MP
- The perceived ‘masculine’ culture of Parliament
- A lack of clarification on support available for MPs with primary caring responsibilities
- A lack of institutionalised support for Members

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a zero tolerance response to unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber to ensure the standard of behaviour in the Chamber is what is accepted in other work environments. If behaviour fails to improve, additional ‘rules and sanctions’ may need to be created.

Improve the online gateway to Parliament to enhance the parliamentary online presence and encourage more women and other currently under-represented groups to consider a role in public life, to help change people’s lives and the communities in which they live.

Reconnect with voters by rebalancing parliamentary and constituency priorities given that the role and expectations of a MP have changed over time. Allow more flexibility so that MPs can better balance their work in the House, with being visible in their local communities and responding to local concerns in their constituencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday-Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government business and Opposition Day debates</td>
<td>Backbench business</td>
<td>Private Members Bills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Establish a Women and Equalities Select Committee to raise issues that are a priority for women and review how women are impacted by Government policy. Women and Equalities Oral Parliamentary Questions already take place in the Chamber regularly and there is a Minister for Women at the Cabinet table, so it would be appropriate to have a Select Committee established.

Improve the predictability of the Parliamentary calendar so that MPs know whipping requirements and timetable of the business of the House further in advance. They can then plan their time and work more effectively both in the House and in the constituency.

Ask the DCMS Select Committee and Independent Press Standards Organisation to review sexism in traditional and social media including analysis of how female parliamentarians are represented.

Provide clarification on support available for MPs with primary caring responsibilities within the new expenses system and formalise parental leave to make it more family-friendly.
INTRODUCTION

VISION

Given the approaching 2015 General Election, the APPG agreed that an Inquiry would be launched to investigate what could be done to deliver a more diverse group of Parliamentarians, especially more women, and to identify what barriers or challenges still exist within Parliament to women’s equal political representation. While the chief focus of the Inquiry has been on women, many of our findings will have an impact on all Parliamentarians.

The Inquiry reviewed the culture and practices of the House and how they impact those who work within it, making recommendations for change. It aimed to create a more effective and professional working environment and in doing so increase the recruitment and retention of politicians, both men and women. In addition, the Inquiry aimed to improve the public perception and image of Parliament to the outside world.

METHODOLOGY

The Inquiry Committee conducted a number of oral evidence hearings with:

- Current and former Members of Parliament (male and female) including a number of current MPs who have announced they are not intending to stand again
- Senior MPs with a particular interest in or responsibility for gender diversity within their Party
- House Authorities
- External Professionals with knowledge of both the characteristics and workings of Parliament and the outside business world
All meetings were held under Chatham House Rules to encourage participants to speak frankly and honestly about their experiences.

These oral evidence sessions ran alongside written evidence received from current and former Members of Parliament and academic experts.

Both oral and written evidence witnesses were asked, where appropriate, about their personal experiences of working in the Palace of Westminster and how they initially got involved in politics. They were asked about how becoming a MP impacted their working lives and whether they would change anything to help them be more effective in their job. They were encouraged to give real examples if they had experienced any obstacles in the selection and election process and whether they had experience of any discrimination or sexism in the House.

An online survey was also sent out to all Members and to the 146 peers who are former MPs, receiving 109 responses. This represents a response rate of 13.69%.

This survey attempted to establish systematic evidence of:

• What prompted politicians to become initially involved in politics
• How they found out about how to participate in politics
• What issues concerned them during selection and when they become Parliamentary candidates
• What support they received, or would have liked to receive, prior to becoming a MP
• Whether they had experienced discriminatory practices either as a Parliamentary Candidate or once they were elected as a MP
• What changes they would like to see in the way MPs work in Parliament
• Ideas for how the House of Commons could be reformed to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds

**FRAMEWORK**

There is no single reason that explains the under-representation of women in politics, whether in the UK or across the world. The causes are multiple - economic, social, cultural and political. This Inquiry recognises that given this, there is no single solution.

The Inquiry examined the issue in three stages:

1. **Supply** – outreach to women from all backgrounds and changing the perception of MPs
2. **Selection** – a review of progress in each of the political parties since the Speaker’s Conference 2008-2010
3. **Retention** – how the working environment in Parliament can be improved

Firstly, the Inquiry focused on the supply of women - examining the factors that currently give rise to a supply pool for political office that has more men. What factors explain the low numbers of women who seek to participate in electoral politics? Key areas of focus were:

• How might parliamentary politics be made more attractive to women and to different types of women?
• Are people able to access sufficient information about what being a MP entails and how Parliament works?
• How might parties better identify, encourage and support women to seek and be selected as a candidate and then elected as MPs?

Secondly, the selection of women as parliamentary candidates by the political parties was explored. Are women seeking selection as parliamentary candidates given equal opportunities? It was recognised that the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation had already analysed parties’ selection processes and identified key recommendations\(^2\). Therefore a review of progress has been provided in the form of an update on the recommendations and Report of the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation.\(^3\)

Thirdly, the Inquiry explored the retention of female MPs. Is the style of parliamentary politics and the workings of the House putting women off staying in Parliament? The Inquiry focused in particular on:

• How existing MPs manage working in two places - the House and the constituency, and how they balance this with their family life?
• How do existing MPs’ experience working in the House?
• Are there aspects of parliamentary practice and culture that are particularly off-putting to women?
• How might the House be reformed to better accommodate a more diverse intake of MPs?

Gender imbalance in the UK Parliament has been addressed by a number of recent investigations, notably by the Speaker’s Conference Report on Parliamentary Representation\(^4\). Others, not least the Wright Report on Rebuilding the House 2009\(^5\) and the follow-up Report from the Political and Constitutional Affairs Committee\(^6\) reflected additional concerns relating to the health of British parliamentary politics. They also have much to say that is pertinent to issues of women and politics. This Inquiry sought to build upon the findings of these studies.

Many of the problems identified which particularly affect women also affect other under-represented groups and indeed some men from historically better represented backgrounds. We hope that our recommendations will be helpful to all these groups. Nonetheless, women form a distinct interest group. First they make up more than half the total population of the UK. Secondly, evidence shows that they bear the brunt of caring responsibilities, whether for children or for elderly relatives and other dependents. Anything that makes it more difficult to carry out these functions is likely to impact disproportionately on women, discouraging them from seeking election or re-election to Parliament.

\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)House of Commons Reform Committee 2009 “Rebuilding the House” London
\(^6\)House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee (2013) “Revisiting Rebuilding the House: the impact of the Wright reforms” London
THE CHANGING ROLE OF A MP

Changes beyond the control of Parliament have affected the work of MPs in recent years. Constituency work occupies an increasing amount of a MP’s time, including weekends. The culture of deference has long since ended and media pressure, often critical, has increased. A number of the longer-standing MPs responding to our survey commented that the life of a Member had become harder in recent years despite the improvement in the working hours of Parliament itself. There is increasing pressure for Members to be seen constantly in their constituency, to attend all local events and send their children to school within its borders.

We recognise too that there are some constraints on changes that can be recommended. Some issues identified as barriers to women’s representation may be inevitable given the current UK constitutional arrangements and representational demands from the British public. For instance, the geographic nature of representation and the increased pressure to spend time in the constituency mean that a number of Members will always have to travel long distances to Parliament. It might not always be possible to fully schedule parliamentary business. Government can, through its majority in the House of Commons, control business in the House but there is much less control in the Lords. This means that the passage of legislation through the Lords is often unpredictable, affecting business in the Commons. Further, Parliament must react almost immediately to breaking events and additional urgent and topical issues.

BACKGROUND

A democratic parliament should better reflect the society it represents and for which it legislates. This means, among other things, ideally equality in the numbers of male and female MPs. Whilst the number and proportion of women in Westminster has increased in recent years, it comes nowhere near achieving this. Men make up 77 percent of the 2010-2015 UK Parliament.

That being said, there are currently 147 women in the House of Commons, the highest number and proportion ever. This is an increase of four following the General election of 2010.

The following graph demonstrates the increase of women elected to Parliament.

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Footnote: Figures adjusted for by-elections since 2010
All political parties have developed different techniques to improve the number of women elected to Westminster, with varying success. As shown below, all of the main political parties have witnessed increases in their numbers of women in Parliament. The Labour Party saw 81 MPs elected to Westminster in 2010, with the help of All Women Shortlists (AWS). The Conservative Party saw 49. However progress is slow, with women still constituting 22 percent of all MPs at Westminster. The results of the 2010 election also show that there is no inevitable rise in the numbers of female MPs: the Liberal Democrats saw a reduction in both the percentage and number of its women at Westminster.

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9Ibid.
While few parliaments across the globe come close to parity in respect of the numbers of men and women elected, Westminster ranks poorly in terms of international comparison. The UK ranks 65th out of the 189 countries included in the Inter Parliamentary Union’s monitoring report\(^1\).

The top ranking countries for the percentage of women MPs include countries from Scandinavia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. These countries differ in respect of economic development, conceptions of the state, notions of egalitarianism, and political systems and cultures. Many of the more established democracies, which we might expect to do better, including the US, France and the UK, fare particularly badly\(^2\). Given there is no single cause of women’s under-representation different countries face a different combination of challenges in attracting and keeping women in their Parliaments. Over the last decade or so, electoral gender quotas have been increasingly utilised and have proved successful in providing a ‘fast-track’ to achieving greater gender balance on the international stage. At the same time, we acknowledge that quotas raise some questions and are not always a popular option.

Even if the current rate of increase in the number of women elected to the UK Parliament were to be maintained, it would still take several electoral cycles before parity is reached.

Further concerns arise for a representative and diverse Parliament when we learn a little more about a typical Parliamentarians’ family. Not only is the general proportion of women MPs at Westminster low but the proportion of women MPs without children is out of step with their male colleagues and with women in British society. Some 45 percent of female MPs have no children compared with only 28 percent of male MPs. Childlessness amongst female MPs is double that of the general population and compares unfavourably with professional equivalents.\(^3\)

Other legislative bodies in the UK are performing much better on gender diversity:

- Northern Ireland Assembly: 19% women
- Greater London Assembly: 32% women
- Scottish Parliament: 35% women
- European Parliament: 37% women
- Welsh Assembly: 40% women

There are similar issues of gender representation in other sectors in the UK:

- British Armed Forces: 9.4% are women
- Law Firms: 15% of Partners are women
- High Court Judges: 15.5% are women
- Accountancy and Consultancy Firms: 17% of Partners are women
- FTSE 100 companies: 20.4% of Board Directors are women

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\(^2\)See Annex 1 for World Rankings of Countries by percentage of women in Parliament

PROGRESS SO FAR

Despite its history and traditions, Parliament is not an unchanging institution and recent years have seen some significant changes. The work of the House of Commons Procedure Committee has seen reformed sitting hours in the Commons. It now sits from 2.30pm to 10.30pm on a Monday to allow Members time to return from their constituencies, from 11.30am to 7.30pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 9.30am to 5.30pm on Thursdays and from 9.30am to 3pm on sitting Fridays. Old hands have commented favourably on the reduction in late sittings.

Previously, recess dates were not agreed in advance in the way they are now. Bills were not routinely timetabled and votes were consequently more unpredictable. Business was announced only one week in advance instead of two, as now. Greater use of carry-over of bills has reduced the legislative crush, with associated late sittings, in July. Non-Members are no longer called ‘Strangers’, and backbenchers have regained control of a certain amount of Parliamentary time.

It is not only in its work in the Chamber that the House has changed. It is more open to the public; the educational and outreach programmes in particular have been much expanded. Perhaps most significantly, a parliamentary nursery was opened in September 2010 which is almost at full capacity.

Given the House has changed before, it can change further.
SUPPLY: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The first stage in achieving higher numbers of women in Parliament is an adequate supply of qualified candidates. Parties are concerned about the numbers of women coming forward who seek political office.

FOR PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT

Establish a Women & Equalities Select Committee to raise issues that are a priority for women and to review how women are impacted by Government policy. Women and Equalities Oral Parliamentary questions already take place in the Chamber regularly and the Minister for Women sits at the Cabinet table.

Many of the problems we have raised throughout the course of this Inquiry could have been considered by a Women and Equalities Select Committee, similar to that exists in many other Parliaments. Such a Committee could have the remit of addressing discrimination wherever it is found, including in Parliament. Given that there are Women and Equalities Oral Questions, a corresponding Select Committee would ensure that Government is fully held to account on issues that matter to women.

A Committee that cuts across several Government Departments would not be an innovation, as the House already has Committees on Science and Technology, Environmental Audit, Public Administration and Public Accounts. We know that the House is trying to save costs, but believe that this matter is so important that we recommend a Women and Equalities Select Committee be set up. Similar committees exist in many other Parliaments. These frequently take the form of a Committee or Women’s Caucus.

The creation of such a Select Committee would symbolise that Britain takes seriously its commitment to representative democracy and would allow Parliament to better hold the government to account on equality.

Enhancing Public Perceptions of ‘Being a MP’

Improve the online gateway to Parliament with a new ‘Being a MP’ section on the Parliament website.

It is probable that the current poor public perception of MPs is compounded by the air of mystery that exists in relation to the work of Parliamentarians and the operations of the House. Research has shown that the general public know little about what their Member of Parliament does and how Parliament operates. The survey indicated that even candidates knew little about what the work of a MP actually entailed before they sought selection.

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15 Rosenblatt (2006) “A Year in the Life: From Member of Public to Member of Parliament”, Hansard Society
The Inquiry recommends an enhanced online platform be developed for those who wish to find out more about being a MP. This would enable individuals, when first considering a role in public life, to more easily find out what it involves. This would:

- Clarify the role of a MP
- State the rules and procedures of the House
- Highlight work/life balance realities and life stories
- Host a link to the APPG Women in Parliament website with additional voxpops, interviews, positive case studies and stories
- Encourage women generally into a role in public life and help in “changing lives and communities”

Transforming the Environment

- **Ask the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art to:**
  - Commission a gender audit of artwork currently on display in the Palace
  - Regularly review artwork to ensure the House presents diverse visual representations for visitors
  - Commission an updated group photo of female members at every new session
- **Ask the House to undertake an equality audit of House practices, culture, ceremonies and language to help demystify Parliament**

Throughout the course of our Inquiry we were consistently informed by witnesses that the environment of the Palace of Westminster can be off-putting. Much of the artwork recognises the work of past Parliamentarians and as such displays predominately white male role models. The language, culture and ceremonies were also cited as likely to discourage a diversity of people from feeling connected to and getting involved with Parliament.

The Inquiry does not seek to undermine many of the celebrated traditional elements of the Palace of Westminster, rather to examine where simple changes could be introduced to alleviate much of the underlining ‘masculine’ elements of Parliament. It is important to note that Portcullis House contains more evidence of the presence of women and we are aware that the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art is commendably prioritising commemoration of the contribution of women to political life.

A regularly updated group photo of all female MPs would provide a noticeable historical record of progress of female representatives in Parliament.

Improving Education and Engagement

- **Continue to host an annual Youth Parliament meeting in the House of Commons Chamber**
- **Ask the Secretary of State for Education to consider what more can be achieved in all state funded schools, academies and free schools to support debating societies, public speaking events, school councils and to teach about engaging in democracy**
Education, particularly education of the young, in the history and workings of our democracy and Parliament is vital to its future health. Parliament has made considerable strides in this direction in recent years, especially with the establishment of the Education Outreach Service. The Inquiry would in particular like to commend the work of the Youth Parliament, whose members now have the unique opportunity to sit and debate in the Commons Chamber once a year. Initiatives like these are vital in demystifying politics at Westminster and provide the next generation with real hands-on experience of engaging in democracy. The Inquiry felt strongly that Parliament should continue to inspire young people on politics and democracy.

The wider educational system has a major part to play in educating the young about Parliament. Citizenship classes, school debating societies, visits to the House of Commons and MPs visiting their schools regularly are all to be encouraged, not only as a means of improving understanding of Parliament but also to encourage a wider pool of potential parliamentary candidates from all backgrounds.

FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Developing the Pipeline

- Enhance efforts to identify and mobilise potential female candidates
- Review and monitor the participation of women at all levels of political parties
- Conduct a review of gender quotas for Parliament if progress is not made in the percent of women in Parliament elected after the next general election
- Increase efforts at a local level to emphasise the importance of candidate diversity
- Consider the use of open primaries to enhance public participation, even if using ‘All Women Shortlists’

For our democracy to be representative, a more diverse election of MPs at Westminster is needed. The selection of party candidates occurs at the local party level and local parties would benefit from selecting from a wider supply pool. Historically, unlike men, women have not built up the traditional party political networks for example through business or trade union contacts. Women’s proportionally higher caring responsibilities further serves to diminish the number of women considering standing for election. Evidence also suggests that women are more likely to participate when asked to do so. Whilst we recognise the work that has already taken place to extend outreach by all political parties, we would like to see this enhanced and, if necessary, more assertive action taken by political parties.

Please note, more of the subject matter on political parties can be found in the ‘Selection’ chapter of this report.
Improving Work/Life Balance

Agree a cross party policy on maternity and paternity leave for all Members

Cross party agreement on maternity and paternity leave for all Members would further facilitate and legitimise being both a MP and a parent. The symbolic impact of such an agreement would provide considerable assurances to the outside world, in particular women, that a work/life balance can be achieved within Parliament.

Enhancing Communications

- Encourage female MPs to speak more regularly in the media
- Provide links from the Party ‘Candidate’ web pages to the Parliament ‘Being a MP’ and APPG Women in Parliament websites
- Encourage gender-balanced attendance at party conferences

Many witnesses noted that the environment in Parliament has changed considerably since the number of female Parliamentarians has increased. This needs to be communicated better to the general public and to remove the assumption that all parliamentarians are white, middle class men. We recognise that the media often reinforces this stereotype and we therefore recommend that parties enable their women to be more visible in the media and at large events such as Party Conferences.

Reducing Sexism in the Media

Request that the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and the Independent Press Standards Organisation review sexism in the UK media and social media, including political coverage of female parliamentarians

Media scrutiny and the public perception of MPs were rated in our survey as the most concerning issues for those considering a role in public life. The current poor public perception of MPs is reinforced by negative coverage in the media and subsequently can turn people off considering becoming a MP. Research has shown that female Parliamentarians of all parties face double the amount of intrusive stories to men and that the media are reluctant to update their presentation of the ‘typical’ politician.\(^6\)

The Committee would therefore like to see a comprehensive and systematic review of sexism in the media. This should include social media as it is increasingly being used to harass and attack politicians, women in particular.

BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE

“There isn’t an obvious way of becoming a MP. It’s not something you get in your careers advice service”\(^7\)

Throughout the course of the Inquiry, all those giving evidence were asked about the pool of Parliamentary candidates and how it could be widened to give greater

\(^6\)O’Neill & Savigny (2013) “How are female politicians represented in the press”

\(^7\)Ibid.
chance of a more representative Parliament at Westminster. Consistent themes arose which highlighted the reasons why fewer women in particular venture to seek election. Respondents highlighted their concerns of intense media scrutiny and the poor public perceptions of MPs; a lack of readily available information on the role; and a sense that Parliament is not a place for ‘people like me’

Our survey asked all respondents to indicate the issues of most concern to them at the time of considering seeking selection:

![Bar Chart]

- **Media scrutiny of MPs and their families**: 72% Concerned, 28% Not Concerned
- **Public perception of politicians**: 68% Concerned, 32% Not Concerned
- **Financial pressures during the selection or campaigning process**: 65% Concerned, 32% Not Concerned, 3% N/A
- **Living and working in two places (Westminster and the Constituency)**: 61% Concerned, 35% Not Concerned, 5% N/A
- **The working hours of a MP**: 53% Concerned, 47% Not Concerned
- **Financial considerations of earning a MPs’ salary**: 50% Concerned, 50% Not Concerned

**The Mysterious Life of a MP**

Since the great majority of members of the public have not come into personal contact with MPs, they rely on the media to get their information and research has shown that much of this is negative, particularly for female parliamentarians. The findings of the Committee on Standards in Public Life have consistently shown a widespread lack of trust of MPs which has worsened since the expenses scandal of 2009. Notably, it is sometimes held with the caveat that ‘my MP is different’ but remains a common assumption in British political culture.

Research has shown that female Parliamentarians of all parties face double the amount of intrusive stories to men and that the media are reluctant to update their presentation of the ‘typical’ politician. In addition, Prime Minister Questions is given...
a disproportionate level of media focus which reinforces the adversarial nature of British politics, often regarded as off-putting to women. Witnesses consistently cited the strong focus on debates in the chamber, reinforcing a “Them vs. Us” negative culture rather than more consensual work taking place, for example, in committees. It is perhaps then understandable that fewer members of the public would be tempted to pursue life as a politician.

Throughout the Inquiry, Members consistently referred to the benefits and flexibilities of life as a Member of Parliament at Westminster. However, many were uneasy about vocalising this in the public domain for fear that it would cause further harm to the reputation of MPs. Despite requiring long hours and hard work, many MPs noted that it gives them considerable flexibility and satisfaction in making a difference to local people. If this were to be more widely known amongst the general population, this Committee believes more diverse candidates would be encouraged to step forward.

Negative connotations are compounded by a lack of clear information on the role of a MP readily available to the general public. One witness stated that getting into Parliament was “a big secret for those who aren’t connected”. Much of the work that goes into initially finding out about the role depends on personal links, in particular with a local political party. As the graphic below demonstrates, 66% of those surveyed mentioned local involvement in the party as a trigger to becoming a MP.

In addition, recent research has found that increasing numbers of candidates standing for the 2015 election have previous links to Westminster, as former special advisors, party workers, researchers, lobbyists or MPs\(^2\). This perhaps demonstrates the failure of political parties to engage with a wider range of people, including women.

The fact that there is no cross party agreement on a job description for MPs makes understanding the role of a Member of Parliament all the more difficult and obscure to the wider population. Speaker’s Conference Recommendation 14 recommended that: A description of the main functions of a Member of Parliament should be drawn up, agreed between the parties and published. The description should not remove the scope for MPs to approach the job of representing their constituency in various ways; it should contain general principles and main objectives and tasks, rather than highly detailed prescriptions.

However, this Recommendation has not yet been achieved.

**Disconnection of Parliament from the Public**

The overall reduction in public engagement with the political system in the UK serves to reduce the numbers and diversity of those willing to consider becoming a MP. This is reinforced through an environment which feels alien and irrelevant to most people’s lives.

The graph below displays the voter turnout in elections to Westminster between 1945 and 2010 and highlights a downward trend in political engagement:

The Inquiry commends the work of the Speaker’s Commission on Digital Democracy in investigating how engagement can be enhanced through electronic technology. The Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss with them the issue of women, politics and digital technology.

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Visitor’s perceptions about the environment that Parliament operates within also serve to affect the likelihood that those who do not fit the traditional model will wish to get involved. Witnesses discussed visible symbols of an unconscious bias within the Parliamentary estate, one describing a very masculine world: “You see pictures of men on the walls; you see statues of men lining the corridors; you see men everywhere”.

In addition, some witnesses reported that much of the language used in Parliament was confusing and likely to discourage people from considering politics as a career option. There have recently been some efforts to change this: What is colloquially known as the ‘Order Paper’ is actually entitled ‘Business today’, Committees have ‘Chairs’ rather than ‘Chairmen’ or ‘Chairwomen’ and non-Members are no longer referred to as ‘Strangers’. These institutional changes however, often fail to filter through to the day to day realities in exchanges between those working on the Parliamentary Estate. For example, one feature singled out by the press is the fact that Parliament is often described as being in ‘Recess’, inferring that Members are on holiday and reinforcing the negative stereotypes previously discussed. However, the technical term for when the House is not sitting is that it is in ‘Adjournment’.

The lack of formal maternity and paternity leave for MPs is entirely out of step with wider society and gives the impression that the work of a Parliamentarian is not appropriate for those with caring responsibilities. Whilst maternity and paternity leave does exist for MPs in practice, there is no formal system in place. In practice, women who have had babies are usually granted maternity leave, but this is at the discretion of the Whips. Witnesses described to us a feeling of going to the Whips office, forced to beg for ‘special treatment’ due to their personal circumstances. By formalising provisions through a cross party agreement as to the circumstances in which MPs are entitled to leave, whether for reasons of parenthood, caring, sickness or bereavement, we believe Parliament would signify an openness to a wider pool of candidates, both men and women.

We note also that while Ministers are now entitled to take maternity and paternity leave, and their work is covered by Ministerial colleagues, there is no additional funding to pay the covering Ministers for their additional responsibilities. We believe that a system of paid cover for Ministers on parental leave should be considered.

Finally, throughout the course of our evidence sessions, current and former MPs consistently referred to the practical difficulties of living and working in two, in some cases very distant, locations as a concern when considering seeking selection. As this was also cited as a major issue in relation to the retention of Members, in particular female, it will be addressed fully in that section. It should be noted here, however, that it was seen as a barrier to all MPs, even for those without additional strains on their time such as caring responsibilities.
SELECTION: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation\(^2\) considered the issue of selection thoroughly, this chapter will seek to provide a progress update on its recommendations and highlight some key areas which still need addressing. We strongly support many of the recommendations of the Speaker’s Conference and look forward to them being implemented forthwith.

FOR PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT

Taking Action
- Ask for a Parliamentary debate to discuss prescriptive quotas in the House of Commons (Speaker’s Conference Recommendation 24)
- Create a Democracy Diversity Fund to help create a diverse and more representative Parliament (Speaker’s Conference Recommendation 33)

In line with our aim to increase the diversity of those elected to Parliament, we believe some form of intervention is required to change the status quo.

The Inquiry recognises that quotas in politics are not universally accepted; indeed only the Labour Party has used them in the form of All Women Shortlists for parliamentary selections. That said, given the ‘fast-track’ results that often arise from their introduction, it would be useful for the House to find time to debate prescriptive quotas for Westminster.

Throughout the course of our investigations witnesses highlighted the high costs of selection and election campaigns and noted that women may well be, on average, less financially resourced than men. We therefore support the suggestion of a Democracy Diversity Fund by the Speaker’s Conference which could “be drawn upon by local political parties to support the work of developing talented individuals from under-represented groups. There must be strong controls in place to make sure the money is not abused and therefore the scheme’s effectiveness and propriety should be regularly evaluated by the Electoral Commission”\(^2\)\(^4\).

FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Diversifying Candidate Selections
- Establish a cross-party review into the costs of selection and introduce a cap on selection costs (Speaker’s Conference Recommendation 32)
- Publish data about the diversity of candidate selections (Speaker’s Conference Recommendation 25)
- Continue enhancing candidate training and mentoring efforts

Evidence heard in the course of this Inquiry confirmed that the demands upon candidates seeking selection are great, not only due to the highly competitive nature...
of selection procedures but also financially. If we are serious about increasing the diversity of Parliamentarians, recognition of the impact of selection costs to candidates should be considered; alongside cross-party steps to reduce the absolute spend permitted by aspirant candidates.

To further diversify the pool of selected candidates for election at Westminster, it is vital that political parties review the outcomes of their selection procedures on an ongoing basis so that they can react to issues of diversity. Parties should be open to publishing data on selection, even although full analysis cannot take place until all selections are complete.

These recommendations should be considered in addition to continued enhancement of training and mentoring efforts to ensure those from non-traditional backgrounds are able to compete for selection on a level playing field.

The chart on the following page shows the Speaker’s Conference Recommendations for Parliamentary Representation and progress updates from the main political parties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Conservative Party</th>
<th>Labour Party</th>
<th>Liberal Democrat Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Guidelines and support on diversity for local Party</td>
<td>Regional Party team are tasked to support local Associations to encourage diversity</td>
<td>Labour Party Accessibility Guide – new version due in July 2014</td>
<td>Diversity Engagement Group centrally provides framework and works with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity training for staff and lay-volunteers</td>
<td>regions and local parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Community champions and improved talent spotting</td>
<td>Vice Chairmen for Women, Disabilities, BME, LGBT and Youth appointed</td>
<td>Talent spotting and training through BAME Labour, Labour Party Disabled Members Group, LGBT Labour and the Labour Women’s Network</td>
<td>Diversity champions appointed in regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focused outreach within under-represented groups and in local government by Conservative Women’s Organisation and Conservative Disability Forum</td>
<td>Champion on Shadow Front Bench</td>
<td>Talent spotting through New Generation and Campaign for Gender Balance and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by MPs/Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Clarity on the role of a MP</td>
<td>MP’s videos on ‘Life as a MP’</td>
<td>Job and personal specification of a MP developed</td>
<td>Inspiration Days for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case studies on MPs on Women2Win website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Monitor background of MPs</td>
<td>Candidate profiles on website to view publically</td>
<td>Monitoring data to be published at National Executive Committee</td>
<td>Candidate profiles are publicly available on the Party website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disclosed details are monitored centrally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Experience required for MPs</td>
<td>Diversity experience and backgrounds welcomed</td>
<td>Clear job and person specification available to all members online</td>
<td>Parliamentary Candidates assessed against competency framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No requirement to have worked in politics</td>
<td>Candidates assessed against competency framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parliamentary candidates assessed on a competency framework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Role of Party Leaders to support diversity</td>
<td>Minister for Women &amp; Equalities at Cabinet table</td>
<td>Shadow Cabinet is 44% women</td>
<td>Minister for Women &amp; Equalities appointed – sits at Cabinet table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Asian MP appointed to the Cabinet</td>
<td>Women &amp; Equalities is a stand-alone role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Diversity awareness training</td>
<td>Coaching provided to local Associations and selection committees in key seats</td>
<td>Training from July 2014 for managers, regional staff and party members</td>
<td>Training provided for all selection committee members in priority seats and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>all members at every Federal Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unconscious bias training delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Monitor progress on diversity</td>
<td>Vice Chairmen attend weekly meetings with Party Chairman to review progress</td>
<td>All Women Shortlists implemented in some seats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister personally leads and receives regular reports</td>
<td>Future Candidates Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Candidate Leadership Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign for Gender Balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive action measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Publish selection details</td>
<td>Details of all selected candidates published online</td>
<td>Details published online</td>
<td>Published on Party website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Publish data on diversity</td>
<td>Details of all selected candidates published online</td>
<td>Will be added online – goal is for 40% female elected representatives</td>
<td>Statement was provided in 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aim is for gender parity in Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td>Data published on website and updated every 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Ceiling for expenses during selection</td>
<td>A limit on materials produced already exists</td>
<td>A limit on materials produced exists already – financial cap is being</td>
<td>Expense limits for selection campaigns in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations explained and discussed individually as well as at Candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association network</td>
<td>‘Candidates compact’ in place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 Expectations of candidates and Associations</td>
<td>Expectations explained and discussed individually as well as at Candidates</td>
<td>Expectations listed in the job description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Mentoring and buddy systems for candidates</td>
<td>Mentoring and coaching provided by MPs (male &amp; female), Women2Win and CWO</td>
<td>Political Mentor Programme</td>
<td>Provided by Campaign for Gender Balance and the Leadership Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Future Candidates’ Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Training for candidates</td>
<td>Programme of training is available for candidates</td>
<td>Programme of training is available</td>
<td>Full programme of candidate training provided at every Party Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Central list of candidates for internships and vacancies</td>
<td>MPs approached when required</td>
<td>List will become outdated too quickly – groups notified as opportunities</td>
<td>Best practice defined and paid internship scheme in place to support diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central list will become outdated too quickly</td>
<td>arise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 Campaigning code of conduct</td>
<td>Code of conduct for all candidates</td>
<td>Code of conduct for all candidates</td>
<td>Code of conduct for all candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Policy on maternity, paternity and caring leave</td>
<td>Personally agreed with Whips – but very supportive to date</td>
<td>Personally agreed with Whips</td>
<td>Arranged for Ministers, but would welcome a formal process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Pairing to support MPs leave</td>
<td>Already in place where needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open and transparent culture around pairing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 Information for disabled MP's</td>
<td>Support this and will pass on information</td>
<td>Support this and will pass on information</td>
<td>Support this and will pass on information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE

“The suffragettes thought that if you got the vote for women, everything else would follow. But we still have a lot further to go. You can’t take progress for granted”

Angela Eagle MP, Chair of the Labour Party

Parties are widely recognised to be the gatekeepers to parliamentary office. Nearly all candidates for the House of Commons are selected by registered political parties. Under our ‘first past the post’ electoral system, and all other things being equal, political parties need to select women in their vacant-held seats and in the seats where they expect to win to increase the numbers of women in Parliament. Selecting women in seats where parties have no realistic chance of winning will not, after the General Election, cause the numbers of women MPs to increase.

Given the significance of party selection, it is important, then, that all political parties have transparent and fair procedures which encourage a more diverse pool of candidates. Over the last decade or so all the main political parties have reformed their candidate procedures to confirm their support for equal opportunities. Such efforts are welcomed by the Committee.

Support for Aspiring Candidates

Demands are great on aspirant candidates seeking selection for a Parliamentary seat. Not only are they entering a highly competitive selection process, but they will incur considerable financial costs on the way, alongside extensive demands on their time. If there is to be real progress in the diversity of Parliamentarians at Westminster, this stage must be as supportive as possible to those from different backgrounds.

In our survey, some 65 percent of respondents noted the ‘financial pressures during the selection or campaigning process’ as a concern when making their decision to become a MP; 39 percent would have liked to have received ‘financial support from the party’. However, no systematic data is available on the true costs of party selection and election. Aspirant parliamentary candidates make life changing decisions when seeking selection: one respondent to our survey commented that they were forced to leave their full time job when selected and thus had to cope without a salary throughout the campaigning period.

Training of selection committees and mentoring potential candidates are key to ensuring people from all backgrounds can participate fairly in our democratic process. As the following chart demonstrates, more than two-thirds of women surveyed had encountered discriminatory behaviour or policies during the selection process; double that of men.

More than two thirds of women surveyed had encountered discrimination during the selection process

This data suggests that parties should continue to review and monitor the effectiveness of their practices and procedures. Complacency must be avoided. The Inquiry recognises and commends the various training and mentoring programmes already employed by political parties to ensure that candidates from all backgrounds are given the best chance to be selected.

Data and Quotas

Pressure on political parties to increase the number of women in Parliament must be sustained to ensure progress continues. Increasingly the implementation of gender quotas is used around the world to accelerate this process.

One of the political factors strongly related to a higher percentage of women in national parliaments across the globe is the presence of quotas. Well-designed and well-implemented quotas can produce ‘fast track’ results; resulting in big jumps in the number of female MPs elected. More than 100 countries in the world have some form of quota. Half of the top twenty countries registering sharpest growth in women’s representation have used legal quotas; while none of the bottom twenty employed them.

In the UK the Labour Party has implemented a type of positive discrimination in the form of All Women Shortlists (AWS). The following table highlights that the 1997 election saw 101 Labour women MPs elected, of whom 35 were elected via AWS. The Party did not use AWS in 2001, when the number of its women MPs declined. However, it has utilised them in each election since and the percentage of Labour women MPs has increased.

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26OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) For further information visit http://www.osce.org/
Presently, the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002, amended by the Equality Act 2010, permits political parties to adopt quotas until 2030, if they so wish. In other words, parties may, but are not required to, use quotas in the selection of parliamentary candidates. If the House were to agree to introduce prescriptive quotas, all political parties would be required to adopt such measures.

An additional method to encourage political parties to provide diverse candidates for election comes in the form of the publishing of candidate diversity data. Importantly all of the three main political party leaders agreed to the publication of this data when they came before the Speaker’s Conference in 2010.

The 2015 Election

The most recent analysis of party selections to-date (figures as of 20th May 2014) indicates that the Labour Party remains ahead of the Conservative Party in terms of the selection of female candidates for the 2015 election. The Liberal Democrats are catching up, but given current opinion polls it may be difficult for them to turn female candidates selected in contested seats into female MPs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Con</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>LD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974(F)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974(0)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>98</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>143</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Railings and Thrasher, British Electoral Facts 1832-2006; House of Commons Library Research Paper 10/36 General Election 2010

28Ibid.
32Where the party came second in 2010 and they might hope to win in the event of a positive swing
RETENTION: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Retention is critical to increasing the number of women in Parliament over time. Whilst the increase in the number of female MPs returned at the 2010 General Election is welcome, the fact that twelve women have announced that they are not standing in 2015 is worrying. This may suggest that there are aspects of parliamentary life which are particularly unappealing to women.

Our Inquiry has identified a number of factors which, together, increase pressure upon Members and in some cases, prompt them to consider that life as a Parliamentarian is not something they wish to continue. It must be noted that these concerns are not necessarily the case for all MPs and impact them at varying degrees.

FOR PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT

Increasing Efficiency

- Improve the predictability of the Parliamentary calendar – MPs should know further in advance whipping requirements and timetable of the business of the House, so they can plan their time and prepare more effectively
- Consider a potential new model of the parliamentary calendar for MPs to reconnect with voters and rebalance parliamentary and constituency priorities. For example:
  - Mondays to Wednesdays: Government business and Opposition day debates
  - Thursdays: Backbench business
  - Fridays: Private Members Bills
- Encourage more grouped and or deferred voting in the House and discuss the options for electronic voting
- Rename ‘Recess’ to reflect that MPs on recess are working in the constituency and are not all on holiday

The demands upon MPs’ time are great and varied. As such it is vital they use their time efficiently to best represent the views of their constituents. Increasing predictability into the Parliamentary calendar was consistently cited by witnesses and respondents to the survey as a way to plan their time better. Ideas of alternative ways of voting were also raised as a method of time saving. As constituent demands have increased over time, this Inquiry recommends that the House of Commons Procedure Committee undertakes a review of the Parliamentary calendar to better reflect the expectations of constituents. This should be in combination with a reconsideration of some of the language that is used within the Parliamentary calendar to more clearly communicate what MPs are doing at any one time.
Improving Behaviour

Create a zero tolerance response to unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber, especially during Prime Ministers Questions. The standard of behaviour in the Chamber should be what is accepted in other work environments, for example no abuse, personal insults, bullying, ‘ganging up’, unprofessional language and bad behaviour. If behaviour fails to improve, additional ‘rules and sanctions’ may need to be created.

The behaviour of some MPs in the House, particularly at Prime Minister’s Questions can be raucous and ill-mannered. Many respondents reminded us that such behaviour (which may extend beyond the Chamber) was unprofessional and would not be tolerated in a modern workplace or even in a classroom. In order to improve both the public perception of MPs and to create a more effective environment for Members themselves, we believe tighter rules and harsher sanctions should be implemented if behaviour does not improve. This requires the Speaker to define what behaviour is unacceptable in the House and consider what additional sanctions might be applied. One possibility would be for the Chair to decline to call an offending Member to speak for a period of days.

Improving Diversity and Inclusion

- Re-design the parliament pass so MPs are more easily identifiable
- Formalise a pairing relationship of MPs to cover when a MP is on maternity or paternity leave
- Introduce parental leave for MPs and Ministers, to include a salary for a ‘covering’ Minister
- Review the possibility of job sharing for MPs and Ministers
- Create an equivalent Diversity and Inclusion Unit for all Members and their staff

In order to retain a more diverse set of Parliamentarians, considerable changes need to be introduced to the workings of the House to allow Members of both genders, of all ages and ethnicities to operate effectively in their surroundings. Members interviewed who did not fit the traditional model of a MP, for example young women, described instances of being failed to be recognised as a Member on repeated occasions. We recommend that all identity passes be double-sided so that all MPs and staff are more easily identified.

We also recommend that Parliament should be brought further into the 21st century by introducing a series of measures to better allow for flexible working. Parliament must facilitate and legitimise being both a MP and a parent through a formal system of maternity and paternity leave. This should also cover paid parental leave for Ministers. It should also consider the possibility of job sharing to reflect the modern working world, although many have expressed concerns about accountability with this. Finally, it should provide better central support for Members and their staff in relation to Human Resources issues such as harassment in the workplace.
Improving Internal Communications

- The Speaker to have an expanded role in the induction process to encourage better attendance at the induction sessions for MPs and staff
- Expand and improve the in-House training for MPs to include parliamentary procedure, best practice on public speaking, voice coaching and media interviews

A lack of awareness of the rules of the House and an uneasiness around the public nature of many elements of the role of a MP were highlighted by witnesses across the board as causing additional stress for Members. Essentially, Members expressed a desire to feel better equipped to deal with the realities of being a MP. We recommend that the Speaker be more involved in the induction process to ensure better communication of the rules of the House, alongside an expanded in-House training system providing additional support, in particular for some of the public-facing aspects of the job. We hope that these resources will provide Members additional assurances to more effectively and more confidently fulfil the demands expected of them.

Improving Training and Development

Raise awareness and expand the provision of Continuous Professional Development for MPs, including unconscious bias training

Throughout the course of the Inquiry concerns were raised by Members in relation to career development and skills acquisition caused by a lack of professional support, as available in most other careers. The Inquiry recommends the House introduce a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for MPs. The House authorities are currently considering what form CPD might take after the next General Election and the Committee would be delighted to engage with them on this.

FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Improving Behaviour

Sign ‘concordats’ of acceptable behaviour and formalise sanctions for unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber

Tighter rules and harsher sanctions should be implemented to improve unprofessional behaviour in the House to better reflect what is acceptable in the rest of the working world. Political parties, in particular front bench teams and Whips, have a critical part to play in this, and we recommend that rather than encouraging unprofessional behaviour, they lead the way in agreeing on what constitutes acceptable behaviour and improving sanctions against those who break the rules.
FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Becoming More Family Friendly

- Provide clarification on support available to MPs with primary caring responsibilities within the new expenses system to make it more family-friendly
- Commission a gender audit of IPSA rules and perceived ‘unintended consequences’
- Better communicate to Members and their staff the scope and limits of IPSA rules and allowances
- Consider additional staffing budgets and resources for Members if they require maternity or paternity leave
- Consider additional staffing budgets and resources for Members if they have, for example, a long term illness

Research throughout the course of this Inquiry has consistently found issues with navigating the current expenses system alongside working in two distinct locations, and balancing work and family responsibilities. Respondents suggested that Members with caring responsibilities should be given more support. Many noted that the changes to the expenses system since 2009 have produced a number of unintended consequences. Our recommendations therefore focus on a review of the current system and a gender audit of IPSA rules. We also recommend that staffing budgets are modernised to allow for Members to take parental leave, or to cover for illness and thereby allow for consistent constituent representation and government scrutiny.

BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE

“It was designed by men for men, hundreds of years ago, and women are an afterthought within it. I think, in a way, that is a real problem for us. It is not really designed to bring out the best in us.”

Female Conservative MP, 2014

Much of what is cited as both a challenge for current Members and a deterrent to a wider pool of candidates stepping forward are the peculiarities of Westminster politics. This Inquiry established that many feel much of Parliamentary life is ‘out of sync’ with the modern world, making it harder to balance with other responsibilities off the Parliamentary Estate.
Modernising the pattern of business

Predictability: Increasing predictability was one of the most common suggestions as a way of improving the life of a Member of Parliament.

Sitting dates are to a large extent predictable for Members, as are now normally set early in the session by Resolution of the House. As an example, on 2nd December 2013 they were set until January 2015. They are published on the website under ‘What’s on’ and in card form. They are, of course, subject to alteration for example, on 9th June the September sitting was extended by a day.

In the shorter term, the House does not control its own agenda, which is announced on Thursdays by the Leader of the House after consultation through ‘the usual channels’.

This means that Members do not know for more than a maximum of two weeks the Parliamentary agenda, making it difficult to plan constituency engagements. The unpredictability of Backbench Business is a particular problem, as often debates are scheduled at short notice. Many MPs have longstanding Parliamentary commitments that are difficult to rearrange at short notice, however would really like to attend many of these important debates. A longer notice period of the Parliamentary timetable would give them greater opportunity to attend.

We accept that the Government must retain flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, but would like as far as possible to see business scheduled further in advance. The subjects of backbench debates and opposition day debates should also be decided earlier.

Sitting Days and Hours: The House sits from Monday to Thursday, with some sitting Fridays for Private Members Bills. MPs are typically tied up with engagements in the constituency not only on Friday but throughout much of the weekend as well. As the graph below highlights both female and male Members felt not only that they were subject to a high volume of work, but also that they found it challenging to balance work and home life alongside constituency and Parliamentary work.

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The unpredictability of Parliamentary Business is a particular problem for MPs and their staff

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24Defined on www.parliament.uk as ‘Usual channels describes the working relationship of the whips from the different parties and the leaderships of the Government and Opposition parties. The term refers to arrangements and compromises about the running of parliamentary business that are agreed behind the scenes’.
Witnesses were keen that the parliamentary timetable should be altered to allow Members more time in the constituency.

The House currently sits on Mondays from 2.30pm to about 10.30pm, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11.30pm to 7.30pm, on Thursdays from 9.30pm to 5.30pm and on sitting Fridays (occurring 13 times for the 2014-15 session) from 9.30pm to 3pm. Backbenchers have the opportunity of face-to-face Ministerial time in the form of ‘Adjournment Debates’. These usually take place for up to half an hour at the end of each daily sitting. The late start on Monday is to accommodate Members who travel down from their constituencies. Occasionally, Parliament will sit for longer than the normal hours.

There was little consensus throughout the course of investigations on what arrangement in terms of working hours would be most effective. Some witnesses recommended concentrating core Chamber business between the hours of nine to five. This would mean that other business, such as Committees, being taken outside of these times and would allow those with caring responsibilities greater opportunity to balance work and home life. One witness summed up the benefits of such a system: “With the exception of Mondays, I would have the core hours of Parliament between nine and five, so that you could fit it with an extended school day that is eight till six.”

While a ‘nine to five’ Parliament might suit Members with a family based in London, it might be of lesser benefit to someone whose family is based a distance from London; we have found many of these MPs prefer longer but fewer sitting days.

One option might be for Parliament to sit in alternate weeks, with the intervals being ‘constituency weeks’. A successful example of this model can be found in the German Bundestag. Notably, this would have different implications for Members with different family patterns and living in different locations.

The Inquiry’s preferred solution is that Government business and Opposition day debates take place on Mondays to Wednesdays, with Backbench business on Thursdays and Private Members Bills on Fridays. This arrangement would allow MPs to better respond to increasing constituent demands and for this reason it should be considered.

**Voting:** Major votes, otherwise known as ‘Divisions’ take place by Members walking through the ‘Division Lobbies’ and last about 15 minutes. The current Westminster voting system is considered by some old-fashioned and time-consuming, however interestingly the introduction of electronic voting was cited as the least popular of the options for improvement suggested in our survey. It is a divisive issue, as many Members consider that time in the lobbies offers a valuable opportunity to network and speak to Ministers. However many Parliaments around the world vote electronically and a discussion could be had around the practicalities of its introduction in a limited manner.

A further concern raised throughout the course of the Inquiry was the unpredictability of the votes, and the expectation of the party Whips that Members should remain, as one witness described, “ever-present within the four walls of the House of Commons” during sitting times.
Some respondents and interviewees thought that votes should be grouped to combat this. This is not always possible, as in the case of the Committee or Report stage of a Bill, or Lords Amendments. The questions to be resolved may depend on the result of a previous vote. Nonetheless, the Inquiry recommends that the House of Commons Procedure Committee should consider whether there is scope for any further grouping. Fears that the grouping of votes would detrimentally impact on the quality of debates was undermined by evidence gathered through the course of this Inquiry. Therefore, the grouping of at least some of the votes should not dramatically impact the quality of government scrutiny.

**Improving support for Members**

Witnesses consistently referred to the challenges involved in being a Member of Parliament arising in particular from the lack of support available. One witness described Westminster as ‘650 sole traders’, suggesting a sense of the solitary environment for Members of Parliament.

**Training:** Further support in terms of a better induction and training programme to enhance Members’ understanding of how Parliament works was cited throughout the Inquiry as a way of legitimising and empowering Members to fulfil the particular demands of the job. As the graph below highlights, around 50% of those surveyed expressed a desire to be given better briefing on Parliamentary procedures, managing their offices and sharing of best practice.

While the induction given to new Members has improved greatly in recent years, as admitted by most of our respondents, it tends to be concentrated when MPs first arrive. Newly-elected Members challenged by the sudden demands upon them may be tempted to forgo seminars on Chamber customs and behaviour while they get their offices and staff sorted out. The Inquiry understands that House staff are in discussion with the party authorities on how best to ensure that Members are given the information they need as soon as possible, and for the time being will only recommend that procedural seminars be offered not only shortly after the election but at intervals thereafter.
The Inquiry recommends that the House introduces a programme of CPD for MPs. This should not be restricted to procedural matters. In addition, many Members might benefit from training in handling the traditional media and social media, as well as public speaking.

Evidence obtained throughout the course of this Inquiry showed that a real concern to aspirant candidates and current MPs is career development and skills acquisition. One respondent to the survey remarked, “Colleagues are left...with no idea of whether they are ‘performing’ as a MP or not. We are very behind as a professional body in this regard”. Since most other career paths involve some form of CPD, it is striking that Parliament does not.

The Inquiry understands the House authorities are currently considering what form CPD might take after the next General Election and the Committee would be delighted to engage with them on this.

**Job sharing:** Modern workplaces increasingly allow job sharing as a way of encouraging and retaining employees who juggle different demands in their work and home life. The law does not currently allow candidates to stand as job-sharers and the Committee heard a number of potential concerns about its use for Parliamentarians. Nevertheless witnesses argued that if the public are to re-engage with politicians we should, as far as possible, attempt to make the environment within Parliament as similar to the modern workplace as possible. We recommend that the Speaker review the possibility of job sharing in Parliament. It should also be considered for Ministers.

**Diversity & Inclusion:** This Committee commends the work of the Diversity and Inclusion team which provides considerable support to House staff in terms of championing issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. According to the Equality Scheme Action Plan 2009, its approach has been:

> “...to embed the principles of equality and diversity in everything we do, ensuring they are considered at the inception stage of policies, procedures, practices and projects. Our aim in producing this scheme and action plan is to achieve clarity regarding the day to day responsibilities of all people working in and for the House, thus creating an equal and diverse organisation”

Nearly 60% of female MPs have experienced some form of discrimination as a MP.

In contrast to Members of some other parliaments, MPs at Westminster are not considered employees, instead they are ‘office-holders’ and on a practical level, are essentially self-employed. There is no agreed cross-party job description and MPs are not covered by the usual legal protections in respect of, for example, grievances or maternity, sickness or caring leave, all of which are left to be dealt with by the discretion of the Party Whips. The House of Commons has a policy to prevent and punish harassment and bullying, but this only applies to staff and does not cover the behaviour of Members towards other Members. There is also no immediately available substitute should a Member wish or need to take time off for any reason, including maternity leave.
The Inquiry believes the House should create an equivalent Diversity and Inclusion Unit for Members and their staff. It recognises and commends the Speaker on the recent creation of a 24 hour confidential helpline to allow all MPs staff to discuss personal and professional issues. Whilst it does not constitute a full Human Resources department, it is a step in the right direction to modernising and professionalising Parliament as a workplace.

Further institutionalised channels to report on and provide support for issues such as bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace are vital to improve the sense of fairness and justice for all those working within the Parliamentary Estate.

The expenses regime: Research throughout the course of this Inquiry has consistently found issues with navigating the current expenses system particularly for those MPs with families. In our survey, ‘Reforming IPSA financial support for families’ was third most popular suggestion for encouraging more people to become MPs. The Inquiry revealed a number of concerns about the new IPSA expenses regime, some of which may be the result of miscommunication. The Inquiry acknowledges that since its foundation IPSA has become more willing to engage with individual MPs. Indeed, we recognise that recently IPSA has improved the level of support available to MPs, for example in the extension of the MP Helpline which is now open from 10am to 5pm every day. Nonetheless, concerns remain.

It has already been mentioned the pressure on MPs to spend time in their constituencies, where they are typically expected to have their main bases and school their children. Under the expenses regime in place before 2009, Members were permitted accommodation in two locations for themselves and their family. This is no longer the case and Members highlighted to us the strains imposed on their families as a result. We recognise that there are additional increments available for MPs to apply for if they have dependents, however, this is not clear to all Members. We recommend that the IPSA rules be subject to a gender audit to establish whether they inadvertently discriminate against women.

The Inquiry highlighted further concerns about the IPSA system, in particular the burden of administration it imposes on Members such as employing staff. Some Members would like to see an extension of IPSA’s administration role in facilitating travel and accommodation for MPs.

Another issue was the perceived tendency of IPSA to rely on the contingency fund when a MP may simply need additional support for maternity cover, or they have a very large constituency, or higher costs in a city or constituency office. This serves to create a further administrative burden on Members and it mirrors the sentiment felt when in relation to the Party Whips of begging ‘cap in hand’ for special treatment. Members felt that clarification of the rules of system and further review in relation to emergency or additional support were vital in allowing Members to focus on their main role.
Improving the Parliamentary environment

Zero tolerance in the chamber: As our witnesses reminded us, the House of Commons was developed by men, for men. ‘Women are an afterthought struggling to fit into something not designed for us’ said one of our witnesses. To allow an increasingly diverse selection of Members to work effectively within Parliament, it is important to look at what should be changed.

The behaviour of some MPs in the House, particularly at Prime Minister’s Questions is raucous and ill-mannered. Many respondents reminded us that such behaviour (which may extend beyond the Chamber) was unprofessional and would not be tolerated in a modern workplace or in a classroom. It has been reported that several female MPs avoid Prime Minister’s Questions due to the testosterone fuelled atmosphere in the chamber. If this reaction becomes widespread it will increase still further the visible male dominance of the House, potentially reinforcing inappropriate behaviour and further discouraging women and minorities (including some gentlemen) from a parliamentary career. Prime Minister’s Questions is the most widely and commented on aspect of the Chamber, poor behaviour here overshadows in the public mind the good and well-mannered exchanges occurring in the Chamber at other times. It is worth pointing out that many other debates are much more professional. Prime Minister’s Questions show MPs at their worst.

It should be noted, according to the survey results, unprofessional behaviour is regarded as a less pressing problem than some others by Members themselves, possibly because MPs are by nature combative and by experience battle-hardened. Nevertheless it may put off the public and would-be entrants, alongside making life difficult for some, particularly new Members.

The Inquiry has given some thought to how unprofessional behaviour might be addressed. Order in the Chamber is in the hands of the Chair, but depends ultimately on the agreement of the House. The sanctions immediately available if a Member does not comply with the instructions of the Chair extend to ordering him or her to withdraw for the rest of the sitting or naming him or her. In the latter case, if the House upholds the Speaker’s decision the Member will be suspended from the House for, usually, five sitting days. These sanctions are draconian and rarely applied.

As stated above, the Inquiry recommends that the Speaker define what behaviour is unacceptable in the House and consider what sanctions might be applied. One possibility would be for the Chair to decline to call an offending Member to speak for a period of days. Another possibility would be for the parties to agree a concordat covering acceptable behaviour, with sanctions imposed for breaches.

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**Improved visibility of women:** The idea of the perceived masculinity of Parliament is reinforced by one small but significant example heard by the Committee. One witness described to us the way in which young female MPs in particular are singled out for challenge (‘Excuse me, only Members are allowed here’) by colleagues or staff. It is one example of how those from non-traditional backgrounds can sometimes be made to feel they are not welcome. Easier recognition of Members through a newly designed double sided identity pass for all those on the Parliamentary Estate would, as stated above, make a great difference.

**Media coverage:** As previously discussed, the impact of negative media coverage can further serve to reinforce the stereotype that Parliament is best suited to a white, middle-class man. Indeed, negative and discriminatory attention by the press was described by witnesses as constituting a further pressure upon them.

Several respondents to our survey commented on how female appearance is remarked upon in a way that men’s is not; academic research supports this. One highlighted that “the press are prime offenders in how they write about women politicians. This must put women off not just for themselves but for the effects on their family”.

It must be noted that witnesses highlighted to us the supportive nature of Parliament when Members face unfair media scrutiny. One witness described an instance of negative news coverage in the national papers about her appearance, yet was struck by the cross party support she received: “Women of all parties were really fantastic, supportive, and proactive about rallying around”.

Increased trolling and abuse on social media sites such as Twitter makes for an even more difficult environment for MPs to effectively function within. One example of this can be seen in the alarming experience of Labour MP Stella Creasy, who received threats of rape on Twitter following her involvement in the campaign to keep a woman on a British bank note.

As described in the ‘Supply’ section, the Inquiry would therefore like to see a review of sexism in the media. This should include social media as it is increasingly being used to harass and attack female politicians.

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38Ibid.
APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: TOP 70 RANKING COUNTRIES IN % OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (Correct as of 1st May 2014)

All G8 countries are highlighted in bold. For those not in the table:
The United States of America is 85th, Russia ranks 104th and Japan is 132nd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% Women in Lower or Single House</th>
<th>Legislative Quotas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The F.Y.R. of Macedonia</td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>% Women in Lower or Single House</th>
<th>Legislative Quotas</th>
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<td>32</td>
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APPENDIX 2: LIST OF THOSE INVITED TO GIVE EVIDENCE

The Inquiry Committee conducted a number of oral evidence hearings with:
- Current Members of Parliament (male and female) including a number of MPs who have announced they are not intending to stand again
- Former Members of Parliament
- Senior MPs with a particular interest in, or responsibility for, gender diversity within their Party
- House Authorities
- External Professionals with knowledge of both the characteristics and workings of Parliament and the outside business world

These oral evidence sessions ran alongside written evidence received from current and former Members of Parliament and academic experts. The Committee also requested evidence from the following organisations:
- Aberdeen Asset Management
- Airbus
- Centre for Policy Studies
- Demos
- Electoral Reform Society
- EY
- Fawcett Society
- Hanover Communications
- Hansard Society
- IPPR
- MHPC
- Morrisons Plc
- Norman Broadbent
- Policy Exchange
- Reform
- ResPublica