

## **More women standing in a UK election than ever before!**

**21 November 2019**

**The 50:50 campaign to encourage women to stand is paying off as more women stand this election than ever before.**

Today marks 101 years since women won the right to stand. This is being celebrated in the middle of a record-breaking election for women as more female candidates are standing than ever before.

50:50's [detailed analysis of election](#) data shows that there are 170 more women candidates standing compared to in 2017. There has been a drop in the number of all-male ballots from 92 in 2017 to 71 this time round and an increase in the number of all women ballots to 4, guaranteed seats for women.

This election has also seen a large number of MPs standing down. Over half of Labour and almost half of Conservative male retirement seats have a female candidate standing.

Dolly Theis, co-founder of 50:50 Parliament's #AskHerToStand campaign says "Today is an historic day. We have more women standing for election than ever before. However, we still have a way to go. It's 101 years since the Qualification of Women Act passed in Parliament enabling women to stand for election, since then over 5000 MPs have been elected but fewer than 500 were women. In 2017 only 12 more women gained seats, at this rate it will take another 50 years to achieve gender balance in the Commons. We cannot stop until it's both normal and easy for all women to consider standing and be able to do so if they wish."

50:50 Parliament work across the political spectrum to address the current gender imbalance. We inspire, encourage and actively support women to stand for elected office. Last year to mark the centenary of the Qualification of Women Act 50:50 organised a massive #AskHerToStand day in Parliament. Hundreds of women from all

over the UK attended. **Women are stepping up**, over 900 women have gone on to sign up to stand via 50:50 Parliament.

This year we are launching our **#NewGirlsNetwork** of 50:50 buddies who are mentoring women and monitoring their progress along the path to Parliament.

### **We still have a way to go**

We may have more women standing than ever before, but many parties are still struggling to achieve gender balance among their candidates. Only 30% of Conservative Party and Liberal Democrat candidates are female. Other parties do not fare much better - 40% of Green Party, 33% of SNP, 26% Sinn Fein, 25% Plaid Cymru, 20% Brexit Party and 11% of DUP candidates are female. The only party to have gender balance is the Labour Party with 53% female candidates. The Labour Party have all-women shortlists, which was introduced in 1997.

### **Another shock election means parties must be prepared at all times**

The 2019 and 2017 elections have taught us that parties must be prepared to stand candidates at all times, and they cannot assume that elections will take place every five years. Although the number of women candidates have gone up, many women were not processed by their party on time and were unable to stand this election.

Councillor Andrea Johnson says “I’m disappointed to receive a stock response ‘please try again next year’ email from CCHQ. I applied to become a Conservative candidate after attending forum in June 2019...At a time when politics has become ugly, where women are routinely targeted on social media, I put my hat in the ring knowing this would be the toughest job of my life. I’m a city councillor, a shadow portfolio holder, a scrutiny chair, I’m association Treasurer, a major campaigner. What more would CCHQ like me to do to show my commitment to the cause? I’ve now been advised to reapply and get involved in the GE.”

## **Why do we need more women MPs?**

In national and local politics only one in three politicians is a woman. We want Westminster to draw upon the widest possible pool of experience and talent, including that of the 32 million women who live and work in the UK. Diversity leads to better decision making and representation shapes policy. A gender balanced legislature would be better informed, more resilient and responsive. We need the best of both, men and women working together in equal numbers, running the country and planning the future together. Gender equality is a human right and Parliament is meant to be a representative institution, most people are women.

Research has shown that women are considerably less likely to consider standing for election than men and need to be asked three times or more before they consider it seriously. It should be normal and easy for every woman to consider standing and be able to do so if they want to.

Although we have a long way to go, 50:50 Parliament is celebrating record numbers of women candidates, looks forward to welcoming all female MPs elected next month and will continue to work hard to increase the number of women selected and elected in future.

Frances Scott, Founder of 50:50 Parliament says "We at 50:50 celebrate all the women standing in 2019. We will continue to work with everyone to get even more women selected and elected next time round. 50:50 are reaching out, If you know a woman who would make a good MP please ask her to stand via [50:50](#), we can help her take the next step. We need everyone's help, let's build a better democracy, together!"

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## About 50:50 Parliament

50:50 Parliament is a cross-party non-partisan organisation taking action to improve the gender balance in the UK Parliament. With their #AskHerToStand and #SignUpToStand campaigns 50:50 inspire, encourage and support women on the way to Westminster. Over 900 women have signed up to stand via the [50:50 website](#) and a team of volunteers are now mentoring and monitoring these women's progress to Parliament. 50:50 have been called the new girl's network, together, they aim to build a better democracy.

You can join 50:50 Parliament at [www.5050parliament.co.uk](http://www.5050parliament.co.uk), and nominate yourself or a woman you know for their mentoring program.

For Election 2019 candidate gender data:

<https://5050parliament.co.uk/ge2019-analysing-candidate-gender/>

For more information, interview requests or media enquiries please contact:

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