

# WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE GENDER INSENSITIVE UK HOUSE OF COMMONS

Professor Sarah Childs



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON



## A RAG Analysis of the House of Commons

Dimension	Measure	Red	Amber	Green
Equality of Participation	Number of MPs (sex, race and class)	X		
	Women's House leadership positions	X		
	Women's participation (internal structures; committees)		X	
Infra-structure	Standing Orders		X	
	Calendar & sitting hours	X		
	Equalities & diversity body (policy)			X
	Equalities & diversity body (institutional)	X		
	Parliamentary buildings & spaces		X	
	Childcare & child-friendly provisions		X	
	Maternity & parental leave	X		
Culture	House commitment & action plan	X		
	Chamber culture (PMQs & 'set pieces')	X		

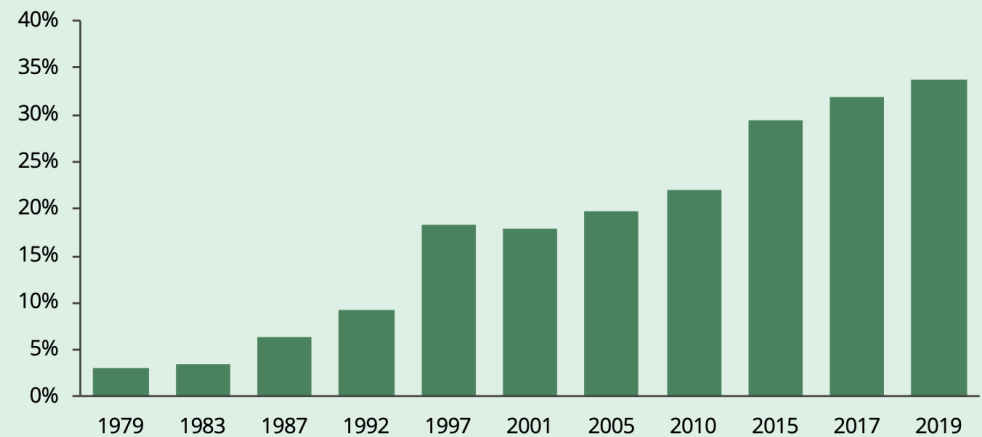
# Women MPs 1918-2019



## Women MPs elected at general elections

	Total	% all MPs
1918	1	0.1%
1922	2	0.3%
1923	8	1.3%
1924	4	0.7%
1929	14	2.3%
1931	15	2.4%
1935	9	1.5%
1945	24	3.8%
1950	21	3.4%
1951	17	2.7%
1955	24	3.8%
1959	25	4.0%
1964	29	4.6%
1966	26	4.1%
1970	26	4.1%
1974 Feb	23	3.6%
1974 Oct	27	4.3%
1979	19	3.0%
1983	23	3.5%
1987	41	6.3%
1992	60	9.2%
1997	120	18.2%
2001	118	17.9%
2005	128	19.8%
2010	143	22.0%
2015	191	29.4%
2017	208	32.0%
2019	220	33.8%

## % WOMEN MPs ELECTED AT GENERAL ELECTIONS SINCE 1979

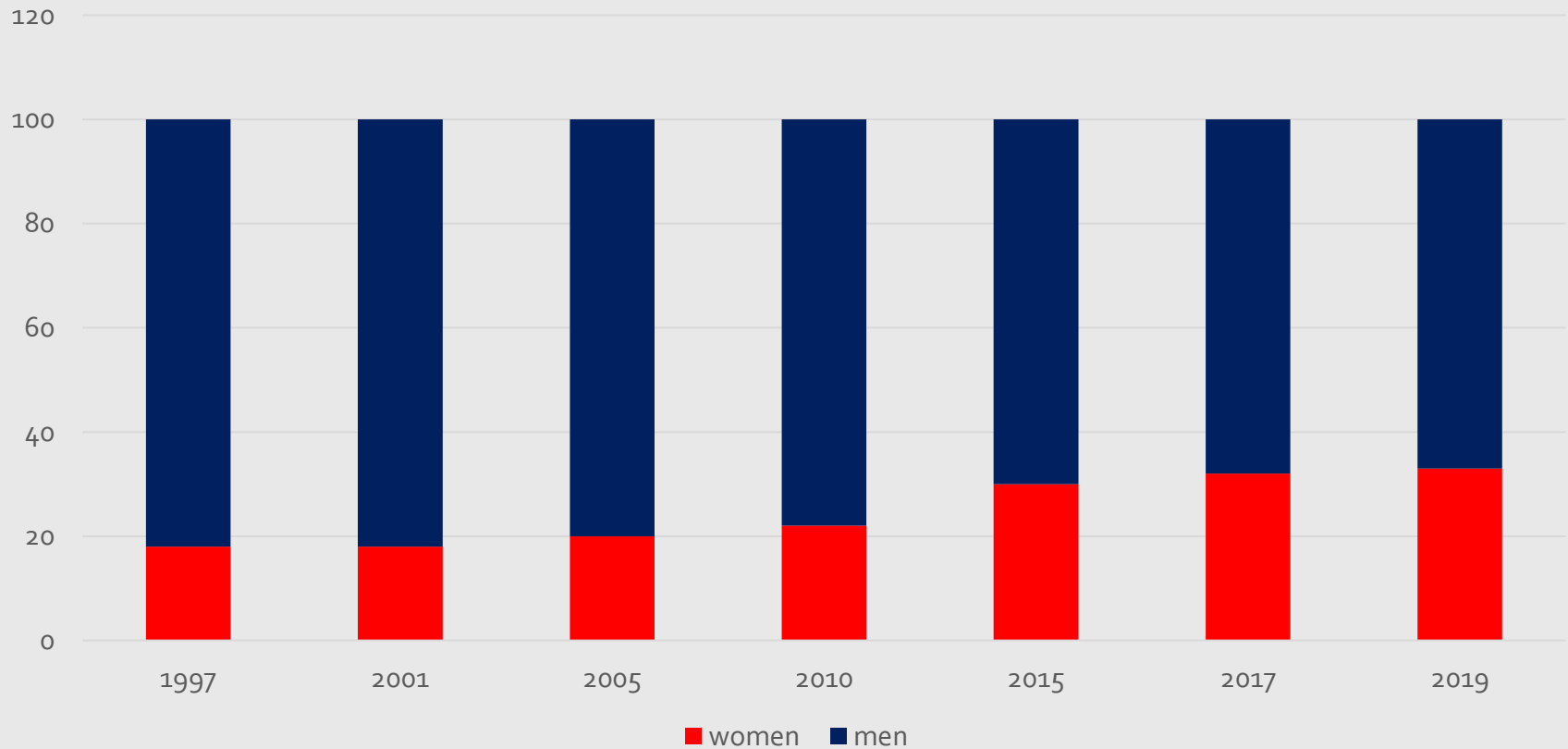


# Women and MPs as % of All MPs



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

Chart Title

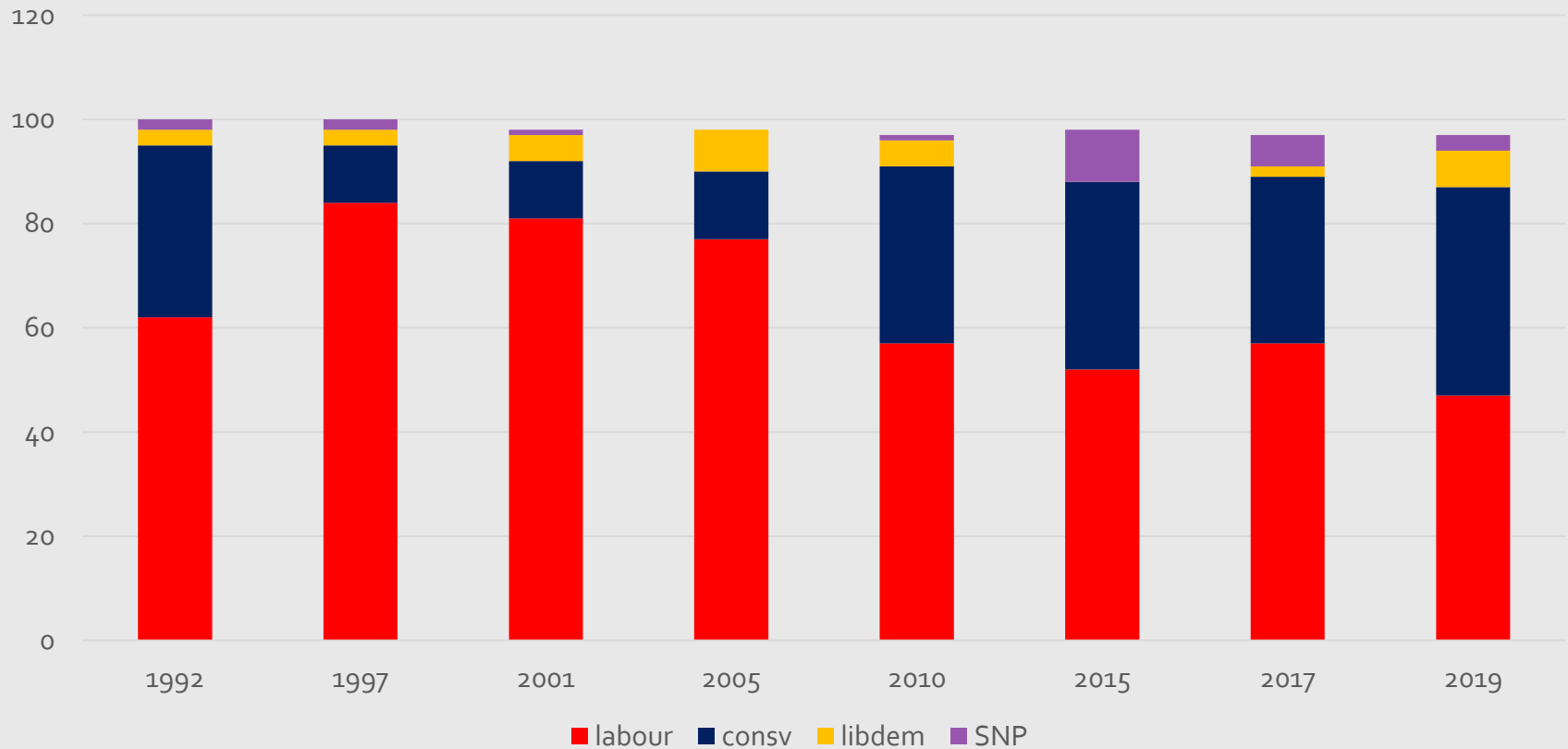


# Women by Party as % of all Women MPs



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

Chart Title

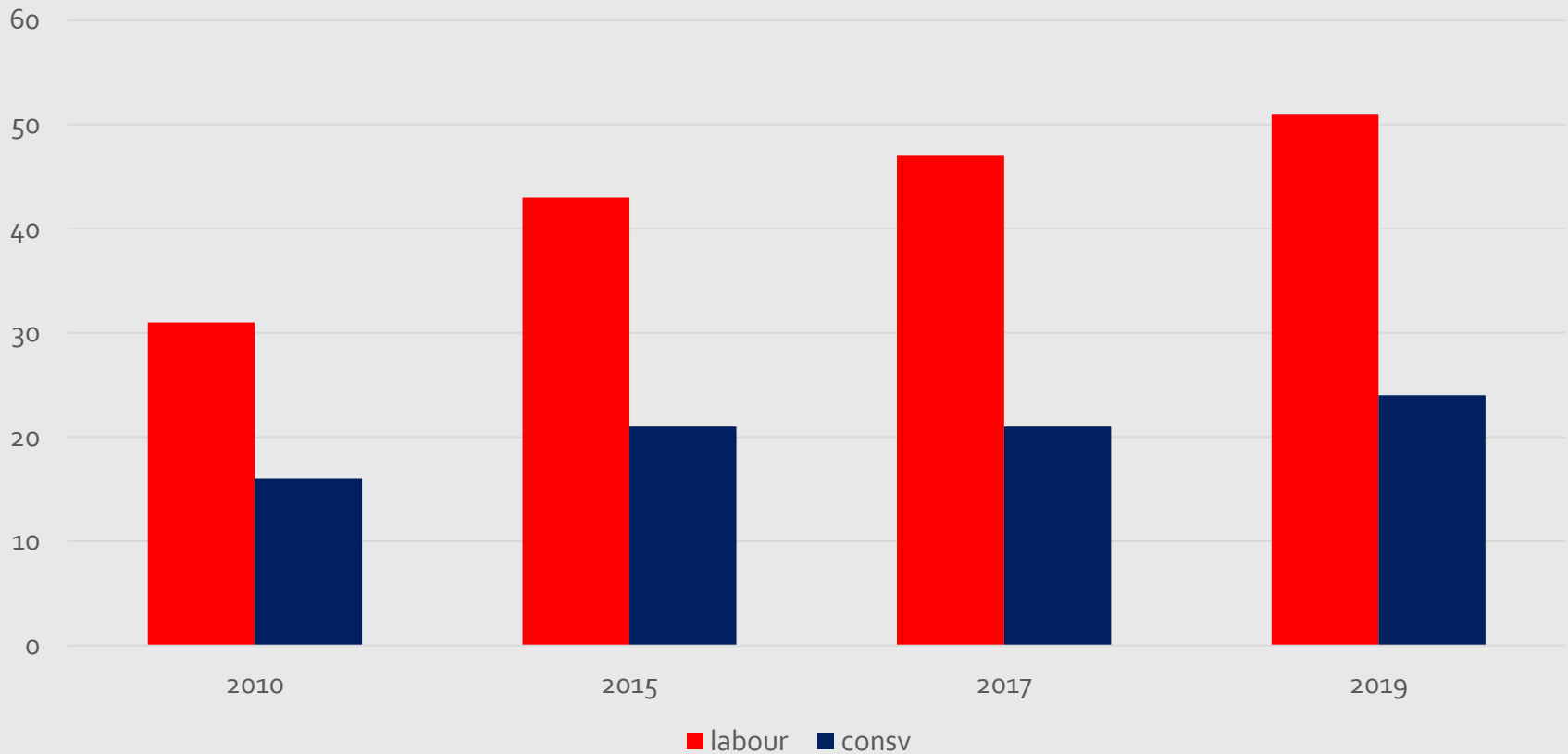


# Women MPs as a % of Respective Parliamentary Parties



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

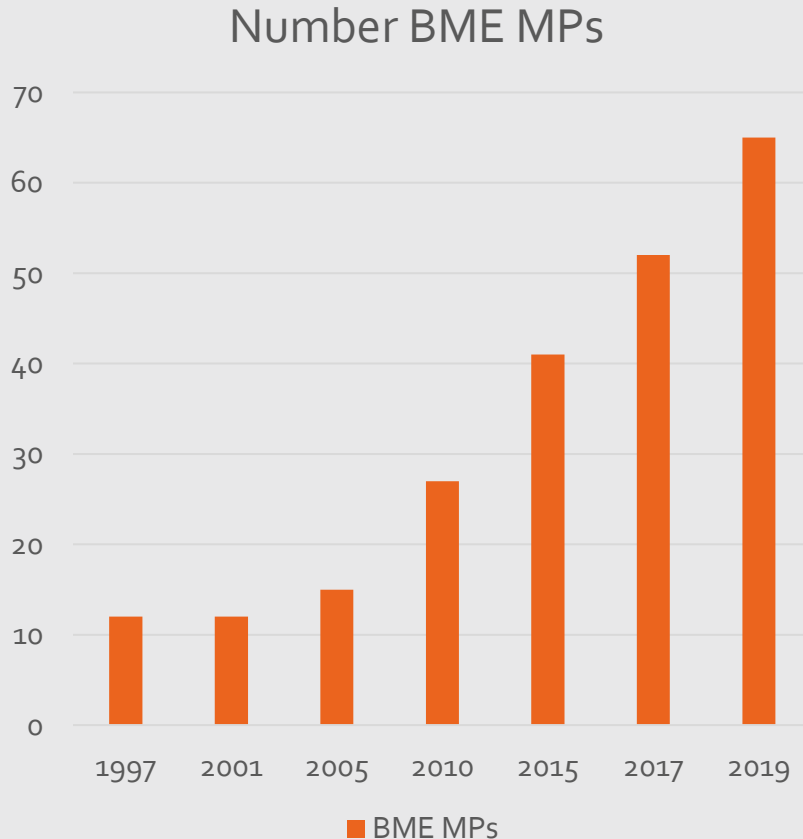
Chart Title



# Numbers of BME MPs 1997-2019



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON



- Women constitute 57%  
BME MPs: 37 out of 65
- Labour BME women,  
number 28: 76% of all  
BME women MPs



So what changed? If the Labour party hadn't adopted All Women Shortlists in half of their winnable seats ahead of the 1997 general election I wouldn't be an MP today. Not because I wasn't capable of doing the job, or didn't have the qualifications – I clearly am and did. ...without the AWS, I wouldn't have been approached. Plenty of local men were willing to put themselves forward so in an open selection, the CLP wouldn't have done any 'head hunting'. So addressing the supply side through creating a demand for women candidates is just as important as removing the inherent discrimination in selection processes if we are to achieve a more diverse Parliament.



# A Better ,albeit not yet 'Good' Parliament



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON



1. 18 of 43 The Good Parliament Recommendations implemented (in some fashion)
2. Women and Equalities Committee made permanent
3. 2018 Inter-Parliamentary Union GSP Audit of both Commons & Lords
4. Abolition of 10 year 'dead' rule for artwork
5. Select Committee witness diversity efforts
6. Proxy voting for babyleave

# Process-tracing Proxy Voting for Babyleave



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

- 28 January 2019 11.14 pm Debate ends: no division but clapping
- *The Good Parliament* Report
- Cross party - Mother of the House; Leader of the House; Commons Reference Group; Procedure Committee; Mr Speaker
- The Motion; The Back Bench Business Debate; Govt debate; Urgent questions
- Extra-parliamentary pressure: Fawcett; (women in the) media
- The Trigger: Jo Swinson (July); Tulip Siddiq (January); naming of Chief Whip
- The Debate: critique of pairing; false opposition between representing constituency and being a good parent; Amendments & 'whatabouterry'
- 2020 Procedure committee inquiry; Covid-19 & extension time/reach
- Permanent change to Standing Orders, Sept 2020



- *The Remotely Representative House (with Dr Jessica Smith)*  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6c6785a30f513e35cdao46/t/60365ab34f274e4f5af59f3f/1614174901602/Remotely+Representative+House+Final160221.pdf>
- *CPA Gender Sensitizing Parliaments 2020 Guidelines*  
[https://issuu.com/theparliamentarian/docs/cwp\\_gender\\_sensitizing\\_guidelines](https://issuu.com/theparliamentarian/docs/cwp_gender_sensitizing_guidelines)
- *UNWomen A GSP Parliament Covid Primer (with Dr Sonia Palmieri)*  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/a-primer-for-parliamentary-action-gender-sensitive-responses-to-covid-19>
- *Job Share for MPs (with Prof. Rosie Campbell)*  
<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=bb90467f-174b-4f68-801a-4ae04e4fd33c>
- *The Good Parliament Report*  
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/news/2016/july/20%20Jul%20Prof%20Sarah%20Childs%20The%20Good%20oParliament%2oreport.pdf>