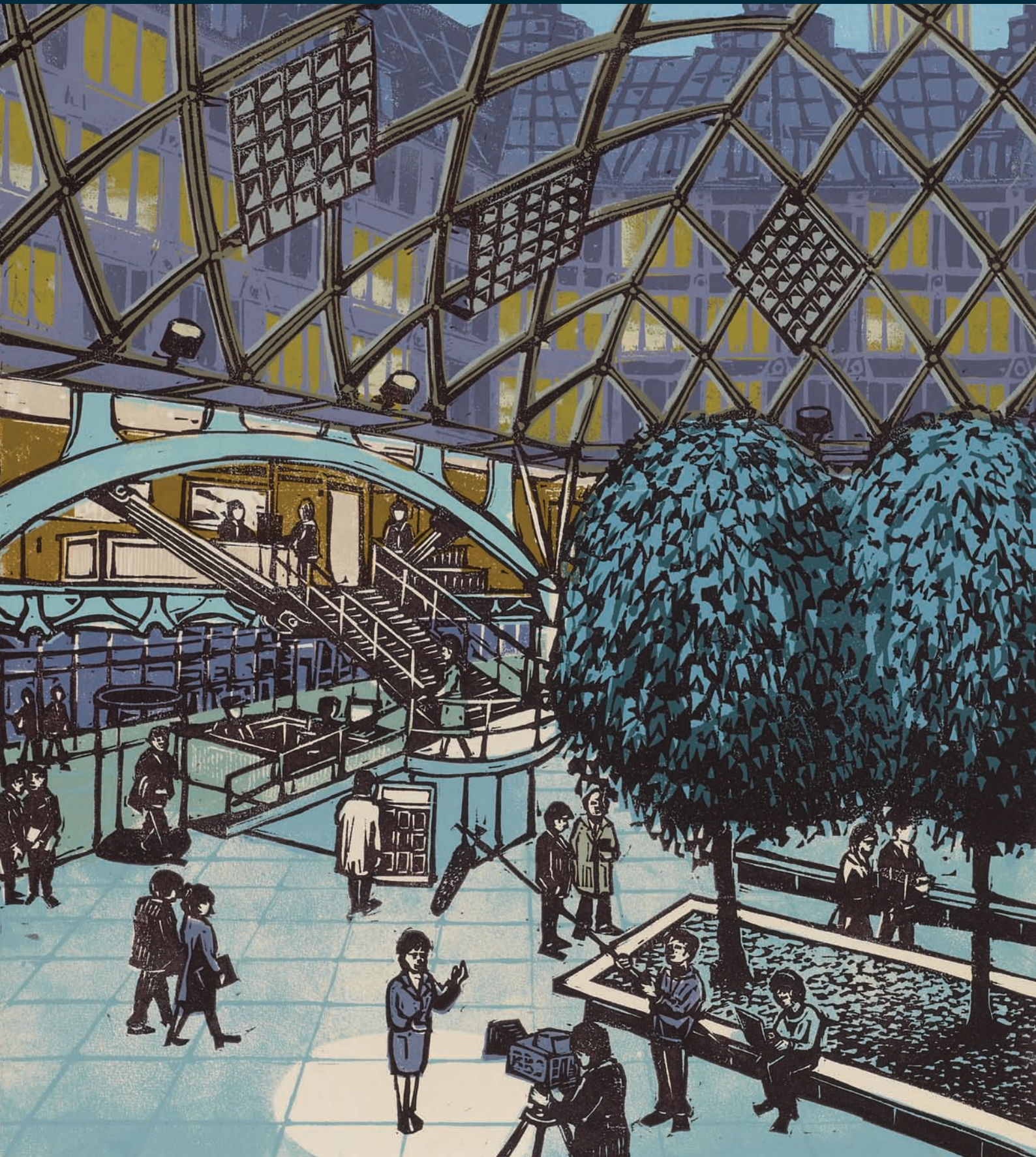


The Good Parliament

Professor Sarah Childs

July 2016



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Executive Summary

The recommendations in this Report are a blueprint for a more representative and inclusive House of Commons. They have the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of the House. Institutional leadership will be provided by the newly created *Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion*.



An Unrepresentative House

The House of Commons is not as representative as it might be; its membership remains disproportionately white, male and elite

One hundred years ago the Commons contained no women; had only ever returned a handful of minority ethnic men; and was largely filled with men of independent means. Much has changed over the last century. Yet, the House remains unrepresentative and its working practices continue to reflect the traditions and preferences of Members who have historically populated it. The House is, then, at some distance from meeting the international democratic standard for *The Good Parliament*: 'truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective in all its functions'.¹

Institutional Deficit

Historically the House of Commons has lacked the institutional will to address issues of representation and inclusion

Members of Parliament are often regarded as individual office-holders. This can obscure a wider institutional responsibility to act. Hence, parliamentary reform is too often the result of individual MPs expending significant time and political capital. This is no longer a satisfactory state. *The Good Parliament* Report is for the House as *an institution* to 'own'.

The New Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion

To redress its institutional deficiency, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon John Bercow MP, has established a new group of MPs

The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion provides the necessary political and institutional lead to deliver on *The Good Parliament*. Formally chaired by the Speaker, it is comprised of a small number of Members, male and female, from across the House, and with the Deputy Speakers as Acting Chairs.

The Good Parliament Recommendations

The recommendations contained in this Report will transform who sits in the House, have the potential to significantly enhance Member effectiveness individually and collectively, improve the quality of parliamentary outcomes, and should ultimately raise the public's regard for the House.

Individual recommendations are explicitly linked to particular actors. This makes it easier to hold them and the House to account.

The 43 recommendations in this Report address three dimensions of the Diversity Sensitive Parliament:

Dimension 1: Equality of Participation in the House

Ensuring a diverse composition and achieving equality of participation

Recommendations are made first to the new Reference Group, the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, the House of Commons Commission, the Women and Equalities Committee, and the political parties, in order to deliver a greater diversity of Parliamentary candidates and MPs. Secondly, recommendations to the House of Commons Commission, the Procedure Committee, political parties, and the Reference Group address what is necessary to facilitate Members' effective participation once present in the House.

Dimension 2: Parliamentary Infrastructure

How Parliament organises itself and supports the work of Members

Key recommendations are made to the Speaker, the House of Commons Commission, the Leader of the House, and the Liaison Committee. Specific recommendations are also made to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). Looking to the likely temporary vacation of the Palace of Westminster due to the poor condition of the buildings, a series of recommendations is made to the Procedure Committee and any new 'Restoration and Renewal' body.

Dimension 3: Commons Culture

Making the culture of the House of Commons more inclusive

Recommendations are aimed at the Speaker of the House, The House of Commons Commission, any new 'Restoration and Renewal' body, the Women in Parliament All Party Parliamentary Group, and the Works of Art Committee.

Institutional Readiness²

The timing of this Report is highly auspicious: two 'windows of opportunity' arise in the present moment conducive to Parliamentary action.

- The centenary of the *Representation of the People Act* and the *Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act*
- The 'Restoration and Renewal' programme for the Palace of Westminster

2018 is a timely reminder of the *promise* of equality in parliamentary participation and representation in the UK. By implementing this Report, much could be realised by the House of Commons within two years. Restoration and Renewal offers an additional opportunity for the House to deliver a new vision for Parliament, and in so doing achieve international recognition as the 'gold standard' *Good Parliament*.

Recommendations Summary

The Speaker

1. Secure cross-party support for a concord regarding what constitutes unacceptable and unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber, and more widely in the House; formally restate the House's commitment to the highest standards of Member behaviour at the start of every parliamentary session; and improve sanctions against those who break the rules
2. The Speaker's Office should systematically and comprehensively monitor and report the speeches and interventions in debates, questions, private members' bills and other parliamentary activities by MPs' sex/gender and other major social characteristics
3. Permit MPs to be counted at the 'door' of the division lobbies when accompanied by their children
4. Target a representative Parliamentary Press Gallery (Lobby journalists). Neither women nor men should be in receipt of less than 40 percent of lobby passes by 2020
5. Initiate an Inter-Parliamentary Union³ 'Gender Sensitive Parliament' audit in 2018

The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion

6. Publish a series of statements detailing and promoting the role and work of MPs, to both educate the public more about what it is that MPs do, and to explicitly signal the range of characteristics, skills, dispositions, and experiences relevant to the job of being an MP
7. Engage in various parliamentary and other activities to enhance the supply of, and demand for, diverse parliamentary candidates
8. Secure a cross-party concord regarding candidate selection for the 2020 Parliament following the boundary review:⁴ all political parties should seek to increase the percentage of women MPs – at the *absolute minimum* all parties currently represented in the House should maintain existing percentages of women MPs
9. Introduce prior to dissolution for the 2020 general election statutory sex/gender quotas to take effect for the 2025 general election if, three months prior to the 2020 general election, political parties currently represented in Parliament have failed to select at least 50 percent women in a party's 'vacant held' and 'target seats'. Introduce permissive legislation to allow for party quotas for other under-represented groups, where parties have failed to select proportional percentages of candidates from these groups
10. Sponsor a measure to gender balance MP membership of the House of Commons Commission
11. Commission a comprehensive diversity and equality audit of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), and submit its findings to the IPSA consultation (October 2016)
12. Produce a 'House Statement' on maternity, paternity, parental, adoption and caring leave

13. Undertake a review for the provision of a crèche facility on the Parliamentary Estate (in addition to the nursery)
14. A rule change should be sought whereby any select committee witness panel of three or more must be sex/gender diverse if, by the end of the 2015 parliament, select committees are not reaching a 40 percent sex/gender threshold amongst witnesses
15. Introduce sex/gender quotas for the election of select committee chairs prior to the 2025 general election if, by 2024, the percentage of women chairs is less than 40 percent
16. Revise the dress code to 'business dress' or 'national costume'

The House of Commons Commission

17. Recognise the House's collective responsibility for enhancing representation and inclusion by formally taking note of the establishment of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion
18. Support the production of comprehensive website materials showing that a diversity of people are, and can be, MPs
19. Support the development of a residential 'Introduction to being an MP' Programme for under-represented groups
20. Re-design the parliamentary identity pass
21. Maximise Member opportunities, capacities and capabilities via Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities

22. Immediately commence Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 (which requires political parties to provide data relating to parliamentary candidates)
23. Clarify the status and effectiveness of the Access to Elected Office Fund for supporting disabled people to stand for election as local councillors or MPs⁵

The Women and Equalities Committee

24. Call the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities before the Committee regarding commencement of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010

The Leader of the House of Commons

25. Put before the House a motion to establish the Women and Equalities Committee as a permanent select committee of the House, by amending Standing Order No. 152
26. Set the recess dates for each parliamentary session, at least one session in advance
27. Abolish party conference recess and sitting Fridays

Liaison Committee

28. Require the House Service to provide comprehensive and systematic diversity data in respect of select committees witnesses at the end of each session, and establish annual rolling targets for witness representativeness

Procedure Committee

29. Ensure that House rules and structures, institutions, nomenclature and culture are diversity sensitive and inclusionary
30. Prohibit single-sex/gender select committees, and encourage political parties to be mindful of wider representativeness in the election of members to committees
31. Introduce greater predictability in the scheduling of House Business
32. Review the establishment of a 'Division Time', whereby multiple votes could be taken together at a particular point of the parliamentary sitting

In the context of the expected temporary decant from the Palace of Westminster for Restoration and Renewal:

33. Trial sittings of the House based around 'normal business hours'
34. Trial opportunities for remote voting by MPs physically present on the Parliamentary Estate
35. Trial new formats for Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs)

The new Restoration & Renewal Body

36. Trial new layouts in any decant Chamber, and review provision of a new Chamber for the return to the Palace of Westminster
37. Provide for flexible committee and other meeting rooms in a restored Palace
38. Provide for inclusionary social spaces for MPs in a restored Palace
39. Provide sufficient toilet capacity across the Parliamentary Estate

Works of Art Committee

40. Abolish the '10 year dead' rule, whereby only individuals who have been dead for at least a decade are represented in the artworks in the Palace of Westminster
41. Commit to diverse artwork in a restored Palace of Westminster

The Women in Parliament (WIP) All Party Parliamentary Group

42. Campaign for male MPs to sign up to #nomoreallmalepanels

Political Parties

43. Engage in various activities to increase the supply of, and demand for, diverse parliamentary candidates

The Good Parliament: Introduction

“First, we are behind the curve compared with working practice in much of industry, and the charitable and public sectors, and that is a problem. Secondly, if we act differently and change the culture and working practices here, we can change how others operate. We should do that, because we are here to change and improve the United Kingdom.”

The late Jo Cox MP¹⁰

“If you put eight Conservative men round a table and ask them to discuss what should be done about pensions, you’d get some good answers. Restoring incentives to save. Ending means testing. Raising the retirement age. But what you’re less likely to get is a powerful insight into the massive unfairness relating to women’s pensions... We need people from diverse backgrounds to inform everything we do, to give us the benefit of their diverse experience, to ensure that we stay in touch with the reality of life in Britain today.”

David Cameron MP¹⁹

The UK Parliament is facing urgent questions about its workings,⁶ worth,⁷ and how the Palace of Westminster’s crumbling condition might be repaired.⁸ In responding, advocates of parliamentary democracy in general and the House of Commons in particular would be usefully guided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s definition of parliamentary good practice. *The Good Parliament* is one that is ‘truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective in its many functions’.⁹ This Report contains recommendations that together have the potential to make the membership of the House more representative; enable Members to be more effective in their parliamentary work, both individually and collectively; and to enhance the representational relationship between the British public, Members, and the House of Commons as an institution.

Four compounding principles underpin the Report:

1. A greater diversity of MPs should be present in the House of Commons, not least in terms of class, disability, ethnicity, sex/gender, and sexuality¹¹
2. An inclusive, effective and representative Parliament is about more than simply increasing the diversity of Members elected to the House; it also requires their equal and effective participation therein
3. The House of Commons has an important symbolic role to play in British society, over and above its substantive role: it should embody the principle of equality and fairness, acting as a ‘role-model’ institution
4. The responsibility of delivering on *The Good Parliament* resides with the House of Commons as *an institution*. In other words, the House should acknowledge its collective responsibility to redress current limitations in representation and inclusion

Arguments for diverse representation in politics are multi-dimensional:¹² the under-representation or marginalisation of key social groups is unjust when there are obstacles that limit political participation.¹³ In the House of Commons, as is the case for many of the world’s parliaments, individual, institutional, and structural features constitute significant barriers for securing diversity amongst elected representatives.¹⁴ Reforms to make parliaments more representative are also made on the grounds that there is a link, albeit not a straightforward one, between ‘who’ is present in our political institutions and the quality and legitimacy of our democratic processes and outcomes.¹⁵ This is not to say that only female MPs can ‘stand for’ women, or that only Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) MPs ‘act for’ minority ethnic groups. Nor is this about the quality of constituency representation achieved by individual MPs. Instead it points to a measure of the representational relationship at the aggregate level; between the institution of Parliament and the people that it seeks to represent, descriptively, substantively and symbolically.¹⁶

When inclusive, a parliament has the potential to become a much more effective political institution. This may be due to: (i) a greater awareness of the public’s multiple needs, interests, and perspectives; (ii) consideration of a more expansive set of issues and interests; (iii) more informed decisions, as different talents and skills and perspectives and experiences, provide new insights and question ‘group think’ and the dominant ways of doing things;¹⁷ and (iv) enhanced legitimacy, as the public feel better represented by parliament, as a consequence of better descriptive and symbolic representation, and a greater responsiveness to them.¹⁸

There is, moreover, an incongruity in a parliament which is unequal and exclusionary when, as a legislature, it makes laws on such issues.

Diversity Sensitive Parliaments Approach

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has developed a globally influential ‘Gender Sensitive Parliaments’ framework that has been employed to identify international best practice. A Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) is a political institution that responds to the ‘needs and interests’ of both women and men in terms of its ‘structures, operations, methods and work’.²¹ A GSP is one that has removed the ‘barriers to women’s full participation’ and offers ‘a positive example or model to society at large’.²² Box 1 below summarises the questions to be asked of a parliament in order to determine whether it is gender sensitive.

Box 1: Inter-Parliamentary Union Gender Sensitive Parliament Questions

Is your Parliament Gender Sensitive?
1. How many women are there in your Parliament? What positions do they hold?
2. Are there laws to support gender equality? Does your Parliament have gender equality objectives and a gender equality plan of action? Are workplace policies in tune with men and women’s realities?
3. Are gender considerations integral to the work of Parliament?
4. Is the Parliamentary culture non-sexist? Are there facilities suited to men and women?
5. Are men shouldering their gender equality responsibilities?
6. How sensitive are political parties to gender?

Source: IPU 2011, 117

The Good Parliament is very much informed by the IPU’s GSP framework, however it takes a broader approach to issues of representation by utilising a Diversity Sensitive Parliaments (DSP) approach, created as a result of research that underpins this Report.

This is not because women’s political representation is settled in the UK, or that the House of Commons is already gender sensitive. It is not. Rather the DSP approach acknowledges that women are not the only group under-represented in politics and Parliament, and that these other exclusions should also be acknowledged and rectified. For a parliament to be truly inclusive, attention to diverse exclusions and to intersectionality and within-group differences is necessary.

Three dimensions critical to realising a representative and inclusive House of Commons guided the development of the recommendations in this Report:²³

Dimension 1: Equality and Participation within the House

Dimension 1 asks the question of how a diverse group of MPs might be selected for, and elected to, Parliament and how, once present, they are enabled to become effective participants across Parliament’s core activities: representation and interest articulation, legislative scrutiny, and executive accountability. This dimension addresses in particular the composition of the House of Commons,²⁴ and MPs’ participation across the House leadership, and in its various committees.

Dimension 2: Parliamentary Infrastructure

Dimension 2 takes a critical look at the way in which Parliament facilitates the work of Members and whether this privileges a particular type of MP – explicitly or implicitly. It covers everything from the buildings and furniture of Parliament to the official rules and working practices that underpin the array of Members’ parliamentary activities. It includes provisions for MPs by IPSA, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

“It is not the job of oil rigs to reflect society; it is not the job of oil rigs to push for laws and regulations to improve families’ lives; and the world does not look at the people who work on oil rigs for an example of what our culture should be. But it is the job of Parliament to do those things... what business do we have asking big business and big employers to do something we are simply not willing to do ourselves?”

Jess Phillips MP²⁰

Dimension 3: Commons Culture

Dimension 3 acknowledges that the official, written-down rules never tell the whole story about how institutions function on the ground – this is what might be thought of as the ‘normal way of doing things’. It is, admittedly, frequently hard to pin down informal institutional norms, practices and culture. That said UK parliamentary culture, as elsewhere, is not fixed but an evolving phenomenon, subject to change.

How diversity sensitive is the House of Commons?

In important ways the House of Commons in 2015 is more descriptively representative of the society it seeks to represent than previously. All of the main political parties are publicly committed to the principle of diverse representation. Over the last two decades parties have put in place selection processes designed to deliver a more representative group of candidates.²⁷ There have been some notable successes, particularly in 1997 (Labour: sex/gender) and 2015 (Labour, Conservative and the Scottish National Party: age, ethnicity, sex/gender and sexuality). The lack of working class representation has become a more high profile political concern over the last decade.²⁸

Table 1 documents the *diversity insensitivities* of the current UK House of Commons according to the three dimensions of equality of participation, parliamentary infrastructure, and Commons’ culture. It uses traffic light colours to signal whether the Commons is doing badly (red) or well (green). Amber signals there has been some improvement but that considerably more needs to be done.²⁹ The preponderance of ‘Red’ in the Table underlines just how far the House of Commons has to travel.³⁰ The ‘Amber’ items reflect recent improvements: the establishment

of the parliamentary nursery (2010); more diverse representation in the artwork that adorns the walls of Portcullis House and the Palace; and, unbeknownst to many, the sex quota written into the Standing Orders for the election of the Deputy Speakers (2010).³¹ Many of the changes that gave rise to these ‘Amber’ measures notably required the expenditure of considerable personal and political capital over sustained periods of time. Only in a single instance does the Commons unambiguously score ‘Green’. Note that the one item scoring ‘Green’ – the Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) – is both a very recent creation (2015), and is not a permanent feature of the House.

The House of Commons is not an unchanging institution. In recent years a number of reforms addressing diversity of participation and representation have been implemented. These include:

- An amendment to the Equality Act 2010 which extended the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 until 2030. This is the law that permits the use of sex/gender quotas by political parties
- The Speaker’s Parliamentary placement scheme (for people from disadvantaged backgrounds)³⁷
- Permitting the celebration of civil partnerships within the House³⁸
- Repeal of Section 141 of the Mental Health Act 1983, which stated that MPs detained on grounds of mental illness might be required to vacate their seat³⁹
- The creation of a fund to support disabled people with additional costs they may face when standing for election as a councillor or MP⁴⁰
- The establishment of the nursery on the parliamentary estate in September 2010⁴¹
- Provision for childcare vouchers for MPs⁴²

“I want to see a Parliament that is representative of the country that we live in...The number of MPs who are from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, and the number of disabled people in Parliament, is not as high as it should be.”

Maria Miller MP²⁵

“Our democracy is worse off if parents, women, and disabled people don’t think the life an MP is for them....[but] this isn’t just about MPs...over 2000 staff are employed by the House of Commons alone. The unpredictable hours, difficulties with Parliament sitting during school term time, and childcare issues matters just as much to them.”

Melanie Onn MP²⁶

Table 1: ‘RAG’ Analysis of the UK House of Commons: Representation and Inclusion

Dimension	Measure	Red	Amber	Green
Equality of Participation	Diversity of MPs ³²	●		
	Women’s House leadership positions ³³	●		
	Women’s participation (internal structures; committees)		●	
Infrastructure	Standing Orders ³⁴		●	
	Calendar & sitting hours	●		
	Equalities & diversity body (policy) ³⁵			●
	Equalities & diversity body (institutional)	●		
	Parliamentary buildings & spaces		●	
	Childcare & child-friendly provisions		●	
	Maternity & parental leave	●		
Culture	House commitment & action plan	●		
	Chamber culture (PMQs & ‘set pieces’) ³⁶	●		

There have also been changes to the hours of the House to limit late night sittings (over a longer period of time),⁴³ and some MPs are involved in the Workplace Equality Networks (WENs) which have been established for House employees.⁴⁴ Finally, and as recommended by the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG Report, and noted above, a Women and Equalities Committee was established following the 2015 general election.

Recommendations for The Good Parliament

This Report offers a ‘menu’ of practical solutions – 43 recommendations – to address the diversity insensitivities that remain in the UK House of Commons. In some instances these restate or revise recommendations from previous Inquires and Reports, not least the 2010 *Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation* and the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG Report, *Improving Parliament*.⁴⁵ The recommendations are specific and technical, and target the short, medium and longer term with a mix of soft and hard measures. No one recommendation will be sufficient to

transform the House of Commons. It is more appropriate to conceive of a process – of the House becoming a *better* Parliament over the next few years.⁴⁶

For each recommendation a responsible decision-maker (actor or institution) is identified. They have ownership of this recommendation and they are responsible for taking action on it. Where the likelihood of a reform being introduced looks less favourable a secondary actor and/or compounding or alternative recommendation is identified. Explicitly linking each recommendation to a particular actor or institution within the House, and in whose remit the recommendation falls, along with identifying more than one possible recommendation reflects past experience of reform at Westminster.⁴⁷ It has proven all too easy for parliamentary reforms – including those likely to be effective and with widespread support – to ultimately fail to be adopted or fully implemented. Reticence to act might derive from party or other reasons, such as executive/legislative relations or positional advantage. At other times the intent might be present but there

is a collective failure to take ownership of the problem and its solution. For these reasons, the recommendations in this Report are grouped not by the expected effect they will have on the House according to the three dimensions of *The Good Parliament*, but by the responsible parliamentary actor or institution. This approach will make it much easier in the future to hold particular actors and Parliament as a whole to account.

Underpinning the Report's approach, and indeed many individual recommendations, is then the principle of institutionalisation: Parliament's diversity insensitivities should not be thought of as the responsibility of those individuals negatively affected by them, or those MPs prepared to expend personal and political capital on them.⁴⁸ Nor can reform be handed over solely to the political parties; their interests might at times conflict with the House as an institution. The commitment to *The Good Parliament* is for the House to sign up to as *an institution*. Of course, the historic preference for regarding MPs as individual office-holders reflects the individual mandate Members receive from the electorate. This in turn explains the apparent reluctance of them to embrace an institutional identity, making it harder for Members to accept a collective responsibility. Nevertheless, the House of Commons is the pinnacle of UK parliamentary democracy and it functions on a daily basis as an institution.

The necessity of an institutional response to the ongoing diversity insensitivities and deficiencies in the House of Commons was the reason that one key recommendation was made to the Speaker, the Rt Hon John Bercow MP prior to the publication of this Report: the establishment of a new parliamentary body, *The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion*.⁴⁹ By creating the

Reference Group, Mr Speaker made concrete his longstanding commitment to parliamentary representation, and made it more likely that the promise of the 2010 *Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Representation* would be realised. It also immediately meets one of the key measures of the IPU's Gender Sensitive Parliament, and redresses a clear institutional deficiency at Westminster: the lack of an official Parliamentary group made up of Members whose very purpose is to address the representation and inclusion agenda within Parliament. A good many of the recommendations in this Report are targeted at the Reference Group, and it is expected that this Report will inform its Programme of Action for the rest of the 2015 Parliament. By also holding other parliamentary actors to account the Reference Group is uniquely positioned to act as an institutional catalyst for change.⁵⁰ The Reference Group will be in place following the 2016 Summer recess.

It is a felicitous moment to act. 2018 will mark the centenary of both the *Representation of the People Act*, and the *Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act*. The first Act abolished nearly all property qualifications for men, thereby enfranchising most working class men, and gave the vote to women aged over 30 with property. The second permitted women to stand as candidates and be elected as MPs. If Mr Speaker was to initiate an Inter-Parliamentary Union 'Gender Sensitive Parliament' audit of the House of Commons on the 100th anniversary of these Acts (Recommendation 5 of this Report) this would be a significant and high-profile move by the House.⁵¹ The UK could become the first parliament from an advanced democracy to undergo this international assessment. If the Commons reached the standard of a 'best practice' parliament, the IPU would showcase its achievement around the world.

The 'Restoration and Renewal' (R&R) process for the UK Parliament is an additional opportune moment for consideration of reform of the House of Commons. The Director of the Hansard Society, Dr Ruth Fox, has spoken of R&R constituting a 'once-in-a-150-year opportunity'.⁵² Any new body established to manage R&R must keep the principles of representation and inclusion firmly in its sights. With an explicit commitment to *diverse* representation and inclusionary politics, decisions could be taken, and action set in train, that would see the House of Commons become a globally recognised 'best practice' *Diversity Sensitive Parliament* in the very near future.

The Good Parliament: Recommendations

“The perception of parliamentary culture as aggressive was frequently cited as a barrier to participation in the written evidence we received, on our online forum and in our discussions around the country.”

Speaker’s Conference 2010⁵³

“[Eleanor Laing MP] agreed with me from the Chair that it was too often the case that some male MPs fail to listen to their female counterparts, but she hoped that this would be overcome with “persistence”....Even before this depressing episode another Tory MP felt compelled to refer to my “stockings” in a passing remark on my way into the debating chamber that very morning. Small victories like this one, especially with the active support of the Deputy Speaker, make a difference.”

Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh MP⁶¹

The Speaker

Speaker Recommendation 1 (Short term)

Secure cross-party support for a concord regarding unacceptable and unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber, and more widely in the House; formally restate the House’s commitment to the highest standards of Member behaviour at the start of every parliamentary session; and improve sanctions against those who break the rules

Much is said – and reported – about the style of politics that characterises the House of Commons Chamber. Without wishing to reduce the passion, deliberation and debate of the Chamber, unprofessional, sexist and exclusionary language and behaviour should have no place in the House.⁵⁴ Reflecting the concerns of some MPs identified in previous academic studies and parliamentary inquiries, and for both symbolic and substantive reasons, the Speaker should: (i) secure cross party agreement, by working with party leaderships and the whips, to uphold professional standards by all Members;⁵⁵ (ii) regularly and formally remind the House of these;⁵⁶ and (iii) police all transgressions, and if necessary introduce new sanctions. Statements relating to sexist language and behaviour, the principle of diversity and equality, and non-harassment should be explicitly included in the concord.⁵⁷

Members should be reminded of Erskine May, the Guide to Parliamentary Practice: ‘good temper and moderation are the *characteristics* of parliamentary language’ (emphasis added).⁵⁸ This reminder of professional standards applies beyond MPs’ relations with each other, to interactions with parliamentary and personal staff, and Lobby journalists.⁵⁹

Speaker Recommendation 2 (Short term)

The Speaker’s Office should systematically and comprehensively monitor and report – on an annual basis – speeches and interventions in debates, questions, private members’ bills and other parliamentary activities by sex and other major social characteristics⁶⁰

It must not be the case that some MPs feel excluded from participating in Chamber debates or other parliamentary activities. Full data should be gathered by the Speaker’s Office to determine the veracity of anecdotal claims that some MPs are staying away from the Chamber whilst others are said to dominate particular parliamentary occasions and activities. If such differential participation is established, a review should be undertaken to consider new standards and sanctions.

Speaker Recommendation 3 (Short term)

Permit MPs to be counted at the ‘door’ of the division lobbies when accompanied by their children⁶⁴

As the 2015 BBC documentary *Inside the Commons*⁶⁵ laid bare, the House of Commons is far from a child-friendly institution – the image of Jenny Willott MP running to the division lobbies with her toddler was a powerful one. The long-standing tradition of disallowing children in the lobbies (they were until recently thought of as ‘Strangers’) was overturned in the last Parliament by the MPs Jo Swinson and Duncan Hames ‘rule breaking’, and carrying their baby through the lobby.⁶⁶ Whilst one could increase the age of children permitted to be taken through the Lobbies, it is preferable that a rule is introduced allowing MPs accompanied by their young children to be counted at the ‘door’ of the Lobby.⁶⁷ This reform simply reflects the reality of the working conditions in the House of

Commons – given its current sitting hours, Members with young children using Parliament’s nursery or another local childcare facility may very well find themselves caring for their children whilst also working in the House.⁶⁸

Speaker Recommendation 4 (Medium term)

Target a representative Parliamentary Press Gallery (Lobby journalists). Neither women nor men should be in receipt of less than 40 percent of lobby passes by 2020

The public receives its representations of Parliament mediated by journalists. It is through their lenses and pens that what is happening in the House is received. A homogenous Parliamentary Press Gallery risks a narrow representation of parliamentary politics, offering a particular ‘take’, or at worse, a distorted account.⁶⁹ Political concerns – those not shared by the Lobby – might also simply go unreported. Independent research has made clear that women MPs are in receipt of less coverage, and at the same time, highly critical and gendered media copy.⁷⁰

Table 2 below details the skewed composition of Parliamentary Lobby journalists.⁷¹ This shows considerable improvement from the 1980s, but reveals that men currently constitute nearly 75 percent of all Lobby journalists.

To address the over-representation of men in the Lobby a clear *target* should

be set for 2020. In the meantime, data should be published annually on the Parliament website for sex/gender and other social characteristics of Lobby members, disaggregated by pass type, and media organisation. In this way the public can be made aware of how different media organisations are faring. Within three months a scheme should be put before the Administration Committee to target a parity Lobby. Such a scheme might, for media organisations in receipt of more than one pass: (i) set a ‘rolling target’: no new passes will be given to an organisation unless passes issued to women for that same organisation have reached the 40 percent minimum; or (ii) set an ‘end point target’: where an organisation fails to reach 40 percent female by 2020, the total number of passes will be capped at the point where they reach 40 percent female.⁷² Where a media organisation only receives one pass at any one time there should be an expectation that over time, the sex/gender of holder switches between women and men.

Speaker Recommendation 5 (Medium term)

Initiate the IPU Gender Sensitive Parliament audit

Initiating the process of an IPU audit of the House of Commons would mark out the UK as the first advanced democracy to subject its Parliament to a Gender Sensitive Parliament evaluation. The first step involves a self-assessment audit and the identification of a monitoring body.

“When waiting in the Chamber for several hours to speak in an all-day debate I asked if I could dive out to make sure my son had eaten and was told that I would invalidate my claim to speak if I did as ‘it’s about choices’.”

Rupa Huq MP⁶²

“When my daughter was born 18 years ago, during Divisions I had to leave her in the Lib Dem Whips Office with members of staff in their early 20s...things have improved slightly since then.”

Tom Brake MP⁶³

Table 2: Female Parliamentary Lobby Journalists, 1983-2015

	Number of Lobby members	Number of women	Percentage of women
1983	135	7	5.2%
1993	209	28	13.4%
2003	188	32	17.0%
2015	171	44	25.7%

Source: *Dod’s Parliamentary Companion, various years*

The monitoring body would be the new Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion. The IPU directly supports Parliaments in conducting assessments and makes visible ‘best practice’ and ‘model Parliaments’; the House of Commons should seek such a standard. To begin this process in the centenary year of women first gaining the right to vote and to sit in the House of Commons would be most fitting, and would add to the other commemorative celebrations already in place for 2018.⁷³

The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion

The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion has the potential to deliver significant symbolic and substantive improvements within the House. Its very existence symbolises that the House of Commons – as an institution – takes seriously diversity insensitivities and deficiencies, issues of representation and inclusion, and, indeed, parliamentary effectiveness and standing. Substantively, the Group’s remit is to take the lead for delivering, in a systematic and sustained fashion, *The Good Parliament* agenda. It provides political and institutional leadership, and will act to ensure that individual parliamentary actors, as well as the House collectively, fulfil their roles in implementing necessary reforms. The Group will draw up a Programme of Action for each parliament, and will report to the Speaker on an annual basis. They should, via the Backbench Business committee, seek an annual debate on the floor of the House.

The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion is comprised of a small membership: 9 MPs, women and men, from across the House reflecting party balance, and should include Members from other under-represented groups.⁷⁴ Parties nominate members.⁷⁵

A composition of women and men reflects the principle that any new body addressing representation and inclusion must itself be diverse.⁷⁶ It follows the ‘40, 40, 20’ rule; that no one sex/gender should be represented at less than 40 percent, and no one sex/gender represented at more than 60 percent (this rule also allows for those who reject binary identities). The Speaker is the official chair of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion but his Deputies will be acting chairs. The Deputy Speakers are in addition to the ordinary committee Members. By handing over the active chairing to the Deputy Speakers, Mr Speaker is importantly signalling the group’s autonomy from any Speaker as an individual.⁷⁷

The Reference Group will liaise with party and House leaders, including Whips, key Committees and their chairs, (e.g. Procedure, Liaison, Administration, and the Women and Equalities Committee), backbench Committees, party Groups, and relevant APPGs, not least the WIP APPG. It will also work closely with the Clerk of the House, the Director General, the Workplace Equality Networks, and the wider House Service, including, the Education, and Outreach and Engagement teams. Externally it should liaise with relevant civil society groups.⁷⁸ The Reference Group will be supported by a secretariat of procedural, subject-based and administrative support.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 6 (Short Term)

Publish a series of statements detailing and promoting the role and work of MPs, to both educate the public more about what it is that MPs do, and to explicitly signal the range of characteristics, skills, dispositions, and experiences relevant to the job of being an MP

How do you know if you *want* a particular job? How do you know if you can *do* a job? In most other walks of

‘The five key components of being an MP: (1) working with and for local people (constituency work); (2) the publicly perceived aspects: speaking in the Chamber, being on select committees, taking part in all party parliamentary groups (APPGs), seeking amendments, speaking in the House and elsewhere, issuing press releases; (3) work[ing] for your political party; (4) using the role to pursue particular interests; (5) being an employer.’⁷⁹

“Next time you see an image of an almost empty Chamber, take a moment to consider where else MPs may be and what they could be doing – whether scrutinising Government on Select Committees, raising issues for debate in Westminster Hall, working on behalf of individual constituents facing difficulties, dealing with party matters, campaigning, or running a busy office as an employer.”

Sir Paul Beresford MP⁸⁰

life, a job description sets out the key roles and responsibilities alongside required and expected candidate characteristics, experiences and skills. Being an MP is widely thought of as distinct from other occupations or professions. MPs will often emphasise that there is no one 'ideal' type of MP. There is seemingly a broad consensus that it is up to the individual MP to weight the various dimensions of an MP's work: representing constituency interests and their constituents' individual interests (case work), parliamentary scrutiny (written and oral questions, membership of a Public Bill or select committee or All Party Parliamentary Groups, for example), and party work, in the constituency and in Parliament.

The main political parties represented at Westminster already outline – albeit to lesser and greater degrees – what they are looking for in parliamentary candidates, as noted in the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG Report.⁸³ In some instances these criteria were developed explicitly to address a commitment to equal opportunities in party processes of candidate selection.⁸⁴ These party candidate descriptors are to be welcomed; they enable party members to consider if they have the requisite credentials to be successful in the parties' recruitment processes.

What of the member of the public contemplating the work of an MP? It is at the stage prior to someone joining a political party that the House of Commons has an important role to play. It should act to both educate the public more about what it is that MPs do, and explicitly signal the range of characteristics, skills, dispositions, and experience that makes for 'good' representatives. This was the clear statement of intent of the Speaker's Conference (Recommendation 14): 'A description of the main functions of a Member of Parliament should be drawn up, agreed between the parties and published.'⁸⁵ Note, this recommendation acknowledged that such a description 'should not remove the scope for MPs to approach the job of representing their constituency

in various ways'. Hence it should: 'contain general principles and main objectives and tasks, rather than highly detailed prescriptions'. To date this Speaker's Conference Recommendation has not been acted upon.

In conjunction with political parties and experts inside and outside the House, including the Education Service and Outreach, the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion should produce a statement that speaks to the non-political citizen, revealing to ordinary people what MPs do in Parliament and in the constituency,⁸⁶ and showing that being an MP is something that all can aspire to.⁸⁷ This would address in a new way the aforementioned Speaker's Conference recommendation for the House to create a job description whilst at the same time taking seriously MPs' reluctance to define what might be taken to constitute a 'job prescription', and therefore something they could not support. The cross-party agreement will have additional symbolic value: demonstrating in a non-partisan way, and to audiences beyond existing party members, what it takes to be an elected representative at Westminster. The Reference Group should instruct political parties represented in the House, and permit other civil society actors, to cross-reference this statement on the public pages of their websites.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 7 (Medium Term)

Engage in various parliamentary and other activities to enhance the supply of, and demand for, diverse parliamentary candidates

- Seek biennial parliamentary debates at the time of International Women's Day to discuss the diversity of parliamentary candidates selected by political parties for the subsequent general election⁸⁸
- Seek amendment – at the earliest opportunity – to any

'Throughout the Inquiry, Members consistently referred to the benefits and flexibilities of life as a Member of Parliament at Westminster...Many MPs noted that it gives them considerable flexibility and satisfaction...if this were more widely known amongst the general population, this Committee believes more diverse candidates would be encouraged to step forward.'⁸¹

"I have generally been able to get home on a Thursday to pick up my 10-year old...we are sometimes able to flex our working days and plan around our home life. I think my little 10 year old thought to himself: 'I'm a bit better off than many others'."

Karin Smyth MP⁸²

new employment law (in the spirit of Speaker's Conference Recommendations 36, 37 and 38) to give approved prospective parliamentary candidates who are employees the right to request a reasonable amount of unpaid leave during working hours, and the right to work flexibly for the purposes of campaigning at a general election and or by-election, or to receive a grant from the state equivalent to the minimum wage for the period sometimes known as the short campaign

- Amend the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 either: (i) to remove the sunset clause; or (ii) to revise the sunset clause so that it is triggered only when women and men constitute no less than 40 percent of MPs for two consecutive Parliaments
- Commission a report into the sexist, racist, disablist, classist, and homophobic treatment of MPs by the print media at the midpoint of this, and each, Parliament⁸⁹
- Commission data detailing the percentage of MPs from under-represented groups acting as official spokespeople for their parties in the national press, and participating in key TV political programmes⁹⁰
- Ask the Consultative Panel on Parliamentary Security to report on what more can be done to protect MPs from social media violence, and what more can be done to protect the children of MPs from media intrusion⁹¹

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 8 (Medium Term)

Secure a cross-party concord regarding candidate selection for the 2020 Parliament following the boundary review: all political parties should seek to increase the percentage of its women MPs – at the *absolute minimum* all parties currently represented in

the House should maintain existing percentages of MPs⁹²

The Government's legislation to reduce the size of the House to 600 Members constitutes, on paper, an opportunity that could be seized to deliver a parity Parliament in 2020. Crudely, if the political parties selected equal numbers of women and men candidates in the seats they expect to hold and, or are very likely to win at the next general election, then all other things being equal, the Commons in 2020 would overnight constitute a sex/gender parity Parliament. If the parties selected women and men from a range of backgrounds the House would also be more representative across other dimensions as well.

This is no doubt rather fanciful. Factor in incumbency and the number of openings for new candidates will be far fewer. Indeed, unless explicit action is taken the boundary review more likely constitutes a challenge to a more representative Commons. This is the view of some senior women Members and some civil society actors. All political parties should seek to increase the percentages of their women MPs. The minimum that the parties must do is to sign up to a commitment that there will be no decline in the percentage of women selected in their party's held and target seats for the 2020 general election, compared with the 2015 general election. (A target seat is one where the party came 2nd or 3rd by a margin of 5 percent or less.) As Baroness Anne Jenkin puts it, 'no woman left behind'.⁹³ Political parties currently represented in the House only by male MPs should publish a target for the number of women MPs they are seeking to elect in 2020.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 9 (Longer term)

Introduce prior to dissolution in 2020⁹⁴ statutory sex/gender quotas to take effect for the 2025 general election if, three months prior to the 2020 general election, political parties currently represented in

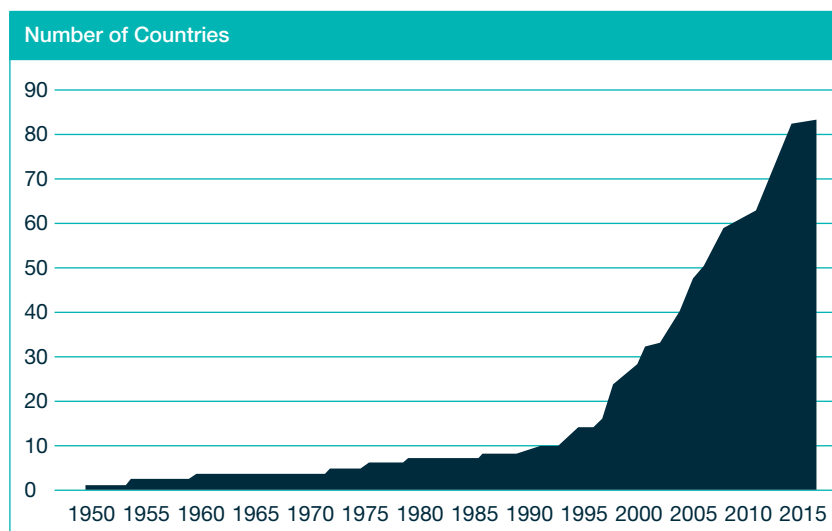
Parliament have failed to select at least 50 percent women in a party's 'vacant held' and 'target seats'.⁹⁵ Introduce permissive legislation to allow for party quotas for other under-represented groups, where parties have failed to select proportional percentages of candidates from these groups⁹⁶

The 2010 Speaker's Conference concluded that solutions to address the under-representation of one group in Parliament might not be appropriate for another under-represented group. There is considerable academic and civil society consensus that the most effective intervention for women's under-representation is the 'quota-plus' strategy.⁹⁷ Quota-plus refers to the introduction of sex/gender quotas alongside supply-side interventions such as training, mentoring, and additional funding. Turning to BME representation, there is some talk of quotas but there is as yet no substantial public appetite for them.⁹⁸ Consideration of 'All working class' quota appears to be growing, although like BME quotas there is no demand akin to those for sex/gender quotas.⁹⁹ Research on sexuality and representation frequently privilege cultural change amongst the public and political parties. In respect of disability arguments tend to emphasise enhancing the resources made available to disabled persons seeking selection as parliamentary candidates.

The general debate over quotas is well rehearsed.¹⁰⁰ In summary, critics will state that they are unfair and offend the principle of merit,¹⁰¹ whilst advocates will query the meritocratic nature of current selection processes,¹⁰² and provide international evidence that quotas work.¹⁰³ The diffusion of quotas is documented in Chart 1 below.

There may always be residual resistance to the idea of quotas in principle, but the evidence in respect of sex/gender quotas – in the UK¹⁰⁴ and globally – is in the same direction sex/gender quotas (when well designed) deliver increased numbers of women into legislatures.¹⁰⁵ There is a 10 percentage point difference between countries using sex/gender quotas and those that do not.¹⁰⁶ And of those countries with more than 30 percent women Members of Parliament, over 80 percent use some kind of quota.¹⁰⁷ Close to home, the positive impact of legislative quotas can be seen in the March 2016 election in the Republic of Ireland. This saw 35 women Members (TDs) elected, resulting in an overall percentage of women TDs of 22 percent. Compared with 2011, when there were only 25 women TDs, this constitutes an increase of 40 percent.¹⁰⁸ That there was also a 90 percent increase in the number of candidates demonstrates that the creation of an artificial demand for women candidates – via quotas – had a positive impact on the supply pool

Chart 1: The Adoption of Sex/Gender Quotas over Time



Source: Table 6.1 from Paxton and Hughes, 2016

of women.¹⁰⁹ In other words, women will put themselves forward in greater numbers when quotas are integrated into the system of candidate selection.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 10 (Short Term)

Sponsor a measure to gender balance MP membership of the House of Commons Commission

The House of Commons Commission ‘is responsible for the administration and services of the House of Commons’.¹¹⁰ The current sex/gender composition of the Commission is highly unfortunate; none of the MPs on the Commission are female. Such a state of affairs cannot easily be defended in 2016. To prevent this happening in the future, a rule change should be introduced. A gender-balanced House of Commons Commission should be achieved by 2020, at the latest. Accordingly, and in a similar fashion to the requirements that the Speaker and Deputy Speakers are comprised of both women and men MPs,¹¹¹ the Reference Group should seek a rule change that requires a mixed MP Membership.¹¹²

For example: in appointing parliamentary members of the House of Commons Commission under section 1(2) (d) of the House of Commons Administration Act 1978 and external members of the Commission under section 2B of that Act, the House should ensure that at least two are men and two women. This rule change would have an additional symbolic effect: in fulfilling the IPU’s ‘sharing responsibility’ principle, a male dominated House of Commons Commission would be demonstrating its institutional commitment to a Diversity Sensitive Parliament.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 11 (Short Term)

Commission a comprehensive diversity and equality audit of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), and submit its findings to the IPSA consultation (October 2016)

Any pay and expenses regime must work for all MPs; pay and expenses must not constitute a barrier to a more diverse group of individuals seeking

Box 2: Diversity Sensitive Principles and MPs’ Business Costs and Expenses

The expenses and pay regime for MPs should neither explicitly nor implicitly discriminate against certain groups of people. This is for reasons of equality and fairness, but also because to do so would likely negatively impact the supply pool of candidates seeking election. Given the difficulty of determining this relationship, the precautionary principle should come into play
Any expenses and pay regime for MPs should be explicitly designed to facilitate the effective work of an MP at both Westminster and in the constituency
Within this overarching commitment to the ‘effective’ MP, MPs’ resilience, and that of their family, should be central
IPSA should always act to ensure the retention of a diversity of MPs; where issues of retention are identified, measures should be implemented to directly address these
MPs’ experiences of housing, travel and security are likely mediated by their gender and other identities, not least ethnicity, disability and sexuality, as well as their family situations
MPs should not feel obliged to supplement their pay and expenses costs with their own private income; being an MP should be affordable by people from across socio-economic backgrounds
IPSA should be cognisant of the media context within MPs live and work; and recognise that some groups of MPs, such as women, LGBTQ or BME MPs, might receive more hostile coverage; and that some groups of MPs may be more concerned about the possible impact of the media on their families

selection by parties and election to the House of Commons. IPSA make commitments to support ‘MPs working from two fixed locations’ and to provide ‘appropriate support for MPs’ families’.¹¹³ IPSA are currently consulting on the MPs’ Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses.¹¹⁴ An Equality Impact Assessment is to be ‘developed during the consultation period’. IPSA add: ‘there will be a full assessment of any changes that we make to the rules following consultation’.¹¹⁵ In line with a recommendation of the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG *Improving Parliament* Report, this Report recommends a comprehensive diversity and equality review that feeds into IPSA’s current consultation. Box 2 outlines diversity sensitive principles that should inform IPSA’s review of MPs’ Business Costs and Expenses.

In previous reviews of IPSA’s provision for MPs the claim that MPs’ pay and conditions do not affect the diversity of the supply pool of parliamentary candidates was challenged by gender equality experts and some women MPs.¹¹⁶ Subsequent academic research established for the first time that there was a significant ‘motherhood gap’ in Parliament.¹¹⁷ Problematic gendered assumptions continue to underpin the system of MPs costs and expenses, working to the detriment of the parent MP – male and female; and there are unintended consequences of existing rules and practices that particularly affect working class MPs, and MPs without additional private wealth.

The following general principles should inform the Audit commissioned by the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion:

i. Defend the principle of the family and support sufficient funds for family accommodation in the constituency and Westminster, and for familial travel between Westminster and the constituency

The traditional image of an MP residing in a London *pied-à-terre* when the

House of Commons is sitting, and returning to his wife, children and Labrador on the weekends is an old-fashioned and masculinised model of an MP.¹¹⁸ Given the current parliamentary calendar and sitting hours of the House of Commons, the single-parent MP, the MP who wants to reside with their family as much as possible, and the MP with a partner working in London, will want to have their children with them in London when the House is sitting, and in the constituency at the weekends and during recess. A regime of business costs and expenses that does not support such arrangements will likely skew the supply pool of candidates to those who follow a more traditional family model or those who have independent means.¹¹⁹ IPSA should in its 2016 review reflect on the adequacy of the accommodation ‘uplift’ for children, and the rules regarding partner and child travel between the constituency and Westminster. There is qualitative evidence to suggest that some MPs are having to supplement these allowances with their own funds.¹²⁰

ii. Defend the principle that ‘connected parties’ can be legitimately employed by MPs as part of a wider commitment to the principle of family

In 2014-15 IPSA report that there were 171 connected parties employed by MPs and that 25 percent of MPs employed a connected party.¹²¹ It is clear from qualitative evidence that the right to employ a connected party is valued by many MPs and by the connected party.¹²² This right should be maintained as it is one way in which some MPs – like other small family businesses – manage their work/ life balance and family commitments. It should be noted that IPSA find there is no ‘substantive evidence of misconduct in the employment of connected parties’.¹²³

iii. Seek the equitable publication of costs incurred by MPs in respect of their children. That is, like the additional costs incurred for reasons of disability or additional

“An MP asked, could I please put on a lunchtime seminar with MPs who had had babies whilst elected to the House so that new MPs could find out about how to time and manage their pregnancies, and how best to address the care of young babies with parliamentary work and the parliamentary week.”

Report author, citing a 2015 intake MP

“My partner and I have already decided that we can’t have a family if I am an MP. They don’t want to be a single parent and they would be, back in the constituency with the child.”

2015 intake MP

security, these should be published at the aggregate and not individual level

The additional costs incurred by MPs with children are currently treated inequitably relative to the additional costs incurred by MPs with disabilities, and in relation to additional security costs.¹²⁴ This leaves MPs who make claims for legitimate children related costs being perceived as ‘expensive’ in the media, by political opponents, and amongst the public. This is one reason why some MPs do not claim their legitimate expenses; and it is why the least expensive MPs – often valorised by the press – are frequently older men either without children, or with grown up children. Whilst IPSA should of course confirm the legitimacy of all costs associated with MPs’ children, there is no public interest in this information being linked to individual Members. All the latter does is feed critical comment of the parent MP.

iv. Ensure that IPSA acknowledges that MPs’ experiences of security are likely affected by their identities

The issue of security is keenly felt by women MPs at Westminster,¹²⁵ and felt to be afforded insufficient recognition by IPSA. This might well be true of other Members as well. The address of the family home in the constituency is often widely known, and some MPs are concerned that they are frequently alone in their constituency home with their children, and without sufficient protection. The rules permitting taxi use in the evenings are also felt to be overly restrictive, relative to public and private sector provision. The

legitimate use of taxis is further limited by the perception that the media will be highly critical of MPs even when they are correctly claimed for.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 12 (Short Term)

Produce a House Statement on maternity, paternity, parental, adoption and caring leave. All parties represented in the Commons would be expected to sign up to this

There is, as previously noted, a sizeable ‘motherhood gap’ in Parliament, with fewer women MPs having children relative both to male MPs, to women in comparable professions, and to women more widely in society. Some 45 percent of women MPs do not have children compared to only 28 percent of male Members.¹²⁶

Arrangements regarding maternity, paternity, parental, adoption, and caring leave for Members are informal and operate at the party level. This no doubt results from the historic maleness of the House. Yet, to become a truly inclusive institution the House of Commons must accommodate and facilitate both the pregnant woman Member and co-parenting and caring MP. Table 3 (below) shows how parliaments commonly respond to maternity, paternity, and parental leave.¹²⁷ It reveals that provision for maternity leave is, in the majority of parliaments, the same as the national law, although more than one quarter makes no provision. Paternity and Parental leave fare less well, suggesting that the father MP is rarely recognised.

Table 3: Parliamentary Provision of Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave

	No provisions	Same as National Law	Own Provisions
Maternity	26%	62%	12%
Paternity	49%	45%	6%
Parental	60%	39%	1%

Source: IPU¹²⁸

In directly addressing the question of MPs with parenting and caring responsibilities, the Reference Group would importantly be responding to contemporary concerns amongst women MPs from across the floor of the House, notably identified in the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG Report.¹²⁹ Following a consultation period,¹³⁰ clear recommendations should be made by the Reference Group to the Administration Committee.¹³¹ For the period of leave, the MP might choose to:

- i. **Vote remotely (i.e. off the Parliamentary Estate)¹³²**
- ii. **Appoint a proxy from amongst fellow party MPs to vote and otherwise act for them in respect of tabling questions, amendments, etc. in Parliament¹³³**
- iii. **Be formally and transparently 'paired' so that any absence from Parliament does not affect the balance of party representation in divisions¹³⁴**

In considering these options the Reference Group should look to the, albeit limited, best practice in other parliaments,¹³⁵ as well as external institutions, and work with IPSA to deliver an appropriate scheme. A working principle should be that MPs should have flexibility in how they balance their caring,¹³⁶ legislative, and constituency duties.

To permit infants in the Chamber and committees

As part of their consultation the Reference Group should revisit the question of infant feeding in Parliament. Globally, the practice appears to be on the rise.¹³⁷ In February 2016 the Australian House amended its Standing Orders to allow breast and bottle feeding.¹³⁸ Elsewhere, it is frequently neither formally ruled in nor ruled out.¹³⁹ Once again this likely reflects the historic under-representation of women, and especially mothers of young children, in parliaments.

The current ruling on infant feeding in the Commons Chamber and in committees was set out in a written answer from Marion Roe MP, then Chairman of the Administration Committee, in March 2002:

Mr. Speaker [Michael Martin] has informed the Committee that, after undertaking broadly-based consultations within the House, he has decided to make no change to the current regulations under which breast-feeding is not permitted in the Chamber, in Committees or in the public galleries (HC Debate 7 March 2002 c467W).

Infant feeding is highly charged for both critics and advocates alike. Advocates hold that babies should be fed whenever they are hungry, wherever that may be.¹⁴⁰ Critics frequently cite the 'check-out critique': what is inappropriate for the supermarket is inappropriate in the Commons.¹⁴¹

According to a senior Commons clerk the issue of infant feeding is really a question of whether to permit babies into the Chamber and committees. This move would enable all Members to fully participate in House business. Members may well sit in the Chamber and in committees for a number of hours either listening to a debate or waiting to speak. In addition to allowing Members to carry out their representative functions, permitting entry to infants would have symbolic benefits – showcasing the Commons as a role-model parent-friendly institution.¹⁴² It is accordingly recommended. The provision of proper facilities for infant feeding near the Chamber and across the Parliamentary Estate should also be made.

Considerable media criticism might be expected if the House was to move to allow infants into the Chamber and committees.¹⁴³ In a recent parliamentary debate Sir Simon Burns MP warned that the wider 'merits' of family friendliness might well 'be undermined' and 'ridiculed'.¹⁴⁴ The late Jo Cox MP disagreed: 'we should take on the popular press if it is critical

and say, “this is what women do; get over it”. It is good for children, so we should advocate it’.¹⁴⁵ If permitted, one need not expect either the presence of babies or their feeding to become a routine event in either the Chamber or committees.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 13 (Short Term)

Undertake a review for the provision of a crèche facility on the Parliamentary Estate

The establishment of the nursery on the Parliamentary Estate represented a sea-change in the provision Parliament made for parents working at Westminster. The nursery provides a particular kind of childcare: the *permanent* placement of 40 children up to the age of five.¹⁴⁶ It is open to Members, their staff, House staff, lobby journalists and Whitehall civil servants. The nursery symbolises that Parliament takes the needs of its Members and staff seriously, and signals to the outside world that, just like other ‘best practice’ employers, it values parents amongst its workforce and will act practically to support them.

A parliamentary crèche in addition to the nursery would provide a different kind of childcare: *ad hoc* and short-term.¹⁴⁷ As in the Scottish Parliament, this would be primarily externally facing, aimed at, for example, visitors to the Parliamentary Estate;¹⁴⁸ witnesses to committees or APPGs; and members of the public attending formal events and meetings. It could also benefit Members on those occasions, such as school holidays, when they might find their children with them in London, or when Parliament ‘sits past its scheduled times’.¹⁴⁹ In all these practical ways a crèche has the potential to support the wider goals of *The Good Parliament* by affecting the make-up of members of the public visiting Parliament, those attending in a political capacity,¹⁵⁰ and, on occasion, Members. The provision of a crèche

has in addition the potential to be hugely symbolic. The Commons would be presenting itself as an exemplar of an open, inclusive and welcoming institution.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 14 (Medium term)

A rule change should be sought whereby any select committee witness panel of three or more must be sex/gender diverse if, by the end of the 2015 Parliament, select committees are not reaching a 40 percent sex/gender threshold amongst witnesses

In addition to Recommendation 28 made to the Liaison Committee regarding enhanced data collection and monitoring of select committee witness composition, and in the instances where this fails to change the skewed sex/gender composition of select committee witnesses by the end of 2019, then a rule change should be sought.¹⁵¹

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 15 (Longer term)

Introduce sex/gender quotas for the election of select committee chairs prior to the 2025 general election if, by 2024, the percentage of women chairs is less than 40 percent

Even as the ‘percentage of women [select committee] chairs has increased successively over the last three Parliaments’, only 6 out of 27 select committee chairs are female.¹⁵² At 20 percent, the current percentage is lower than the 29 percent of women MPs in the House of Commons overall. The means by which to achieve gender balance across select committee chairs is not easy, given their elected nature. Chairs may stand for two parliaments or 8 years, whichever is longer, and so incumbency limits openings.¹⁵³ Strict rules could be devised¹⁵⁴ but a second approach is advocated, one arguably more in keeping with the

House's more usual ways of acting. Incumbent chairs of select committees would first indicate their willingness to stand again. This information would become part of the informal process of negotiation between parties when they 'divide up' committee chairs by party, as in current practice. Once these incumbents are agreed upon (either they stand unopposed or are elected as chairs), the party whips could divide up the remaining chairs by lot, followed by elections based on single sex/ gender nomination papers to gender balance chairs overall, using either the 50:50 or '40, 40, 20' target.

Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Recommendation 16 (Medium Term)

Revise the dress code to 'business dress' or 'national costume'

The issue of Members' dress code is vexed. This is in part because, as a custom, different Speakers have not always enforced the same standards.¹⁵⁵ It is also the case that norms of dress in the Chamber, as in wider society, are explicitly gendered. Take the issue of hats:¹⁵⁶ male MPs are not permitted to address the House whilst wearing a hat whereas women are exempt from this rule.¹⁵⁷ If 'large briefcases' 'should not be brought into the Chamber' but 'small bags are permitted',¹⁵⁸ there might again be a gendered distinction in play.

Some male MPs are evidently aggrieved, charging that the principle of demonstrating 'respect' for the House is offended by women's 'knee length boots' and 'denim'.¹⁵⁹ The underlying problem lies not with a particular concept of style or fashion, but the convention itself: men are expected to wear a jacket and tie in the Chamber and women to dress with the 'equivalent level of formality'.¹⁶⁰ Yet there is no functional 'equivalent' to the male suit and tie for women – unless one wants to suggest women must always wear a suit and blouse.

The solution offered here is simple: to reframe the convention in a gender

neutral way, one that removes men's stricter dress code.¹⁶¹ Today 'business dress' does not always require of men a jacket and tie.¹⁶² Adding 'national costume' would furthermore reflect the UK's multicultural traditions and recognise that Members may wish to wear something other than Western dress.¹⁶³ Individual MPs would hereafter become the arbiter of their own dress, no doubt assisted by the national and local media. The Speaker and Deputies could retain their role in deciding whether this was ultimately of an acceptable standard.¹⁶⁴

The House of Commons Commission

As the parliamentary institution tasked with the responsibility for the overall administration and services of the House of Commons, the Commission should be one of the key parliamentary actors to help deliver *The Good Parliament*. Over the last few years it has increasingly taken seriously its responsibilities to address issues of equality and diversity in respect of administration and parliamentary staff.¹⁶⁵ This Report calls on the Commission to publicly recognise its, and the House's, key role in engendering a more inclusive, and ultimately more effective, Commons on the Member side as well.

As with the recommendations to the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion the House of Commons Commission should initiate the removal of real and, or perceived, barriers to the public's participation and representation at Westminster. It should act to signal that the Commons is 'open to all', as voters, constituents, and aspiring Members. In other words, under the direction of the Commission, the House Service should act to ensure that that the public have a greater understanding of the constituency and parliamentary roles and work of MPs, and associated skills and capacities, in order to (i) increase public engagement with, and understanding of, Parliament, (ii) engender greater participation in

electoral politics, and (iii) ultimately broaden the supply of ‘political talent.’¹⁶⁶ It should, secondly, address institutional rules, practices and norms that limit Members’ participation and effectiveness within the House. It can also act to persuade the political parties that they should do all that they can to support a diverse membership of the House.

House of Commons Commission Recommendation 17 (Short Term)

Recognise the House’s collective responsibility for enhancing representation and inclusion by formally taking note of the creation by Mr Speaker of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion

By explicitly taking note of the new Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion, and providing it with resources, the House of Commons Commission would be fulfilling its own remit to give political direction and leadership to the House of Commons.

House of Commons Commission Recommendation 18 (Short Term)

Support the production of comprehensive website materials showing that a diversity of people are – and can be – MPs

Parliament has made a significant commitment to education and outreach in the last few years:

- The new Education Centre was opened in 2015¹⁶⁷
- A Parliamentary Studies Module is taught in just shy of 20 Universities¹⁶⁸
- The Speaker’s Lecture Series has been running for more than five years
- Regional outreach officers work with local communities and partners, hosting events and workshops

- Digital and social media is extensively deployed (e.g. the ‘MP for Week Game’ and the twitter campaign #MPforaweek)¹⁶⁹
- The Information Office and media teams highlight stories about the work of Members and the business of the House
- The Visitor Services team conduct tours of the Palace of Westminster
- The ‘About Parliament’ webpage¹⁷⁰ takes the virtual parliamentary visitor to a range of material detailing what Parliament does and who works in it¹⁷¹

The provision of comprehensive website materials is the first step that a parliament as an institution committed to diverse representation and inclusion can take to invite the public to think of themselves as political actors, and to become the candidates and MPs of the future. Additional website information about ‘being an MP’¹⁷² should include amongst its content: (i) comprehensive candidate and MP diversity data, in the spirit of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 (see Recommendations 22, 24 and 43 in this Report);¹⁷³ (ii) podcasts by diverse MPs showing how they do their job as MPs, how they manage their work/life balance, and how their experiences of pre-parliamentary work assists them in their MP work;¹⁷⁴ and (iii) multiple ‘Day in the life of an MP’ stories.¹⁷⁵ It should also make direct links to the series of statements detailing and promoting the role and work of MPs drawn up by the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion, as recommended above (Recommendation 6).

House of Commons Commission Recommendation 19 (Medium Term)

Support the development of a residential ‘Introduction to being an MP’ programme

Establish a short *residential* programme for those interested in gaining more knowledge of Parliament and potentially considering standing

for political office in the future. This programme would be in addition to, and complements the Speaker's Placement Scheme.¹⁷⁶ Applicants would have no prior experience of working in the House; nor previously worked for MPs or political parties; must not have stood for national political office; not be an approved prospective parliamentary candidate for a registered political party; and they must come from currently under-represented groups, including young people, and those who have had, or have, caring responsibilities.¹⁷⁷

House of Commons Commission Recommendation 20 (Short Term)

Instigate a re-design of the parliamentary identity pass

Parliamentary passes identify who has a right to be present on the Parliamentary Estate, and who has a right to access particular parts of the Estate. This is in large measure about security, although it is also about MPs' privacy, and historically reflected the more hierarchical approach to those who worked in Parliament. There is plenty of qualitative evidence that the current pass system leaves too many – especially young, female and BME Members (and staff) – questioned about their identity and status. Should you be in the Members' lift, in that particular corridor, or on the Terrace?¹⁷⁸ Such questioning is frequently experienced as discrimination at the individual level, and at the collective and symbolic level reinforces problematic assumptions about who belongs in Parliament. There is a very straightforward and pragmatic solution: parliamentary passes should be double-sided with (bigger) photographs and names on both sides.¹⁷⁹

House of Commons Commission Recommendation 21 (Medium term)

Maximise Member opportunities, capacities and capabilities via Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The House should via the House of Commons Commission restate its responsibility to assist all Members in learning the skills necessary for effective parliamentary participation. This responsibility applies to the new Member and should also be available for all Members, especially those considering taking on new roles within the House.¹⁸⁰ Much has been done in this respect in recent years, albeit with variable levels of take-up. The Commission should seek, via the parties' leadership, greater 'buy-in' from Members for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

- **Expect that all candidates standing for election as select committee chairs – including incumbent chairs – to have completed specified chair training sessions**, including equality and diversity training. Completion of this training could be linked to the pay associated with chairing a select committee
- **Redouble efforts encouraging members to take up CPD opportunities provided by the House.** This would involve working with party leaderships, the whips, MPs and external experts to create a new series of CPD¹⁸¹

The Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities

Minister for Women and Equalities Recommendation 22 (Short Term)

Immediate Commencement of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010

Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 was intended to ensure that all political parties provided full diversity data regarding candidate selection in advance of each general election. Transparency is the means by which the public and civil society would be able to hold parties to account as

the process of candidate selection took place. In other words, it would no longer be left until the day after the general election to total up the numbers of women MPs, or the number of BME candidates, and lament the homogeneity of the House. At the Speaker's Conference evidence session in 2010 with each of the then leaders of the three main parties, Gordon Brown MP, David Cameron MP and Nick Clegg MP, all agreed to the provision of such data. These promises have only been periodically and incompletely delivered upon, and frequently only after repeated pressure from senior MPs.

Speaker's Conference Report Recommendation 25 made explicit the nature of the information which was to be supplied by the parties, as outlined in Box 3 below.

In 2012, following up on her role as Acting Chair of the Speaker's Conference, Dame Anne Begg MP called in the Commons Chamber for 'central management and guidance' regarding the collation and monitoring of candidate diversity data. Her fellow Conference Member, Jo Swinson MP, agreed that Parliament should 'think about a mechanism for regularly holding the Government and the House and the parties to account'. In responding, the Coalition Equalities Minister, Lynne Featherstone MP, made clear her preference for a *voluntary* approach.¹⁸² Two years later in 2014 the then Minister, Helen Grant MP reiterated the same sentiment: 'I am very pleased that the main parties are acting on their agreement to publish the data ahead of the 2015 general election as an alternative to implementing section

Box 3: Speaker's Conference Report Recommendation 25

Political parties registered under part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 should be required to publish details of their candidate selections online every six months, on 31 March and 31 October, setting out, for each potential candidate at each stage of the selection process, the following information:

(a) the administrative region in which the selection takes place;

(b) the method by which the candidate was selected;

(c) whether the party:

(i) currently holds the seat for which the candidate was selected; or

(ii) came second or third in the seat at the last general election within a margin of less than 5% of the votes cast; or

(iii) came second or third in the seat at the last general election within a margin of more than five per cent but less than ten per cent of the votes cast;

(d) the sex of the candidate;

(e) the ethnicity of the candidate; and

(f) whether the candidate is willing to identify as a disabled person.

The reports might also include the following information:

(a) where a candidate is willing to identify as a disabled person, the nature of the impairment;

(b) where a candidate is willing to state his or her sexual orientation, the sexual orientation of the candidate;

(c) the age of the candidate;

(d) the occupation of the candidate at the time of selection; and

(e) the highest level of the candidate's educational attainment.

106 of the Equality Act'.¹⁸³ Neither of these two Government statements, nor indeed the political parties' published data, has fulfilled the intention of the Speaker's Conference recommendation. Accordingly, it was almost impossible for the public and civil society to hold the parties to account for their selection outcomes as they happened at the 2015 general election.¹⁸⁴

The current Minister for Women and Equalities, the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, should commence Section 106 forthwith. Given the 2010-15 data demonstrating the size of the motherhood gap in the UK Parliament, noted above, but not known at the time of the Speaker's Conference, parenthood status and child/children age should additionally be sought. The diversity data should also detail the selection method under which candidates are selected: the formal 'rules'; dates when these were in operation; and detailing which candidates were selected by which method at which point. The Minister might consider including religion as an additional characteristic, given that it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

Finally, to ensure transparency and easy public access to this data, the Minister should empower the Electoral Commission to host the data collected under Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010. It would henceforward become a duty of the Electoral Commission to publish (i) parties' candidate diversity data by seat safety every six months (31 April and 31 Nov) on a dedicated webpage. The data would be structured by party and by seat safety.¹⁸⁵ (ii) parties' selection methods, rules, and outcomes, by seat safety. The Electoral Commission should also be asked to investigate what measures, if any, might be necessary to support smaller parties in the collection of such data.

Minister for Women and Equalities Recommendation 23 (Short Term)

Clarify the Status and Effectiveness of the Access to Elected Office for Disability fund¹⁸⁶

In December 2015, in a written answer to Caroline Lucas MP, the Minister, Caroline Dinenage MP, wrote that 'an evaluation of the pilot fund is currently being undertaken and will be published in due course'. She also stated that 'an announcement regarding the future of the fund is anticipated early in 2016'. It is timely that a full and transparent review of the fund be published forthwith and that a statement be made as to its continuance.¹⁸⁷

The Women and Equalities Committee (WEC)

Women and Equalities Committee Recommendation 24 (Short Term)

Call the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities Minister before the Committee in respect of the Commencement of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010

Without full, easily accessible, and comparative diversity data from all political parties seeking representation in the House of Commons, it will be very hard to hold the political parties to account for the selection of a diverse group of candidates for Westminster. The powers, as already noted, are established in legislation but they need to be brought into force by the Secretary of State. If the Minister for Women and Equalities does not respond favourably to the recommendation made to her in this Report (Recommendation 22), the Women and Equalities Committee should call the Minister before the Committee and request that she immediately commence Section 106.

'We support the suggestion of a Democracy Diversity Fund which could be drawn upon by local political parties to support the work of developing talented individuals from under-represented groups and also to provide bursaries to individuals who would otherwise be unable to sustain the costs of candidacy. 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, in reports which should be laid before the House at least once every Parliament. The Electoral Commission should consult the Equality and Human Rights Commission when evaluating the scheme.'

Speaker's Conference,
Paragraph 214

The Leader of the House

Leader of the House Recommendation 25 (Short Term)

Put before the House a motion to establish the Women and Equalities Committee as a permanent Select Committee of the House, by amending Standing Order No. 152

The establishment of the Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) following the 2015 general election redressed a clear limitation in the legislature's scrutiny of the executive. The amendment to Standing Order No. 152 that gave life to the WEC is however time limited for this Parliament (see Box 4 below).¹⁸⁸ The loss of the WEC should be an unthinkable backward move for the UK Parliament, both symbolically and substantively. The Government must act to ensure that it is made permanent.

Leader of the House Recommendation 26 (Short Term)

Set the dates of parliamentary recess for each parliamentary session, at least one session in advance

Certainty in the dates of the parliamentary calendar would: (i) permit greater clarity for MPs and the public in respect of both parliamentary and constituency representation, enabling

MPs and constituents to plan ahead for events and meetings in both, and for MPs to undertake additional UK and overseas visits;¹⁸⁹ (ii); enhance efficiencies in the use of the Houses' resources (financial and staffing) if the Lords and Commons sittings were made to marry as part of this process. This would contribute to improved perceptions of the two Houses as an effective bi-cameral institution; and (iii) bolster MPs' work/life balance, enabling them, for example, to plan their Easter holiday and childcare arrangements a little bit sooner than after Christmas, as was the case this year.

Critics will counter that Parliament must be a responsive institution. Yet Parliament is routinely recalled when the House is not sitting and when there are unexpected or time sensitive political crises.¹⁹⁰ Moving to a fixed calendar need not damage the House's ability to react when necessary, given that it already has the procedural flexibility to respond to such events.¹⁹¹ When compared with other institutions and workplaces, universities and schools, for example, such a move seems not very radical, either.¹⁹² One year into a Parliament, and with clear indications that some backbenchers are becoming restless on the issue of time management, it is appropriate for the Leader of the House to re-visit the virtue of this recommendation in the context of the effectiveness of the House.

Box 4: Standing Order No. 152

The Text of the amended Standing Order No. 152
(Select Committees related to governmental departments is as follows)^{1 2}

Standing Order No. 152
(Select Committees Related to government departments)

(1) Select Committees shall be appointed to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the principal government departments as set out in paragraph (2) of this order and Associated public bodies.

(2) The committees appointed under paragraph (1) of this order, the principal departments of government with which they are concerned and the maximum numbers of each committee shall be as follows:

Name of Committee	Principal government departments covered	Maximum members
19 Women and Equalities	Government Equalities Office	11

¹ New text in italics

² This amendment is to have effect until the end of the current Parliament

Leader of the House Recommendation 27 (Medium term)

Abolish the party conference recess and sitting Fridays

The House of Commons currently rises in July, returns in September for two weeks, and then rises again – to permit the political parties to hold their conferences – before returning in early October. This recommendation is that the Commons should: (i) sit continuously following the summer recess;¹⁹³ and (ii) no longer sit on Fridays.¹⁹⁴ The advantages of Parliament sitting continuously after it returns from the summer recess and only Monday-Thursday are multiple. This timetable would:

- Remove any (mis)representation of MPs going on ‘holiday’ just a couple of weeks after Parliament returns in September
- Produce operating efficiencies at Parliament
- Recognise that the rise of multi-party politics at Westminster no longer fits with the idea or practice of a ‘party conference season’¹⁹⁵
- Free up an additional 12 sitting days for parliamentary business that more than compensates for the ‘lost’ Fridays¹⁹⁶
- Permit reconsideration of the timing of summer recess to better reflect Scottish school holidays¹⁹⁷
- Guarantees a weekday day for constituency representation,¹⁹⁸ which potentially reduces weekend work commitments for the MP (bolstering MPs and MPs’ families),¹⁹⁹ whilst expanding MPs’ opportunities to meet with constituents.²⁰⁰ This point importantly acknowledges that constituency representation is today a larger aspect of MPs work.²⁰¹

Liaison Committee

Liaison Committee Recommendation 28 (Short Term)

Require of the House Service the annual provision of comprehensive and systematic diversity data in respect of select committee witnesses, and establish annual rolling targets for witness representativeness

In-House and academic research finds the composition of witnesses to select committees highly skewed in men’s favour – just one-quarter are women. Some select committees, notably the Treasury, have witness compositions that are 90 percent male.²⁰² Such an unrepresentative set of witnesses risks a ‘perception that the House of Commons is a closed institution’; one that ‘does not hear from witnesses with whom the general public identify’.²⁰³ There are multiple ways in which the diversity of witnesses can be achieved: the provision of additional resources to compile and maintain a more diverse ‘rolodex’; ‘joining up’ different parts of Parliament that deal with external contacts and experts, such as the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and Outreach; and explicitly asking existing contacts to identify potential witnesses from under-represented groups. In the first instance committees should when inviting witnesses from organisations ask for the names of both a man and a woman.²⁰⁴

The House Service should moreover be required to gather, evaluate, and produce annual reports documenting data for committee witnesses disaggregated by sex/gender and other major social characteristics, for each individual select committee and overall. Witnesses could be asked to fill in a form before their evidence session or prior to receipt of any expenses.²⁰⁵ A league table of the best and worst ranking committees should be published each year. Rolling annual targets should be set for each committee until no sex/gender participates at levels of less than 40

percent, and until proportionality is achieved for other social characteristics.

There may be some exceptional circumstances, for example, regarding a highly specific topic or role where the supply of witnesses may be limited, and, or may not be very diverse. In these cases a clear reason should be given by the committee chair and documented as part of the data collection on committee witness diversity. Where a committee seeks to make a claim that there are 'too few' diverse candidates amongst the pool of witnesses, the committee should be required to seek a formal 'waiver' from the Liaison Committee, having first put out a particular public request for diverse witnesses.

It is also important that the face of the UK Parliament represented by select committee members abroad is not overwhelmingly male and white. Data for UK and overseas committee visits disaggregated by sex/gender and other major social characteristics for each committee should be gathered. Again, rolling annual targets should be set for each committee until proportionality is reached.

The Procedure Committee

Procedure Committee Recommendation 29 (Medium term)

Ensure that House rules and structures, institutions, nomenclature and culture are diversity sensitive and inclusionary

By formalising the principles of inclusion and representation in official parliamentary proceedings, this should positively affect wider cultural change over time.

Standing Orders (SOs) are a central part of the 'rule book' of the House of Commons, setting down responsibilities for different actors in Parliament, and how these should act in particular circumstances. In their current form the SOs of the House

are, except for the seasoned clerk and longstanding or exceptional MP, difficult to decipher. Not being fully appreciative of, or misunderstanding, a practice can only limit MPs' effectiveness. It would likely also engender a sense of marginalisation within the House. At times the necessity for very precise parliamentary language may be real; at other times this may be the triumph of tradition over transparency. In respect of the former, an alternative, accessible account should be made available for Members, and indeed for the public; in the latter case, a process of rewriting is appropriate.

To limit any opaqueness in the formal and informal rules and workings of the House, the clerks could be required to produce 'explanatory notes' for Standing Orders.²⁰⁶ The House of Lords already produces *The Companion to the Standing Orders*.²⁰⁷ There should also be: (i) the immediate implementation of gender neutral drafting amendments to the Standing Orders;²⁰⁸ (ii) an audit of gendered, exclusionary and alienating language in official House documents relating to the operation of the House. These might be explicitly gendered, e.g. *Father* of the House, and *Chairman* of Ways and Means, or implicitly gendered or exclusionary e.g. *purdah*, *Chairman of Ways and Means* (rather than *Deputy Speaker*), *Serjeant at Arms* and *Maiden* speech.²⁰⁹ Given the gap between what the formal written down rules say and how they are actually applied in practice, there should also be within 18 months (iii) a review of parliamentary customs and every-day practices, especially those that might be perceived as opaque or which might act to alienate some Members. Critics might claim value in such historical legacies or suggest that they have little substantive relevance for most MPs and on most occasions. But even if not for substantive reasons, there may very well be symbolic grounds for revision or abolition. The test of a practice should be whether it contributes to an ideal of an MP that is exclusive, for example, suggesting a narrow social, cultural or economic elite, or Members without caring responsibilities or other needs.²¹⁰

Take Standing Orders 7 & 8, for example.²¹¹ These SOs presume that MPs seeking a seat for questions or a debate later in the day are able to be present in the House some time, and perhaps many hours, prior to this. In so doing, the SOs may very well be highly disadvantageous to MPs who have caring responsibilities, disability or health issues or live some way from the House of Commons. As one MP put it, 'It's not the first day of the Sales'.²¹² On specified parliamentary days where the numbers in the Chamber are likely to be larger than the capacity of the benches (e.g. PMQs, the Budget and Queen's Speech) there could be a ballot for seating in the second and third row of benches near the Speaker.²¹³ Or take the conventions of 'Elder Statesmen' sitting on the 'first front benches seat beyond the gangway',²¹⁴ or of the role of seniority – and not just experience – in being called to speak. Seniority can but privilege white men, given most women's and most BME MPs' more recent election to the House. This convention, in other words, 'only works for men', or more precisely some men.²¹⁵

Procedure Committee Recommendation 30 (Short Term)

Prohibit single-sex/gender select and domestic committees, and encourage political parties to be conscious of representativeness in the membership of committees²¹⁶

It highly undesirable in 2016 that the composition of some select committees is so skewed by sex/gender: Culture, Media and Sport has a single woman MP and the WEC just two men, for example. Recent research has established that the proportion of women members on the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees has been significantly lower than the percentage of women in the House overall and below the average of other departmental committees for the overwhelming majority of parliamentary sessions since 1979.²¹⁷ It is also the case that committees popularly considered the

most important are those chaired and made up disproportionately by men. Such horizontal and vertical segregation is important for the equality of participation amongst MPs. It also affects the work that committees undertake, and for the authority with which committee inquiries and reports are held. The absence of 'established' male MPs on the WEC has, for example, been said to invite the view that 'inequalities are not a big concern for the most powerful group in the land – the stale, male, pale majority of Parliament itself'.²¹⁸ Fiona Mactaggart MP cites a clerk to the Defence Committee to show how women's membership shifted that Committee's agenda: 'we used to talk about how big the bombs are...now we also talk about the families of people who fight'.²¹⁹

The recommendation for sex/gender balance on select committees is straightforward: where parties have more than one member to be elected to a select committee, the mode of 'transparent' and 'democratic' method of election must provide for the election of at least one woman and one man, e.g. through the use of preferential voting.²²¹ A proviso is also added: no MP should sit on more than two select committees, so as not to over-burden any Member.

A new sex/gender balancing rule for select committees is in the spirit of the original Wright Committee intention for membership of the Back Bench Business Committee: '... remaining members [to] be elected by all the House, in the same way as deputy speakers, with provisions



*Treasury Select Committee*²²⁰

to ensure some gender balance', at least two men and two women.²²² It is regrettable that in 2012 the House agreed to Standing Order No. 122D, which, by moving from whole House to party-based election, had the effect of removing this gender balancing requirement.²²³

Procedure Committee Recommendation 31 (Short Term)

Introduce greater predictability in the scheduling of House Business

'Improving the predictability of the Parliamentary Calendar so that MPs know whipping requirements and the timetable of the business of the House further in advance' was one of the seven key recommendations of the 2014 WIP APPG Report.²²⁴ Such a move enables MPs to 'plan their time and work more effectively both in the House and in the constituency'. This is not just a lament from the mother MP; the inefficiencies of the current scheduling are recognised by MPs, male and female.²²⁵ For the good of parliamentary democracy, greater efforts should be made to improve the advance scheduling of Government business, moving to *three weeks* or a *month* in advance. There needs to be some flexibility admittedly, but there is no suggestion that such scheduling would be unable to respond to unexpected events.

Procedure Committee Recommendation 32 (Medium Term)

Review the establishment of a 'Division Time'

Division Time refers to a distinct period where MPs would vote in Parliament. In other words, votes are not taken on a motion immediately following the debate but at a specified Division Time on the same day.²²⁶ This might apply to (i) all divisions; (ii) limited to non-legislation; or (iii) limited to certain types of business. Standing Orders could also provide for designation of a vote or a piece of legislation that should not

be subject to Division Time voting, perhaps being so designated at the Programming stage. Contingent amendments would be addressed following the Scottish model: votes on amendments to Bills are taken immediately after the debate on the amendments.²²⁷

MPs are deeply split on the question of when and how best to conduct divisions in the House of Commons. The argument against a single moment for divisions is clear: it separates votes from debate.²²⁸ This is sometimes said to have substantive effects. The outcome of a vote might be changed as MPs are persuaded during the debate to vote in a particular way.²²⁹ A Division Time is also said to reduce MPs' independence from the whips, as MPs might be more easily persuaded, cajoled or even coerced into voting in a particular direction as they gather for a series of votes. It might also be regarded as a 'selfish' move that makes MPs' 'lives easier' rather than making parliamentary scrutiny better.²³⁰

Advocates counter these points, arguing first, that grouped divisions save MPs time for other parliamentary activities, whereas the current system is an inefficient use of MPs' time.²³¹ Secondly, a Division Time is less disruptive of other parliamentary business as MPs will be able to schedule their time with greater certainty. Thirdly, the principle of separating the debate from votes has already been conceded with deferred divisions.²³² Fourthly, on most votes MPs will usually vote with their parties thereby limiting concern about MPs' independence. A proviso to designate a particular vote outwith the new rules would formally negate the 'Syria' critique; that a good speech in a debate can change MPs' minds.²³³ Fifthly, this is not a practice without precedent in other parliaments, for example, Scotland and the European Parliament. Finally, a Division Time preserves the practice of MPs coming together to vote and lobby Ministers in the division lobbies.

Table 4: Earliest and Latest Time of Division June 2015- January 13, 2016

Days	Earliest Time of Division	Latest Time of Division
Monday	05:00 pm	12:28 am
Tuesday	01:45 pm	01:45 am
Wednesday	02:55 pm	10:15 pm
Thursday	02:55 pm	05:29 pm
Friday	09:34 am	02:07 pm

Source: House of Commons Department of Information Services²³⁶

If the principle of divisions taking place at a single moment of time each day is looked upon favourably, then the case can subsequently be made that this should be within what is broadly accepted to be the business day: 4-5pm or 5-6pm are the obvious choices.²³⁴ There is little to be gained from holding the Division Time late in the evening.²³⁵

Table 4 above shows the unpredictability of divisions within the House of Commons. The ‘latest’ time is the last division of the day. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays – consecutive days that might compound the impact of evening and later sittings – these clearly fall outside a routine understanding of business hours. It might be politically opportune for the Procedure Committee to give considered thought to a Commons Division Time given that debates about remote and electronic voting will likely not go away.²³⁷ A trial of some such Division Time arrangements could be recommended to the body established to handle Restoration and Renewal during the likely decant from the Palace of Westminster.

Procedure Committee in the context of decant for Restoration and Renewal²³⁸

Restoration and Renewal (R&R) constitutes an unprecedented opportunity to imagine how Westminster might be. It is likely that Churchill’s observation that ‘we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us’ will be deployed to defend Parliament as currently constituted.²⁴¹ Yet there is a risk of being so shaped

by Barry and Pugin that any vision of a renewed parliament becomes blinkered by their Gothic grandeur.²⁴² The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, which was appointed to consider the first stage of R&R,²⁴³ and whatever new body comes into being thereafter, should be asking: What should the parliament of 2030 or 2050 be like? What form of building, what type of furniture, what style of decor, will deliver *The Good Parliament*, one that is truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective? In all this it must be minded that who sits in the House of Commons of the future may be – should be – much more diverse than those who are currently elected to the House.

At the time of writing, the most likely scenario is that MPs will move out of the House in the near future.²⁴⁴ The individual reforms outlined below are underpinned by a commitment to experimentation that R&R decant permits. Most notably, the physical form of the new spaces in which parliamentary debates and scrutiny will take place during any decant should be sufficiently flexible to trial new ways of doing politics – ways that might both enhance the effectiveness within the House, and the legitimacy of the House amongst the electorate. In sum, wherever Parliament is temporarily housed, it should be sufficiently flexible so that alternative ways of doing politics could be trialled and, if successful, introduced in the restored Palace.

“Today the most dangerous myth of all is that the process of reform is over. That great national exploit will never be over.”

Chris Bryant MP²³⁹

“Everyone who works in, or visits, the Palace of Westminster is constantly reminded of how the old lives with the new. I think we are pretty comfortable with this; history should be our inspiration, not our jailor.”

Robert Rogers²⁴⁰

Procedure Committee Recommendation 33

Trial sittings of the House based around 'normal business hours'

The question of what hours the House should sit is highly contested. Reformers are told that the situation today is much better than before. And they would be correct in this, as Table 5 shows,²⁴⁵ although it might also be the case that the hours of the House are getting 'worse' once again.²⁴⁶ The media have also reported that some male MPs wish to turn the clocks backwards.²⁴⁷

The Commons' sitting times are notably not fixed, with the House frequently sitting beyond the official times: following the 'moment of interruption' there will often be a division, meaning that on a Tuesday or a Wednesday, MPs will be most unlikely to leave the House before 8pm even if it does not formally sit beyond 7.30pm.²⁴⁸ Late nights are explicitly scheduled on Monday evenings to permit MPs to travel to the House on a Monday morning rather than on a Sunday evening.²⁴⁹

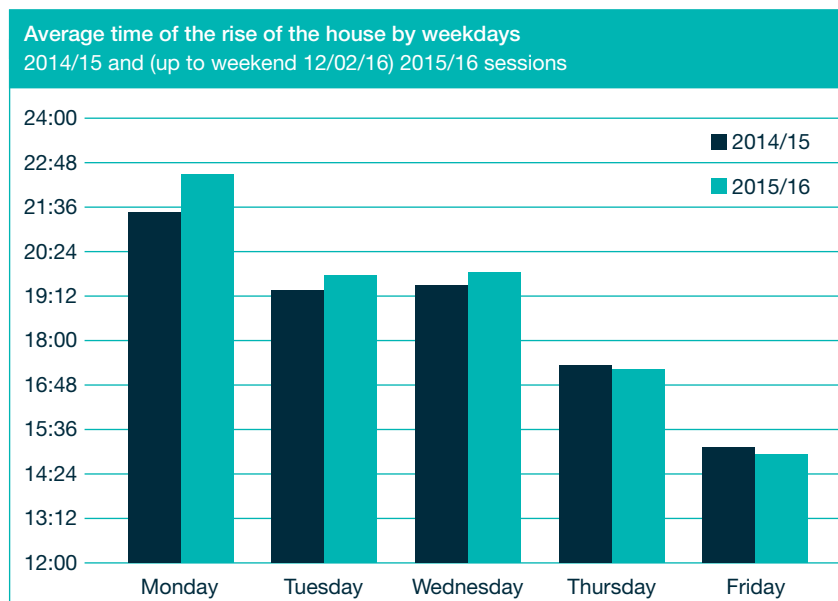
Table 5: Current Sitting Times of the House of Commons Chamber

	Hours
Monday	2.30pm-10.30pm
Tuesday	11.30am-7.30pm
Wednesday	11.30am-7.30pm
Thursday	9.30am-5.30pm
Friday	9.30am-3.00pm

Chart 2 (below) shows the average time the House rises on each day. The 2014/15 session sat past 9pm on 19 occasions; the 2015/16 session has already sat past 9pm 26 times, roughly the equivalent of once a week, and includes two sittings finishing after midnight, with one lasting until nearly 2am.²⁵⁰ Only one of these would be said to have been caused by an urgent political issue.²⁵¹

It is worth re-stating that there is no objective reason for the current hours. Rather they reflect a continuation of an historic accommodation to MPs' professional lives outside Parliament in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Some MPs may *prefer* the current hours – that is their prerogative – but these hours are not required.²⁵²

Chart 2: Average Time of the Rise of the House by Weekday



Source: House of Commons sessional returns diary

Defenders of the current hours frequently draw on the apparently opposing positions held by the ‘London’ versus the ‘geographically distant’ MP.²⁵³ It is said that changing to business hours might well be of *personal* advantage to those MPs whose constituencies are in London or who choose to live in London. In contrast, the geographically distant MP will be said to prefer the concentrated week, enabling them to return to their families and constituencies as quickly as possible on a Thursday or even on a Wednesday. At the individual level, it is likely correct to say that the London living MP would be the beneficiary, and the non-London living MP bear the cost, of any move towards business hours.

Framing the issue in a ‘geographic’ fashion is however not the only – or necessarily the most appropriate – way to decide parliamentary hours. When Parliament make laws and when it holds Government to account is a political choice. This choice speaks to the core of *The Good Parliament*. Business hours have the potential to improve the quality of debate, deliberation and decisions. Might this (representation, effectiveness and accountability) be improved when not undertaken by exhausted MPs?²⁵⁵ That is, MPs tired both when they listen to the debates that are to inform their vote late at night, and tired the next day when they will likely be participating in a select committee evidence sessions, in public bill committees scrutinising legislation, debating in Westminster Hall, or meeting constituents and other visitors.

Secondly, by making some aspects of MPs’ parliamentary work more predictable, business hours will facilitate MPs’ non-Chamber parliamentary activities, not least interactions with constituents, civil society and lobby groups (representation, transparency and accountability). Thirdly, business hours might have the advantage of garnering greater media coverage, most obviously via the early evening news programmes. Fourthly, business hours should aid ‘work/life balance’

and the mental and physical health of all MPs (effectiveness),²⁵⁷ irrespective of where they reside and whether they have children or not (representation). Neither does business hours threaten MPs’ autonomy to do the job as they like. With official Parliamentary business not taking place in the evenings, MPs will be able to choose whether to undertake constituency or other parliamentary work in the evenings if they so wish. Alternatively, if their families are in London they might undertake family responsibilities. Other MPs might choose to relax, so as to be fresh for parliamentary work the next day or for when they return to their constituencies. On top of these positive substantive outcomes, there is also a final symbolic benefit: evening sittings symbolise a House that excludes rather than includes.²⁵⁸

Procedure Committee Recommendation 34

Trial opportunities for remote voting by MPs physically present on the Parliamentary Estate

Many, if not most, MPs are adamant that the division lobby is *the* critical site for the individual and collective lobbying of ministers – a key means of influencing and holding the Government to account. It is where MPs gather as equals; a place from which ministers cannot hide. Those that are critical of the current arrangements contend in contrast that voting either at: (i) voting stations in a few locations across the Parliamentary Estate; or (ii) from anywhere on the Parliamentary Estate, would negate the need for the provision of division lobbies,²⁶⁰ maximise MPs’ time, and would not, in respect of the first case, undermine the interaction between MPs and ministers so valued by MPs, though they may save less time. Some MPs suggest that in other parliaments, those with MPs voting at their desks or in the Chamber, Members are still able to lobby ministers. And the way that MPs dash to and from votes might leave less time for lobbying than other MPs wish to suggest.²⁶¹

“I chanced a little joke. If I was a spouse living at the other end of the country, I would want to be assured that my other half was snug in the warm bosom of the Mother of all Parliaments and not wandering the streets with too much time on his hands and too much money in his pockets.”

Chris Mullin²⁵⁴

“It’s not that we [the geographically distant] would benefit from working hours – my family is in my constituency – but if we had normal hours, we’d return to our families and constituencies on Thursday evenings not exhausted by long hours; we’d have more energy and be more effective in the constituency.”

“As a ‘role model’ institution Parliament shouldn’t feel it has to match shift work/late nights of other parts of the population...it should be setting an example.”

“Evening work then becomes your choice, and you might use your evenings to sleep, so you work better at the weekend.”

‘SNP MPs look to Scottish Parliament and ask, why are the Westminster Hours as they are?’²⁵⁶

‘The division Bell rings...the MPs rush out...we’ll be back soon they cry...everyone sits around waiting...this may happen more than once over the event as MPs dash to and from PCH.’²⁵⁹

Against a backdrop of yet another apparent parliamentary stand-off, the considerable conjecture advanced by both sides could be tested during R&R decant: MPs could experience the reality of ‘on Estate voting’ before their return to the Palace.²⁶² If MPs were to find themselves unable to, or less effective at, lobbying Ministers, or if electronic voting negatively impacted relationships within the House (effectively emptying it out and reducing Member interaction, as critics suggest), a strong case for the retention of division lobbies would have been made.

Procedure Committee Recommendation 35

Trial new formats for Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs)

Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) is frequently regarded as the epitome of the masculinised style of the House of Commons – ‘willy-jousting’ *par excellence*: feisty’, ‘raucous’, ‘gladiatorial’ and ‘rowdy.’²⁶⁶ Favourably disposed MPs will tell you that the ‘theatre’ that is PMQs is integral to British parliamentary politics. ‘It would be unrealistic to expect that, having corralled 500 people of deeply held and opposing views in a small room, contentious assertions will be heard in reverent silence; they won’t.’²⁶⁷ MPs will tell you that each party wills – and requires – their leader to perform.²⁶⁸ That the public ‘love’ the spectacle. The media’s interest represents – if not constitutes – PMQs as the most important political moment of the week at Westminster. Viewing figures would concur.²⁶⁹ Foreign politicians and ministers are said to lament an equivalent in their legislatures: did Scotland not introduce First Minister’s Questions to fill the PMQ sized-hole in its procedures? Tony Blair, in admitting his fear ahead of PMQs revealed its force in holding Prime Ministers to account.²⁷⁰ And advocates of PMQs will keenly name women MPs who flourish in its atmosphere. On the other side of the argument, studies point out that little of substance is gained from the questions asked, answered,

or avoided.²⁷¹ The previous Clerk of the House has admitted that when the volume prevented questions and answers being heard, then the House and the country are losers.²⁷² The PM’s questioning before the Liaison Committee is depicted as an ‘antidote’ to PMQs.²⁷³ And then there are accounts of MPs – male and female – opting out of the Chamber.²⁷⁴

So what might be done? At present it is for the Speaker to police aberrant behaviour: ‘offensive behaviour, abuse and heckling should be addressed, as having to shout in order to be heard above the noise did not appear to be in keeping with a modern democracy’.²⁷⁵ Amending the current practice, backbenchers could be heard in silence when asking their question. There is some precedent in that Maiden Speeches are heard ‘courteously’, and personal statements are heard in ‘(near) silence’.²⁷⁶ Any MP not respecting this could be asked to apologise, and if the behaviour is repeated by that MP or another of the same party, the MP could be asked to leave the Chamber for the duration of PMQs or put in a ‘sin bin’, as the Hansard Society has suggested.²⁷⁷ Questions to the PM from the Leader of the Opposition might also be further separated from backbenchers’ questions to the PM.

Then there are alternative or additional formats which could challenge the pattern of ‘scrutiny by screech’;²⁷⁸ backbenchers – drawn by lot – could hold a more deliberative Committee session with the PM;²⁷⁹ more radically still, public questions could be gathered via YouTube, or the PM might be questioned by the public on internet TV.²⁸⁰ The substantive point being made here is that different ways of holding the Prime Minister to account can – and should – be tried during decant. The new R&R body might invite the Procedure Committee to undertake an inquiry into possible reforms.

‘Misbehaviour is now furtively out of the sight of the camera or communal, where numbers obscure identity.’²⁶³

‘The TV coverage fails to pick up on the ‘one-line interjections that spice proceedings’; ...if the minister keeps going, talking directly at the microphone, it sounds as though the ride is fairly smooth.’²⁶⁴

‘Whips encourage MPs to shout ‘weak, weak, weak’ at an MP... whips give bottles of champagne if an MP ‘scores’, gets called to account for poor behaviour... abuse is unacceptable, not about words per se, it is the intention you are trying to achieve; that’s not difficult to judge: if it was children in the playground doing it [it] would be classed as abusive and bullying.’²⁶⁵

New R&R Body²⁸¹

R&R Body

Recommendation 36

Trial new layouts in any decant Chamber, and review provision of a new Chamber for return to the Palace

Any debating Chamber should, at the very minimum, provide seating for all its members. To do otherwise is to deny MPs the ability to participate comfortably, and arguably, effectively in the Chamber. The UK Parliament has never had a permanent home in the modern era that could accommodate all its members, a senior clerk admitted: presently the number of spaces is said to be 427, over 200 spaces short of the 650 MPs elected to the House,²⁸⁴ although the size of the House is to be reduced to 600.²⁸⁵ As a minimal improvement the means to distinguish ‘seats’ could be established by re-upholstering the benches.²⁸⁶ Chamber furniture should also be sufficiently flexible to provide for all members. Members using wheelchairs – and one should presume more than one or two – should be able to sit with their party colleagues on the back and front benches.²⁸⁷ And there should be better audio provision to aide participation.²⁸⁸

The advantages of a flexible system of seating, over and above reasons of diversity and equality of participation by individual Members just stated, include: (i) the provision or removal of additional seating as and when wanted; and (ii) variation in the layout of the seating specific to the needs of particular Chamber activities and events. For example, where the Chamber is likely to be attended by few Members, it would be possible to rearrange the seating so that Members could sit in a physically closer arrangement. This might enhance debate and provide for better TV coverage, and might counter the public perception of an ‘empty’ Chamber. Alternatively, if a more consensual style is preferred, seating might reflect a less adversarial layout.

The decant experiments outlined above should moreover inform consideration of return. Extant debates over alternative configurations of seating are frequently based on subjective observation. ‘Have you watched how dull and sterile or staged the European Parliament is?’ some MPs ask. Decant provides for current MPs to experience first-hand how a variety of seating layouts are mediated by party-political and institutional culture and norms. These experiences should formally feed into discussions for return.

The necessity of accommodating Members’ needs as well as adopting a more flexible seating system might well mean that the current Chamber is simply too small.²⁸⁹ This could be addressed by expanding the current Chamber into the division lobbies.²⁹⁰ Consideration should also be given to the building of a new Chamber on the Palace estate, most likely the building of a glass extension or glassing over an existing courtyard.²⁹¹ This might have the additional benefit of suggesting to the public a commitment to the principles of a more transparent and accessible Parliament. The existing Chamber could be retained for use on ceremonial occasions, and, or opened for more extensive public visits.²⁹²

R&R Body

Recommendation 37

Provide for flexible committee rooms and other parliamentary meeting rooms

The principle of flexibility is a very good one; to maximise efficiency in limited space, non-fixed furniture ensures that the same space can be used for different purposes. Consideration should also be given to the layout, furniture and furnishings. At present committee rooms in the Palace are imposing, often with very formal and fixed layouts, and dark wood panelling, wallpaper and oil paintings. This contrasts greatly with the more contemporary business-like decor and feel of Portcullis House.²⁹³ Different meeting purposes may very well further

‘Even when there is room between two Members, a veteran will insist on occupying the usual place. The technique is to aim the bottom at the non-existent space between two Members bear down heavily while wiggling the posterior vigorously from side to side. By a phenomenon that puzzles physicists a space appears where there was none before. The bottom of the MP with ancient rights hits the green leather.’

Paul Flynn MP²⁸²

‘Bobbing up and down on the benches; it is sexual harassment. You find yourself sitting on a male MP’s knee.’²⁸³

benefit from the flexibility to rearrange furniture so as to make a space more intimate and less intimidating to those not used to attending and speaking in the House.²⁹⁴ In short, rooms used for meetings with the public should be made welcoming from the viewpoint of the public. In addition, consideration should be given to access: many doors in Parliament are very heavy to open, and are difficult to negotiate. Signage is often poor too, directing the public to Central Lobby and the Committee floors, for example. The question of technology must also be addressed during decant: virtual conferencing is a widespread practice beyond Parliament. Trials could be undertaken to explore greater remote participation in committees by MPs and witnesses.²⁹⁵ Accordingly, the restored Palace should ensure that the committee rooms and meeting rooms are technologically 'fit for purpose'.

R&R Body Recommendation 38

Provide for inclusionary parliamentary spaces for MPs

The provision of 'Lady' Members rooms should be maintained in decant and in a restored Parliament; ditto the male changing room.²⁹⁶ These are necessary both because of the hours that Parliament keeps and, regarding the former, because of the disproportionate number of men in the House.²⁹⁷ There should be a principle of equal provision in terms of furniture, including baby changing and caring furniture within these rooms.²⁹⁸ Women MPs should be asked their preference for the name of the rooms – perhaps these might be named after pioneering women MPs or women political activists if the notion of the 'Lady Member' is felt to be anachronistic. Given the existing hours and parliamentary calendar, the House should also ensure that the hairdressing salon is maintained. In the absence of a reform of parliamentary hours, the provision of additional facilities on the estate might be also considered.

Additional space in the restored Palace might be provided for by glazing over courtyard(s). Again these could be designed to be less foreboding. They should be flexible spaces too; able to be used in different ways at different times, e.g. reception areas or private meeting spaces. There should also be a review of establishing a 'cafe-like' space in the Palace that provides a more relaxed environment, as in the Portcullis House atrium. The atrium is extensively used by MPs, especially for meeting visitors to Parliament. For the latter it is a more informal, relaxed, and hence welcoming space than the Palace which, whilst awe inspiring, can also be experienced as intimidating. Some Members would also welcome the provision of less formal and more cafe-like dining provision; those currently available in Portcullis House close earlier than the House currently sits.²⁹⁹

R&R Body Recommendation 39

Provide sufficient toilet capacity

Provision should be planned for a future sex/gender parity and diverse Parliament (MPs, staff and visitors).³⁰⁰ Failure to do so will limit who can visit, participate in the formal activities of, and work in Parliament. Baby changing facilities should be separate facilities accessible to all parents and carers and there should be easily accessible disabled toilets. Unisex/gender neutral toilets should be provided.³⁰¹ In respect of the latter, a US restaurant has succinctly explained why: 'for single dads with daughters, single moms with sons, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and adults with ageing parents who may be disabled'.³⁰²

Works of Art Committee

Works of Art Committee Recommendation 40

Abolition of the '10 year dead' rule

Works of Art Committee Recommendation 41

Commit to diverse artwork in a restored Palace of Westminster

What makes one person feel part of, and welcome in, a particular institution, and yet another feel less welcome? Identifying or having an affinity with an institution is a subjective, emotional state.³⁰⁴ In an era of apparent antipathy towards party and parliamentary politics, creating a sense of belonging to, and being part of, or having a relationship with, a parliament is something that the House of Commons should be very much concerned with. One part of this is how the institution presents itself to the public and to those who work in the House when they are present in Parliament, and for the public when they access the House via the parliamentary website.

The Parliamentary Art Collection acquires works that document Parliament, its buildings, people, business and ceremonies.³⁰⁵ The collection allows audiences to engage with the work of Parliament and provokes considered thought on its role and activities.³⁰⁶ Seeking to ensure that the artwork of the House is representative is a principle that has been accepted. This principle – of creating a representative relationship between the public and Parliament via its artwork – must be kept centre stage during the R&R process.

The '10 year dead rule' has been an important inhibitor of showing artwork of women MPs. This rule was introduced precisely to prevent the acceptance of a portrait of Lady Astor: a misogynistic rule from the very beginning, as indicated in the exchange of letters (see right).³⁰⁷

The Speaker can waive the rule; instead, it should be permanently removed and new artwork should be commissioned to continue to show the diverse membership and activities of the Commons.

The following is recommended:

- By abolishing the '10 year dead rule' portraits of women former MPs currently hanging in Portcullis House should be considered for re-hanging in the Palace. This might include portraits of Shirley Williams and Mo Mowlam
- Artwork currently displayed in the House of Commons should be routinely audited to ensure diverse representations³⁰⁹
- Portraits of parliamentary 'firsts' might be commissioned,³¹⁰ e.g. Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary; Ann Taylor, Chief Whip
- New artwork commissioned,³¹¹ including, but not limited to, photographs of women MPs at each election until parity is reached; commission artwork for other currently under-represented groups, if Members so wish
- Maximise the use of technology to show contemporary displays that document the diverse Membership of the House over time in the House's public spaces (e.g. Westminster Hall, Westminster Hall Cafe, the Lower and Upper Waiting Rooms (the spaces at the top and bottom of the stairs leading to the Committee rooms)³¹²
- Commission greater gift shop wares celebrating the diversity of MPs (e.g. postcards of existing portraits; coffee table books)³¹³



Baroness Dawn Primarolo³⁰³

'That no portrait bust or other representations of living persons or of any person deceased less than ten years shall be accepted'; 'except in accordance with a resolution of both Houses of Parliament.'

'The Cabinet agreed that: the First Commissioner of Works should have authority to write to Lord Astor and state that the Cabinet felt that it was undesirable as a matter of principle, that pictures of living persons should be accepted for the Houses of Parliament.'

Formal document dated 03/12/1924

'Letter to Speaker from Lord Peel 27/02/1925 ...would be useful to quote it when refusing to accept portraits of persons who have no real claim to be commemorated in the Houses of Parliament.' [emphasis added]³⁰⁸

The Women in Parliament All Party Parliamentary Group

Women in Parliament All Party Parliamentary Group Recommendation 42 (Short Term)

Campaign for male MPs to sign up to the #nomoreallmalepanels

All Party Parliamentary Groups are informal cross-party groups that, whilst having no official status within Parliament, are numerous and can be highly active organisations.³¹⁴ Made up of women MPs and Peers, the purpose of the WIP APPG is ‘to increase the number of women in Parliament in all parties and to encourage women to get involved in public life’.³¹⁵ A good number of recommendations from its 2014 Report *Improving Parliament* have fed into this Report. The WIP APPG has a critical ongoing role in representing the views of women Parliamentarians, and in supporting other parliamentary actors in addressing the recommendations made to them in this Report. They also have the potential to change the culture of the House through campaigning to bring more male Members publicly on board with the representation and inclusion agenda.

Outside of Parliament there is a growing international movement #nomoreallmalepanels. The aim is simple: to put an end to all-male line ups at seminars, workshops, conferences, and on TV panel shows.³¹⁶ All male panels do not ‘just happen’; they are statistically biased and are by definition exclusionary.³¹⁷ The WIP APPG group should ‘sign up to the hashtag’ and seek to end the practice in Parliament by encouraging male MPs to voluntarily refuse to participate in all male panels.³¹⁸ This *voluntary endeavour* has the potential to reap significant symbolic reward: all it requires is male Members to ask, ‘who is on a panel?’ If there are no women, one simply declines the invitation, and makes it clear why they have declined.³¹⁹ Male

members should be invited to sign a public pledge. Party leaders should similarly be invited to sign a statement committing not to host ‘all male panels’.

Political parties

Political parties are key gatekeepers to political office. There is a great deal more that the parties could and should be doing to ensure that they first select more diverse candidates and secondly ensure equality of participation amongst MPs once they are elected to the House of Commons. This Report does not seek to reproduce the extensive literature that speaks to the totality of these issues – the 2010 *Speaker’s Conference on Parliamentary Representation* Report contains a considerable number of very good recommendations. Here the recommendations are limited to those that bolster other recommendations targeted in this Report.

Political Party Recommendation 43 (Short Term)

Engage in various activities to increase the supply of and demand for diverse parliamentary candidates

- In the absence of the Minister for Women and Equalities commencing Section 106 (see above), comply with its spirit, as recommended by the Speaker’s Conference (Recommendation 25).³²⁰ As part of this commitment the parties should also support the request by the Commons’ Department for Information Services that MPs complete a post-general election survey³²¹
- Publish, no later than six months after a general election, a target for the percentage of the candidate characteristics listed in Section 106 of Equality Act 2010 for the next two general elections, and to set out their ‘action plan’ to achieve these.³²² Parties might add ‘parenthood’ to the Equality Act 2010 list of candidates

- Publish on the public pages of their party website an agreed set of expectations for candidates setting out the role, and the reasonable demands which may be made, of both prospective parliamentary candidates and local party associations³²³
- Publish a list of party national and regional equality champions
- Implement Speaker's Conference Recommendation 32 'All political parties should place a ceiling upon the expenses which candidates can incur during any single selection process'³²⁴

Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Design and Approach

The Report is generated from a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the University of Bristol.³²⁵ It is underpinned by an extensive body of international research that has analysed the under-representation of women in politics over more than two decades,³²⁶ as well as by newer work on political institutions.³²⁷ It is also informed by recent parliamentary reports on representation, most notably, the 2010 *Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Representation*,³²⁸ the 2014 Women in Parliament APPG report *Improving Parliament*,³²⁹ and the 2015 Report presented to the Administration Committee, based on a survey of women Members.³³⁰ Sarah Childs was the gender Special Adviser to the Speaker's Conference and advised the WIP APPG on their 2014 Report. *The Good Parliament* Report is also informed by the 2015 Report of the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy. The 2015 BBC TV series *Inside the Commons* provided additional illustrative and contextual material.³³¹

The 2010 Speaker's Conference examined under-representation in the UK Parliament – women, minority ethnic groups, the disabled, LGBTQ and, albeit to a lesser extent, class.³³² Its inquiry focused predominantly on the supply and recruitment of MPs. Explicitly taking up the Speaker's Conference baton the 2014 WIP APPG Report added the issue of Member retention. Whilst it spoke to questions of sex/gender, its recommendations were felt to benefit other currently under-represented groups. The WIP APPG's most notable success to date: the establishment of the Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) in 2015.³³³

Both the APPG's *Improving Parliament* Report³³⁴ and the subsequent internal House of Commons report for the Administration Committee, documented women MPs views on, and experiences of the House, and involved gathering new data via surveys and interviews with women MPs, past and present.³³⁵ Some women MPs speak privately on this agenda whilst others are happy to speak publicly about their experiences. Academics have also been gathering qualitative and quantitative data for more than two decades. Women MPs views of the House are, then, well known.

From July 2015 to February 2016 Professor Sarah Childs was 'embedded' full time in the House of Commons,³³⁶ interviewing MPs, male and female,³³⁷ meeting with groups of MPs, talking to individual and groups of clerks and officials, observing House activities and interactions in Parliament's social spaces, and subjecting a range of parliamentary publications to a gendered/diversity reading. An international conference was also held in conjunction with the BGIPU to facilitate 'lesson learning' from the best practice parliaments of Sweden and Finland.³³⁸ A subsequent meeting was held with representatives from leading UK civil society groups.

The assessment contained in Table 1 (the 'RAG' Analysis of the Commons) is based on: counting the diversity of MPs elected to the Commons in 2015; assessing MPs participation in domestic and departmental select committees and in leadership positions in the House; documenting equality and diversity provisions in the rules of the House, and noting explicit institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion; as well as examining how the House 'feels' for Members from different backgrounds.

In all these activities, and in the drafting of the recommendations and this Report, the author benefited from the formal advice of a small group of MPs, male and female from across the House, and an Advisory Board made up of officials and clerks and chaired by Mr Speaker.³³⁹

Appendix 2: The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Gender Sensitive Parliaments Approach

The IPU framework for a Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) is structured across seven dimensions (see Box 5 below), and suggests a continuum of gender (in)sensitivity. The following criteria can be used to rate the gender sensitive status of a Parliament:

- Infrastructure (amenities);
- Rules/practices (standing orders);
- Language/discourse in plenary;
- Language/discourse in informal settings;
- Sitting hours;
- Dress code;
- Maternity and paternity leave;
- Childcare facilities;
- Induction training;
- Parliamentary culture; and access to resources.

Measurements include: the numbers of women present; analysis of the positions women and men hold within a parliament; and the extent to which gender considerations are integral to the work of a parliament.³⁴⁰ Further questions include: are facilities suited to men and women? Is the culture of a parliament non-sexist, or does it privilege traditional masculine ways

of operating? Are men shouldering their responsibilities in respect of gender equality? And finally, is there a parliamentary plan of action for gender equality?

In this Report the IPU's third dimension is not addressed. Assessing the extent to which Parliament mainstreams gender in policy and legislative terms was felt to lie beyond the remit of this particular project. In other words, this Report focuses on the 'inward' dimension of Gender Sensitive Parliaments (Galligan and Meier EIGE/2014/OPER/13, 13); on the position of women within the institution and the working conditions and practices they face. The outward dimension focuses on work parliament produces in steering society and contributing to gender equality more broadly.

Critically, the IPU definition calls attention to the necessity of conceiving of Parliaments as an organism. In particular, Dimension 7 holds that gender sensitivity is not just about MPs but about issues of gender insensitivity affecting parliamentary staff. Whilst the specific concerns of the administrative side of the House are not directly addressed in this Report, the necessity of acknowledging the interconnections and inter-dependencies between the political and administrative side of the

UK Parliament was kept central. As Melanie Onn MP stated: 'We should have a system that suits as many people as possible, and that includes the staff, who work here as much as the MPs, the men as much as the women, and those with family caring responsibilities other than children'.³⁴¹ Nothing that would adversely affect the administrative and support side would be advocated; the presence of representatives from these parts of the House on the Advisory Board protected against the inadvertent or unconscious marginalisation or downgrading of these concerns.

Dimensions 5 and 6 of the IPU framework emphasise that the 'problem' of a Parliament's gender insensitivity is not the responsibility of women MPs but of political parties and of male parliamentarians. This shared responsibility goes further: it is a collective, institutional responsibility: in the UK case, the House of Commons *as a body* should act to eliminate gender insensitivities – it must take ownership of *The Good Parliament*. This is implied in the IPU's statement that GSP status can be 'irrespective of the number of women members' in a parliament; it is not the concern of women MPs but of the institution who can and should act.

Box 5: The Inter Parliamentary Union's Seven Dimensions of Gender Sensitive Parliaments

IPU Gender Sensitive Parliament: Dimensions
1. Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all its bodies and internal structures
2. Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context
3. Mainstreams gender equality throughout all its work (via gender mainstreaming and or via a women's caucus or gender equality committee, to ensure that parliamentary outputs analyzed from gender perspective)
4. Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality and responds to the needs and realities of MPs – men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities
5. Acknowledges and builds on the contributions made by its men members who pursue and advocate for gender equality
6. Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievements of gender equality
7. Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration

Appendix 3:
Parliamentary
Gender/Equalities bodies

Box 6: The Swedish Speaker's Reference Group on Gender Equality

<p>History and composition Established in 1995. The Speaker, Brigitta Dahl invited seven women MPs, from each of the parties in Parliament</p>
<p>Aims To shed light on the conditions and assumptions governing parliamentary and political work in a broad perspective, and the possibilities of development for individual members and for parliament as a whole</p>
<p>Organisation There are no formal rules or procedures regulating the Reference Group and its activities. Normally it meets once or twice a semester in the Speaker's office</p>
<p>Activities Internal studies on gender equality in the Swedish Parliament Publication of proposals for a gender equality Parliament Breakfast meetings on gender equality topics Relations with FEMM Committee in European Parliament</p>

Box 7: Swedish Speaker's Working Group for Gender Equality Issues, a History

<p>Promoting Gender Equality in the Riksdag (undated) Action programme for the electoral period 2014–2018</p>
<p>The purpose of the current action programme for gender equality, for 2014–2018, is to highlight differences in the preconditions for male and female MPs to perform their duties, and to carry out initiatives to even out existing differences.</p>
<p>Another purpose is to increase knowledge and awareness of the significance of gender when it comes to power and influence. By continuously focusing on questions of gender equality, the action programme is helping to reach the goal of a gender-equal Riksdag.</p>
<p>Meeting the challenges of daily life also depends on working environment and working conditions. How Riksdag work is organised as regards voting times, how meetings are scheduled and how services concerning child-minding, etc. are organised are therefore of interest.</p>
<p>Social media are a significant part of the life of MPs today and this action programme should therefore pay particular attention to how this affects the preconditions for female and male MPs to perform their duties.</p>
<p>The action programme for 2014–2018 has begun with a mapping of gender equality in the Riksdag. This will also be used as a benchmark measurement in the follow-up of the action programme at the end of the electoral period.</p>
<p>Statistics As background material for future work, existing structures will be highlighted with the help of gender-divided statistics, for example analysis of the duration of speaking times, the gender composition of presiding members of committees, and how the Riksdag is represented in various contexts.</p>
<p>Studies Studies are to be carried out into which policy areas women and men tend to talk about in Riksdag debates and gender differences in the way of expressing oneself are to be examined by means of a psycholinguistic analysis of Riksdag debates.</p>
<p>Survey The focus of the action programme is on qualitative aspects of gender equality in the Riksdag. These may concern terms of address, conduct and treatment, not only between colleagues but also in contacts with voters and the media. The way in which the political leadership is affected by gender should also be highlighted. In cooperation with researchers in Political Science, a survey has been sent out to all active MPs in the Riksdag. The purpose of the survey is to obtain more in-depth knowledge of how the MPs experience different aspects of Riksdag work and whether there are differences between men and women in this respect. Besides containing background questions on age and gender, etc., the survey is to be divided into four different sub-areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations and demands regarding politicians • How is Riksdag work organised? • The working climate • Networks and contacts
<p>Courses and seminars The action programme should also encompass educational initiatives and activities to increase MPs' knowledge of the significance of gender for power and influence. It should include seminars, for example, on gender aspects and the use of social media.</p>
<p>Reference group of researchers In order to develop proposals for concrete measures which can be included in the action plan, a group of researchers from various disciplines relating to the project will be linked to the project. These will include researchers in both political science and behavioural science.</p>

Box 8: The National Assembly for Wales' Women in Democracy Caucus

The National Assembly for Wales, under the Presiding Officer, Dame Rosemary Butler, established a caucus in 2013
It is made up of one representative from each of the Assembly's four political parties
<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about measures parliaments and parties have put in place to encourage/ensure female representation at varying political levels 2. Seek to identify whether parliaments with strong female representation create distinct policies and legislation as a result of this positive representation 3. Identify the pastoral needs of women politicians and what the Assembly Commission can learn from this and benchmark accordingly.
The Caucus would also present the opportunity for the representatives from the Assembly's four political parties to advise of any measures and action their respective parties had undertaken.
<p>Recommendations pertaining to Parliament included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a progress update from Assembly Party Leaders on the steps that they have taken to ensure an increased representation of women Members for the Fifth Assembly; • Invite the Remuneration Board to look at the specific pastoral requirements of Assembly Members, particularly those with caring responsibilities; • Encourage their party groups to adopt a more skill-based approach founded on the general principles of fair recruitment in order to encourage a wider range of women to put themselves forward for elections; • Urge the Assembly to consider gender specific support and one to one coaching for new and returning female members in the Fifth Assembly.

Source: *Women in Public Life, Assembly Women in Democracy Report, 2015*
(www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1417)

Appendix 4: Media Passes

Table 6: Media Passes by Type and Sex

Pass Type	Male	Female	Total No.	% Female
Cat 28Escort status (general access + reporters premises)	8	5	13	38
Cat 28A (gen + reporters premises, gallery and Lobby)	178	55	233	24
Cat 28B (gen+ reporters premises and gallery)	53	33	86	38
Cat 26C (gen+ reporters premises and sound box)	15	16	31	52
Cat 28D Foreign Press (gen+ reporters premises & lobby)	5	1	6	17
Cat 28E (gen+ reporters premises)	35	11	46	24

Source: UK Parliament Pass Office

Appendix 5: Sex Quota for Deputy Speakers

5 E (iii) ‘at least one man and at least one woman shall be elected across the four posts of Speaker and Deputy Speakers ...The constraints will be applied at the count, so there is no obligation on Members to vote for candidates from both sides of the House, or for both a man and a woman. The ballot paper indicates which side of the House the candidates come from, and their gender.’

‘Standing Order No. 2A also provides that constraints shall be applied to the count so that of those elected: (i) two candidates shall come from the opposite side of the House to that from which the Speaker was drawn, so the first candidate from the present Opposition side will be Chairman of Ways and Means and the second, Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means; (ii) one candidate shall come from the same side of the House as that from which the Speaker was drawn and shall be First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means; and (iii) at least one man and at least one woman shall be elected across the four posts of Speaker and Deputy Speakers. If neither of the Opposition side candidates reaches the quota in the first round of voting, the votes cast for the Government side candidate will be transferred to their next preference to determine which Opposition side candidate becomes Chairman of Ways and Means. The constraints will be applied at the count, so there is no obligation on Members to vote for candidates from both sides of the House, or for both a man and a woman. The ballot paper indicates which side of the House the candidates come from, and their gender.’

This change was passed without debate in the House.
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100304/debtext/100304-0011.htm#10030456000003 (col 1100).

The history and background is in the First Report of the Procedure Committee 2009-10.
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmproced/341/34102.htm

Gender Weighting

44. One of the conventions observed in nominating Deputy Speakers in the past has been that the team should represent both genders. We believe that this convention is a valuable one and we have considered how it might be translated into an electoral system based primarily on party balance. We have identified two possibilities: first, that Members voting in the Deputy Speaker elections could be required to include at least one man and at least one woman in their choices, and second that the rules could stipulate instead that the winning candidates include at least one man and at least one woman. The former approach is likely to lead to a higher percentage of spoilt ballot papers and would not guarantee the desired result. The latter approach would have the advantage of ensuring that the team could not fail to represent both sexes but it has the disadvantage that it could mean a popular candidate of the “wrong” sex – or several such candidates – being passed over in favour of a candidate who polled far fewer votes. On the whole, we believe that this is a price worth paying and one which could be addressed through the judicious choice of an electoral system. **We recommend that the rules for the election of the Deputy Speakers stipulate that at least one man and at least one woman be elected to the team formed by the Speaker and Deputy Speakers.**

Appendix 6: Maternity and Paternity Leave

There is no global parliamentary database listing the provisions parliaments make for the mother or father Member of Parliament. As part of this project a short questionnaire which included a generic question about maternity/paternity provision was gathered from ten parliaments.³⁴² These included two sub-national UK Parliaments (Scotland and Wales), three Westminster-style parliaments (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand); and two Western and three Northern European parliaments (Germany and Spain, and Denmark, Finland and Sweden respectively). The data (see Table 7) finds that most of the surveyed parliaments – *six* – have formal House leave arrangements, either general leave provisions or more specific maternity, paternity and parental leave provisions (Australia; Denmark; Finland; Germany; New Zealand; and Spain); *three* Parliaments have no formal provisions and rely on informal party arrangements (Canada, Scotland, Wales); and a *single* Parliament – Sweden – matches their country level provision. The UK Parliament’s reliance on informal party arrangements sees them in the same group as Canada, Scotland and Wales.

Table 7: Maternity and Paternity Leave Arrangements

Country	Maternity Leave
1. Australia	A motion to grant leave of absence does not require notice, states the cause and period of leave, and has priority over all other business. A Member who has been granted leave of absence by the House is excused from the Service of the House or any Committee
2. Canada	No formal process of either maternity or paternity leave
3. Denmark	An MP (male and female) may request up to 12 months paid leave (pregnancy, childbirth, adoption). Formally it is up to whole Parliament to grant leave – it is put on the agenda for plenary sitting; in practice it is always granted. An MP writes to the Speaker via the Legal Services office.
4. Finland	According to section 48 of the Parliament’s rules of Procedure a record of absence from a plenary session (illness, maternity, paternity or parental leave) shall be entered into the minutes of the plenary session. MPs receive full remuneration during maternal or paternal leave.
5. Germany	Members who are unable to be present on days when the Bundestag is sitting, or to attend recorded votes, notify the President of the Bundestag in writing. The reasons are not examined. ... While the law provides for deductions to be made from Members’ monthly expense allowance in the event of their absence... no deductions are made if the absence is due to pregnancy, if it falls during the period of maternity protection, or if it is for the purpose of caring for an ill child under the age of 14.
6. New Zealand	There is a provision for members to apply to the Speaker for extended periods of leave, and this can be used for what would effectively be maternity or paternity leave. Members would receive their full salary while on this leave. In New Zealand MPs are not employees, and are therefore not subject to the provisions of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.
7. Scotland	There is no access to maternity or paternity leave for members; policies will be set by the individual parties
8. Spain	<p>According with the Standing Orders of the Congress of Deputies. Section 82 (modified by the Plenary Sitting on July 21th, 2011) Voting may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) By assent to the Speaker’s proposal. ii) Ordinary. iii) Public, by roll call. iv) Secret <p>2. In the event of pregnancy, maternity, paternity or serious sickness preventing a Member of Parliament from carrying out his or her functions and considered sufficiently justified taking into account the special circumstances, the Bureau may authorise in a motivated document the Member to cast his or her vote through the telematics procedure with identity verification, in plenary sessions, in a voting, that cannot be subject to fragmentation or modification, and which will be foreseeable in respect to the manner and moment when it will take place. For such purpose, the Member will issue the due application by means of a document addressed to the Bureau, which will inform him or her of its decision, specifying, if necessary, the voting and time period he or she will be allowed to cast the vote through this procedure. The vote casted through this procedure will have to be personally verified by means of a system established to this end by the Bureau and held by the Presidency of the Chamber prior to the beginning of the voting.</p>
9. Sweden	<p>The same rules for parental leave are applicable to MPs as for the general public. The MP applies for parental leave also from Parliament; the application has to be approved by the Speaker.</p> <p>(Parental allowance of 480 days, of 390 compensated at 80 percent wage, and 90 days with minimum wage. 60 of the 390 are the ‘daddy quota’. Father is entitled to parental allowance of 10 days in connection of the birth at 90 percent of wage. Temporal parental allowance for care of sick children is 120 days per child and year (Freidenvall undated, 33)).</p>
10. Wales	There is no formal process; arrangements are made between the individual member and their parties. Some members have used ‘pairing’ arrangements via the party whips for one-off appointments.

The use of substitutes is a feature of two parliaments (Denmark and Sweden), although there is some limited substitution also in Finland. In Denmark and Sweden the substitute would be the next person on the party list in the same constituency as the Member on leave. Finland, whilst considering the rights of MPs to be personal and not temporarily replaceable, permits alternate members for Committees. Both New Zealand and Australia make use of proxy voting (see Boxes 9 and 10).

Box 9: Australia Nursing Mothers and Proxy Votes³⁴³

Members nursing an infant are able to give their vote by proxy for any division except that on the third reading of a bill which proposes an alteration of the Constitution. (This exemption is in recognition of the fact that bills proposing an alteration to the Constitution must be passed with an absolute majority in both Houses) (Constitution, s128) Government Members give their vote to the Chief Government Whip and non-government Members to the Chief Opposition Whip. (Resolution of the House, *Votes and Proceedings No. 1*, 12-13 February 2008, pp. 27-8)

The provisions for proxy voting are provided for by a resolution of the House agreed on 13 February 2008, the terms of which are appended to the standing orders titled *Special provisions for nursing mothers*.

Box 10: Proxy Voting in the New Zealand Parliament: Standing Order 154

154 Proxy voting (1) A member may give authority for a proxy vote to be cast in the member's name or for an abstention to be recorded. (2) A proxy must state the name of the member who is giving the authority, the date it is given, and the period or business for which the authority is valid. It must be signed by the member giving it and indicate the member who is given authority to exercise it. (3) A member who has given a proxy may revoke or amend that proxy at any time before its exercise.

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(4) The leader or senior whip of each party, or a member acting as the leader or senior whip of the party in the House for the time being, may exercise a proxy vote for any member of the party, subject to any express direction from a member to the contrary. 155 Casting of proxy vote (1) A proxy vote may be cast or an abstention recorded on a party or personal vote only by the person who has authority to exercise it. In the case of any dispute, the member exercising a proxy must produce the authority to the Speaker. (2) In the case of a party vote, proxies may be exercised for a number equal to no more than 25 percent of a party's membership in the House, rounded upwards where applicable. (3) A proxy may be exercised for a member, in addition to the number of proxies that may be exercised under paragraph (2), while that member is absent from the House with the permission of the Speaker granted under Standing Order 38(1). (4) In the case of a party vote, proxy votes may be exercised for a

party consisting of up to five members, or an Independent member, only if at least one of the members of that party or that Independent member is— (a) present within the parliamentary precincts at the time, or (b) absent from the House with the permission of the Speaker granted under Standing Order 38(1). (5) Despite paragraph (2), there is no limit on the number of proxy votes that may be exercised in the period from the declaration of a state of national emergency until that state of national emergency is terminated or expires.

38 Permission to be absent from the House (1) The Speaker may grant a member of a party consisting of one member, an Independent member, or any other member (following a request from a member's party leader or whip) permission to be absent from the House— (a) on account of illness or other family cause of a personal nature: (b) to enable the member to attend to public business (whether in New Zealand or overseas). (2) A leader or whip of a party consisting of more than one member may grant any member of that party permission to be absent from the House.

In 2013, the New Zealand Parliament adopted a sessional order to allow an MP to be absent from the Parliamentary precincts on compassionate grounds, but to be regarded as present for the purposes of casting party votes. The Standing Orders Committee subsequently recommended to the House this be incorporated the rules and procedures for members' attendance in the Standing Orders (ANZACATT20167A).

Appendix 7: Descriptive Representation

Precise figures for Member diversity are not available. This is because data is not systematically collected, and because identities are sometimes contested (class), and are not always apparent, or declared (disability and sexuality). With such caveats noted,³⁴⁴ only one percent of Conservative MPs (3) and seven percent of Labour MPs (16) elected at the 2015 general election came from manual occupations.³⁴⁵ This is despite manual workers making up respectively 12 and 25 percent of the total, and the working, population. It is frequently cited that only a ‘handful’ of MPs identify as having a disability, when there are over 10 million disabled people in the UK.³⁴⁶ The number of BME MPs would need to more than double, from 41 to 83, to reflect their percentage in the UK population. Thirteen percent of UK resident population is non-white. (SN01156, 4); 56 percent of all BME MPs are Labour Members and 41 percent Conservative

(SN01156, 6). With 191 women MPs – 29 percent of all MPs – the House of Commons has its highest ever number and percentage of women. It is just under 30 percent female. To reach one third would require another 26 women MPs. At 459, the current number of men sitting in the House is nine more than the total numbers of women MPs ever elected to the UK House of Commons, 450. As women constitute more than half the UK population, there are some 130 women MPs ‘missing’ from the House. Twenty of the BME MPs are women: 3 percent. This is double the number in the 2010 parliament. Sixty percent (14 of 23) of non-white Labour MPs are women compared to 29 percent (5 out of 17 Conservative MPs (SN01156, 7)). Thirty-two LGBTQ MPs – 5 percent of all MPs – were elected in 2015, an increase of 6 from the previous Parliament. Given that estimated LGBTQ populations vary between 1.5 and 10 percent, the Commons may be under-represented by LGBTQ Members.³⁴⁷

Table 8: Women MPs Elected to the House of Commons, 1983-2015, by Party

	Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Other	Total
1983	10 (5%)	13 (3 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	23 (4%)
1987	21 (9 %)	17 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	41 (6%)
1992	37 (14%)	20 (6%)	2 (10%)	3 (13%)	60 (9%)
1997	101 (24%)	13 (8%)	3 (7%)	3 (10%)	120 (18%)
2001	95 (23%)	14 (8%)	6 (11%)	4 (13%)	118 (18%)
2005	98 (28%)	17 (9%)	10 (16%)	3 (10%)	128 (20%)
2010	81 (32%)	49 (16%)	7 (12 %)	7 (22%)	143 (22%)
2015	99 (43%)	68 (21%)	0 (0%)	24 (30%)	191 (29%)

Table 9: BME MPs elected to the House of Commons 1987-2015, by Party

	Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Other	Total
1987	4 (1.7%)	0	0	0	4 (6.2%)
1992	5 (1.8%)	1 (0.3%)	0	0	6 (5.5%)
1997	9 (2.2%)	0	0	0	9 (1.4%)
2001	12 (2.9%)	0	0	0	12 (5.6%)
2005	13 (3.6%)	2 (1%)	0	0	15 (2.3%)
2010	16 (6.2%)	11 (3.4)	0	0	27 (4.2%)
2015	23 (10%)	17(5%)	0	1 (2%)	41 (6.3%)

Source: House of Commons, SN001156

Appendix 8: Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/106/prospective

Information about diversity in range of candidates, etc.

(1) This section applies to an association which is a registered political party.

(2) If the party *had* candidates at a relevant election, the party must, in accordance with regulations, publish information relating to protected characteristics of persons who come within a description prescribed in the regulations in accordance with subsection (3). [emphasis added]

(3) One or more of the following descriptions may be prescribed for the purposes of subsection (2)—

- (a) successful applicants for nomination as a candidate at the relevant election;
- (b) unsuccessful applicants for nomination as a candidate at that election;
- (c) candidates elected at that election;
- (d) candidates who are not elected at that election.

(4) The duty imposed by subsection (2) applies only in so far as it is possible to publish information in a manner that ensures that no person to whom the information relates can be identified from that information.

(5) The following elections are relevant elections—

- (a) Parliamentary Elections;
- (b) elections to the European Parliament;
- (c) elections to the Scottish Parliament;
- (d) elections to the National Assembly for Wales.

(6) This section does not apply to the following protected characteristics—

- (a) marriage and civil partnership;
- (b) pregnancy and maternity.

(7) The regulations may provide that the information to be published—

- (a) must (subject to subsection (6)) relate to all protected characteristics or only to such as are prescribed;
- (b) must include a statement, in respect of each protected characteristic to which the information relates, of the proportion that the number of persons who provided the information to the party bears to the number of persons who were asked to provide it.

(8) *Regulations under this section may prescribe—* [emphasis added]

- (a) descriptions of information;
- (b) descriptions of political party to which the duty is to apply;
- (c) *the time at which information is to be published;*
- (d) *the form and manner in which information is to be published;*
- (e) *the period for which information is to be published.*

(9) *Provision by virtue of subsection (8)(b) may, in particular, provide that the duty imposed by subsection (2) does not apply to a party which had candidates in fewer constituencies in the election concerned than a prescribed number.* [emphasis added]

(10) Regulations under this section—

- (a) may provide that the duty imposed by subsection (2) applies only to such relevant elections as are prescribed;
- (b) may provide that a by-election or other election to fill a vacancy is not to be treated as a relevant election or is to be so treated only to a prescribed extent;
- (c) may amend this section so as to provide for the duty imposed by subsection (2) to apply in the case of additional descriptions of election.

(11) Nothing in this section authorises a political party to require a person to provide information to it.

Appendix 9: Division Time

Table 10: Average Number of Divisions per Day June 2015-January 13 2016

Days	Number of Divisions
Monday	51
Tuesday	63
Wednesday	31
Thursday	12
Friday	7
Grand Total	164

Source: DIS

Table 11: Average Time of Divisions June 2015-January 13 2016

Days	Average Time of Division
Monday	08:30 pm
Tuesday	05:46 pm
Wednesday	06:04 pm
Thursday	04:27 pm
Friday	11:24 am

Source: DIS

The Scottish Decision Time

www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/26509.aspx

Voting takes place at Decision Time which is normally at 5pm. In practice, this means that the vote is not taken on a motion immediately following the debate but at Decision Time on the same day. There are some exceptions to this. For example, votes on amendments to Bills will be taken immediately after the debate on the amendments. These exceptions are set out in Rule 11.3. If there is a division then the vote takes place electronically and only takes a few minutes. The advantage for Members is that they know when they need to be in the Chamber each day and can plan their diaries accordingly.

Rule 11.2 Decision Time

1. Except as provided in Rule 11.3, the Presiding Officer shall put any question in relation to a motion or amendment during Decision Time on the day on which the motion or amendment is moved.

2. Decision Time is the period which normally begins at 17:00 where a meeting of the Parliament is held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and at 12:00 where a meeting of the Parliament is held on Friday and which ends when every decision which is to be taken during Decision Time has been taken.

3. Normally, Decision Time shall end not later than 30 minutes after it begins but, in accordance with Rule 2.2.6(a), it may continue in order to complete any voting which is not adjourned to a later meeting under paragraph 5.

4. The Parliament may, on a motion of the Parliamentary Bureau, decide that Decision Time on a particular day or days shall begin at a time other than that mentioned in paragraph 2.

Rule 11.3 Decisions at times other than Decision Time

2. If an amendment to a Bill is moved, the Presiding Officer shall put the question on that amendment immediately after any debate on that amendment or, if the amendment has already been debated, immediately after the amendment is moved.

3. Decisions may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, be taken at a time other than Decision Time or the times mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2. Members shall be notified of any such time.

Report of the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament 'Shaping Scotland's Parliament'
www.scottish.parliament.uk/PublicInformationdocuments/Report_of_the_Consultative_Steering_Group.pdf

18. We recommend that where possible voting in the Parliament should take place at a regular appointed time, for example towards the end of the day on the day's business, say from 5pm onwards for Plenary sessions or at the end of a Committee session.

19. It is important to schedule votes for the same day as the associated discussion to ensure that debates are fresh in Members' minds. The scheduling of votes at a set time each day, as proposed above, would ensure the most effective use of Parliamentary and MSPs' time. Such an arrangement would also allow Parliamentary and Members' staff to plan other business around this time.

Appendix 10:

The Evolution of sitting hours in the Chamber since 1979³⁴⁸

Table 12: The Evolution of sitting hours in the Chamber 1979-1997

	Sitting hours at the beginning of the 1979 Parliament	Experimental introduction of Wednesday morning sittings (1994-95 Session) ³⁴⁹
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Tuesday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Wednesday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	10.00am – 10.00pm
Thursday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	11.30am – 7.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	9.30am – 2.30pm
Permanent introduction of Wednesday morning sittings (1995-96 Session) ³⁵⁰		
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	
Tuesday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	
Wednesday	9.30 am – 2.00pm; 2.30pm – 10.00pm	
Thursday	11.30am – 7.00pm	
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	

Table 13: The Evolution of sitting hours in the Chamber since 1997

	Sitting hours at the beginning of the 1997 Parliament	Thursday sitting experiment 1999-2002 ³⁵¹
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Tuesday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Wednesday	9.30 am – 2.00pm; 2.30pm – 10.00pm	9.30am – 2.00pm (until Nov 99); 2.30pm – 10.00pm
Thursday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	11.30am – 7.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	9.30am – 2.30pm
Experimental sitting hours from 2003-2005 ³⁵²		Proposed permanent arrangements (January 2005)
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Tuesday	11.30am – 7.00pm*	11.30am – 7.00pm*
Wednesday	11.30am – 7.00pm*	11.30am – 7.00pm*
Thursday	11.30am – 6.00pm	10.30am – 6.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	9.30am – 2.30pm
Sitting hours from the beginning of 2005 Parliament ³⁵³		Sitting hours at the beginning of the 2010 Parliament
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Tuesday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	2.30pm – 10.00pm
Wednesday	11.30am – 7.00pm*	11.30am – 7.00pm*
Thursday	10.30am – 6.00pm	10.30am – 6.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	9.30am – 2.30pm
Sitting hours from 15 October 2012 ³⁵⁴		
Monday	2.30pm – 10.00pm	
Tuesday	11.30am – 7.00pm*	
Wednesday	11.30am – 7.00pm*	
Thursday	9.30am – 5.00pm	
Friday	9.30am – 2.30pm	

* If a Tuesday or Wednesday was the first day of sitting after a recess, Monday hours would apply

Appendix 11: Digital Democracy Commission

This Report overlaps in its foci and aims in some respects with that of the 2015 Report of the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy. The following Recommendations made in the 'Open Up' report are accordingly endorsed in this Report:

- Increasing public awareness of the role of Parliament and MP, and increasing public participation in the work of Parliament. (recommendation 1)
- Simplifying and clarifying parliamentary language, including procedural terms; developing digital tools; clarifying and simplifying online and printed communications; the wider use of aids for people with disabilities. (recommendation 4)
- Pilot a new procedure for amending bills so that amendments can be written, debated and voted in plain English (recommendation 5)
- Engage with specific groups who are not currently engaged in the democratic process (recommendation 12)
- The House urgently reviews measures to support MPs subject to cyber harassment ...improving cyber-security(recommendation 15)
- Experiment with using digital to involve people more in committee work (recommendation 16)
- Experiment with new ways of enabling the public to put forward questions to Ministers. (recommendation 19)
- ...information on the social characteristics of candidates and those elected is currently gathered in an ad hoc manner by different sources. The House of Commons Library could gather all of this data and produce a regular report on the background of MPs and Candidates. This would create an officially recognised data source and improve the real-time data available for anyone to analyse.

...The Commission fully endorses the draft political and Constitutional Reform Committee Recommendation that 'the government and the Electoral Commission should examine the changes which can be made to provide more and better information to voters, and should actively support the work of outside organisations working to similar goals (recommendation 25)

- Seize the opportunity that R&R work provides to improve facilities to assist MPs in their work for the public and ensure the fabric of Parliament is fit for the future (recommendation 28)
- Pilot an electronic version of the practice of 'nodding through' MPs who are physically unable to go through the division lobbies, which would enable MPs who are unwell, or have childcare responsibilities, or a disability, to vote away from the Chamber. (recommendation 30)
- Erskine May...should be freely available online by the time the next edition is produced. (recommendation 32)

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The *MPs Panel* intentionally had a membership of male and female MPs from across the parties. My thanks go to Tom Brake MP, Angela Crawley MP, Ben Howlett MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Fiona Mactaggart MP, Maria Miller MP, Caroline Spelman MP, and Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP. Dr Dan Poulter MP was a later addition. These MPs gave up of their time, to attend meetings, comment on draft reforms, and to provide political and personal support throughout the project. I trust they realise how important it was, knowing that I could draw on their experiences and expertise. It was also a very good experience of working with representatives from different parties.

I also spoke with other Members, again male and female, as part of this project; they shall remain anonymous but I thank them generously. I hope that they feel that their views are fairly represented in this Report, even if they do not necessarily agree with all of the recommendations that I make. A couple of MPs were particularly helpful and supportive – above and beyond what I could ever have expected. I trust that they know who they are. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Women's Parliamentary Labour Party and the Conservative Party's Women's Forum.

Two former MPs, Mary Macleod and Jo Swinson, unselfishly gave up their time to assist me. Both have significant records in respect of seeking and effecting a re-gendering of the UK Parliament. Their experiences in developing and implementing reforms were invaluable; their role in this project demands formal recognition.

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The Clerk of the House, David Natzler, supported my presence in the Commons throughout, and offered acute insights on drafts of the Report's recommendations. He also facilitated a survey of Parliaments in a number of parliamentary and European countries, some of the findings of which are presented in this Report. Always prepared to see me, David frequently and rightly pushed me to explain, justify, and be more precise in my recommendations – the Report is very much better for this. Liam Laurence Smyth provided me with assured interpretations of the workings of the House and thoughtful consideration of, and suggestions on, individual reforms. He was also a welcome lunchtime companion on more than one occasion. Simon Patrick very patiently took me through Standing Orders, and willingly answered all the queries in purple ink that I had scribbled all over them. To Paul Evans, I am grateful for the driest of senses of humour, and a political astuteness that ensured that I was able to better negotiate the politics of parliamentary reform, and to do so in a convivial atmosphere. The 'budding' of my political antennae is very much down to him. I'm not sure we share the same choice of pubs, mind you. I must especially thank Andrew Kennon. Andrew had already been an excellent 'link' for the Parliamentary Studies Programme at the University of Bristol when I approached him with this project. My initial thoughts about 'inviting myself into Parliament' might never have come to fruition without his support. I suspect that he found himself having to defend my presence to Members within the House. I am most appreciative of his willingness to stand by me, especially when I was not always cognisant of the peculiarities and particularities of the House.

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Others to whom special thanks must go: Kate Emms your reading of House politics and sunny disposition were so very welcome; and I always appreciate a woman with a good sense of cardigans! Melanie Unwin must be thanked for suggesting the painting that adorns the cover of this Report, for helping me understand the '10 year dead rule', and for taking me on her Parliamentary 'toilets tour'. Melanie has just overseen the unveiling of 'New Dawn' the art installation celebrating women's suffrage. I encourage you to come and see it. It is simply stunning. Melanie has done so much for the showing of diverse artwork in the House; she also offered me excellent advice and parliamentary friendship. Mari Takayanagi similarly provided friendship alongside a feminist history of the House, and she took me on a Parliamentary tour, including to the 'Original Act Room' that inspired 'New Dawn'.

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The advice proffered was very much in the clerkly tradition: folks would identify a solution even when they themselves might not be in favour of that particular, or any other recommendation I might be, on that day, musing over. They saw it as their job to provide the technical support or political insight that few who have not inhabited the House for an extensive period of time would be in a position to know. Whilst this observation reveals something of what is exclusionary about Westminster; that its ways of working and being are highly complex, contingent, and frequently conventional rather than rule-based. I would also suggest that the disposition of Parliament's administrative staff reveal the very highest standard of service.

The BG IPU and IPU Geneva, and especially Emily Davies, Kareen Jabre, and Rick Nimmo must be thanked for hosting and contributing to the international Conference on Gender Sensitive Parliaments held at Westminster in November 2015. Emily acted with particular good grace as a stand-in chair in the face of my loss of voice on the day itself. Mr Speaker opened the event, and I thank him for that. Thanks also, to Elizabeth Evans (University of Bristol) for acting as Rapporteur; and to Mr David Natzler (Clerk of the House) and Lucy Wake (Amnesty) for acting as discussants; and finally to Professors Lenita Freidenvall and Johanna Kantola (Stockholm University and the University of Helsinki, respectively) and to Ola Johansson MP (Sweden) and Johanna Sumuvuori (ex-MP, Finland) for their academic and practitioner input.

I also participated in a number of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) events whilst embedded in the Commons, including the first ever Women's Forum at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta. My thanks go to Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, Fiona Mactaggart MP, Valerie Vaz MP, Baroness Berridge, and Helen Haywood (CPA) for making this such an enjoyable trip. This trip also confirmed that the British national costume for women is the 'little black dress', albeit with a little bit of sparkle.

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For discussing Parliamentary reform, confirming individual reforms, reading parts or all of the Report, and for providing the research upon which it is based, I would like to thank: Peter Allen, Jeanette Ashe, Stephen Bates, Rosie Campbell, Elizabeth Evans, Lenita Freidenvall, Marc Geddes, Sonia Palmieri, Melanie Hughes, Kate Jenkins, Ron Johnston, Johanna Kantola, Meryl Kenny, Joni Lovenduski, Heather Savigny, Jessica Smith, Jo Silvester, Jane Tinkler, and Georgina Waylen.

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Finally, I want to acknowledge the ongoing support of my family and friends; they saw too little of me this year, and when they did I was often exhausted. But I knew that they would forgive and feed me. As ever, thank you.

I am, of course, solely responsible for *The Good Parliament*. This Report was never about constructing a fantasy Parliament but of offering a set of very practical interventions that the House could – and should – adopt. It is now for politicians and the House to act on this ‘menu of reforms’.

Sarah Childs

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- 1 www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/democracy_en.pdf
- 2 Jane Mansbridge, PSA Women and Politics Conference, University of Edinburgh, June 2016. www.psa.ac.uk/events/psa-women-and-politics-summit
- 3 www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/action-gender-e.pdf
- 4 These recommendations presume that the Parliament will last the full five years.
- 5 www.gov.uk/access-to-elected-office-fund/overview
- 6 www.theguardian.com/society/2015/oct/30/tory-mps-filibuster-blocks-bill-to-give-carers-free-hospital-parking; www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/prime-ministers-questions-the-old-politics-is-back-and-cameron-is-in-trouble-a6712046.html; www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/13/parliament-women-mps-sexist-mothers-westminster.
- 7 www.hansardsociety.org.uk/research/public-attitudes/audit-of-political-engagement/. This Report does not seek to speak to the totality of possible UK parliamentary reform. See for example: www.hansardsociety.org.uk/research/; www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/parliament;
- 8 www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/building/restoration-project/; www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33184160.
- 9 www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/democracy_en.pdf. The term 'The Good Parliament' is mine and not the IPU's. Chris Bryant MP (2014) notes that the Parliament of 1376 was known as the 'Good Parliament'.
- 10 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 11 The use of the term sex/gender recognises debates about essentialist and socially constructed gender identities and acknowledges that some individuals do not identify with binary gender or sex identities. One might, accordingly, and as representatives of Parliament suggested, advocate that the members of a group should not identify as the same sex/gender.
- 12 Childs and Lovenduski 2014.
- 13 A representative Parliament is not limited to addressing women's representation and most, if not all of us, have more than one (politically salient) identity. An MP might be a working-class, female; a disabled, gay man; or an elite BME man, for example. See parliamentarycandidates.org/; Sobolweska and Fieldhouse (2013) on ethnicity; Casey and Reynolds (2015) on trans representation; Childs (2015) on sex and class.
- 14 Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Childs 2008; Paxton and Hughes 2016.
- 15 Childs and Lovenduski 2014.
- 16 Childs and Lovenduski 2014.
- 17 Such claims are also made in business: www.ft.com/cms/s/4f4b3c8e-d521-11e3-9187-00144feabdc0.html
- 18 Childs and Lovenduski 2014.
- 19 www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/dec/12/conservatives.davidcameron. See also www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9876685/David-Cameron-I-did-not-appoint-enough-women-to-Cabinet.html; www.harrietharman.org/associate_parliamentary_group_for_sex_equality
- 20 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 21 IPU 2012, 2011.
- 22 IPU 2012, 40.
- 23 These are informed by the IPU's seven dimensions of a gender sensitive parliament, see Appendix 2.
- 24 Recommendations in this Report are limited to what the *House of Commons* might do to. See Childs (2013c), Childs and Evans (2012), and the Speaker's Conference (2010) for more comprehensive discussion of party reform and regulation.
- 25 Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 26 Shadow Deputy Leader of the House, www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2015/10/we-need-to-do-much-more-make-houses-parliament-21st-century-employer
- 27 Childs and Lovenduski 2014.
- 28 See appendix 7.
- 29 See Appendix 1 for the project research design. The methodology behind this table is outlined in this Appendix.
- 30 See also WIP APPG Report (2014).
- 31 See Appendix 5.
- 32 Some might suggest 'amber' is warranted due to improvements in recent years regarding sex and BME representation: I disagree on the grounds of: (i) the asymmetry in women's representation by party; and (ii) the lack of representation amongst w/c, disabled and BME groups.
- 33 Despite two of the three Deputy Speakers and the Opposition Chief Whip being female, there is a clear under-representation of women on other House committees, not least the House of Commons' Commission, the Administration Committee and the Procedure Committee. This was also true of the recent Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster.
- 34 The amber is warranted here by the sex quota for the Speakers and the removal of the term 'Chairman' from most SOs.
- 35 The establishment of the WEC fulfils a key IPU criterion.
- 36 It was not possible to fully assess the culture beyond the Chamber e.g. in Select Committees or Public Bill Committees, or in the private MP spaces of the House of Commons, although a general account of these informed the Report. The wider atmosphere of the House is in some respects addressed in regard to the provision of inclusionary spaces in a restored and renewed House of Commons – see the recommendations for the Procedure Committee and the R&R body.
- 37 www.parliament.uk/about/working/work-placements-and-apprenticeships/speakers-parliamentary-placement-scheme/
- 38 Speaker's Conference Recommendation 56.
- 39 Speaker's Conference Recommendation 63. The Mental Health Discrimination Act 2013 came into force at the end of April 2013.
- 40 Speaker's Conference Recommendations 33 & 61 This was launched as the Access to Elected Office fund by the Coalition Government, although it has now closed.

- 41 Speaker's Conference Recommendation 51.
- 42 Speaker's Conference Recommendation 52. The Scheme makes provision for additional payments to Members with dependants (see paras 4.22ff).
- 43 See Appendix 9.
- 44 In respect of the House administration, the House of Commons Commission has already made a clear commitment to equality and diversity, with new bodies and procedures. www.parliament.uk/about/working/workplace-equality-networks/
- 45 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/239/239i.pdf; appgimprovingparliamentreport.co.uk/download/APPG-Women-In-Parliament-Report-2014.pdf; www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm; see also Lucas (2015, 177-9).
- 46 A relative improvement is more achievable, according to a senior male Labour MP.
- 47 Russell 2011.
- 48 Galligan and Meier (2014, 26) 'it shifts the responsibility for change from women to the institution as a whole'. Crewe (2015b, 33) talks of structural change.
- 49 See the section 'The Commons Reference Group for Representation and Inclusion' in the main body of this Report for more details.
- 50 See the Section 'The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion' for further discussion about the composition, remit, and recommendations made to, the Group.
- 51 It should be conceived of as the first part of achieving diversity sensitive parliamentary status. www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-plan.htm The IPU has published *A Self-Assessment Toolkit for Parliaments*, February 2014. www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/self-e.pdf
- 52 www.psa.ac.uk/events/future-parliament-democratic-reform-and-restoration-palace-westminster; www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/building/restoration-project/. This was also the view of the Straw Report, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cm/govern/692/692.pdf. Caroline Lucas agrees (2015, 203).
- 53 Paragraph 330.
- 54 Specific consideration of PMQs is discussed later under the Procedure Committee and in the context of R&R.
- 55 This would meet the WIP APPG (2014, 35) and Speaker's Conference (no. 71) recommendations for improving behaviour.
- 56 This repeats the aspiration of the WIP APPG Recommendation '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.' The Speaker's Office might, for example, publish greater detail than currently presented in the Sessional returns, including names and reasons.
- 57 IPU 2011, 68-9.
- 58 Erskine May, 24th edition, 444.
- 59 In 2014 the House adopted a Respect Policy (www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-commission/Respect-Policy.pdf) which seeks to 'ensure that any workplace conflict is handled promptly, fairly and effectively', and directly addresses issues of harassment and bullying between MPs and House staff.
- 60 The 2012 House of Commons Briefing paper 'Guidance on the Conventions and Courtesies of the House notes that 'The Speaker's Office keeps comprehensive records of Members' success and failure in being called in debate'. www.parliament.uk/documents/documents/conventions-and-courtesies-guidance.pdf. The Speaker has already publicly noted his concern that some women MPs are no longer attending PMQs, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27062577. As part of this project it was also claimed to the author that women MPs are deciding not to put in questions for PMQs for the same reasons. It might also be true for other Members.
- 61 www.thenational.scot/comment/tasminahmed-sheikh-women-mps-can-help-kill-off-these-tory-dinosaurs.15665. See Ilie (2013) for comparison of the UK and Sweden.
- 62 www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/13/parliament-women-mps-sexist-mothers-westminster
- 63 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 64 See Jess Phillips, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 65 www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0522z48
- 66 www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/lib-dem-mp-makes-history-by-bringing-his-baby-into-commons-for-vote-9611522.html; see also Crewe 2015a, 44.
- 67 This solution marries with aspects of Recommendation 30 of the Digital Democracy Commission. Such a rule should also apply to MPs who are unwell or who have particular needs relating to a disability.
- 68 The nursery is open from 8am to 6pm. www.leyf.org.uk/find-a-nursery/westminster/house-of-commons-nursery/.
- 69 The WIP APPG report (2014, 23) notes how concerns about intense media scrutiny may reduce supply of women as parliamentary candidates. See also www.newstatesman.com/media/2014/04/it-s-2014-yet-media-and-politics-still-man-s-game.
- 70 O'Neill and Savigny 2013, cited in APPG Report 2014. See also Childs 2008, chapter 6 and Crewe 2015b, 29-30. Both Crewe 2015a and Childs 2008 are clear that 'sexist' reporting is not the preserve of male journalists. For analysis of the 2015 general election campaign, see blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/politics-as-usual-women-media-and-the-uk-general-election-2015/
- 71 See also Appendix 4. Data is not available in terms of other characteristics. Note that some changes are taking place, with part-time working and job-share one of the reasons for more women in the lobby. Sex differences are more obvious on the television than in newspapers: www.theguardian.com/media/2016/mar/13/women-political-reporting-westminster-lobby
- 72 If, in the meantime there is a review of passes which reduces the numbers of passes overall, the percentage given to women must not be less than 40 percent.
- 73 www.parliament.uk/vote100; twitter.com/UKVote100
- 74 In line with House practice, in the current Parliament this translates for a committee with 9 members to 5 Conservative and 3 Labour MPs with 1 from the smaller parties.
- 75 Where applicable, political parties might want to make one of their nominees the chair of their parliamentary women's organisation. Alternatively, MPs could elect their members from sex/gender specific shortlists or a party's parliamentary women's group might nominate the women members. The chair of the Women in Parliament APPG might also be a nominee of their party.
- 76 MPs may well identify with more than one under-represented group.
- 77 Mr Speaker is a self-avowed 'advocate' for the 'greater participation in politics from the widest possible range of people' (WIP APPG 2014, 6).
- 78 For example, Disability Rights UK, the Fawcett Society, the Hansard Society, OBV, and Stonewall.
- 79 www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf

- 80** www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sir-paul-beresford/what-do-mps-do_b_9699054.html
- 81** WIP APPG 2014, 24.
- 82** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 83** WIP APPG Report 2014, 29.
- 84** Silvester & Dykes 2007; Silvester 2008; Silvester 2012.
- 85** See Chapter 4, of the Speaker's Conference Final Report.
- 86** This complements the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy Recommendation. www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf. Such efforts might also limit the rise of the much criticised 'professional politician' (WIP APPG 2014, 24; Criddle in Cowley and Kavanagh 2016).
- 87** See for example, WIP APPG Report 2014, 25; Speaker's Conference Recommendation 14 and 16. In 2002 the Procedure Committee attempted a job description, but 'the truth is no definition exists (Rogers and Walters 2015, 54, 74). See also Review Body on Senior Salaries, Report no. 38, Vol. 2.
- 88** Speaker's Conference Recommendation 27.
- 89** This amends the WIP APPG Key Recommendation: '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.' Each report would likely incur costs of around five thousand pounds. See also Engender Scotland's demand the creation of a Scottish 'Women in Media' body, resourced to monitor and challenge underrepresentation, gender stereotyping and sexualisation of women and girls in print, broadcast and social media, www.engender.org.uk/files/Engenders-Gender-Matters-Manifesto--Twenty-by-2016.pdf
- 90** As above, this would likely incur costs of around five thousand pounds per report.
- 91** Note, that women's concerns about familial press intrusion are a frequently cited reason not to participate in politics. Tom Brake said he would take the issue of social media abuse to the House of Commons Commission (WH 10 November 2015). This complements Recommendation 15 of the Digital Democracy Commission. Privacy laws do not apply to MPs' children. See also www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf
- 92** These recommendations presume that the Parliament will last the full five years.
- 93** Personal correspondence.
- 94** This presumes that the Parliament lasts the full five years.
- 95** This recommendation upgrades that in the WIP APPG Report (2014, 27) which called for a debate to discuss quotas. The quota should be set at 50:50 for vacant held and target seats, and 40: 40: 20 for other seats, to ensure a more rapid increase in the numbers of MPs. Legislative quotas should be linked to party funding and other party regulation and involve significant penalties and incentives (Childs 2012).
- 96** Speaker's Conference Recommendation 23.
- 97** Evans and Childs 2012; Campbell and Childs 2015.
- 98** cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/36175/LAW_2015_29.pdf
- 99** Childs 2015 unpublished paper; available on request.
- 100** For an account of quotas in the UK Parliament see cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/36175/LAW_2015_29.pdf
- 101** mlkrook.org/pdf/pa_forth.pdf
- 102** Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Childs 2004, 2008, 2012; www.rainbowmurray.co.uk/APSR_2014.pdf
- 103** Over time quotas are setting higher targets and are getting better at reaching targets (Melanie Hughes private correspondence). See also www.quotaproject.org; Fox 2012; Childs and Evans 2012; www.lse.ac.uk/genderInstitute/pdf/Confronting-Inequality.pdf
- 104** In 1997 Labour women MPs constituted 84 percent of all women MPs; 81 percent in 2001; 77 percent in 2005; 57 percent in 2010; and 52 percent in 2015. Note that it was only in 2015 that the Labour party no longer had more women MPs than all the other parties added together; in no small part, this is explained by some unexpected wins by Conservative women and most importantly, the landslide success of the SNP in Scotland. Women constitute 36 percent of SNP MPs.
- 105** Krook 2009.
- 106** Hughes, private correspondence.
- 107** IPU 2011, 12. www.ipu.org. See also www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/OSCEReport_Gender_equality_Norris-Krook.pdf 'Among the twenty OSCE countries registering the sharpest growth in the proportion of women in parliament during the last decade...
- half had introduced legal quotas. By contrast, among the twenty OSCE countries lagging behind in growth...none had implemented legal quotas'.
- 108** blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/03/16/the-2016-irish-election-demonstrated-how-gender-quotas-can-shift-the-balance-on-female-representation/
- 109** I'd like to thank Meryl Kenny for this observation.
- 110** See Recommendations for the House of Commons Commission for more details. www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/other-committees/house-of-commons-commission/workinfo/
- 111** The composition of the Commission is laid down by the House of Commons Administration Act 1978, amended in 2015 (House of Commons Commission Act). [Under paragraph 6(2) of Schedule 1, the Commission may determine its own procedures] See Oral Answers, 21 January 2016, where Tom Brake is 'pleased' that 'the two lay people on the Commission are women'.
- 112** It is to be regretted that this issue was not addressed in the Straw Report, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmgovern/692/692.pdf. The recommended four backbench members would 'increase the ability to represent the full spectrum of views in the House'. Note, that the Membership of the Committee was all male bar one, Valerie Vaz MP. To be sure, paragraph 21 notes a relationship between effectiveness and diversity, as well as the importance of talent and the 'additional imperative to reflect the diversity of those whom it is there to serve...' The later make no mention of the sex quota for the election of the Deputy Speakers (parag 33).
- 113** IPSA 2016, 11.
- 114** Specific recommendations will be made by the author as part of this consultation which closes in October 2016.
- 115** IPSA 2016, 11.
- 116** The Report author along with colleagues, Professor Rosie Campbell and Dr Emma Crewe, made this point on more than one occasion; a number of women MPs individually and collectively contributed to previous reviews. Private information.
- 117** As discussed under Recommendation 12.
- 118** See also the same point made in the House of Commons Service (2015, 5, 10)
- 119** IPSA 2016, 24.
- 120** Interview data gathered as part of this project.

- 121** IPSA 2016, 70.
- 122** Data gathered as part of this project.
- 123** IPSA 2016, 23, 72.
- 124** IPSA 2016, 23, 75.
- 125** This Report was written prior to the killing of Jo Cox MP. This is the case amongst those who participated in Childs' 2016 study, and reported in the House of Commons Service (2015, 6) 'Members wondered whether IPSA had taken sufficient account of the equality issues (through an equality assessment for example) surrounding its rules around travel and taxis, including the implications for those travelling with children.
- 126** Campbell and Childs 2014. onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-923X.12092/abstract
- 127** The survey did not specifically ask about caring or adoption leave.
- 128** IPU 2011, 92-4.
- 129** The Group would also be fulfilling Recommendation 49 of the 2010 Speaker's Conference. The House of Commons Service 2015, includes reference to 'the pressure to come back after having a child was therefore [in absence of proper maternity leave] great (House of Commons Service 2015, 14). See also www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 130** This consultation could be extended beyond parents to acknowledge the caring needs of others in society, not least elderly people.
- 131** Our current system of election (first past the post, or single member simple plurality) renders it harder- albeit not impossible – to adopt a 'substitute' solution. In party list systems a substitute who acts in the place of the MP is identified from the party list, frequently the next best placed candidate. In the UK such an approach would require the parties to 'find' people, most likely a losing candidate or ex-MP to act in the place of an MP on maternity, paternity or caring leave. However, questions might be asked regarding the legitimacy of this individual who will not have stood for election in the said constituency. Both local parties and the wider electorate might not in such circumstances accept an alternative non-elected party representative acting in the place of their MP. One might also think of the arrangements prior to a by-election, whereby constituency duties are 'normally handled by a neighbouring MP of the same party' as constituting a practice/norm akin to a proxy (see Rogers and Walters 2015, 23).
- 132** The inclusion of remote voting for MPs on maternity/paternity/caring leave need not be read to favour this reform in general. I leave it to those who know about technology to establish a secure system, e.g. biometric validation.
- 133** According to the Speaker's Conference (paragraph 267), 'while there are arrangements for proxy voting in the House these arrangements require the Member to be present in the House of Commons. There is some precedence for proxies in the Lords; and in the Labour party in terms of voting in PLP meetings. In New Zealand there is a procedure for proxy voting – Standing order 154. See Appendix 6.
- 134** Proxy voting is permitted for nursing mothers in the Australian House of Representatives. The Speaker's Conference (Recommendation 53) called for 'greater transparency' regarding the organisation of pairing. Formal pairing might, if it was in place over an extended period, risk rendering the paired MP unduly absent from parliamentary duties. Again, this might raise questions of legitimacy and effectiveness for the individual MP.
- 135** See Appendix 6. Also, IPU 2011, 94. Australia: www.aph.gov.au/~media/02%20Parliamentary%20Business/24%20Committees/243%20Reps%20Committees/Procedures/NursingMothers/FullReport.pdf?la=en; Canada: www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/PROC/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=8775954
- 136** See Barbara Keeley MP, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 137** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm In January 2016 a Spanish MP breastfed her baby, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35303171
- 138** This change was effected by amending SO 257 to provide that 'a visitor does not include an infant being cared for by a Member'. The change implemented a House Standing Committee on Procedure Recommendation, presented in December 2015. Personal correspondence. www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-02/breastfeeding-politicians-allowed-to-bring-children-into-chamber/7133324; www.nationalpost.com/m/wp/blog.html?b=news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/breastfeeding-mps-cause-a-stir-in-parliaments-around-the-world-but-with-more-women-running-than-ever-in-canada-it-should-be-the-new-norm. This report cites case in Argentina and a Canadian MP carrying a baby in the chamber. Australian Parliament – Breastfeeding MPs can now be accompanied by their spouse or nanny on all official interstate travel. www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/parliament-moves-to-become-more-mumfriendly-as-breastfeeding-mps-win-more-travel-flexibility/news-story/
- 139** This is the case in Canada, Denmark, Finland and New Zealand; whilst in Germany despite formal procedure ruling it out, in practice, Members have periodically taken their children in, although there is no precedent for infant feeding within the chamber.
- 140** Alison Thewliss MP, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 141** See Maria Miller MP, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm. Miller rightly goes onto say, 'does she agree that, by making this place more family-friendly in the first place, the requirement for us to bring children into work would be less acute?' See Chris Grayling's response to Alison Thewliss MP (4 Feb 2016: Column 1099): ...we must also be careful to maintain some of the traditions of this House as well'. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160204/debtext/160204-0001.htm
- 142** The symbolic value of permitting infant feeding is noted by Caroline Lucas MP (2015). It might also reinforce the health benefits of breastfeeding www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/child/nutrition/breastfeeding/en/
- 143** www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1314283/Licia-Ronzulli-brings-baby-EU-Parliament.html; www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3399700/Attention-seeking-MP-criticised-breastfeeding-baby-parliament-debate-Madrid.html; See also Jess Phillips, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 144** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 145** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm; See also www.newsweek.com/uk-parliament-break-breastfeeding-taboo-422811
- 146** Brief on House of Commons Family Friendly Policies, 2015. www.leyf.org.uk/find-a-nursery/westminster/house-of-commons-nursery/
- 147** See Neil Gray MP: 'I have not been able to bring my one-year-old down terribly often. Part of the problem is that, although there is a nursery here, it does not have a crèche facility. Children have to use it full time.' www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 148** www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/12522.aspx
- 149** www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2015/10/we-need-do-much-more-make-houses-parliament-21st-century-employer
- 150** Anecdotally it has been suggested that childcare is rarely a reason for a witness not to be able to participate as a witness to a select committee. At the same time it is frequently accepted that the 'everyday' reasons of there

being short notice of evidence sessions explains the presence of the 'usual suspects'. In this the 'gendered' nature of 'everyday constraints' frequently fails to be appreciated (www.sheffield.ac.uk/politics/people/research/marc-geddes). In any case, the symbolic is of importance here.

151 Issues of representation also relate to Committee staff but fall outside of the remit of this report. www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/house-of-commons-commission/single-equality-scheme/.

152 www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/11979/meet-the-new-select-committee-chairs/

153 2015 saw 11 incumbent chairs stand for election again. www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/guide-select-ctte-members.pdf

154 For Example, once the total number of Select Committees is agreed, the Chair positions, would by a process of lottery, be designated either 'male' or 'female' for the duration of the Parliament. Single sex elections would then be used to elect a Chair for each Select Committee Chair. A strict 50:50 quota could be used. Alternatively, a '40, 40, 20' quota would provide for greater flexibility, and would be inclusionary of MPs who may not identify as either male or female. The use of lot would importantly avoid the problem of re-enforcing the historical gendered segregation of Committees that is currently evident, with apparently 'women's committees' chaired by women, e.g. Health, and the WEC, and 'men's committees', e.g. The Treasury, Defence, and Foreign Affairs chaired by men.

155 HC Deb (1981–82) 27, c 468; *ibid* (1987–88) 119, c 194; but see *ibid* (1988–89) 159, c 1283.

156 The requirement that Members wishing to raise a point of order during a division wore a hat has been abolished (1997/8 HC 600, 64, see SN/PC/06432, 10). 'That MPs had to speak uncovered' is according to Bryant (2014, 249, 250) 'another Victorian affectation dressed up as tradition'. See Rogers (2012, 194) for a discussion of hats and Nancy Astor MP.

157 SN/PC/06432, 12. Speaker and Deputy Speakers 2015, 10. HC Deb (1951–52) 498, c 2750; *ibid* (1979–80) 984, c 986. The Speaker has also indicated that members should not wear arm bands to publicise a cause, HC Deb (2004–05) 431, c 1519.

158 Speaker and Deputy Speakers 2015, 12.

159 As a senior male Clerk told me. See also Flynn (2012, 132); Lucas (2015, 173) ponders the irony of having to cover up her 'No more page 3 T shirt'.

160 Erskine May 2011, 451; Business of the House and Its Committees, 42; Rogers and Walters 2015, 264.

161 See Flynn 2012, 132.

162 No doubt some MPs will lament the loss of the convention relating to ties. See Jacob Rees Mogg, 29 Nov 2013, col 593 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131129/debtext/131129-0002.htm#13112935000125

163 Bernie Grant was congratulated by Speaker Weatherill for wearing an African Daishiki (SN/PC/06432, 12). news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/771601.stm

164 The standard of 'business dress' would undoubtedly rule out the wearing of beach wear, including shorts and flip flops, or jeans and sundresses. Whilst frequently ruled inappropriate as business dress the question of 'trainers' is more arguable for those with mobility issues: www.caledonianclub.com/club-information/faqs.

165 Indeed, it has been in receipt of national awards for its efforts in this respect. www.parliament.uk/business/news/2016/january/house-of-commons-placed-116-out-of-400-in-equality-index/

166 See the late Jo Cox, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm

167 www.parliament.uk/education/visit-parliament-with-your-school/faqs-and-subsidy/the-education-centre/

168 www.parliament.uk/get-involved/education-programmes/universities-programme/students-and-parliament/

169 www.parliament.uk/education/teaching-resources-lesson-plans/mp-for-a-week-game/
170 www.parliament.uk/about/

171 www.parliament.uk/about/

172 www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/ See APPG Key Recommendation: '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.' See also www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf

173 See the recommendation relating to Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 below. The House of Commons Library already publishes some information on MPs' backgrounds but this should be supplemented with candidate data and given more prominence on the website.

174 www.parliament.uk/about/working/workplace-equality-networks/parliamentary-role-models/

175 This recommendation would help meet the concerns of the WIP APPG: 'more can be done to outreach to women across the country' (WIP APPG 2014, 5). As the Deputy Leader of the House has put it: 'I should encourage the House of Commons authorities to make more widely known what happens in relation to flexible working, nurseries, childcare schemes in our unusual summer holidays, career breaks, and so on.' This complements recommendation 12 of the Digital Democracy Commission. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm It also complements the current Diversity and Inclusion communications/role models campaign.

176 www.parliament.uk/about/working/workplacements-and-apprenticeships/speakers-parliamentary-placement-scheme/

177 Any scheme should provide for those who may have caring responsibilities, e.g. provide funding for child or other care where necessary.

178 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-35685169

179 As advocated in the WIP APPG Report (2014, 34). On one occasion when my own pass was the 'wrong way around' and a police officer asked me to show the other side, I discussed this recommendation; he heartily approved, stating it would make his life much easier. The counter argument that all staff should be trained better to recognise Members and to be polite in asking for Members and staff to show their ID fails to recognise the sensitivity of being frequently asked to prove one's right to be in a particular place.

180 See also WIP APPG (2014, 35); www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf

181 As suggested by the WIP APPG Report (2014, 35).

182 There would be a roundtable meeting between officials and party representatives to discuss how selection processes could be more transparent. Childs and Evans 2012; HC Deb 12 January 2012 c440

183 HC Deb 27 February 2014 c511

184 parliamentarycandidates.org/; Campbell and Childs 2015.

185 Seat safety refers to whether a party holds the seat; came 2nd or 3rd within a margin of less than 5 percent of the votes; 2nd or 3rd within a margin of more than 5 percent but less than 10 percent; and, other.

- 186** www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/commons/2015-12-14/19860
- 187** The written answer reported that in 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, there had been 27, 34 and 48 applicants respectively; some 271K had been awarded; most to applicants in greater London and the South East; with similar amounts awarded to women and men; and that 218K had been awarded to white applicants, approximately 27K to Asian applicants, and 23K to Black, African, Caribbean, and Black British; and finally that some 120K had been awarded to the Labour Party.
- 188** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmstords/soadd0506.pdf
- 189** Again, there is no suggestion that such a calendar could not respond to serious and unexpected events.
- 190** www.parliament.uk/business/news/2014/september/recall-of-house-of-commons/
- 191** www.parliament.uk/about/how/occasions/recallparliament/
- 192** Contra Rogers and Walters (2015, 372).
- 193** Mr Speaker has made clear his position www.politicshome.com/party-politics/articles/house/john-bercow-its-time-rethink-conference-break .
- 194** This recommendation was submitted as part of the Procedure Committee's Inquiry into reform of Private Members' Bills (January 2016) www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/procedure-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/private-members-bills-15-16/publications/
- 195** Parties would decide when to hold their party conferences. These could be moved to a weekend model or might be held in one of the parliamentary recesses.
- 196** Private Members' Bill (PMB) business could either be integrated with other business or see the establishment of 'PMB Thursdays' thereby recreating current Friday practice. The 'lost' 13 PMB Fridays are more than compensated for by the 12 'reclaimed party conference' days. Hansard 13 Friday sitting times = 65 hours, 9.30-14.30. Current Thursday sitting hours 9.30-17.30 x 12 = 96 hours. I leave it to others such as the Hansard Society to make suggestions to the processes and form of PMBs.
- 197** See Neil Gray MP www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 198** In the WIP APPG Report (2014, 15): 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.
- 199** Among reasons given for standing down from Parliament 'the most common one given was the impact being an MP had on family life' www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf
- 200** Amended from WIP APPG Key Recommendation: 'Reconnect with voters by rebalancing parliamentary and constituency priorities given that the role and expectations of a MP have changed over time.' See also WIP APPG (2014, 33).
- 201** www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf
- 202** Research suggests that women are currently fewer than 1 in 4 of Select Committee witnesses www.psa.ac.uk/conference/2016-conference-0/paper/taking-evidence-role-witnesses-evidence-gathering-process-select. Geddes finds that men were 76 percent of all Select Committee witnesses, with the Treasury performing the worst: less than 10 percent of its witnesses were women. Private sector witnesses were also particularly unrepresentative, at 10 percent. The best ranking Committee was International Development at 30 percent. See also eprints.lse.ac.uk/55425/1/Democratic%20Audit_Who%20gives%20evidence_January%202014.pdf. Using data from one month in autumn 2013, Berry and Kippin found that 76 percent of witnesses to House of Commons Select Committees were male. In the 'expert' category this rose to 83 percent, and if one was looking just at individuals without an organisational affiliation, 89 percent. The worst ranking Committee, taking evidence from less than six percent women was energy and climate change.
- 203** Marc Geddes 2016, 20-1.
- 204** This is a practice established in Finland by the Gender Equality Act 1995, amended in 2005 (Holli and Saari 2009).
- 205** I would like to thank Marc Geddes for this suggestion.
- 206** See www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf; www.parliament.uk/documents/rules-of-behaviour.pdf, page 3. See Recommendation 4, and 32 of the Digital Democracy Commission.
- 207** www.parliament.uk/documents/publications-records/House-of-Lords-Publications/Rules-guides-for-business/Companion-to-standing-orders/Companion-to-Standing-Order-2015.pdf; www.parliament.uk/business/publications/house-of-lords-publications/rules-and-guides-for-business/companion-to-the-standing-orders/
- 208** www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Historical-background-to-gender-neutral-language.pdf.
- 209** The WIP APPG (2014, 33) held that recess should be renamed to reflect the fact that MPs' are mostly working rather than on holiday when the House is not sitting. Although not gendered this is clearly opaque language. This complements recommendation 5 of the Digital Democracy Commission. See Rogers and Walters (2015, 53) for an explanation of the cricketing origins of 'maiden speech'. Cf Disraeli, 'A maiden speech so inaudible that it was doubted whether after all the young orator really did lose his virginity', cited in Rogers (2012a, 35; see also 154).
- 210** See Lucas (2015).
- 211** SO 7: No Member's name shall be affixed to any seat in the House before the hour of prayers; and the Speaker shall give directions to the doorkeepers accordingly; SO 8: Any Member having secured a seat at prayers shall be entitled to retain the same until the rising of the House.
- 212** Private MP comment.
- 213** SN/PC/06432, 5.
- 214** SN/PC/06432, 5.
- 215** Private MP comment.
- 216** BBC '15 June 2010 '...remaining members be elected by all the House, in the same way as deputy speakers, with provisions to ensure some gender balance'; cf 12 March 2012, the House agreed to SO N 122D...'one effect of the changes [from whole House election to party election] ...is to remove the requirement for gender balance in the committee. ...SO [had] specified that the Committee must include at least two men and two women. In the debate, Angela Smith for the Labour party argued that 'The opposition will have a quota to provide gender balance on the Committee, because we are committed to equality when it comes to gender representation in the House' (HC Deb 12 March 2012 c46).SN/PC/6290 and SN/PC05654.
- 217** Unpublished research by Stephen Bates, Mark Goodwin and Steve McKay, www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/bates-stephen.aspx

- 218 wonklifebalance.wordpress.com/2015/07/05/does-it-matter-that-there-is-only-one-man-on-the-women-and-equalities-select-committee/ For a recent Canadian consideration on this matter, see www.embassynews.ca/news/2016/04/06/huge-irony-in-male-dominated-study-of-women-peace-and-security-says-mp/48450
- 219 content.yudu.com/web/1w6ew/0A1w6f0/ParlIssueOne2016/html/index.html?page=1
- 220 For additional images of the same ilk, see www.google.co.uk/search?q=treasury+select+committee&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=667&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwip4-KupOjLAhVJRhQKHYHOBz0Q_AUICCGD
- 221 This recommendation reflects the fact that there are some 370 select committee places to be filled and only 191 women MPs overall, a good number of whom serve on the front bench teams. At the time of writing the Cabinet is one-third women, the Government overall more than 25 percent female, and Labour's Cabinet attendees are fifty percent female. researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05368/SN05368.pdf
- 222 BBC '15 June 2010.
- 223 In the accompanying debate, Angela Smith MP argued that 'The opposition [Labour] will have a quota to provide gender balance on the Committee, because we are committed to equality when it comes to gender representation in the House'. HC Deb 12 March 2012 c46. SN/PC/6290 and SN/PC05654. See Freidenvall (undated) ', for a comparison.
- 224 The WIP APPG Report (2014, 37) notes: 'Members do not know for more than a maximum of two weeks the Parliamentary Agenda. See also Rogers and Walters (2015): a 'pretty firm' first week followed by a second 'more likely to change'.
- 225 A younger male Conservative Member who had worked outside politics before becoming an MP was adamant about this. See also Alison Thewliss, and the late Jo Cox MP, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 226 As in the Scottish Parliament, see Appendix 9.
- 227 For example, Criminal Justice Scotland Bill, Stage 3, formal divisions at 3.45.
- 228 Rogers and Walters 2015, 267.
- 229 Ridge contends that it matters that MPs are 'forced to sit on the green benches listening to that powerful and dignified oratory'; in her view Hilary Benn's speech 'strengthened' MPs views even whilst she accepts that MPs frequently vote without listening to a 'sentence of the debate' www.telegraph.co.uk/women/politics/sorry-mums---we-simply-cant-allow-mps-to-vote-from-home/ ; see also parliamentsandlegislatures.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/the-art-of-oratory-in-the-house-of-commons/
- 230 Rogers and Walters 2015, 157.
- 231 Lucas 2015. The WIP APPG Report (2014, 33) 'encourage[d]' more group and or deferred voting' and thought electronic voting worthy of 'discussion'.
- 232 These relate mostly to SIs and EU documents (A short Guide to Business of the House and its Committees (2015, 58). Proceedings of Bills are not covered by these arrangements (ibid).
- 233 parliamentsandlegislatures.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/the-art-of-oratory-in-the-house-of-commons/
- 234 The Speaker's Conference (Recommendation 54) suggested the House reconsider business hours.
- 235 This discussion is a very good example where conceiving of the House of Commons as an organism reveals the impact on other staff working in the House other than MPs. Late sittings and unpredictable sittings will bear heavily on other staff working in the House and who have caring responsibilities, and will likely limit diversity overall.
- 236 See also researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02226/SN02226.pdf
- 237 See the discussion between Therese Coffey MP and Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh MP, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160121/debindex/160121-x.htm
- 238 This section expands my submission to the Joint Committee of Parliament, February 2016. www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/joint-committee-on-the-palace-of-westminster/inquiries/parliament-2015/restoration-and-renewal-consultation-15-16/
- 239 Bryant 2014, 372.
- 240 Rogers 2012, xi
- 241 hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1943/oct/28/house-of-commons-rebuilding; blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-palace-of-westminster-should-be-a-museum-not-the-institutional-heart-of-british-politics/
- 242 Rogers and Walters agree (2015, 1, 3). See also theconversation.com/gothic-glory-and-pop-up-parliaments-could-past-visions-help-rescue-the-crumbling-palace-of-westminster-45218
- 243 www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/joint-committee-on-the-palace-of-westminster/role/. Of the twelve members of the Committee only two are women. See Digital Democracy Recommendation 28 which speaks of 'seize[ing] the opportunity...to ensure that Parliament is fit for the future'.
- 244 www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/26/palace-of-westminster-refurbishment-could-see-mps-and-peers-relocated
- 245 Note how the term 'better' implies that later hours are by definition worse.
- 246 The 2014/15 session had 133 sitting days, a total of 989 hours and 14mins at an average of 7 hours and 26mins per sitting day. The 2015/16 session has so far had 116 sitting days, a total of 897 hours and 22mins at an average of 7 hours and 44mins per sitting day. Source: House of Commons Library. See also SN02226.
- 247 www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/13/parliament-women-mps-sexist-mothers-westminster
- 248 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmstords/614/body.htm
- 249 SN02226, 7.
- 250 Sitting days starting on 7/9/15 and 5/1/16. Source: DIS
- 251 The EU referendum bill followed a long statement on Syrian migrants.
- 252 Rogers and Walters 2015, 133.
- 253 House of Commons Service 2015, 12.
- 254 Mullin 2009, 320.
- 255 Admittedly, this is an empirical question but see Weinberg 2014, 2015.
- 256 Anonymous MPs.
- 257 See Weinberg 2014, 2015.
- 258 The IPU (2011, 121) Night sittings should be discontinued and sittings should be aligned with school holidays. There is also the aforementioned 'knock on' effect on parliamentary staff.
- 259 Personal Observation.
- 260 Until 1836 those voting 'aye' went out of the Chamber; the Noes sat where they were (Rogers 2012, 114)
- 261 Rogers and Walters 2015, 157. The Digital Democracy Commission Recommendation 29 suggests a move to record votes using smart identity cards as an alternative solution.

- 262** See, the *Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy*. It is worth noting that Division Lobbies were an innovation introduced after the 1834 fire (Bryant 20014, 36). Note also that MPs arriving in ambulances for a vote do not physically have to go through the lobbies. In the Lords some Members are permitted to stay seated on the benches.
- 263** Flynn 2012, 196.
- 264** Rogers and Walters 2015, 161.
- 265** According to an ex-MP not named for reasons of anonymity. See also Crewe (2015a, 46-7, 215).
- 266** See Bryant (2014, 250-1) for discussion of men's behaviour towards women in the House in the early 20th century. parliamentsandlegislatures.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/the-art-of-oratory-in-the-house-of-commons/. See also WIP APPG (2014, 42); Crewe (2015b, 26); Flynn (2012), 196.
- 267** Rogers and Walters 2015, 289.
- 268** Harriet Harman MP, Woman's Hour, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b079m0v0; Bryant 2014, 370.
- 269** www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jermey-corbyn-first-pmqs-viewing-figures-million-people-bbc-10506259.html
- 270** www.totalpolitics.com/blog/28148/30-facts-about-pmqs.thtml
- 271** pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/67/2/253. See also blog.hansardsociety.org.uk/pmq2015/
- 272** Rogers and Walters 2015, 289.
- 273** Rogers and Walters 2015, 308, 289.
- 274** www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27062577. The 2015 Administration Committee report queried 'whether this [criticism of PMQs] was a gender specific issue'. This is not, however, *the* test of whether a parliamentary practice is masculinised. Some men may very well be put off by the particular masculine performance demanded by PMQs. Similarly, some women might very well relish it.
- 275** House of Commons Service 2015, 11.
- 276** Rogers and Walters 2015, 142.
- 277** www.hansardsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Tuned-in-or-Turned-off-Public-attitudes-to-PMQs.pdf ; www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26133375
- 278** blog.hansardsociety.org.uk/pmq2015/
- 279** www.hansardsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Tuned-in-or-Turned-off-Public-attitudes-to-PMQs.pdf; Rogers and Walters 2015, 376.
- 280** Recommendation 19 of the Digital Democracy Commission and tomdlondon.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/a-radical-and-practical-proposal-to.html?m=0
- 281** This Report was published prior to the publication of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster which is to make recommendations for the next stage of R&R.
- 282** 2012, 174. One MP interviewed for this project reinforced this: the people who get seats on the benches are by convention all men.
- 283** Private MP comment.
- 284** Rogers and Walters 2015, 12-13.
- 285** The Boundary Review must be completed by October 2018. www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/Other_Publications/The_Future_of_the_Assembly-E.pdf
- 286** As some tube carriages on the London Underground have citytransport.info/Bakerloo.htm; or as in the foyer of the Scottish Parliament. I make no claims as a furniture designer, but suggest it is not beyond their wit to design such a bench.
- 287** The Queensland Parliament removed seats to accommodate a quadriplegic member www.parliament.nz/resource/en-nz/00CLOOCanzacatt1. See for a discussion the size of the National Assembly for Wales www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/Other_Publications/The_Future_of_the_Assembly-E.pdf
- 288** uk.news.yahoo.com/sleeping-mp-blasted-online-actually-115437272.html It is often said by MPs and officials that women's voices are not always picked up properly by the existing equipment.
- 289** Rogers and Walters, 2015, 12.
- 290** This would be facilitated by a move to 'on Estate' electronic voting.
- 291** Rogers and Walters 2015, 372. The obvious example here is the German Bundestag www.galinsky.com/buildings/reichstag/index.htm; nearer to home, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament building are also illustrative.
- 292** R&R offers up the possibility of reconsidering what maximises visitor experiences. A point made by Oonagh Gay.
- 293** A senior clerk claims that these rooms are preferred by MPs.
- 294** In June 2016 the WEC held an evidence session in which a roundtable format was adopted. www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/news-parliament-2015/sexual-harassment-and-sexual-violence-in-schools-first-evidence-16-17/
- 295** See Recommendation 16 of the Digital Democracy Commission.
- 296** House of Commons Service 2015, 15.
- 297** For an historical account see Bryant 2014, 252.
- 298** See contributions from Angela Crawley and Barbara Keeley, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm
- 299** House of Commons Service 2015; Alison Thewliss, 10 Nov 2015, 44WH. See also www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/06/westminster-drinking-culture-contributed-to-charles-kennedy-s-problems_n_8095336.html. These recommendations indirectly address questions of the culture of the House beyond the Chamber.
- 300** In 2012, the number of toilets in the Palace was 530 (Rogers 2012, 37).
- 301** 9 November 2015, Points of Order: Pauline Latham; Government Equalities Office Report (2015, 14); www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/toilets.htm. Gender neutral toilets have just been introduced into the White House www.charismanews.com/us/49144-obama-opens-first-gender-neutral-bathrooms-at-white-house
- 302** uk.businessinsider.com/pizza-shops-unisex-bathroom-goes-viral-2016-1. Having had to take my ageing father into a women's toilet in a pub, a unisex/gender neutral toilet would have been most welcome.
- 303** The Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo. Primarolo was one of the MPs for my university city, the MP for Bristol South 1987-2015.
- 304** Following Pitkin on symbolic representation (1967, 100). See also Lombardo and Meier (2014).
- 305** The majority of the Collection dates from to the late 18th century to the current day. The works are used widely by departments of the House involved in public engagement, see www.parliament.uk/art.

- 306** The constituencies and people Parliament represents are also made present through images such as a Chartist petition being presented in 1842, www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/petitions-committee/petition-of-the-month/1842-chartist-petition/ or Caroline Lucas, Green Party, Brighton, 24 March 2010, Brighton Pavilion constituency, www.parliament.uk/worksofar/artwork/simon-roberts/caroline-lucas-green-party-brighton-24-march-2010-brighton-pavilion-constituency/7134
- 307** Sir Lionel Earle suggests adopting the National Portrait Gallery's 10 year rule.
- 308** PM Stanley Baldwin 'his agreement with the rule', Source: Emily Green Assistant Curator (21/12/15).
- 309** As the WIP APPG (2014, 20) Report suggested.
- 310** These are all, admittedly, Labour women MPs but this is a product of Labour's time in office between 1997 and 2010.
- 311** As with New Dawn, www.parliament.uk/about/art-in-parliament/news/2015/march/artwork-to-commemorate-womens-suffrage-commissioned-/, and in the Scottish Parliament, 'Travelling the Distance', www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/18500/comsculp
- 312** In Iceland the Centenary of Suffrage celebrations included a digital screen on the outside of a parliamentary building with images of all the women MPs on a loop. Personal observation.
- 313** The suffrage campaign is rightly a huge part of Parliament's history but the story of women and the House of Commons must not become reduced to suffrage. See Chi Onwurah MP (21 January 2016) discussing the items on sale in the bookshop and the walls of the Palace. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160121/debindx/160121-x.htm
- 314** www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/members/apg/
- 315** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhallparty/160603/women-in-parliament.htm
- 316** allmalepanels.tumblr.com/; www.owen.org/pledge
- 317** www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/10/the-odds-that-a-panel-would-randomly-be-all-men-are-astronomical/411505/; 'qz.com/524694/524694/'
- 318** This report contains precise recommendations for select committee composition and witnesses.
- 319** www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/10/13/why-i-say-no-to-all-male-panels/
- 320** Parties would by so acting fulfil Speaker's Conference Recommendation 27.
- 321** This would fulfil Speaker's Conference Recommendation 57. See also the Digital Democracy Recommendation 25.
- 322** This would fulfil Speaker's Conference Recommendation 26.
- 323** See also WIP APPG 2014 Report; Crewe 2015a, 25.
- 324** Included in the WIP APPG Report 2014, 27.
- 325** ESRC/UoB Impact Acceleration Award 2015-16, ES/M500410/1.
- 326** See for example, for the UK, Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Childs 2004, 2008; Childs and Webb 2012; Campbell and Childs 2015, and for global studies, Kittilison 2006; Hughes and Paxton 2016.
- 327** This Report does not seek to produce an account of the gendered nature of the UK House of Commons, see for example Crewe 2015a,b; Childs 2013c; Krook and Mackay 2011. www.femfiin.com. Joni Lovenduski (2005, 50 & 52-3): Both gender theory and institutional theory suggests that institutions have considerable capacity to reproduce their cultures. See also Crewe 2015a. parliamentandlegislatures.wordpress.com/2015/07/29/what-is-a-good-ethnography-of-parliament/
- 328** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/239/239i.pdf. This strategy of establishing a Speaker's Conference was prompted by the 2005 Hansard Society *Women at the Top Report*.
- 329** appgimprovingparliamentreport.co.uk/download/APPG-Women-In-Parliament-Report-2014.pdf I was an adviser to the APPG for this Report.
- 330** *Report for the House of Commons Administration Committee on the findings of the interview study with Members on women's experience in Parliament*. It adopted a qualitative approach with interviews (23 Members) and focus groups. The aim was to 'give a real sense of some of the issues experienced by women, particularly as a result of living and working in two geographical centres' (2015, 4). 17, one-to-one interviews, one paired interview, one focus group; Labour MPs over-interviewed; women 20 to 3 men interviewed. See also www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/admin-committee/Interview-study-Members-leaving-Parliament-report%20-%20April%202016.pdf
- 331** As the then ten year old son of a friend – in a blatant attempt not to be sent to bed – asked pointed questions about the behaviour of MPs in the Chamber during PMQs, and could not make sense of the MP running to the division lobbies with her screaming toddler.
- 332** It addressed class mostly through consideration of the costs of political participation. See Lovenduski 2010.
- 333** According to Philip Davies MP (19 Nov Com 242WH): 'One of the most depressing things to have happened was the introduction of a SC on Women and Equalities. After everything else, in 2015, we have a separate committee to deal with women's issues, on top of the Women's Minister, Women's Question Time, and the many strategies in this country that only deal with women. For the record I do not care less if every MP in this House were female or if every member of my staff were female, as long as they were there on merit. Cf Maria Miller in the same debate (Column 256WH) ...International Men's Day is also about promoting gender equality ...women face discrimination on a daily basis – that is not a myth. He does not do his case much good by attempting to belittle that discrimination.'
- 334** WIP APPG methodology included: online survey of all MPs, evidence from external experts; oral and written evidence from current and retired MPs; review of progress of Speaker's Conference recommendations (2014, 12). The Report's suggestion that 'job-share for MPs and Ministers' be reviewed is to be addressed in a stand-alone pamphlet, to be published in late summer 2016.
- 335** For a comparison with Sweden, see Freidenvall (2013). Interviewing both women and men she found that men had a slightly more positive view of the Parliament; critical views came primarily from the women in the opposition parties, who had served in the Parliament for some time.
- 336** June 2015 to February 2016.
- 337** Interviewees are not named for reasons of anonymity.
- 338** See the Acknowledgements.
- 339** See the Acknowledgements.
- 340** 'So a gendered hierarchy is not merely revealed by the absence of women from influential or decision making forums, but by the denigration of their ideas when they do articulate them' (Crewe 2015a, 214-5).
- 341** www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151110/halltext/151110h0001.htm

342 Galligan and Meier (2014, 19) note that Portugal allows for temporary substitution; Estonian MPs may request a suspension of their mandate for raising a child under three.

343 www.aph.gov.au/~media/02%20Parliamentary%20Business/24%20Committees/243%20Reps%20Committees/Procedures/NursingMothers/FullReport.pdf?la=en

344 Not all disabled or gay MPs will be 'out'; the gendered definition of manual labour might mean that women's jobs are less likely to be included. See Criddle (in Cowley and Kavanagh, 2015, 342) and Jones (2011, 144). See Appendix 7 for tables for Sex and BME representation.

345 Criddle, in Cowley and Kavanagh 2015, 357.

346 www.disabilitypolitics.org.uk/; www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-21464655.

347 Criddle (in Cowley and Kavanagh 2015, 349), citing Andrew Reynolds. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11398629; www.theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/05/10-per-cent-population-gay-alfred-kinsey-statistics. See also www.academia.edu/21837364/Standing_Out_Transgender_and_Gender_Variant_Candidates_and_Elected_Officials_Around_the_World.

348 All data from the House of Commons Department for Information Services.

349 Changes to sitting times on Wednesdays were agreed on 19 December 1994 and came into effect on 25 January 1995. The changes applied on an experimental basis until the end of the 1994-95 Session [HC Deb 19 December 1994 cc1456-1498 (debate); cc1500-1507 (decision)].

350 On 2 November 1995, the House agreed to make Wednesday morning sittings in the House permanent, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1995/nov/02/parliamentary-procedure.

351 Thursday sittings began at 11.30am from 11 January 1999. See HC Deb 16 December 1998 cc986-1058 and HC Deb 20 November 2000 c101. Sittings in Westminster Hall replaced Wednesday morning sittings from the beginning of the 1999-2000 Session, initially on an experimental basis (See HC Deb 24 May 1999 cc81-132). Sittings in Westminster Hall were made permanent from the beginning of the 2002-03 Session and the Standing Order providing for Wednesday morning sittings in the Chamber was repealed.

352 HC Deb 29 October 2002 cc689-843.

353 HC Deb 26 January 2005 cc327-386.

354 HC Deb 15 July 2012 cc333-385.

