

2015 Demos Local MPs Findings

By Region:

Less than half of the current MPs from the East of England, South East of England, Yorkshire & Humber, and the West Midlands are local (in red).

MEP Region	Number of MPs	% of Local MPs	Local MPs	Non-Local MPs	Indeterminate MPs
East Midlands	45	51%	23	20	2
East of England	60	37%	22	34	4
London	74	73%	54	13	7
North East England	29	76%	22	4	3
North West England	72	63%	45	20	7
Northern Ireland	18	89%	16	2	0
Scotland	59	76%	45	9	5
South East England	84	44%	37	40	7
South West England	55	53%	29	21	5
Wales	40	78%	31	6	3
West Midlands	59	46%	27	27	5
Yorkshire and Humber	55	47%	26	24	5

By Gender:

No significant difference by gender.

Gender	Number of MPs	% of Local MPs	Local MPs	Non-Local MPs	Indeterminate MPs
Male	502	58%	291	171	40
Female	148	58%	86	49	13

Investigating Size of Majorities:

Seats with smaller majorities tend to be more local and more female.

MPs are almost twice as likely to be not-local in safe seats, compared with swing marginals.

MPs are also more than twice as likely to be male in safe seats, compared with swing marginals.

Majority	Number of MPs	% of Local MPs	% Female	Local MPs	Non-Local MPs	Indeterminate MPs
Majority under 1000	41	73%	34%	30	9	2
Majority between 1001 and 5,000	177	72%	24%	127	40	10
Majority between 5,001 and 10,000	183	55%	25%	101	61	21
Majority between 10,001 and 15,000	151	53%	19%	80	63	8
Majority over 15,000	97	40%	15%	39	47	11

Ralph Scott, senior researcher at the think-tank Demos, said of the figures:

"All major parties are suffering from voter disillusionment and are looking for ways to earn back trust. At the same time, surveys show people want more female, more working class and more local MPs.

"Our research finds that political parties do respond to this when the electoral stakes are high. Marginal seats are far more likely to have local candidates than safe seats. Women are also more likely to be selected in close contests.

"With hundreds of candidates still to be selected, parties need to pay close attention to their picks. It could make all the difference come polling day."

Jonathan Birdwell, Head of Citizenship at the think-tank Demos, authored the Demos Quarterly article proposing the idea of introducing the option of 'none of the above' on the ballot. He said:

"The public often say politicians lack 'real world' experience, and are more concerned with their parties' interests than what their local constituents care about. This is particularly true of

younger generations, over half of whom say they would be more likely to vote if there were more working class MPs, and over a third would if there were more local MPs.

“It’s time that a ‘none of the above’ option on the ballot is taken seriously as a legitimate and realistic reform.

“None of the above’ could be a powerful option for either the Russell Brand generation or voters in safe seats who aren’t happy with their party’s choice of candidate. If it got enough votes it could even trigger a new election with candidates chosen by open primary.”

Notes to editors

The research will be published on Friday February 5 in Issue 5 of the Demos Quarterly political magazine.

Defining local

An MP has only been classified as local if fulfilling one or more of the following three criteria:

1. MP was born within 20 km of their current constituency boundaries.
2. MP went to school within 20 km of the current constituency boundaries.
3. MP lived within 20 km of current constituency boundaries at least 5 years prior to seeking election.

Support for local MPs

The study builds on previous research by the University of Nottingham showing that 80% of the electorate want to see more ‘local’ MPs running for office. Of people interviewed in the same survey, only 50% said they wanted more female MPs while 58% wanted more from a working class background.

Contact

Rob Macpherson
rob.macpherson@demos.co.uk

020 7367 6325
(out of hours: 07809 280 643)