



## **NOT FALLING BUT STALLING** **more women elected but it's accident not design**

Alex Salmond and the SNP may have achieved a historic victory in the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections, but the male-dominated political landscape looks suspiciously like 'politics as usual'. In the latest elections, women took just 45 out of 129 seats in Holyrood (34.8 per cent), compared with previous highs of 39.5 per cent in the 2003 elections and 37.2 per cent in 1999. Although the SNP has a number of high profile women, including deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon, just over a quarter of the SNP's winning candidates are female. (*table 1*)

45 women and 84 men make up the 2011 parliament. Women comprise 19 of the 69-strong SNP group (27.5 per cent), 17 of the 37 Scottish Labour MSPs (45.9 per cent), six out of 15 Conservatives (40 per cent), and one of five Liberal Democrats (20 per cent). One of the two Green MSPs elected is female and the one Independent returned is a woman. Overall, the number of female MSPs has risen slightly since the immediate post-2007 election results, from 43 in 2007 to 45 women MSPs.

The 2011 results are a case of 'stalling not falling'. For Engender(2), the election results raise questions as to the future prospects of women's political representation in Scotland, pointing to underlying trends of further decline in the recruitment and election of female candidates.

Overall, the proportion of female candidates fell from 36.1 per cent in 2007 to 29.5 per cent in 2011, fuelling fears that we would see a significant fall in women elected. While the drop materialised in the constituency vote where only 20 women (27.4%) were elected the effect was mitigated by the higher number of women elected on regional lists (25 women or 44.6%). In fact, this was the first election to see more women elected from the regional list than by constituency and here the zipping of candidates (alternating one female, one male) on the Labour party lists – the only positive action measure used – delivered. (*table 2*)

A report into the election results for Engender found that there were clear gendered patterns of candidate placement in the 2011 elections, with women candidates generally placed in lower positions on party lists and less likely to be selected to contest safe or winnable constituency seats. (*table 4*)

There is little evidence that political parties are making any ongoing efforts to reform the norms and practices of political recruitment in Scotland. If political parties are serious about making real advances in women's political representation, then they must make a firm commitment – including the use of equality guarantees to ensure equal representation at Holyrood. Engender Director, Niki Kandirikiria said "Our

politicians say they want a parliament that reflects the society it represents but appear unwilling to take the measures available to them to get this. When the parties come to review their election strategy they should include a full debate on adopting measures which would deliver a truly representative parliament.”

## ENDS

### NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Statistics compiled by Dr Meryl Kenny and Dr Fiona Mackay, School of Social & Political Science, University of Edinburgh are attached. See full report at [http://www.engender.org.uk/UserFiles/File/news/Election%20Report%20\(Scottish%20Parliament%202011\).pdf](http://www.engender.org.uk/UserFiles/File/news/Election%20Report%20(Scottish%20Parliament%202011).pdf)
2. Engender is a membership organisation that works in Scotland and Europe on an anti-sexist agenda to increase women’s power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society.
3. **Press Contact:** Engender – 0131 558 9596

## TABLES AND FIGURES

**Table 1. Scottish Parliament 2011 by party and gender**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% <i>female</i></b>
SNP	19	50	69	27.5%
Labour	17	20	37	45.9%
Conservatives	6	9	15	40.0%
Liberal Democrats	1	4	5	20.0%
Others	2	1	3	66.7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>34.8%</i>

<b>Table 2: Scottish Parliament 2011 by party, seat and gender</b>										
<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>		<b>Total seats constituency (%women)</b>	<b>List</b>		<b>Total Seats List (%women)</b>	<b>Total MSPs</b>	<b>Total women</b>	<b>Total men</b>	<b>% women (%women 2007)</b>
	<b>female</b>	<b>male</b>		<b>female</b>	<b>male</b>					
<b>Labour</b>	6	9	15 (40%)	11	11	22 (50%)	37	17	20	<b>45.9%</b> (50%)
<b>SNP</b>	14	39	53 (35.9%)	5	11	16 (31.3%)	69	19	50	<b>27.5%</b> (25.5%)
<b>Cons</b>	0	3	3 (0.0%)	6	6	12 (50%)	15	6	9	<b>40%</b> (29.4%)
<b>Lib Dems</b>	0	2	2 (0.0%)	1	2	3 (33.3%)	5	1	4	<b>20%</b> (12.5%)
<b>Greens</b>	0	0	0 (0.0%)	1	1	2 (50%)	2	1	1	<b>50%</b> (0.00%)
<b>Independent</b>	0	0	0 (0.0%)	1	0	1 (100%)	1	1	0	<b>100%</b> (100%)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>73 (27.4%)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56 (44.6%)</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>34.8%</b>

**Table 3. Scottish Parliament 2011 candidates by party, gender and type of seat**

Party	Constituency		Total Candidates Constituency (% women)	List		Total Seats List (% women)
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
Labour	20	53	73 (27.4%)	25	30	55 (45.5%)
SNP	21	52	73 (28.7%)	21	58	79 (26.6%)
Conservatives	14	59	73 (19.2%)	10	45	55 (18.2%)
Lib Dems	21	51	72 <sup>1</sup> (29.2%)	19	36	55 (34.6%)
Green Party	0	0	0 (0.0%)	20	24	44 (45.6%)
<i>Total</i>	76	215	291 (26.1%)	95	193	288 (34%)

**Table 4. Scottish Parliament 2011 list candidates**

Party	List		Total Seats List (% women)	Candidates in 'Top Three' List Places		Total 'Top Three' List Places (% women)
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
Labour	25	30	55 (45.5%)	13	11	24 (54.2%)
SNP	21	58	79 (26.6%)	6	18	24 (25%)
Conservatives	10	45	55 (18.2%)	6	18	24 (25%)
Lib Dems	19	36	55 (34.6%)	8	16	24 (33.3%)
Green Party	20	24	44 (45.6%)	13	16	24 (54.2%)
<i>Total</i>	95	193	288 (34%)	41	79	120 (34.6%)

I The Scottish Liberal Democrats did not contest Clydesdale

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