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LGBT MPs and Candidates in the British General Election May 2015: The State of Play

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<http://globalstudies.unc.edu/lgbt-representation-and-rights-research-initiative/>

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Marriage equality was one of the defining issues of the last British parliament, and came at the end of a decade of rapid progress in gay rights both legally and culturally. Arguably, the legalisation of same sex marriage, against significant opposition in his own party, was Prime Minister David Cameron's finest moment but also a moment that highlighted tensions between generations.

In 2010 Cameron promoted a cadre of modernists MPs which led to more openly gay and lesbian Conservative MPs (13) than all other parties. Two out gay Tory MPs ultimately had to beat back de-selection attempts (Crispin Blunt and Nigel Evans).

The representation of gay leaders in public office has come a very long way since Chris Smith's groundbreaking coming out, when a Labour MP, in 1984.

In recent years Britain has led the way in the visible inclusion of out LGBT politicians. Of the 214 out MPs around the world elected since the first, Coos Huijsen in the Netherlands in 1976, Britain has claimed 36 of them. The 26 sitting in parliament at the time of dissolution in April 2015 represented the highest number in the world. On May 8th that number will rise higher. We know these individual stories matter because the *descriptive* representation of gay people has dramatically effected laws, values and levels of social acceptance – from New Zealand to Nepal, Canada to Colombia – indeed in all 38 countries that have had openly gay members of parliament. In these places, and many others, out elected officials have changed the tone and substance of the debate.

The parliament elected on May 7th will almost certainly have even more out lesbian, gay and bisexual MPs than before – a new record high. There are more out candidates and more in winnable seats. The vast majority of sitting MPs are expected to return to Westminster (only one gay MP stood down in 2015). The new LGBT MPs will cut across party and region, gender and age. However, there will be a pivot from the right to the left. The number of out Tory and Liberal Democrat MPs is likely to decline while the number of gay Labour MPs will probably increase by at least five. We may also see new SNP and Plaid Cymru MPs who happen to be gay. The partisan shift stems from the fact that, unlike five years ago, the Tories are not standing any out gay candidates in safe seats or even winnable marginals. In contrast Labour have one new gay candidate in a safe seat and four in very winnable marginals.

In sum:

- There are likely to be more out lesbian, gay, and bisexual MPs after May 7th than ever before in the UK and a higher number and proportion than anywhere else in the world.
- At dissolution there were 26 out LGBT MPs in the House: 13 Tories, 9 Labour and 4 Liberal Democrats.
- We predict 28 out LGBT MPs returned on May 7th- representing 4% of the total seats in the Commons.
- In a switch from the previous parliament, the new House will almost certainly have more Labour LGBT MPs than Tories, and the caucus will be more left leaning than before with likely Scottish Nationalist and Plaid Cymru MPs.
- Parties and candidates have publically identified 150 out LGBT candidates standing in the general election: 42 Tory, 39 Liberal Democrat, 36 Labour, 22 Green, 6 UKIP, 3 Plaid Cymru, 1 SNP and 1 from the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.¹
- LGBT MPs and candidates are overwhelmingly male (90% of predicted MPs and 86% of candidates) and white (100% of predicted MPs and all but two candidates).
- There are likely to be LGBT MPs from every part of nation except the East of England and Northern Ireland. The highest proportion will likely come from the South West.

¹ The SNP and UKIP did not make available a comprehensive list of out LGBT candidates when requested.

TABLE 1: BY PARTY

	<i>Tory</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>LibDem</i>	<i>SNP</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>UKIP</i>	<i>ALLNI</i>
Sitting MPs	13	9	4	0	0	0	0	0
% of party	4%	3%	7%	0	0	0	0	0%
Candidates	42	36	39	1	3	22	6	1
% of party	6%	5%	5%	2%	7%	4%	1%	5%
MP Predict	10	14	2	1	1	0	0	0
% of party	3%	5%	8%	2%	25%	0%	0%	0%

- On the basis of polling evidence (as of April 30th) we predict that two Tories and two Liberal Democrats will lose their seats (one Tory has retired) and that all other incumbent MPs – i.e., 21 in total - will survive.
- We predict they will be joined by seven new LGBT MPs (five Labour, one SNP, and one from Plaid Cymru).
- Our least robust predictions are the SNP (Glasgow South) and Plaid Cymru (Ceredigion) victories and the Lib Dem (St. Austell and Bristol West) and Tory (Pudsey) losses. Plaid have an outside chance of taking Llanelli with an LGBT candidate. While, Labour are mounting a strong challenge in the LGBT Tory seats of Finchley and Milton Keynes South. Nevertheless, with the swings and roundabouts of election day, the prediction of 28 elected LGBT MPs in May 2015 is pretty strong.
- None of the LGBT MPs in serious danger of losing their seats – Conservatives Eric Ollerenshaw (Lancaster), Stuart Andrew (Pudsey), Mike Freer (Finchley) and Iain Stewart (Milton Keynes South), and Lib Dems Stephen Gilbert (St. Austell) and Stephen Williams (Bristol West)– appear to be the victims of overt and sustained homophobia in the campaign. They are likely to be casualties of national swings against their respective parties. Indeed, the Tory incumbent and Labour challenger in Lancaster and Milton Keynes are both openly gay.

Table 2: BY REGION

	<i>NE</i>	<i>NW</i>	<i>Yorks</i>	<i>EM</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Lon</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Scot</i>	<i>NI</i>
MPs	1	4	3	2	2	0	3	4	5	2	0	0
% of const	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%	0%	4%	5%	9%	5%	0%	0%
Candidates	8	15	12	15	11	2	28	19	13	12	13	1
% of const	28%	17%	22%	33%	23%	3%	36%	20%	24%	27%	22%	5%
MP Predict	2	4	2	2	2	0	3	4	4	4	1	0
% of const	7%	5%	5%	4%	4%	0%	4%	5%	7%	10%	2%	0%

NB: SEATS= NE (29) NW (75) YORKS (54) EM (46) WM (47) EAST (58) LON (73) SE (84) SW (55) WALES (40)
SCOT (59) NI (18)

- There exists a broad geographical spread in the growth of LGBT MPs and candidates. There are likely to be LGBT MPs from every part of nation except the East of England and Northern Ireland. There could be only the second out MP from Scotland and a doubling of the number of gay MPs in Wales.
- A third of seats in London have out candidates but the capital may still only return three LGBT MPs. Conversely, in the South West, a quarter of the voters will have LGBT candidates as choices but that region could elect four LGBT MPs (six if Stephen Gilbert and Stephen Williams hold on in St. Austell and Bristol).
- While the highest proportion of constituencies with out candidates is London. Wales is likely to have a higher ratio of LGBT MPs than any other part of the UK.
- The East is by far the most impoverished region of the England with only two, no-hope, candidates.

TABLE 3: BY IDENTITY

	<i>Gay</i>	<i>Lesbian</i>	<i>Bisexual</i>	<i>Transgender</i>
MPs	22	2	2	0
% of LGBT	85%	8%	8%	0
MP Predict	22	3	3	0
%	79%	10%	10%	0
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Trans M-F</i>	<i>Trans F-M</i>
Candidates	129	17	3	1
% of LGBT	86%	11%	2%	1%

- Out of the 28 MPs predicted to win on May 7th 22 are gay men (79%), three identify as lesbian, two as bisexual men and one as a bisexual woman.
- We don't have full data on the number of candidates who identify as bisexual, but LGBTQ candidates are overwhelming male (86%). There are seventeen women, only three trans-women and one trans-man.
- Ethnic diversity among LGBT candidates and elected officials is almost non-existent. All the sitting MPs are white, all the predicted MPs elected on May 7 are white, and of the 150 candidates all but two are white.

CONSTITUENCIES TO WATCH

Lancaster & Fleetwood

- Labour's Cat Smith versus incumbent Tory Eric Ollerenshaw – both LGBT

Pudsey

- incumbent LGBT Tory Stuart Andrew vulnerable to strong Labour challenge

St. Austell and Newquay

- incumbent LGBT LibDem Stephen Gilbert in a tight race with Tory

Milton Keynes South

- Labour's Andrew Pakes versus incumbent Tory Iain Stewart – both LGBT

Finchley and Golders Green

- LGBT Tory MP Mike Freer could lose Thatcher's old constituency to Labour

Glasgow South

- SNP's Stewart McDonald could overwhelm huge Labour majority

Ceredigion

- Plaid Cymru's Mike Parker could oust sitting Liberal Democrat MP

Northampton South

- Kevin McKeever could overcome large Tory majority

FULL DATA

1. Predicted winners

Best guess (as of April 30):

28 out LGBT MPs in new House of Commons

14 Labour: 10 Tories: 2 Liberal Democrats: 1 SNP: 1 PC

May 2015 election range estimate:

20 Low # of out MPs - 34 High # of out MPs

11-14 Labour: 7-12 Tories: 2-5 Liberal Democrats: 0-1 SNP: 0-2 PC

Labour

Stephen Twigg – Liverpool and West Derby (NW)

Steve Reed – Croydon North (LON)

Chris Bryant – Rhondda (WALES)

Clive Betts - Sheffield South East (YORK)

Stephen Doughty – Cardiff South and Penarth (WALES)

Angela Eagle – Wallasey (NW)

Nick Brown – Newcastle East (NE)

Gordon Marsden – Blackpool South (NW)

Ben Bradshaw – Exeter – (SW)

Gerald Jones (G) - Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (WALES)

Cat Smith - Lancaster & Fleetwood (NW)

Louise Baldock (B)- Stockton South (NE)

Luke Pollard (G) - Plymouth Sutton & Devonport (SW)

Peter Kyle (G) - Hove (SE)

Tory

Nick Herbert – Arundel and South Down (SE)

Nigel Evans – Ribble Valley (YORK)

Alan Duncan – Rutland and Melton (EM)

David Kawczynski - Shrewsbury and Atcham (WM)

Crispin Blunt – Reigate (SE)

Nick Boles – Grantham and Stamford (EM)

Conor Burns – Bournemouth West (SW)

Mike Freer – Finchley and Golders Green (LON)

Margot James – Stourbridge (WM)

Iain Stewart – Milton Keynes South (SE)

Lib Dem

David Laws – Yeovil (SW)

Simon Hughes – Bermondsey and Old Southwark (LON)

SNP

Stewart McDonald – Glasgow South (SCOT)

Plaid Cymru

Mike Parker – Ceredigion (WALES)

NB: Four constituencies both leading candidates (Lab/Con) are gay (Lancaster, Milton Keynes South, Wallasey and Blackpool South). In other constituencies there are two LGBT candidates, but one is not a contender – (e.g., Arundel and South Down, Grantham and Cardiff South and Penarth) – the LGBT MP is unlikely to lose.

2. Candidates**Sitting MPs re-standing*****Labour*****Likely Holds**

Stephen Twigg – Liverpool and West Derby – majority 50.6% (NW)

Steve Reed – Croydon North – 47.9% (LON)

Chris Bryant – Rhondda – 37.2% (WALES)

Stephen Doughty – Cardiff South and Penarth 27.4% (WALES)

Clive Betts - Sheffield South East – 25.4% (YORK)

Angela Eagle – Wallasey – 20.4% (NW)

Nick Brown – Newcastle East – 11.8% (NE)

Gordon Marsden – Blackpool South – 5.3% (NW)

Ben Bradshaw – Exeter – 5.2% (SW)

Conservative**Likely Holds**

Nick Herbert – Arundel and South Down – 29.9% (SE)

Nigel Evans – Ribble Valley – 28.3% (YORK)

Alan Duncan – Rutland and Melton – 25.4% (EM)

David Kawczynski - Shrewsbury and Atcham – 15% (WM)

Crispin Blunt – Reigate – 27.2% (SE)

Nick Boles – Grantham and Stamford – 28.1% (EM)

Conor Burns – Bournemouth West – 13.4% (SW)

Possible Loses

Mike Freer – Finchley and Golders Green – 12.3% (LON)

Margot James – Stourbridge – 10.9% (WM)

Iain Stewart – Milton Keynes South – 9.4% (SE)

Stuart Andrew – Pudsey – 3.4% (YORK)

Likely Loses

Eric Ollerenshaw – Lancaster and Fleetwood 0.8% (NW)

Liberal Democrat

Likely Holds

David Laws – Yeovil – 22.8% (SW)

Simon Hughes – Bermondsey and Old Southwark – 19.1% (LON)

Possible loses

Stephen Gilbert - St. Austell and Newquay – 2.8% (SW)

Stephen Williams – Bristol West – 20.5% (SW)

Labour Candidates

Most likely winners

Gerald Jones (G) - Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Lab Maj 12.6%) (WALES)

Cat Smith - Lancaster & Fleetwood 0.8% (Very likely both Tory/Lab LGBT) (NW)

Louise Baldock (B)- Stockton South 0.7% (Very likely) (NE)

Luke Pollard (G) - Plymouth Sutton & Devonport 2.6% (Good chance) (SW)

Peter Kyle (G) - Hove 3.7% (Good chance) (SE)

Andrew Pakes (G) - Milton Keynes South 9.4% (both Tory & Lab Gay) (SE)

Long shots

Todd Foreman (G) - North East Somerset 9.6% (SW)

Wes Streeting (G) - Ilford North 11.5% (LON)

Chris Oxlade (G) - Crawley 12.5% (SE)

Tristan Osborne (G) - Chatham & Aylesford 13.9% (SE)

Ian Boulton - Filton & Bradley Stoke 14.3% (SW)

Kevin McKeever - Northampton South 15.4% (EM)

Katrina Gilman - The Wrekin 20.6% (WM)

Stefano Borella - Bexleyheath & Crayford 24.0% (LON)

No chance

Andy Adams - North West Hampshire (3rd place) (SE)

Sean Kelly-Walsh – Charnwood (3rd place) (EM)

Emily Brothers (T) - Sutton & Cheam (3rd place) (LON)

Braden Davy - Gordon (3rd place) (SCOT)

Matthew Dorrance - Brecon & Radnorshire (3rd place) (WALES)

Sean Morton - Moray (3rd place) (SCOT)

Jordan Newell - Colchester (3rd place) (EAST)

Lloyd Russell-Moyle - Lewes (3rd place) (SE)

Charles Smith - Maidenhead (3rd place) (SE)
Christopher Wellbelove – Arundel and South Downs (3rd place) (SE)
Steve Race – East Devon – (3rd place) (SW)
Barrie Fairbairn - Grantham & Stamford (3rd place) (EM)
Michael Sparling - Torridge & West Devon (4th place) (SW)

Tory Candidates

Long shots

Lee Rowley – NE Derbyshire – 5.2% (EM)
Peter Anthony - Blackpool South – 5.3% (both Tory & Lab Gay) (NW)
David Nicholls – Clwyd South – 8.2% (WALES)
Simon Nayyar – Feltham and Heston – 9.6% (LON)
Gareth Streeter – Rother Valley – 12.5% (YORK)
Damien Moore – Southport – 13.8% (NW)
Robert McIlveen – York Central – 13.9% (YORK)
Ben Howlett – Bath – 25.2% (SW)

No chance

Christopher Clarkson – Wallasey – 20.4% (NW)
Chris Chapman – Ilford South – 22.1% (LON)
Peter Bedford – Bolsover – 25.4% (EM)
Mark Fletcher – Doncaster North – 26.3% (YORK)
Emma Warman - Cardiff South and Penarth – 27.4% (WALES)
Richard Hopkin – Cardiff Central – (3rd place – 29.8%) (WALES)
Paul Holmes – Mitcham and Morden – 31.2% (LON)
Will Blair – Holborn and St.Pancras – (3rd place) (LON)
Jean Paul Floru – Southwark and Old Bermondsey - (3rd place) (LON)
Martin McGann – North Tyneside – (3rd place) (NE)
Keiran Mullan – Birmingham Hodge Hill (3rd place) (WM)
Thomas Smith – Gateshead (3rd place) (NE)
Mark Vivis – Chesterfield (3rd place) (EM)
James Bellis – Vauxhall (3rd place) (LON)
Jamie Greene – North Ayrshire and Arran (3rd place) (SCOT)
Liam Marshall-Ascough – Stoke-on-Trent Central (3rd place) (WM)
Ross Thomson – Aberdeen South (3rd place) (SCOT)
James Bird – Birmingham Hall Green (4th place) (WM)
Kyle Thornton – Glasgow South (4th place) (SCOT)
Annie Wells – Glasgow North East (4th place) (SCOT)
Taylor Muir - Rutherglen and Hamilton West (4th place) (SCOT)
James McMordie – Edinburgh East (4th place) (SCOT)

Liberal Democratic Candidates

Unlikely to hold

Gerald Vernon-Jackson (G) – Portsmouth South – (LD maj 12.6%) (SE)

Long shots

John Munro - Weston-super-Mare – 5.1% (SW)

Terry Stacy - Islington South & Finsbury – 8.2% (LON)

No Chance

Dave Page - Manchester Gorton - 17.5% (NW)

Paul Hodgkinson – Cotswolds – 23.5% (SW)

Steven Lambert – Aylesbury – 23.7% (SE)

Adrian Trett – Vauxhall – 24.7% (LON)

Janice Spalding – Basingstoke - 26.0% (SE)

Steve Sollitt – Havant – 27.7% (SE)

David Lee - East Surrey – 30.9% (SE)

Giles Goodall – Wealden – 31.3% (SE)

Ben Mathis - Hackney South & Shoreditch - 31.6% (LON)

Peter Brooks – Orpington – 35.2% (LON)

Alan Bullion – Sevenoaks – 35.5% (SE)

Paul Childs - Liverpool Riverside – 36.5% (NW)

Callum Delhoy – Daventry – 37.1% (EM)

James Harrison - Glasgow North West – 38.3% (SCOT)

Andy Graham – Witney – 39.4% (SE)

Zoe O'Connell (T) – Maldon - 40.5% (EAST)

Cadan ap Tomos - Cardiff West (3rd place) (WALES)

Stuart Bonar - Plymouth Moor View (3rd place) (SW)

Lee Dargue - Birmingham Edgbaston (3rd place) (WM)

Euan Davidson - Aberdeen North (3rd place) (SCOT)

Josh Dixon - Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner (3rd place) (LON)

Kevin Michael Peter McNamara - Ealing North (3rd place) (LON)

Andrew Martin - Bolton West (3rd place) (NW)

Alisdair McGregor - Calder Valley (3rd place) (YORK)

Ross Pepper – Lincoln (3rd place) (EM)

Chris Young - Glasgow Central (3rd place) (SCOT)

Stewart Golton - Elmet & Rothwell (3rd place) (YORK)

Stephen Glenn – Sedgefield (3rd place) (NE)

Richard Gadsden – Blackley and Broughton (3rd place) (NW)

Mark Argent – NE Leicestershire (3rd place) (EM)

Victor Chamberlain - Wythenshawe and Sale East (4th place) (NW)
David Evans – Banff and Buchan (4th place) (SCOT)

SNP Candidates

Stewart McDonald (G) – Glasgow South – 31.6% (Ashcroft has winning) (SCOT)

Plaid Cymru Candidates

Vaughan Williams (G) – Llanelli – 12.5% (WALES)
Mike Parker (G) – Ceredigion – 21.8% (some polls have Parker winning) (WALES)
Harri Roberts – Swansea West (4th place) – (WALES)

UKIP Candidates

David Coburn – Gordon (SCOT)
Nathan Garbutt – Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (YORK)
Richard Hilton – Mitcham and Morden (LON)
Gary Shores – Beverly and Holderness (YORK)
Peter Whittle – Eltham (LON)
Richard Hendron – Brentford and Isleworth (LON)

Green Candidates

Grant Bishop (G) - Birmingham Yardley (WM)
Matt Cooke (G) – Torfaen (WALES)
Martyn Curzey (G) - Aldridge Brownhills (WM)
Will Duckworth (G) - Dudley North (WM)
Gabby Garcia (L) – Leicester South (EM)
Stella Gardiner (T) - Bexleyhealth and Crayford (LON)
Sam Gibbons (G) - Newcastle Under Lyme (WM)
Tim Goodall (G) - Leeds North West (YORKS)
Andrew Gray (G) - Newcastle East (NE)
Lesley Hedges (L) – Colne Valley (YORKS)
Rebecca Johnson (L) - Hampstead and Kilburn (LON)
David Kirwan (G) – Broxtowe (EM)
Charlie Kiss (T) – Islington South and Finsbury (LON)
Jazz Mahal (B) - Ealing Southall (LON)
Tamsin Omond (L) - East Ham (LON)
Will Patterson (G) - Wigan (NW)
Victoria Percival (B) - Boston & Skegness (EM)
Storm Poorun (G) - Lewisham East (LON)
Anne Power - Wyre and Preston North (NW)
Lorna Tooley (B) – Romford (LON)
Marion Turner-Hawes (L) - Wellingborough (EM)

Lee Williscroft-Ferris (G) - Hexham (NE)

Alliance Party of Northern Ireland Candidates

Andrew Muir – North Down (NI)

NB: Data based on party identification and individual candidate publicity. As of April 28th 2015 the SNP and UKIP had not responded to requests as to whether they had out LGBT candidates running in the election.

Sources:

<http://lgbt.libdems.org.uk/en/page/lgbt-candidates-2015>

<https://lgbtorg-admin.conservativewebsites.org.uk/news/conservatives-lead-way-most-out-candidates-2015-election>

<https://twitter.com/lgbtlabour>

<http://attitude.co.uk/plaid-cymru-the-lgbt-manifesto/>

<http://www.lgbtlabour.org.uk/ge15>

Candidates and party headquarters

The LGBT Representation and Rights Research Initiative at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is the first academic program in the United States focused exclusively on the link between the representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and the legal and political rights afforded to those groups.

<http://globalstudies.unc.edu/lgbt-representation-and-rights-research-initiative/>

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For comprehensive up-to-date data on LGBT elected officials globally and the Initiative's recent policy papers go to:

<http://globalstudies.unc.edu/lgbt-representation-and-rights-research-initiative/>

Reynolds is available for media comment and will be in London for the General Election.

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