

# **The race for representation**

## **How ethnic diversity became the ‘new normal’ in British politics**

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## Introduction

The 2015 election will produce a record number of ethnic minority MPs, rising to over 40 from the 27 elected in 2010 and potentially trebling in a decade from the 15 elected in 2005.

Despite the 2015 election being the most unpredictable in recent history, it looks certain that more ethnic minority MPs than ever before will sit in the next parliament. If each seat is won by the candidate who is currently favourite, 44 MPs with a minority background would be elected in May, a 60% increase on the record 27 ethnic minority MPs elected in 2010.

This says a lot about Britain. Voters have shown that skin colour doesn't determine who they support. Party strategists who thought they could only choose 'Ethnic faces for ethnic voters' in the most diverse inner city seats have been proved wrong.

Much of this recent progress can be attributed to the Conservative Party. After 25 years largely of 'ethnic politics in one party' since the 1987 breakthrough of non-white Labour MPs, David Cameron's Conservatives are now fielding as many non-white candidates as their Labour rivals – and have been more likely to select new candidates in safe seats during this Parliament. The Conservatives could even overtake Labour on the number of non-white MPs if they won an outright majority in May.

Several factors have made ethnic diversity the 'new normal' in British politics. Chief among them is the significant increase in racial tolerance among the British electorate over the last 30 years. Social and demographic changes have also raised expectations, of equal treatment in political and public life, for the 2015 generation of non-white Britons.

Some barriers that still remain to ethnic minority representation in politics more broadly, however. The Liberal Democrats remain an all-white party in parliament and look likely to remain so; UKIP and the Lib Dems select fewer non-white candidates than Labour or the Conservatives. Ethnic Minority representation in parliament is largely confined to England. And while elected politics is more openly contested and meritocratic, there remains a lack of diversity in the 'political backrooms' of Special Advisors and strategists, as well as in the media and judiciary.

There is progress but it should not be a cue for complacency. It was only comparatively recently that non-white MPs were elected in any significant numbers to Parliament. We would need around 65 ethnic minority MPs to make it representative of the diversity of modern Britain, and we are not there yet. But if the current progress continues, we will get there – potentially in the parliament elected in 2020.

Even while it is incomplete, the recent rapid progress in Parliamentary diversity is important. Over the last decade, Britain has come ever closer to being able to say, truthfully, to candidates for Parliament that they do now have fair chances, and do not face higher barriers for selection or election, to an extent that was not the case ten or fifteen years ago. That does help the House of Commons to better reflect the country that it serves. That is an important step forward for British democracy. The recent changes also show that

competition between parties has been an important catalyst for speeding up change.

But there is little reason to think that the increase in ethnic minority representation offers any magic key to shifting the votes of ethnic minority voters. This welcome progress has come about because voters – particularly white British voters – are mostly highly unlikely to vote for or against a candidate based on skin colour. It ought not to come as a surprise to the political parties to discover that ethnic minority voters don't cast their votes based on the ethnicity of candidates either.

Ethnic diversity is the 'new normal' in British politics. MPs like Sajid Javid and Chuka Umunna are hotly-tipped as future party leaders. There is every reason to conclude that a non-white Prime Minister is probably just a matter of time but, in the Britain of 2015, whether somebody makes it to the top will depend on the content of their character, and their politics, not the colour of their skin.

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## Key findings

- A record number of ethnic minority MPs will be elected in 2015, with 40+ ethnic minority MPs likely to be elected. If each seat is won by the candidate who is currently favourite, 44 non-white MPs will be elected in May, a 60% increase on the record 27 ethnic minority MPs elected in 2010.
- While the possible range for ethnic minority MPs is between 36 and 47 MPs elected across the full range of conceivable election outcomes, our central projection is that between 40-45 ethnic minority MPs is the likely outcome, especially if neither party wins an overall majority.
- The Conservatives have been most likely to select new non-white candidates for safe seats. The party could well secure the most newly elected 'class of 2015' non-white MPs. If the Conservatives were to win an overall majority, we project that they would also overtake Labour to have most of the ethnic minority MPs in the Commons, with seven of the eleven new 'class of 2015' ethnic minority MPs being Tories.
- In a hung Parliament, the balance of minority representation between the parties would depend on the precise seat count:
  - If the two major parties were tied in House of Commons seats, (eg 276 seats each) as would happen if each party won the seats where it is currently the favourite, our projection suggests there would be around 24 non-white Labour MPs and 17 Conservatives, with one SNP MP, one UKIP MP of mixed heritage and one Lib Dem (see below). Our projection is that there would be nine Labour first-time ethnic minority MPs and seven new Conservative ethnic minority MPs in this scenario.
  - In a hung Parliament with a Conservative-led minority or coalition government, the gap would be narrower: in this scenario, we would project 18 ethnic minority Conservatives to 21 Labour MPs, plus three MPs from other parties (the SNP, Lib Dems and UKIP). The Conservatives would elect more new, 'class of 2015' MPs - seven Conservatives to six from Labour - while Labour would hold on to a slight overall lead in the Commons as a whole.
- Labour has been less likely to select ethnic minority candidates to succeed retiring MPs, but more likely to select non-white candidates in seats that the party hopes to gain. If a Labour majority government were to be elected, then Labour would double its number of ethnic minority MPs, and extend its lead over the Conservatives. The number of ethnic minority MPs elected could well rise to 47 or more, with 30 Labour and 15 Conservative MPs, and two from other parties.
- The Liberal Democrats are again unlikely to elect any non-white MPs, though they have one white candidate with Irish traveller heritage who self-identifies as BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic).
- Of the dozen seats in which UKIP's chances are strongest, one candidate - Tim Aker in Thurrock - has mixed-race heritage as his father was Turkish.

## About British Future and this report

British Future is an independent and non-partisan think-tank focusing on issues of identity and opportunity, immigration and integration.

British Future's new analysis takes the betting odds on each constituency as a neutral and non-partisan indicator of which candidate is likely to take each seat. While the odds will continue to fluctuate, we have allocated a percentage chance to candidates reflecting the odds mid-March 2015, rounded off at 5% margins, with projections based on those seats where the current favourite is a non-white candidate, or where an ethnic minority candidate would be likely to take the seat if Britain woke up to one of five different potential election results on 8 May. We used the odds in early March 2015, ahead of the budget, and each major party was favourite or joint favourite in 276 seats at that time. The scenarios give our most likely projection for the number of minority MPs in each case: the real world totals of minority MPs would be likely to be within one or two seats of these projections for each party, depending on how the closest specific constituency results fell in practice.

Individual constituency betting odds are available from a variety of different bookmakers. A useful and regularly-updated source is <http://politicalbookie.com/>, run by Ladbrokes' head of political betting Matthew Shaddick.

The language used to describe people by ethnicity has shifted several times over recent decades, and there continue to be a range of different and contested views. The boundaries around 'ethnic minority' candidates are likely to become more blurred over time, with those of mixed ethnicity being among the fastest-growing groups in 2011 census.

This report seeks to follow a liberal principle of self-definition, so that where candidates define themselves as being from ethnic minority or mixed heritage backgrounds in their own public statements, they have been included in these figures.

The Ethnic Minority British Election Study estimated that the eligible electorate was 8% non-white in 2010. This will have risen in 2015, probably to over 10%. The electorate is less diverse than the population as a whole, because ethnic minority communities have a younger age profile, so contain a higher proportion of under-18s, and because not all residents are eligible voters. However, the proportion will rise over time, with one in five first time voters being from an ethnic minority background in 2015.

This is a preview of a full report that will be published, including the final statistics, after the nominations for candidates close on 9 April so as to incorporate late retirements and any last-minute selections for winnable seats.

More information at [www.britishfuture.org](http://www.britishfuture.org)

## The ‘new normal’ in British politics

A record number of ethnic minority MPs will be elected to the House of Commons in the 2015 General Election, with projections strongly indicating that over 40 non-white MPs are likely to take their places on the green benches in May.

Though the precise number elected will depend on the outcomes in the marginal seats, and perhaps on late selections too, one certainty about Britain’s most unpredictable general election is that it will definitely result in a record number of ethnic minority MPs.

If each constituency were won by the candidate who is currently the favourite, there would be 44 non-white MPs elected. A significant rise on the record 27 MPs elected in 2010 is certain, and a near-tripling in the number of non-white MPs over a decade from the 15 elected in 2005 is likely.

The history of ethnic minority MPs stretches back over a century to 1892. Yet there will be many more current ethnic minority MPs after the May 2015 General Election than all former non-white MPs put together in the previous history of the House of Commons (just 15 former non-white MPs) - capturing the extent to which progress is accelerating in this area.

This remains below the 65 non-white MPs required before the UK can claim to have an elected house that is representative of the ethnic make-up of modern Britain. But the accelerated progress of recent years, and its cross-party nature, offers grounds for optimism that Britain will have a representative parliament by 2020 or 2025.

There are several developments that have helped to make ethnic diversity the “new normal” in British politics over the last decade.

i) We have witnessed an end to ‘ethnic politics in one party’, when the Labour Party enjoyed a near-monopoly on non-white representation. This has been replaced by a neck-and-neck race for representation between the major parties after rapid progress by the Conservatives over the last decade. We offer further analysis of this phenomenon later in this report.

ii) There has been a sharp inter-generational decline of racism in British society over the last 30 years – enabling a break with the “ethnic faces for ethnic voters” model of race and representation.

Non-white MPs now represent all types of constituency, from inner cities to the shires. The political classes have gradually come to realise that voters are considerably more racially tolerant than the party strategists and academic experts had given them credit for. The widely held assumption that many white voters would reject non-white candidates has proved baseless. The electorate has proved much more open to candidates, whatever the colour of their skin, than both academics and party selectors had anticipated, though progress was delayed by damaging urban myths about race deciding election contests (especially Cheltenham in 1992).

iii) Social and demographic change has reflected increased British ethnic minority success in education and social and economic integration. The 'Class of 2015 generation' of non-white Britons now has higher expectations of fair chances and equal treatment in politics and public life and this is reflected in more candidates putting themselves forward.

iv) The stereotype of the 'traditional MP' is breaking down, albeit gradually. Progress on race has been considerably more rapid in the last 20 years than on gender, since the breakthrough for women MPs in 1997.

It makes sense to conclude that a non-white British Prime Minister is simply a matter of time and all of the evidence suggests that the vast majority of the public would take that very much in their stride, with the bouquets or brickbats coming from how they did the job, not colour of their skin.

While we have finally moved on from the shamefully low levels of minority representation in previous parliaments, only if progress is sustained across the political spectrum can Britain hope to see a Parliament that reflects the country that we have become.



## **The race for representation: how the Conservatives caught up**

For a quarter of a century after the 1987 breakthrough, ethnic diversity in parliament was confined to just one side of the House of Commons. In 2001, there were 12 ethnic minority MPs, all of them Labour, with only one Asian Conservative elected in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The new analysis shows that most of the progress over the last decade has been made by the Conservatives. David Cameron deserves credit for his successful political leadership on this issue. Despite inheriting weak foundations on Tory party diversity, he has in ten years emulated more quickly the scale of progress which it took Labour nearly 25 years to make from 1987 to 2010, so that the main parties are now neck-and-neck on ethnic diversity in their 'class of 2015' intakes.

Cameron's Conservatives could even overtake Labour on the overall number of non-white MPs if they were to win an overall majority in 2015. While that appears unlikely, the current trends in Parliamentary candidate selections suggest it would be a perfectly reasonable ambition for the Conservatives to seek to overtake Labour by 2020.

The Labour story remains one of gradual progress, rather than retreat. If the party performs well in its target seats in 2015 and Labour is the largest party in the House of Commons, then it will again have the most ethnic minority MPs. However, Labour may well lose its historic lead at the next general election, if not this one.

From outside the Labour Party, many will think increased competition on race and representation is good for Britain. A single-party monopoly reduced the potential influence and impact of minority voices in politics. In a comparative context, Labour's record remains respectable. Selecting minority candidates in 10% of all selections, including potentially-winnable seats, puts it ahead of most of its social democratic sister parties around the continent. But in Britain it now looks like it is treading water as the Tories catch up. Labour's gradual progress appears to reflect the general trend of the increasing educational success and presence in public life of British ethnic minorities, rather than any active political leadership from the party itself in the last decade.

Labour also needs to investigate whether the poor record of minority candidates in selections for safe seats was simply bad luck in this round of selections, or may represent a more systemic issue. Given the trade unions' influence in constituency parties, it may be worth investigating whether the union movement is as powerful a route for ethnic minority advancement as it might aspire to be. Labour may also find that its record of representation in local government lags behind and so reduces the pool of ethnic minority candidates it can draw from.

The chances of being overtaken in this 'race' is not yet something that many people in the Labour Party have spotted. It is possible that the prospect of falling behind on ethnic minority representation – perhaps more striking considering the party's strong support among minority voters - will lead to Labour refocusing and making more progress. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats put considerable effort into trying to increase the number of women selected when faced with a similar problem.

Whatever the outcome of future selections, there can be no doubt that the days of a one-party monopoly on ethnic minority representation are finished for good – something which makes it more likely that progress will continue, whichever of the political parties happens to be riding high in the polls.

For the question of which party will have more ethnic minority MPs to be relatively open shortly before the General Election is unprecedented, and shows a significant rebalancing in the politics of ethnic minority representation in British politics - one that nobody predicted a decade ago.

## How the 2015 swingometer will decide the race for representation

It is certain that a record number of non-white MPs will be elected in May, compared to the 27 elected in 2010. Both the overall number and the party breakdown, however, will depend on the individual constituency results.

Our projections of the different potential election outcomes show that 2015 will be the first general election in which more than one party has a serious prospect of making the largest contribution to increasing the ethnic diversity of the House of Commons.

### *Scenario One: Déjà vu all over again in 2010 replay*

If there was a replay of the 2010 General Election, in which each party won the same House of Commons constituencies it currently holds, both the Conservative and Labour party would elect eighteen ethnic minority MPs each.

There would be seven Conservatives and two Labour MPs in the ‘class of 2015’ of newly elected first-time MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Of course, an exact replay is unlikely, given significant shifts in the current fortunes of several parties, especially the SNP and the Liberal Democrats. But this starting point does illustrate how the Conservatives have been more likely to select ethnic minority candidates for safe seats – and that the race for representation has become a genuinely competitive two-horse contest.

	Overall seats in scenario	Projected ethnic minority MPs in the Commons	Class of 2015 ethnic minority MPs
Conservative	306	18	<b>7</b>
Labour	258	18	<b>2</b>
LibDems	57	0	0
SNP	6	0	0
UKIP	0	0	0
PC	3	0	0
Green	1	0	0
Respect	1	0	0
Northern Ireland	18	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>

**Scenario Two: Hung Parliament and neck-and-neck result sees Labour retain clear diversity lead**

*Perhaps it was a sign of how disaffected the voters were – but the election campaign seemed to make no difference at all, as each of the party campaigns simply cancelled each other out. Each party wins exactly those seats where they had been the favourites in March 2015, leaving the major parties neck and neck in the House of Commons.*

In this scenario, the Conservatives elect seven ‘class of 2015’ first-time MPs from ethnic minorities to Labour’s nine. Labour maintains its lead in ethnic representation in the House of Commons. Parliament looks hung, drawn and quartered, but Ed Miliband’s minority government results from the scales being tipped by crucial victories in marginal seats, including in Hastings and Rye, where Sarah Owen becomes the first British MP of Chinese descent, and Amina Lone gains Morecambe and Lonsdale from the Conservatives.

	Overall seats in scenario	Projected ethnic minority MPs in the Commons	Class of 2015 minority MPs
Conservative	276	17	<b>7</b>
Labour	276	24	<b>9</b>
LibDems	30	1	1
SNP	41	1	1
UKIP	4	1	1
PC	3	0	0
Green	1	0	0
Respect	1	0	0
Northern Ireland	18	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>

### **Scenario Three: Cameron stays in without a majority – and closes the diversity gap**

*Though predictions of a hung Parliament proved accurate, in this playing-out of the May election the Conservatives move ahead during the campaign, with a lead of almost 30 seats proving enough for David Cameron to go into talks confident he would emerge as Prime Minister of a coalition or a minority government.*

In the ethnic diversity stakes, the honours are divided. The Conservatives win the ‘class of 2015’ contest, electing seven first-time MPs to Labour’s six.

But Labour remains ahead on non-white representation in the House of Commons overall, going past the number of ethnic minority Labour MPs elected in 2010. Three Labour gains from the Liberal Democrats – in Brent East, Bradford East and Norwich South – sees Labour just stay ahead, though other Labour contenders in target seats fall short. The Conservatives, though, demonstrate that Parliament’s ‘Ethnic diversity stakes’ has now become a neck-and-neck race, where they have every prospect of overtaking Labour at the next election. Labour MPs call on the party to treat the result as a wake up call that it should never again be complacent about maintaining its historic role and reputation as the strongest party for ethnic minority representation.

	Overall seats in scenario	Projected minority MPs in the Commons	Class of 2015 minority MPs
Conservative	292	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
Labour	263	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>
LibDems	30	1	1
SNP	38	1	1
UKIP	4	1	1
Plaid	3	0	0
Green	1	0	0
Respect	1	0	0
Northern Ireland	18	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>16</b>

#### **Scenario Four: Conservative majority marks historic victory in race for representation too**

*It feels like 1992 all over again – but with one striking twist. Once again expectations, as the polls closed, of a hung Parliament shifted as the constituency declarations through the night add up to a slim Conservative majority by the early hours. John Major’s 336 MPs had included just one non-white Conservative, but **Cameron’s eighteen ethnic minority Tory MPs outnumber their fifteen Labour counterparts** in a historic reversal which takes many in Westminster by surprise.*

**In this scenario, no fewer than seven out of ten first-time non-white MPs are Tories**, along with one SNP MP, as a series of disappointing defeats in marginal seats means Labour contribute just two MPs to the ethnic minority ‘class of 2015’. Their weakest performance for two decades sees new, non-white Labour MPs elected in Edmonton and Norwich, with Dawn Butler returning to the Commons in Brent Central, having lost her seat in 2010.

Labour stands still and even drops back to 15 non-white MPs. The SNP unseats Anas Sarwar in Glasgow and both Valerie Vaz in Walsall South and Sadiq Khan in Tooting lose seats, on the outer edge of the Tory HQ wishlist, to an unexpectedly strong Tory performance in London and the West Midlands marginal. Paul Uppal holds his Wolverhampton South-West seat quite comfortably.

The Conservatives celebrate their breakthrough – but the total number of minority MPs in the Commons reaches just 35, not the 40-plus that had seemed likely before the election. In a role reversal of the party pattern of a decade ago, it is now Labour that is struggling to match a strong Conservative contribution to Parliamentary diversity. Speeding up progress in 2020 will depend on pressure within the left to get back into the race for representation.

	Overall seats in scenario	Total ethnic minority MPs in the Commons	Class of 2015 ethnic minority MPs
<b>Conservative</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
LibDems	14	1	1
SNP	36	1	1
UKIP	2	0	0
Plaid Cymru	3	0	0
Respect	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>

### **Scenario Five: Miliband majority sees Labour extend its diversity lead**

*As enough marginal seats tumble across England to deliver an overall majority for Labour, Ed Miliband's surprise triumph also sees the party extend its historic reputation for leadership on ethnic minority representation, establishing a strong lead over a Conservative party which had thought it was within shouting distance of catching Labour.*

While the Conservatives bring another six ethnic minority MPs to the Commons in this scenario, increasing their numbers to 15 after the loss of Paul Uppal and Alok Sharma in marginal seats, the doubling of the Labour contingent through the election of 14 new ethnic minority or mixed heritage MPs marks an acceleration of progress. There are now twice as many Labour MPs from minority backgrounds as there are Conservatives.

Labour ethnic minority candidates Purma Sen in Brighton and Naz Shah in Bradford defeat both Caroline Lucas for the Greens and Respect's George Galloway.

The number of ethnic minority MPs heads close to 50, with both parties having demonstrated that they would stand minority candidates in a wider range of seats than before. But the prospect of the Conservatives competing for parity now looks some way off once again.

	Overall seats	Total ethnic minority MPs in the Commons	Class of 2015 minority MPs
<b>Conservative</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>
Lib Dems	28	1	1
SNP	36	1	1
UKIP	2	0	0
Plaid Cymru	3	0	0
Green	0	0	0
Respect	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	18		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>22</b>

## The Contenders: who will make the 'Class of 2015'?

### Incumbent MPs seeking re-election

There are 16 Labour and 11 Conservative MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds in the current House of Commons. None of the 27 is among the 86 MPs retiring from the Commons this May, not least because two-thirds of the non-white MPs were first elected in 2010, and only five began their parliamentary careers before 2005.

25 of these 27 MPs seeking re-election are the favourites to win their seats, while two current MPs will fight to retain their seats as the underdog.

**Paul Uppal** (Conservative) is defending a majority of 691 in Wolverhampton South-West, which ranks 13<sup>th</sup> on the list of Labour target seats. The bookmakers' odds suggest he has a 25% chance of retaining the seat.

**Anas Sarwar** (Labour) has a majority of 10,551 in Glasgow Central but the SNP surge has turned every seat into a marginal constituency. The SNP led by 10 points in a constituency poll, and are currently favourites to take the seat, though Sarwar remains in the race, with a 40% chance of holding on.

Twelve non-white Labour MPs and ten Conservatives appear all-but-certain to be re-elected in May, with at least a 90% chance of victory. In addition, one Conservative and two Labour MPs are currently clear favourites in their seats, though these could yet fall if the opposing party secures an overall Commons majority.

The Conservatives need at least 20 net gains to secure an overall majority. Walsall South, held by **Valerie Vaz** (majority 1755, 4.3%) and **Sadiq Khan's** Tooting (majority 2525, 5%) rank 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> in the list of seats where the Conservatives missed out in 2010. Labour is currently a strong favourite to retain both seats for 2015.

**Alok Sharma's** Reading West was a key marginal gained by the Conservatives from Labour in the 2010 election with a large swing. Sharma is now defending a majority of 6004 (12%) and has a 75% chance of retaining a seat that now ranks as Labour's 95<sup>th</sup> target seat.

### New candidates replacing retiring MPs

#### **Conservatives:**

The Conservatives have selected seven ethnic minority candidates in thirty-five selections held to date to replace retiring Conservative MPs – 20% of selections for Conservative-held



seats during this Parliament have seen ethnic minority candidates win the local Conservative association selection contest.

Six minority candidates are standing in seats that look very safe, with **Rishi Sunak** successful in the selection contest to replace William Hague in Richmond, South Yorkshire, who won the largest Conservative majority in the country in 2010.

Other Conservative candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds selected by local associations to defend majorities of over 10,000 are **Ranil Jayawardene** in Hampshire North-East (18,591 majority), **Suella Fernandes** in Fareham (17,092), London assembly member **James Cleverly**, who succeeds **Brooks Newmark** in Braintree (16,121), **Nusrat Ghani** in Wealden (15,921), and **Alan Mak** who will defend a 12,160 vote majority in Havant, where David Willetts is standing down.

**Seema Kennedy** (South Ribble) will defend a Conservative-held seat which is 78th on the Labour target list: she currently has a 75% chance of retaining the seat, which the Conservatives won by 5554 votes (11%) last time

#### ***Labour:***

Labour have selected just two ethnic minority candidates to replace MPs who are standing down, in 38 selections. 5% of selections for Labour-held seats have seen an ethnic minority candidate selection.

In Edmonton, **Kate Osamor** will defend a majority of just under 10,000. By contrast, **Tulip Siddiq** is defending the smallest Labour majority in parliament, just 42 votes, in a three-way marginal. Her 18% lead in Lord Ashcroft's constituency poll last year means that she is still considered a strong favourite in this super-marginal seat.

#### **New candidates seeking to gain target seats**

Labour needs 68 net gains to secure a majority, but it would need to win more than 68 seats elsewhere if, as current opinion polls suggest, the party loses seats in Scotland. Labour has published a list of 106 'battleground' target seats, and has selected ethnic minority candidates for 13 of these contests: 12% of the party's long list of target seats.

In these target marginal seats, three non-white Labour candidates are challenging the Liberal Democrats in seats where Labour is favourite to win, with Clive Lewis in Norwich South 6<sup>th</sup> on the party's target list, Imran Hussain in Bradford East at 10<sup>th</sup> and former MP Dawn Butler seeking to return to the Commons in Brent Central (23<sup>rd</sup>).

Several Labour candidates are standing in marginal seats which are too close to call and whose outcome will help to determine which is the largest party in the House of Commons.

Sarah Owen, of British Chinese origin, is the frontrunner in Hastings and Rye, while Amina Lone in Morecambe and Lonsdale and Rupa Huq, in Ealing Central must win constituencies where they are currently narrow favourites for there to be a chance of a change of government at the election.

Naz Shah faces a tough fight against George Galloway of Respect in Bradford West. Labour had been slight favourites to take the seat, before having to re-run their candidate selection. Galloway is now slight favourite (5/6) with Labour at evens.

Four more Labour candidates are contenders, with more than a 40% chance of winning a seat, but still remain underdogs. Purna Sen is seeking to unseat Green MP Caroline Lucas in Brighton, while Amanjit Jhund is also seeking to unseat a Liberal Democrat MP, Jo Swinson, in Dunbartonshire East. He is currently third favourite in a three-way fight, with the SNP in pole position, though Jhund is still given a 30% chance of victory. If Labour wins seats like that being fought by Azhar Ali in Pendle or Jessica Asato in Norwich North then Ed Miliband would almost certainly emerge as Prime Minister.

A further three ethnic minority Labour candidates are contenders with an outside chance of winning seats where the party is competitive, but currently projected to be more likely to finish second than first:

**Thabgam Debbonair** (Bristol West) – **38% chance**

**Amanjit Jhund** (Dunbartonshire East) – **29% chance**

**Rebecca Blake** (Redditch) – **20% chance**

The Conservatives' only ethnic minority candidate in the forty marginal seats that they are seeking to gain from another party, **Afzal Amin** in Dudley North, was suspended from the party as this report was going to print following allegations of impropriety. The majority of 649 (1.7%) puts it ninth on the list of Tory target seats, ranked by percentage majorities, but a strong UKIP challenge means that the Conservatives are a distant third in the betting, with only a 10% chance of taking the seat.

### Other parties

The Liberal Democrats have a weak record on ethnic minority representation, and will again struggle in tough election circumstances. The party had an all-white Parliamentary party among its 57 MPs in 2010.

Though they are unlikely to elect any 'visible minority' MPs in 2015, one of the Lib Dems likely to be elected does self-identify as BAME (black and minority ethnic): Bath candidate Steve Bradley, who is of Irish traveller descent. Two other minority candidates were selected for the Lib Dems, but have since stood down. Ibrahim Taguri faced an uphill struggle after being selected to succeed Sarah Teather in Brent East, and was given around a 15% chance before he stood down after media allegations over the rules on political donations. A British Chinese candidate, Sarah Yong, was selected in Somerton and Frome, but stood down citing personal reasons.

Lib Dem candidate Layla Morgan has a slightly stronger chance (25%) of causing an upset in Oxford West and Abingdon, where she is seeking to reverse the Lib Dem loss to the Conservatives in 2010. Maajad Nawaaz of the Quilliam Foundation is the Lib Dem candidate in the 3-way marginal of Hampstead and Kilburn, but is currently a 16/1 outsider (5%) to take the seat.

There have been relatively few ethnic minority MPs elected outside England, except for Mohammed Sarwar in Glasgow Central from 1997 to 2010, who was succeeded by his son Anas Sarwar at the 2010 election. While Sarwar now faces a tough challenge, the SNP look very likely to elect their first non-white Westminster MP, since **Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh** in Ochil is targeting the smallest Labour majority in Scotland.

The Greens have no minority candidates in their dozen top target seats. Leader Nathalie Bennett candidly acknowledged that the party does have a problem with diversity but struggled to identify what she could do about this as leader of a party that prides itself on its bottom-up, decentralised structure.

UKIP has relatively few target seats. Of the dozen seats in which the party's prospects are strongest, one candidate has a mixed race heritage, Thurrock candidate Tim Aker, whose father was Turkish.

Aker was the subject of a rather disreputable attack from his Conservative opponents, who were widely criticized for a leaflet referring to him as Timur Aker, the name on his birth certificate, in a move which Conservative MP Jackie Doyle-Price acknowledged was "childish", though she defended the leaflet in rather disingenuous terms: "If I'm honest with you I think by referring to his Turkish heritage we've actually given him credibility because frankly having roots from overseas is nothing to be ashamed of. Actually they are something to be proud. What we've done is actually broadcast the fact that Tim is just as much a

citizen with diverse roots as anybody else in this country. It's probably going to do him a favour." While the Conservative party can take pride in the progress which it has made on selecting ethnic minority candidates, the party leadership should ensure that its local campaigns do not cross the line by casting slurs on opponents based on their ethnic heritage.

## APPENDIX

The tables below project which candidates would be likely to be elected in their constituency contests if the national results reflected the five election scenarios that we have set out.

### Existing Labour MPs seeking re-election

Name	Constituency	Since	Majority	Current odds	Result in our five election scenarios				
					2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Diane Abbott	Hackney North & Stoke Newington	1987	14,461 (31%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Keith Vaz	Leicester East	1987	14,082 (29%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Mark Hendrick	Preston	2000	7,733 (24%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
David Lammy	Tottenham	2000	16,931 (42%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Khalid Mahmood	Birmingham Perry Barr	2001	11,908 (28%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Sadiq Khan	Tooting	2005	2524 (8%) Con	80% (Cons 5/1)	In	In	In	In	Out
Virendra Sharma	Ealing Southall	2007	9,291 (20%) Con	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Rushanara Ali	Bethnal Green and Bow	2010	11,574 (23%) Respect	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham Ladywood	2010	10,105 (28%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Lisa Nandy	Wigan	2010	10,487 (24%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Chi Onwurah	Newcastle upon Tyne central	2010	7,464 (22%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton SE	2010	8,634 (22%) C	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Anas Sarwar	Glasgow Central	2010	10,551 (35%) SNP	40% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	In	In	Out	Out	Out
Chuka Umunna	Streatham	2010	3,259 (7%) LD	1/33 on 95%	In	In	In	In	In
Valerie Vaz	Walsall South	2010	1755 (4%) C	90% (Cons 8/1)	In	In	In	In	Out
Seema Malhotra	Feltham and Heston	2011	6203 (27%) C (10%2010)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
<b>Re-elected MPs</b>						<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

## Existing Conservative MPs seeking re-election

Name	Seat	Since	Majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Adam Afriyie	Windsor	2005	19,054 (38%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Shailesh Vara	NW Cambs	2005	16,677 (29%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Rehman Chisti	Gillingham & Rainham	2010	8,680 (19%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Helen Grant	Maidstone & the Weald	2010	5889 (12%)	90% (LD 7/1)	In	In	In	In	In
Sam Gyimah	East Surrey	2010	16,874 (31%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Sajid Javid	Bromsgrove	2010	11,308 (22%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Kwasi Kwarteng	Spelthorne	2010	10,019 (21%)	90% (UKIP 7/1)	In	In	In	In	In
Priti Patel	Witham	2010	15,196 (32%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Alok Sharma	Reading West	2010	6,004 (13%)	75% (Labour 11/4)	In	Out	In	In	In
Paul Uppal	Wolverhampton SW	2010	691 (2%)	25% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	In	Out	Out	In	In
Nadhim Zahawi	Stratford-upon-Avon	2010	11,346 (22%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
<b>Total MPs</b>						<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

## Potential Conservative class of 2015: replacing incumbent MP

### Replacing incumbent MP

Candidate	Seat	Challenger	Defending 2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Ranil Jayawardena	Hamps N-East		18,591 (35%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Alan Mak	Havant		12,160 (28%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Rishi Sunak	Richmond		23,336 (44%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Seema Kennedy	South Ribble	Lab	5,554 (11%)	75% (Lab 5/2)	In	Out	In	In	In
Nusrat Ghani	Wealden		15,921 (29%)	99%	In	In	In	In	In
Suella Fernandes	Fareham		17092	99%	In	In	In	In	In
James Cleverley	Braintree	UKIP	16121 (32.8%)	95% (UKIP 12/1)	In	In	In	In	In

### Fighting target seats

Candidate	Seat	Held by	Challenging 2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Afzal Amin*	Dudley North	Lab	649 (1.7%)	10% (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	In	Out	Out	Out	In
<b>Total MPs</b>						<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

\*Suspended as this report went to print

## Potential Lib Dem class of 2015

### Replacing incumbent

Name	Seat	Challenger	2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Steve Bradley	Bath	Con	11,883 (11%)	80%	In	In	In	In	In

### Fighting target seats

Name	Seat	Incumbent	2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Layla Morgan	Oxford West & Abingdon	Con	176 (0.3%)	25% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Out	Out	Out	Out	Out
Maajid Nawaz	Hampstead & Kilburn	Con	841 (1.6%)	5% (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Out	Out	Out	Out	Out
<b>Total MPs</b>					<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

### SNP selections: fighting target seat

Candidate	Seat	Held by	Challenging 2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh	Ochil	Lab	5187 (10%)	80% (Labour 4/1)	Out	In (?)	In	In	In
<b>Total MPs</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

### UKIP selections: fighting target seat

Candidate	Seat	Held by	Challenging 2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Tim Aker	Thurrock	Con	13,479 (29.4%) 5 <sup>th</sup> place in 2010	60%	Out	Out	In	In	Out
<b>Total MPs</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>



## Potential Labour class of 2015 entrants

### Replacing incumbent Labour MP

Candidate	Seat	Challenger	2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Tulip Siddiq	Hampstead & Kilburn	Con (LD)	42 (0.1%)	80%	In	In	In	In	Out
Kate Osamur	Edmonton		9613	99%	In	In	In	In	In
<b>Total MPs</b>					<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

### Fighting target seats

Candidate	Seat	Held by	2010 majority	Current odds	2010 replay	Lab majority	Hung, Lab-led	Hung, Con-led	Con majority
Clive Lewis	Norwich South	LibDems	310 (0.7%)	75%	Out	In	In	In	Out
Imran Hussain	Bradford East	Lib Dem	365 (0.9%)	80%	Out	In	In	In	Out
Amina Lone	Morecambe & Lunesdale	Con	866 (2%)	60%	Out	In	In	Out	Out
Naz Shah	Bradford West	Respect (2012*)	10,140 (30.9%)  2010: Lab maj 5,763 (14.2%)	55%	Out	In	In	In	Out
Purma Sen	Brighton Pavilion	Green	1252 (2.4%)	40% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Out	In	Out	Out	Out
Dawn Butler**	Brent Central	Lib Dem	1345 (3%)	90%	Out	In	In	In	In
Sarah Owen	Hastings & Rye	Con	1993 (4%)	70%	Out	In	In	Out	Out
Uma Kumaran	Harrow East	Con	3403 (7.1%)	45% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Out	In	Out	Out	Out
Amanjit Jhund	Dunbartons hire East	Lib Dem	2184 (4.6%)	30% (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Out	In	Out	Out	Out
Rupa Huq	Ealing Central & Acton	Con	3716 (7.9%)	55%	Out	In	In	Out	Out
Azhar Ali	Pendle	Con	3585 (8%)	45% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Out	In	Out	Out	Out
Jessica Asato	Norwich North	Con	3901 (9.2%)	40% (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Out	In	Out	Out	Out
Rebecca Blake	Redditch	Con	5821 (13.2%)	20%	Out	Out?	Out	Out	Out
<b>Labour class of 2015</b>					<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>

\* Respect gained Bradford West in a 2012 by-election; it was a Labour seat in 2010

\*\* Dawn Butler is a former MP, seeking to return to the Commons, in a Lib Dem held seat

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