

PROFESSOR SARAH CHILDS - SUBMISSION

The Good Parliament was published in June 2016. It is a blueprint for achieving a 'truly representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective' Parliament (www.ipu.org). The Report is a response to existing academic research and in-House reports that had already documented many of the diversity insensitivities that characterise the Commons, as shown in the Table below.

'Red, Amber, Green' Analysis of the Commons: Representation and Inclusion

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

The Good Parliament makes 43 recommendations to a range of individuals and institutions within, and closely related to, the House of Commons. They address three dimensions:

1. *Equality and Participation within the House*. This dimension 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 Members. It addresses in particular the composition of the House and MPs' participation across the House leadership, and in its various committees.
2. *Parliamentary Infrastructure*. This dimension examines how Parliament facilitates the work of Members and whether this privileges a particular type of MP. It covers everything from the buildings and furniture to the official rules and working practices.
3. *Commons Culture*. This dimension acknowledges that the official, written-down rules never tell the whole story about how institutions function on the ground.

The individual recommendations are listed on pages 3-5 of *The Good Parliament*. Together these 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.

The Commons to-date has, however, lacked sufficient collective will to act on issues of representation and inclusion. *The Good Parliament* addressed this by: exploiting

the experience and expertise of the political and institutional sides of the House (via a MPs Panel and an Advisory Group of officials); designing technical rather than fantastical recommendations; including a range of soft and hard recommendations; and linking each recommendation to a particular actor/institution that would be responsible for its implementation.

Most importantly, the Commons' institutional deficiency was directly redressed. Mr Speaker established *The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion* to lead on this agenda. Mr Speaker chairs the Group, comprised of MPs, male and female, from across the House. The Group has met once (Nov. 2016) and it will meet again in the New Year. The Report recommended that it draw up a 'programme of action' for the duration of this Parliament.