



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**Assembly and Executive Review Committee**

**Stakeholder 'Call for Evidence' Paper on Review  
Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly**

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**Stakeholder Details**

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<b>Stakeholder Address</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type (Include one or more X)</b>		
	<b>Registered Political Party</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Local Government</b>
	<b>Academic</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Government</b>
	<b>Legislature</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Non-Government</b>
	<b>Other (Please Specify)/ Member of the Public</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide some background information on your role as a stakeholder</b>			
(This box will expand as you type)			
<p><b>Paul Chaney</b> is a Reader in Public Policy at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. His research interests include: gender and politics, equalities, public policy, territorial politics, governance, representation and, human rights. He has written over fifty papers in leading academic journals and his books include: <i>Women, Politics and Constitutional Change</i> (2007, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, ISBN: 0708318959, co-authored), <i>Equality and Public Policy</i> (2011, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, ISBN-10: 070832326X, ISBN-13: 978-0708323267). He was a member of the UK government Steering Group that established the Equality and Human Rights Commission.</p> <p><u>Books</u></p> <p>Chaney, P. (2011) <b><u>Equality and Public Policy</u></b>, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, ISBN-10: 070832326X, ISBN-13: 978-0708323267, pp345</p> <p>Chaney P, (co-authored) (2007) <b><u>Women, Politics and Constitutional Change</u></b>, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, ISBN: 0708318959. pp.253.</p> <p>Chaney, P. (co-authored) (2001) <b><u>New Governance- New Democracy?</u></b> University of Wales Press, Cardiff (2001) pp 250, ISBN 0-7083-1678-6</p> <p><u>Peer Reviewed Journal Papers:</u></p> <p><b>Chaney, P. (2014)</b> The Substantive Representation of Women - Does Issue Salience Matter? Party Politicization and UK Westminster Elections 1945- 2010, <b>British Journal of Politics and International Relations</b>, 16, 96- 116, <a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-856X">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-856X</a></p> <p><b>Chaney, P. (2014)</b> Electoral Politics and the Party Politicization of Human Rights: The Case of Westminster Elections 1945- 2010, <b>Parliamentary Affairs - A Journal of Representative Politics</b>, 67, 1, 209- 231, Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society, <a href="http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/current">http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/current</a></p> <p><b>Chaney, P. (2014)</b> Institutional Ableism, Critical Actors and the Substantive Representation of Disabled People: Evidence from the UK Parliament 1940-2012. <b>Journal of Legislative Studies</b>, Impact 0.976, <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/fjls20/current#.U4xm0ih2Goo">http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/fjls20/current#.U4xm0ih2Goo</a></p>			

**Chaney, P. (2014)** Manifesto Discourse and the Substantive Representation of Ethnic Minorities: Analysis of UK State-Wide and Meso Elections, 1964-2011, **Parliamentary Affairs: A Journal of Representative Politics** (Oxford University Press/ Hansard Society) (Early View <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/07/03/pa.gst010.abstract> ) [Journal Ranking: 22/92 in Social Sciences, 5-Year Impact Factor: 1.616]

**Chaney, P. (2013)** 'Older People, Equality and Territorial Justice: Devolution and Social Policy in the UK', **Critical Social Policy**, vol. 33, no. 1, 114-139. [Journal Ranking: 22/92 in Social Sciences, 5-Year Impact Factor: 1.616] <http://csp.sagepub.com/content/33/1/114.abstract>

**Chaney, P. (2013)** New legislative settings and the application of the participative-democratic model of mainstreaming equality in public policy making: evidence from the UK's devolution programme, **Policy Studies**, 33, 5, 455-476. [2012 Impact Factor 1.452] <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/.U5YlaSh2Goo#.U5Yleyh2Goo>

#### **Selected Research Projects:**

(2014- 2019) Co-Applicant / Award Holder £7M ESRC Large Centres Research Grant ES/L009099/1. Wales Institute of Social, Economic Research and Data.

(2009-10) Equality and Human Rights Commission, A study of equality and human rights during the first decade of devolution - Principal investigator and award holder.

(2007-8) Advice and Guidance to Public Service Providers: Promoting Multi-Strand Equality in the Welsh legislative Context and Beyond, Welsh Assembly Government / UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government. Principal investigator and award holder.

(2004-05) Phase II. Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Close The Pay Gap Campaign in Wales, commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Equal Opportunities Commission Wales, and the Wales TUC. Principal investigator and award holder.

(2004) (with Prof Teresa Rees). The Northern Ireland Section 75 Equality Duty: An International Perspective analysis commissioned by the Northern Ireland Office / Office of the First Minister/ Office of the Deputy First Minister, for the Section 75 Equality Duty Operational Review - conducted by Professor Eithne McLaughlin and Mr. Neil Faris. Principal investigator and award holder.

(2003-4) Action against Discrimination in Pay Systems: A Preliminary Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Close The Pay Gap Campaign in Wales, commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Equal Opportunities Commission Wales, and the Wales TUC. Principal investigator and award holder.

(2001-2002) The Equality Policies of the Government of the National Assembly for Wales and their Implementation: July 1999 to January 2002: Project commissioned by: The Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission, Commission for Racial Equality, and Institute of Welsh Affairs.

#### **Guidelines for Completion of Submissions**

The Committee would ask that stakeholders submit electronic responses using this pro forma.

Stakeholders should be aware that their written evidence will be discussed by the Committee in public session and included in the Committee's published Report.

Stakeholders should also be aware that if they decide to publish their submissions, the

publication would not be covered by Assembly privilege in relation to the law of defamation.

## Section 2

### Introduction

#### Powers

- 2.1. The Assembly and Executive Review Committee is a Standing Committee established in accordance with Section 29A and 29B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”) and Standing Order 59 which, amongst other powers, provide for the Committee to:
- I. make a report to the Secretary of State, the Assembly and the Executive Committee, by no later than 1 May 2015, on the operation of Parts III and IV of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; and
  - II. consider such other matters relating to the functioning of the Assembly or the Executive as may be referred to it by the Assembly.

#### Assembly and Executive Review Committee’s Terms of Reference for and approach to this Review

- 2.2. The Committee agreed the **Terms of Reference** of this Review on **24 June 2014** as follows:
- i. **Analyse the key challenges / barriers facing women in relation to entry into politics in Northern Ireland and in particular this Assembly**
  - ii. **Examine potential existing initiatives which would assist women in relation to entry into politics in this Assembly**
  - iii. **Examine what are the merits of ‘positive actions’ that have been successful within the United Kingdom and Ireland and within other jurisdictions, and to consider their potential impact in the context of Northern Ireland and in particular this Assembly**

- iv. **Provide recommendations / conclusions on i to iii above, including initiatives / mechanisms to enhance the role of women already active in the political arena in Northern Ireland and in particular this Assembly**

### **Phase 1 – Review Evidence Gathering**

The Review will take evidence on **Women in Politics in the Northern Ireland Assembly** in relation to the **(i) to (iv) above**. This will include evidence from **Assembly Research and Information Services, expert / academic witnesses, a public ‘Call for Evidence’ and from visits to other legislatures.**

### **Phase 2 – Consideration and Report**

The Committee will consider all evidence received in relation to **Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly** and report and provide recommendations / conclusions to the Assembly on these matters by in **late autumn 2014.**

### **Matters Outside the Scope of the Review**

- 2.3. The Committee has agreed that the following issue is outside of the scope of the Review:
- **Alternative electoral systems / models**

## Section 3

### BACKGROUND

**This section provides some background information on some issues being considered by the Committee as part of this Review.**

**3.1.** The following sections provide information relating to **Women in politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly** drawn from the Northern Ireland Assembly Research & Information Service Research paper NIAR 570-13.<sup>1</sup>

#### **3.2 Statistical Outline**

The Northern Ireland Assembly currently has 22 female Members out of a total of 108 (22%), although 20 women were elected in 2011, the net increase being due to two more female than male co-option by a party and independent Member replacing Members since the election. 38 female and 180 male candidates stood in the 2011 Assembly elections (17.4%).

If placed in international perspective alongside national legislatures, the Northern Ireland Assembly would rank 70<sup>th</sup> in the world. Apart from the Italian regional legislatures, the Northern Ireland Assembly has significantly lower female representation than comparable Western European legislatures.

The following figures place the Assembly in the perspective of female political representation in Northern Ireland and in general.

- 23.5% of Local Councillors in 2011 were women (compared with 31% in England)
- With 5 of 26 Mayors /Chairs of Councils were women
- 4 of 18 MPs are women (compared with 22% in GB)
- 2 of 3 MEPs are women (compared with 30% in GB)
- 4 of 15 Ministers and Junior Ministers are women
- 4 Chairpersons and 2 Deputy Chairperson of Committees are women out of 18 Committees

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2014/assembly\\_exec\\_review/potter0914.pdf](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2014/assembly_exec_review/potter0914.pdf)

The representation of women in politics in Northern Ireland has a direct association with candidate selection. An examination of the 2011 Assembly elections indicates that female candidates generally fared better than their male counterparts in terms of votes won, but the lower numbers elected were more reflective of lower numbers of candidates.

### **3.3 Policy**

The Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, which consists of a range of commitments by governments to address structural disadvantages experienced by women internationally, includes specific measures to increase women's participation in power and decision-making.

These include:

*Strategic Objective G.1: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.*

*Strategic Objective G.2: Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.*

The Belfast Agreement 1998 includes a commitment to *'the right of women to full and equal political participation'*.

The vision for the Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland states:

*Men and women will be able to realise their full potential to contribute equally to the political, economic, social, (including caring roles) and cultural development of Northern Ireland and benefit equally from the results.*

One of the Key Action Areas of the Strategy is *'representation in public life/decision-making'*, which is associated with the following strategic objectives:

- To achieve better collection and dissemination of data;
- To achieve gender balance on all government appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies;
- To actively promote an inclusive society; and
- To ensure the participation of women and men in all levels of peace building, civil society, economy and government

### **3.5 Legislative Frameworks**

Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly are provided for in the Northern Ireland Act 1998. There are no provisions for gender equality relating to elections in the Act.

The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 amends the Sex Discrimination Northern Ireland) Order 1976 to exempt the selection of election candidates from the provision of the Order. This enables political parties to use positive discrimination for the promotion of women candidates over men. This provision has been extended to 2030.

**Further information on barriers to women's participation within legislatures; examples**



of proposals, mechanisms to overcome barriers; quotas and support mechanisms to increase the political participation are set out in paper NIAR 570-13.

[www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2014/assembly\\_exec\\_review/potter0914.pdf](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2014/assembly_exec_review/potter0914.pdf)

#### Section 4

#### Questions to consider

(1) Question

***What are the key challenges / barriers facing women in relation to entering politics in Northern Ireland, and in particular the Northern Ireland Assembly, and what evidence can you provide on this?***

(This box will expand as you type)

In my view the key challenges / barriers facing women in relation to entering politics in Northern Ireland, and in particular the Northern Ireland Assembly – are cultural, political and organisational. Cultural – the endurance of androcentric attitudes/ practices in society, compounded by gender inequalities in the labour market, unequal domestic division of labour and the prevalence of sexism and discriminatory practices. Political – candidate selection procedures in political parties are not gender equal. Sexism and discrimination endure in party practices. Gender power inequalities endure in the main political parties. Organisational – vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market and the endurance of the gender pay gap attest to gender inequalities across organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. In part these observations draw upon my work for (1). The Northern Ireland Section 75 Equality Duty: An International Perspective analysis commissioned by the Northern Ireland Office / Office of the First Minister/ Office of the Deputy First Minister, for the Section 75 Equality Duty Operational Review – co-ordinated by Professor Eithne McLaughlin and Mr. Neil Faris. And (2). the comparative analysis in my book Equality and Public Policy (2011).

## (2) Question

***Can you provide evidence on initiatives which demonstrates positive outcomes to encourage more women to pursue a career in politics which could be applied to the Northern Ireland Assembly?***

(This box will expand as you type)

Further to the analysis in: Chaney P, (co-authored) (2007) Women, Politics and Constitutional Change, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, ISBN: 0708318959. pp.253 – and subsequent publications – the following have proved effective in the Welsh context:

- Positive action in candidate selection by the Welsh Labour Party (twinning of constituencies) – and Plaid Cymru (“zipping” of candidates on National Assembly seats elected by PR)
- Mentoring and outreach work to encourage women to stand for election
- Government finding of gender equality networks in civil / civic society
- Government adoption of gender mainstreaming

## (3a) Question

***What policies should political parties have in place to increase the number of women candidates in Northern Ireland elections?***

(This box will expand as you type)

Twinning of constituencies – one female and one male candidate in each pair of constituencies – or – use of quotas.

Parties should adopt gender mainstreaming practices.

Equality Impact Assessments should be used routinely

Gender equality should be achieved on all decision-making forums within parties

Parties' gender equality practices should be subject to effective external monitoring and scrutiny by an ombuds(wo)man.

**(3b) Question**

***Political Parties are asked to specify what policies and initiatives they have in place to increase women in political life?***

(This box will expand as you type)

N/A

**(4) Question**

***What 'positive actions' would you recommend to increase women's representation in the Northern Ireland Assembly?***

(This box will expand as you type)

- Positive action in candidate selection - twinning of constituencies – and “zipping” of candidates elected by PR.
- Mentoring and outreach work to encourage women to stand for election
- Government finding of gender equality networks in civil / civic society
- Government adoption of gender mainstreaming

Moreover, serious consideration be given to the use of statutory quotas (i.e. a prescribed number of women in the Assembly).

#### (5) Question

***What recommendations would you put forward to enhance the role of women already active in the political arena in Northern Ireland (providing evidence for recommendations as applicable)?***

(This box will expand as you type)

- Based on the evidence in Wales I recommend that more women are given ministerial office as well as chairing Assembly Committees. The Welsh evidence shows how this can translate into the substantive representation of women.
- More effective childcare provision
- Mentoring and training

**(6) Question**

***Do you consider there are specific initiatives / actions that the Northern Ireland Assembly as an institution should take to enhance the role of women in politics, including a gender sensitive environment – and if so please include your recommendations.***

(This box will expand as you type)

- Gender equality provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration, EC Directives, and UN Declaration on Human Rights should be embedded in all aspects of the Assembly's functioning and backed in Standing Orders – and rigorously enforced.
- Family-friendly working hours
- A standing cross-party committee on equalities and human rights
- Adoption of gender mainstreaming practices

**Section 5**

**Additional Information**

Please provide any additional information which you believe will be of assistance to the Committee during the course of the Review.

(This box will expand as you type)

I believe the Committee should give serious consideration to the use of quotas – and should be mindful of the experience in Wales – namely that positive action measures (twinning of constituencies, “zipping” etc.) can deliver gender equality (50: 50 female/ male split in Assembly members was achieved in the third Assembly) – BUT it fails to address the underlying social-cultural and structural inequalities – such that practices revert to type when affirmative action is withdrawn.

**Section 6**

**Contact Details**

**All responses should be sent by email please to:**

The Committee Clerk  
Assembly and Executive Review Committee  
Room 241  
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Ballymiscaw  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

**Tel:** 028 90521787 or  
028 90521928

**To arrive no later than Wednesday 3 September 2014 please**

**Email:** [committee.assembly&executivereview@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:committee.assembly&executivereview@niassembly.gov.uk)

**Thank you for your submission**