

20 years of Holyrood – Scotland's Women Stand

An alliance of women's organisations and The Scottish Parliament have announced a move aiming to tackle the gender imbalance in Scottish politics.

The Scottish Parliament plans to open up its Debating Chamber on Saturday 7 September 2019 to over 400 women from across Scotland for a day of action and inspiration. The event is part of the Parliament's 20th anniversary programme.



The initiative, called Scotland's Women Stand, is being organised by the Parliament Project, which is a non-partisan project aiming to inspire, empower and encourage women to run for political office in the UK and YWCA Scotland: The Young Women's Movement. It is hoped that the project will help women to overcome boundaries and it will equip them for political office.

Registration for the event is open to all women from across Scotland. Women can sign up to attend online, and organisers are actively collaborating with third sector organisations to ensure the event is inclusive and accessible to women from all backgrounds.

Deputy Presiding Officer Linda Fabiani MSP, who will chair the event said: "The Parliament wants to open its doors to over 400 women from across Scotland in a concerted day of action to support and inspire women to get involved in political life in Scotland.

"This event is for women up and down the country that have never thought about standing for political office, didn't think it was for them and didn't know that they had the power to make a positive difference to the lives of people in Scotland.

"In the Parliament's 20th year as we reflect on what the institution has achieved over two decades, we must also look to the future and make sure that the Parliament is reflective of the communities that it serves. This new programme seeks to shape the future of women in politics in Scotland and take the positive action we need to make the Parliament and politics generally more representative. But for it to be successful, we need women from across Scotland and for all backgrounds and communities to get involved."

The event in the Debating Chamber aims to look at their roles and potential to have a voice in Scottish political life, inspiring them with high profile women already playing a key role in politics. It will also seek to demystify the political process and help women better understand how they can influence politics in Scotland.

Lee Chalmers, Director of The Parliament Project said: "We want this event to be a catalyst and an inspiration for women to get involved in politics, but also to equip them with valuable

knowledge and skills. The Parliament Project has seen several participants in our programme go forward to stand for elected office and this is an opportunity for many more to begin that journey.

“More women as elected representatives is a change we need to support, and this event is a powerful moment in recognising that need, connecting women with a 400-strong group of their peers in Holyrood, a space of political power. There will be inclusive workshops and follow-on peer circles to support and inspire women standing for election, or to get involved in participatory democracy.”

YWCA Scotland: The Young Women’s Movement, are working with young women on leadership topics and recently released research with young women showing that politics is not an environment that welcomes them.

Patrycja Kupiec, Director of YWCA Scotland – The Young Women’s Movement, said:“Our organisation has been advocating for voices of girls and women in Scotland to be heard, celebrated and respected for over 150 years, and we want to see equal representation in politics in 10 years not another 100 years.”