

Claire Perry MP



Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Constituency: [Devizes](#), South West
Majority: 13,005

Party: Conservative



Westminster

Claire Perry MP
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Relevant contributions

- A brief summary of her relevant can [be found here](#).
- Perry has consistently welcomed the government's policy of fuel duty freezes, and has tabled questions on rail electrification and other rail issues.

Parliamentary Career

- PPS to Philip Hammond as Secretary of State for Defence 2011-13;
- Chair, Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection -2012;
- Adviser to the Prime Minister on Preventing the Sexualisation and Commercialisation of Childhood 2012-;
- Assistant Government Whip 2013-14;
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport 2014-

Past Select committees

Member: Justice 2010-11

All-party groups (membership)

Member, [Canada](#) Group
Member, [Child Protection](#) Group
Member, [Environment](#) Group
Member, [Fairs and Showgrounds](#) Group
Member, [Headache Disorders](#) Group
Member, [Rural Services](#) Group
Member, [Sure Start Children's Centres](#) Group
Member, [Women's Sport and Fitness](#) Group 2012-
Member, [Eggs, Pigs and Poultry](#) Group 2012-
Member, [Stalking and Harassment](#) Group 2013-
Member, [Fit and Healthy Childhood](#) Group 2013-

Party posts

Member, Conservative Party 2006-;
Founding member:
2020 group 2011-
Conservative Women's Forum

Councils, public bodies

Governor:
Wellington Academy,
St John's School, Marlborough

Political interests

Economy, education, defence, justice, international development, child protection

Non-political career

Analyst, Bank of America 1985-88;
Consultant, McKinsey and Company 1990-94;
Various roles, Credit Suisse First Boston 1994-2000;
Volunteer fundraiser 2002-04;
Policy adviser to George Osborne MP 2007-09

Profile

A tall, outspoken, well-connected former banker and management consultant with a fairly short political pedigree, Claire Perry made no secret of her ambitions for ministerial office even before she was selected to succeed Michael Ancram (now, the Marquess of Lothian) in one of the Conservatives' safest seats. She has announced that she will be defending her seat at the 2015 General Election.

At the July 2014 Cabinet reshuffle, David Cameron called upon Perry's services to help freshen up his government in time for the 2015 General Election as he promoted her Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State for Transport.

Ambition has done her no harm. A year after joining the Conservative Party she was working in the office of the Shadow Chancellor George Osborne and was quickly promoted to David Cameron's 'A-list' of preferred candidates. Two years later, she was chosen for the seat from 185 applicants in her first attempt at public office, beating among others Nadhim Zahawi, now MP for Stratford-upon-Avon.

She got her feet on the bottom rung of the promotional ladder in 2011 when she was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Defence Secretary Phil Hammond.

In 2012 she was appointed David Cameron's adviser on the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. She has campaigned with some success to make internet pornography an "opt-in" for UK-based internet service providers. She chaired a parliamentary inquiry into online child protection and initiated a debate about it.

And in 2013 she became one of a number of new faces in the Government Whips' Office as an Assistant Whip.

Born in 1964, she grew up in a "conservative with a small-c" family in Somerset where she went to Nailsea Comprehensive School. She was the first in her family to go to university, reading geography at Brasenose College, Oxford, where she avoided the "sad, awful people" who engaged in student politics, and instead gained two rowing blues. She was a women's officer and remembers herself as "a fearsome leftie, a bra-burning feminist with a hideous new-romantic haircut".

She started work in the City for Bank of America before studying for an MBA at the Harvard Business School. She then worked in the USA for McKinsey and Company and Credit Suisse First Boston and started her own company offering financial advice to women.

There she met and married Clayton Perry, a New Zealand-born banker and fund manager who played a leading role in private equity acquisitions before the credit crunch as a senior executive of Credit Suisse.

They returned to Britain in 2000 to live near Salisbury and Perry took a career break to bring up their three children. They are now all at private boarding schools.

She dates her political awakening from David Cameron's election as Conservative leader, and joined the Party in 2006, saying she was "frustrated about the way the world was going". She was soon running the Salisbury branch, where a year later a chance meeting with George Osborne at a fundraising event led to a job on his staff, developing policy on taxation, unemployment and prisons.

It was Osborne who suggested she stand for Parliament after she complained that the Party had too few women who were prepared to stand up and talk about issues. She is still numbered among "Giddy's gang", the Chancellor of the Exchequer's inner circle, where her best hope of promotion lies.

She refused to fight any seat outside Wiltshire, campaigned mainly on rural issues, and launched a local scheme to get young people involved in politics. She is highly concerned about climate change, wants a referendum on EU membership and would vote to repeal the hunting ban.

She centred her maiden speech on hidden rural poverty and the rural economy, accusing the

previous Labour Government of indifference to country issues.

She was a prolific speaker, especially on the economy and prison reform, clocking up more than 75 contributions to debates in her first year. As a PPS she now speaks less frequently. She is sometimes frustrated by the “soundbite” quality of debate.

She complains of sexism in Parliament, but is well-known for language as blue as her politics, which she says is a legacy of working on a trading floor. She was accused of swearing at a fellow Tory MP Douglas Carswell in the Chamber and reprimanded for her language on a live radio programme. And she raised eyebrows and made headlines with a remark in the tea room when, ignored during the tuition fees debate, she suggested certain sexual favours might persuade Mr Speaker to call her.

Often in the news, she attracted more comment when she questioned whether people in poverty should have more children. She had a public row with the sketchwriter Quentin Letts after he rudely described her as an “incorrigible crawler” and a “buxom Amazon”.

She tried unsuccessfully to persuade her female MP colleagues not to dye their hair for a month, in defiance against pressure on women to look young.

Though a staunch loyalist, often chosen by the media to defend the Government line, she set up a group of about 40 Conservative women MPs called the Forum, who describe themselves as “critical friends” of Government policy.

In 2012, she was ordered to pay compensation to her former secretary and best friend after sacking her without fair warning. She came in for some criticism for declaring to an audience that the Duchess of Cambridge was pregnant in July 2012, months before she was.

She chairs the All-Party Group on Connecting Communities and is active on groups on penal affairs, prostitution, women in the penal system, parents and families and young childhood. She upset some Conservatives by saying “prison for girls is not the answer”. She supports transferable tax allowances for married couples and those in civil partnerships.

Her high-profile campaign to get internet service providers to block pornographic websites had its repercussions when her own website was hacked and plastered with pornographic images.

In 2013 she announced that she was separating from her husband after seventeen years of marriage, and moved to a new home in her constituency. She was later reported to have a “blossoming friendship” with a Cambridge University professor of laser engineering Bill O’Neill, who has advised the Government on technology.

Standing nearly six feet tall, she keeps fit by walking and cycling, and enjoys growing vegetables. She often says her second daughter is the Perry most likely to become Prime Minister, “after her mother”.

Contact

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