



Northern Ireland Assembly Elections: 2011

RESEARCH PAPER 11/42 18 May 2011

Elections on 5 May 2011 resulted in little change in the overall party composition of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Gains and losses by individual parties involved just one or two seats. 108 Assembly Members were elected by Single Transferrable Vote, 6 Members for each of 18 constituencies. Following the 2011 elections the two largest parties in the Assembly are the DUP (38 MLAs) and Sinn Féin (29 MLAs).

Richard Cracknell

Recent Research Papers

11/26	Unemployment by Constituency	16.03.11
11/27	Economic Indicators, Budget update	22.03.11
11/28	Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill: Committee Stage Report	24.03.11
11/29	Economic Indicators, April 2011	05.04.11
11/30	Direct taxes: rates and allowances 2011/12	06.04.11
11/31	Health and Social Care Bill: Committee Stage Report	06.04.11
11/32	Localism Bill: Committee Stage Report	12.04.11
11/33	Unemployment by Constituency, April 2011	14.04.11
11/34	London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Amendment) Bill [Bill 165 of 2010-12]	21.04.11
11/35	Economic Indicators, May 2011	03.05.11
11/36	Energy Bill [HL] [Bill 167 of 2010-12]	04.05.11
11/37	Education Bill: Committee Stage Report	05.05.11
11/38	Social Indicators	06.05.11
11/39	Legislation (Territorial Extent) Bill: Committee Stage Report	11.05.11

Research Paper

Contributing Authors: Richard Cracknell
Jeremy Hardacre

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as being up to date; the law or policies may have changed since it was last updated; and it should not be relied upon as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for it. A suitably qualified professional should be consulted if specific advice or information is required.

This information is provided subject to [our general terms and conditions](#) which are available online or may be provided on request in hard copy. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing with Members and their staff, but not with the general public.

We welcome comments on our papers; these should be e-mailed to papers@parliament.uk.

Contents

	Summary	1
1	Introduction	2
1.1	The Electoral System	2
1.2	Results	3
1.3	Turnout	3
	Table 2: 2011 Assembly election turnout	4
	Map: NI Assembly Turnout	4
	Table 3: Assembly seats by party by constituency	5
2	NI Assembly composition 1998 to 2011	6
2.1	Party	6
	Table 4 Assembly seats by party 1998 to 2011	6
2.2	Gender	7
	Table 5 Women elected to the Assembly 1998 to 2011	7
3	NI Assembly seats by party by constituency	8
3.1	Map: Democratic Unionist Party	8
3.2	Map: Sinn Féin	8
3.3	Map: Ulster Unionist Party	8
3.4	Map: Social Democratic and Labour Party	8
3.5	Map: Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	9
3.6	Map: Traditional Unionist Vote	9
3.7	Map: Green Party	9
3.8	Map: Independent	9
	Appendix 1 – 2011 Assembly Members elected by party	10

Summary

Elections on 5 May 2011 resulted in little change in the overall composition of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Gains and losses by individual parties involved just one or two seats. 108 Assembly Members were elected by Single Transferrable Vote, 6 Members for each of 18 constituencies.

Following the 2011 elections the two largest parties in the Assembly are the DUP (38 MLAs) and Sinn Féin (29 MLAs).

2011 NI Assembly Elections: MLAs by party

	Seats won	change from 2007
Democratic Unionist Party	38	+2
Sinn Fein	29	+1
Ulster Unionist Party	16	-2
Social Democratic and Labour Party	14	-2
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	8	+1
Independent	1	-
Green Party	1	-
Traditional Unionist Voice	1	+1
Progressive Unionist Party	0	-1
Total	108	0

1 Introduction

The Northern Ireland Assembly elections on 5 May 2011 were the first to take place following a full term of the Assembly. Elections were previously held on 7 March 2007, but these had been against a backdrop of previous suspension(s) of devolution and the Assembly not convening.

The Assembly was first elected in July 1998, but devolution was suspended on 14 October 2002, under the terms of the *Northern Ireland Act 2000*. Assembly elections took place on 26 November 2003, the Assembly elected then finally convened in May 2006 solely for the purpose of determining the ministers, but without any legislative powers. The Assembly, elected on 26 November 2003, was dissolved on 30 January 2007.

1.1 The Electoral System

As part of the Belfast Agreement concluded on 10 April 1998,¹ the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system was adopted for the Northern Ireland Assembly. STV was already in use for local and European Parliament elections in Northern Ireland.

The STV system requires electors to vote for at least one candidate and then express preference for as many others as they wish. A candidate is elected as soon as he/she reaches the electoral quotient computed according to a particular quotient, known as the Droop Quota:

$$\text{Droop quota} = \frac{\text{Votes}}{\text{Seats} + 1} + 1$$

A candidate who has reached or exceeded the quota is deemed elected. Any surplus votes are then redistributed fractionally to the other candidates on the basis of the second choices expressed by electors.² The same operation is carried out in the case of candidates placed last, who are eliminated. If there are still seats to be filled after the second count, the process continues.

There are 108 seats in the Assembly, with six seats allocated to each of the 18 Westminster constituencies in Northern Ireland.

¹ Cm 3883 1998 Otherwise known as the Good Friday Agreement

² Further information on how the STV voting system operates is available from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland <http://www.eoni.org.uk/index/faqs/pr-stv-voting-system-faqs.htm>

1.2 Results

Elections on 5 May resulted in little change in the political composition of the Assembly:

- The Democratic Unionist Party won 38 (35%) of the 108 seats, 2 more than in 2007. The DUP won the highest share (30%) of the first preference votes.
- Sinn Féin, gained one more seat than in 2007 and secured the second highest share of first preference votes, 27%.
- The SDLP and UUP both lost seats in 2011 compared with 2007. In 2003 the UUP had received 23% of first preferences, but this fell to just under 15% in 2007 and further to around 13% in 2011. Their 16 seats in the Assembly is 2 fewer than previously. The SDLP also had 2 fewer seats in the 2011 Assembly. Its 14% first preference vote share was just 1% point lower than 2007.

Table 1: Northern Ireland Assembly election results: 5 May 2011

	Seats won	change from 2007	1st pref votes		change from 2007
			No.	%	% pt
Democratic Unionist Party	38	+2	198,436	30.0%	-0.1%
Sinn Féin	29	+1	178,222	26.9%	0.8%
Social Democratic and Labour Party	14	-2	94,286	14.2%	-1.0%
Ulster Unionist Party	16	-2	87,531	13.2%	-1.7%
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	8	+1	50,875	7.7%	2.5%
Traditional Unionist Voice	1	+1	16,480	2.5%	2.5%
Independent	1	+0	15,445	2.3%	0.0%
Green Party	1	+0	6,031	0.9%	-0.8%
People Before Profit Alliance	0	+0	5,438	0.8%	0.7%
UK Independence Party	0	+0	4,152	0.6%	0.4%
Progressive Unionist Party	0	-1	1,493	0.2%	-0.3%
British National Party	0	+0	1,252	0.2%	0.2%
Workers Party	0	+0	1,155	0.2%	0.0%
Socialist Party	0	+0	819	0.1%	0.1%
No party description	0	+0	90	0.0%	-0.8%
Procapitalism	0	+0	29	0.0%	0.0%
Total			661,734	100%	

Note: These figures have been provided by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (www.eoni.org.uk); they differ slightly in some cases from those produced by the media immediately after the 5 May.

1.3 Turnout

The number of valid votes was 661,734, 54.7% of the electorate. Invalid votes numbered 12,374 (around twice as many as in 2007). Total votes cast (valid and invalid) are equivalent to 55.7% of the electorate. Turnout in 2011 was lower than in the 2007 Assembly election (62.3%)³.

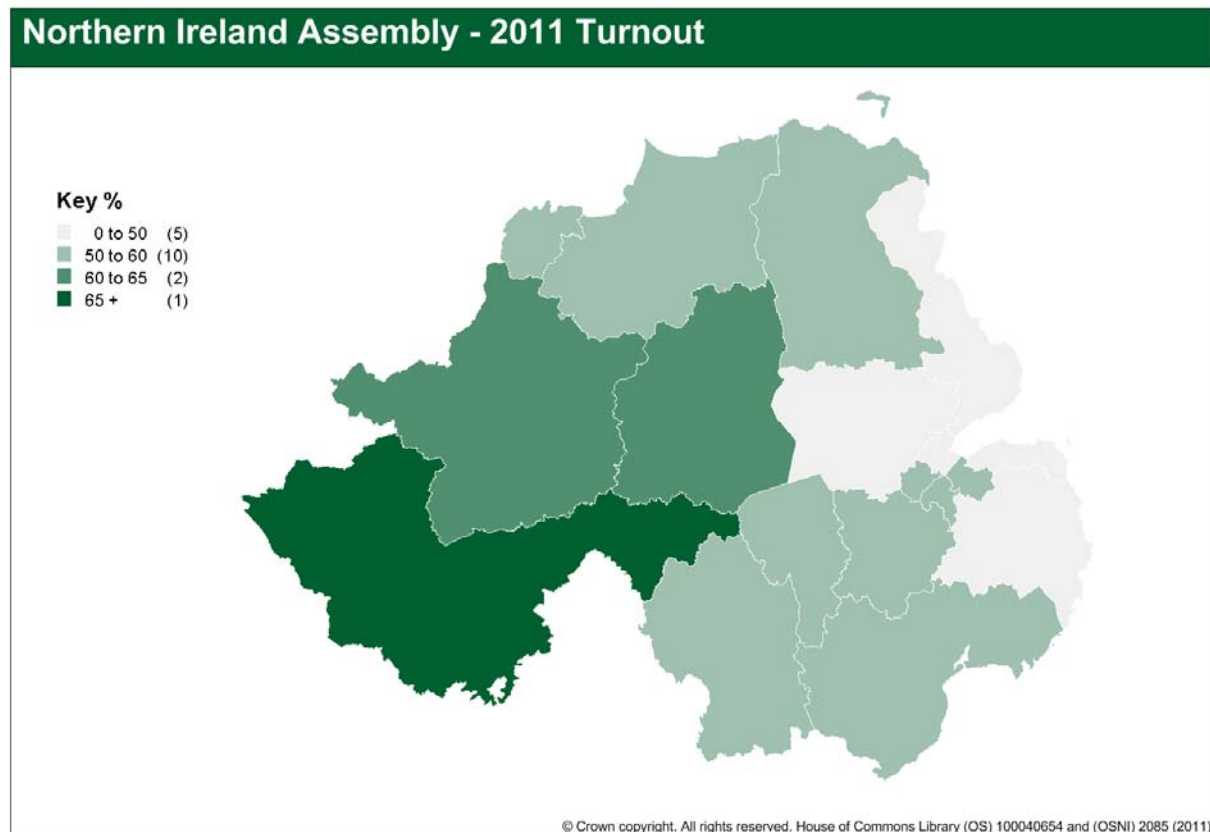
³ based on valid votes only.

By constituency turnout varied around the average from 45% in North Down to 68% in Fermanagh and South Tyrone:

Table 2: 2011 Assembly election turnout

	Turnout
Belfast East	52.8%
Belfast North	49.1%
Belfast South	51.7%
Belfast West	56.3%
East Antrim	47.1%
East Londonderry	53.2%
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	67.6%
Foyle	56.6%
Lagan Valley	52.5%
Mid Ulster	64.2%
Newry and Armagh	60.0%
North Antrim	53.9%
North Down	45.2%
South Antrim	49.3%
South Down	57.0%
Strangford	47.7%
Upper Bann	54.4%
West Tyrone	62.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>54.7%</i>

Note: valid votes as % of election-day electorate



The system of single transferrable vote elects six MLAs for each of the 18 constituencies. The DUP has at least one MLA in all except one constituency, Belfast West. Sinn Féin has five of the Belfast West seats; the SDLP has the remaining one. Sinn Féin has MLAs in all except four constituencies.

The party distribution of the six seats in each constituency by party is set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Assembly seats by party by constituency

Constituency	DUP	Sinn Féin	UUP	SDLP	Alliance	TUV	Green Party	Independent	Total
Belfast East	3		1		2				6
Belfast North	3	2		1					6
Belfast South	1	1	1	2	1				6
Belfast West		5		1					6
East Antrim	3	1	1		1				6
East Londonderry	3	1		1				1	6
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2	3	1						6
Foyle	1	2		3					6
Lagan Valley	4		1		1				6
Mid Ulster	1	3	1	1					6
Newry & Armagh	1	3	1	1					6
North Antrim	3	1	1			1			6
North Down	3		1		1		1		6
South Antrim	3	1	1		1				6
South Down	1	2	1	2					6
Strangford	3		2		1				6
Upper Bann	2	1	2	1					6
West Tyrone	1	3	1	1					6
Total	38	29	16	14	8	1	1	1	108

Source: The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland www.eoni.org.uk

Maps showing the number of Assembly Members by party in each constituency are on pages 8 and 9.

2 NI Assembly composition 1998 to 2011

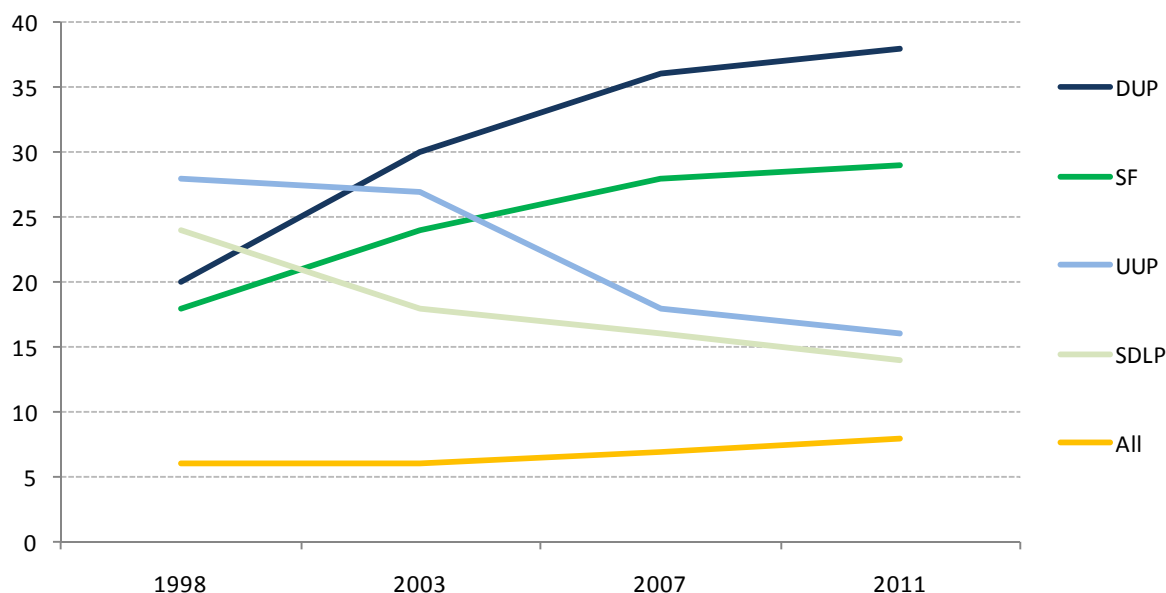
2.1 Party

The political composition of the Assembly elected in 2011 is similar to that elected in 2007. What changes there were in 2011, however, were a continuation of the trends seen previously of gains by the DUP and Sinn Féin, with seats lost by the SDLP and UUP.

84 of those elected in 2011 had been in the previous Assembly, 11 of whom had become MLAs as substitutes for sitting Members.

Table 4 Assembly seats by party 1998 to 2011

	1998	2003	2007	2011
Democratic Unionist Party	20	30	36	38
Sinn Féin	18	24	28	29
Ulster Unionist Party	28	27	18	16
Social Democratic and Labour Party	24	18	16	14
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	6	6	7	8
Independent	-	1	1	1
Green Party	-	-	1	1
Traditional Unionist Voice	-	-	-	1
United Kingdom Unionist Party	5	1	-	-
Progressive Unionist Party	2	1	1	-
NI Women's Coalition	2	-	-	-
Independent Unionists	3	-	-	-
	108	108	108	108



Note: MLAs are shown by party at election; no account is taken of subsequent party defections

2.2 Gender

Twenty women were elected to the Assembly in 2011, the highest number ever.

Table 5 Women elected to the Assembly 1998 to 2011

	1998	2003	2007	2011
Women MLAs	15	18	15	20
	14%	17%	14%	19%

Note: MLAs are at election; no account is taken of substitutions between elections

The Alliance Party's Anna Lo was first elected to the Assembly in 2007; she was re-elected in 2011. She is believed to be the first ethnic Chinese person to be elected to a legislature in Europe and is the only minority ethnic Member of the Assembly.⁴

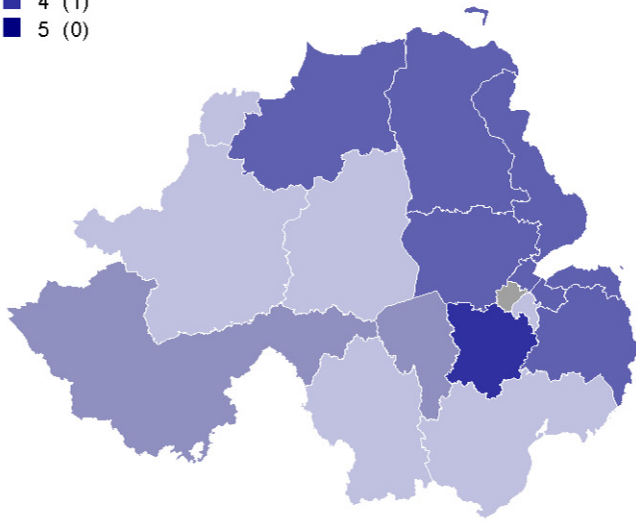
⁴ <http://www.annalo.org/about>

Northern Ireland Assembly seats by party and constituency

Democratic Unionist

Seats

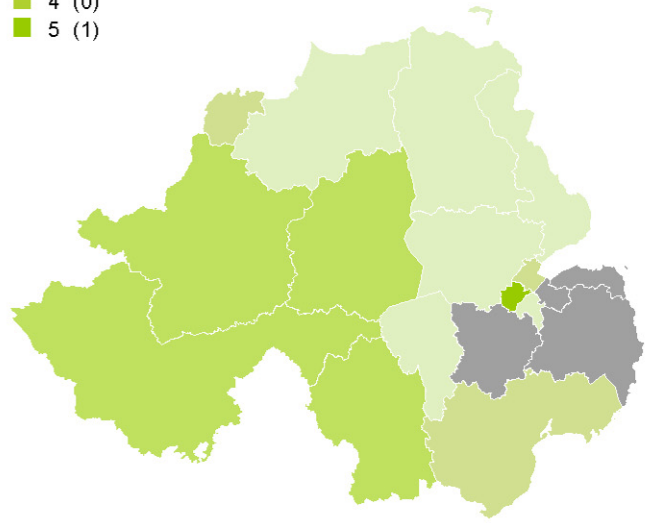
- 0 (1)
- 1 (6)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (8)
- 4 (1)
- 5 (0)



Sinn Féin

Seats

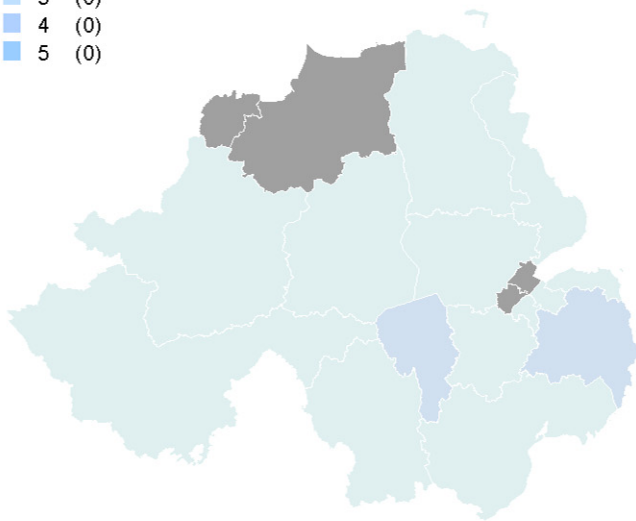
- 0 (4)
- 1 (6)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (0)
- 5 (1)



Ulster Unionist

Seats

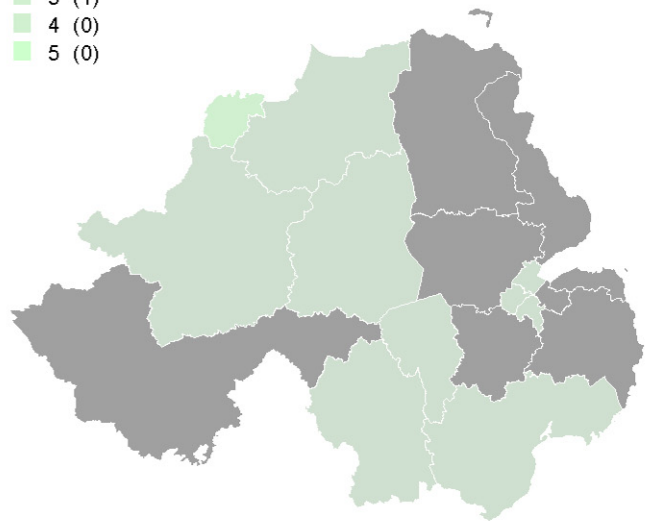
- 0 (4)
- 1 (12)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (0)
- 4 (0)
- 5 (0)



SDLP

Seats

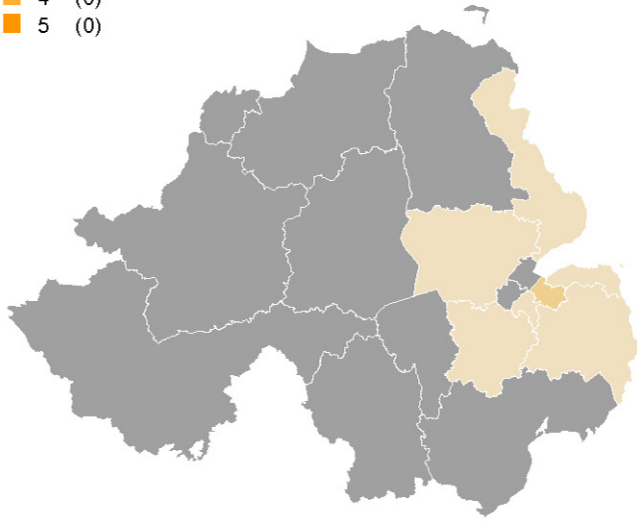
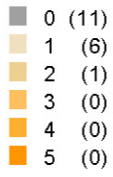
- 0 (8)
- 1 (7)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (1)
- 4 (0)
- 5 (0)



Northern Ireland Assembly seats by party and constituency

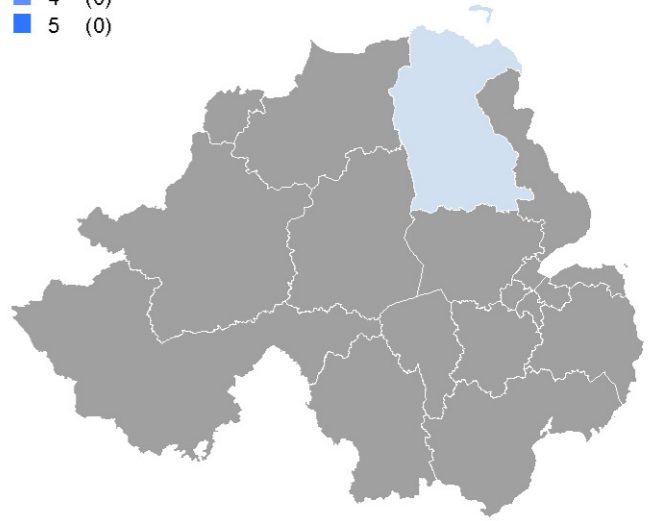
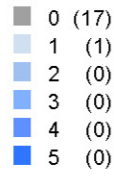
Alliance

Seats



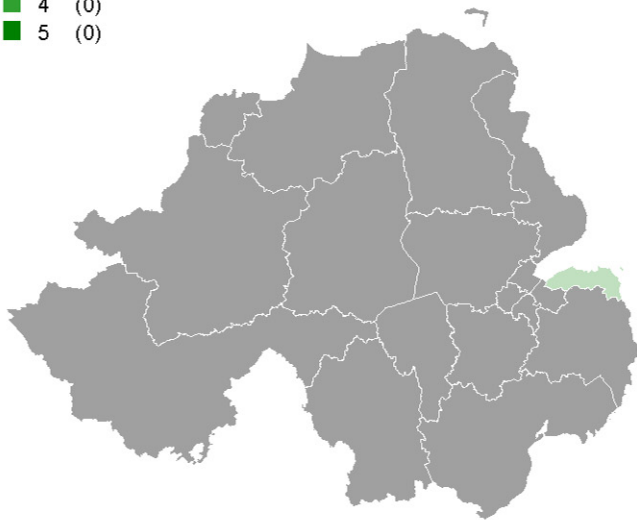
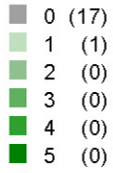
TUV

Seats



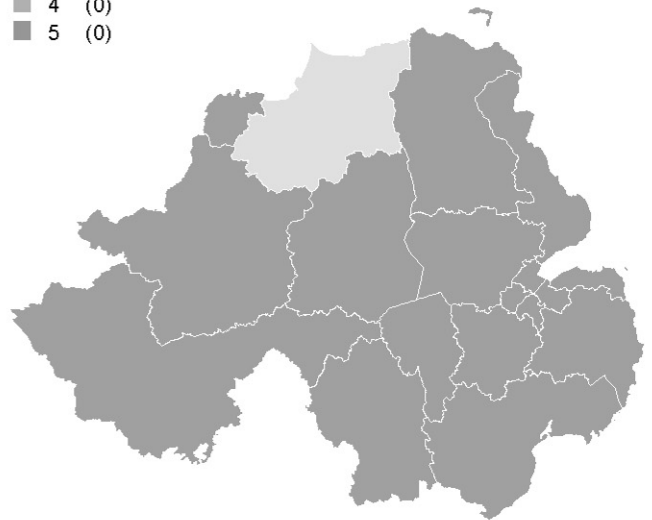
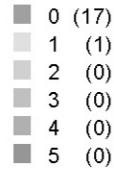
Green Party

Seats



Independent

Seats



Appendix 1 – 2011 Assembly Members elected by party

Name	Party	Name	Party
Steven Agnew	Green Party	Sean Lynch	Sinn Féin
Jim Allister	TUV	Chris Lyttle	Alliance
Martina Anderson	Sinn Féin	Alban Maginness	SDLP
Sydney Anderson	DUP	Alex Maskey	Sinn Féin
Alex Attwood	SDLP	Paul Maskey	Sinn Féin
Roy Beggs	UUP	John McCallister	UUP
Jonathan Bell	DUP	Fra McCann	Sinn Féin
Cathal Boylan	Sinn Féin	Jennifer McCann	Sinn Féin
Michaela Boyle	Sinn Féin	Kieran McCarthy	Alliance
Dominic Bradley	SDLP	Raymond McCartney	Sinn Féin
Paula Bradley	DUP	Nelson McCausland	DUP
Mickey Brady	Sinn Féin	David McClarty	Independent
Thomas Buchanan	DUP	Basil McCrea	UUP
Joe Byrne	SDLP	Ian McCrea	DUP
Gregory Campbell	DUP	Conall Patrick McDevitt	SDLP
Trevor Clarke	DUP	Alasdair McDonnell	SDLP
Willie Clarke	Sinn Féin	Barry McElduff	Sinn Féin
Judith Cochrane	Alliance	Michael McGimpsey	UUP
Michael Copeland	UUP	Patsy McGlone	SDLP
Jonathan Craig	DUP	Martin McGuinness	Sinn Féin
Leslie Cree	UUP	David McIlveen	DUP
John Dallat	SDLP	Michelle McIlveen	DUP
Stewart Dickson	Alliance	Daithí Gerard McKay	Sinn Féin
Joanne Dobson	UUP	Karen McKeivitt	SDLP
Pat Doherty	Sinn Féin	Mitchel McLaughlin	Sinn Féin
Sammy Douglas	DUP	Oliver McMullan	Sinn Féin
Gordon Dunne	DUP	David McNarry	UUP
Mark H Durkan	SDLP	Adrian McQuillan	DUP
Alex Easton	DUP	Francie Molloy	Sinn Féin
Colum Eastwood	SDLP	Maurice Morrow	DUP
Tom Elliott	UUP	Stephen Moutray	DUP
Stephen Farry	Alliance	Conor Murphy	Sinn Féin
Phil Flanagan	Sinn Féin	Mike Nesbitt	UUP
David R J Ford	Alliance	Robin Newton	DUP
Arlene Foster	DUP	Carál Ní Chuilín	Sinn Féin
Paul Frew	DUP	John O'Dowd	Sinn Féin
Sam Gardiner	UUP	Cathal O'hOisin	Sinn Féin
Michelle Gildernew	Sinn Féin	Michelle O'Neill	Sinn Féin
Paul Girvan	DUP	Sandra Overend	UUP
Paul Givan	DUP	Edwin Poots	DUP
Brenda Hale	DUP	Pat Ramsey	SDLP
Simon Hamilton	DUP	Sue Ramsey	Sinn Féin
William Hay	DUP	Margaret Ritchie	SDLP
David Hilditch	DUP	George Robinson	DUP
William Humphrey	DUP	Peter Robinson	DUP
Ross Hussey	UUP	Alastair Ross	DUP
William Irwin	DUP	Caitriona Ruane	Sinn Féin
Dolores Kelly	SDLP	Pat Sheehan	Sinn Féin
Gery Kelly	Sinn Féin	Jimmy Spratt	DUP
Danny Kennedy	UUP	Meryn Storey	DUP
Danny Kinahan	UUP	Robin Swann	UUP
Pam Lewis	DUP	Peter James Weir	DUP
Anna Lo	Alliance	Jim Wells	DUP
Trevor Lunn	Alliance	Sammy Wilson	DUP