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2019 General Election Results in Northern Ireland and the Representation of Women

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1 Introduction

A UK general election was held on 12 December 2019. This paper summarises the election results in Northern Ireland in relation to the representation of women. The paper briefly:

- Summarises candidates by gender
- Summarises results by gender
- Compares the representation of women with previous elections
- Compares representation in Northern Ireland with the rest of the UK

2 Candidates

Table 1 summarises candidates in Northern Ireland by gender.

Table 1: Candidates in the 2019 General Election by Party and Gender

	DUP	SF	UUP	SDLP	APNI	Green	PBPA	Con + U	Aontú	Ind	UKIP	Total	%Female
<i>Belfast E</i>	M		M		F							2M 1F	33%
<i>Belfast N</i>	M	M			F							2M 1F	33%
<i>Belfast S</i>	F		M	F	F				M			2M 3F	60%
<i>Belfast W</i>	M	M		M	F		M		F			4M 2F	33%
<i>E Antrim</i>	M	M	M	F	M	M		M				6M 1F	14%
<i>E L'Derry</i>	M	M	M	F	M				M			5M 1F	17%
<i>Fermanagh & S Tyrone</i>		F	M	M	M					F		3M 2F	40%
<i>Foyle</i>	M	F	M	M	F		M		F			4M 3F	43%
<i>Lagan Valley</i>	M	M	M	F	F			M			M	5M 2F	29%
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	M	M	M	F	M					M		5M 1F	17%
<i>Newry & Armagh</i>	M	M	M	M	F				M			5M 1F	17%
<i>N Antrim</i>	M	F	M	F	F					M		3M 3F	50%
<i>N Down</i>	M		M		M			M				4M 0F	0%
<i>S Antrim</i>	M	M	M	F	M							4M 1F	20%
<i>S Down</i>	M	M	F	M	M				M			5M 1F	17%
<i>Strangford</i>	M	M	M	M	F	M		M			M	7M 1F	13%
<i>Upper Bann</i>	F	M	M	F	M							3M 2F	40%
<i>W Tyrone</i>	M	F	M	M	M	F			M			5M 2F	29%
<i>Total</i>	15M 2F	11M 4F	15M 1F	7M 8F	9M 9F	2M 1F	2M 0F	4M 0F	5M 2F	2M 1F	2M 0F	74M 28F	
<i>%Female</i>	12%	27%	6%	53%	50%	33%	0%	0%	29%	33%	0%	27%	

At 27%, this is an increase on female candidates standing in the 2015 general election (24%)¹, but less than the 2017 election (33%)². Across the UK, 34% of candidates for the 2019 election were female³.

¹ Research and Information Service Briefing Paper 43/15 *General Election 2015: Gender Representation* 14 April 2019: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2015/exec_review/4315.pdf.

² Research and Information Service Research Paper 31/17 *Election Report: Westminster General Election, 8 June 2017*, 15 June 2017: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2017/general/3117.pdf>.

³ 'General election 2019: Record number of women set to stand', *BBC News* 18 November 2019: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50441274>.

3 Election Results by Gender

Table 2 shows the election results in Northern Ireland.

Table 2: 2019 General Election Results in Northern Ireland

Constituency	Party	Elected
Belfast North	Sinn Féin	John Finucane
Belfast South	SDLP	Claire Hanna
Foyle	SDLP	Colm Eastwood
North Down	Alliance	Stephen Farry
Belfast East	DUP	Gavin Robinson
Belfast West	Sinn Féin	Paul Maskey
East Antrim	DUP	Sammy Wilson
East Londonderry	DUP	Gregory Campbell
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	Sinn Féin	Michelle Gildernew
Lagan Valley	DUP	Jeffrey Donaldson
Mid Ulster	Sinn Féin	Francie Molloy
Newry and Armagh	Sinn Féin	Mickey Brady
North Antrim	DUP	Ian Paisley
South Antrim	DUP	Paul Girvan
South Down	Sinn Féin	Chris Hazzard
Strangford	DUP	Jim Shannon
Upper Bann	DUP	Carla Lockhart
West Tyrone	Sinn Féin	Orfhlaith Begley

Four of the eighteen elected are women (22%). This is more than the two women elected in 2015 (11%) but the same as the 2017⁴ and 2010 elections⁵. Across the UK, 34% of elected Members of Parliament are female⁶.

Female elected representation in Northern Ireland is as follows:

- Members of Parliament (MPs) 22%
- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) 30%⁷
- Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) 100%⁸
- Local councillors 26%⁹

In 2014, the Assembly and Executive Review Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly undertook a review into Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly, which focussed on women in the Assembly, but also on the representation of women in Northern Ireland more generally. The Committee concluded that¹⁰:

I. The under-representation of women in politics in Northern Ireland is a serious issue which must be addressed as matter of urgency.

II. The Assembly and political parties play a key role in encouraging women to seek and secure election to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

III. Civil society and the education sector have an important contribution to make in encouraging women to consider a career in politics.

IV. The Executive's strategies and policies if designed, delivered and appropriately funded can enable women at all levels of society to balance their caring responsibilities with a career in politics.

V. The media plays an important role in informing society's views about the work of female politicians and the contribution they make to political life in Northern Ireland.

⁴ Research and Information Service Research Paper 31/17 *Election Report: Westminster General Election, 8 June 2017*, 15 June 2017: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2017/general/3117.pdf>.

⁵ Research and Information Service Briefing Paper 48/15 *Women in the General Election in Northern Ireland 2015*, 11 May 2015: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2015/general/4815.pdf>.

⁶ 'UK elects record number of female MPs'. *The Guardian* 13 December 2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/dec/13/uk-elects-record-number-of-female-mps>.

⁷ The figure given is for those elected in 2017. This increased to 32% due to co-options since the election. The figure does not take into account additional co-options in respect of MLAs elected as MPs in the 2019 election.

⁸ European Parliament Liaison Office in the United Kingdom web pages, accessed 13 December 2019: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/european-elections/uk_meps/northern_ireland.html.

⁹ Oireachtas Library and Research Service and Northern Ireland Assembly Research Service infographic 4/19 *Local Elections 2019 (Northern Ireland) 2019: A Statistical Profile*, 31 July 2019: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2017-2022/2019/general/0419.pdf>.

¹⁰ Assembly and Executive Review Committee (2014), Report on Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly, 9 March 2015: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2016-2017/assembly-and-executive-review/session-2011-2016/report-on-women-in-politics-and-the-northern-ireland-assembly/>.

Twenty-nine recommendations were made by the Committee to increase the representation of women in Northern Ireland.