



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Research Paper

21 June 2011

Dr Robert Barry and Barbara Love

Analysis of Transferred Votes in the Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2011

(This paper has been revised to include updated figures provided by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011)

NIAR 282-11

This paper provides an analysis of transferred votes in the Northern Ireland Assembly election held on 5 May 2011. It supplements the main analysis of the election results presented in the document entitled “Northern Ireland Assembly Election 2011” published by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 17 May 2011.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/researchandlibrary/2011/5511.pdf>

Paper 59/11

21 June 2011

Research and Information Service briefings are compiled for the benefit of MLAs and their support staff. Authors are available to discuss the contents of these papers with Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public. We do, however, welcome written evidence that relate to our papers and these should be sent to the Research and Information Service, Northern Ireland Assembly, Room 139, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX or e-mailed to RLS@niassembly.gov.uk

Key Points

In the Northern Ireland Assembly election 2011 the majority of Unionist transfers were from Unionist parties while the majority of Nationalist transfers were from Nationalist parties. This was also the case in the previous Northern Ireland Assembly election in 2007.

The total number of transferred votes was lower compared with 2007, due to the smaller number of candidates in this election.

Of the five main parties:

- The UUP¹ received the highest number of transfer votes **from** other parties;
- Alliance² received the lowest number of transfer votes **from** other parties;
- The highest number of transfers **to** other parties were from UUP candidates; and,
- The lowest number of transfers **to** other parties were from SDLP candidates

Thirty four of the 108 successful candidates were elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly on first preference votes only. The remaining 74 successful candidates were elected on the basis of first preference votes and vote transfers.

¹ Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

² Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

Contents

Key Points	3
1 Overview	7
2 Transferred votes by Party	7
3 Transferred votes by Constituency	12
Results by Constituency	
Belfast East.....	13
Belfast North.....	14
Belfast South.....	15
Belfast West.....	16
East Antrim.....	17
East Londonderry.....	18
Fermanagh & South Tyrone.....	19
Foyle.....	20
Lagan Valley.....	21
Mid-Ulster.....	22
Newry & Armagh.....	23
North Antrim.....	24
North Down.....	25
South Antrim.....	26
South Down.....	27
Strangford.....	28
Upper Bann.....	29
West Tyrone.....	30
Annex A Table 2: Transferred votes by Party.....	31
Annex B List of Abbreviations.....	32

1 Overview

A lower number of votes were transferred in the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly election than in the previous election in 2007 (81,495³ compared with 104,182 excluding within-party transfers), reflecting in part the lower turnout in the most recent election but primarily due to the smaller number of candidates. An analysis of transferred votes revealed that the majority (87%) of Unionist votes were transferred from Unionist parties while the majority (89%) of Nationalist votes were transferred from Nationalist parties. **When within-party transfers⁴ are excluded:**

- Three quarters (74%) of transfers from Unionist voters⁵ went to other Unionist party candidates, a decrease from 79% in 2007. As with 2007, 12% went to Nationalist party candidates.
- Just under two thirds (64%) of transfers from Nationalist voters⁶ went to other Nationalist party candidates. While there was no change in the proportion of transfers to other Nationalist parties, the proportion transferred to Unionist parties decreased from 13% to 6%. The proportion of transfers from Nationalist voters to other parties increased accordingly.
- When compared with 2007, the proportion of transfers to Alliance increased slightly.

2 Transferred votes by Party

Of the five main parties:

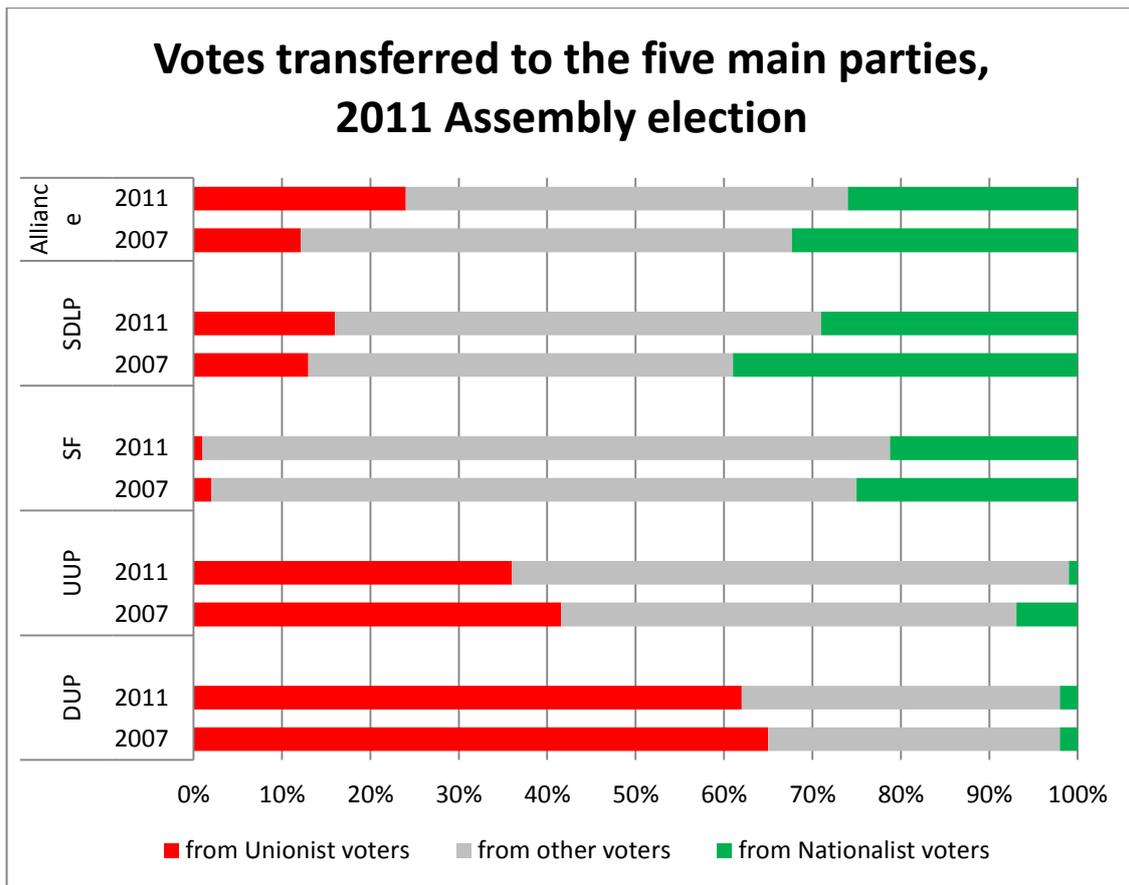
- The UUP received the most transferred votes from other parties while Alliance received the lowest number of transfers from other parties. In the 2007 election the SDLP received the most transferred votes from other parties while Sinn Féin received the fewest.
- Most transfers to other parties were from UUP candidates while the lowest number of transfers to other parties were from SDLP candidates.

³ Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

⁴ transfers to other candidates in the same party

⁵ i.e. voters whose previous preference was for a Unionist party (UUP, DUP, TUV or PUP) candidate.

⁶ i.e. voters whose previous preference was for a Nationalist party (SDLP or Sinn Féin) candidate.



Excludes own party transfers

DUP candidates received a total of 33,251 transferred votes, 16,835 of which were transferred from their own party and 16,416 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, most transfer votes (62%) came from other Unionist voters while 36% were from other voters. Only 2% came from Nationalist voters. Compared with 2007 transfers, a lower proportion of transfers (excluding own party transfers) came from other Unionist votes (65% in 2007) and a higher proportion came from other voters (33% in 2007). The proportion from Nationalist voters remained unchanged at 2%.

Sinn Féin candidates received a total of 26,887⁷ transferred votes, 19,738 of which were transferred from their own party and 7,149 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, most transfers (75%) came from other voters (i.e. those voting for parties that are neither Nationalist nor Unionist). Almost a quarter (22.4%) of transfers came from SDLP voters while only 2.2% from Unionist voters. Proportionally, transfers to Sinn Féin remain broadly unchanged from the 2007 election.

⁷ Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

Ulster Unionist Party candidates received a total of 31,333⁸ transferred votes, 10,223 of which were transferred from their own party and 21,110 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, most transfers (63%) came from votes that were neither Nationalist nor Unionist while 36% came from voters of other Unionist parties and 2% from Nationalist voters. Compared with 2007 transfers, a lower proportion of transfers came from other Unionist votes (42% in 2007). The proportion from Nationalist voters also decreased from 7% in 2007 while a higher proportion of transfers came from other voters (51% in 2007).

SDLP candidates received a total of 26,292 transferred votes, 6,883 of which were transferred from their own party and 19,409 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, the highest proportion of vote transfers (55%) came from other voters, 29% came from Sinn Féin voters and 16% from Unionist voters. Compared with 2007 transfers, a lower proportion of transfers (excluding own party transfers) came from Sinn Féin voters (39% in 2007) and Unionist voters (13% in 2007) while a higher proportion came from other voters (48% in 2007).

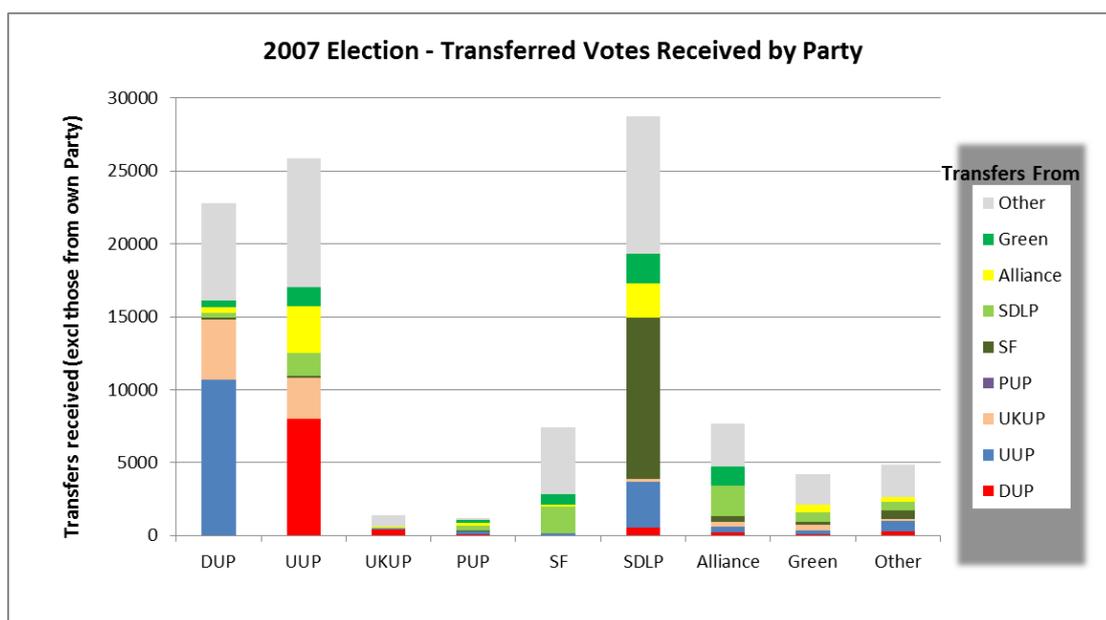
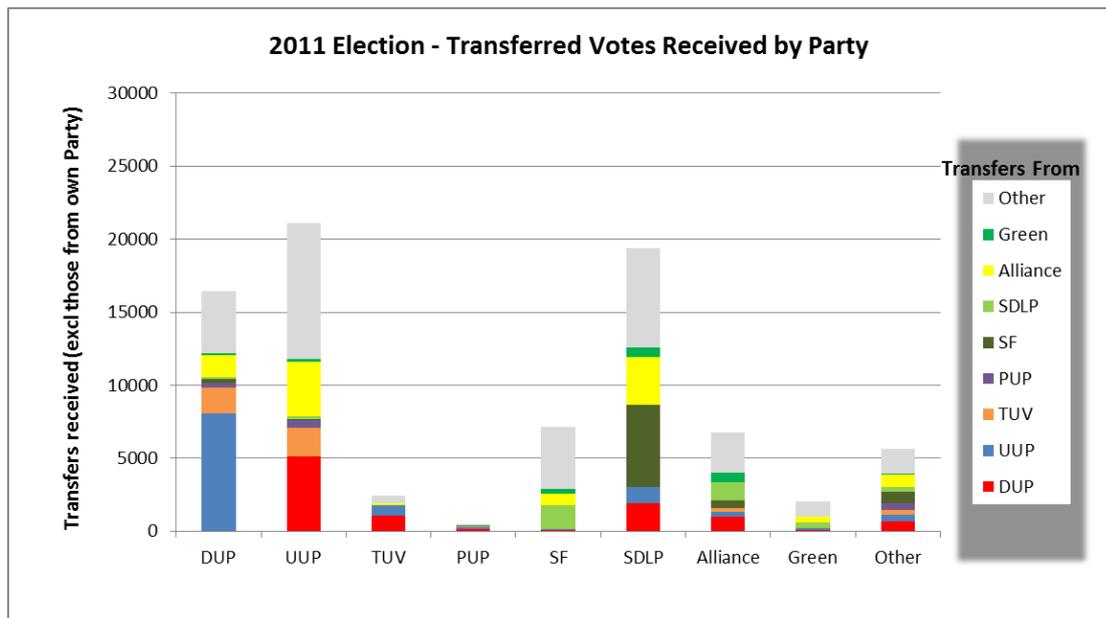
Alliance candidates received a total of 8,027 transferred votes, 1,243 of which were transferred from their own party and 6,784 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, half of vote transfers (50%) came from other voters, 26% came from Nationalist voters and 24% from Unionist voters. Compared with 2007 transfers, a lower proportion of transfers (excluding own party transfers) came from Nationalist votes (32% in 2007) and from other voters (55% in 2007) while a lower proportion came from Unionist voters (13% in 2007).

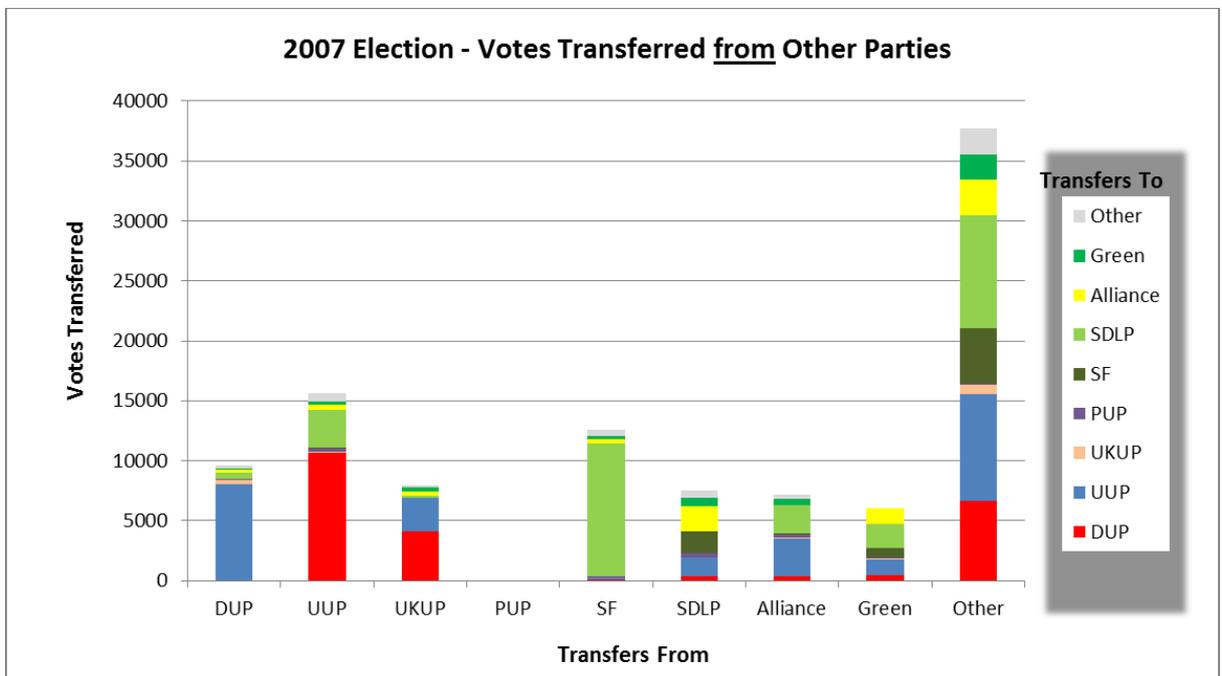
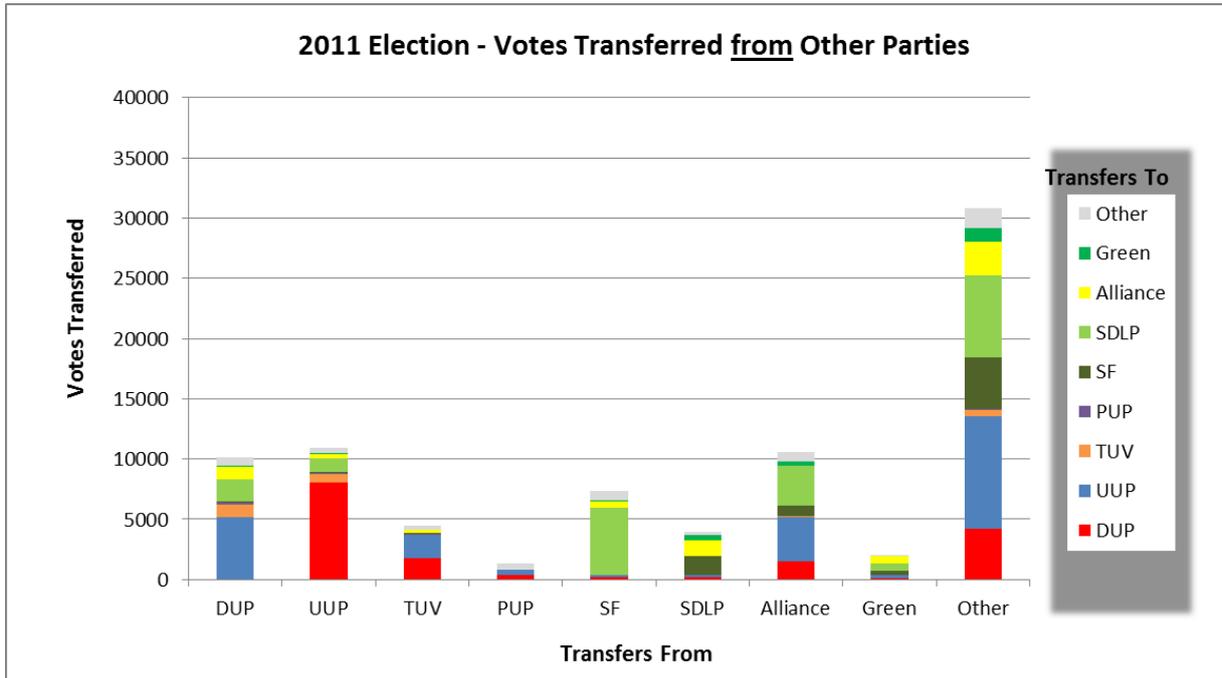
The **TUV** candidates received a total of 2,979 transferred votes, 563 of which were transferred from their own party and 2,416 were transferred from voters of other parties. Excluding own party transfers, most transfers (73%) came from Unionist voters while 26% came from other voters. Less than one per cent were transferred from Nationalist Voters. The **TUV** did not exist for the 2007 Assembly elections, having been formed in December of that year. In the 2011 elections there was one seat won by the TUV.

The **Progressive Unionist Party** candidates received a total of 469 transferred votes, all of which were transferred from voters of parties other than the PUP. Most of these transfers (73%) came from Unionist voters, with 25% coming from other voters and 2% from Nationalist voters. The PUP lost its only seat in the 2011 election.

⁸ Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

The **Green Party** candidates received a total of 2,075 transferred votes, more than two thirds (69%) of which came from candidates that were neither Unionist nor Nationalist. The Green Party received the least transferred votes from Unionist voters (9%). Transfers from Nationalist voters made up a fifth (21%) of votes transferred to the Green Party. The Green Party won one seat in the 2011 election. Compared with 2007 transfers, a lower proportion of transfers (excluding own party transfers) came from Unionist voters (17% in 2007) and a higher proportion came from other voters (63% in 2007) while the proportion from Nationalist voters remained relatively unchanged (20% in 2007).





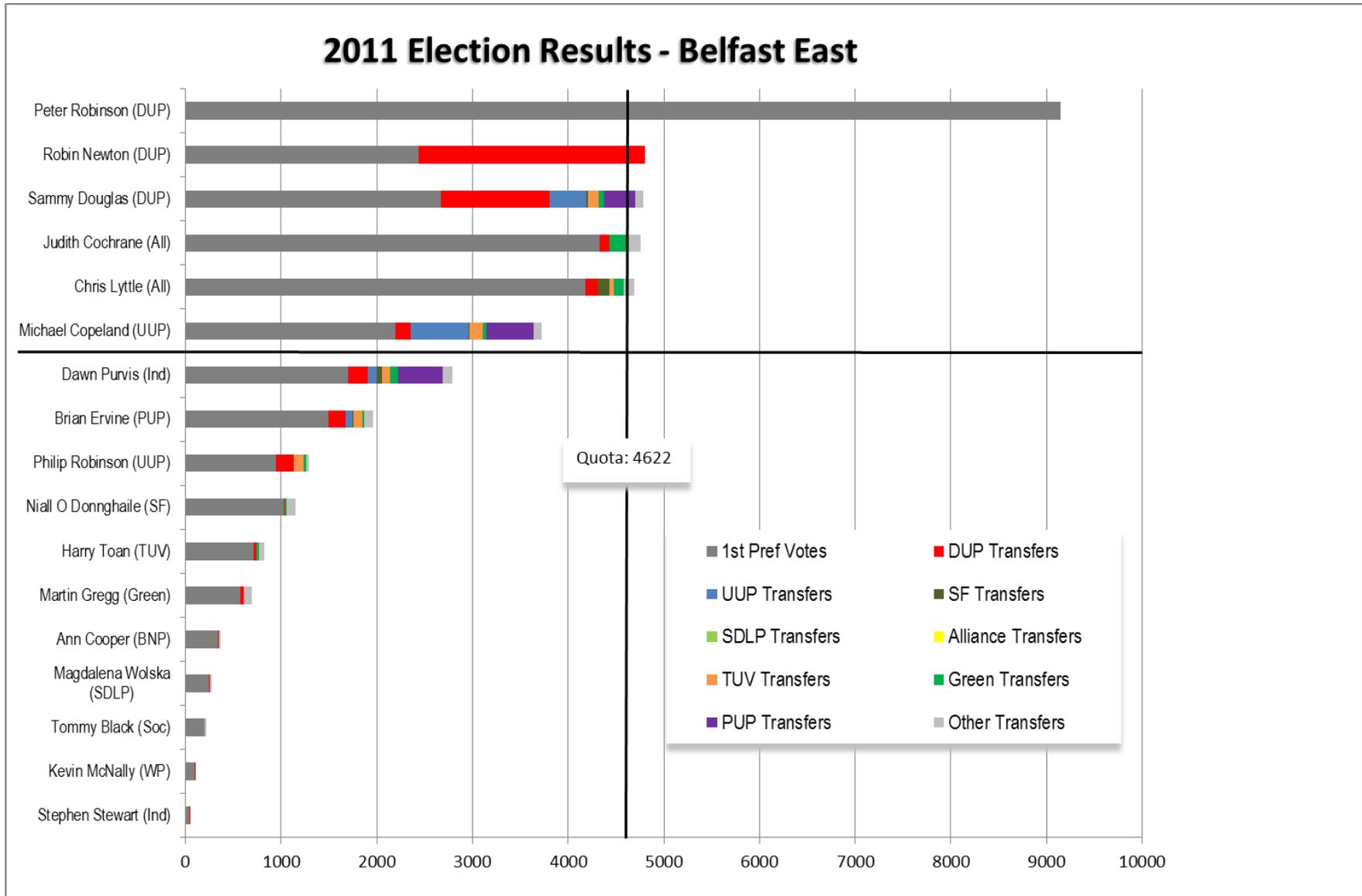
3 Transferred votes by Constituency

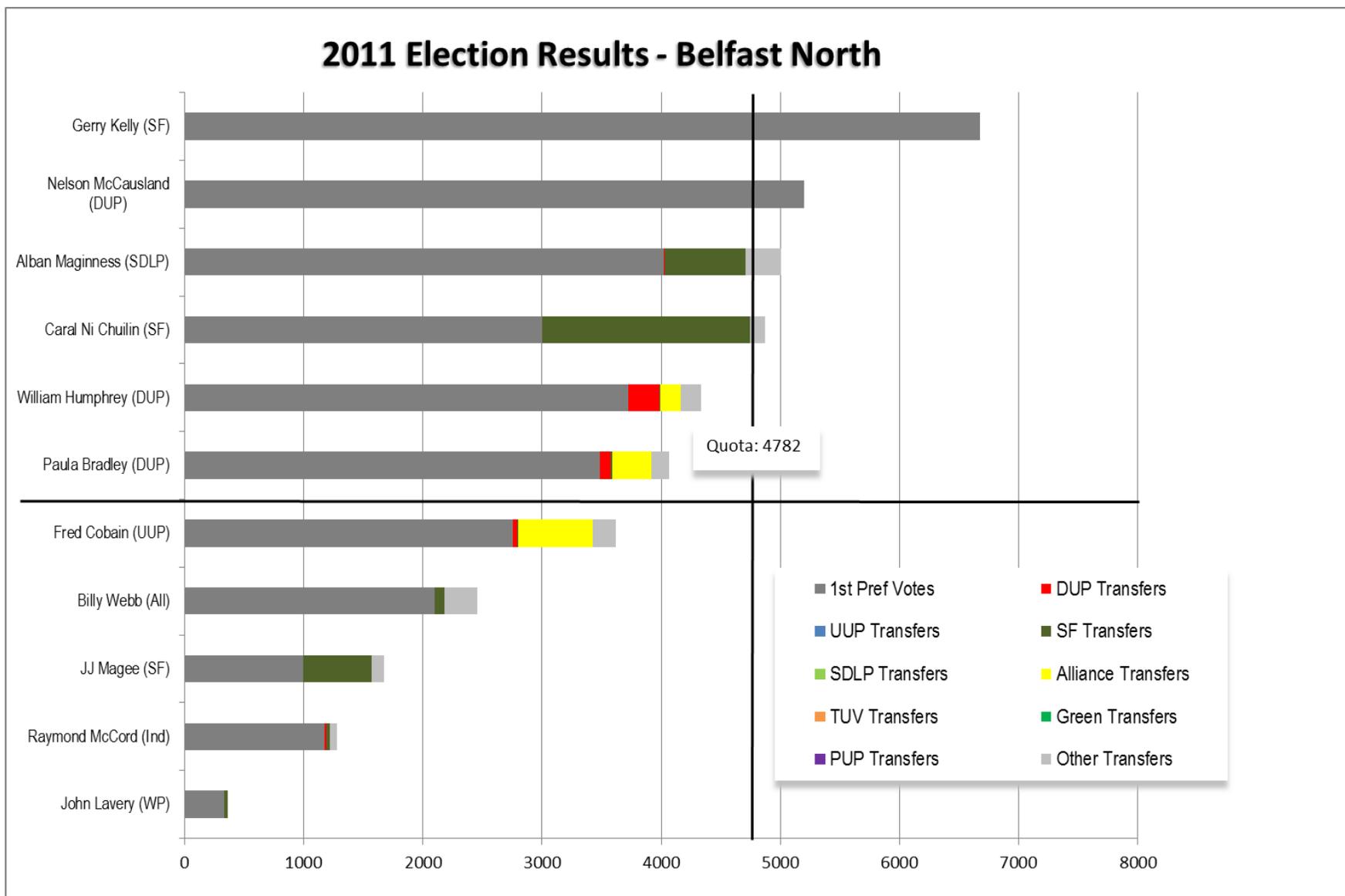
Thirty four of the 108 successful candidates were elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly on first preference votes only while the remaining 74 were elected on the basis of first preference votes and vote transfers.

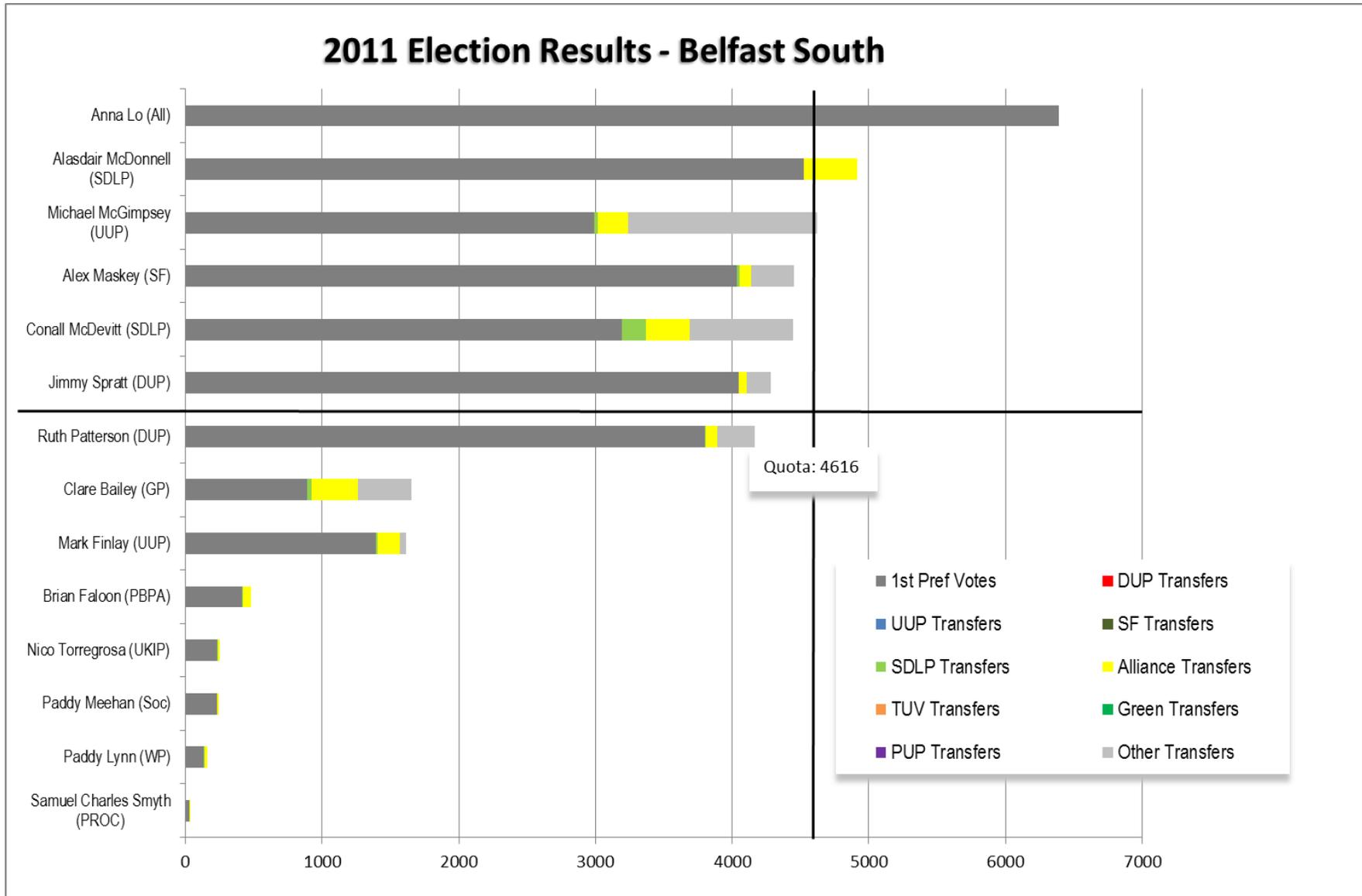
The table shown below presents the number of candidates in each Constituency that were elected on first preference votes only. This table is then followed by a series of charts which present the election results for each Constituency showing first preference and transferred votes for each candidate (candidates above the horizontal line in each chart were elected).

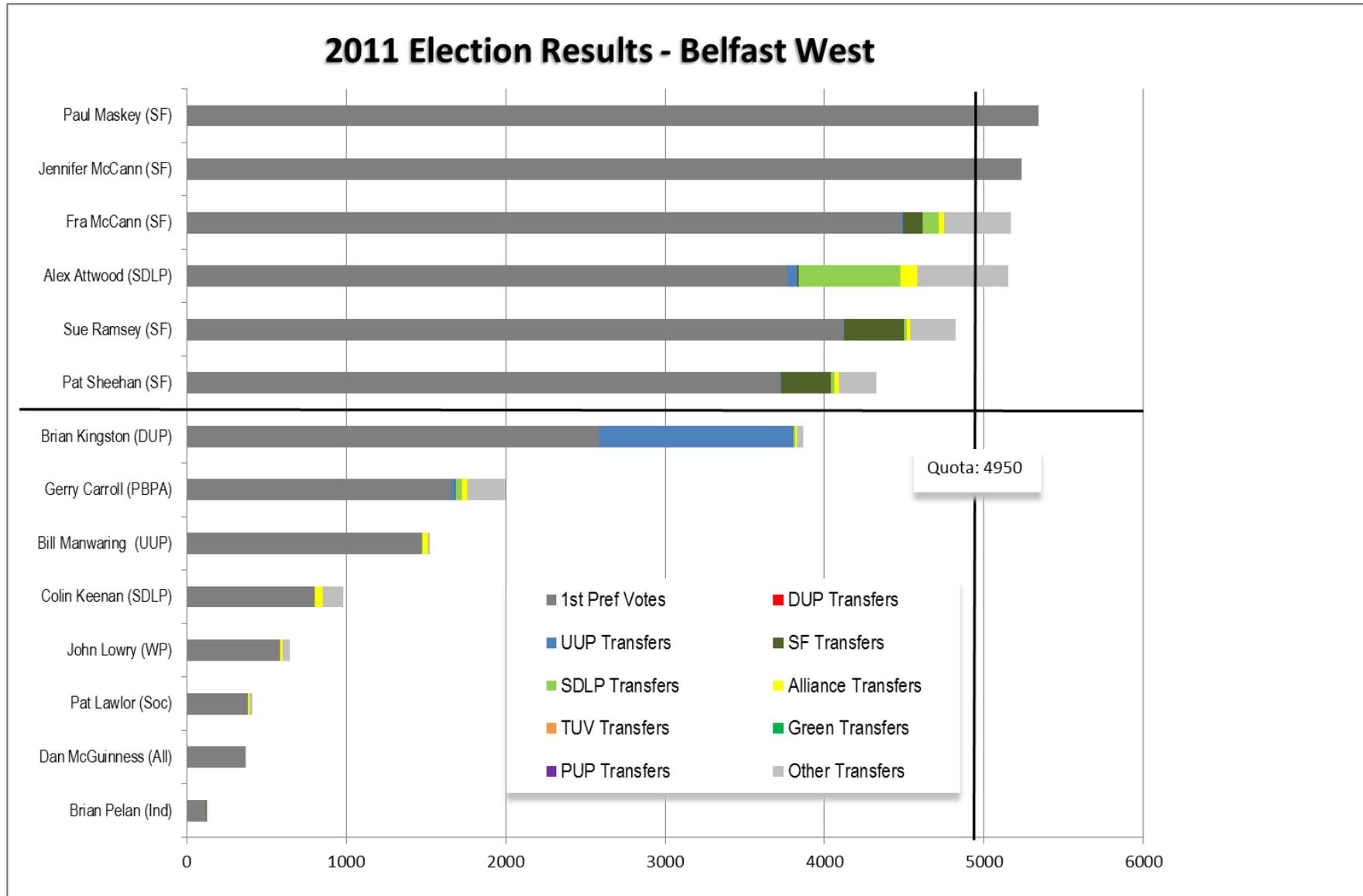
Table 1: No. of candidates elected on first preference votes only by Constituency

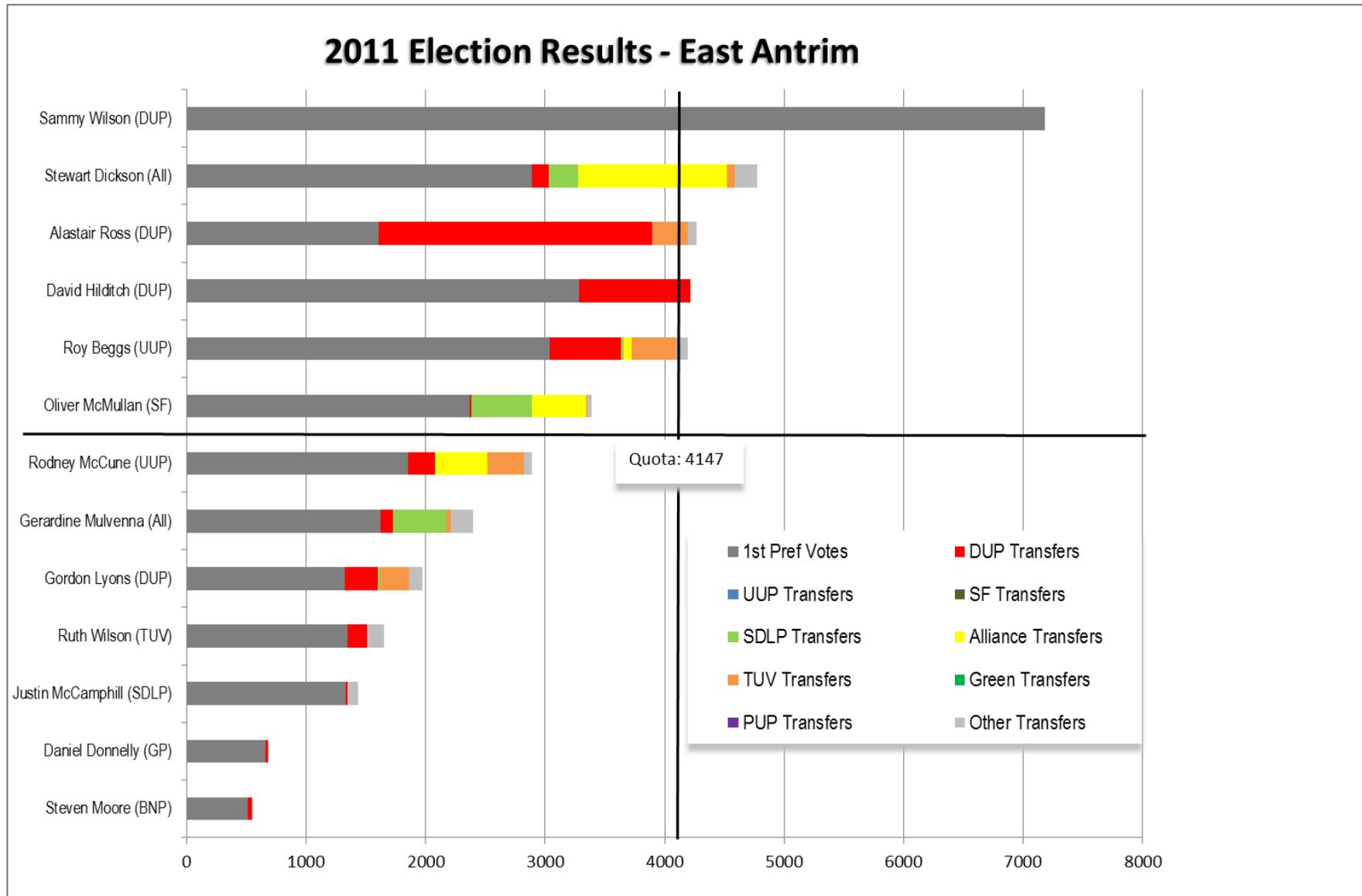
One candidate elected on first preference votes only	Two candidates elected on first preference votes only	Three candidates elected on first preference votes only
Belfast East	Belfast North	Fermanagh and South Tyrone
Belfast South	Belfast West	Newry and Armagh
East Antrim	Foyle	North Antrim
East Londonderry	Lagan Valley	South Antrim
North Down	Mid Ulster	Strangford
South Down	West Tyrone	
Upper Bann		

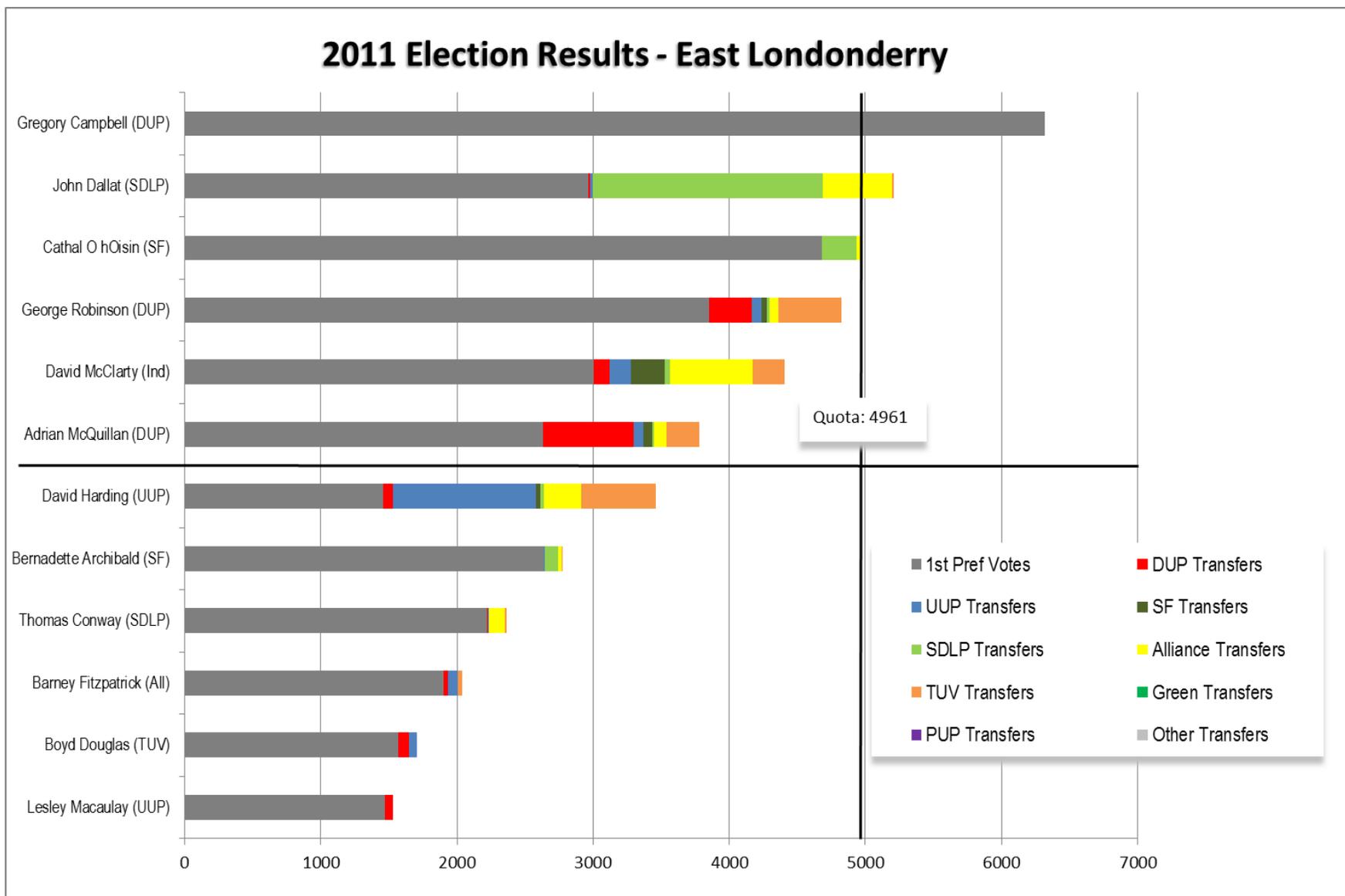


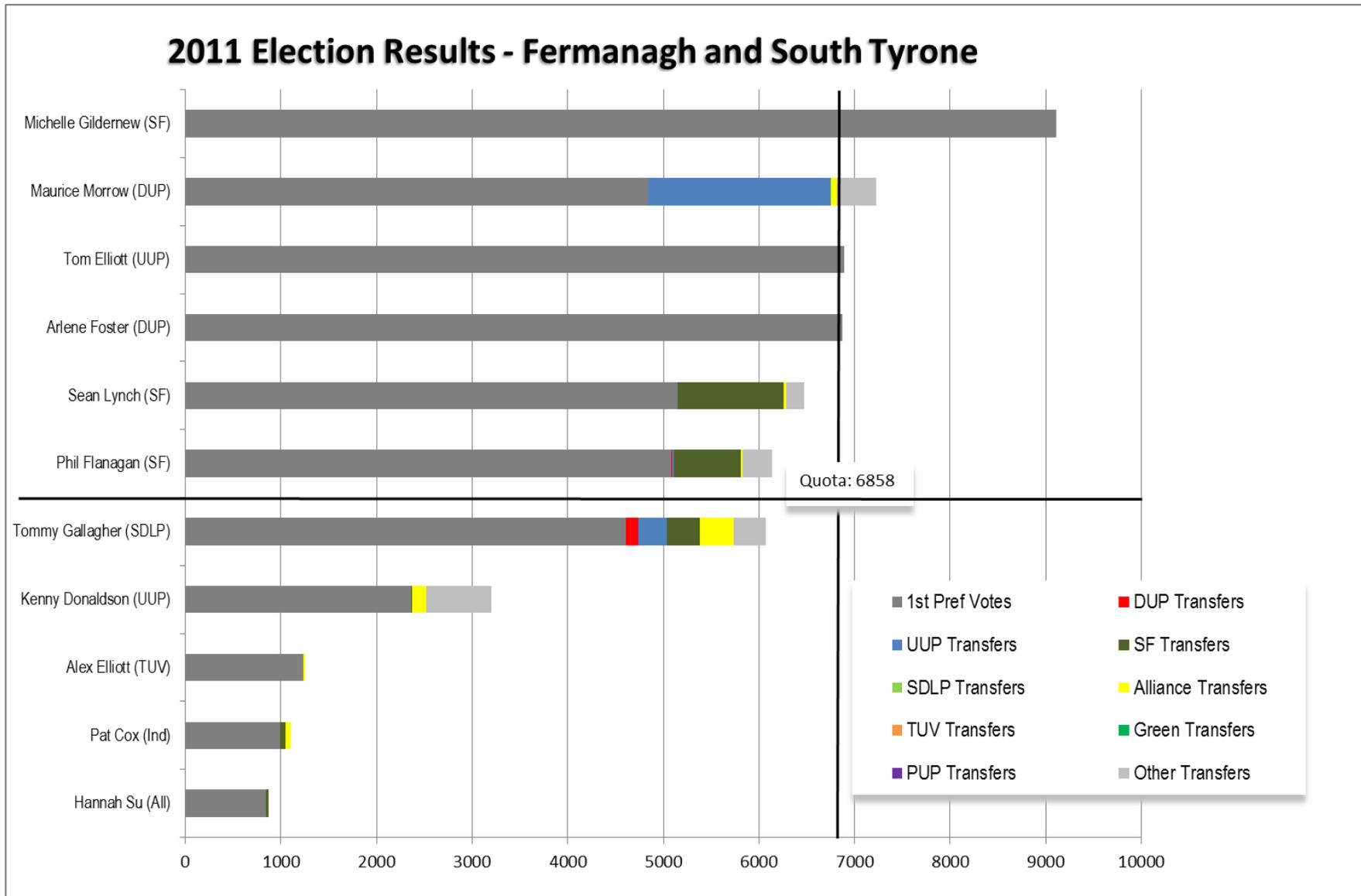


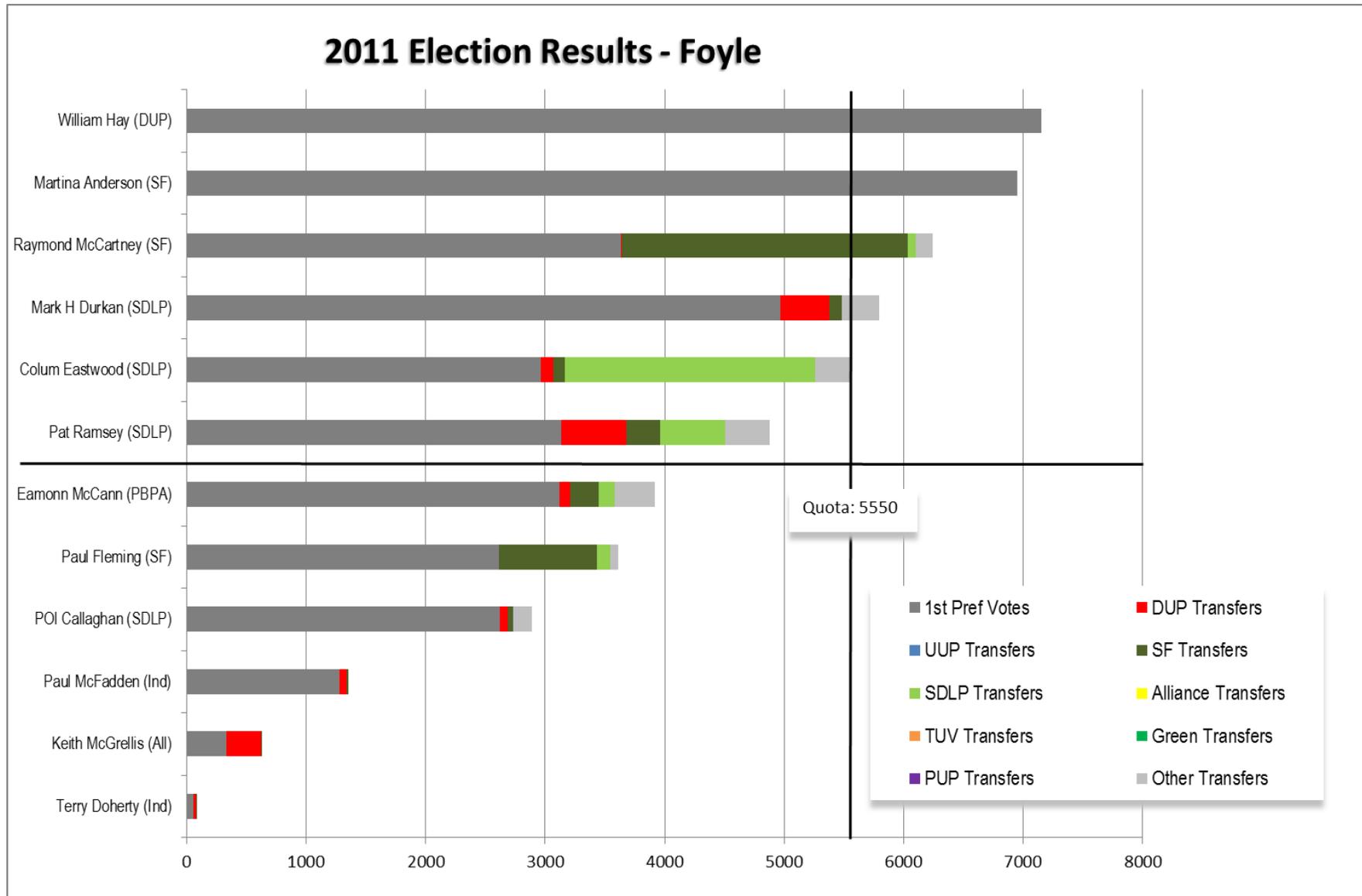


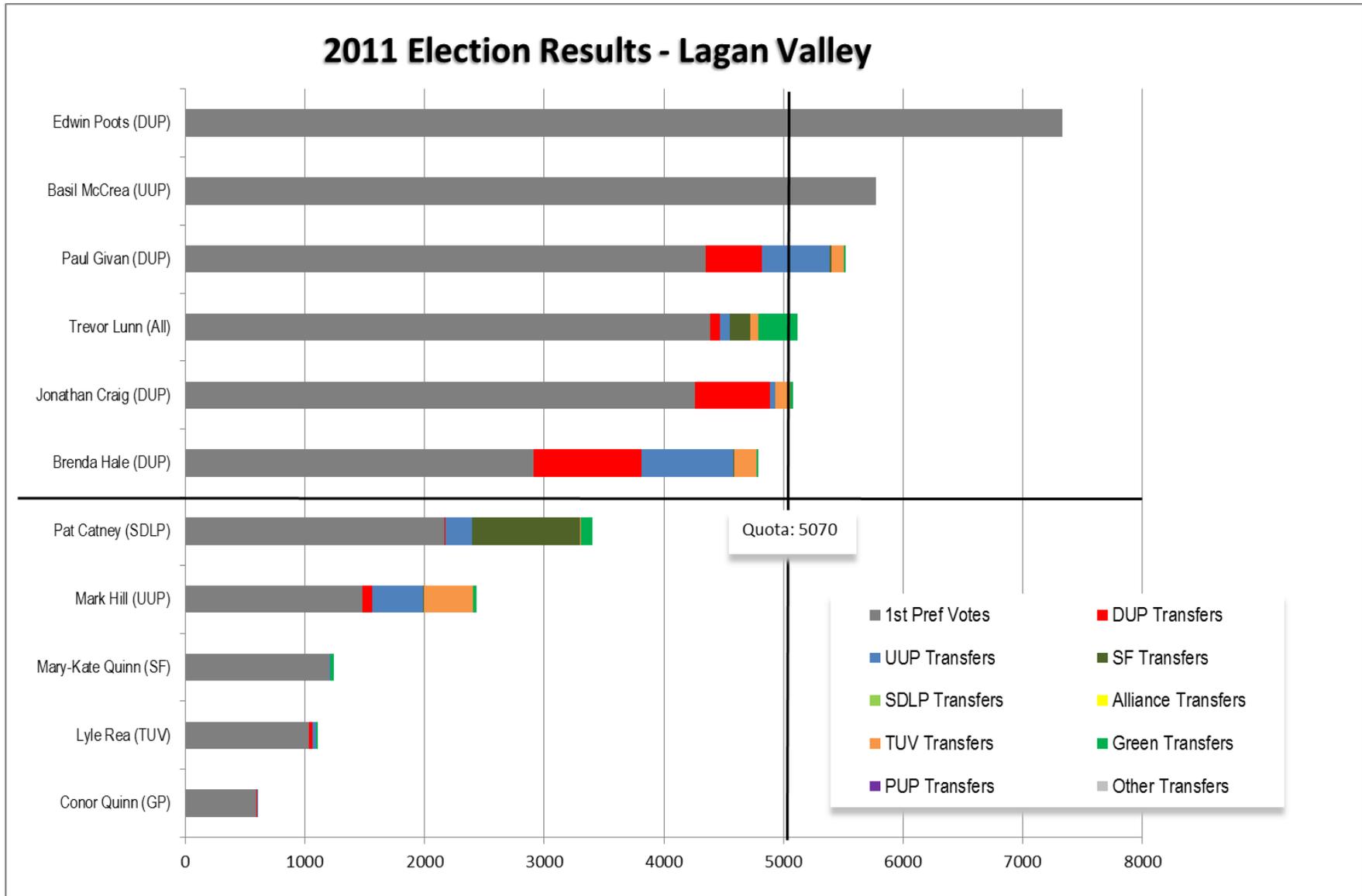


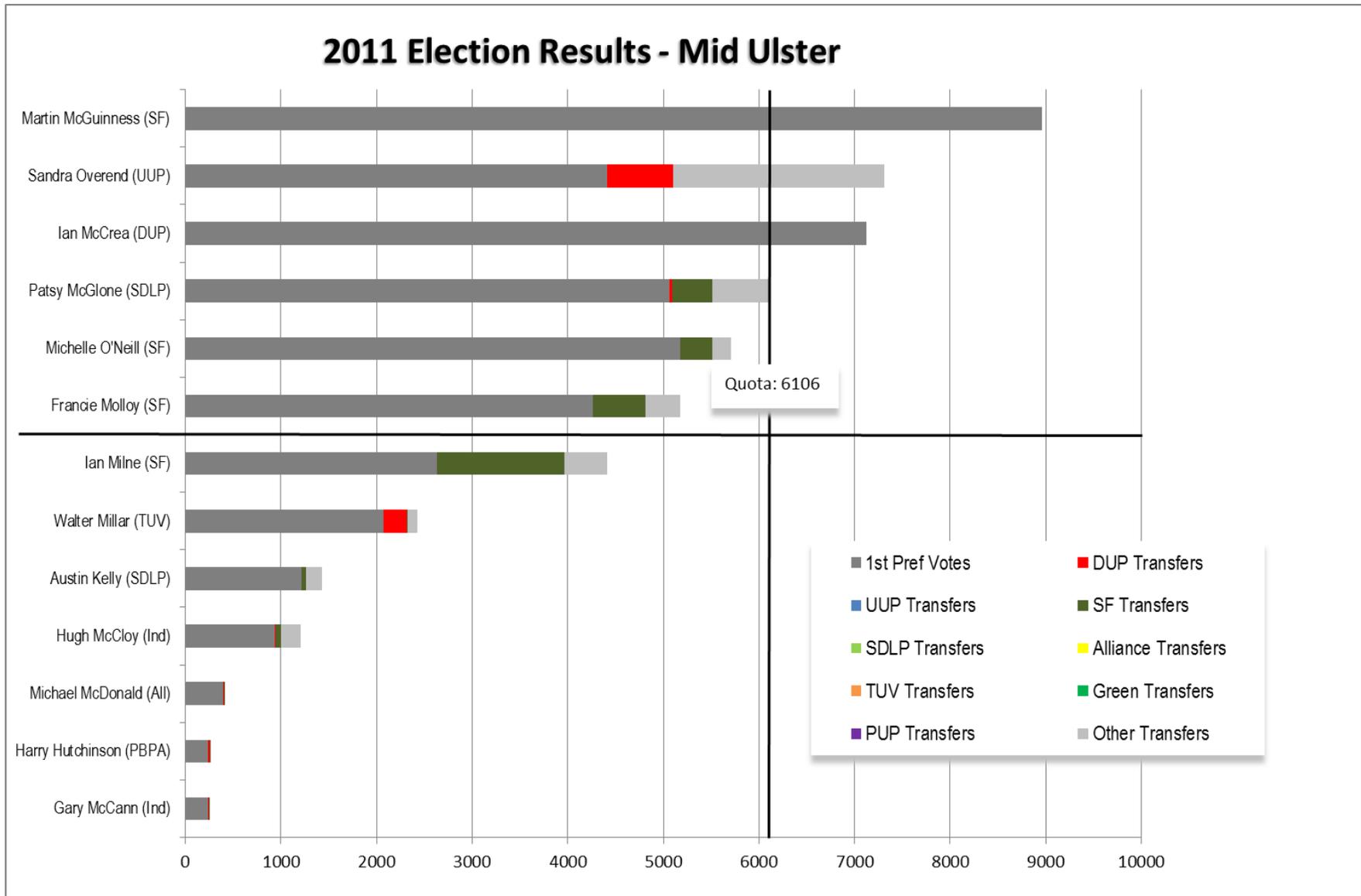




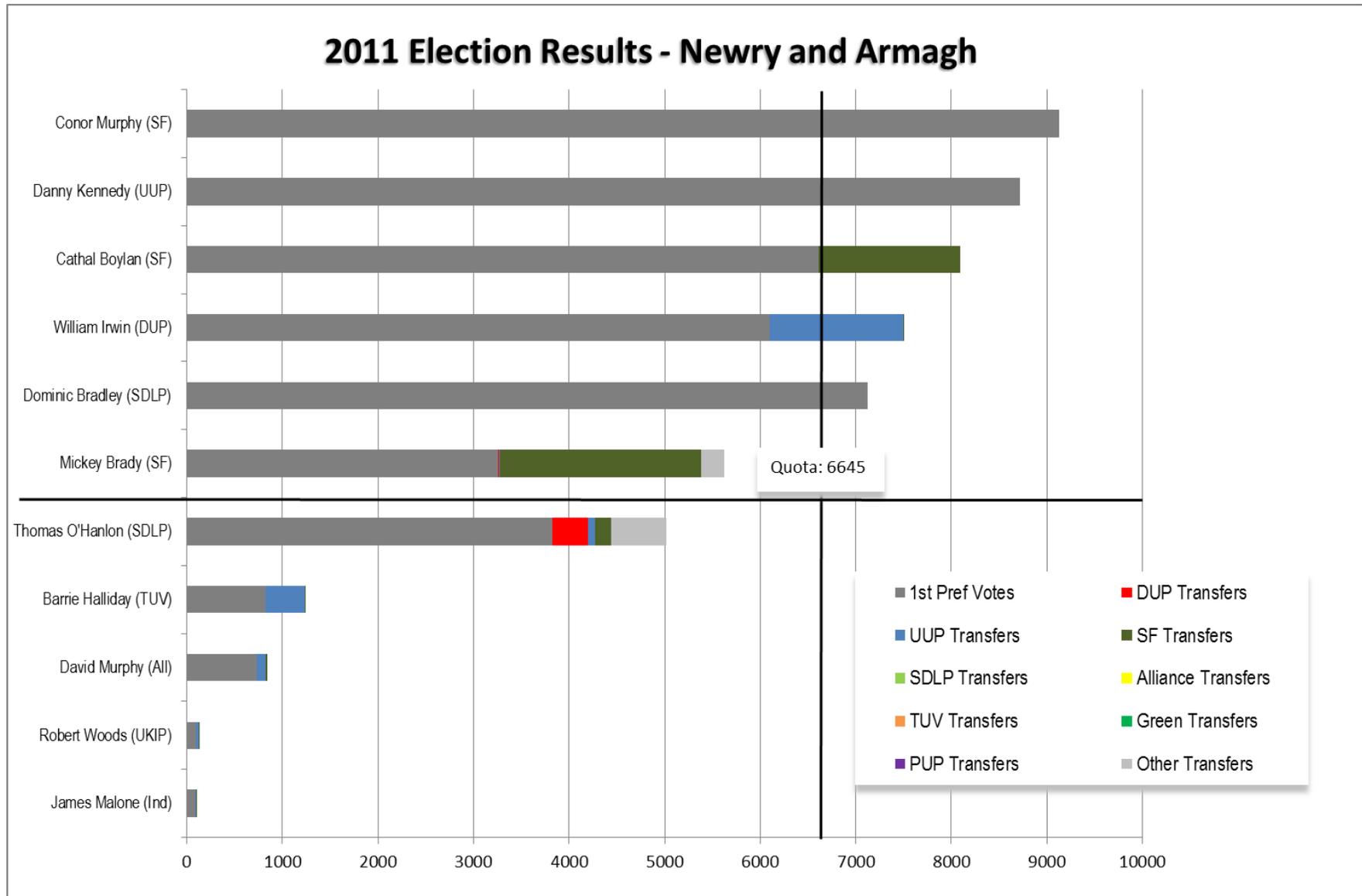


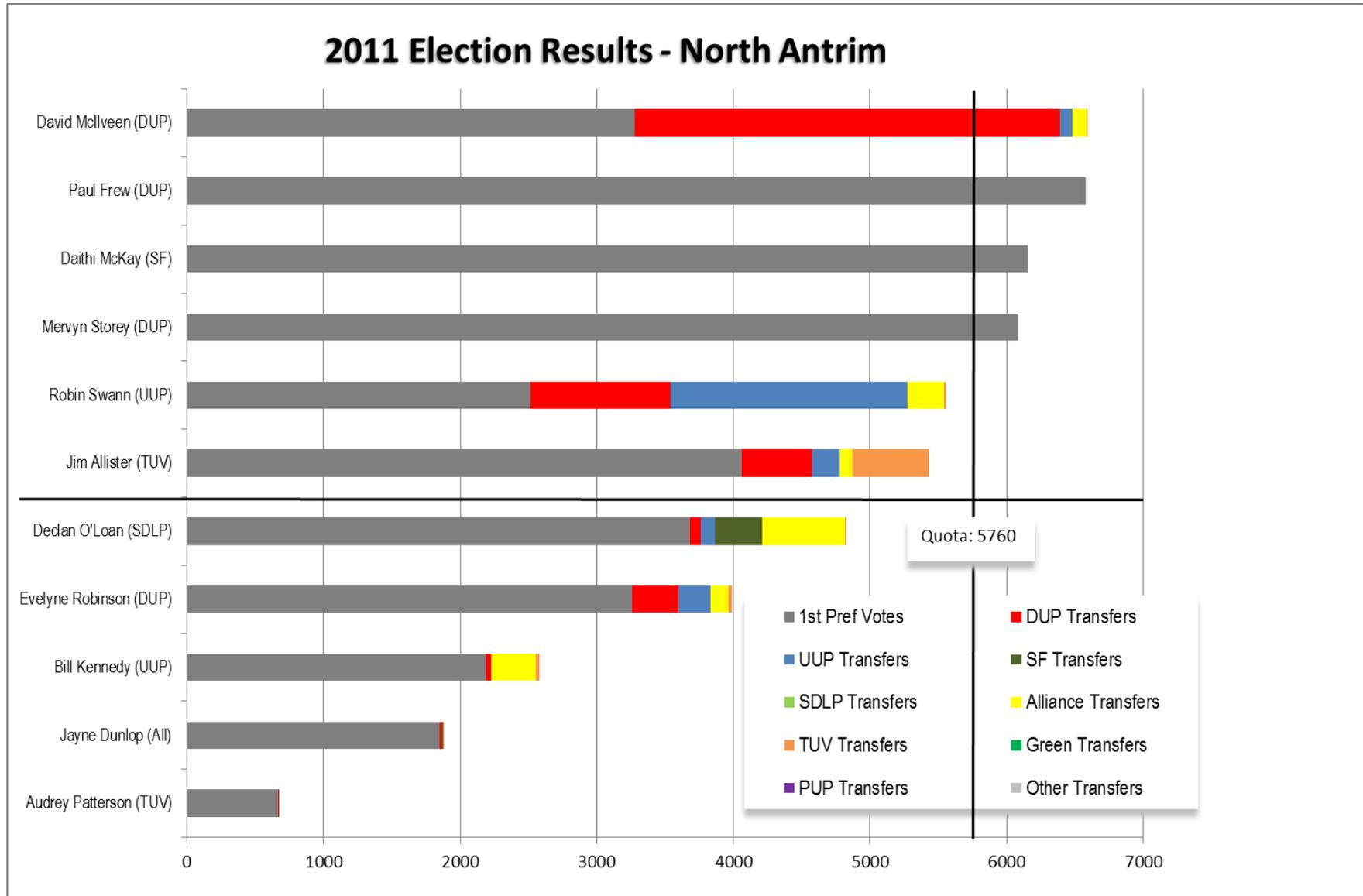


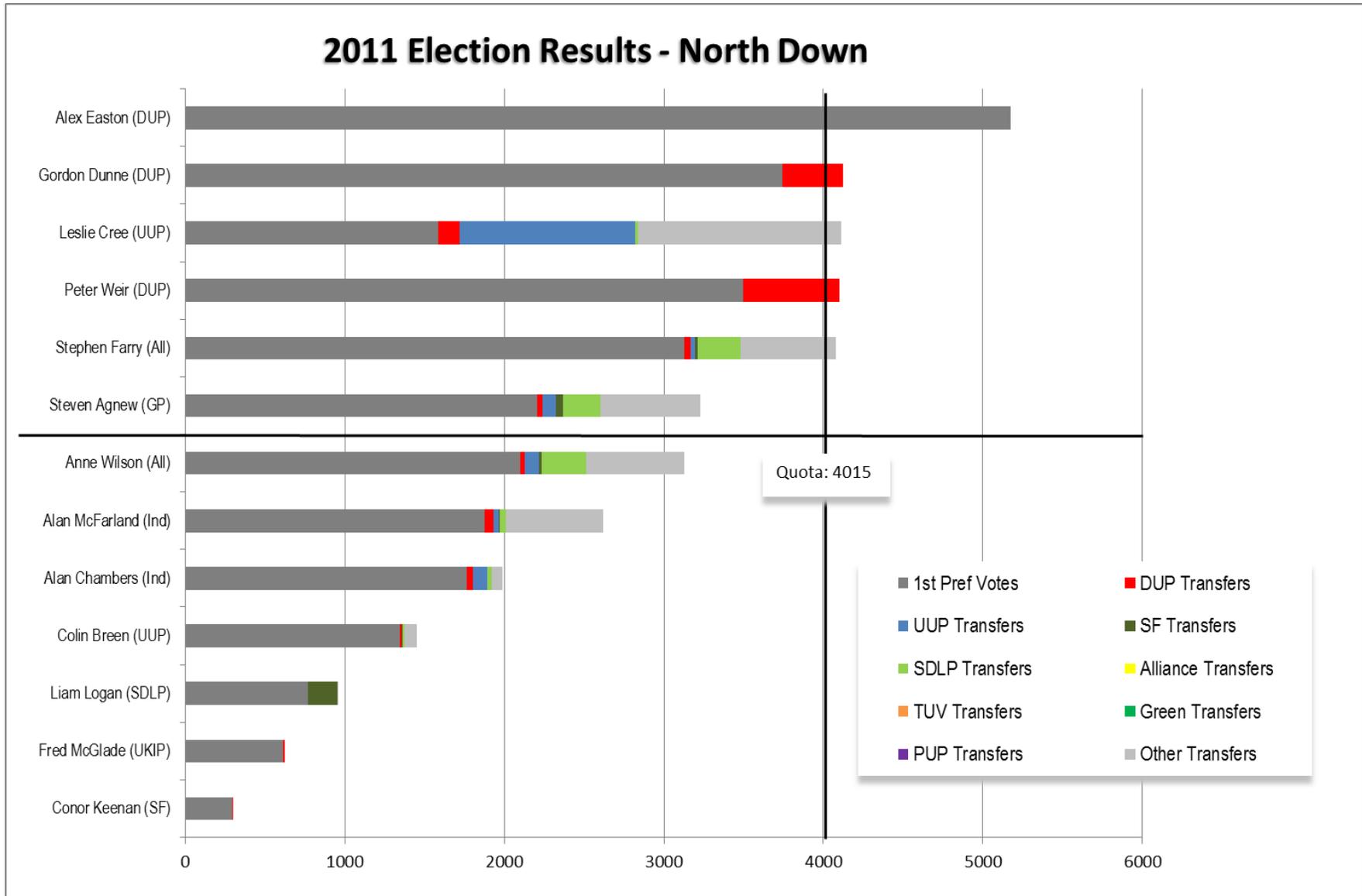


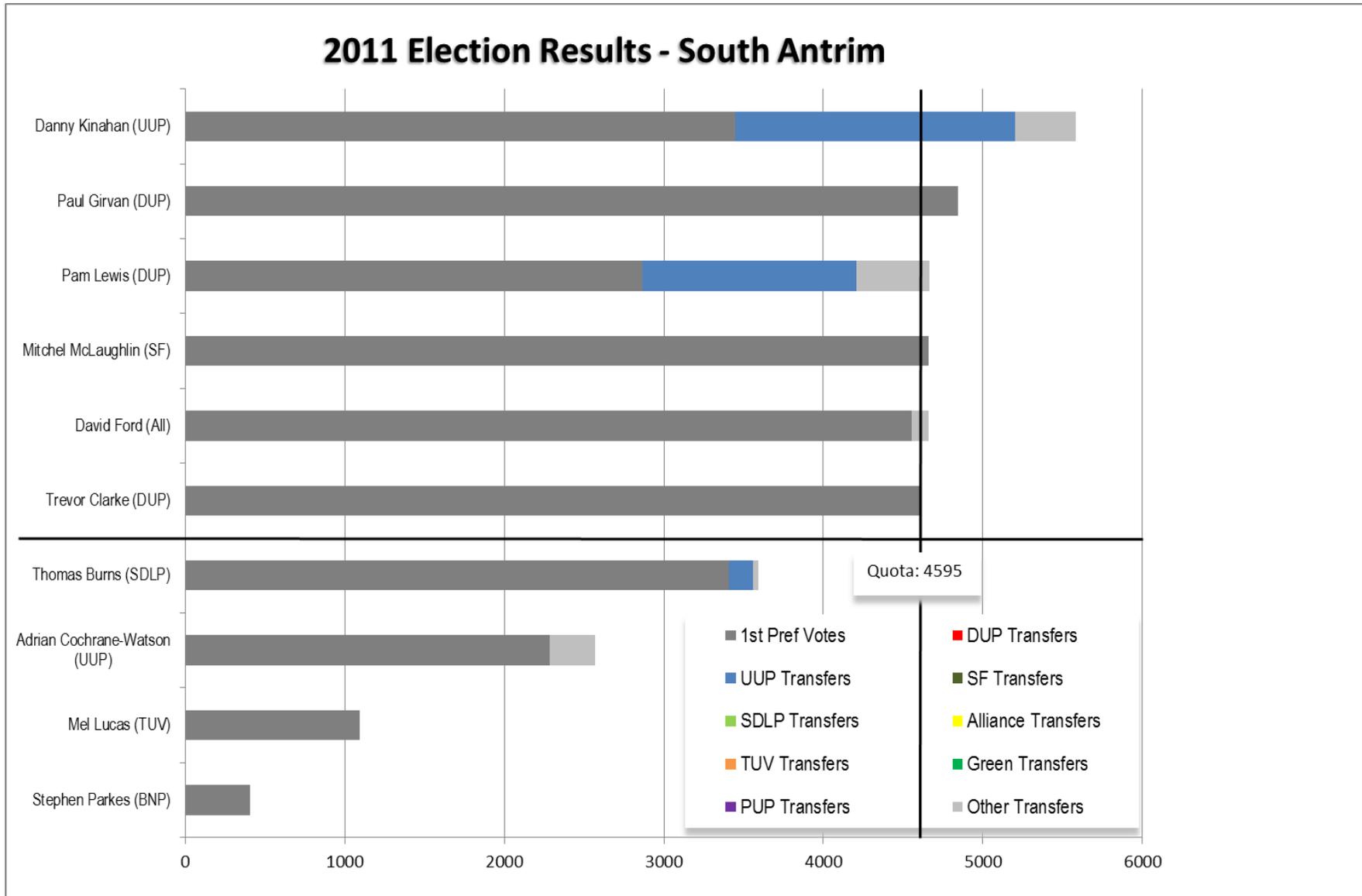


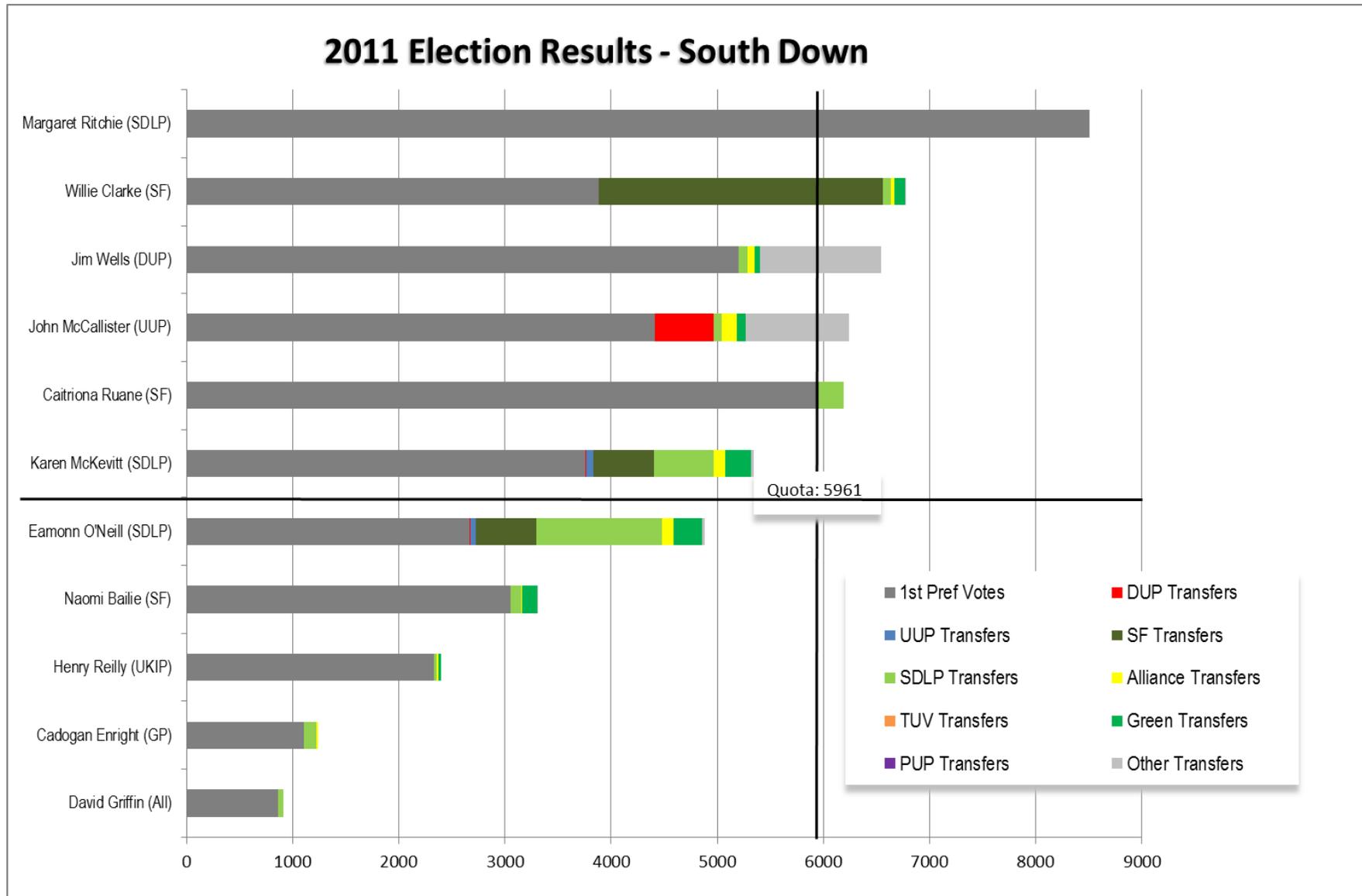
Note: Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 11/05/2011

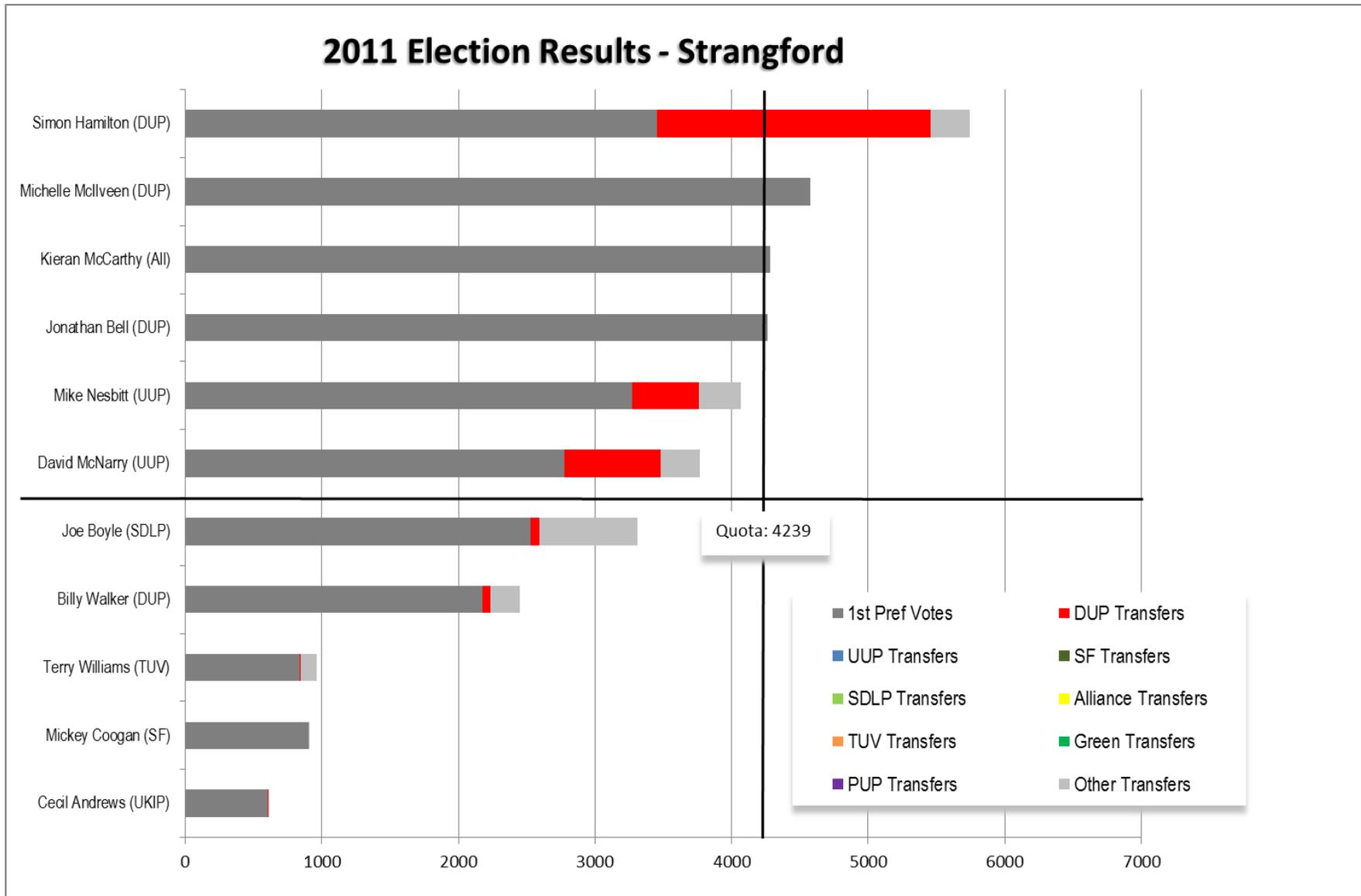


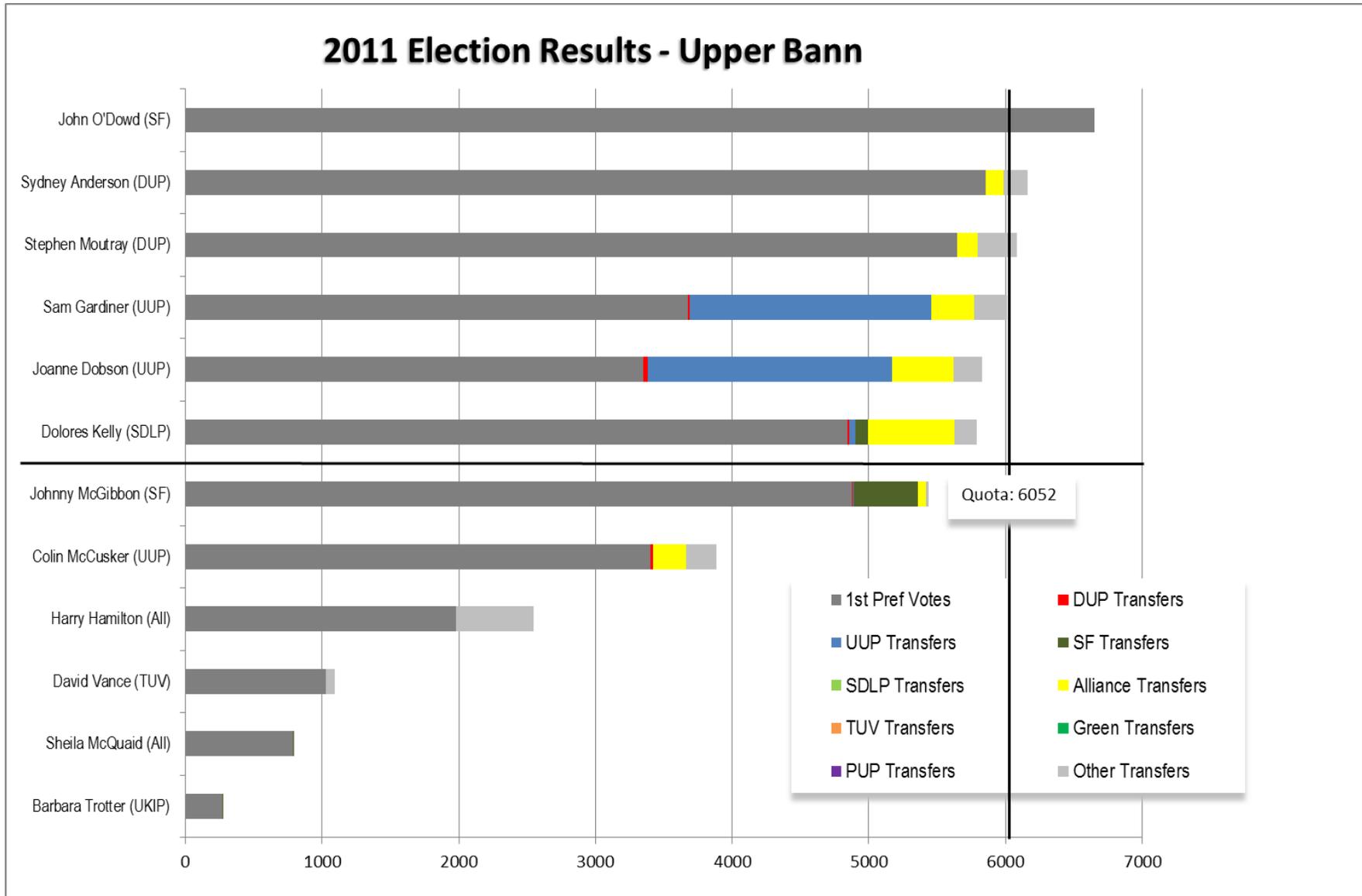


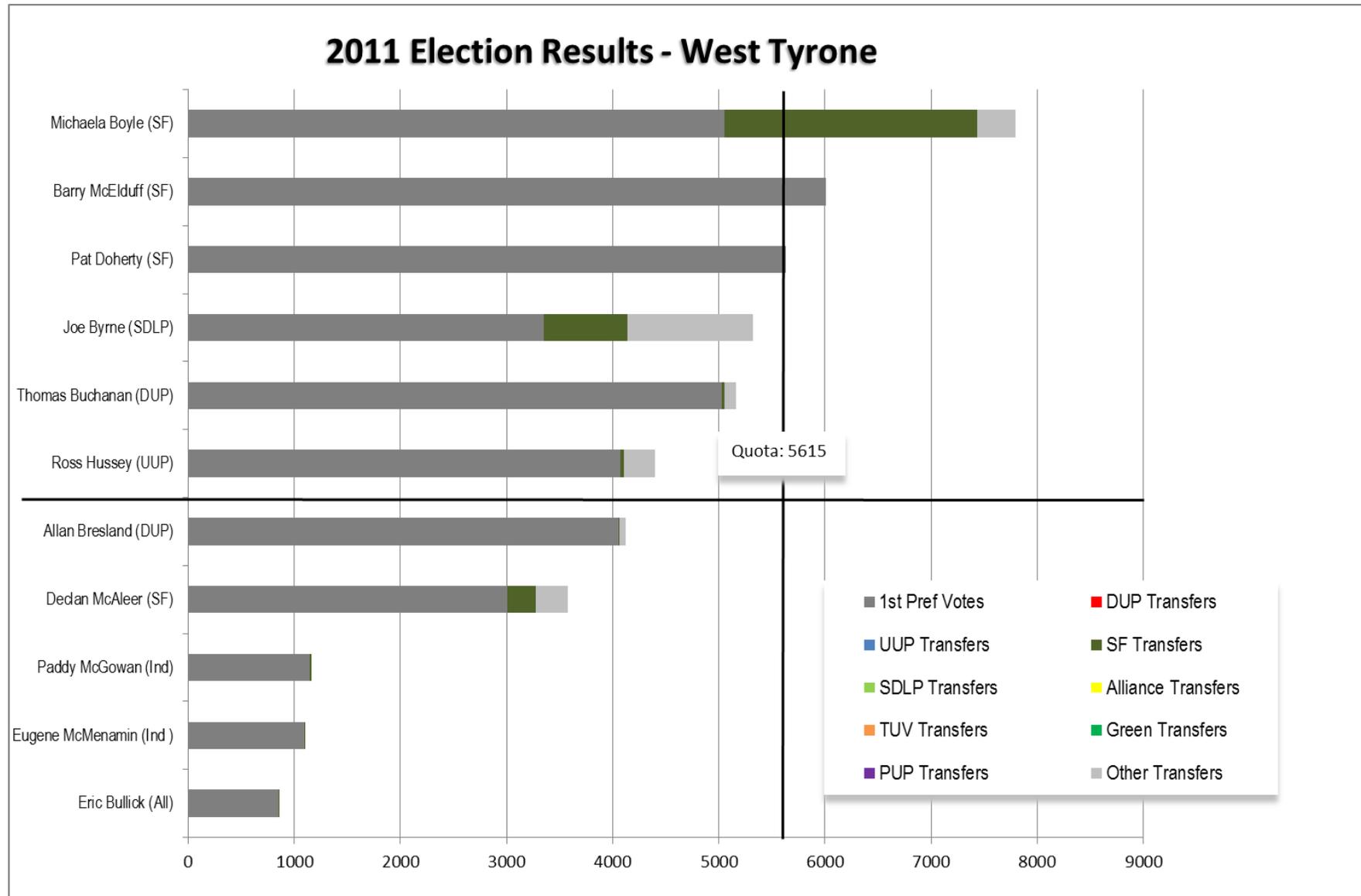












Annex A Table 2: Transferred votes by Party

		Transfers to				Transfers to		Transfers to			Totals
		DUP	UUP	TUV	PUP	SF	SDLP	Alliance	Green	Other	
Transfers from Unionists	DUP	16835	5145	1073	177	68	1886	969	102	701	26956
	UUP	8066	10223	695	79	71	1107	359	95	423	21118
	TUV	1794	1934	563	86	17	30	268	0	322	5014
	PUP	328	498	0	0	0	0	0	0	469	1295
	Total	27023	17800	2331	342	156	3023	1596	197	1915	54383
Transfers from Nationalists	SF	224	104	17	11	19738	5627	498	41	787	27047
	SDLP	162	209	3	0	1600	6883	1287	395	312	10851
	Total	386	313	20	11	21338	12510	1785	436	1099	37898
Transfers from Others	Alliance	1464	3700	106	0	832	3304	1243	349	850	11848
	Green	150	183	38	25	296	608	620	0	109	2029
	Other	4228	9337	484	91	4265	6847	2783	1093	1694	30822
	Total	5842	13220	628	116	5393	10759	4646	1442	2653	44699
Totals		33251	31333	2979	469	26887	26292	8027	2075	5667	136980

Notes: Transfers have been rounded to nearest whole number

Excludes votes that could not be transferred (e.g. if next preference already elected or excluded)

Includes votes that were transferred more than once

Corrected figures supplied by Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 16/06/2011

Annex B: List of Abbreviations

DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour party
SF	Sinn Féin
APNI	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
TUV	Traditional Unionist Voice
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
UKUP	United Kingdom Unionist Party
PBPA	People Before Profit Alliance
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
WP	Workers' Party
GP	Green Party
SOC	Socialist Party
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Ind	Independents