2010 General Election

Candidates in Northern Ireland, by Party and Gender

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Party** | **Total** | **Male** | **Female** | ***% Male*** | ***%Female*** |
| Alliance | 18 | 12 | 6 | *67* | *33* |
| SDLP | 18 | 13 | 5 | *72* | *28* |
| Greens | 4 | 3 | 1 | *75* | *25* |
| UCUNF | 17 | 13 | 4 | *76* | *24* |
| Sinn Fein | 17 | 14 | 3 | *82* | *18* |
| Others | 8 | 7 | 1 | *88* | *13* |
| TUV | 10 | 9 | 1 | *90* | *10* |
| DUP | 16 | 16 | 0 | *100* | *0* |
| **TOTAL** | **108** | **87** | **21** | ***81*** | ***19*** |

108 candidates were selected to contest the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies in the UK 2010 general election. In this, as in previous general elections, women’s share of candidacies is only 19%. The Alliance party has the strongest gender balance, fielding 6 women among the 18 party candidates: deputy leader and 2010 Belfast Lord Mayor, Naomi Long MLA (East Belfast); Anna Lo, MLA (South Belfast); Maire Hendron (West Belfast); Vasundhara Kamble, originally from India and first time candidate (Fermanagh and South Tyrone); Jayne Dunlop (North Antrim) and Deborah Girvin (Strangford).

The Social Democratic and Labour Party’s (SDLP) candidate list comprises 5 women: party leader and Social affairs minister in the NI executive, Margaret Ritchie MLA (South Down); Dolores Kelly MLA (Upper Bann); Mary Muldoon (East Belfast) and first time candidates Michelle Byrne (South Antrim) and Claire Hanna (Strangford). Barbara Haig (Strangford) is standing for the Green Party which is fielding only 4 candidates in total. The Ulster Conservatives and Unionist New Force party (UCUNF), previously the Ulster Unionist Party, have paid some attention to women’s presence among its candidates and is putting forward 4 women, almost one-quarter of its slate. All are first-time candidates. Daphne Trimble, is well known in NI as a public figure, and is contesting in Lagan Valley. She is joined by businesswoman Lesley Macauley (East Londonderry), community worker Paula Bradshaw (South Belfast) and the party’s women’s development officer Sandra Overend (Mid-Ulster).

Sinn Fein’s record on favouring the selection of relatively gender-balanced party tickets is not upheld on this occasion as the party is presenting only 3 women to the electorate. Each one is an experienced politician. Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs in the NI Executive, Michelle Gildernew, MLA is seeking to retain her Westminster seat (Fermanagh-South Tyrone); Catriona Ruane, MLA and Minister for Education in the Stormont Executive, is contesting South Down, while Martina Anderson, MLA is seeing a seat in Foyle. The lone woman among the Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) candidates is first-time candidate Kay Kilpatrick. Among other candidates declared is Lady Sylvia Hermon, sitting MP for North Down, standing in this election as an Independent on leaving the Ulster Unionists in protest at the party’s electoral pact with the Conservatives. Her constituency has a tradition of returning Independent MPs to Westminster.

Candidates in Northern Ireland, by Constituency and Gender

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Constituency** | **Total** | **Male** | **Female** | ***%Male*** | ***%Female*** |
| Belfast North | 6 | 6 | 0 | *100* | *0* |
| East Antrim | 6 | 6 | 0 | *100* | *0* |
| Newry and Armagh | 6 | 6 | 0 | *100* | *0* |
| West Tyrone | 6 | 6 | 0 | *100* | *0* |
| North Antrim | 7 | 6 | 1 | *86* | *14* |
| East Londonderry | 6 | 5 | 1 | *83* | *17* |
| Foyle | 6 | 5 | 1 | *83* | *17* |
| Lagan Valley | 6 | 5 | 1 | *83* | *17* |
| Mid Ulster | 6 | 5 | 1 | *83* | *17* |
| South Antrim | 6 | 5 | 1 | *83* | *17* |
| Belfast West | 5 | 4 | 1 | *80* | *20* |
| Upper Bann | 5 | 4 | 1 | *80* | *20* |
| North Down | 7 | 5 | 2 | *71* | *29* |
| South Down | 7 | 5 | 2 | *71* | *29* |
| Belfast East | 6 | 4 | 2 | *67* | *33* |
| Belfast South | 5 | 3 | 2 | *60* | *40* |
| Fermanagh and South Tyrone | 5 | 3 | 2 | *60* | *40* |
| Strangford | 7 | 4 | 3 | *57* | *43* |
| **TOTAL** | **108** | **87** | **21** | ***81*** | ***19*** |

Three of the 18 electoral constituencies are presenting a gender-balanced candidate slate to voters –where there is a 60:40 or better ratio between male and female candidates. These are Strangford, Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and South Belfast. They are followed by Belfast East in which women make up one-third of candidates available to the voters. In North and South Down the two women in each constituency give a gender ratio of around 70:30. West Belfast and Upper Bann come in at 80:20, with one woman among the five candidates in each case. A further 6 constituencies field a single woman, but the number of men running is greater than in West Belfast and Upper Bann. This reduces the gender ratio to below 80:20. At the end of the spectrum, four constituencies have no woman running: North Belfast, East Antrim, Newry and Armagh and West Tyrone.