



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Northern Ireland Local Elections: General Summary

1. With all 582 seats now declared, the following is the total number of seats and percentage first preference votes obtained by each party:

Party	Seat total and Gain/loss	Percentage of First Preference Vote	Gain/loss in First Preference Vote compared to 1989 results
UUP	197 (+ 8)	29%	- 2.3%
DUP	103 (- 7)	17.2%	- .5%
SDLP	127 (+ 6)	21.9%	+ .9%
Sinn Fein	51 (+ 8)	12.5%	+ 1.3%
Alliance	44 (+ 6)	7.7%	+ .8%
Independents	23		
Independent Un.	18		
Others	19		

2. For the UUP, the results must represent a disappointment. Its vote has declined 2.3% compared to 1989 despite general expectations that the party would make some inroads into the DUP vote. In particular, the UUP had hoped to consolidate its vote in Belfast but lost some ground to the DUP.
3. The DUP will regard the results with relief despite a drop of .5% in its overall vote. The Party has now halted a pattern of decline in its local election vote over the past decade (from 24.5% in 1985 to 17.7% in 1989) and its vote has effectively consolidated at the 1989 level. In political terms, the DUP is likely to present the decline in the UUP vote and the consolidation of its own as justification for its position in relation to the Talks.

** The UUP total may increase slightly due to Independent Unionists accepting the party whip.*

4. The Alliance Party will be fairly happy at its overall vote (a gain of .8% to 7.7%) while regretting that weakness of organisation did not allow a higher total number of seats. Alliance was particularly unlucky not to gain an extra 2-3 seats in Belfast.
5. The SDLP vote has consolidated at the 1989 level with a .9% increase (although showing a decline at 2.4% in overall percentage terms compared to the 1992 General Election).
6. For Sinn Fein, the result is a good one. Its overall percentage vote has increased by 1.3% (from 11.2% in 1989 to 12.5%) and it has maintained its position as the majority nationalist party in Belfast City Council. The Party gained an extra two seats in Dungannon (to a total of 5) while losing a seat in Fermanagh.

Composition of Councils

7. Derry, Newry and Mourne and Down will continue to be controlled by the SDLP (with the Party gaining an overall majority in Derry). The SDLP will be the largest single party in Strabane, Derry, Limavady, Magherafelt, Newry and Mourne and Down Councils.
8. Magherafelt moves from being an evenly split Council to a 9-7 nationalist majority. Limavady will now have a nationalist majority for the first time.
9. The SDLP will be somewhat disappointed that formerly evenly split or narrowly Unionist controlled Councils such as Dungannon, Strabane, Cookstown and Fermanagh did not move to nationalist control. In particular, there will be considerable disappointment at the Dungannon result where Sinn Fein achieved a gain of 2 seats (to 5).

10. The DUP will be disappointed at the loss of its overall majority in Ballymena Council, an unexpected reverse ascribed to local factors.

Belfast City Council

11. Sinn Fein emerged with largest percentage of first preference votes in Belfast with 23.2%. The UUP obtained 21.5%; the DUP 16.8%; the SDLP 15.6%; Alliance 10.9%; Independent Unionists 2.6%; others 9.4%.
12. The seat totals in Belfast are:

UUP	15
SF	10
DUP	9
All.	5
SDLP	9
Others	3
13. Sinn Fein won a seat in Lower Falls from the SDLP and now has 7 of the 10 seats in West Belfast.
14. For the UUP, a particular disappointment in Belfast will be the loss of Lord Mayor Herbert Ditty's seat.
15. The Belfast results will undoubtedly be presented by Sinn Fein as a significant victory. The SDLP loss of the Lower Falls seat will be a disappointment to the Party but its gains in others areas of Belfast will be a compensating factor.

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