

**My Vote**   
My Voice

# Easy Read Guide to Northern Ireland's Main Political Parties

**VOTE**



**Sinn Féin**



**DUP**



**Alliance**





People have different ideas about how the country should be run.



A **political party** is a group of people who share similar ideas about how the country should be run.



Political parties want to be in **government** so they can turn their ideas into law.

The government is a group of people who have the power make laws and set rules for the country.



Northern Ireland has **five main political parties**.



They are:

- the **Democratic Unionist Party**
- **Sinn Féin**
- the **Ulster Unionist Party**
- the **Social Democratic and Labour Party**
- the **Alliance Party**



Some political parties are often described as being either **left-wing** or **right-wing**.



Some political parties are also described as being in the **centre**.



Left-wing political parties believe in **equality**.

This means that they want all people to be given equal chances and have more support from the government.



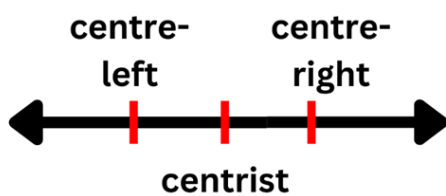
Right-wing political parties believe in **tradition**.

This means that they want people to make their own decisions about their lives and for the government to be smaller.



Political parties in the centre support a **balance** between left-wing and right-wing ideas.

This means they want equality and also want people to make their own decisions about their own lives.



Most of Northern Ireland's **main political parties are based in the centre**, but each lean in different directions.

These positions are called **centre-left**, **centre-right**, and **centrist**.



The Democratic Unionist Party is **right-wing**.

They are also called "**the DUP**" for short.



They want to **give families more support** with childcare and school costs.



They also want **more money from the UK government** to help create more jobs in Northern Ireland.



Sinn Féin is **left-wing**. Their name means “we ourselves” in Irish Gaelic.

They want more money spent on public services like schools, healthcare, and transport, and organise them on an **all-Ireland basis**.



This means that public services would help people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



The Ulster Unionist Party is **centre-right**.

They are also called “**the UUP**” for short.



They **support stronger links with the United Kingdom** to create more jobs for people in Northern Ireland.

They also want more money from the UK government to help Northern Ireland deal with issues like poverty and healthcare.





The Social Democratic and Labour Party is **centre-left**.

They are also called “**the SDLP**” for short.

They want **more devolution**. This means getting more powers for the Northern Ireland Assembly so it can make more of its own laws.



They want **Northern Ireland to work closer with the Republic of Ireland’s government** on all-Ireland public services.



The Alliance Party is **centrist**.

They are also called “**Alliance**” for short.



They want **better integration** in Northern Ireland.



This means bringing more people together from different communities in schools, health care, justice, and politics.

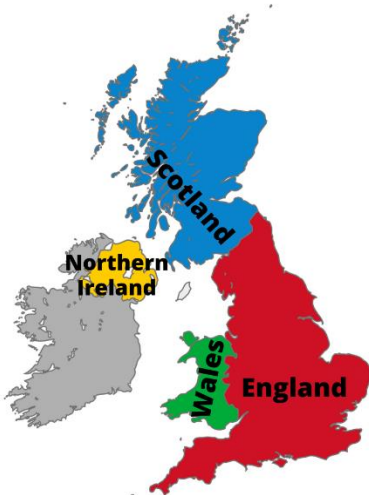


Political parties in Northern Ireland are often described as either **nationalist**, **unionist**, or **neutral**.



Sinn Féin and the SDLP are **nationalists** and support a **united Ireland**.

This means Northern Ireland **would leave the United Kingdom and join the Republic of Ireland** as one independent country.



The DUP and the UUP are **unionists**.

This means they **support Northern Ireland staying as part of the United Kingdom** and do not support a united Ireland.



The Alliance Party is **neutral** on whether Northern Ireland should leave or stay in the United Kingdom.

This means **they do not campaign for either position**.



Most of these political parties have **Members of Parliament** elected from all over Northern Ireland.

A Member of Parliament is also called an **MP**. An MP is elected to speak for people living in their area in **Parliament**.

Parliament is where the United Kingdom's laws are made.



A **general election** is when the people of the country vote for the next government.

General elections usually happen every 5 years.

**Every part of the United Kingdom**, including Northern Ireland, votes in a general election.



The party with the most MPs after a general election forms the government.





The Conservative Party have the most MPs and are the party in government.

Their leader is **Rishi Sunak** and he is the **Prime Minister**.

The Prime Minister is in charge of the government.



The **Labour Party** has the second-most MPs and form the **Official Opposition**.

This means they challenge the government and make it explain its decisions. At the next general election, **they want to replace the government**.

Their leader is **Sir Keir Starmer** and he is the Leader of the Opposition.



The DUP is also part of the Official Opposition.

Their leader is **Sir Jeffrey Donaldson**.



The SDLP is also part of the Official Opposition.

Their leader is **Colum Eastwood**.



Alliance is also part of the Official Opposition.

Their leader in Westminster is **Dr Stephen Farry**.



Sinn Féin have elected MPs but **they do not take their seats in Parliament**.



The UUP currently do not have any MPs elected from Northern Ireland.

**My Vote My Voice is on a mission to register more autistic people and people with learning disabilities to vote at the next general election.**

**Visit [www.myvotemyvoice.org.uk](http://www.myvotemyvoice.org.uk) to find out more!**

## Get in touch

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