

Doubtful ballot papers – allowed votes

Suggested examples of allowed votes are provided here. All of these examples are based on previous case law or taken from the specific rules for the elections. Ultimately the decision on any particular ballot paper rests with the Deputy Returning Officer and it is for them to determine their own view of the application of case law.





Case references can be found in *Dealing with doubtful ballot papers*. Other references are to the election rules: The Northern Ireland Assembly (Elections) Order 2001 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of The Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (as amended).

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 1.2em;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</p>		
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>		
<p>ANDERSON Hans 57 Hawthorn Close, Newtown Rowan Parky</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> XXX </div>
<p>CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Newtown Beech Parky</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> XX </div>
<p>FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Newtown Independent</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
<p>HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Newtown Willow Parky</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> XX </div>
<p>KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Newtown Independent</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> X </div>
<p>MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Newtown Oak Parky</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

Allow for Kumar, Hamilton, Cranston and Anderson as first, second third and fourth preference respectively – Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</p>		
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Newtown Close, Newtown Rowan Parky		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> X </div>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Newtown Beech Parky		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> 2 </div>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Newtown Independent		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> 4 </div>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Newtown Willow Parky		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Newtown Independent		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> 3 </div>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Newtown Oak Parky		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>







Allow – 'X' is taken as a first preference for Anderson. Allow for Cranston, Kumar and Fleming as second, third and fourth preference respectively. Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h1>Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h1> <h2>[insert name of constituency] constituency</h2>		
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Antonyown Close, Antonyown Rowan Party		<input type="text"/>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Antonyown Beech Party		<input type="text"/>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Antonyown Independent		<input type="text"/>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Antonyown Willow Party		<input type="text"/>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Antonyown Independent		<input type="text"/>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Antonyown Oak Party		<input type="text"/>





Allow as first preference for Kumar.
Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</h3>	
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>	
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px;">two</div>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px;">one</div>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto;"></div>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto;"></div>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Independent	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px;">three</div>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 10px auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px;">four</div>






Allow for Cranston, Anderson, Kumar and MacDonald as first, second, third and fourth preference respectively. Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0; color: #0070C0;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</h3>		
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">2</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">1</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">4</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">3</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>
KUMAR Kuldeep 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Independent	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">3</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party	<div style="font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">3</div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <input style="width: 100px; height: 60px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> </div>






Allow for Cranston, Anderson, Kumar and Fleming as first, second, third and fourth preference respectively. Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</h3>	
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>	
<p>ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<p>CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<p>FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<p>HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<p>KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Independent</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> Kumar </div>
<p>MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>

Allow for Kumar as first preference (provided there is no other candidate called Kumar.)
Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)
and *Ruffle v Rogers*

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 1.2em;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</p>		
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">5</div>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">6</div>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2</div>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1</div>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Independent		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</div>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>

Partially allow – allow for Hamilton, Fleming and Kumar as first, second and third preference respectively. Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Northern Ireland Assembly Election</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 1.2em;">[insert name of constituency] constituency</p>	
<p>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>	
<p>ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party</p>	 <input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
<p>CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party</p>	 <input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
<p>FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent</p>	 <input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
<p>HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party</p>	 <input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
<p>KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Independent</p>	<input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>
<p>MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party</p>	 <input style="width: 100px; height: 80px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>











Allow - yes is taken as first preference for Fleming. Assembly rule 44C(1) and Local rule 46(1) and *Ruffle v Rogers*

Doubtful ballot papers – rejected votes











Suggested examples of rejected votes are provided here. All of these examples are based on previous case law or taken from the specific rules for the elections. Ultimately the decision on any particular ballot paper rests with the Deputy Returning Officer and it is for them to determine their own view of the application of case law.

Case references can be found in *Dealing with doubtful ballot papers*. Other references are to the election rules: The Northern Ireland Assembly (Elections) Order 2001 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of The Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (as amended).











The Electoral Commission

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party	L. Smith 129 Acacia Rd 	
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		











Reject - voter can be identified. Assembly rule 44C(1)(d) and Local rule 46(1)(d) and *Woodward v Sarsons*, South Newington case.

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		











Reject - more than one first preference. Assembly rule 44C(1)(c) and Local rule 46(1)(c)

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		











Reject – void for uncertainty. Assembly rule 44C(1)(e) and Local rule 46(1)(e) and Buckrose case

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		











Reject – void for uncertainty. Assembly rule 44C(1)(e) and Local rule 46(1)(e)

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		











Reject –void for uncertainty. Assembly rule 44C(1)(e) and Local rule 46(1)(e)

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		

Reject – more than one first preference. Assembly rule 44C (1)(c) and Local rule 46(1)(c)

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		

Reject – no first preference and not marked otherwise by means of a figure. Assembly rule 44C(1)(c) and Local rule 46(1)(b)

Northern Ireland Assembly Election [insert name of constituency] constituency		
You can make as many or as few choices as you wish. Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.		
ANDERSON Hans 57 Anytown Close, Anytown Rowan Party		
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party		
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent		
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party		
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytownw Independent		
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party		

Reject – unmarked. Assembly rule 44C (1)(e) and Local rule 46(1)(e)