



General Election Opinion Poll

27th October 2013



REDC

Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,001 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 21st and 23rd October 2013.
- A random digit dial (RDD) method is used to ensure a random selection process of households to be included – this also ensures that ex-directory households are covered.
- Half of the sample are interviewed using an RDD landline sample, with the other half conducted using an RDD mobile phone sample, this ensures 98% coverage of the population reaching landline only households, mobile only households and those with both a landline and a mobile.
- Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults. A further past vote weighting is included that takes the current recall for how people voted at the last election, compares this to the actual results, and weights the data to halfway between the two.
- Vote intention results are based on those who will actually go and vote, using a 10 point scale, where 1 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, those rating 4 to 10 are included as being those who will actually go and vote.
- Finally, some people tell RED C that they intend to vote, and have a good past voting record, but say they don't know who they would vote for or refuse to answer the question. Whenever such people say which party they voted for in the last election, RED C ascribe 50% to the party they voted for previously. We have seen from analysis of past elections that this is the most likely outcome and this reallocation tries to overcome the effect of the “spiral of silence” where voters are do not want to admit who they will vote for.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

Lack of perceived “Fairness” in Budget hurts Labour

Much of the talk before the Budget was announced was the need for Labour to get some wins with voters out of the Budget, and so halt the recent declining trend in support for the junior coalitions partner. This poll suggests that any planned boost for Labour has simply failed to materialise, with results instead showing gains for its larger coalition partner Fine Gael, at the expense of Labour support, which slips to a new low level.

In fact, Fine Gael end up as the only winners from the Budget, with gains of 2% in the last 6 weeks suggesting their supporters are happy with the Budget. This leaves the party securing its highest share of first preference support for over a year, and it is at the expense in support of both Labour and the Green Party.

For the Greens this is not a particular surprise, as the 3-4% they secured in the last poll was a boost, but at the same time somewhat out of line compared to recent trends.

In contrast, for Labour this is not good news, as they had hoped recent declines might be arrested by some of the measures in the Budget, such as free GP care for under 5's. While the fall in support for Labour is only a drop of 1% compared to the last poll in September, it means they have lost 3% of the first preference vote since June, and continues a general downward trend in support for the party.

In the past we have seen that one of the key attributes that Labour supporters are looking for from their party is to ensure “fairness” in the actions of the coalition government. So in this poll we asked voters whether they felt the Budget was fair. Just under 2 in 5 (39%) felt that it was, which is of course very similar to the levels of support across the coalition.

However, when you dig a little deeper into these figures you find that this is not split along party lines. The key statistic for Labour is that 62% of those supporting the party felt the Budget was unfair. In contrast only 32% of Fine Gael supporters thought it was unfair. This suggests that the measures in the Budget, rather than stop declining support for the party, may well have prompted further defection.

Importance of Perceived Economic Competence on Voter Support

The state of the economy and how a party is perceived in terms of their economic competence is a key influence on voter behaviour. Recent evidence of this link was clearly seen at the 2007 General Election, when Fianna Fail won more support than many expected, partly because voters simply trusted them more with a wobbling economy at the time.

Given the importance of this link, it is vital for the current coalition that they begin to benefit from any improvement in the economy in Ireland. It would certainly have been a strategy for both government coalition parties, to weather the storm of harsh economic budgets for the first half of their term in office. In the hope that improving conditions would allow them to be seen to have pulled Ireland out of the downtimes and so consolidate support in the run up to the next General Election.

In our regular Sunday Business Post polls, we regularly look at how voters perceive the government parties in terms of economic competence. The expectation being that as this measure begins to improve, we might begin to see a resulting gradual improvement in support for the parties in power themselves. To put this into context, for the first two years in government during a very tough recession, there have been less voters who trust the coalition with the economy than say they would vote for them.

This year, despite some early signs of improvement in the economy and gains in consumer confidence; as yet the coalition do not appear to be reaping any rewards for this. In fact the proportion of voters that trust Fine Gael and Labour with the economy has declined in the past year. It currently stands at just over a third of voters (36%), down 2% from a year ago.

The real insight comes however when we look at “trust to manage the economy” by voter type. While 70% of current Fine Gael supporters trust the coalition with the economy, among Fine Gael defectors (those that claim to have voted for the party in 2011 but won’t support them now) just 14% trust the coalition on the economy. Suggesting this is a major factor in defection.

The same analysis for Labour produces a slightly different picture. A far lower proportion (52%) of current Labour supporters trust the coalition with the economy in the first place. On first glance this would suggest that economic competence is key for Labour. However, the gap on economic competence among current supporters and Labour defectors is far lower than for Fine Gael, with 30% of Labour defectors still stating that they trust the coalition on the economy.

This suggests that as the economy improves it is likely to be Fine Gael that gains more so than Labour. And while an improving economy may help Labour to some extent in the future, this perhaps has to be in conjunction with an improving perception among lost Labour voters that they are fighting for “Fairness” in government as well.

First Preference Vote Intention – Oct 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael
29% +2

Labour
9% -1

Fianna Fail
23% =

Sinn Fein
17% =

Independent/
Other
22% -1

Undecided Voters
18% =

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First Preference Vote Intention – Oct 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote (including undecided))

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE

	Core figures 27 th Oct 2013	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in past elections	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	23	29	36
Labour	7	9	19
Fianna Fáil	18	23	17
Sinn Féin	15	17	10
Independent candidates	16	18	13
Green Party	2	2	2
Socialist Party	*	1	1
Other Party	1	1	1
Undecided	18		

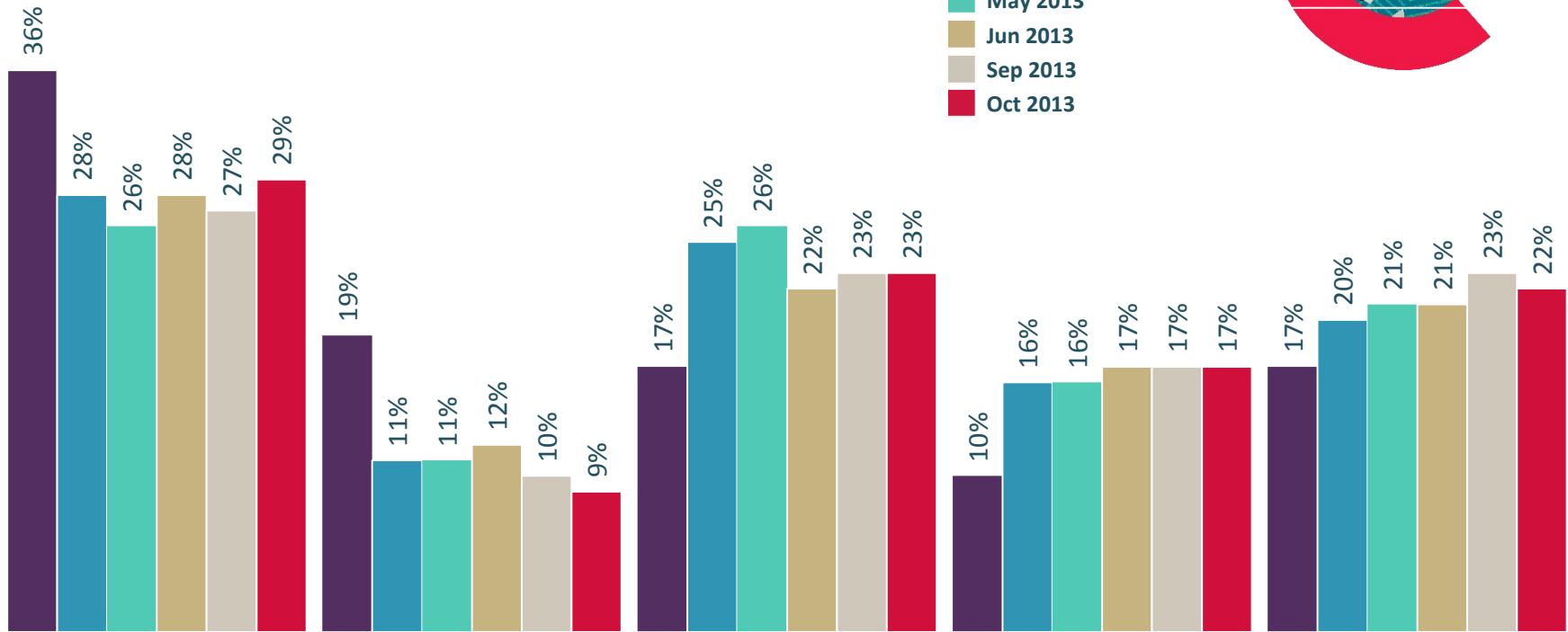
First Preference Vote Intention – Feb 2013 – June 2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



- General election 2011
- Apr 2013
- May 2013
- Jun 2013
- Sep 2013
- Oct 2013



Fine Gael
29%

Labour
9%

Fianna Fail
23%

Sinn Fein
17%

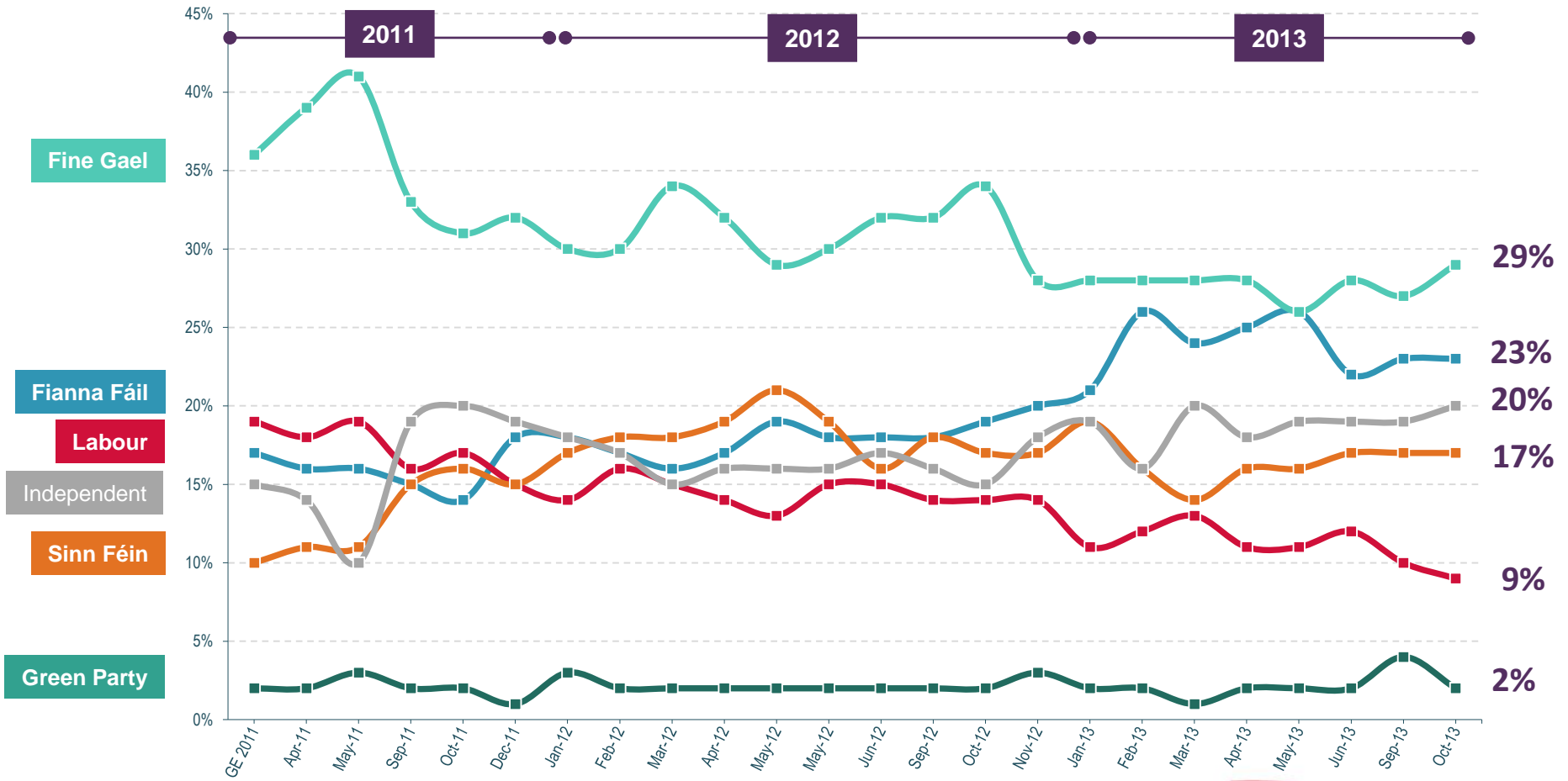
Independent/
Other
22%



First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

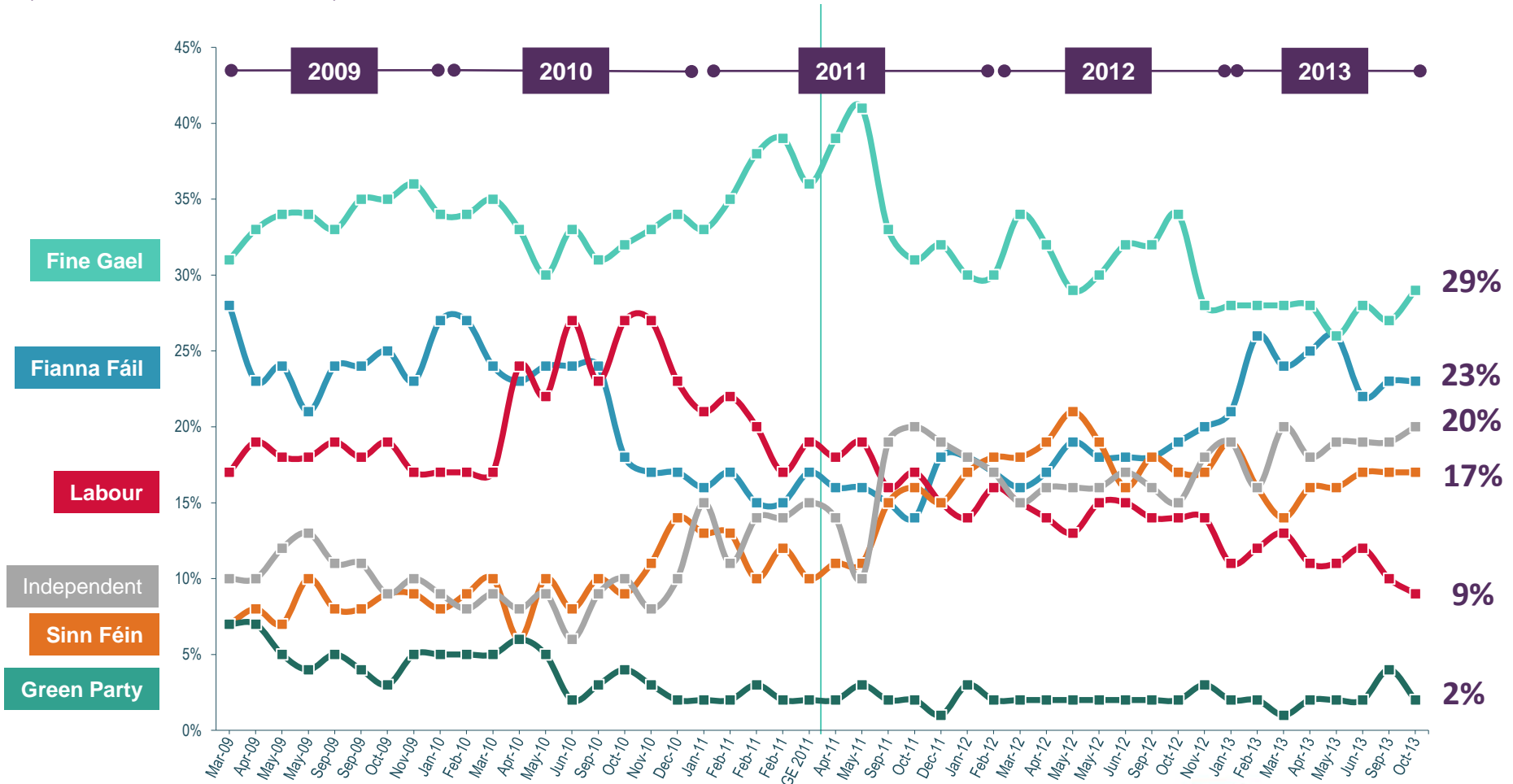
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2013

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

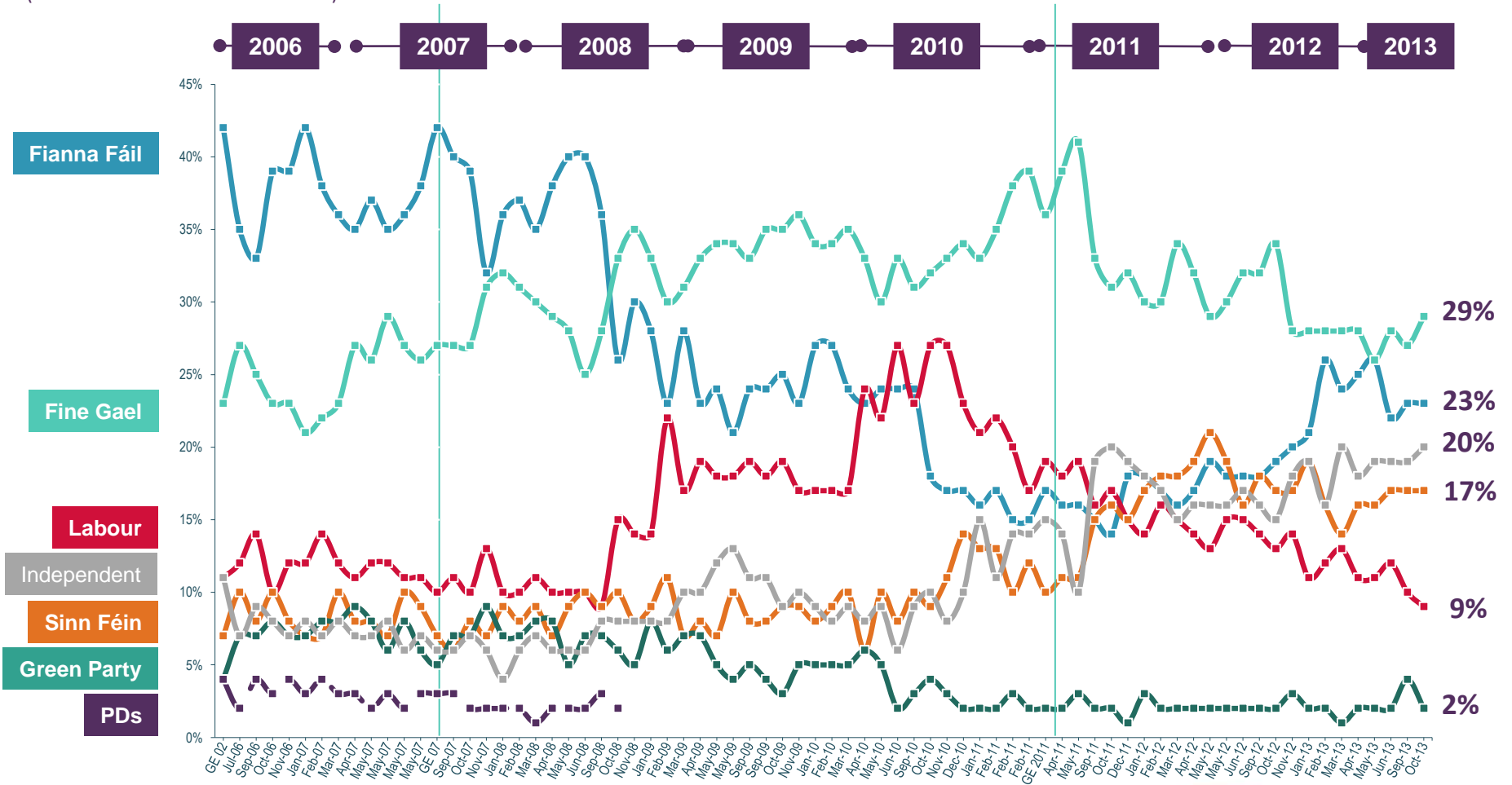
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2006 to 2013

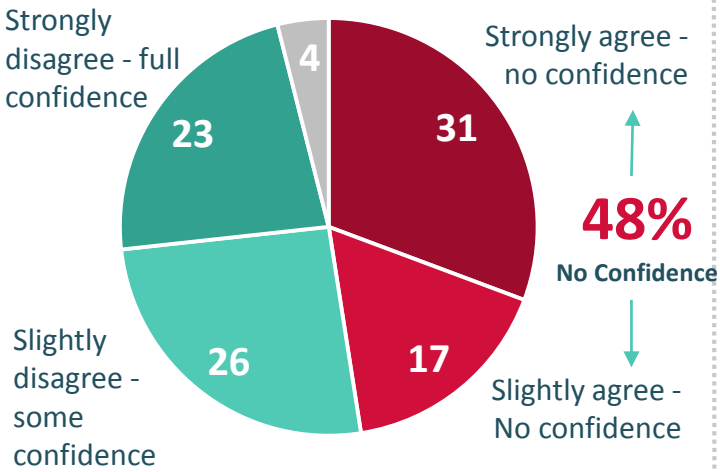
If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

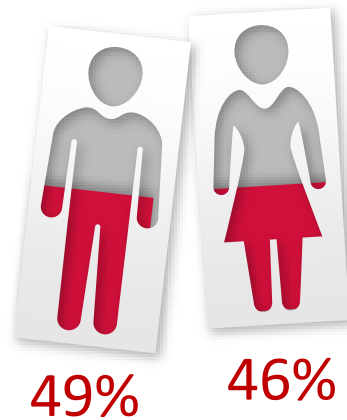


Confidence in Dr Reilly to run the Health Department

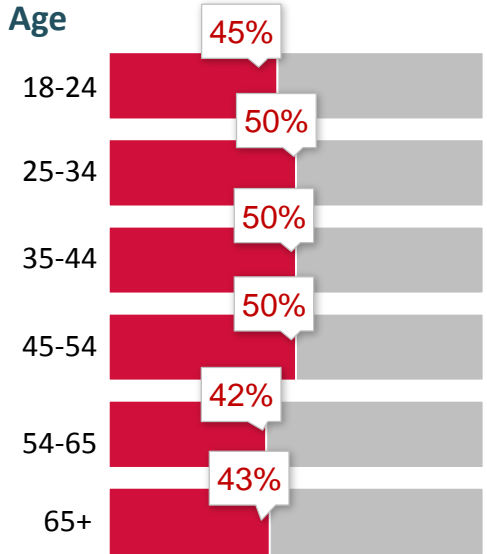
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



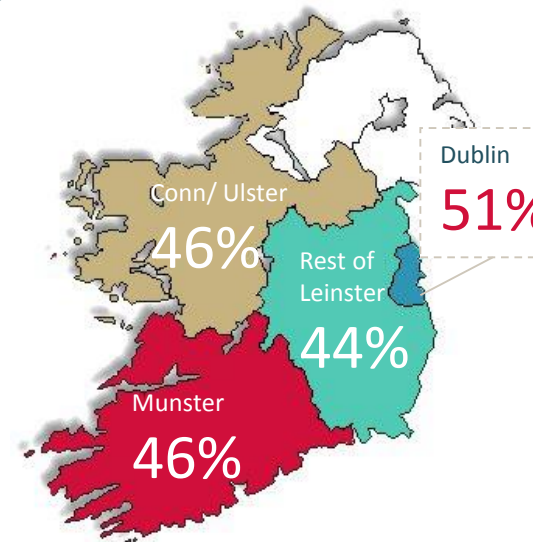
Social Class



Party Support



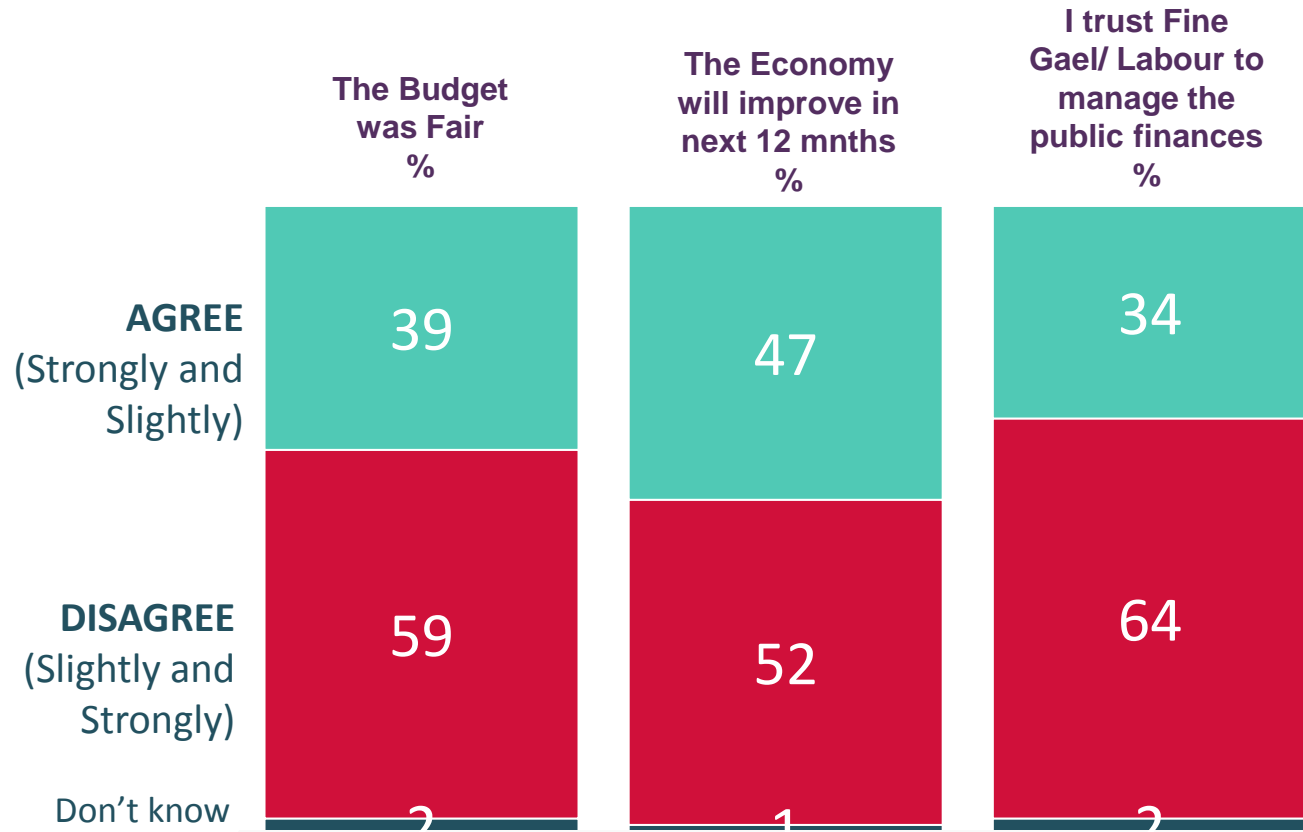
Region



Attitudes towards the Budget and the Economy

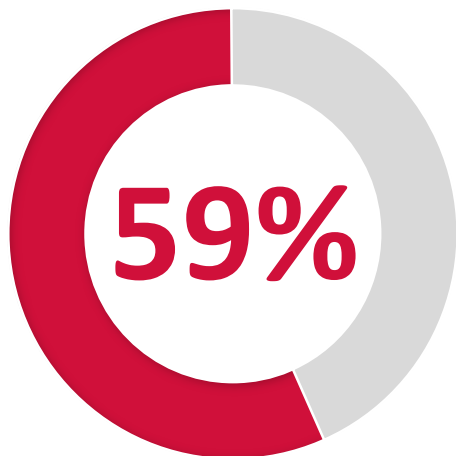
(Base: All adults 18+)

Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy and the budget. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

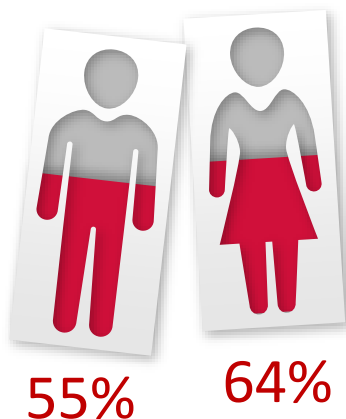


Who felt the Budget was Unfair?

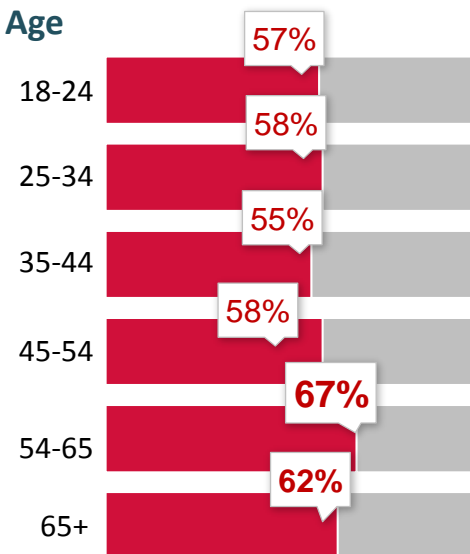
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



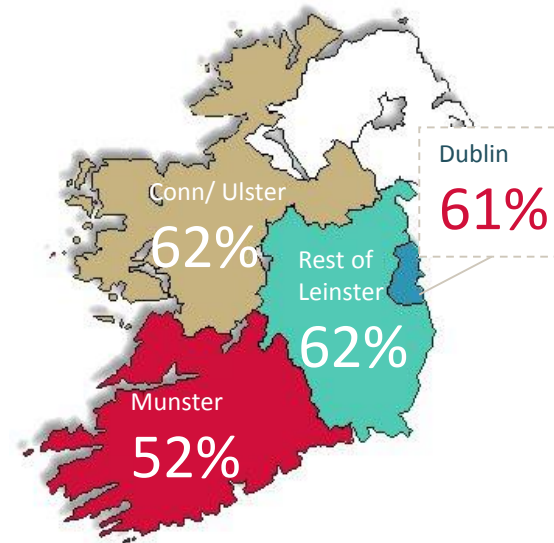
Social Class



Party Support

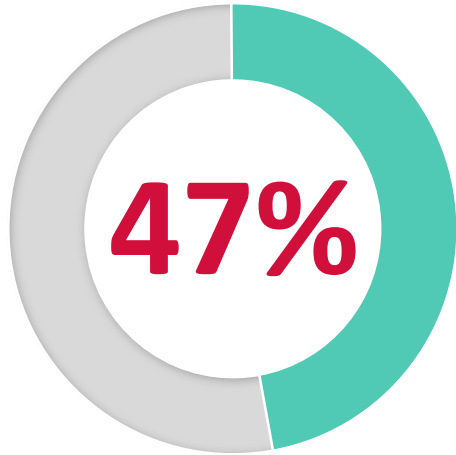


Region

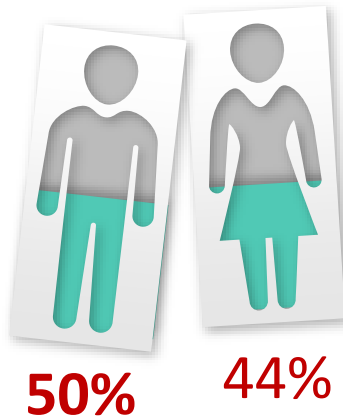


Who is more likely to think the economy will improve?

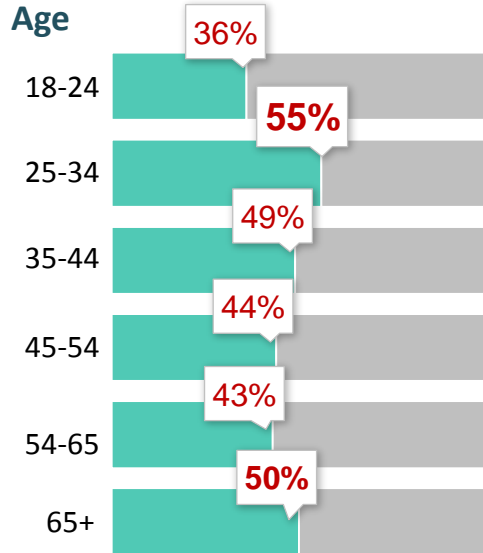
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **52%**



Lower Social Grades: **43%**



Party Support

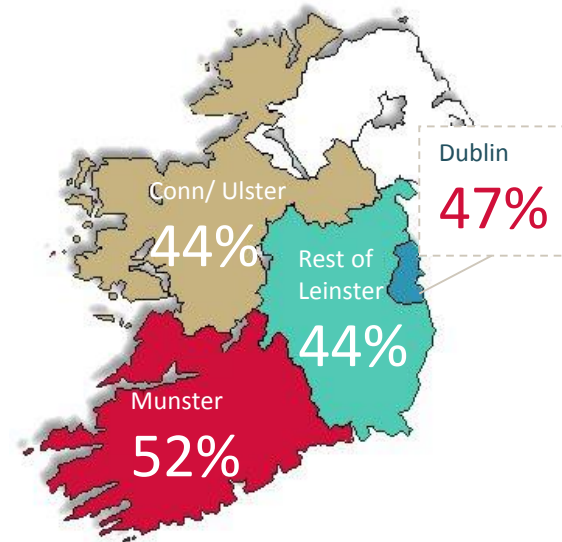

FINE GAEL **69%**


Labour **64%**


FIANNA FAIL **48%**

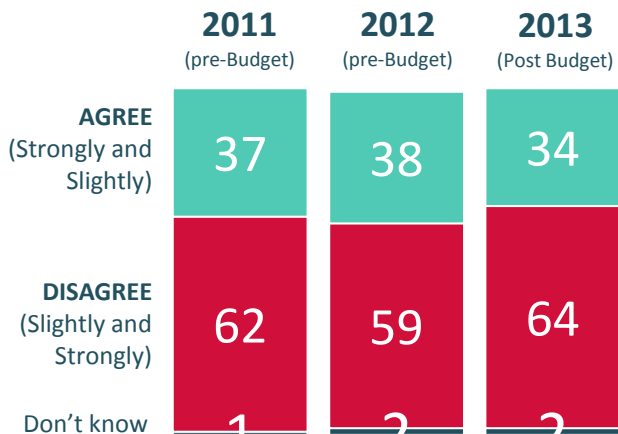

SF **30%**

Region

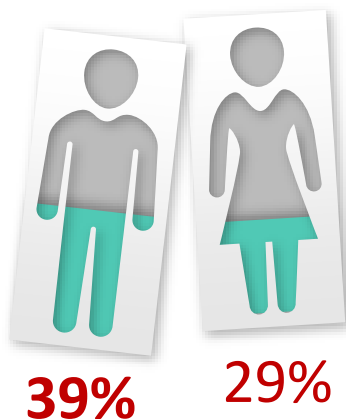


Who trusts Fine Gael/ Labour to handle the economy?

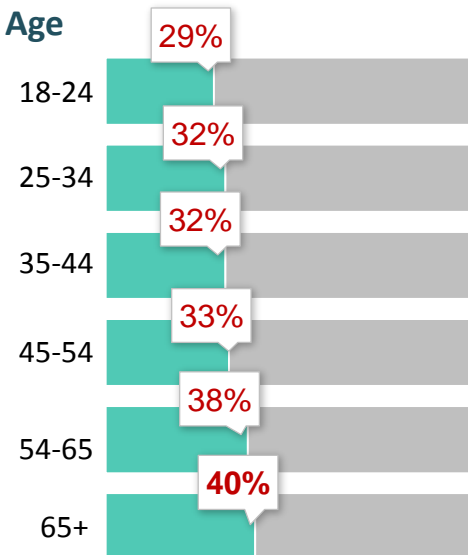
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **36%**



Lower Social Grades: **32%**



Party Support

FINE GAEL 70%

Labour 52%

FIANNA FAIL 22%

SF 21%

Region

