



# General Election Opinion Poll

15<sup>th</sup> September 2013



**REDC**

# Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,003 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September 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.

# Government parties remain under pressure

Despite a month which has seen much talk of possible green shoots of recovery in the economy, it is the government parties that remain under pressure in this most recent Sunday Business Post/RED C tracking poll. The poll, taken between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of September, and published the weekend before the Dail is due to start back after their summer break, shows both government parties losing share. Fine Gael first preference support falls back by 1%, to leave the party securing 27% of the first preference vote; while their coalition partners Labour also lose 1% share, leaving them securing just 10% of the first preference vote overall.

These are relatively small shifts, and well within the margin of error between this poll and the last, but the overall trend for both parties this year has been downward. This is perhaps more the case for Labour than Fine Gael, whose support at just 10%, is the lowest seen in a RED C poll since October 2008. It continues the gradual decline in support seen for the party since the last election, with between 4-5% of support lost each year over the past two years. There had been some signs of a mini revival in the parties' fortunes before the Dail closed for the summer. That has been short lived for the party, and the need for further signs of an improving economy, may well prove vital for the parties' fortunes over the next year.

For Fianna Fail the small 1% gains this period, leave the party securing 23% first preference support. The party will be pleased to see that the negative impact that the released Anglo tapes had on support has begun to be clawed back. Small gains this month, plus that fact that a large chunk of undecided voters (35%) remain past Fianna Fail supporters, provide a positive platform for the party to regain the support it had secured in May.

Sinn Fein also have a relatively good poll, retaining support at 17%, after gains made in the last poll. The party has achieved higher support since the last election, in the first half of 2012, but this was at a time when they were the only party supporting a No vote at the ESM Treaty referendum, and therefore has significant media coverage.

Finally Independent, Green, Socialist and Other parties make up 23% of the first preference vote. When we split this vote into its composite parts, in fact Independent candidates on their own have lost support. They took 18% share of the vote in June and here see a 2% fall in support to leave them securing just 16%.

Green Party support also sees some gains. Anecdotal evidence does suggest that leader Eamon Ryan has received quite a lot of coverage during the summer. They are also the only other party apart from Fianna Fail who are supporting a No vote in the Seanad Referendum. Before we get too excited about gains for the Greens however, they have really only increased support by just over 1% when we look share to two decimal points, rather than rounded to one number scores.

# Seanad referendum closer than overall figure suggest

This poll also marks the start of the countdown to the Seanad referendum, with just under three weeks to go to the vote on the 4<sup>th</sup> October. In the past, the public have been seen to only really start to connect with the issues on referenda in the final 2-3 weeks of the campaign. For this referendum I would not expect that to be any different, particularly this referendum hasn't really captured the public's imagination yet, and it is only this week that posters have begun to appear on the subject and the referendum commissions advertising has begun.

RED C first conducted a poll on the referendum back in June for bookmakers Paddy Power, and since then the general trend has been for the Yes vote in support of abolition to decline. This trend is typical in any recent referendum, where it is up to the supporters of change, to persuade voters that the result will be an improvement on the status quo. The problem for the government parties is that they could be in danger of losing this one. With three weeks to go, and no real debate as yet, only 50% of likely voters suggest they will vote Yes in favour of abolition. This is down slightly from June when 52% stated they would support the abolition, so as in past referendums the Yes vote is declining, even if only gradually.

Now, it is true that only 35% of voters currently suggest they will vote No to keep the Seanad, and it is also the case that this is lower than seen in August when 37% said they intended to vote No. As such, if we were to just look at the Yes and No sides on face value and exclude the undecided voters, it would suggest that the vote should be carried relatively comfortably. History however does not suggest this to be the case. The reality is that if you don't know how to vote in a referendum, but still intend to vote, you are far more likely to vote No, than Yes. The reason behind this is that if you are unsure how to vote, it is far easier to vote No in order to keep the "status quo" and leave things as they are, than to vote for something where you are unclear of the consequences.

As a result this referendum is potentially much closer than the base figures suggest. Further slips for the Yes camp over the next three weeks, and it could be very tight indeed. The signs to watch for will be how effective the No camp is at casting doubt over the benefits of change. The more people doubt the benefits, the more likely they are to vote No, and so keep the status quo.

The key for this will be Labour and Sinn Fein voters, who despite their parties support for abolition seem less than sure of the reality. While Fine Gael voters appear to be more likely to support their parties stance, with 67% suggesting they will vote Yes, just 50% of both Labour and Sinn Fein's supporters agree with their parties stance at present. At the same time, those in more upmarket groups also appear less unsure with just 45% supporting the abolition; which again emphasises the precarious nature of the vote, as they are far more likely to vote in the referendum. Women, those voters living in Dublin and younger voters should also be key targets for the Yes side, as they are all currently less likely to support abolition. With three weeks to go, the Yes side certainly do have a fight on their hands..

# First Preference Vote Intention – Sep 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  
**27%** -1

Labour  
**10%** -2

Fianna Fail  
**23%** +1

Sinn Fein  
**17%** =

Independent/  
Other  
**23%** +2

Undecided Voters  
**18%** -2



# First Preference Vote Intention – Sep 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))

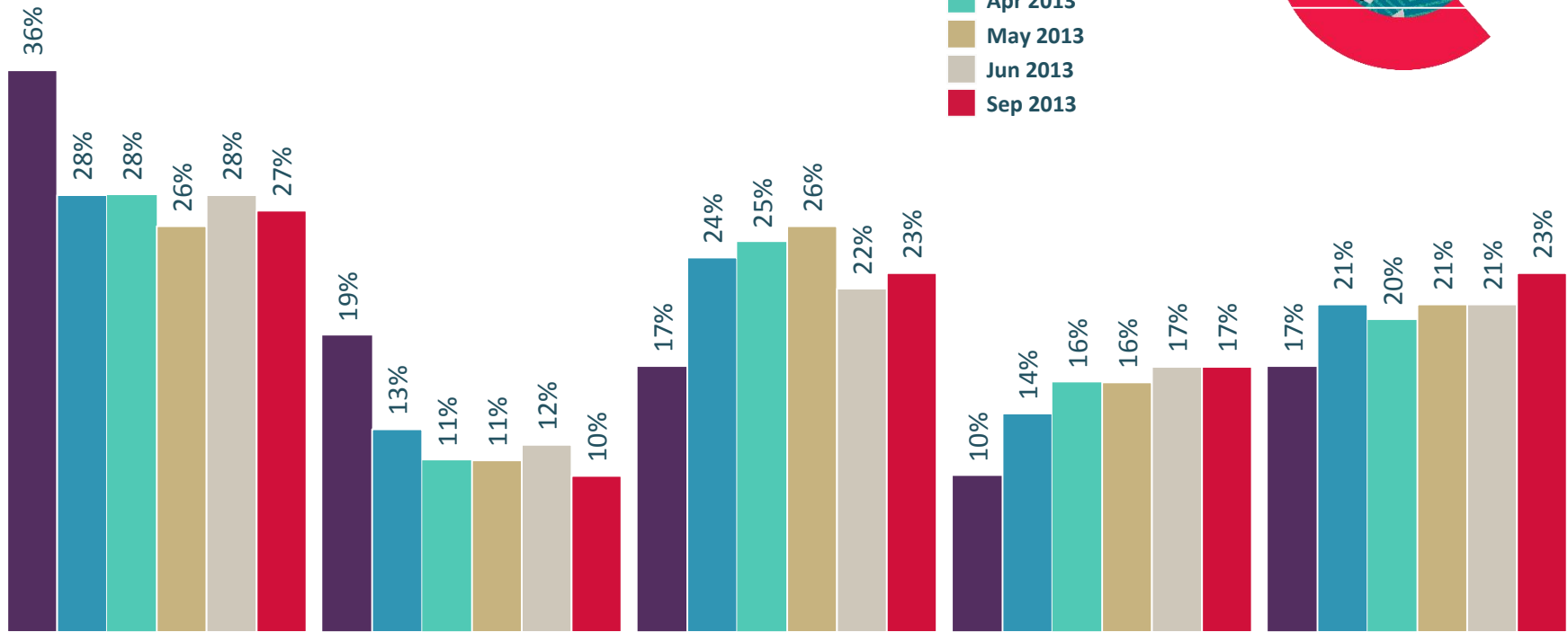
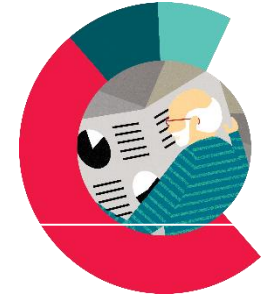
## CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE

	Core figures 15 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2013	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in past elections	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	22	27	36
Labour	8	10	19
Fianna Fáil	18	23	17
Sinn Féin	15	17	10
Independent candidates	14	16	13
Green Party	3	4	2
Socialist Party	1	1	1
Other Party	1	2	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)



Fine Gael  
**27%**

Labour  
**10%**

Fianna Fail  
**23%**

Sinn Fein  
**17%**

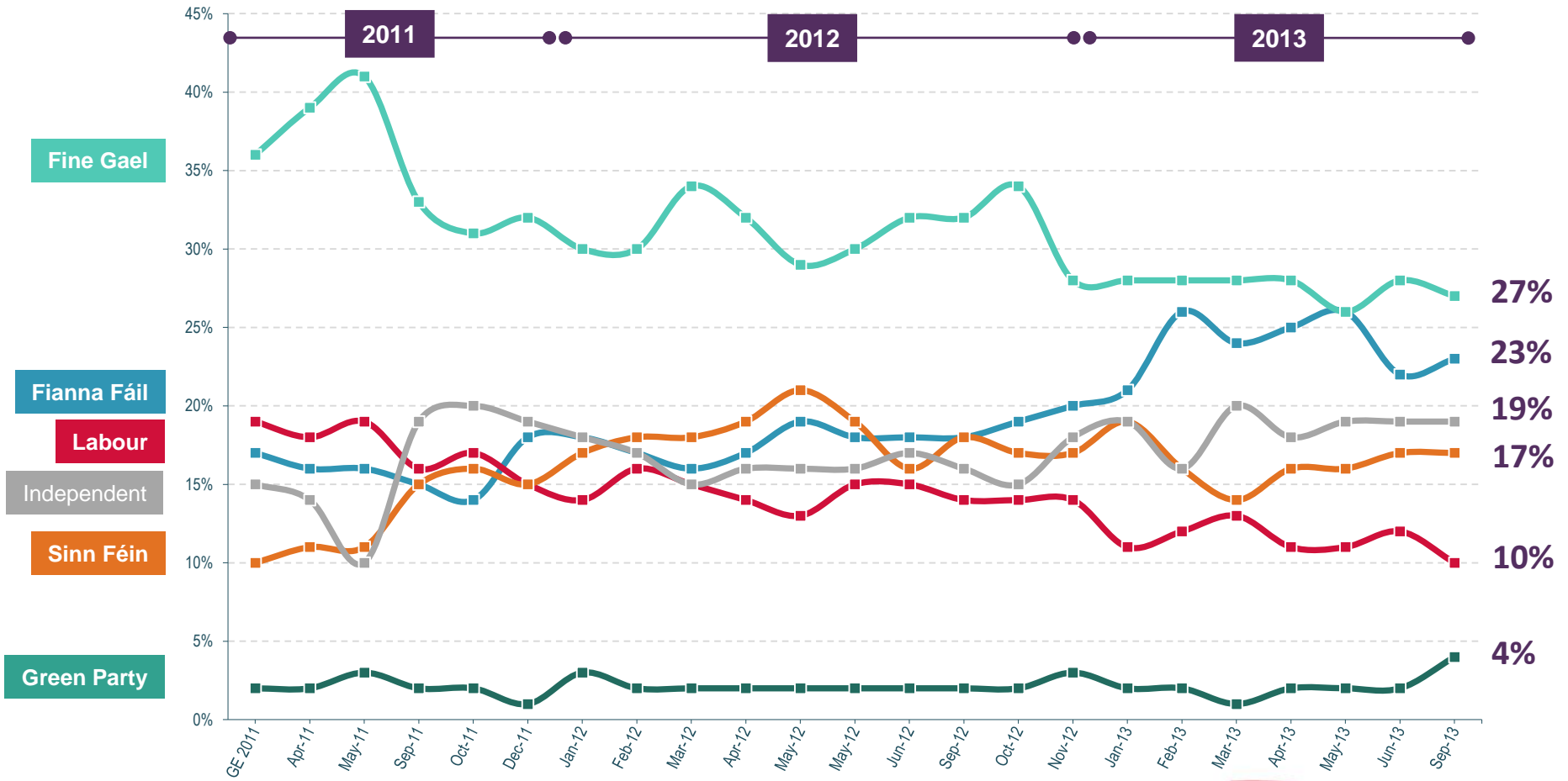
Independent/  
Other  
**23%**



# 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 )

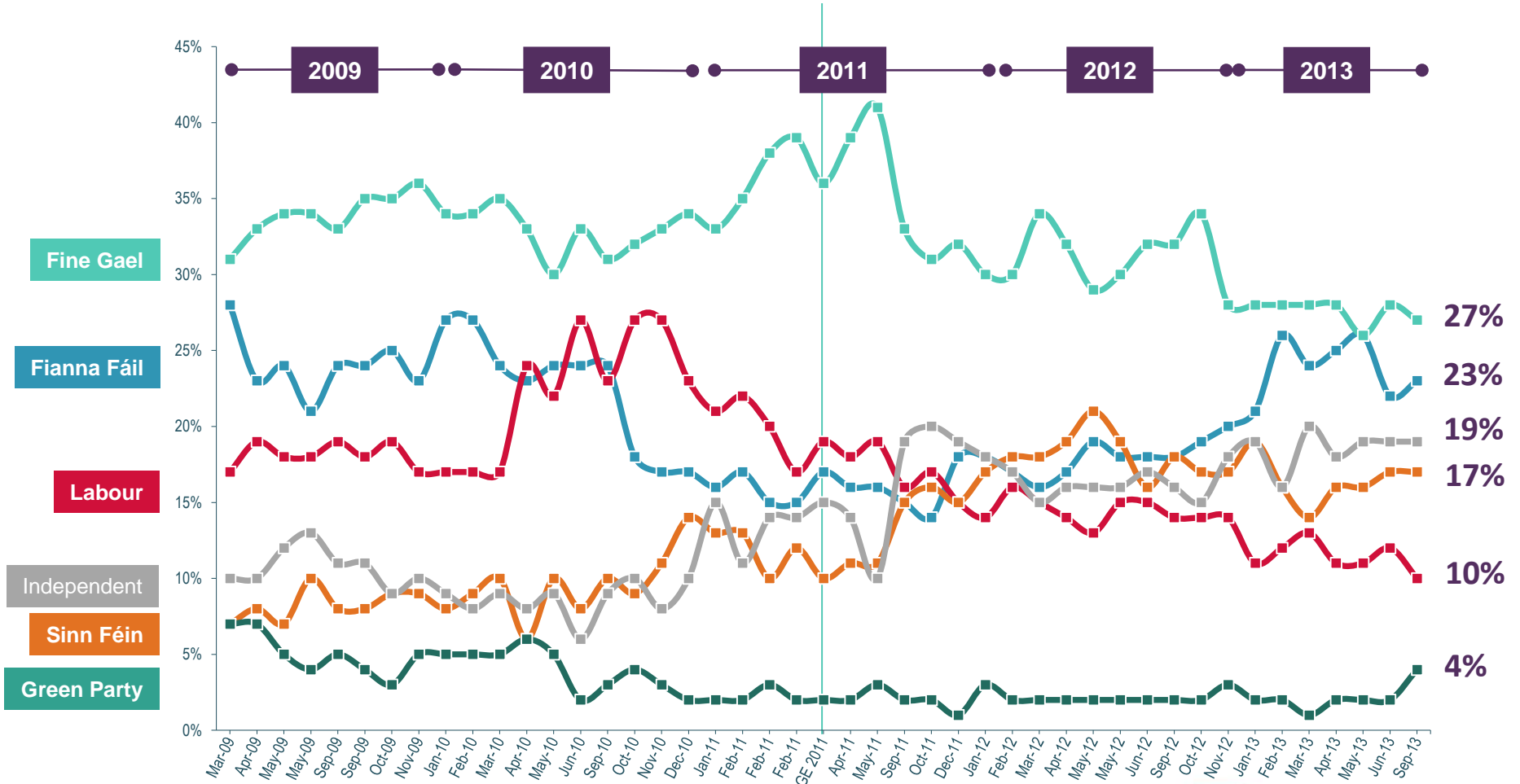




# First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2013

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)

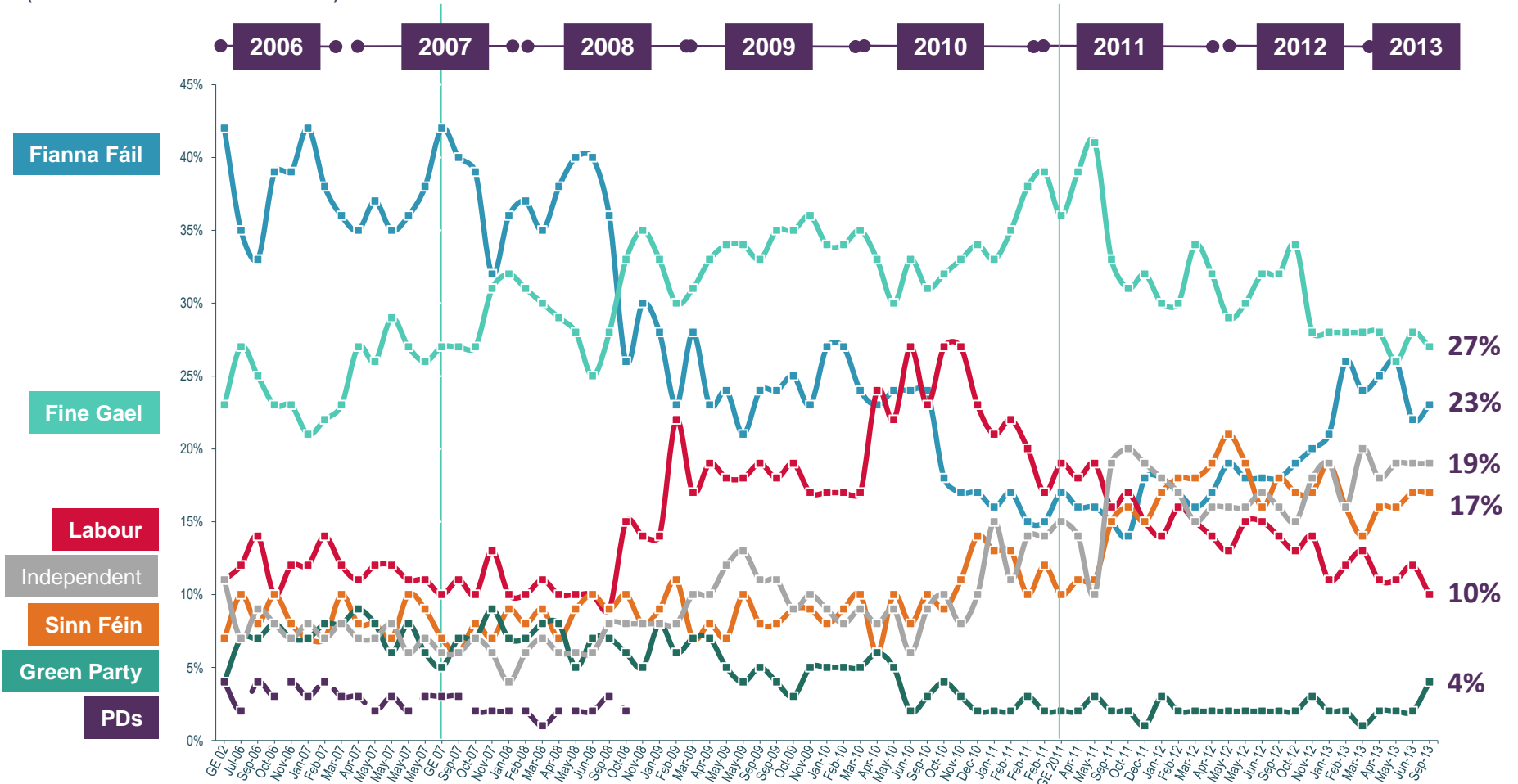
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# 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)

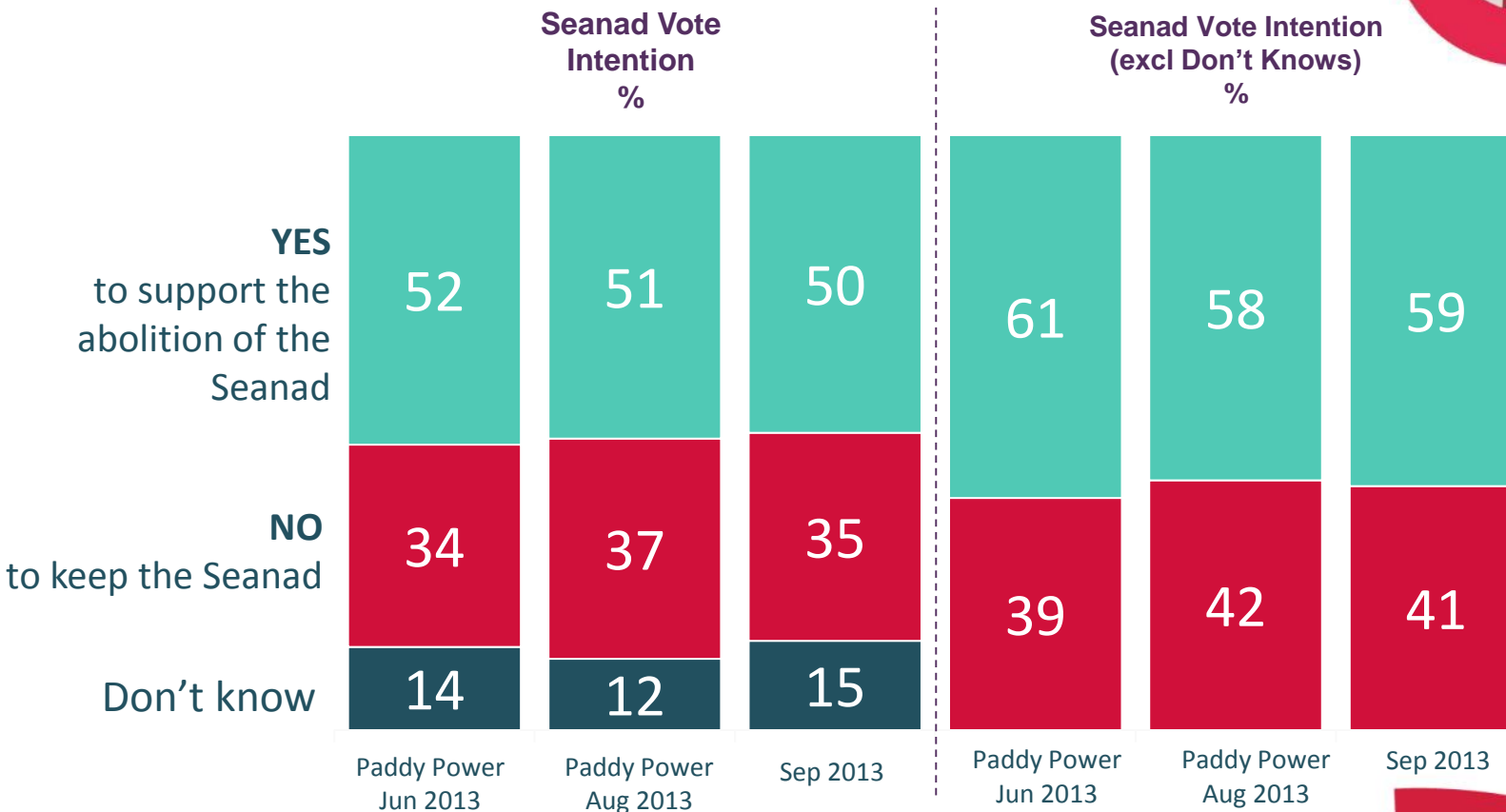
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# Vote Intention for Referendum on Abolition of Seanad

(Base: Jun= All adults 18+, Aug & Sep = Likely Voters aged 18+)

Thinking about the referendum on October 4th 2013, to vote for a proposed amendment to the Constitution to abolish the Seanad. If this referendum was to be held tomorrow would you vote Yes in favour to abolish the Seanad or No to keep the Seanad?

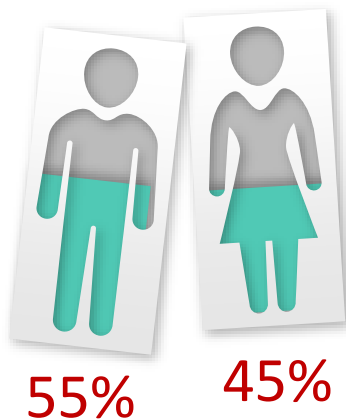


# Support for Seanad Abolition

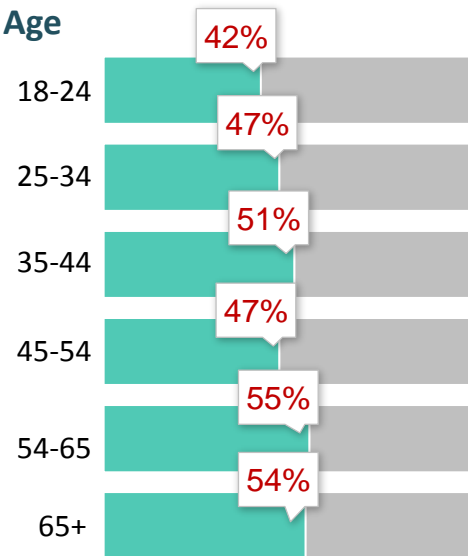
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



## Gender



## Age



## Social Class



## Party Support



## Region

