



# General Election Opinion Poll

13<sup>th</sup> September 2015



# Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,005 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- 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.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.



## Long term decline in Sinn Fein support benefits government parties

The start of this new session of the Dail, will be focusing attention for politicians that an election is not far away. While we don't know exactly when that General Election will be, it has to take place roughly within the next 6 months, and that means we are well into the campaign planning phase for most parties.

A feature in the polls, during the term of this government has been the rise of Sinn Fein and Independent candidate support, as voters frustrated with the current government appear to search for a new direction. It is clear that many voters have been left disenfranchised with the old party system, having been burned by the Fianna Fail government that led us into bailout, and annoyed that the choice they made to replace them has effectively had to follow the same austerity path.

Of key relevance to the next success or failure of many politicians, is sustainability of this political shift among voters as the election approaches. There is certainly a theory that the movement seen in the polls was potentially temporary in nature, and that as voters' minds became really focused on the formation of the next government, that their support may drift back to the more established parties. This is certainly the hope among government party supporters, who believe that as the economy emerges from the recession, and show signs of delivering better times ahead, voters will look for stability. The recent UK elections certainly bore out this theory, with voters in the end looking for stability for next few years.

At the start of this year in Ireland we began to see signs of this predicted shift of voters moving away from Independent candidates in the polls, and moving back to the government parties, partly as result of the improving economic situation.

The surprise for some was that this trend was relatively short lived and has in fact been reversed in the past couple of months, as new Independent parties and groupings were announced, and the government suffered a series of bad news days. The recent gains by Independents have made many question the theory that government party support would necessary be regained, the closer we got to an actual election.

Today's poll still sees Independent candidates riding relatively high, although the total lack of direct claimed support for the two new parties formed by Independents, Renua and the Social Democrats, will be of considerable concern for their founders.

The really interesting trend over the longer term however, has instead been the decline in support for Sinn Fein. Perhaps another sign of the move away from the protest vote at polling in the mid-term, back towards the more established parties.

## Long term decline in Sinn Fein support benefits government parties - II

The fall in 1<sup>st</sup> preference support for the party in this poll, is relatively small at 2% and well within the margin of error, so could effectively be discounted. The longer term trend in support however tells another story.

Back in December we were recording the highest levels of support seen for Sinn Fein in any RED C poll, reaching a high of 24% of the first preference vote. In today's poll they secured just 16%, the worst level seen for the party since February 2014. That means that in effect the party has lost 8% support over the first 9 months of the year.

Over that period the loss in support hasn't been a steady decline, with drops in January and March following scandals that were soon reversed to some extent in the months afterwards. The problem is that the gains haven't been as strong as the losses, and so one scandal after another has seen a gradual seepage of voters away from the party at almost 1% a month for the past nine months.

The greatest declines are seen among younger voters, who of course are somewhat more flighty in their vote intention behaviour. In December last year almost a third of 18-34 year old voters claimed they were supporting Sinn Fein, but this has fallen to just over 1 in 5 (20%) voters now. A large chunk of these young voters have returned to Labour, while others claim they will vote for a variety of smaller parties.

The Labour shift is interesting, as it is also apparent that far less past Labour voters in general suggest they will now vote Sinn Fein, and offers the possibility that Labour could profit even more in the longer term from a further Sinn Fein decline in support.

For Sinn Fein the issues in the North in recent weeks appear to have done them no favours with voters, with declines in support occurring despite another high profile Anti-Water tax March in the past week, at which party figures were prominent. The gains they have made during the mid-term have been built on their support for the disenfranchised voters who feel let down by the government. In order to re-gain lost ground, they therefore need to move to settle matters in the North quickly, and so re-focus voters' attention on the local issues they are fighting for on their behalf.

The question then is if this re-focus will be enough to regain voters, with the backdrop of an increasingly positive economic outlook, and an electorate who broadly believe that the country is currently on the right track.

# First Preference Vote Intention – September 2015

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)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



Fine Gael

**28%** +3

Labour

**10%** +2

Fianna Fail

**18%** =

Sinn Fein

**16%** -2

Independent/  
Other

**28%** -3

Undecided Voters

**13%** +1

REDC

# First Preference Vote Intention – September 2015

*If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (showing impact of past vote weighting, and likely voter filters)*

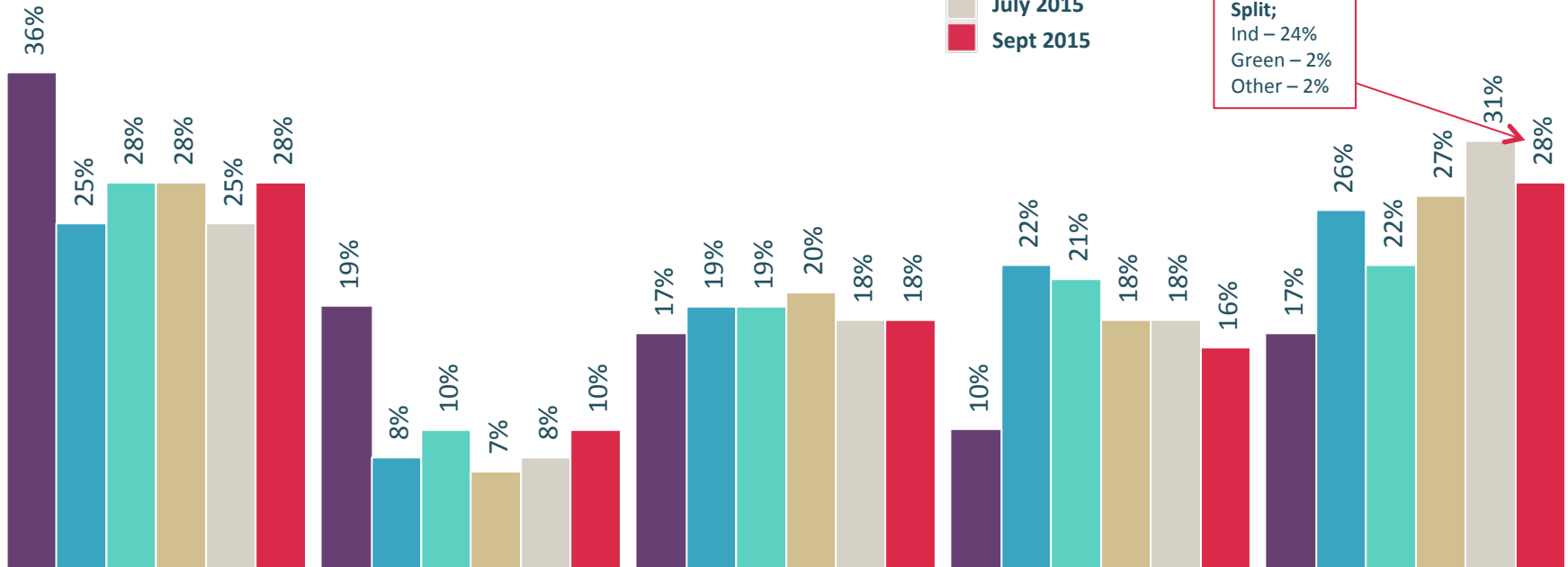
(Base: All adults 18+)

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT					
	Core figures	Impact of Past vote weighting	Likely Voters	Excluding Undecided	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	36
Labour	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	19
Fianna Fáil	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	17
Sinn Féin	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	10
Independent candidates	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	13
Green Party	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	2
Socialist Party	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	1
Other Party	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	1
Undecided	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>		

# First Preference Vote Intention – April – Sept 2015

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)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael  
**28%**

Labour  
**10%**

Fianna Fail  
**18%**

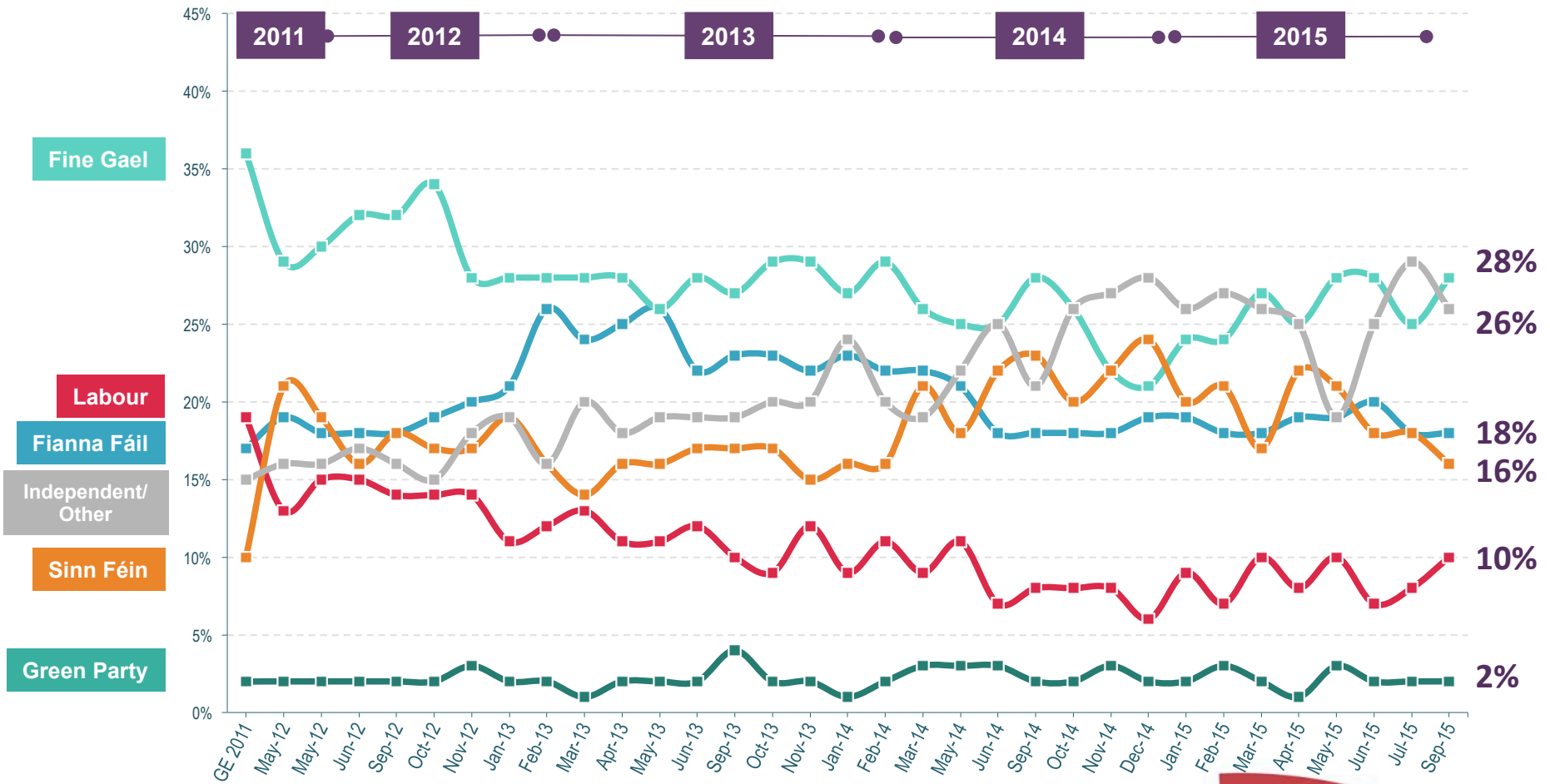
Sinn Fein  
**16%**

Independent/  
Other  
**28%**

# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2015

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)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )

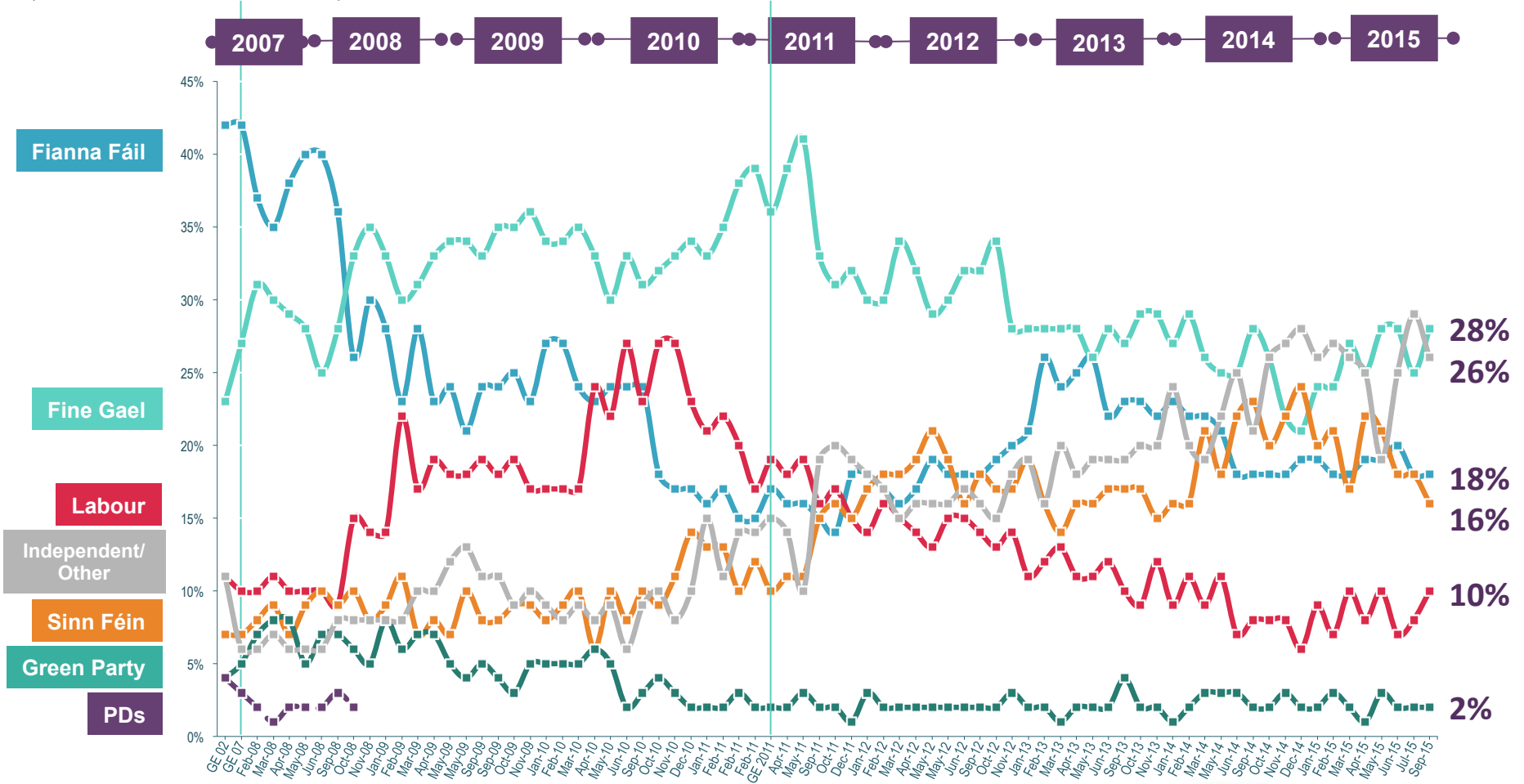




# First Preference Vote Intention – 2007 to 2015

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)

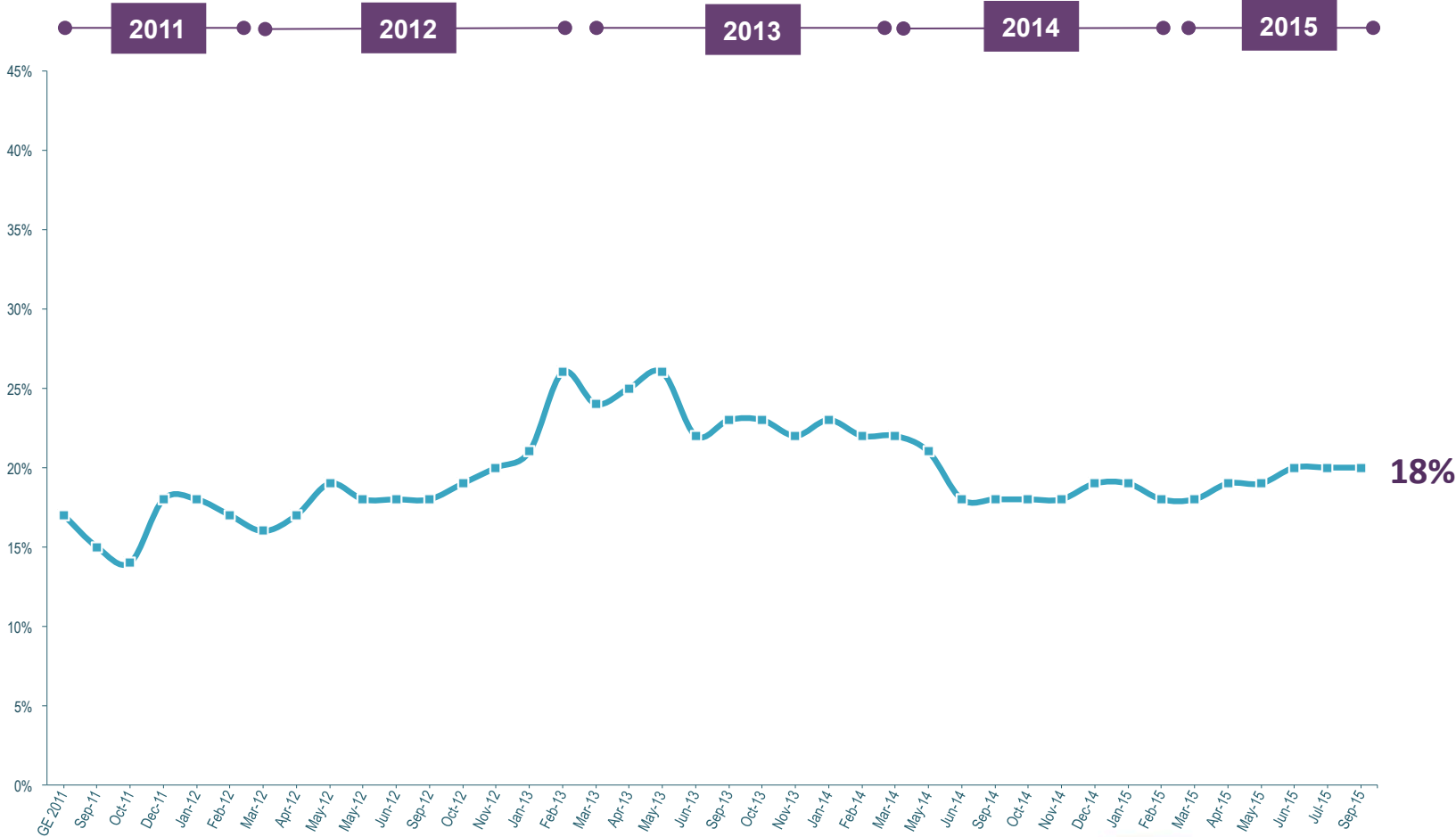
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Fianna Fáil

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)

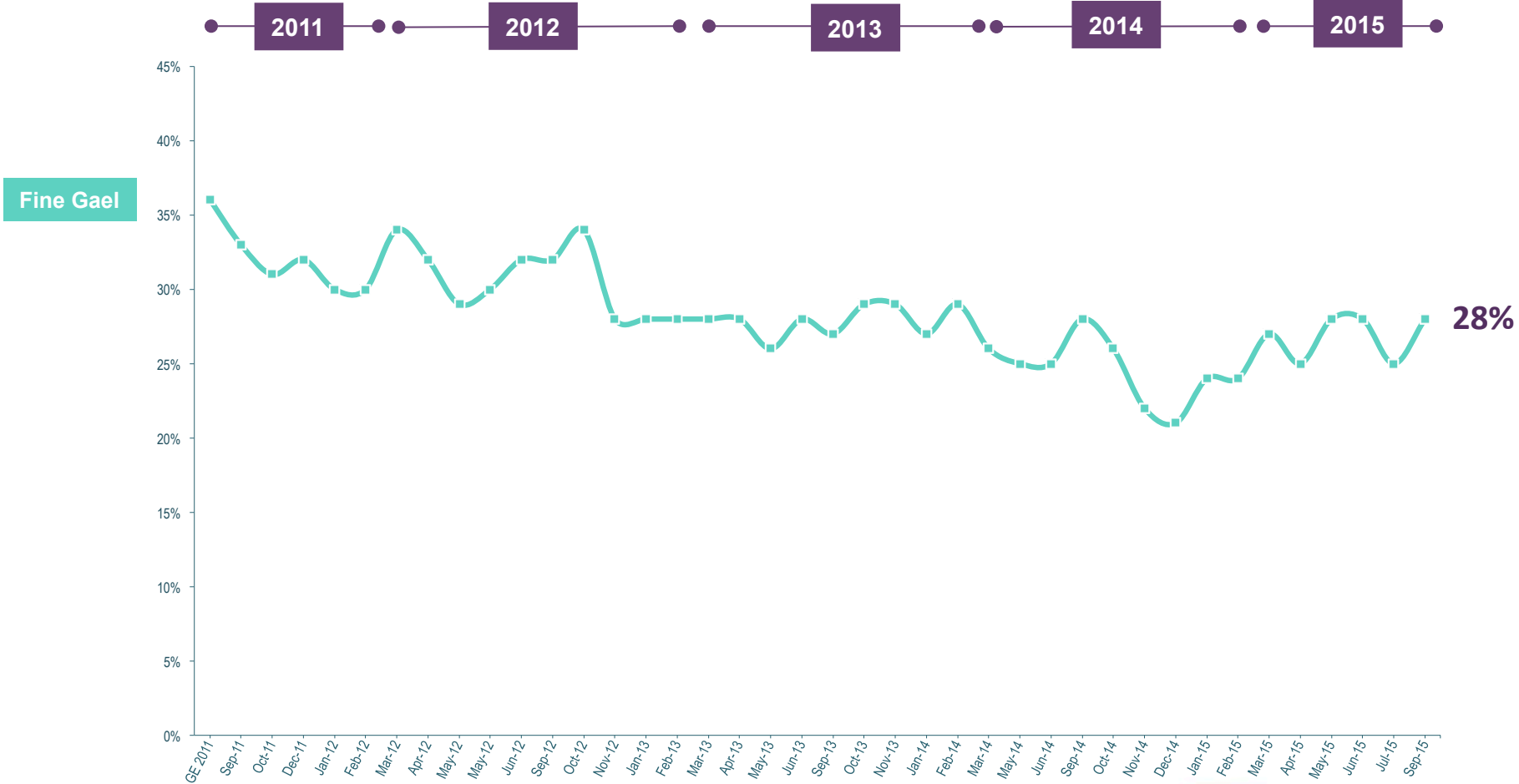
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Fine Gael

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)

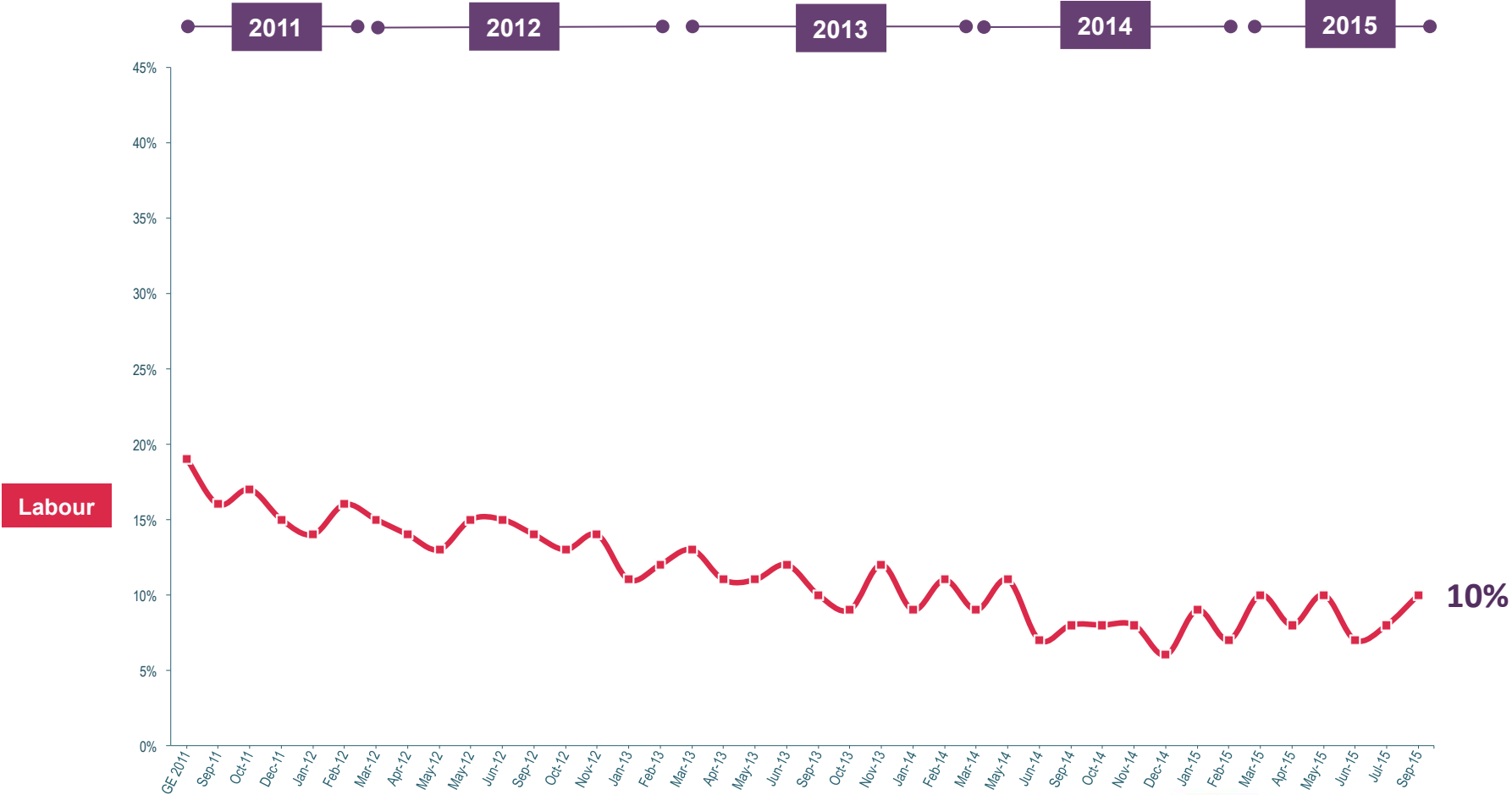
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Labour

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)

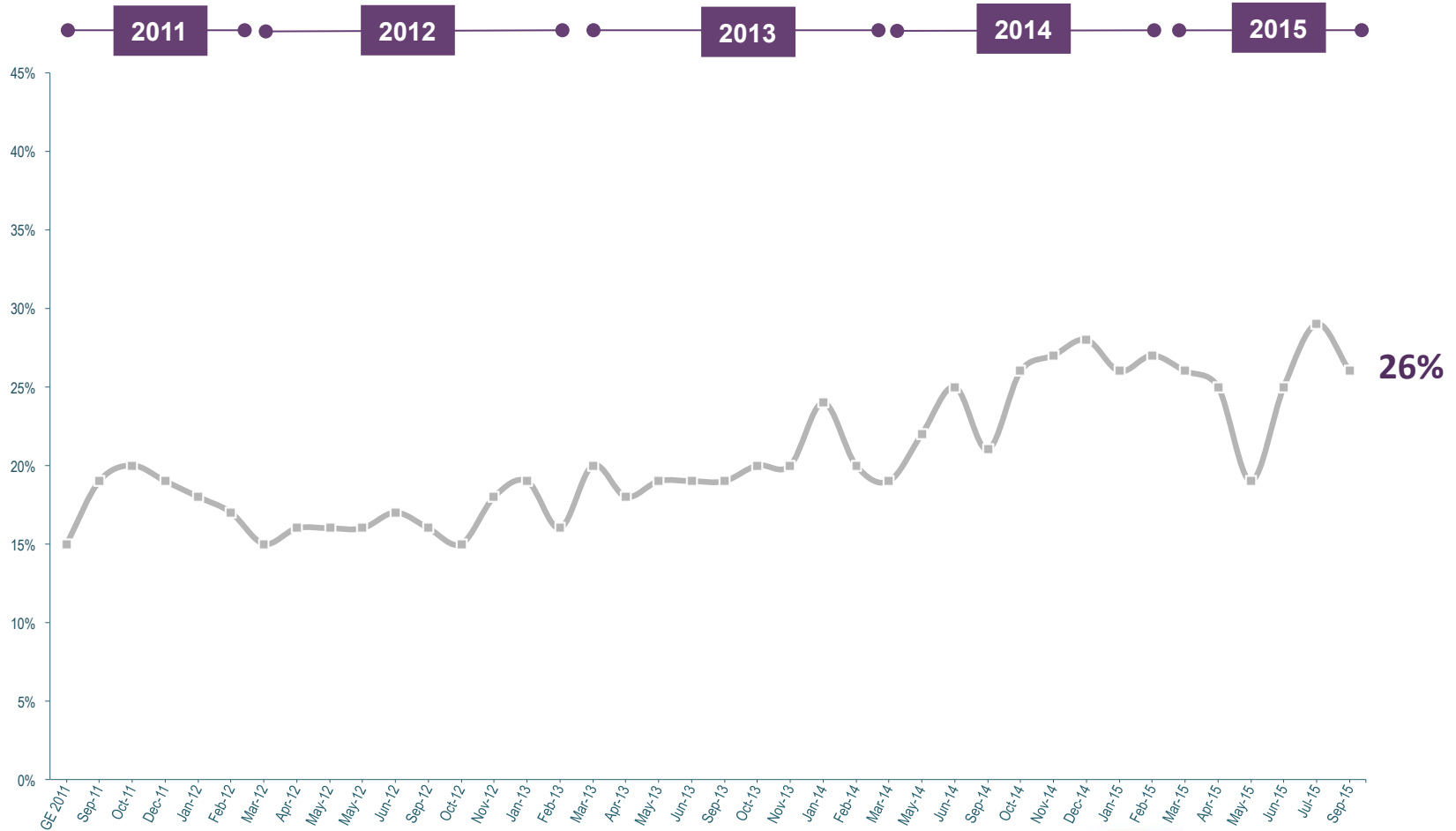
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Independents/

Other  
*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)*

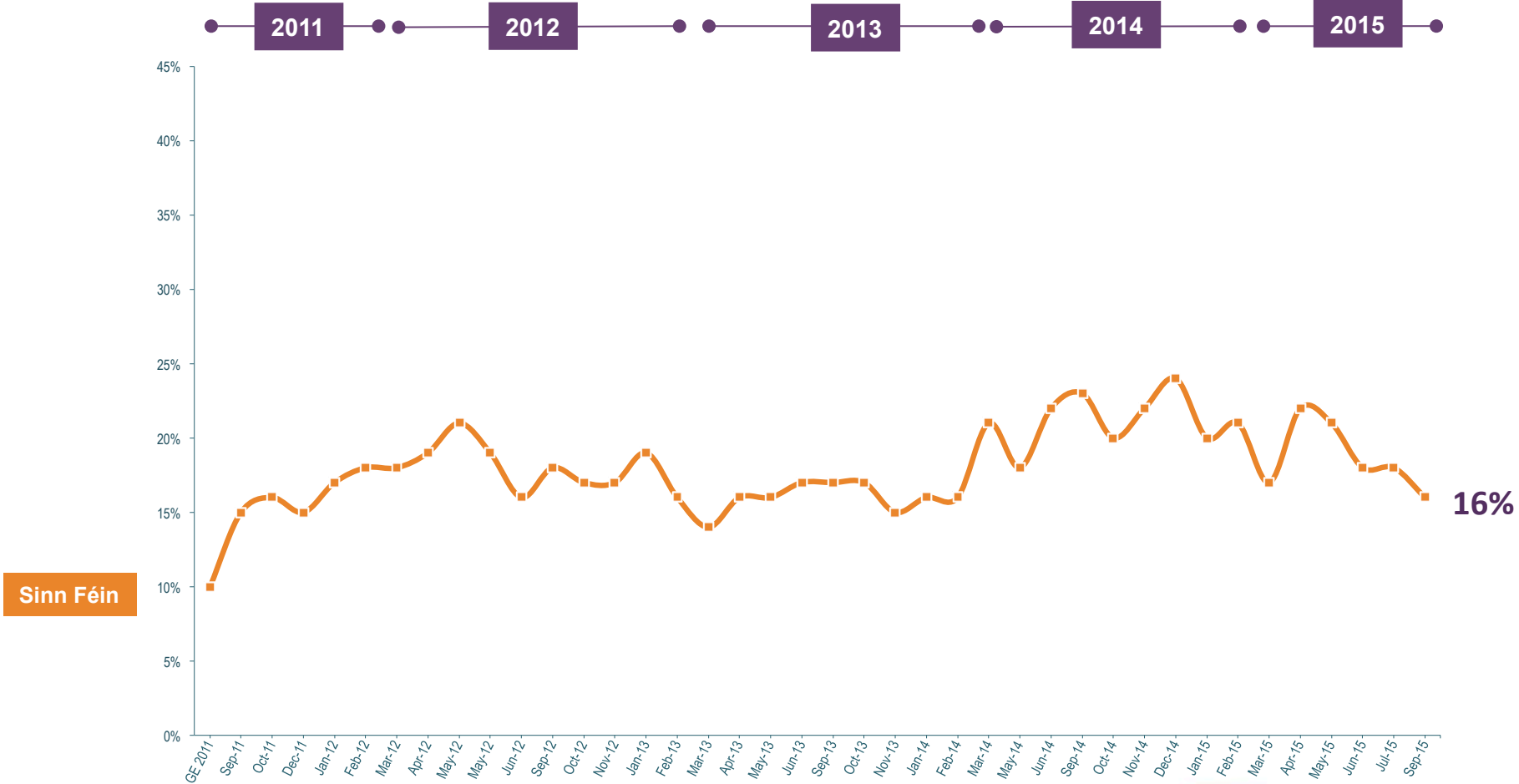
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Sinn Féin

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)

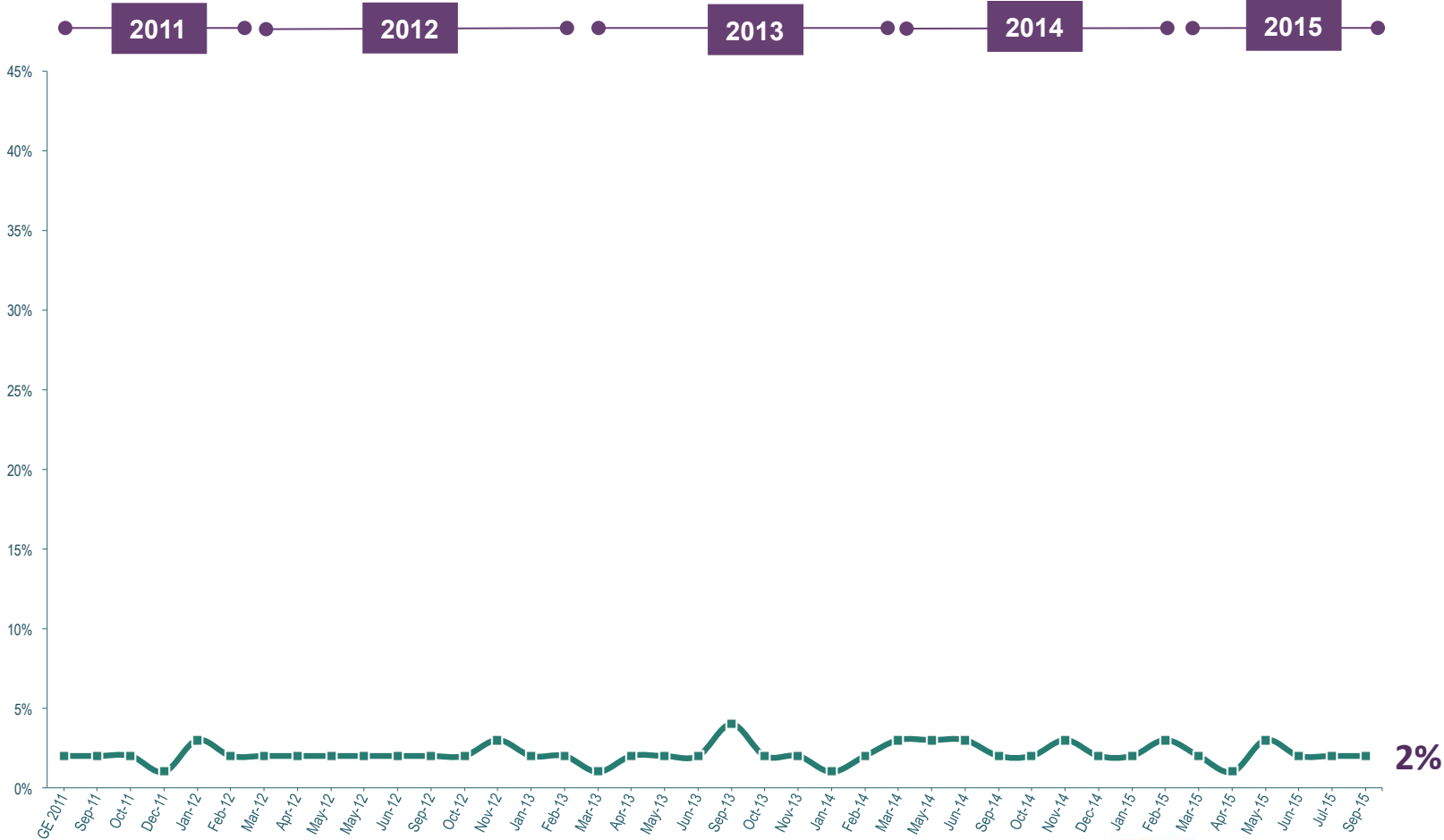
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Green Party

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)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



Green Party

2%





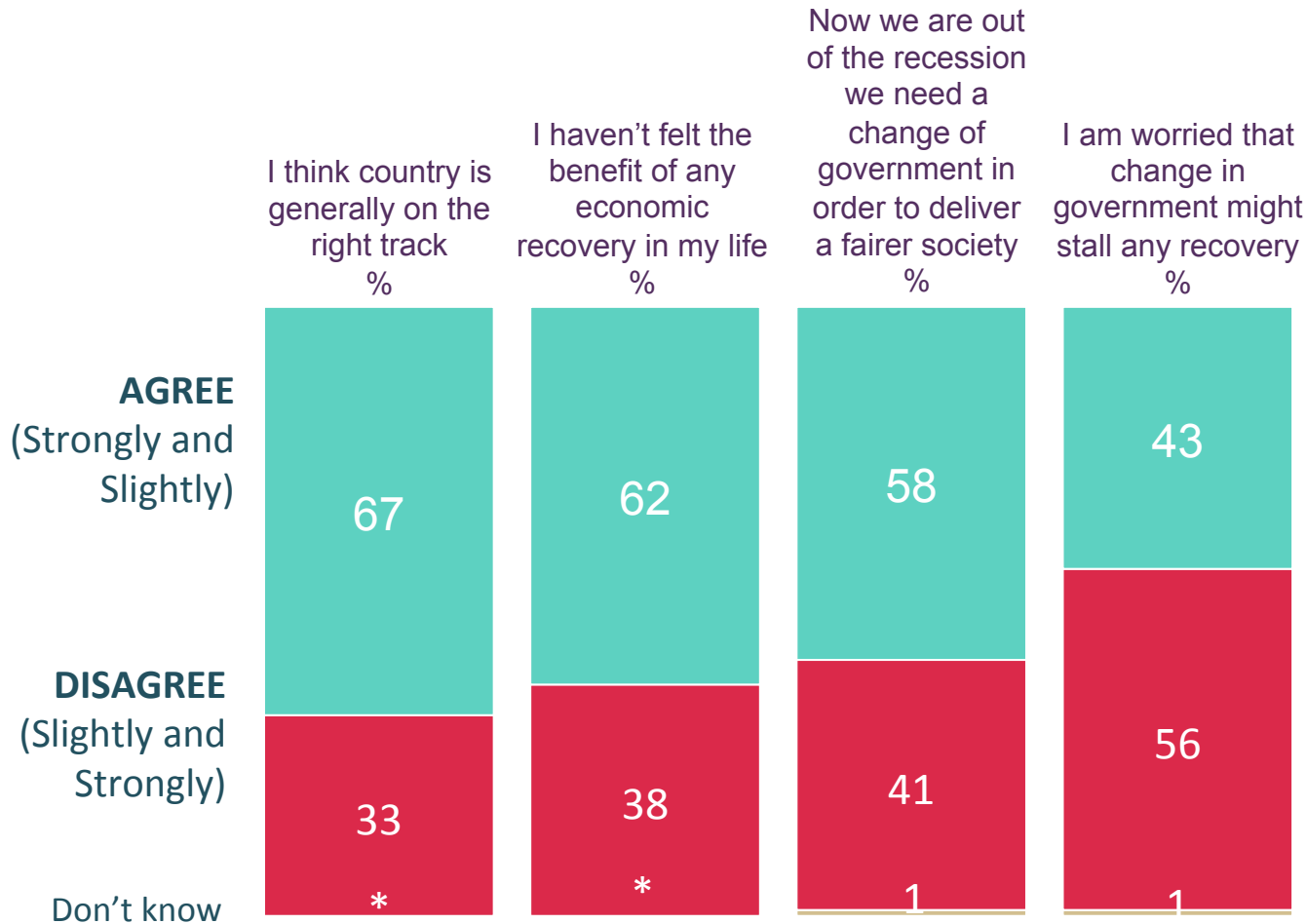
# Government & The Economy



# Attitudes towards Government and the Economy

(Base: All adults 18+)

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the economy in Ireland. 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

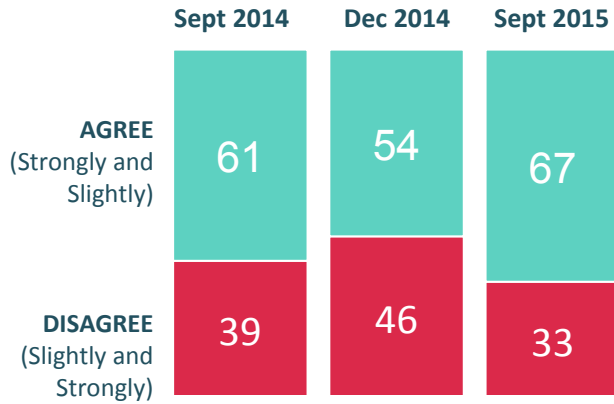


# Who thinks the country is generally on the right track?

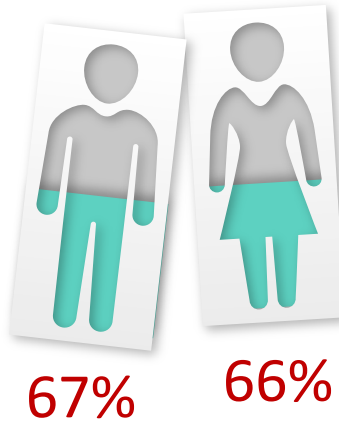
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I think country is generally on the right track

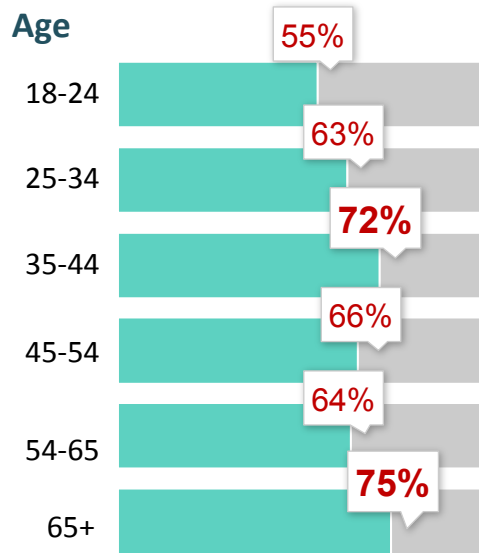
(Base: All Adults 18+)



## Gender



## Age



## Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **68%**



Lower Social Grades: **64%**



## Party Support

**FINE GAEL** **89%**

**Labour** **85%**

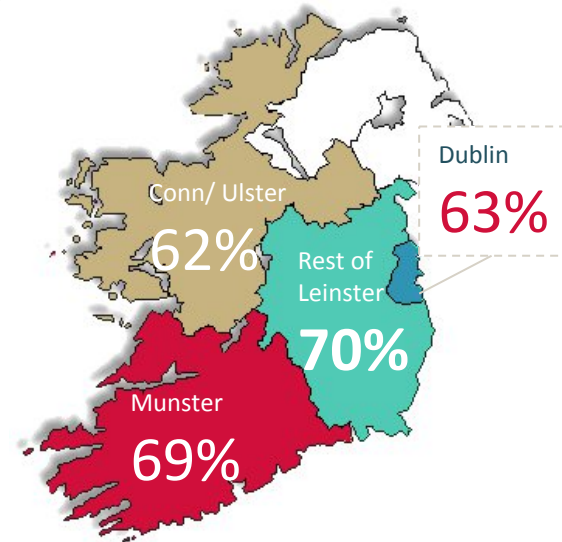
**FIANNA FAÏL** **66%**

**SF** **44%**

**Independents** **56%**

**Undecideds** **67%**

## Region

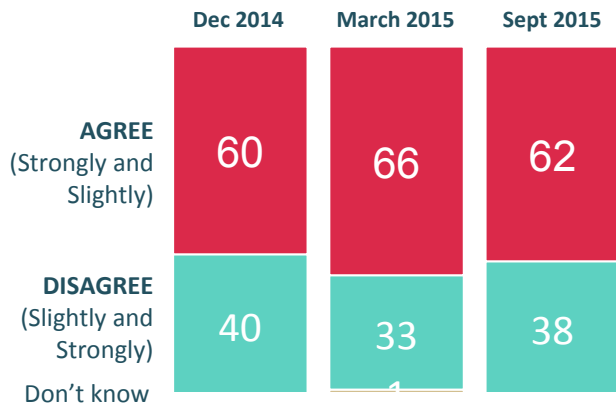


# Who has NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in their life?

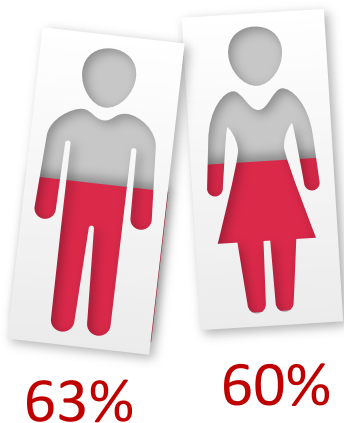
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I have NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in my life.

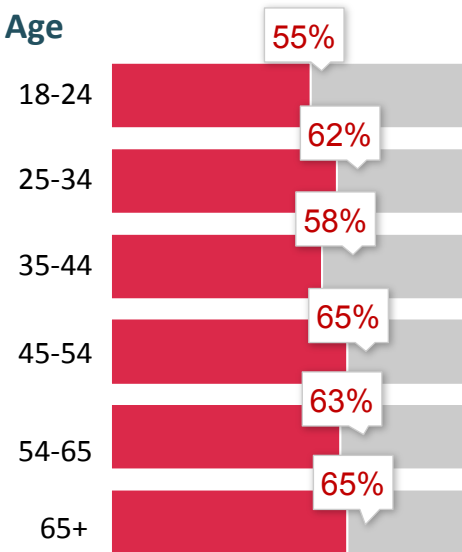
(Base: All Adults 18+)



## Gender



## Age



## Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 57%



Lower Social Grades: 65%



## Party Support

**FINE GAEL** 55%

**Labour** 51%

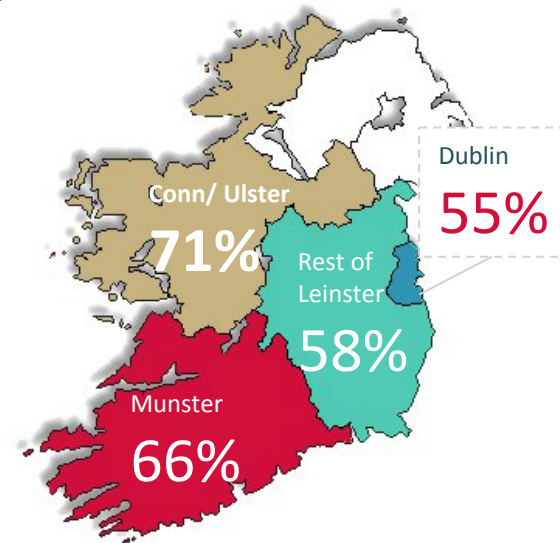
**FIANNA FAÏL** 72%

**SF** 69%

Independents 62%

Undecideds 59%

## Region

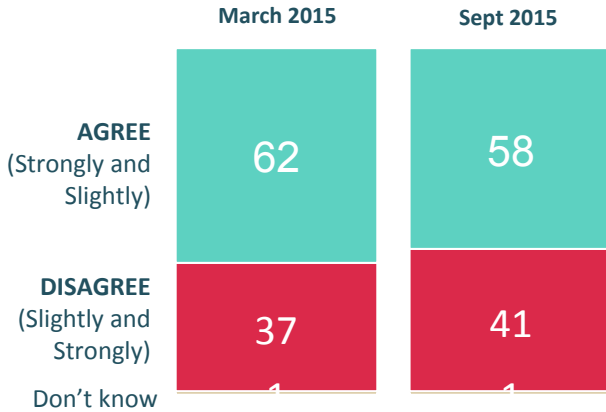


# Who believes now we are out of the recession we need a change of government in order to deliver a fairer society?

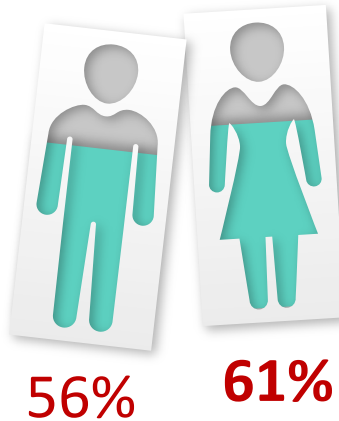
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Now we are out of the recession we need a change of government in order to deliver a fairer society

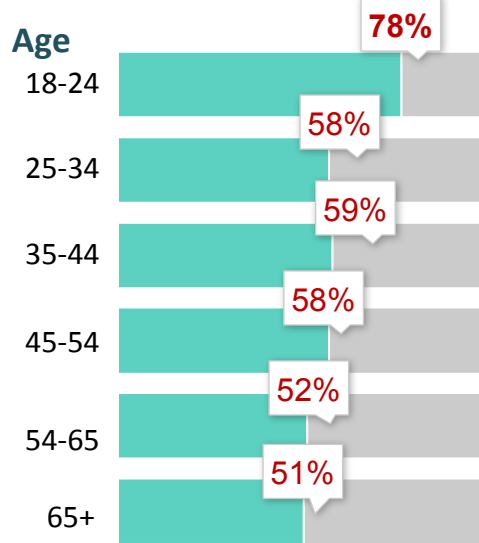
(Base: All Adults 18+)



## Gender



## Age



## Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 58%



Lower Social Grades: 60%



## Party Support

**FINE GAEL** 21%

**Labour** 39%

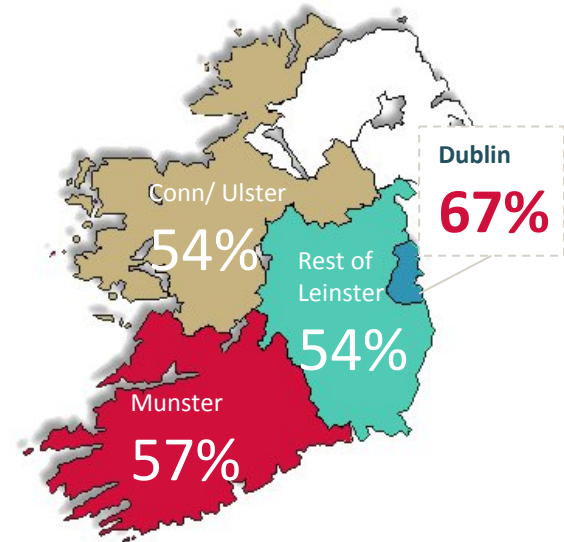
**FIANNA FAÏL** 74%

**SF** 73%

**Independents** 81%

**Undecideds** 65%

## Region

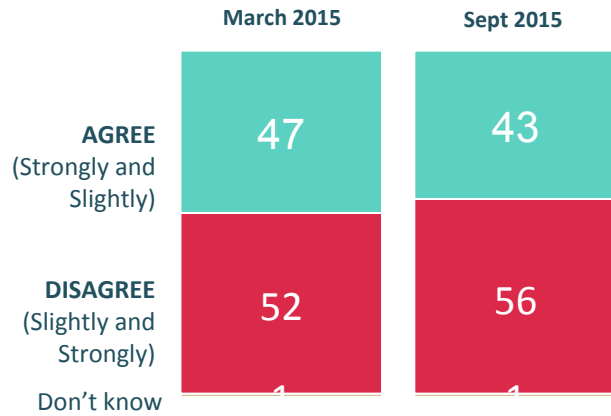


# Who is worried that change in government might stall any recovery?

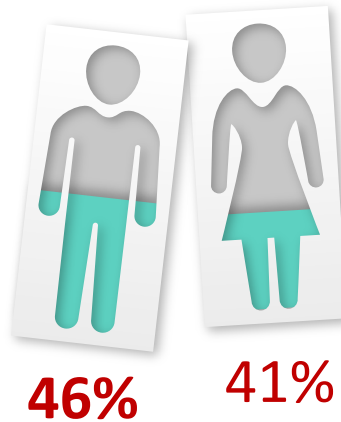
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I am worried that change in government might stall any recovery

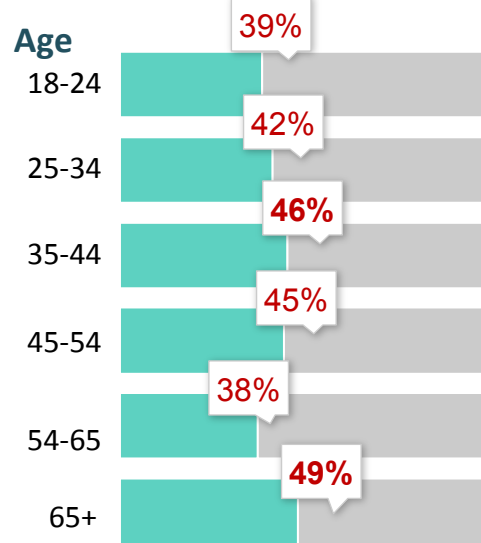
(Base: All Adults 18+)



## Gender



## Age



## Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 44%



Lower Social Grades: 42%



## Party Support

**FINE GAEL** 73%

**Labour** 63%

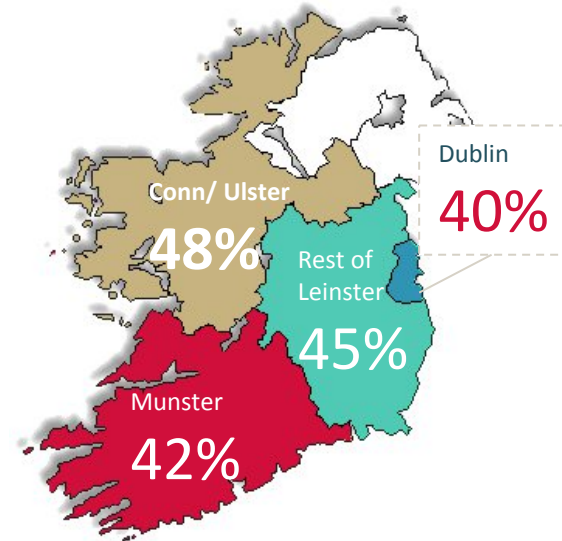
**FIANNA FAÏL** 37%

**SF** 27%

Independents 26%

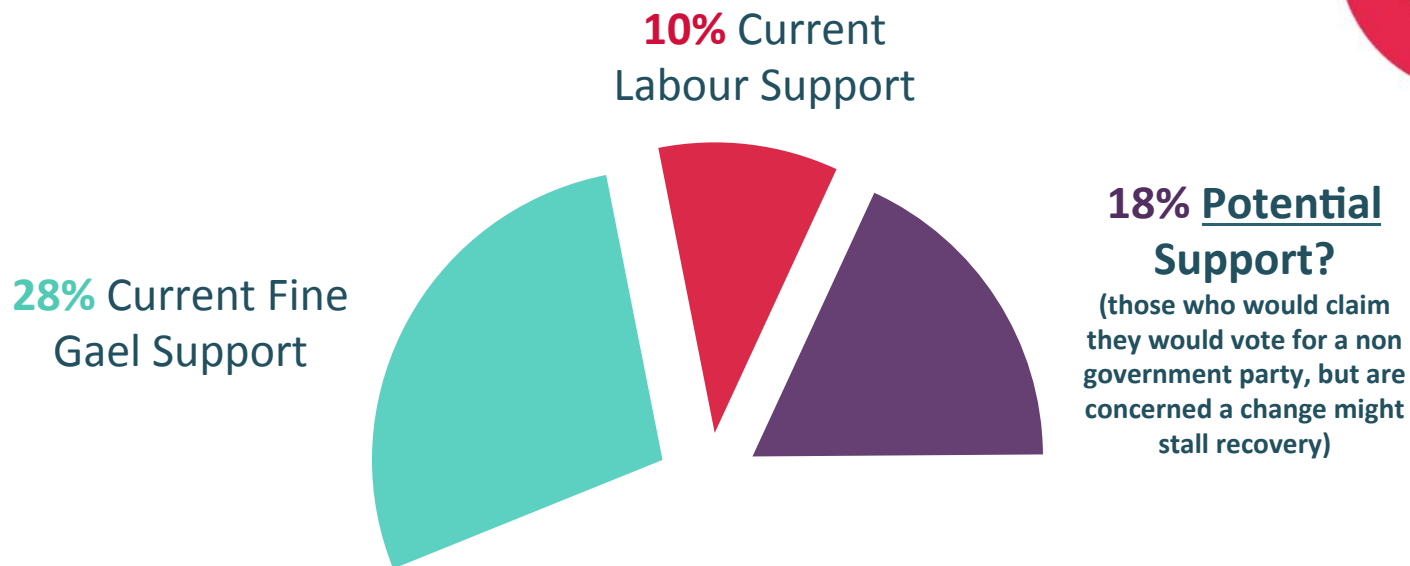
Undecideds 36%

## Region



# What effect might the worry of stalled recovery in changing government have on claimed non-government supporters?

(Base: All Likely Voters 18+)



Some concern remains among non-government supporters that a change in government may stall recovery, suggesting support for government parties may increase at election time.

REDC