



General Election Opinion Poll

14th September 2014



REDC

Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,001 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 8th – 10th September 2014.
- 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.



Early Signals that Recovering Economy Could Benefit Government Parties - I

The first poll after the summer recess, suggests that a good summer from both a weather and an economic narrative point of view has benefited the government parties. Fine Gael reaps the biggest dividends with a 3% improvement in first preference share since the last poll in June. After what was a relatively tough start to the year, when the parties support had been trending downwards throughout March to June, it will be a relief for the party to see gains this period. The rise in support in this poll only claws back that lost during those months at the start of year, but does show that the party can winback support with a prevailing wind behind them. Of course, there are plenty of hurdles to jump, none more so than the water charge introduction, but positive economic news may offset the negative publicity.

The key to an improving economy is whether that voter sentiment will be impacted enough to offset anger at austerity in the years before this, and so potentially see voters prepared to return to Fine Gael and help them secure a second term in government. This poll has some early signals that that this might be the case, with clear messages in terms of economic competence, forgiveness or understanding of austerity, and general positive attitude about the way the country is moving.

Two-fifths of all (40%) voters agree that they trust the Fine Gael and Labour coalition to manage the economy. This is significant as we have seen in elections previously that perceived economic competence has a direct impact on likelihood to vote for that party. As such, an increase in the coalitions perceived economic competence of 6% since just after the budget last year, and 2% compared to just before the budget in 2012, at which vote intention support for Fine Gael was above 30%, is positive for the party. More importantly, it suggests that either Fine Gael or Labour has headroom to regain further first preference support, given that there is a gap of 4% between their economic competence standing among voters (40%) and their joint first preference support (36%).

Perhaps partially linked to the economic competence rating, and surely influenced by indications by government party sources that we have seen our last austerity budget, is the finding that voters also appear to be prepared to forgive the austerity that had been such a driver of dissatisfaction just a few months ago. Almost three in five voters (58%) agree today that the government's austerity policies were necessary. Greatest support is of course among Fine Gael voters, but there are also relatively high levels of support among both Labour and Fianna Fail supporters, and even 2 in 5 Sinn Fein supporters now agree that the policies were necessary. The idea that pain is soon forgotten when better times arrive appears to be very much the case for many voters.

Early Signals that Recovering Economy Could Benefit Government Parties - II

Voters also appear to be pretty positive about the state of the country as a whole. Three-fifths of the electorate (60%) currently believe that the country is on the right track. We asked a similar question back in January 2013, and at that time only 41% felt the country was on the right track. This represents a very significant change in outlook for the country as a whole. It is also clear that the government at the helm, must surely be getting some credit for that fact.

So how hopeful can Fine Gael be that signs of a more positive voter sentiment can drive back the voters they have lost since the last election? It appears that the key is translating positive sentiment with regard to being on the right track and forgiving austerity, into clear support of trust in the coalition on economic matters. When we look at these indices by lapsed Fine Gael voters, a relatively high proportion (65%) already agree that the country is on the right track, slightly less are ready to support the assertion that austerity was the best way to go about the recovery (58%), but only just over a third (37%) are as yet prepared to state that they trust the current coalition to manage the economy. The task for Fine Gael is therefore to deliver more trust in their economic capability, and to further link the countries apparent improving fortunes to its own actions.

At the same time in order to ensure the government lasts long enough for the parties to benefit from continued improvements in the economy, it is clear that Labour will require more support from its partners. At present the situation for Labour is certainly not as rosy, despite the positive improvements in the economy. In fact it is clear that their voters are not as easily won back. Support for the party is up just 1% despite the change in leadership and the improved conditions that have occurred since the last poll. Current Labour voters are not as positive about the improvements in the country, and lapsed voters are less so. Less than half (46%) of those lapsed voters who voted for Labour at the last election, but do not plan to do so now, feel the country is on the right track (a similar level to Sinn Fein voters), or that the austerity put in place by the government was necessary. At the same time just 30% of those lapsed Labour voters trust the coalition to manage the economy.

Labour also has something of a balancing act to achieve to please all of its supporters at the budget and so improve its economic competence standing. While the current supporters are most in favour of public spending on public services over tax cuts in the next budget (77%), the lapsed Labour voters are not so sure about this with less agreeing that this should be the case (57%).

It is clear that how this budget is delivered may have a significant effect on both the government parties, and it may be that with still limited resources and trying to meet several audiences' needs it fails to reach any of them. A balance between taxation relief and easy to understand benefits for public services is essential if both government parties are to prosper from it.

First Preference Vote Intention – September 2014

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
28% +3

Labour
8% +1

Fianna Fail
18% =

Sinn Fein
23% +1

Independent/
Other
23% -5

Undecided Voters
10% -2

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First Preference Vote Intention – September 2014

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))

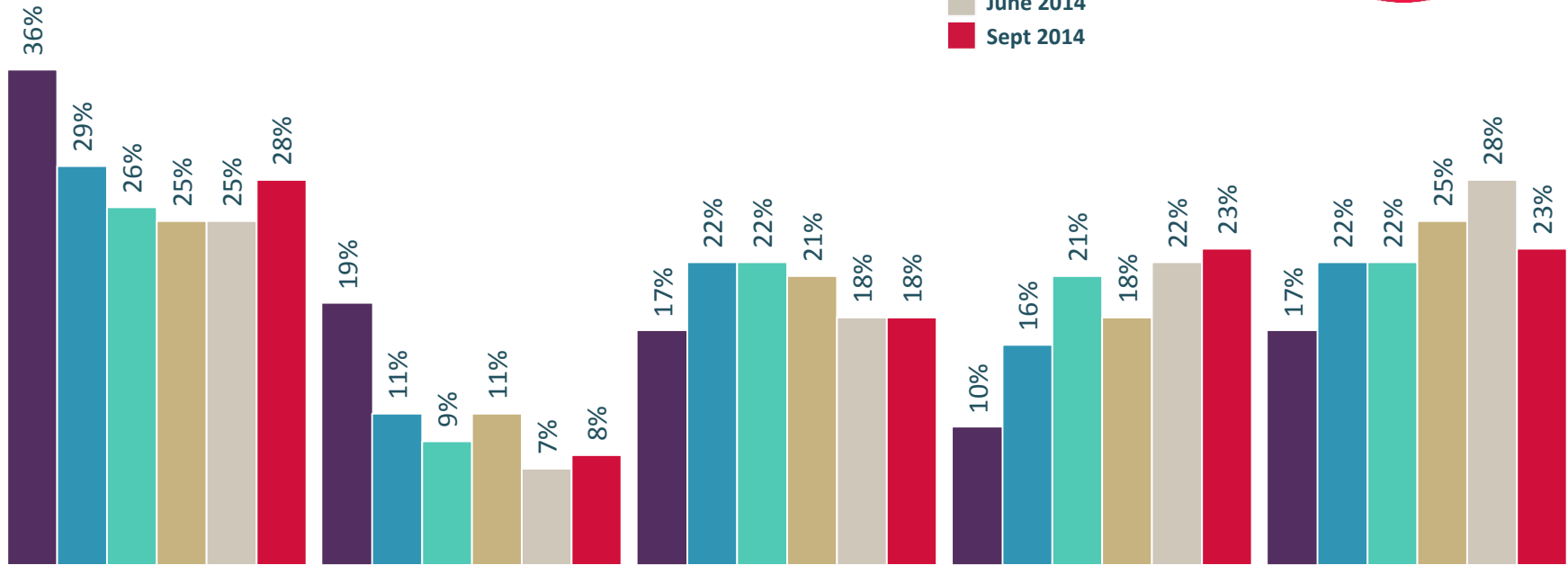
CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE

	Core figures 14 th September 2014	Excluding 50% undecided, and weighting back 50% undecided to how they voted in past elections	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fine Gael	25	28	36
Labour	7	8	19
Fianna Fáil	16	18	17
Sinn Féin	21	23	10
Independent candidates	17	21	13
Green Party	2	2	2
Socialist Party	1	-	1
Other Party	1	-	1
Undecided	10		

First Preference Vote Intention – Feb-Sept 2014

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
28%

Labour
8%

Fianna Fail
18%

Sinn Fein
23%

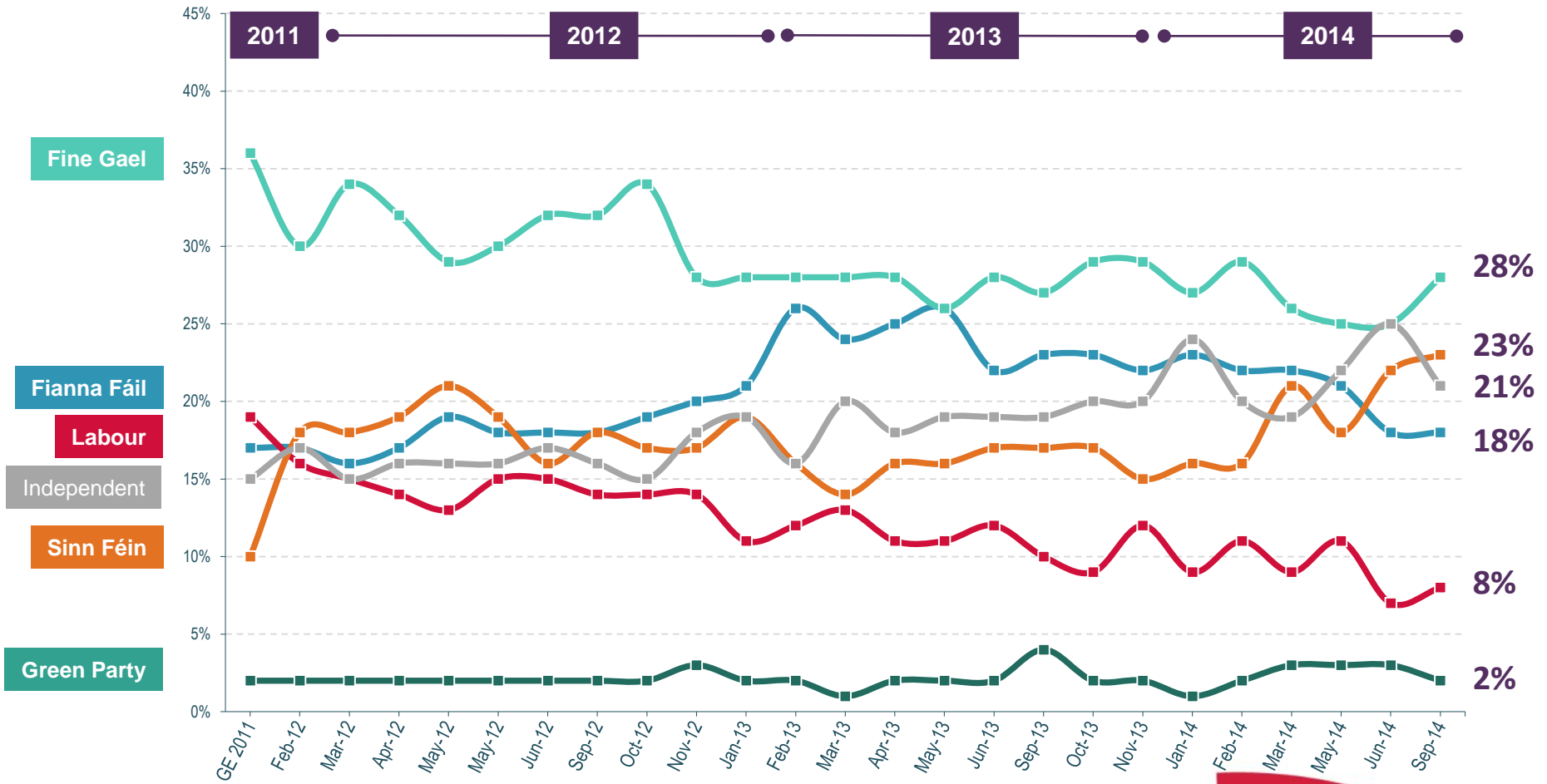
Independent/
Other
23%



First Preference Vote Intention – 2012-2014

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)

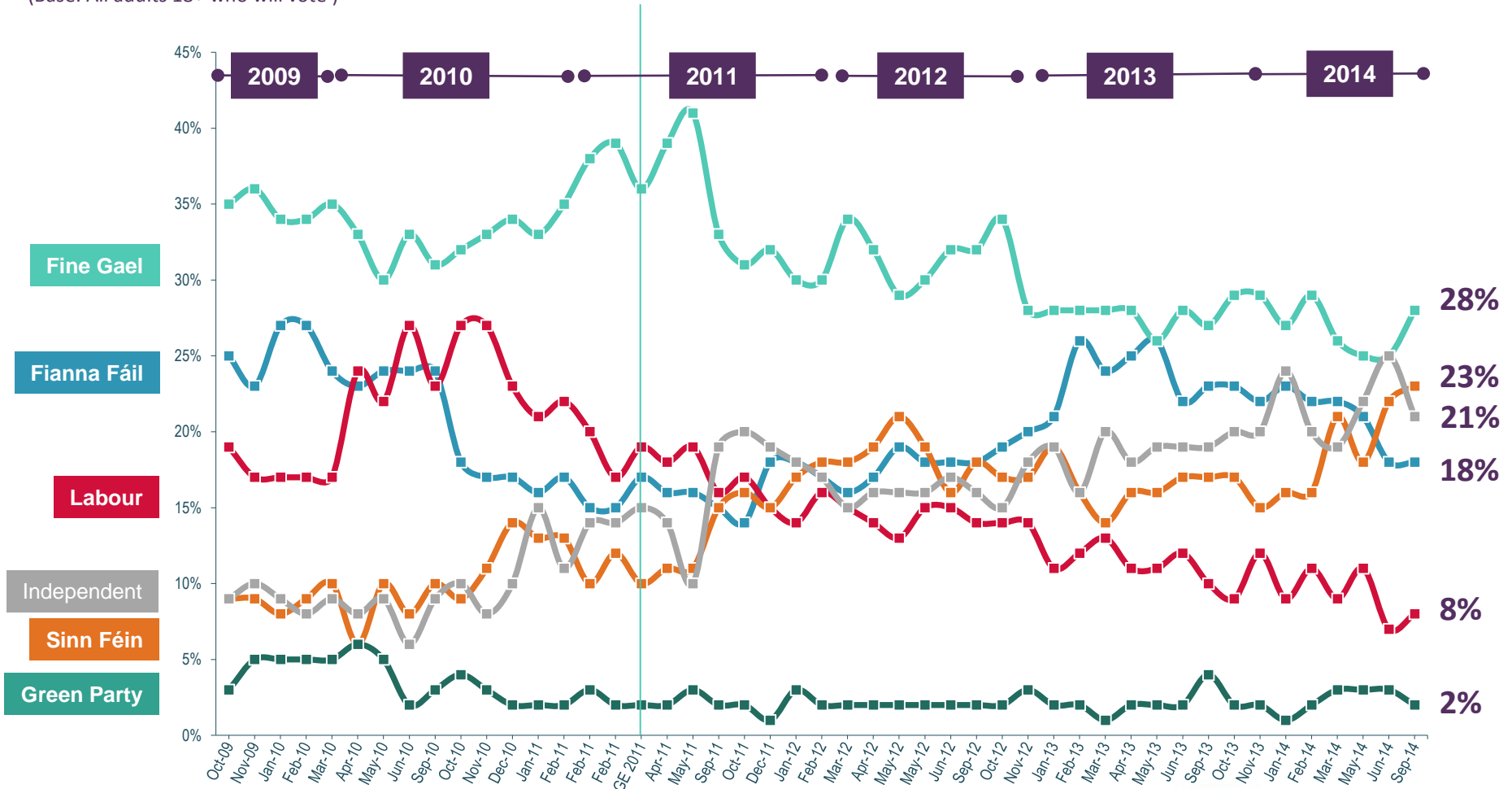
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2014

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)

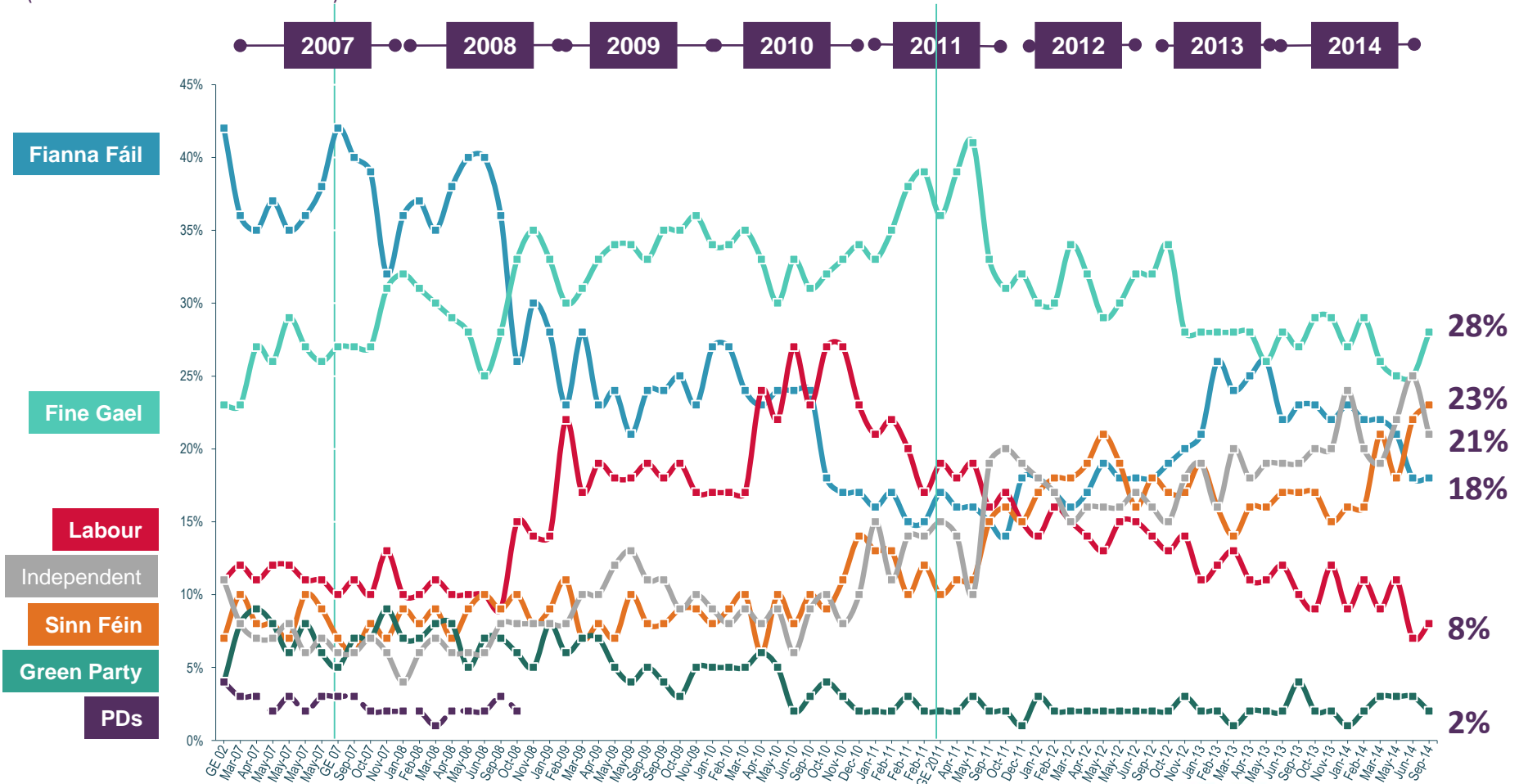
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2007 to 2014

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)

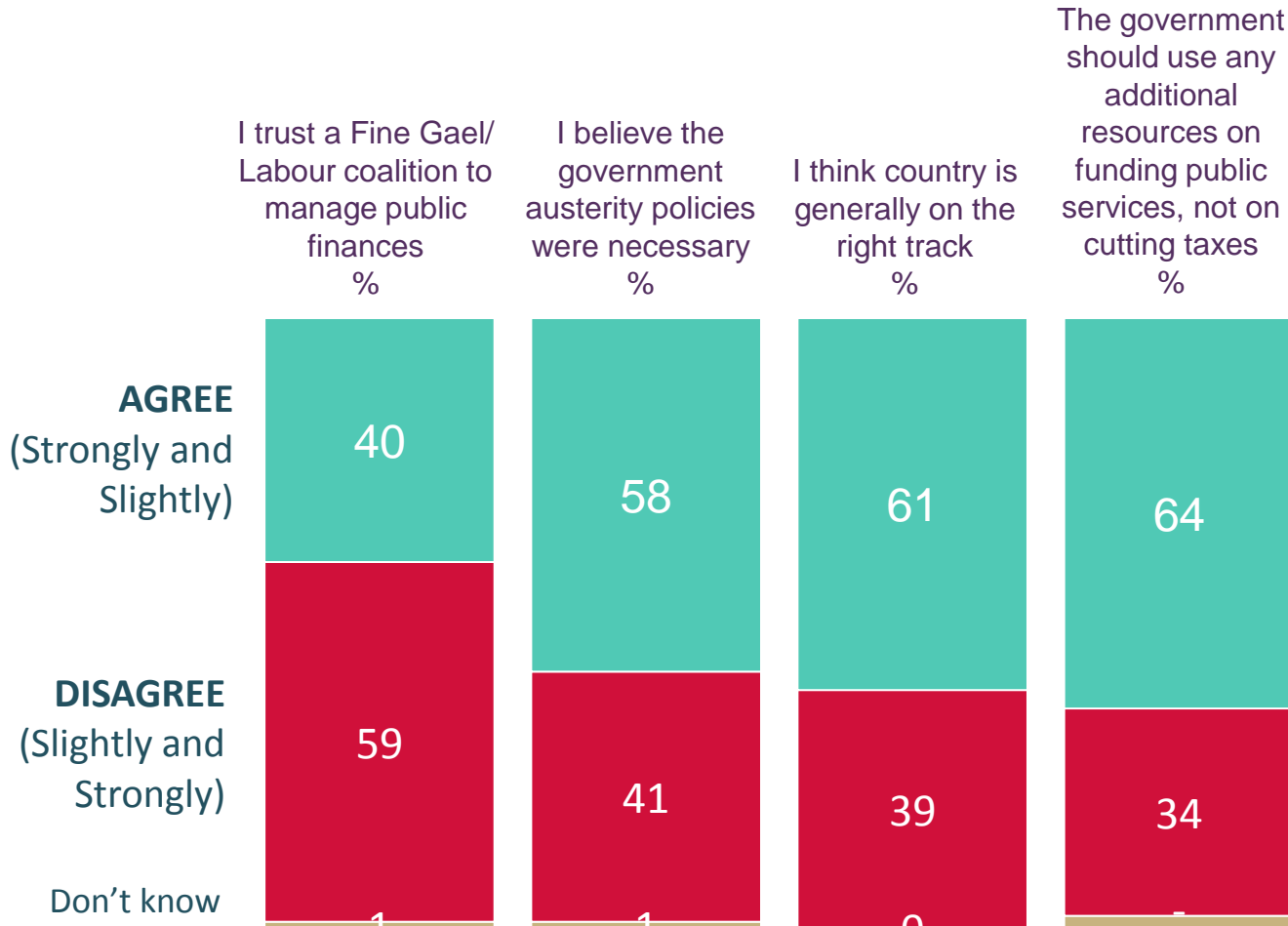
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



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 forthcoming 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

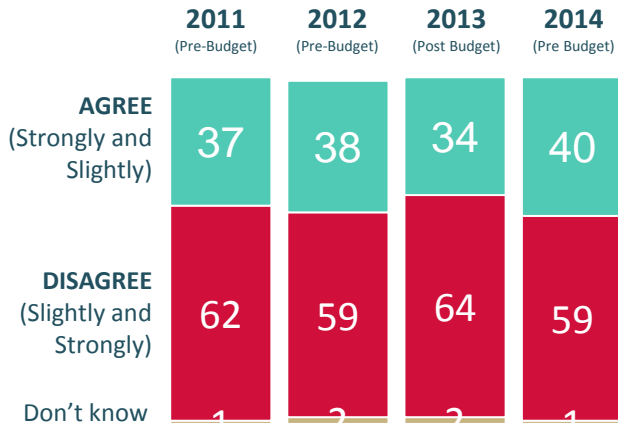


Who trusts Fine Gael/ Labour to manage public finances?

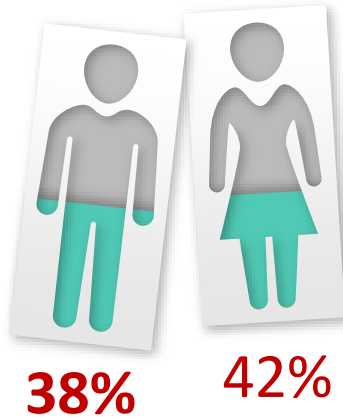
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy and the forthcoming budget. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I trust a Fine Gael/ Labour coalition to manage public finances

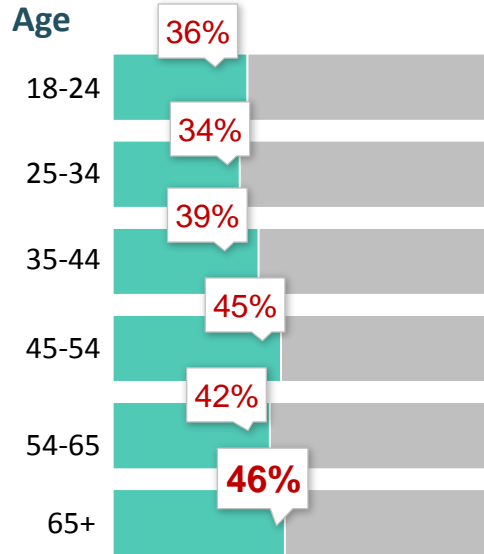
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **44%**



Lower Social Grades: **35%**



Party Support

FINE GAEL **77%**

Labour **63%**

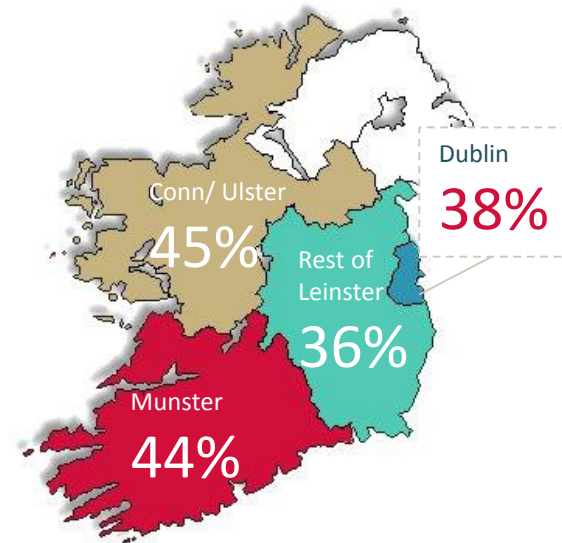
FIANNA FAÏL **35%**

SF **23%**

Independents **16%**

Undecideds **35%**

Region



Who believe the government austerity policies were necessary?

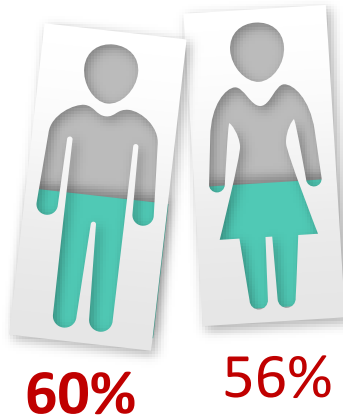
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I believe the government austerity policies were necessary

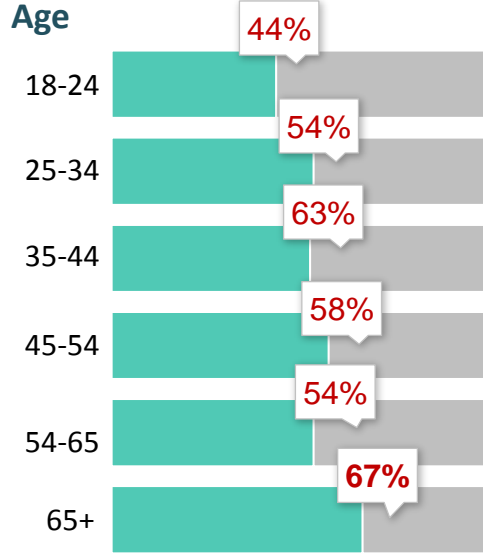
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 60%



Lower Social Grades: 54%



Party Support

 FINE GAEL 82%

 Labour 64%

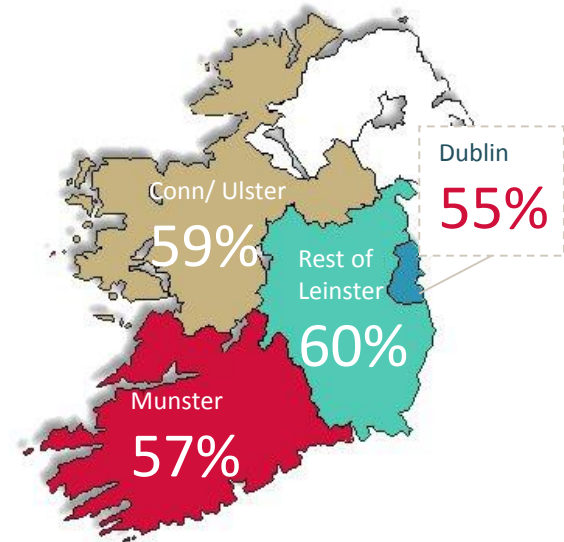
 FIANNA FÁIL THE REPUBLICAN PARTY 57%

 SF 42%

Independents 45%

Undecideds 51%

Region

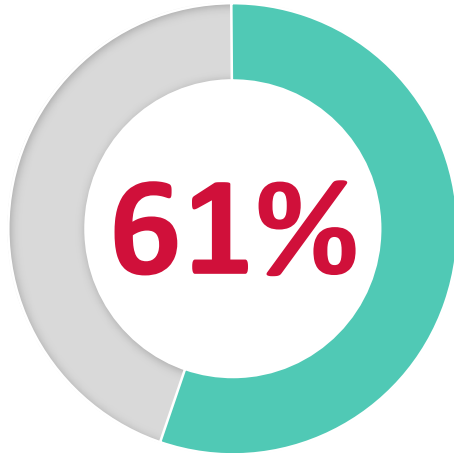


Who thinks the country is generally on the right track?

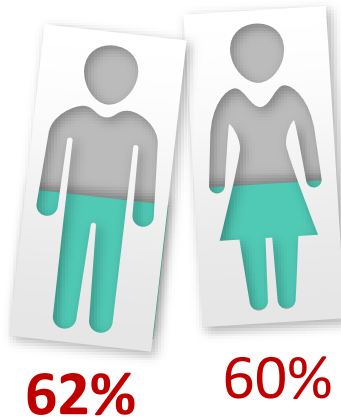
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy and the forthcoming budget. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I think country is generally on the right track

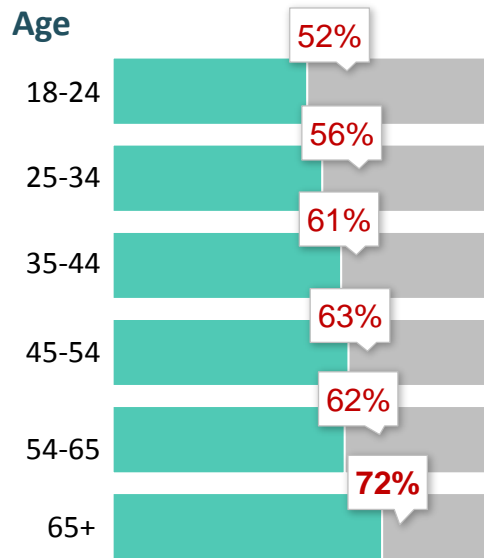
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 65%



Lower Social Grades: 57%



Party Support

 FINE GAEL 90%

 Labour 72%

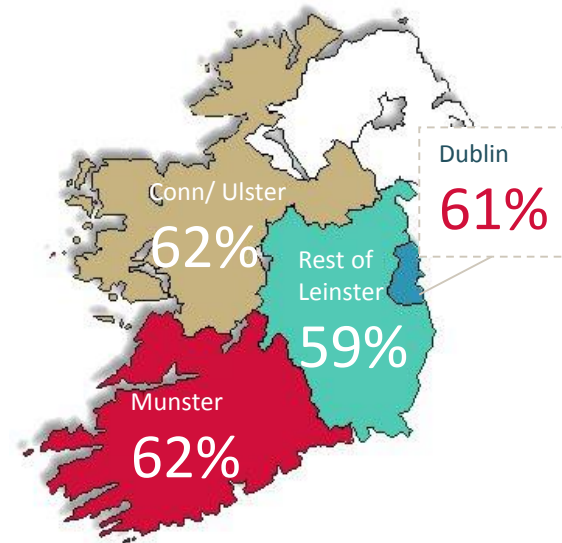
 FIANNA FÁIL 62%

 SF 44%

Independents 48%

Undecideds 54%

Region

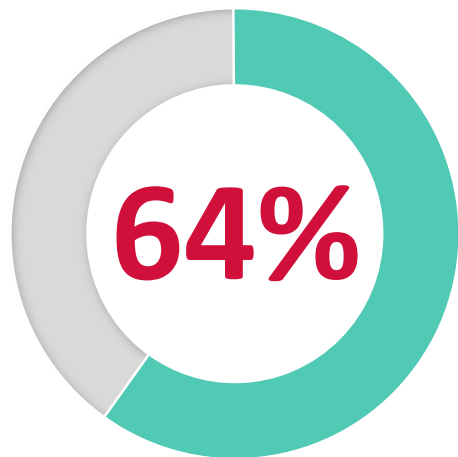


Who thinks the government should use any additional resources on funding public services, not on cutting taxes?

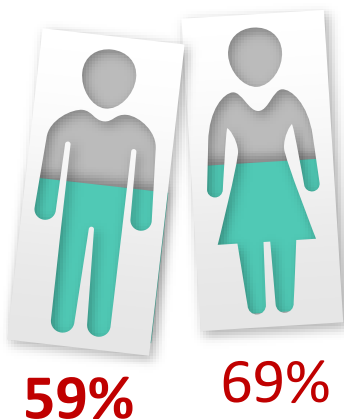
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy and the forthcoming budget. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

The government should use any additional resources on funding public services, not on cutting taxes

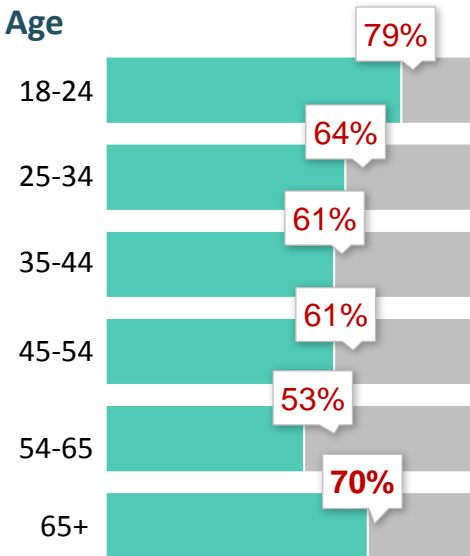
(Base: All likely voters aged 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **69%**



Lower Social Grades: **61%**



Party Support

 **62%**

 **78%**

 **64%**

 **61%**

Independents **64%**

Undecideds **62%**

Region

