



General Election Opinion Poll

17th January 2016



Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,005 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 11th – 13th January 2016.
- 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.



Fairness vs. stability – the battle for floating voters - I

The polls at the end of the last year saw a pretty consistent trend. Fine Gael support was steadily growing as the months passed by, while the Independent/Other party block support fell steadily in the second half of the year. The trend was so strong that Fine Gael improved its share of the vote by 7% from the middle of last year to the last poll of 2015, and ended up securing 32% of the first preference vote. In conclusion, many commentators have been talking about Fine Gael potentially securing the same first preference vote as they achieved at the last General Election of 36%, and effectively calling the result at this still relatively early stage.

The first poll of 2016 sees results that are very similar to those recorded at the end of last year, with only small changes for a few parties, all within the margin of error. But the changes, are possibly more significant than the topline figures suggest, due to the impact they have on the trends seen running up to this poll.

Firstly the rise in support for Fine Gael appears to have been halted. We had previously seen this happen once in early December in a poll we conducted for Paddy Power, but this could have been written off as a once off anomaly. To see support for the party fluctuate down in a second poll, suggests the predicted continued upward trend for the party is perhaps not as strong as people suggested it may have been. A drop of 2% in this poll, to leave Fine Gael securing 30% of the vote is certainly not a disaster, but raises the suggestion that people are still not completely sure of voting for the party again.

The fact that the Independent and other party grouping has managed to retain the same levels of support is also important. For months Independent candidates and other parties have been hemorrhaging support, and the suggestion has been that they will continue to do so as the election moves closer. To stop the rot at this stage, at least offers a glimmer of hope that this prophecy of declining share may not materialise.

Within this larger group most of the smaller parties and groupings level of support has remained steady, but the Social Democrats will be disappointed to see support fall back to 1%, having secured 3% at the end of November. Of course small shifts well within the margin of error can have a massive impact when support is already low. It is also notoriously difficult for smaller parties to get the media coverage to boost support at this stage. A better measure of how well these parties are really doing nationally will come when the campaign starts proper, and people can see the candidates who are standing in their own constituency.

Fairness vs. stability – the battle for floating voters - II

The fact that the main beneficiary of support has been Fianna Fail is also interesting. They suffered at the end of last year as an apparent direct result of Fine Gael's gains. Today's poll gives them a positive platform that suggests growth is still possible. The party's new poster, that has been accused by some of attack politics was only released on Wednesday morning, so only impacted on one day of interviewing for the poll and as a result it is perhaps too early to suggest it is this that has given the party a boost.

The final interesting feature from the poll is the increased levels of undecided voters. Normally as we move towards the election voters become clearer in how they are going to vote, and undecided voters decline. We have seen the opposite over the last month and a half with undecided voter levels increasing. Some of the reasoning behind this increase in uncertain voters is possibly uncovered by the other questions asked in this poll, that suggest a number of voters remain both confused and not really sure of how they will vote.

At first glance these extra attitude ratings appear to be very favorable to the current government being returned. To start with more people than ever (42%) are now feeling the effect of the recovery personally, and this is before the major impact of the last budget has even had a chance to have an effect in the end of month paychecks. At the same time 7 out of 10 people believe the country is on the right track. This measure is often used around the world as an indicator of likely or possible current government support, as it reflects voter's opinions on the country as whole. Finally, almost half (46%) of all voters also have concerns that a change in government may stall any recovery.

These factors should all point to the potential for increased support for the government parties, and as a result this may well materialise. However, while on the one hand a significant tranche of the population fear that a change in government may destabilise the economic recovery, an even greater proportion (60%) agree that we need a change in government to bring a fairer society now that we are out of the recession. This means that there are a relatively important tranche of voters who both fear a change in government, and also would like to see it in order to establish a fairer society.

It is this battle of fairness vs. stability that is unfolding in the mind of many floating voters – and today's poll further emphasises that one or other of these features has yet to finally crystallise support for one party or another. What is clear however is the importance of both of these emotive triggers to the final result of the election in a few weeks' time.

First Preference Vote Intention – January 2016

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

30% -2

Labour

9% =

Fianna Fail

19% +2

Sinn Fein

19% =

Independent/
Other Party

23% =

Undecided Voters

16% +1

REDC

First Preference Vote Intention – January 2016

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	Prompting on Other Parties	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	24	23	25	30	30	36
Labour	6	7	7	9	9	19
Fianna Fáil	16	15	16	19	19	17
Sinn Féin	16	16	16	19	19	10
Independent candidates	12	13	15	18	15	13
Green Party	1	2	2	2	2	2
Renua	1	1	1	1	2	-
AAA-PBP	1	1	1	1	3	1*
Social Democrats	1	1	1	1	1	-
Other Party	*	*	*	*	*	1
Undecided	22	21	16	n/a	n/a	n/a

*Socialist Party

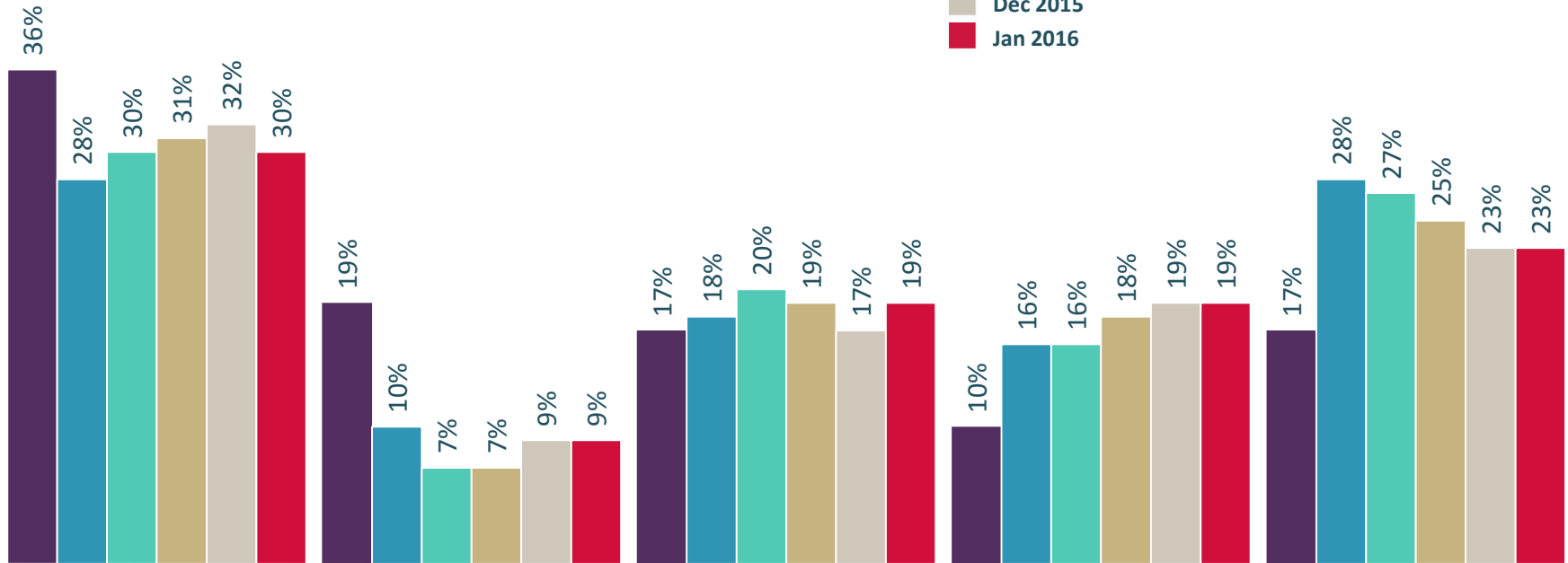
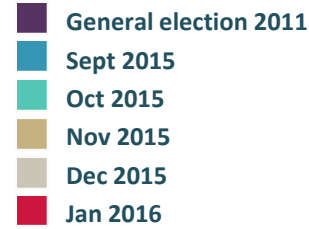


REDC

First Preference Vote Intention – Sept ‘15 – Jan ‘16

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
30%

Labour
9%

Fianna Fail
19%

Sinn Fein
19%

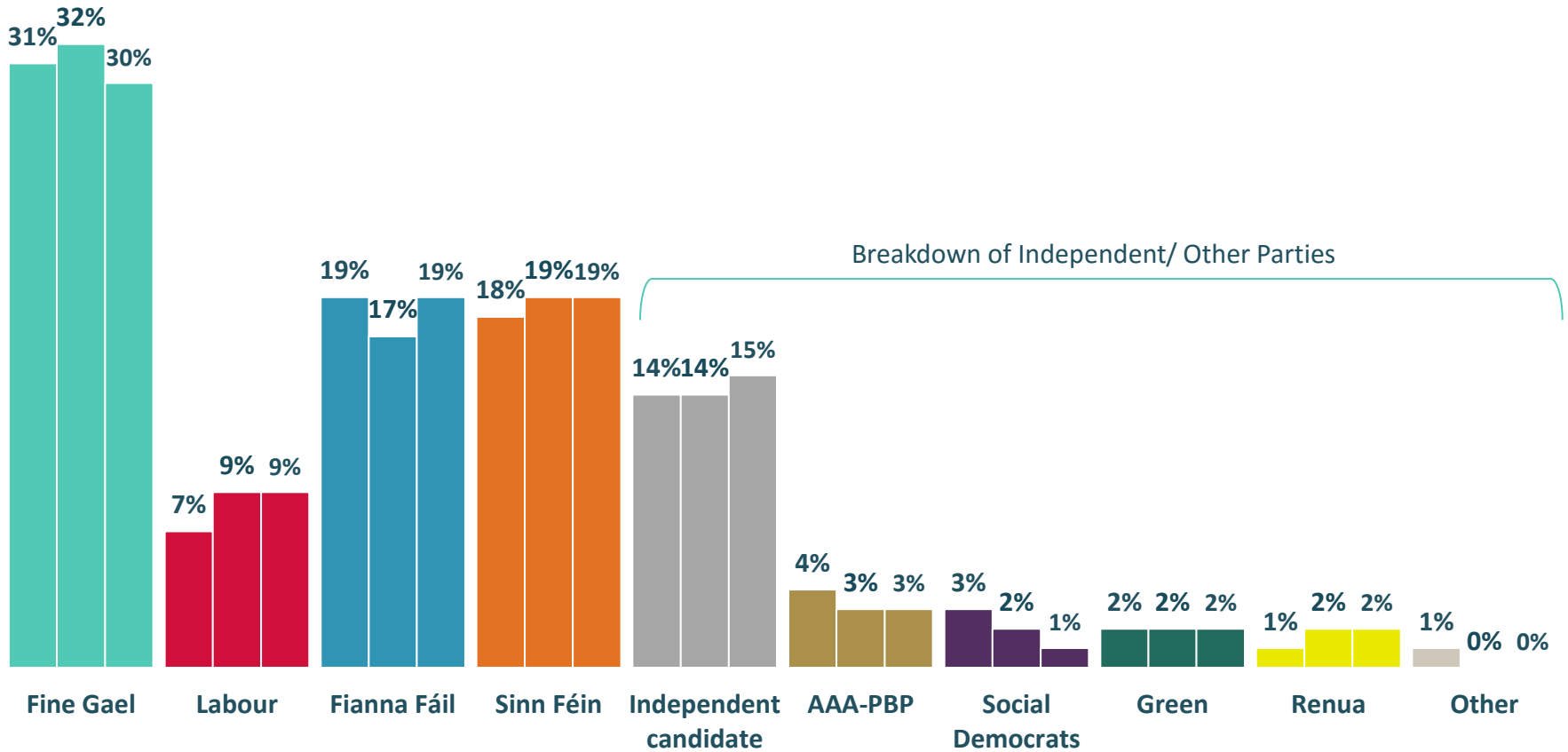
Independent/
Other Party
23%

First Preference Vote Intention – Nov '15 to Jan '16

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) + PROMPT If Independent Candidate for party.

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

Nov 2015 Dec 2015 Jan 2016



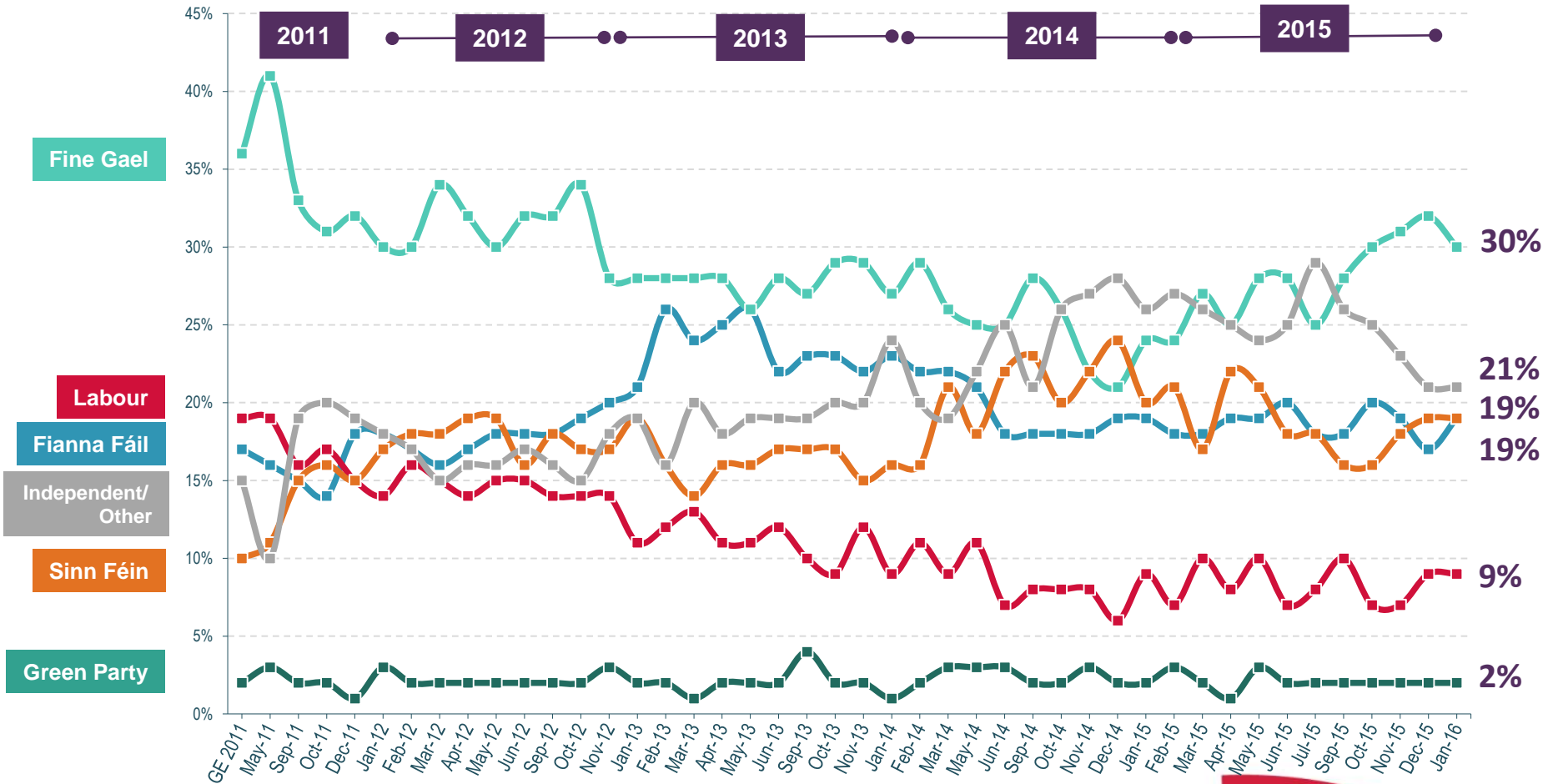
(Independent Alliance 2%)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2016

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)

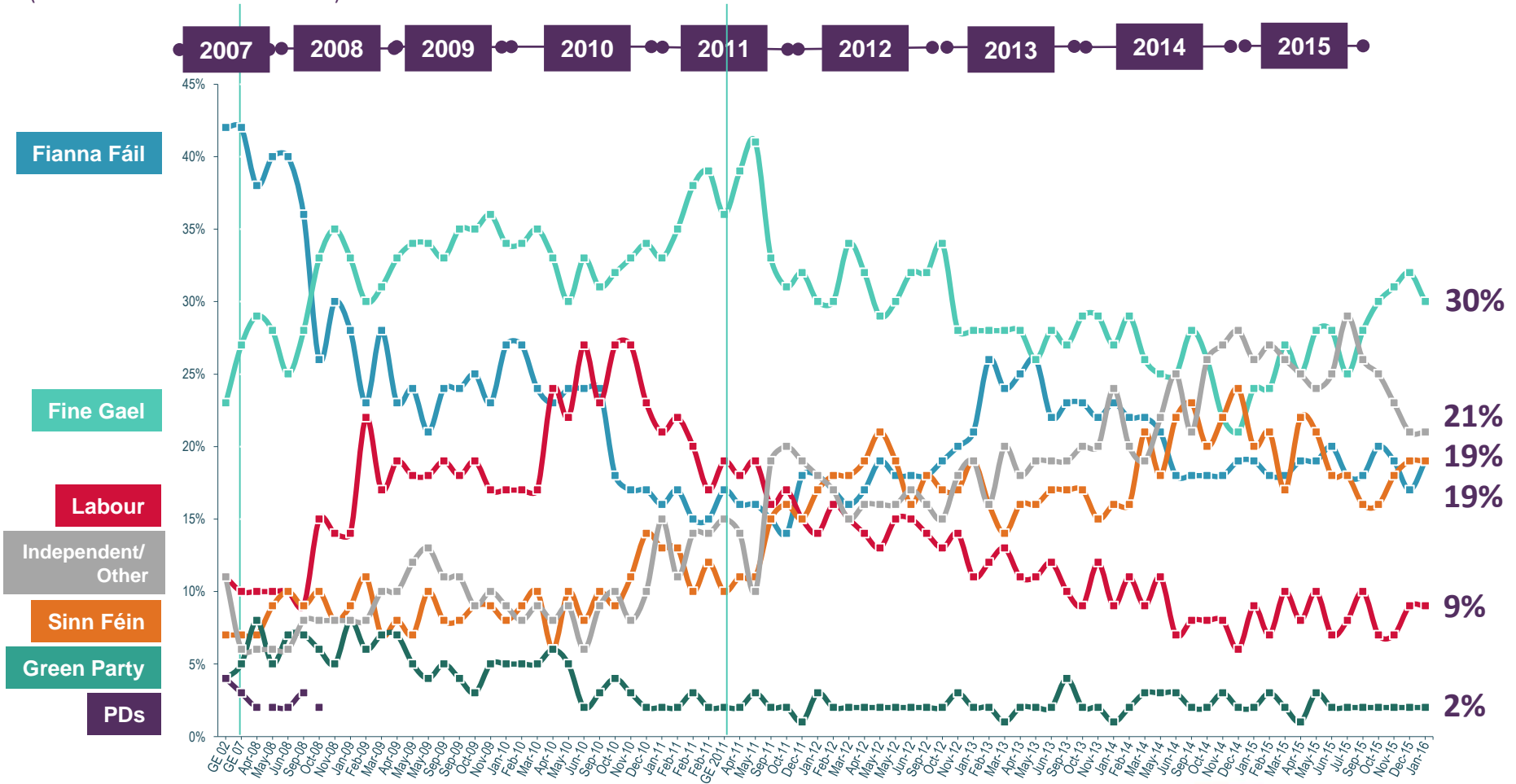
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2007 to 2016

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)



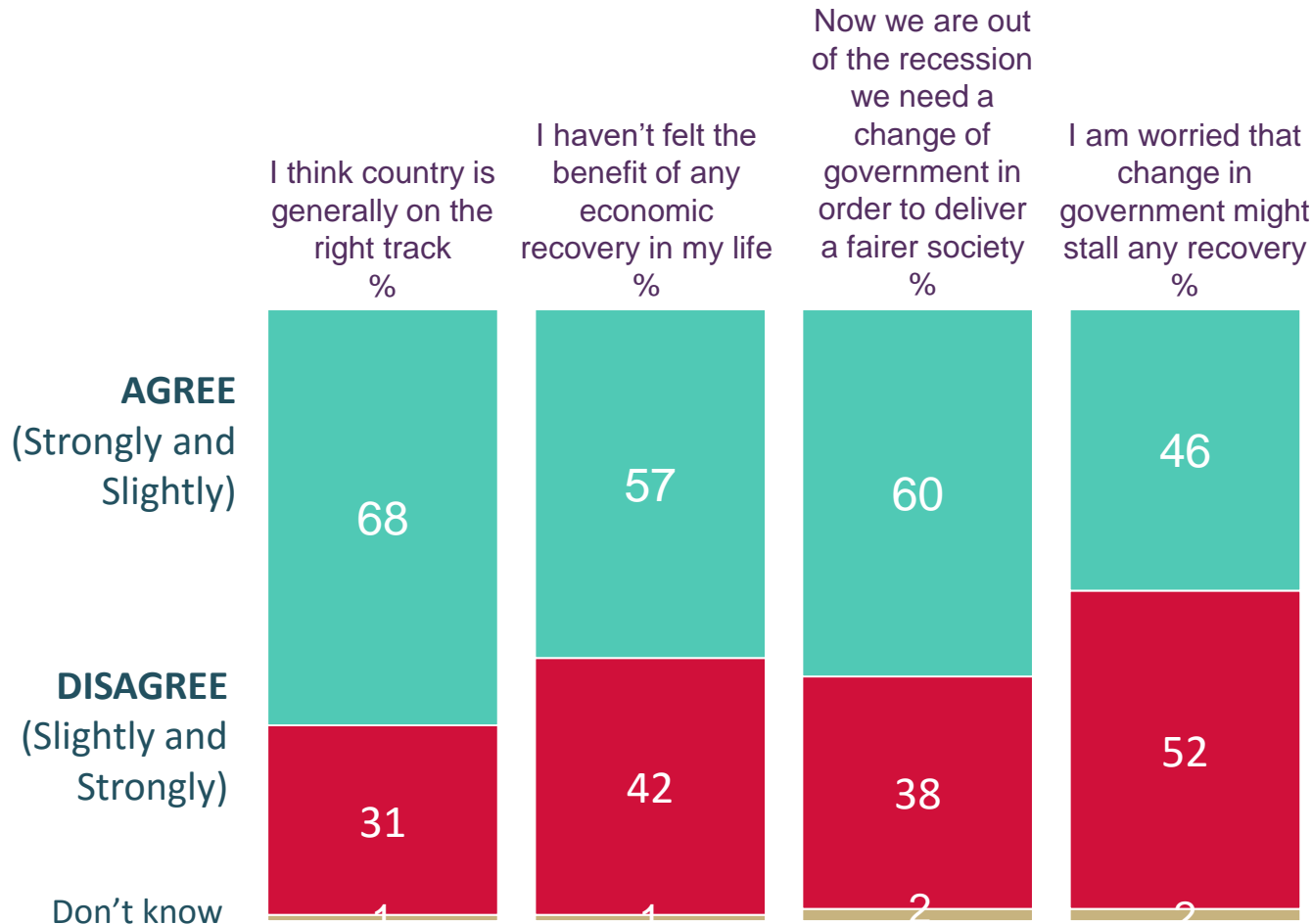


Government & The Economy

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

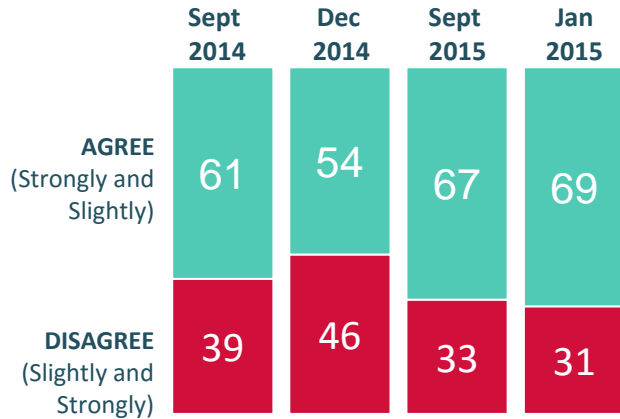


Who thinks the country is generally on the right track?

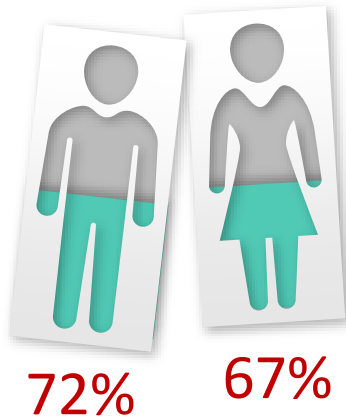
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

I think country is generally on the right track

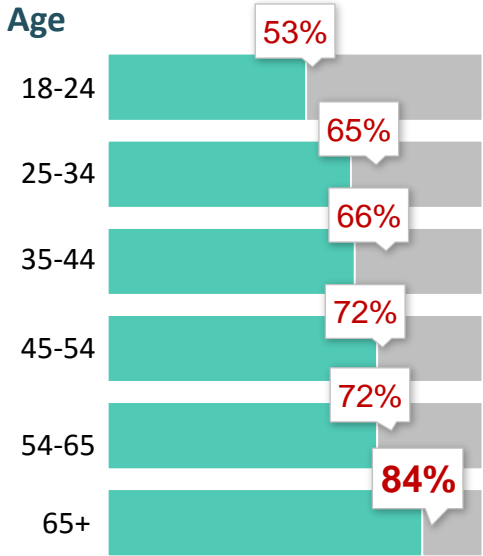
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **73%**



Lower Social Grades: **64%**



Party Support

FINE GAEL **93%**

Labour **81%**

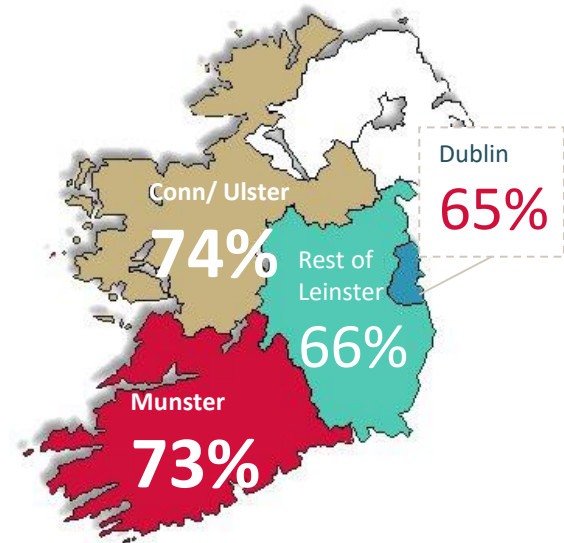
FIANNA FAÏL **64%**

SF **51%**

Independents **59%**

Undecideds **72%**

Region

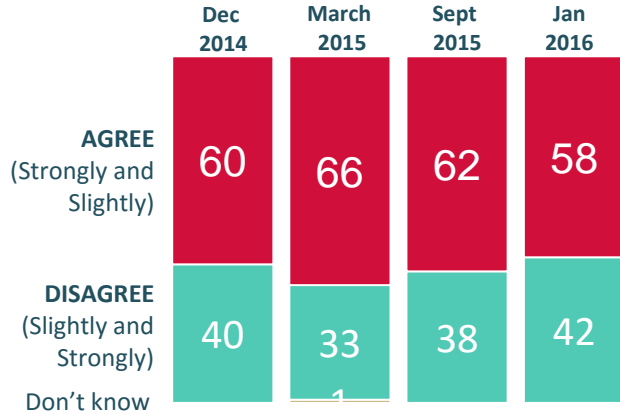


Who has NOT felt the benefit of any economic recovery in their life?

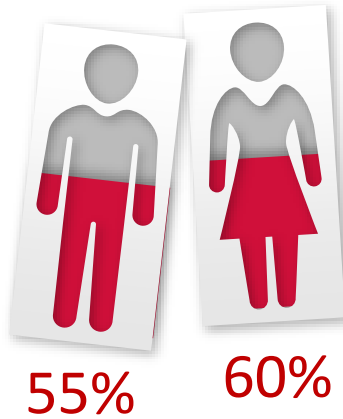
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

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

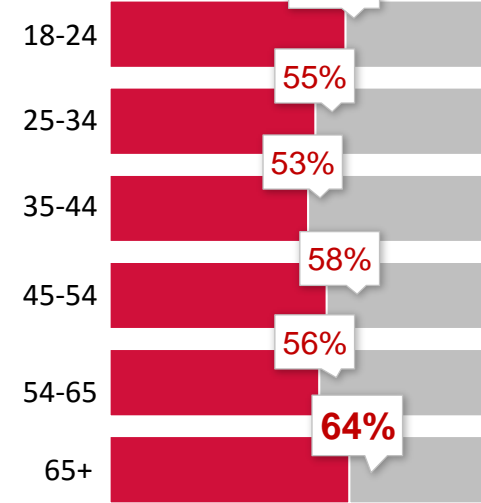
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 50%



Lower Social Grades: 64%



Party Support

FINE GAEL 46%

Labour 38%

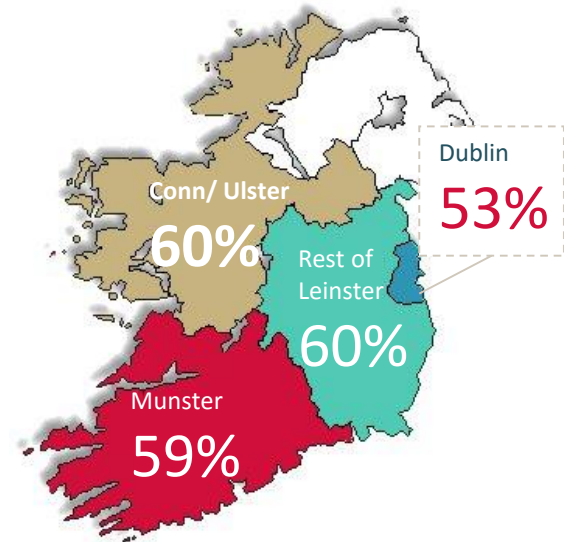
FIANNA FAÏL 61%

SF 65%

Independents 68%

Undecideds 57%

Region

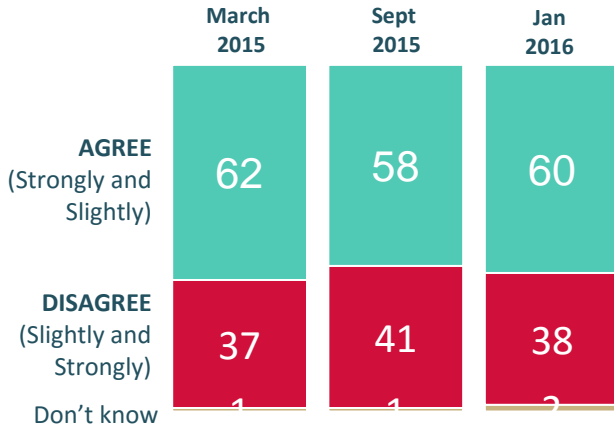


Who believes now we are out of the recession we need a change of government in order to deliver a fairer society?

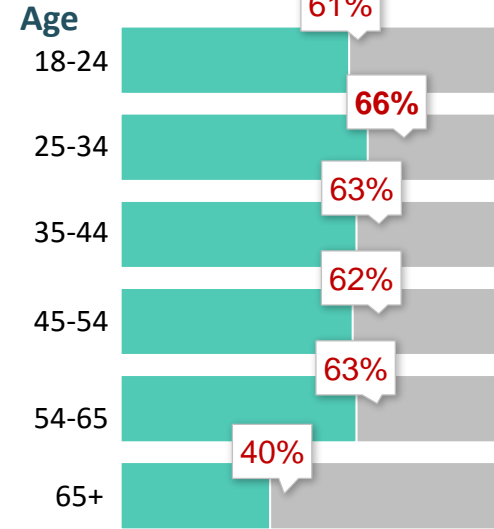
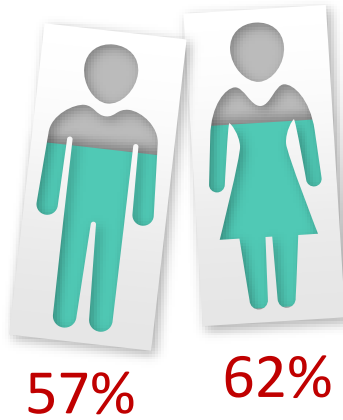
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements . READ OUT

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



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: **58%**



Lower Social Grades: **63%**



Party Support

FINE GAEL 25%

Labour 39%

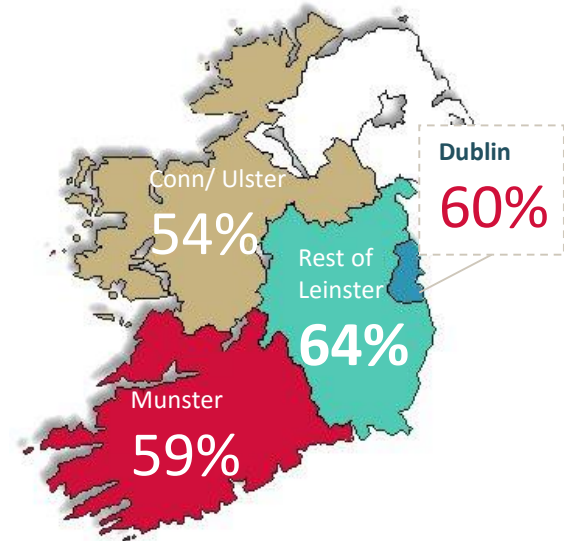
FIANNA FAÏL 83%

SF 90%

Independents 69%

Undecideds 63%

Region

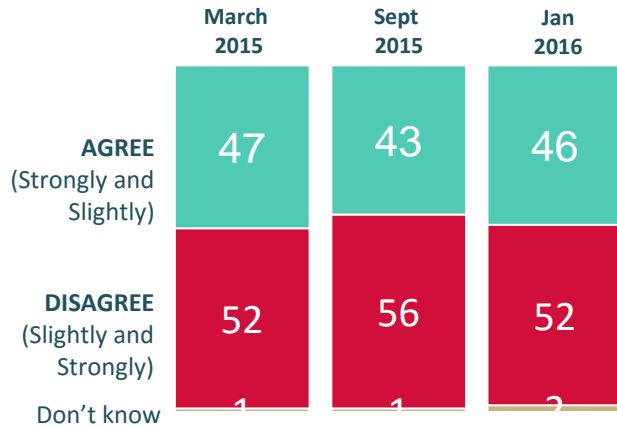


Who is worried that change in government might stall any recovery?

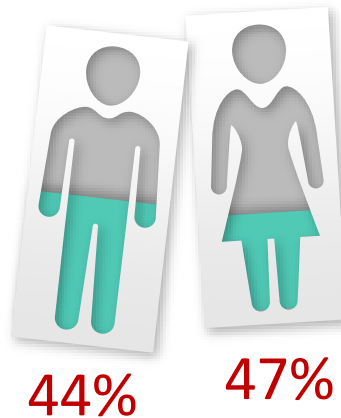
Now I am going to read out some statements that other people have made regarding the economy. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is disagree strongly and 4 is agree strongly can you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. READ OUT

I am worried that change in government might stall any recovery

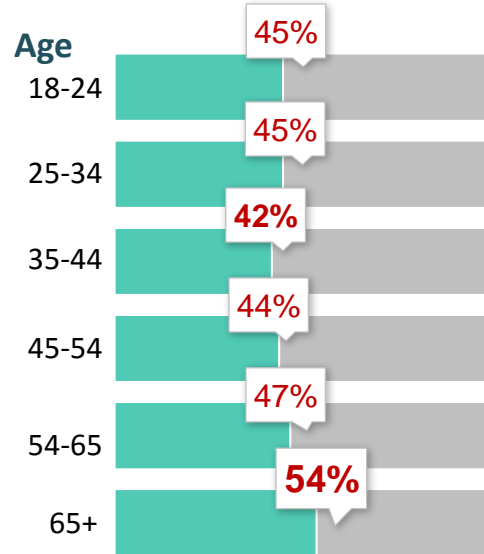
(Base: All Adults 18+)



Gender



Age



Social Class

Higher Social Grades: 48%



Lower Social Grades: 44%



Party Support

FINE GAEL 73%

Labour 62%

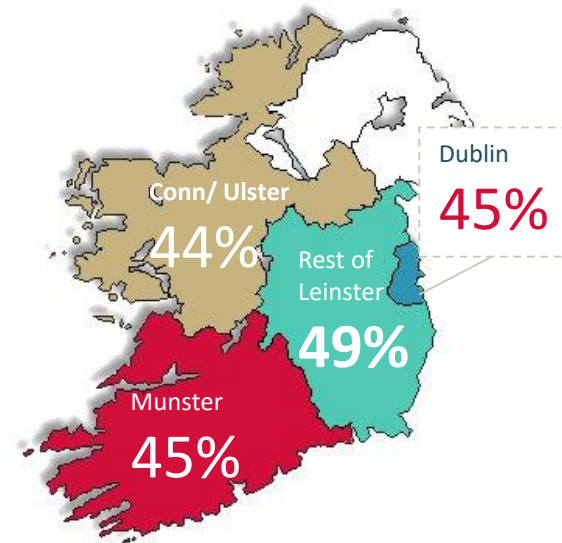
FIANNA FAÏL 33%

SF 28%

Independents 40%

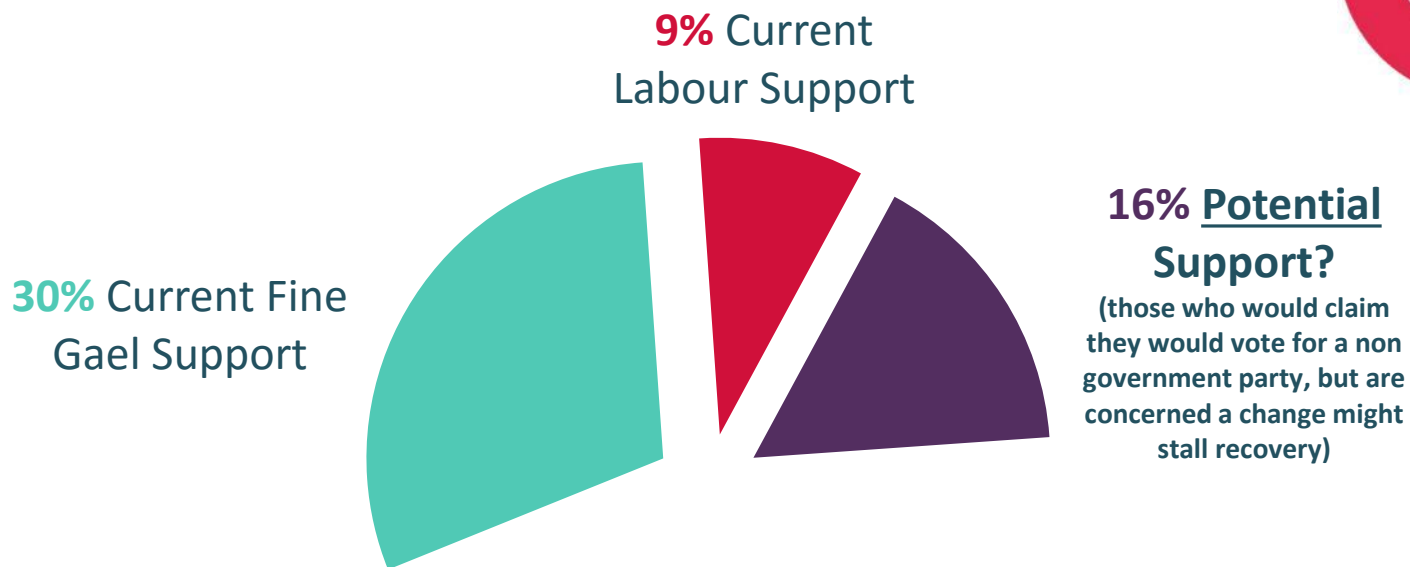
Undecideds 46%

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.