General Election Opinion Poll

29th May 2016

Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,004 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 23th – 26th May 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 recall for how people voted at the last election and weights this to the exact result at the last election.

- 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 8 to 10 are included as being those who will definitely go and vote.

- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

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Voters Currently See Little Reason to Change Support

Despite weeks of uncertainly, disagreements and careful horse trading between parties and Independent candidates – voters appear to have seen little that would make them change their vote behaviour should another general election be called. There are small movements within the overall picture, but by and large most parties remain within the margin of error of the result at the last election.

The largest movements in support are seen for Labour, whose gains since a poor poll immediately after the last election will be a welcome relief to new leader Brendan Howlin. These gains at least suggest that the party remains relevant to a core group of voters, and provides a base for future growth. Likewise the gains for Independent candidates, to return their support level to be closer to that achieved at the actual general election, following a decline immediately afterwards, will also be seen by them as vindication for either taking part or not taking part in the current government formation. At this stage it certainly appears that none are being chastised one way or another for their decisions.

The two largest parties secure equal footing among the electorate, with both reaching 26% of the first preference vote share. While the differences are small versus the last general election result, they are perhaps somewhat significant. Fine Gael at 26% is exactly the same result that they achieved at the last election, while Fianna Fail securing 26% is of course a rise in support of 2%. This is still within the margin of error for this poll, but does suggest that both parties are now pretty much on a level footing among the electorate, rather than Fine Gael being the larger of the two as seen at the last election.

So what is the difference in voter support between the two? Fine Gael's strength appears to be centered in older voters aged fifty five or over. This of course is potentially a problem for the party in the long run and they need to appeal more to younger voters. The highest levels of support for the party are seen among men aged 55+, and they are somewhat weaker among women in those age groups, where Fianna Fail does better. In fact Fianna Fail secures better levels of support among women of all groups, and this is a real strength for the party in comparison to Fine Gael.

Another key difference in support for the two parties can be seen in the regional variances between the two parties. Fianna Fail has a real strength among voters living in Munster, where its leader Micheal Martin of course has his own strong supporter base. As seen at the last general election, Fine Gael support is stronger in Dublin and in the Rest of Leinster counties outside of Dublin.

Finally support for both parties differs somewhat depending on social standing and education. Support for Fianna Fail is somewhat stronger among those who haven't gone on to higher third level education and come from more blue collar backgrounds. While Fine Gael has again somewhat stronger support among those third level education and in more upmarket careers.
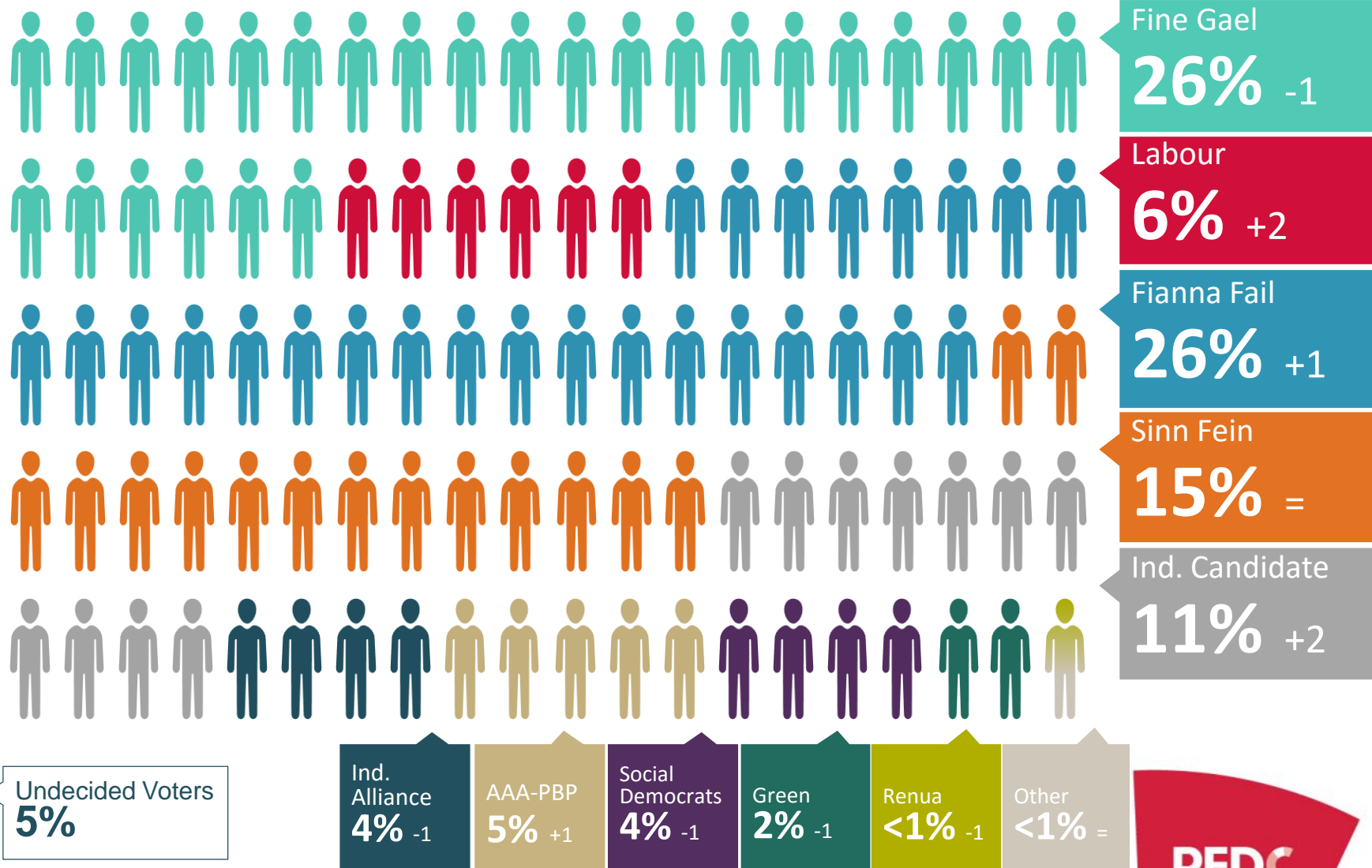
On the whole though, despite some difference by age, gender and region, the voters for both parties have really quite similar demographic profiles. Yet another indicator perhaps as to why these two parties have held the balance of power in Ireland for some time, and an explanation of why voters appear to be happy to switch between the two parties.

Once the government actually starts to do some work, which at present appears to have been very little, we will be able to better monitor how it will be evaluated by voters, and who ultimately will be blamed for its failures or praised for its successes.

First Preference Vote Intention – 29th May 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
26% -1

Labour
6% +2

Fianna Fail
26% +1

Sinn Fein
15% =

Ind. Candidate
11% +2

Undecided Voters
5%

Ind. Alliance
4% -1

AAA-PBP
5% +1

Social Democrats
4% -1

Green
2% -1

Renua
<1% -1

Other
<1% =

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First Preference Vote Intention – 13th May 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)
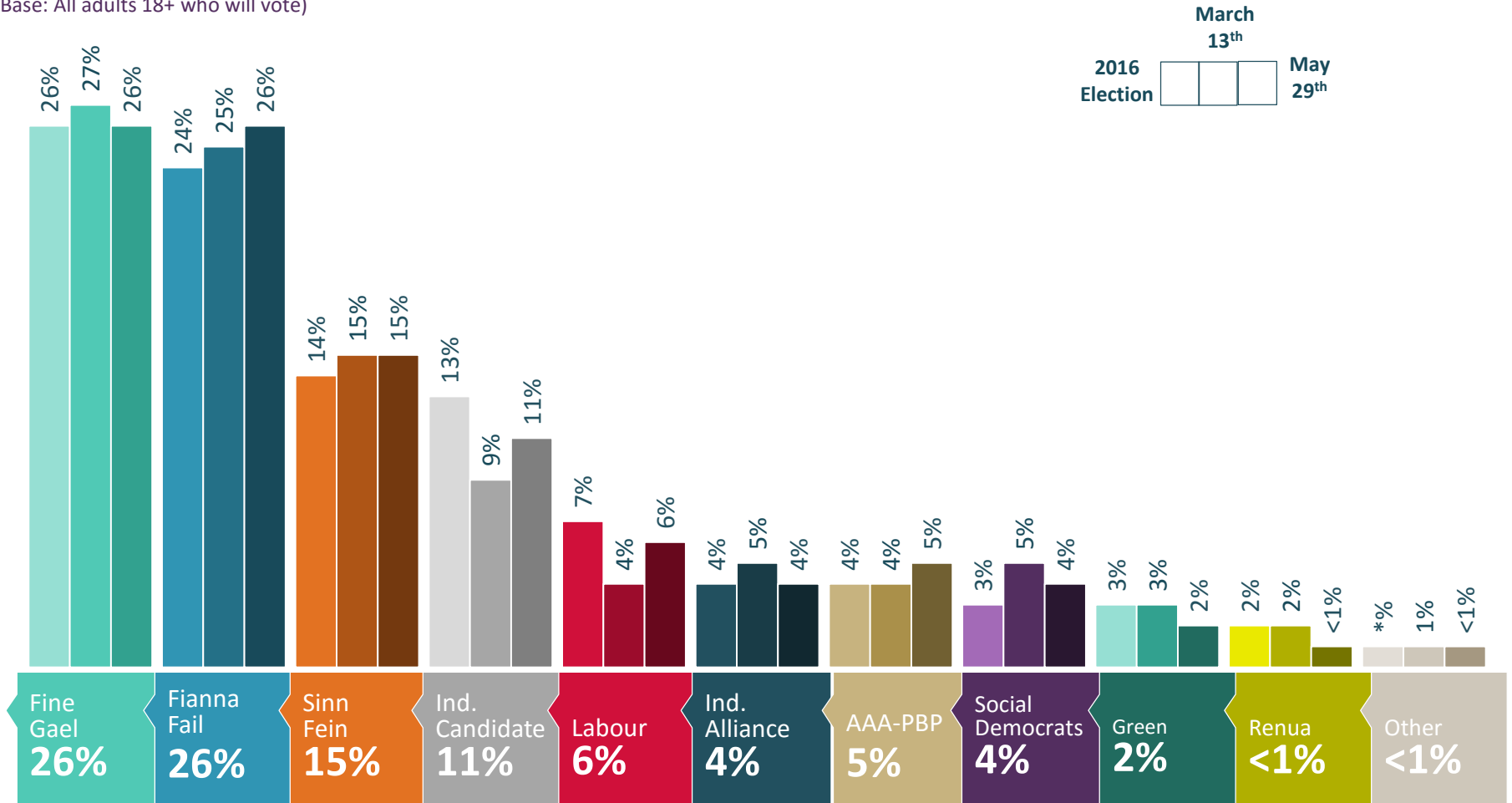
(Base: All adults 18+)

	CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT					
	Core figures	Impact of Past vote weighting	Likely Voters (8-10)	Excluding Undecided	Prompting on Other Parties	2016 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	26	23	25	26	26	27
Labour	7	6	6	6	6	7
Fianna Fáil	23	22	25	26	26	24
Sinn Féin	15	16	15	15	15	14
Independent candidates	17	17	16	16	15	17
Green Party	2	2	2	2	2	3
Renua	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	2
AAA-PBP	1	3	3	4	5	4
Social Democrats	1	2	2	3	4	3
Workers Party	0	0	0	0	0	<1
Other	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Undecided	7	7	5	n/a	n/a	n/a

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First Preference Vote Intention – May '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.
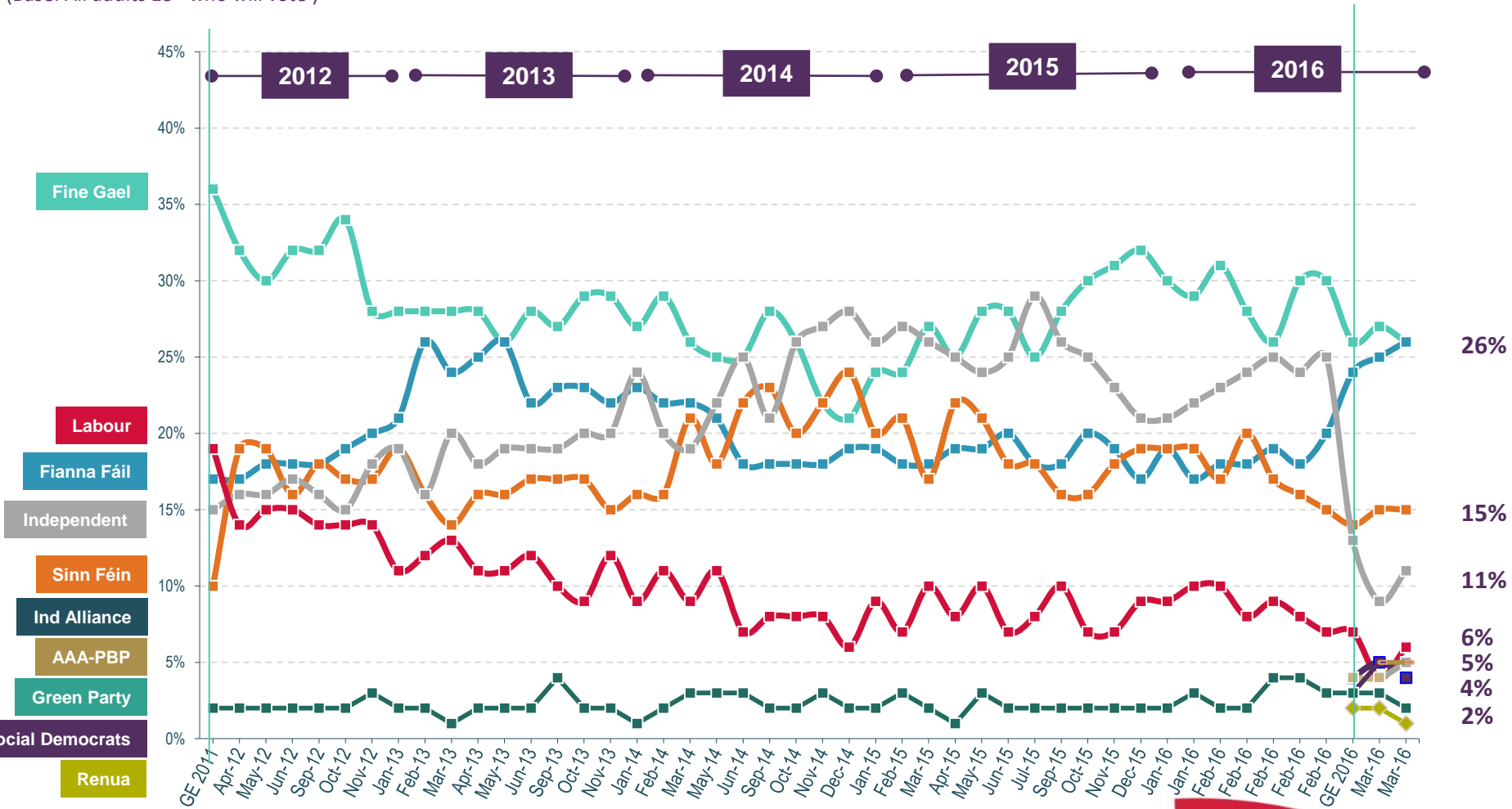
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

Legend (time points): 2016 Election | March 13th | May 29th

Party	2016 Election	March 13th	May 29th	Final
Fine Gael	26%	27%	26%	**26%**
Fianna Fail	24%	25%	26%	**26%**
Sinn Fein	14%	15%	15%	**15%**
Ind. Candidate	13%	9%	11%	**11%**
Labour	7%	4%	6%	**6%**
Ind. Alliance	4%	5%	4%	**4%**
AAA-PBP	4%	4%	5%	**5%**
Social Democrats	3%	5%	4%	**4%**
Green	3%	3%	2%	**2%**
Renua	2%	2%	<1%	**<1%**
Other	*%	1%	<1%	**<1%**

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First Preference Vote Intention – 2012-2016

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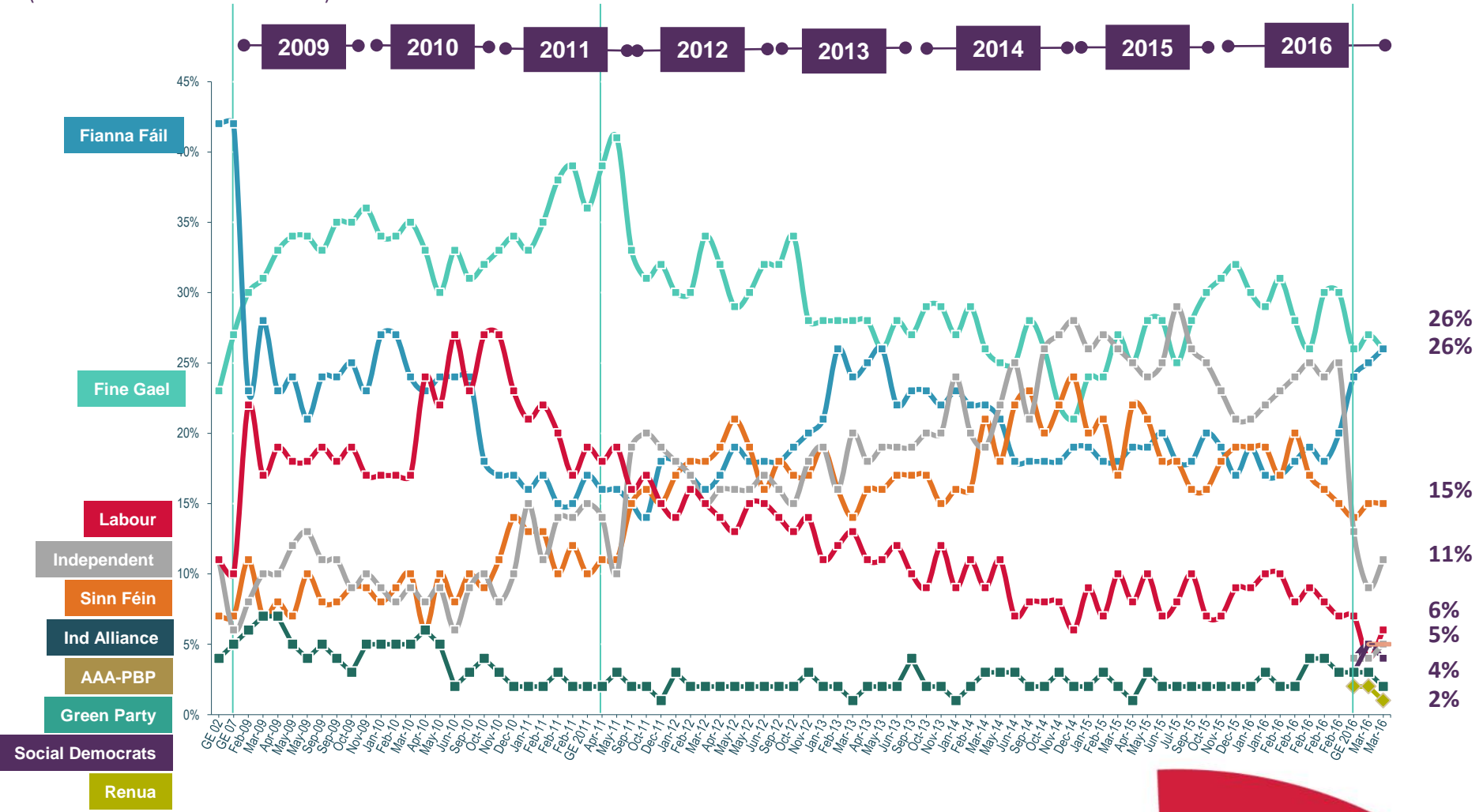
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

Fine Gael
Labour
Fianna Fáil
Independent
Sinn Féin
Ind Alliance
AAA-PBP
Green Party
Social Democrats
Renua

26%
15%
11%
6%
5%
4%
2%

Note; From GE 2016 Onwards, 'Independents/Others' split out to show AAA-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately

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First Preference Vote Intention – 2009 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)

Note; From GE 2016 Onwards, 'Independents/Others' split out to show AAA-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately