



**The Sunday  
Business Post**

# General Election Opinion Poll

November 2016



# Methodology and Weighting

- ✓ RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,000 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 21<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 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.



# The Difficult Balancing Act for Fianna Fáil

Fianna Fáil are often cited as the effective “winners” of the last election, having come back from the verge of decimation in 2011, to push Fine Gael close for the highest share of the popular first preference vote across the country. Having not been able to form a government themselves, and having made the decision not to go into government with Fine Gael, they set about ensuring that they effectively controlled the government and its agenda, by tough negotiating in the confidence and supply agreement.

At that time things couldn't have been rosier, support for the party and the stand they took during negotiations was on the rise, reaching a high in the RED C polls of 29%. This was some three percent ahead of Fine Gael and at this stage the question was being asked about how whether they would underpin the current government, if their fortunes continued to improve with the electorate as a whole.

Since then however, the picture hasn't been so positive. The summer recess appears to have stopped the momentum for the party. Instead they have seen their fortunes diminish, and share of the first preference vote has seeped away again. September saw the party still perform well at 27% share, but this was down 2% from pre-summer recess polling. October they were down again to 26%, but still holding ground ahead of Fine Gael. Now in November's poll they have dropped back again to 24%, and as Fine Gael retain a pretty steady share, this means they have fallen back behind their arch rivals to similar levels seen at the last election.

If the fall in support simply a reaction to lower media presence by the party? That seems unlikely – particularly as Micheal Martin had quite a heavy presence in the media at the start of this week when polling began. But perhaps what he had to say in those interviews about Public Sector pay hasn't done the party any favours. Fianna Fáil have been pretty hawkish about public sector pay demands. They have argued that services need to be put before pay increases, particularly with the unknown impact of Brexit coming down the line. But as you will see elsewhere in the poll, this isn't a view shared by a significant proportion of the population, many of whom support Fianna Fáil. In fact of those that supported Fianna Fáil at the last election, 53% support public sector pay restoration even if it means reduced spending on public services, some way ahead of all other party supporters, apart from Sinn Fein supporters at 57%.

It is also becoming clear that in the current environment it is quite unlikely that Fianna Fáil will remove their support from the Confidence and Supply agreement. For a start the numbers don't stack up yet to suggest that the result of another election would look that different to the last one. On this basis it is probably better for Fianna Fáil to hang on and hope that Fine Gael support declines for one reason or another as government goes about its business. Conversely, as the likelihood of Fianna Fáil actually pulling support diminishes, this itself appears to be impacting on its own support levels. But this could be short term pain for longer term gain.

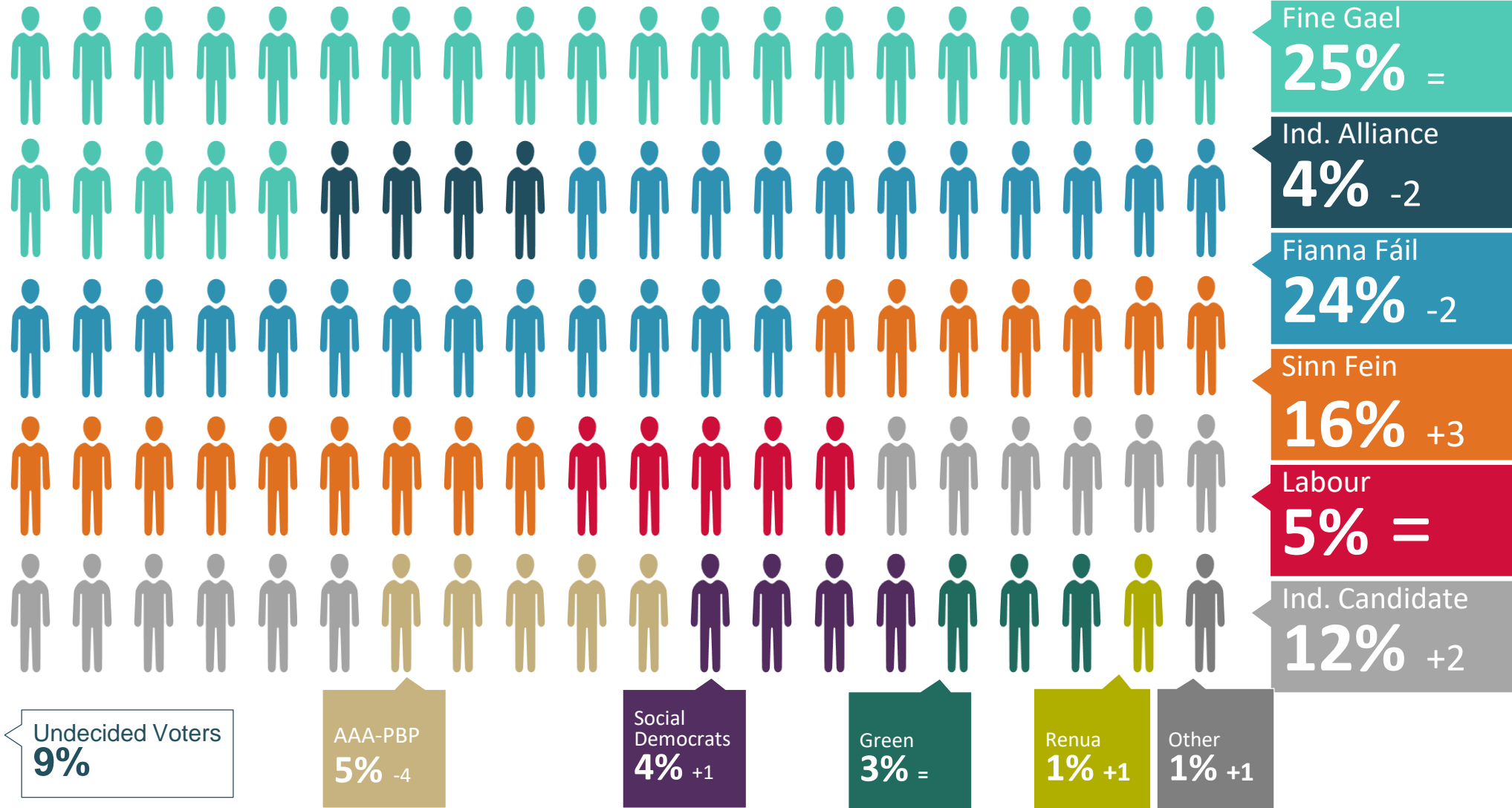
The other problem for Fianna Fáil is that the longer the agreement goes on, the more similar the two parties possibly look to the electorate on a number of issues to voters, such as public sector pay. Partly, this is because Fine Gael have to keep their policies in check within the constraints of the agreement.

The challenge for Fianna Fáil is all about the balance between ensuring their policies are part of the programme for government, while somehow keeping a distance from the government in the eyes of the electorate. It is one that was easier to maintain when negotiating the programme for government, but is much harder to maintain now that programme is underway.

# First Preference Vote Intention – 25<sup>th</sup> November 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)

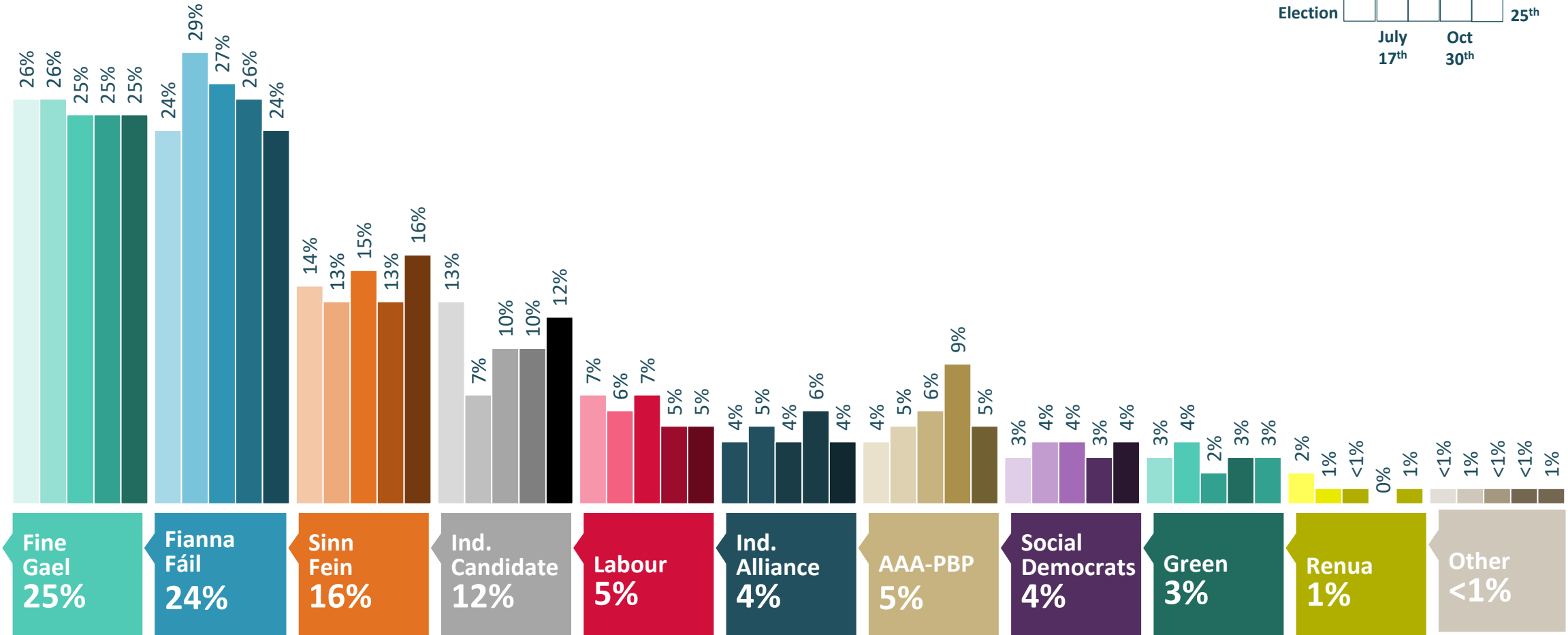
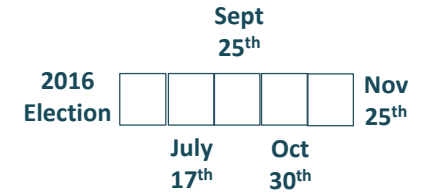
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



# First Preference Vote Intention – November '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)

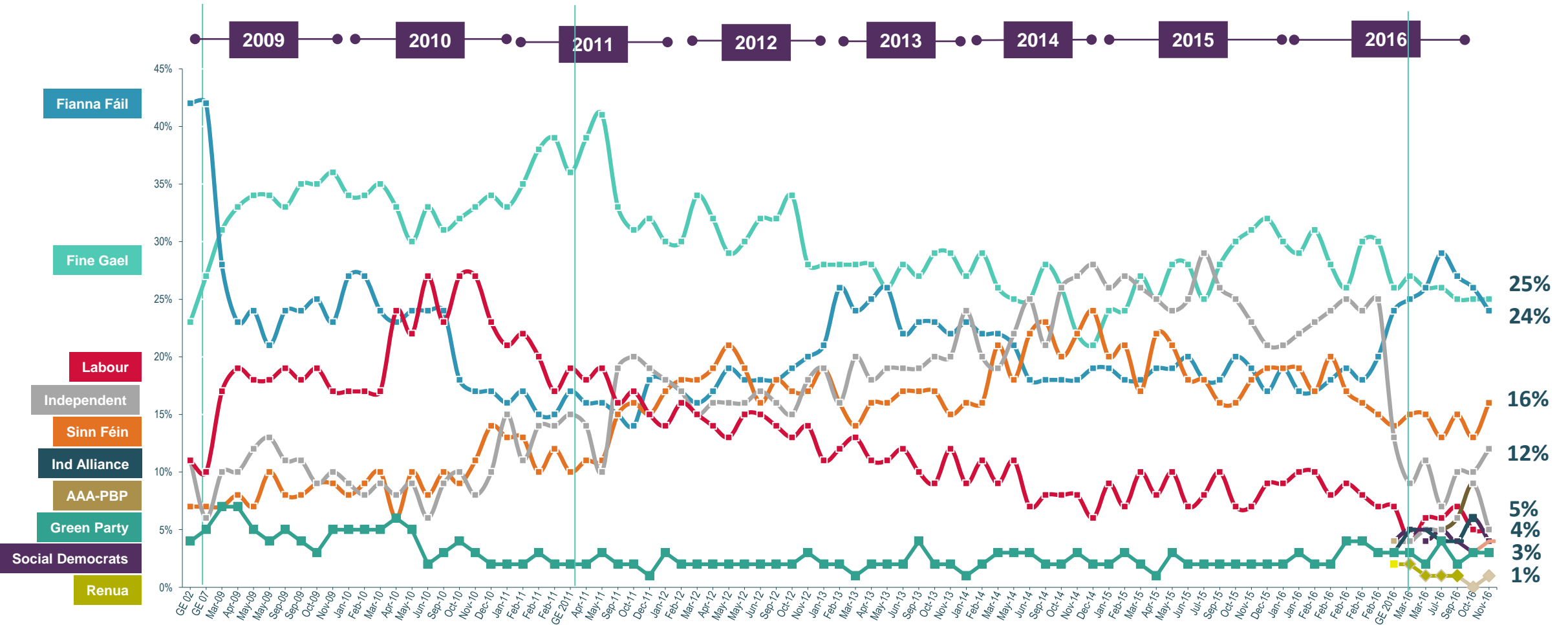




# First Preference Vote Intention – 2009 to 2016

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)

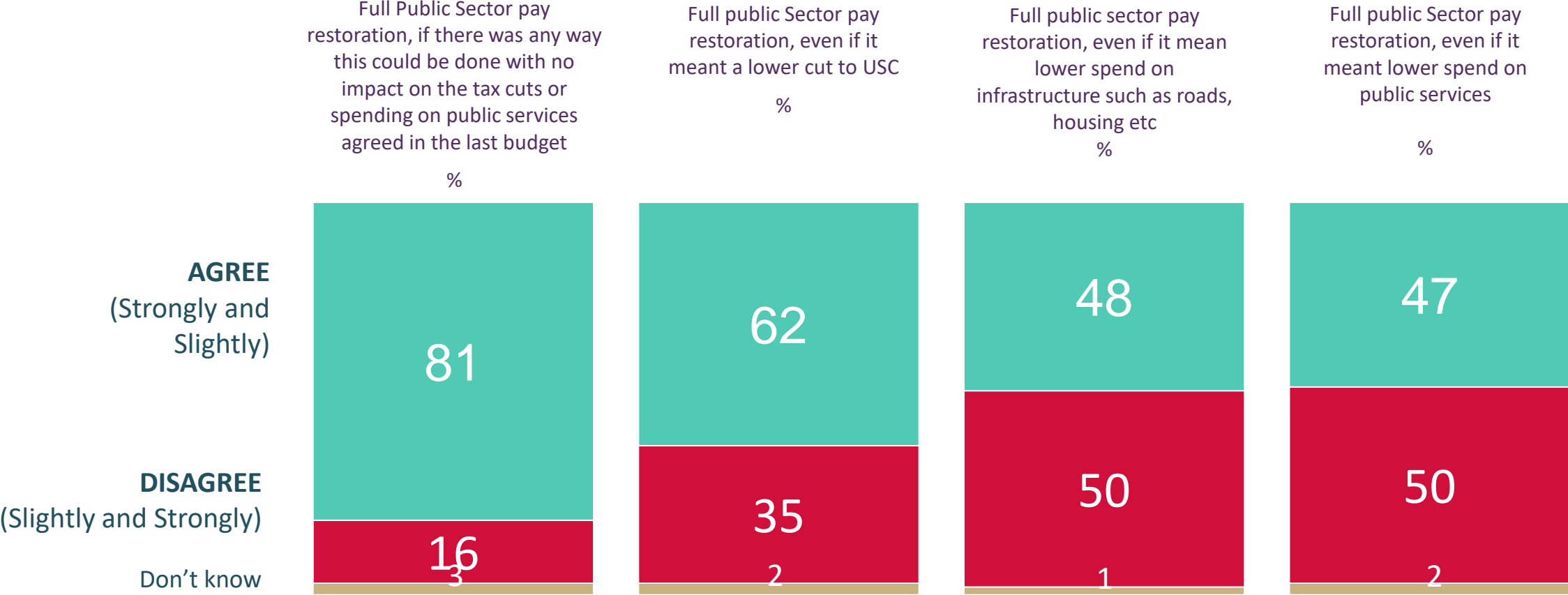


Note; From GE 2016 Onwards, 'Independents/Others' split out to show AAA-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately

# Attitudes towards Public Section Pay Restoration

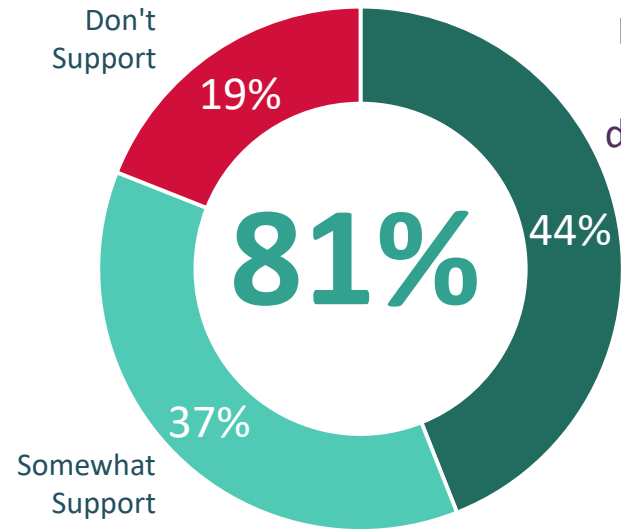
(Base: All adults 18+)11

To what extent you support or oppose calls by the public sector unions for public sector pay restoration to levels seen before the recession, in each of the following cases....



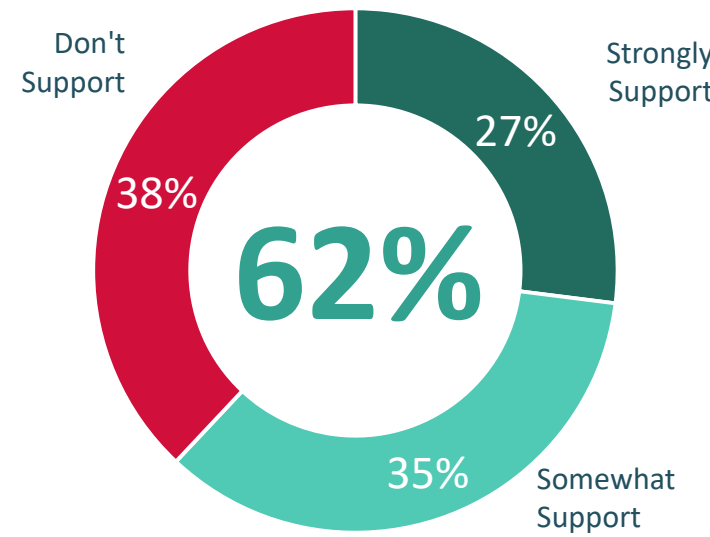


# Attitudes towards Public Section Pay Restoration

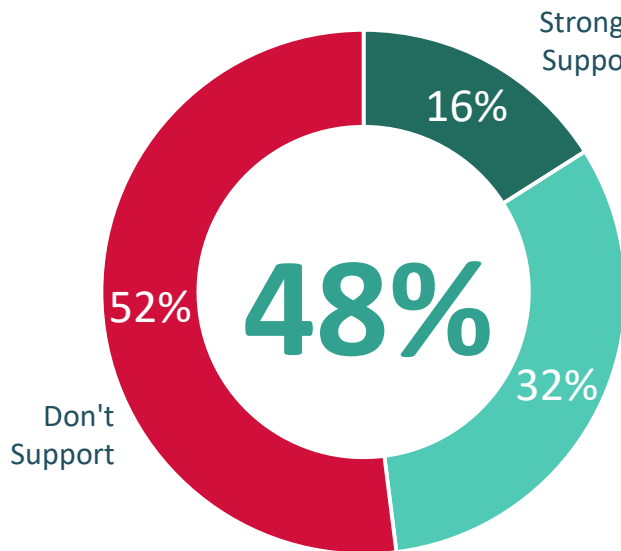


Full Public Sector pay restoration, if there was any way this could be done with no impact on the tax cuts or spending on public services agreed in the last budget

Strongly Support

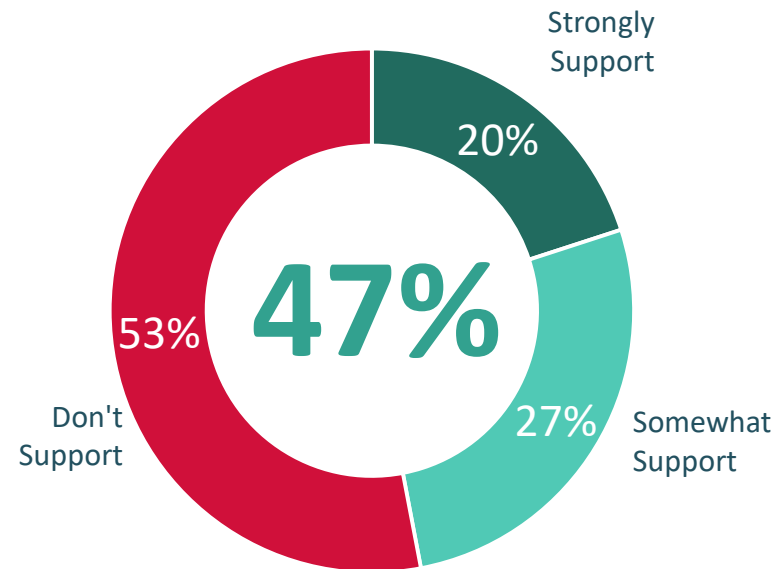


Full Public Sector pay restoration, even if it meant a lower cut to USC



Public sector pay restoration, even if it meant lower spend on infrastructure such as roads, housing etc

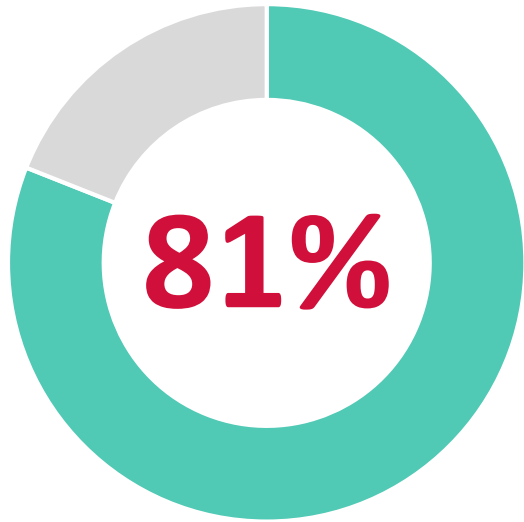
Somewhat Support



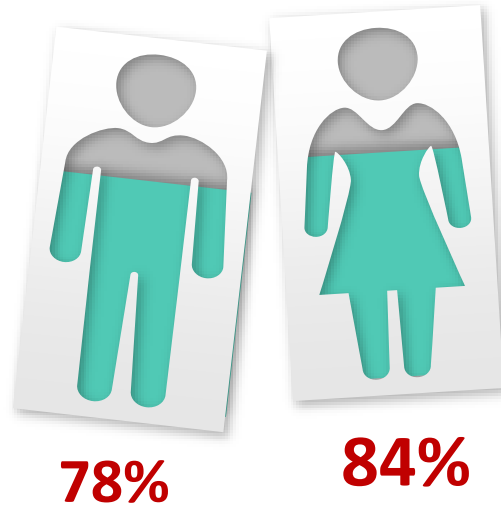
Public Sector pay restoration, even if it meant lower spend on public services



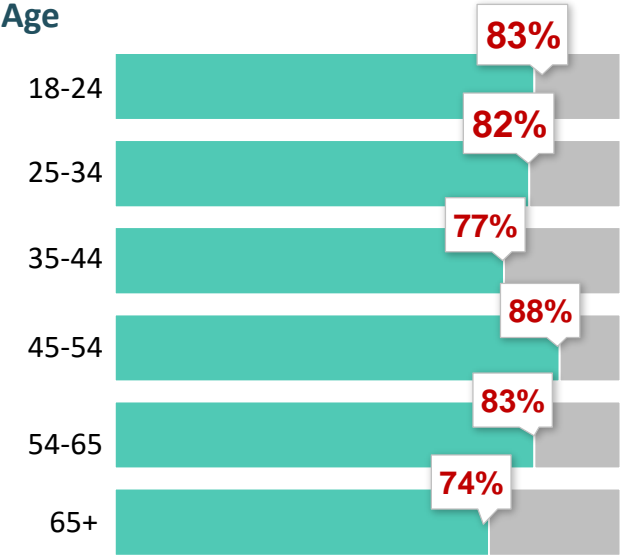
# Full Public Sector pay restoration, if there was any way this could be done with no impact on the tax cuts or spending on public services agreed in the last budget



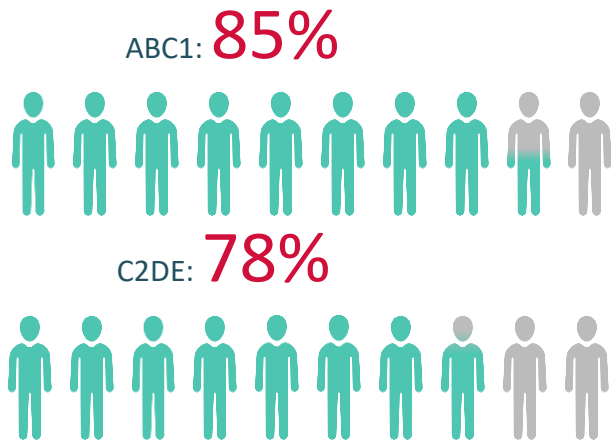
## Gender



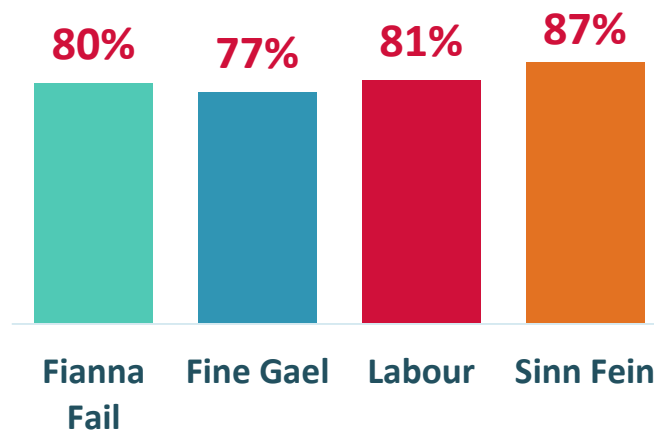
## Age



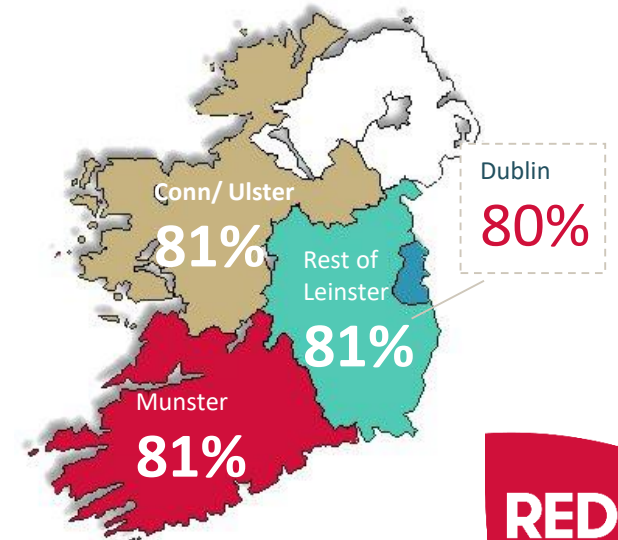
## Social Class



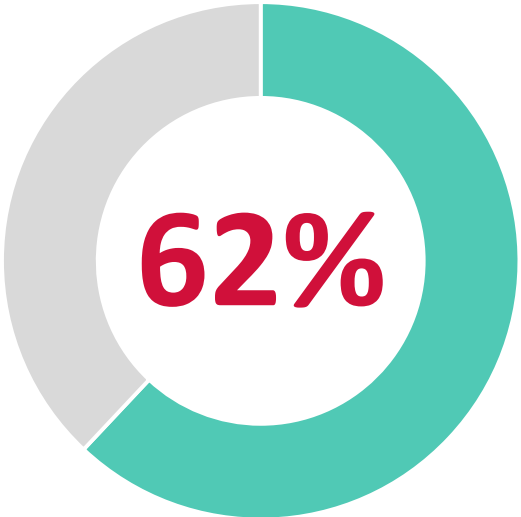
## Party Support



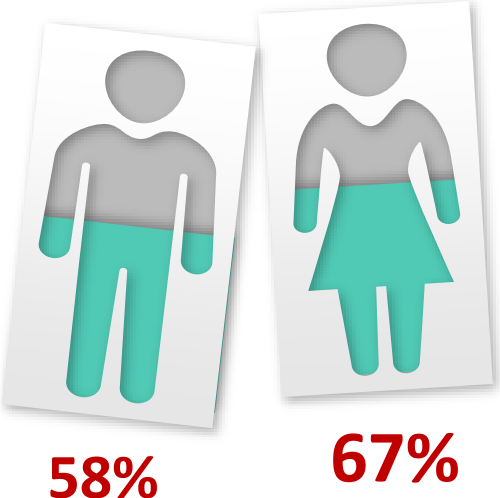
## Region



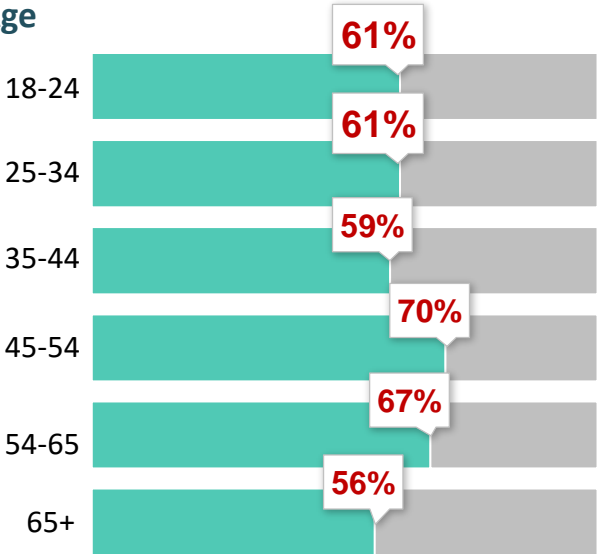
# Full Public Sector pay restoration, even if it meant a lower cut to Universal Social Charge taxes



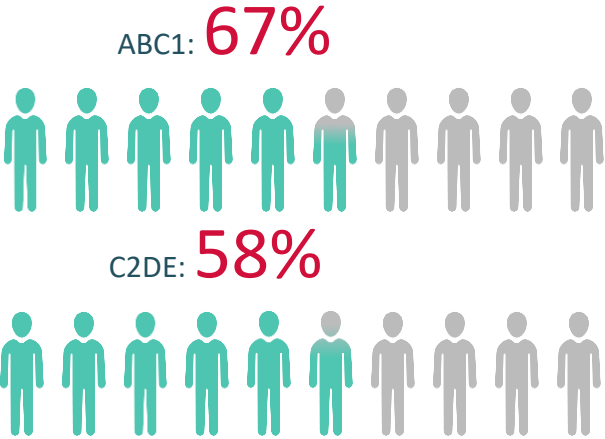
Gender



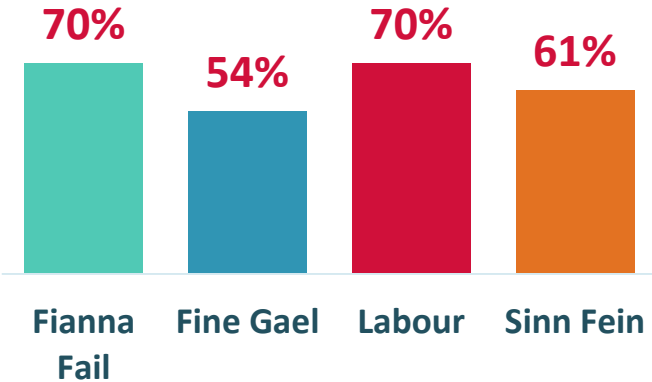
Age



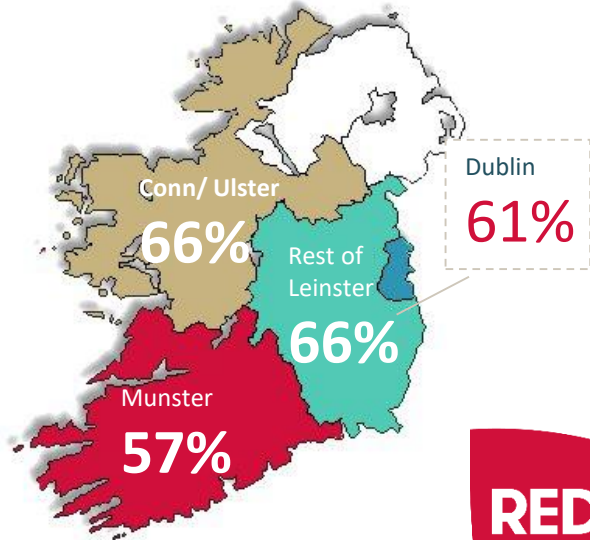
Social Class



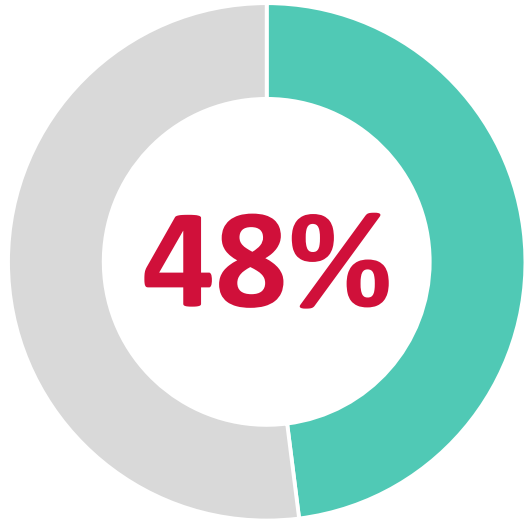
Party Support



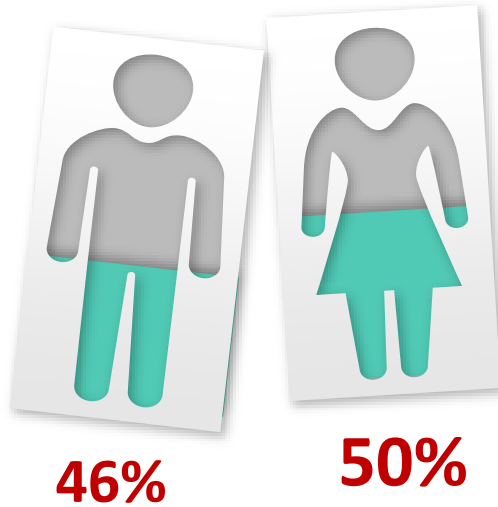
Region



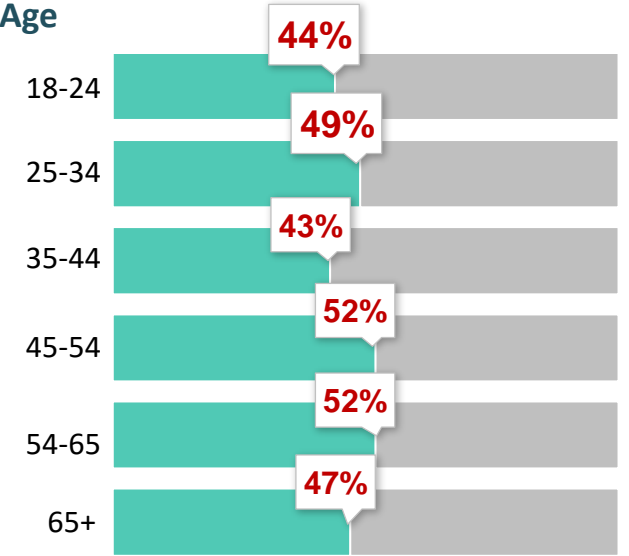
# Full Public sector pay restoration, even if it meant lower spend on infrastructure such as roads, housing etc



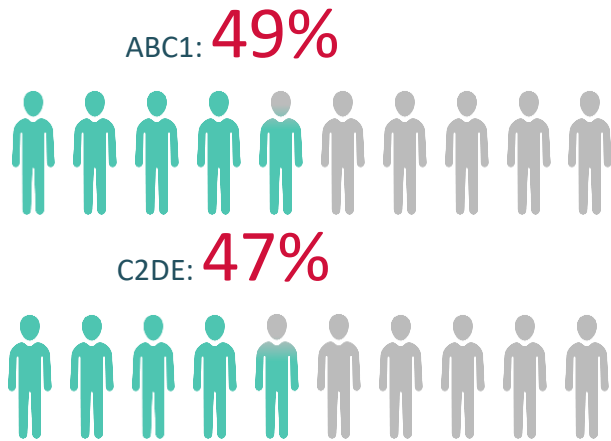
## Gender



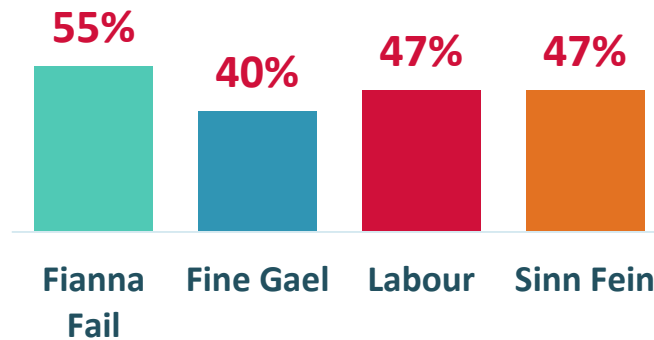
## Age



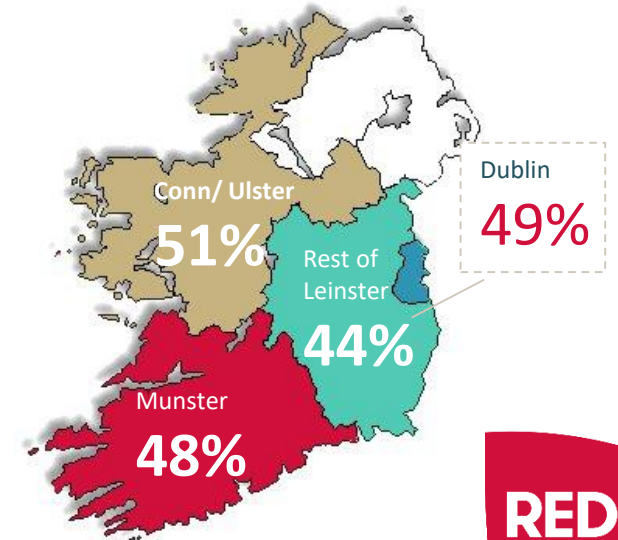
## Social Class



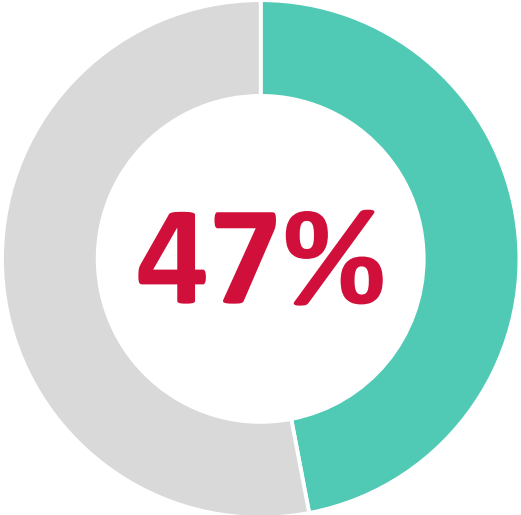
## Party Support



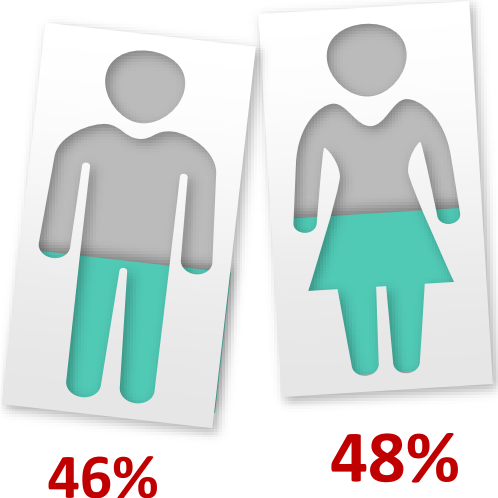
## Region



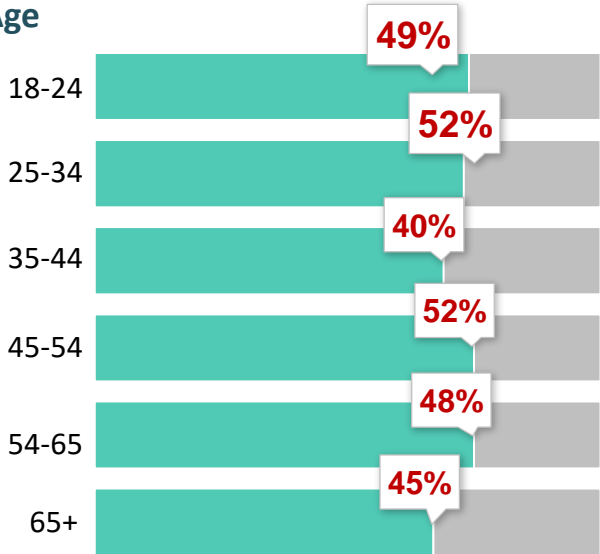
# Full Public Sector pay restoration, even if it meant lower spend on public services



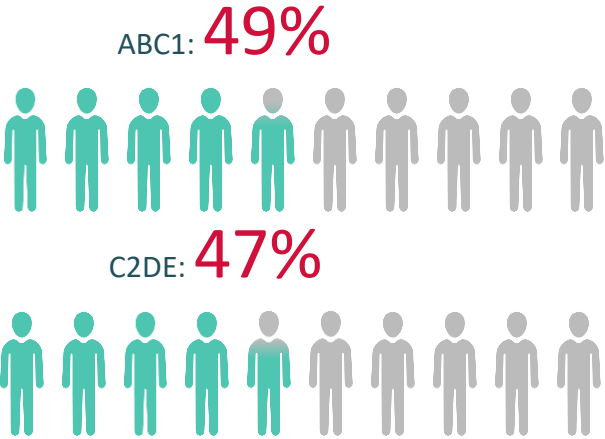
Gender



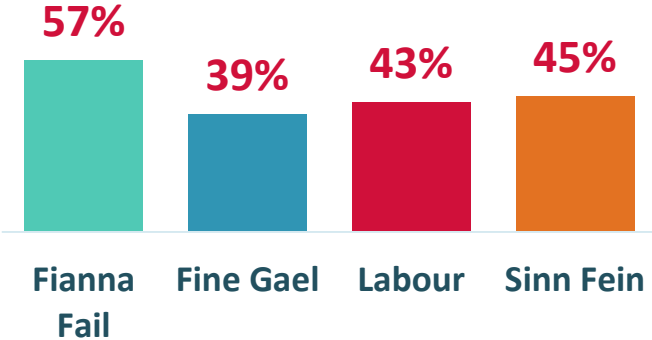
Age



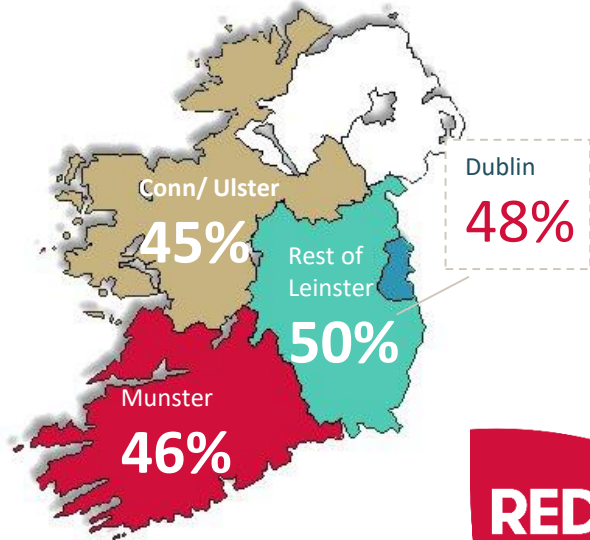
Social Class



Party Support



Region



**THANK  
YOU**

**REDC**