



**The Sunday
Business Post**

General Election Opinion Poll

March 2017



Methodology and Weighting

- ✓ RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,004 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 20th – 24th March 2017.
- ✓ 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.



Polling Trends Suggest General Election Unlikely

We are now into the third month of the year, and while individual months have seen change for some parties, none appears to be able to drive through a consistent momentum of change in support among the electorate.

Asked if they wanted to see a General Election, should the Fine Gael leadership and Taoiseach change as expected in the next few months, just under half of all voters (49%) want to see one held. Support for another election is most strong among Sinn Fein and Solidarity-PBP voters at over 75%. This falls back among Fianna Fail voters where just 43% support an election and again for Fine Gael voters where just 30% want to see an election.

There is no surprise in this, as the current read from the polls suggest that were we to have another election the result would leave us in pretty much the same situation we are in now. It may end up with Fianna Fail holding power and Fine Gael supporting supply and confidence, but otherwise it would be a very similar position to that we have now, with no one party having overall power. The main reason for this appears to be the difficulty for any one party to consistently build any momentum with the electorate.

At the start of the year Fianna Fail saw a significant improvement in support after falling back in the run up to Christmas last year. This returned them to clearly be the party with the largest support among the electorate at 27% support. But since then the party has remained relatively steady at 26% for the following two months, and hasn't been able to build momentum for increased support.

Likewise Sinn Fein support saw very strong gains last month, taking the party to close to 20% support. In a poll taken shortly after Fianna Fail ensured that the current government remained in place, this was perhaps a reaction among some of the electorate to the establishment. But despite all the attention on Martin McGuinness passing this week, the party has failed to extend this trend into a second month. Instead support for Sinn Fein has fallen back again this month to 17%. This is still a good showing for the party, but no sign that we will see a defining trend in support for the party.

It may be something of surprise that all the attention on the party hasn't seen a further bounce in support for Sinn Fein this month. For what it is worth, my take on this is that attention isn't always a good thing. Sinn Fein's rise in the polls has been on the back of a focus on politics and perhaps a movement away from the past. A new leader in Northern Ireland, and a focus on its position as the real opposition in the Dail, has driven these gains in support.

Martin McGuinness's passing and the focus on his life from the early days till now, reminds some less certain voters of the violence of the parties past, and potentially puts them off. If this theory is correct, then the ultimate end game for the party is to move on from the past. How might the party perform for example with a new leader in the Republic of Ireland, unfettered by their past?

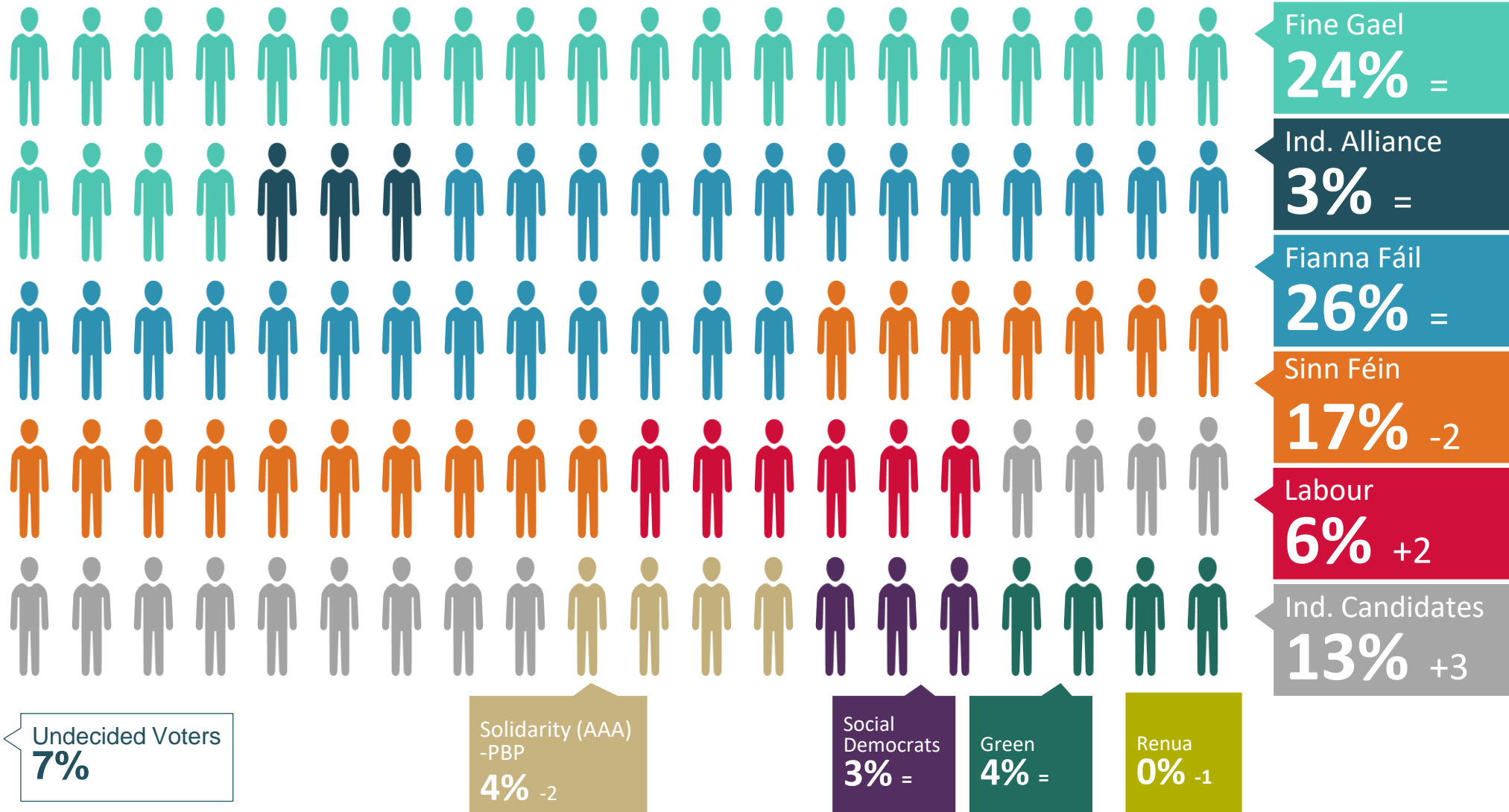
Other parties all appear relatively stable within the margins for error on any poll. The demise of the Independent vote as we believe, been wrongly trumpeted by the media. It appears to remain relatively strong in our polls which prompts for all the smaller parties in our question, with some momentum from month to month but generally swinging between 13% and 16% of the first preference vote overall. This includes 3-5% support for the Independent Alliance. Solidarity-PBP and Labour are regularly securing between 4% and 6%, while the Social Democrats are stable at 3% and Renua fluctuating between 1% or less.

With a stable picture among the electorate, and with no party securing any meaningful longer term momentum, it is unlikely we will see any party forcing a General Election any time soon.

First Preference Vote Intention – 24th March 2017

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)

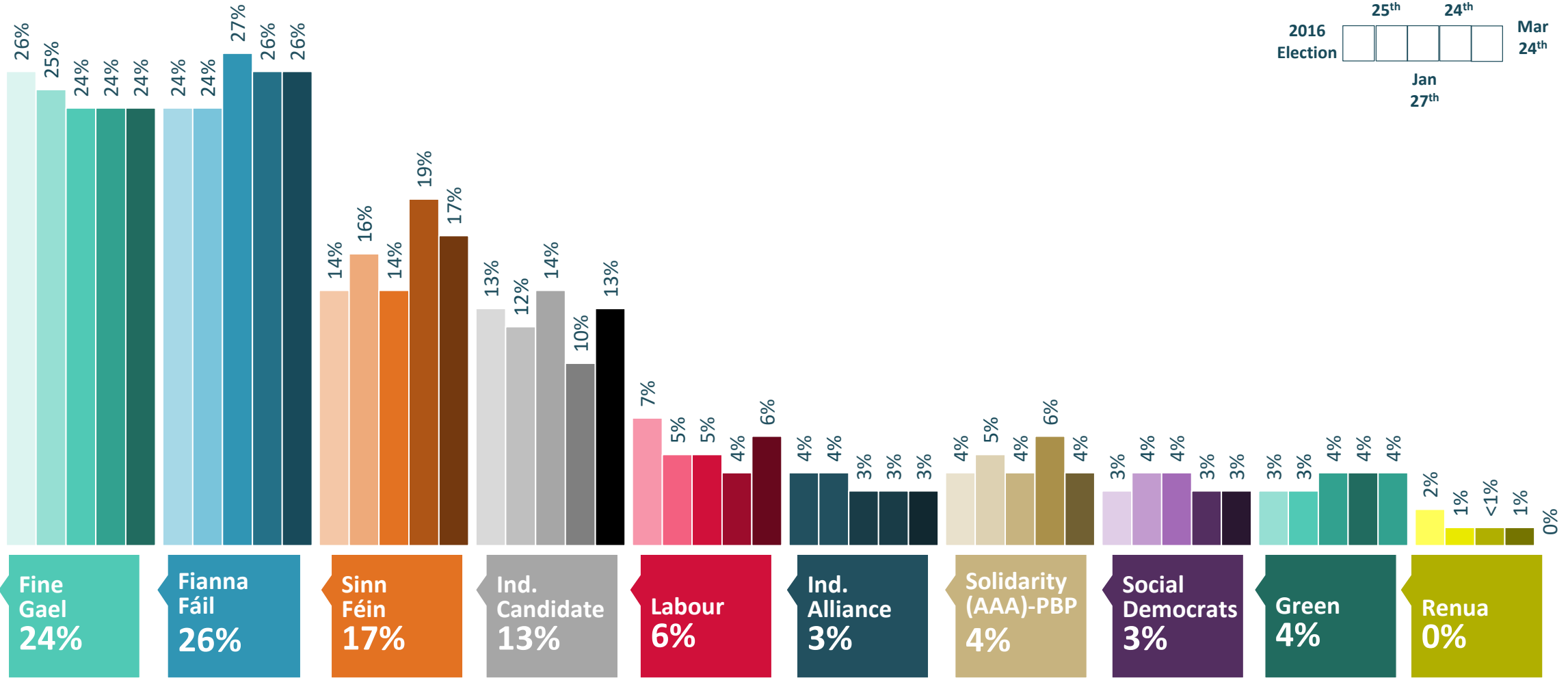
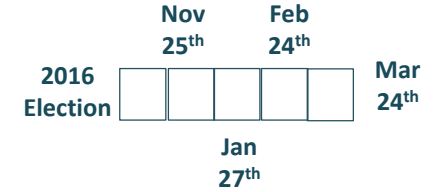
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – March '17

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)

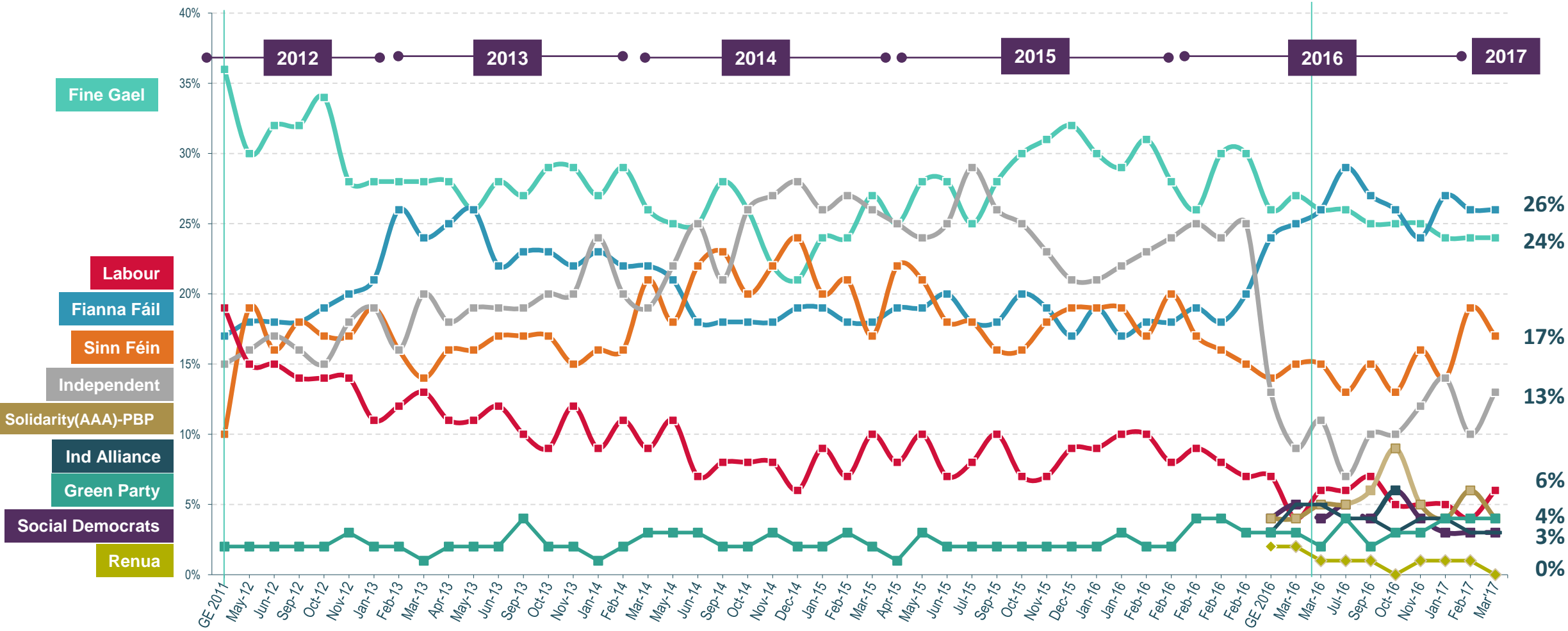
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First Preference Vote Intention – 2012-2017

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)

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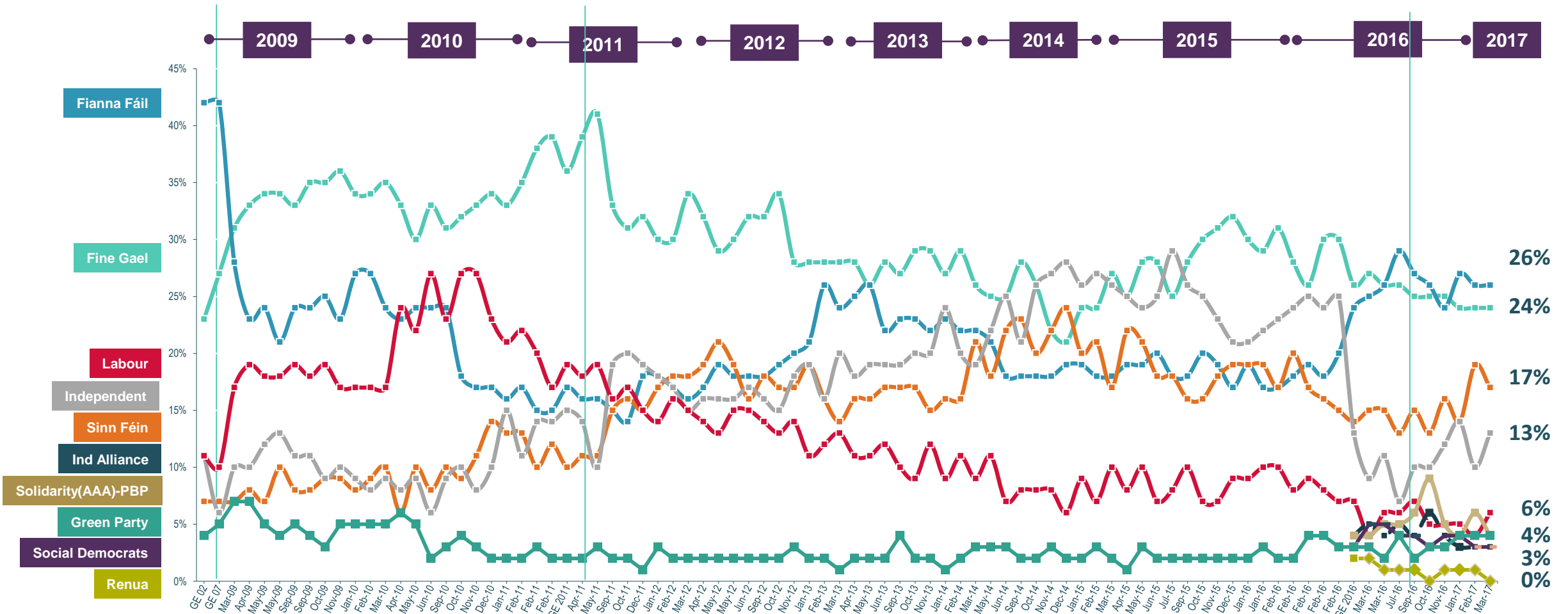


Note; From GE 2016 Onwards, 'Independents/Others' split out to show AAA-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately

First Preference Vote Intention – 2009 to 2017

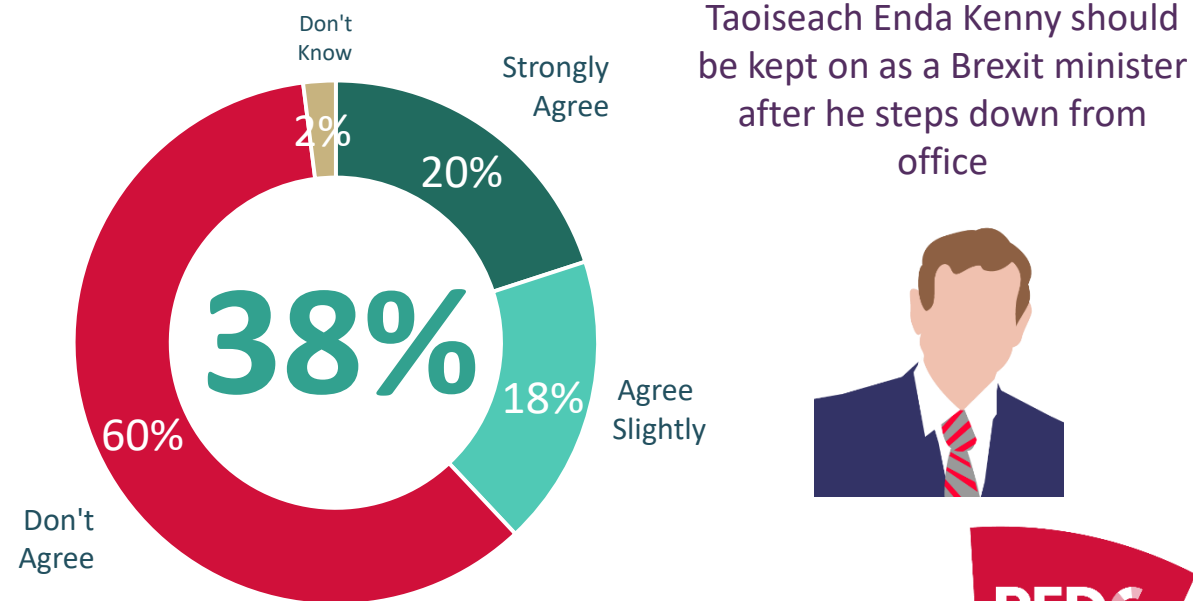
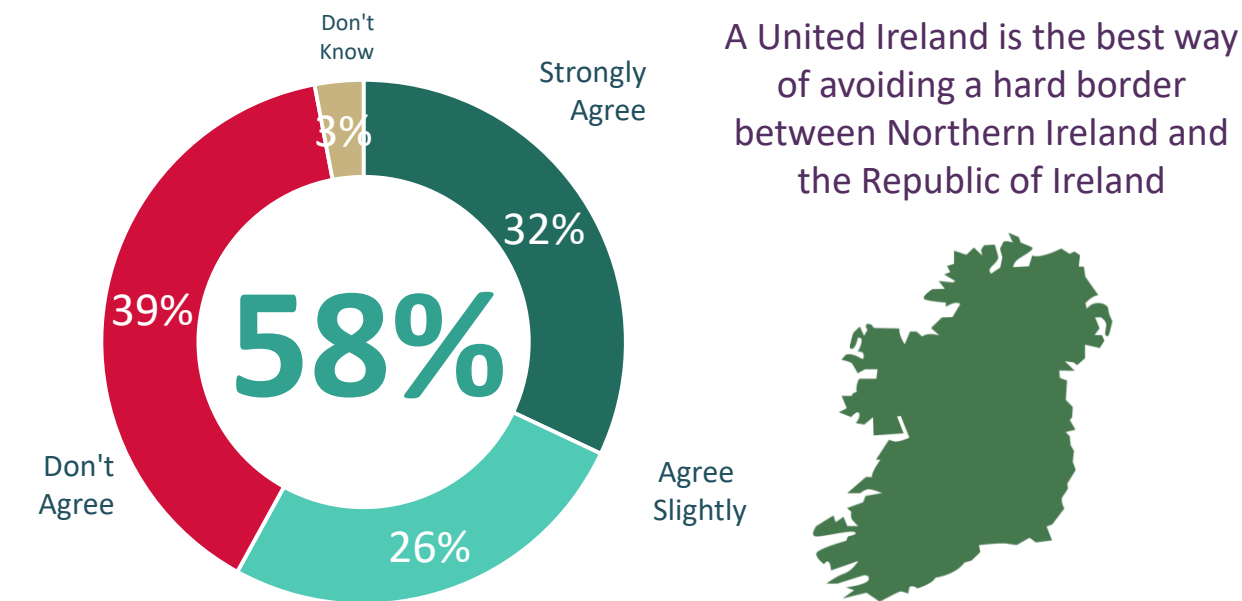
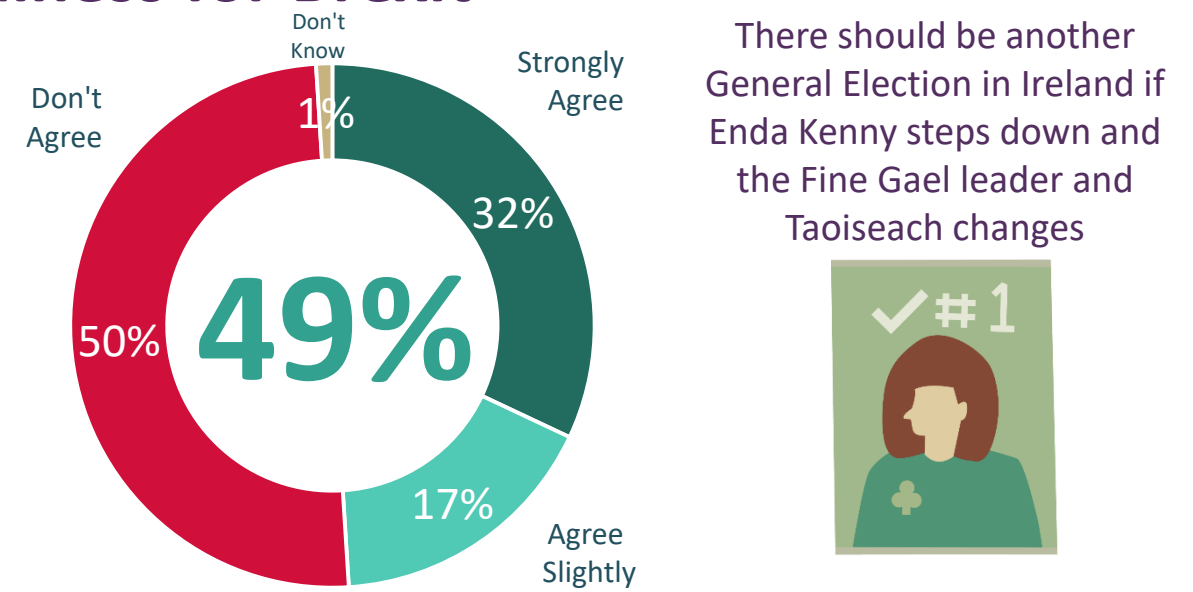
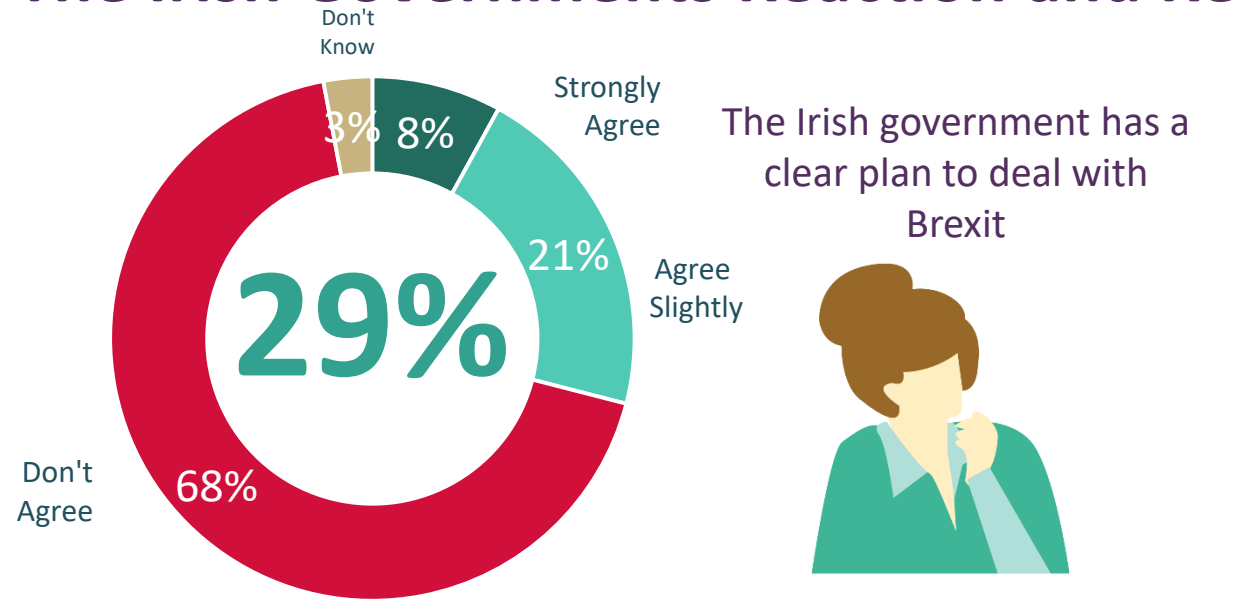
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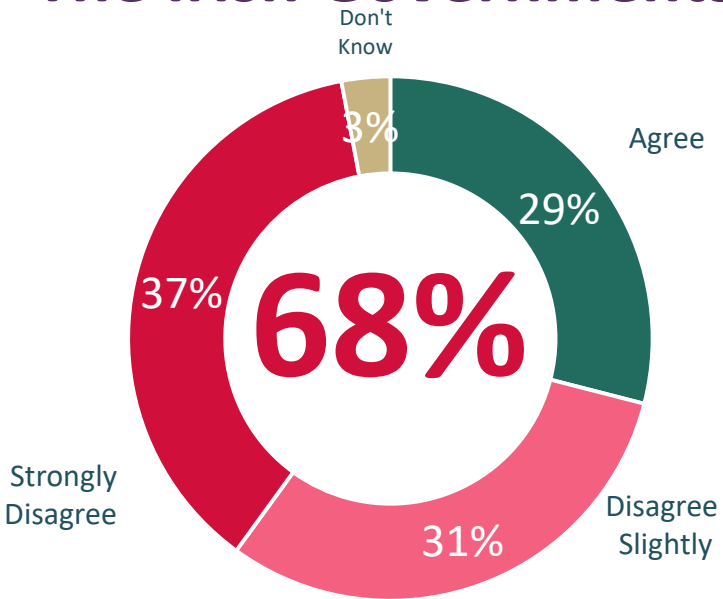


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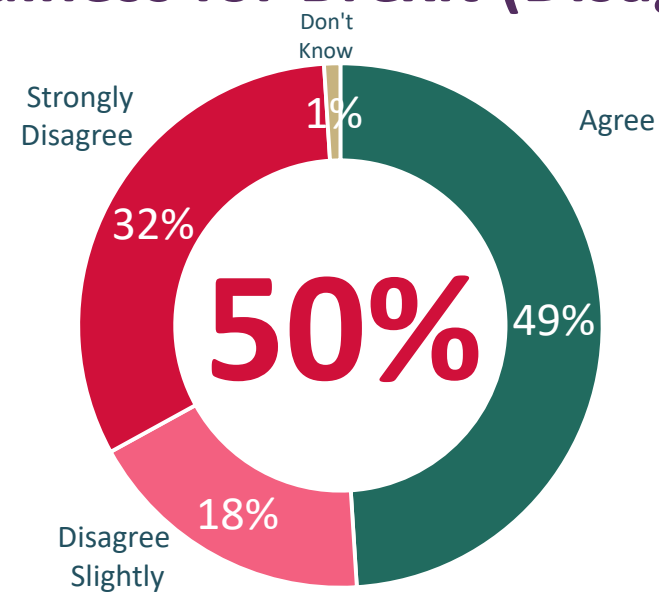
The Irish Governments Reaction and Readiness for Brexit



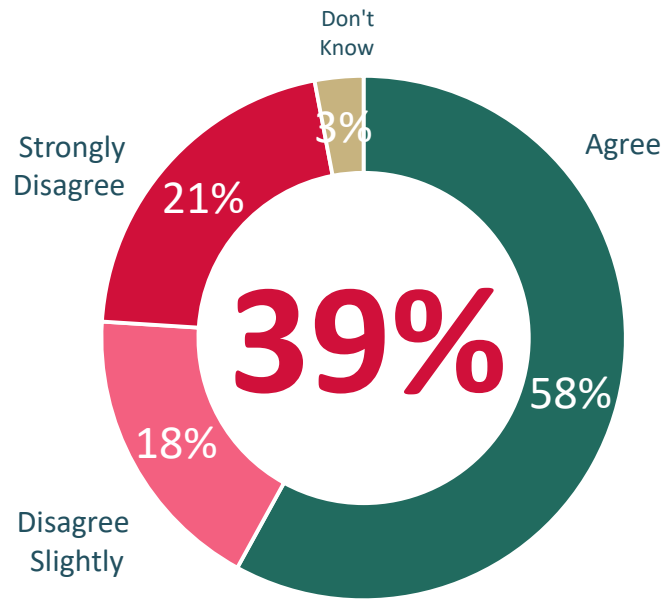
The Irish Governments Reaction and Readiness for Brexit (Disagree)



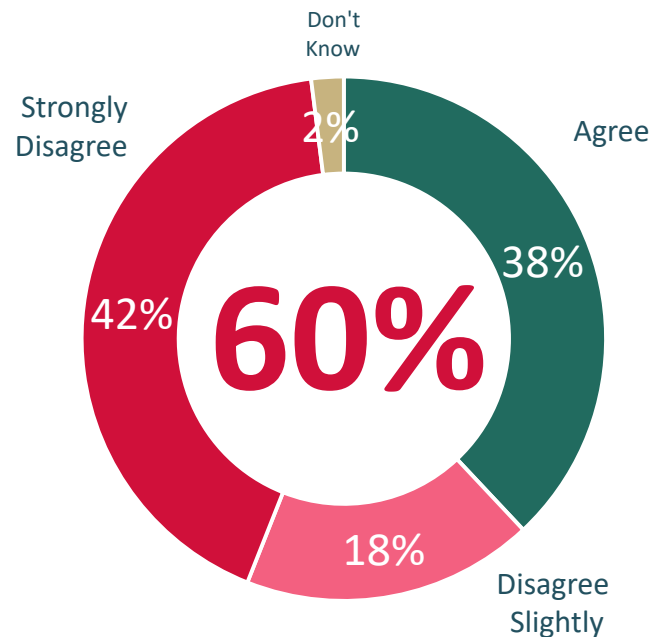
The Irish government has a clear plan to deal with Brexit



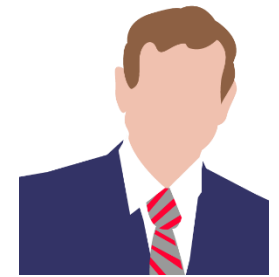
There should be another General Election in Ireland if Enda Kenny steps down and the Fine Gael leader and Taoiseach changes



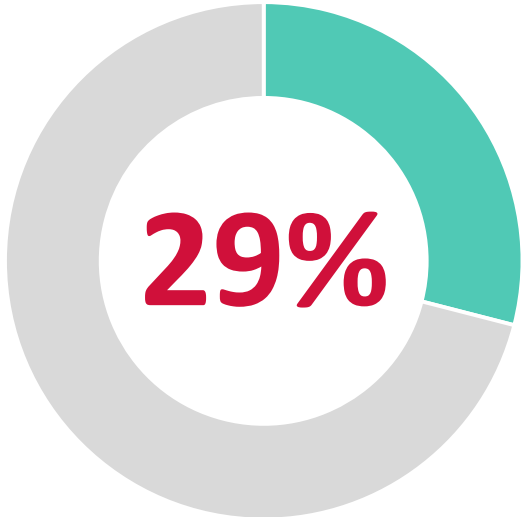
A United Ireland is the best way of avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland



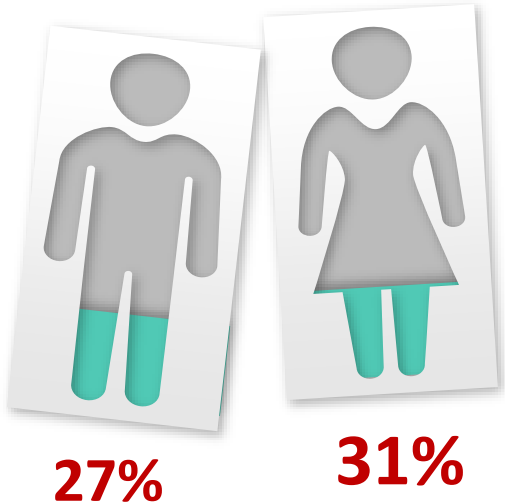
Taoiseach Enda Kenny should be kept on as a Brexit minister after he steps down from office



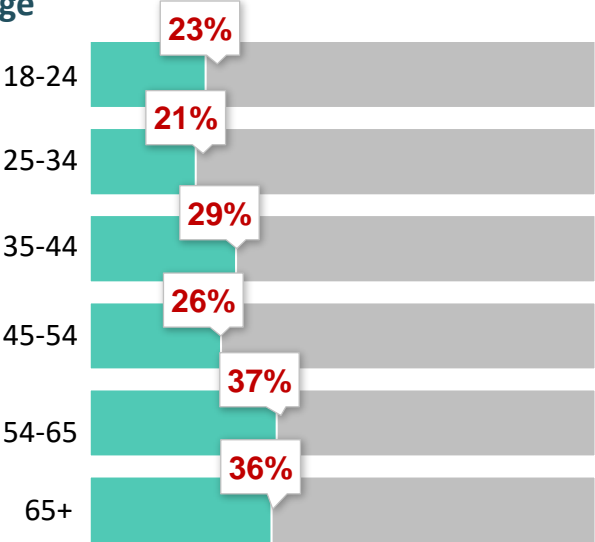
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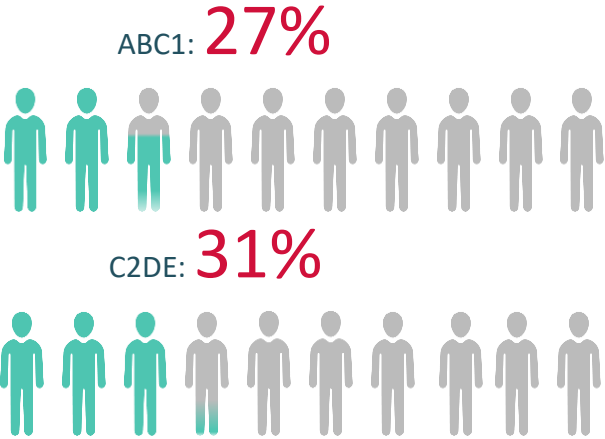
Gender



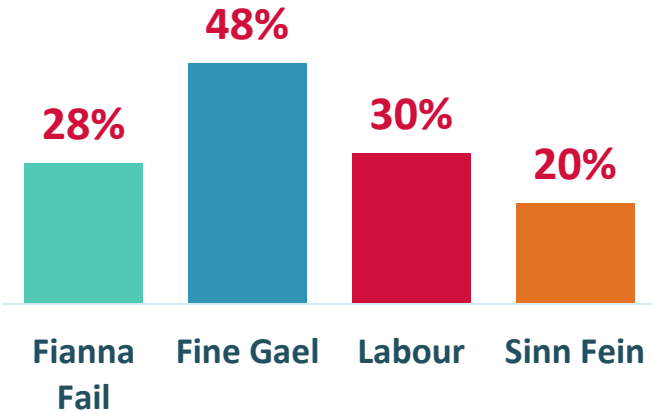
Age



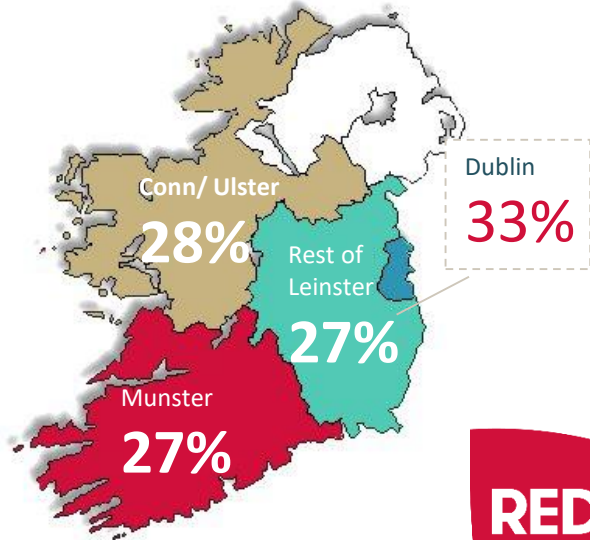
Social Class



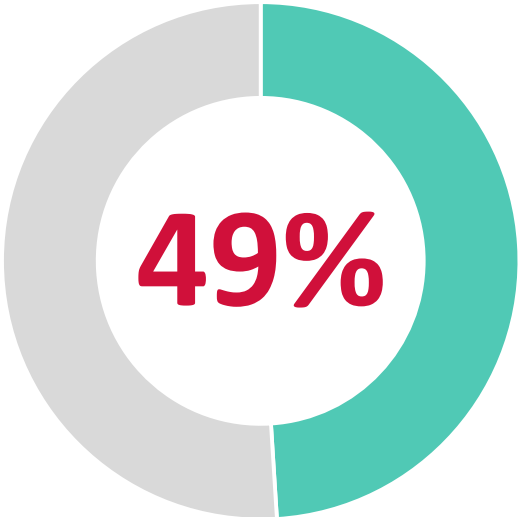
Party Agree



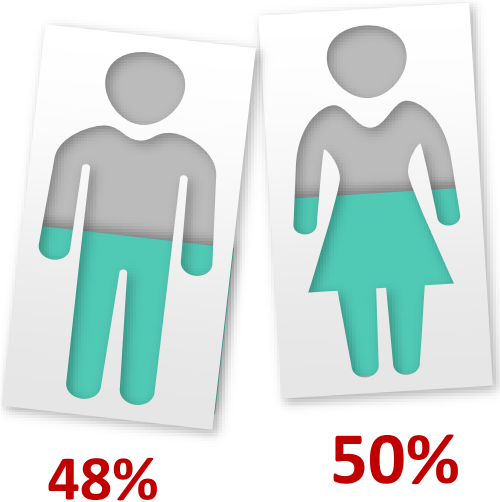
Region



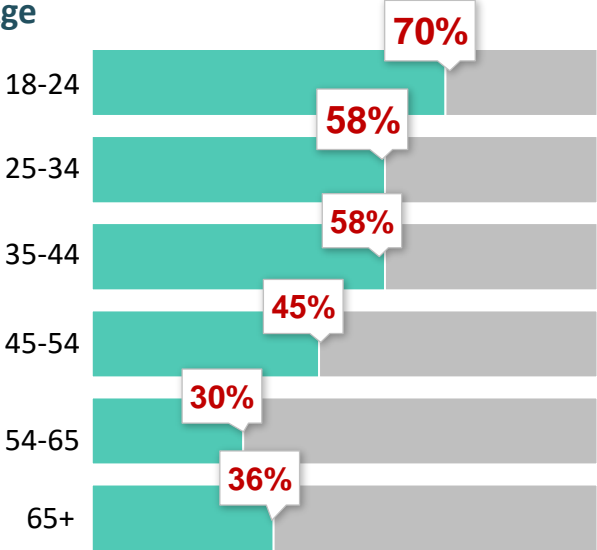
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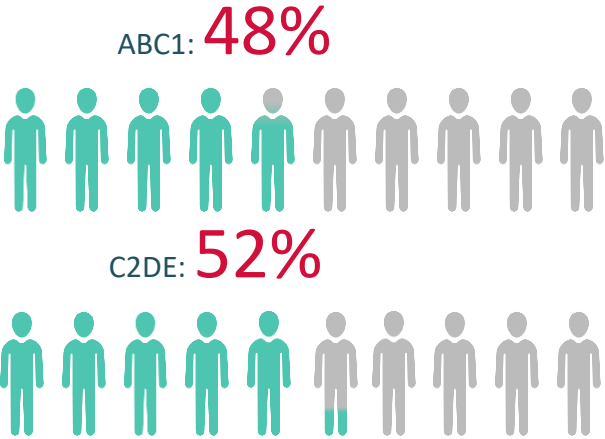
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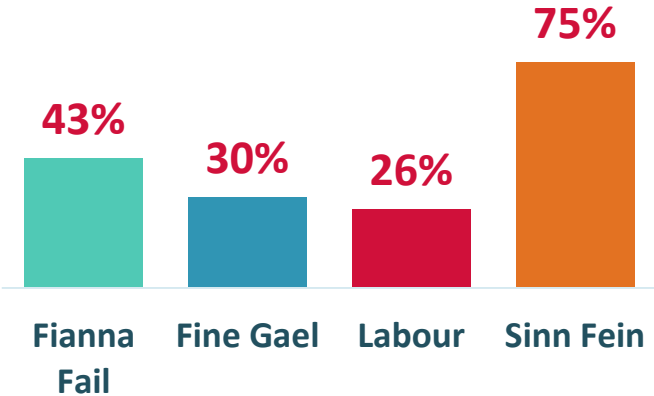
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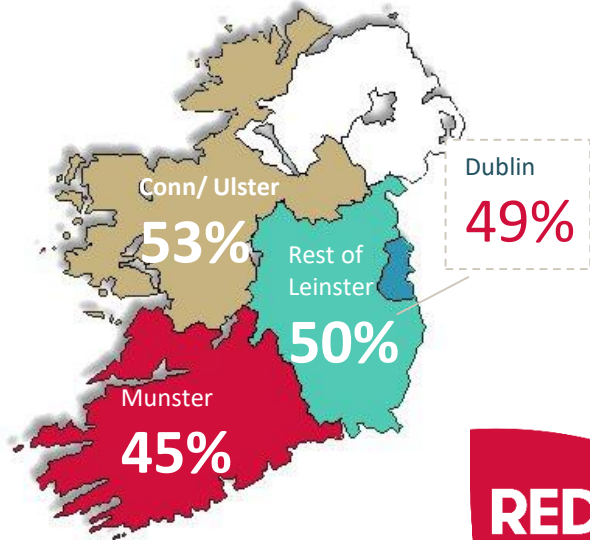
Social Class



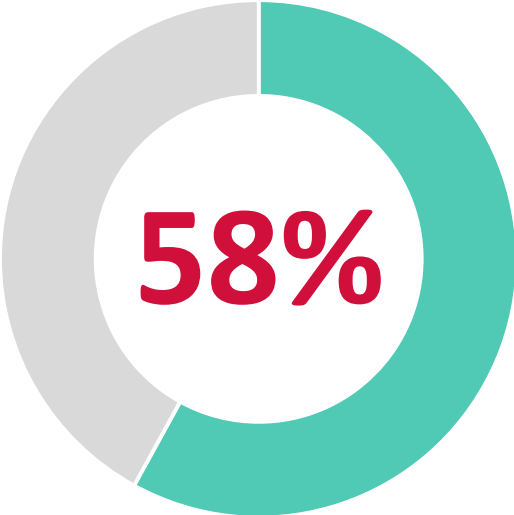
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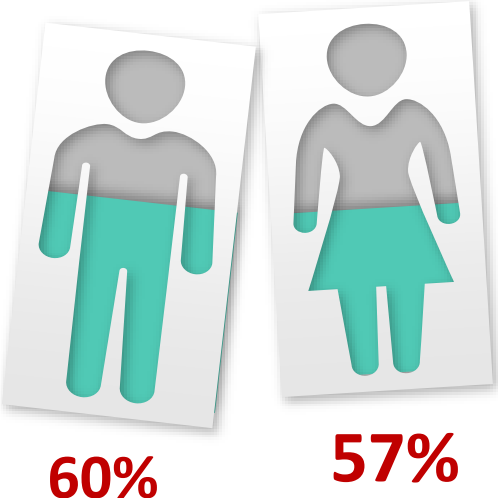
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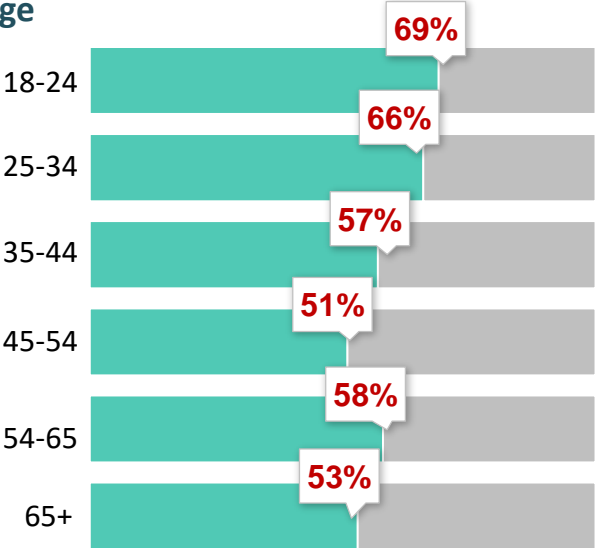
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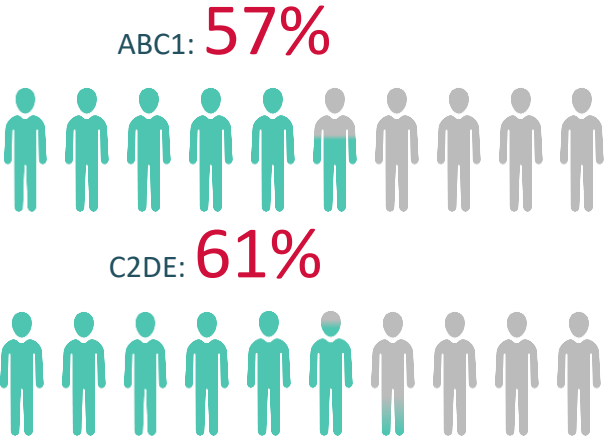
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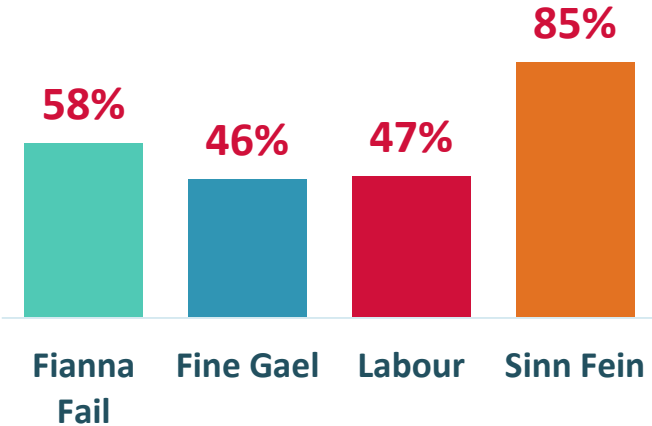
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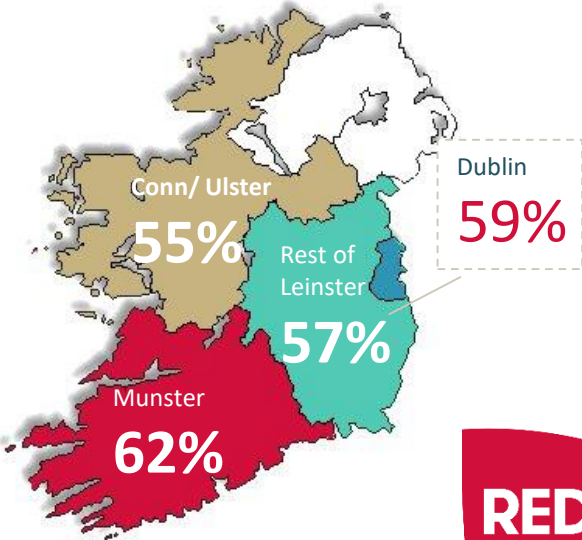
Social Class



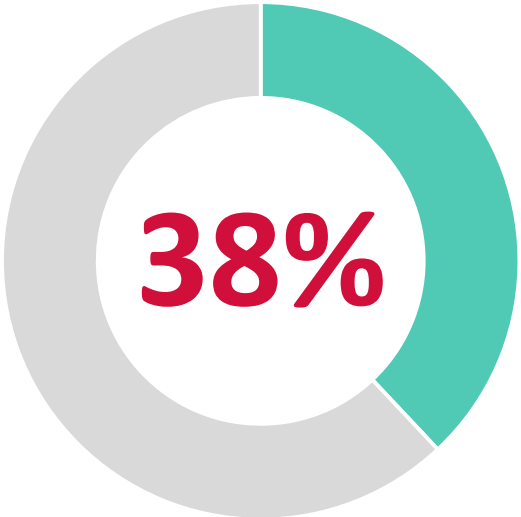
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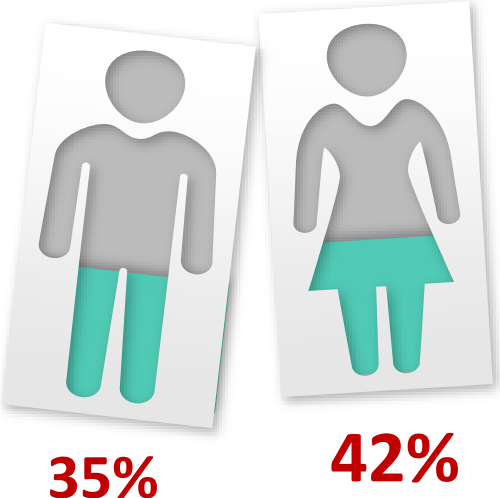
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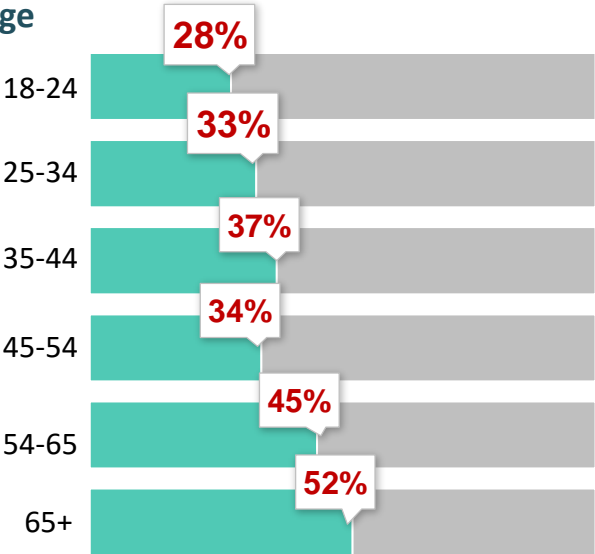
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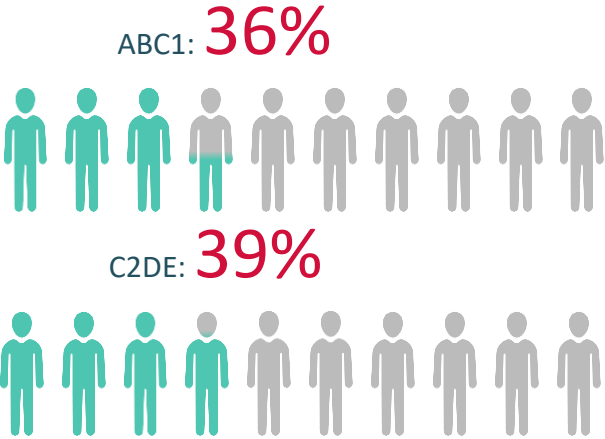
Gender



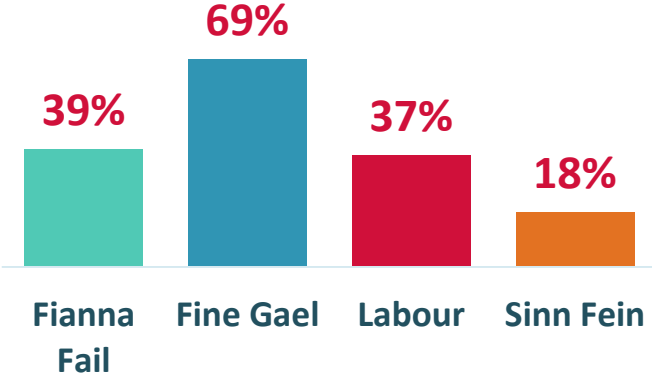
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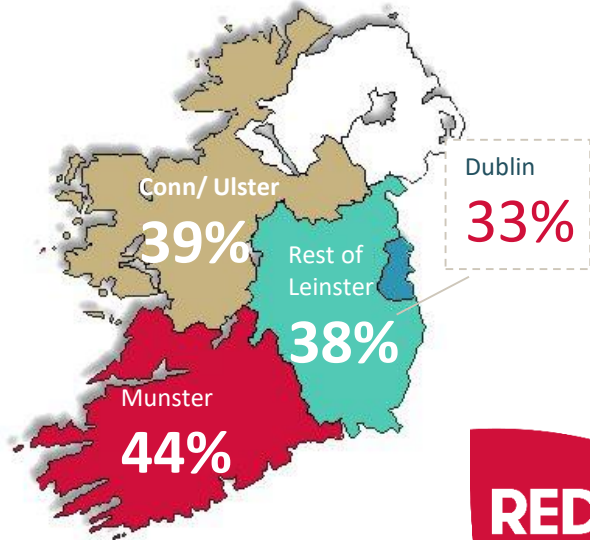
Social Class



Party Agree



Region



**THANK
YOU**

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